

## NOVEMBER 2

### Ezekiel 3:16-6:14

Keep finding words to circle or underline.

Ezekiel 3:16-27

Vs. 16-21 God has commissioned Ezekiel and is now laying out his responsibility and charge. This is a very serious and vivid image. I'm thankful that our motivation in the harvest is the grace and love that we have found in Christ. Still, we can identify with this responsibility to warn others.

Vs. 22-27 It is interesting that God gave Ezekiel this news as He showed him His glory. Think over what God just told him. God was going to bind him at home so he couldn't go out (paralysis?) and make Ezekiel unable to speak. Only as God gave him an assignment or gave him a word would Ezekiel be able to go out and be able to speak. This would be for about seven years of his life and marriage, until he received news of the fall of Jerusalem. It was nice that he had seen the glory of God first.

This would be a sign to the people and it would protect Ezekiel. Normally he would be fully harmless, totally "bound" (whatever that meant) and absolutely speechless. Why hurt a guy like that? I can't imagine this was any fun for his wife, but I have a feeling God gave them some grace in this. Maybe when no one was looking, God let Ezekiel do the dishes.

Ezekiel 4

This "sign" is fairly self-explanatory in its details. This had to have been very public and visual. God probably allowed Ezekiel to go to a public place like a market and do this.

Vs. 1-3 This was not happening yet in Israel for about another three years, but Ezekiel would enact the future siege of Jerusalem.

Vs. 4-8 No one is completely sure what the significance of those days (years) is, especially for how they apply to Judah. Judah went on about 100 years longer than the northern kingdom. What is interesting is that once Ezekiel got himself set up on one side or the other, God paralyzed him again so that he couldn't move.

Vs. 9-17 This would show the people how desperate times would be in the city. God gave Ezekiel some grace here, because human waste wasn't an acceptable way for anyone, especially a priest, to cook his food. Yet, in the desperation of the siege of Jerusalem, this is how things would be.

Summing this up: The madman who lived in that house over there, who couldn't move or speak, would come out every day, go into the busy market square with a big building stone that said "Jerusalem" on it. Then he would make it look like a city in siege. He would then lie on his side the whole day, paralyzed. Then he would suddenly move and would make bread over cow pies. Then he would get up, take the brick and go home, and do it all over again the next day. He did it for 430 days, for over a year. The elders would go to him and ask what this meant; and once or twice suddenly, he spoke and told them. Now the word has spread around and everyone comes to the market to see the crazy prophet.

The people hoped that Jerusalem would survive, but God was telling them it wouldn't.

Ezekiel 5

Vs. 1-4 Remember that Ezekiel had to have done this publicly if it was to have had any impact. Imagine a guy in the mall suddenly pulling out a sword and shaving his head and then doing the rest of this. It would be memorable to say the least.

I'm sure people laughed for a while, but as we'll see, eventually they began to take Ezekiel very seriously.

Vs. 5-17 This is a public declaration from the Lord. Again, look for stuff to underline. God really wanted them to know that He is the Lord. Notice here how often the Lord says, *nations all around you*.

V. 11 It isn't clear to us yet how the sanctuary of the Lord's temple was defiled, but that is coming up. God will take Ezekiel on a field trip.

Ezekiel 6

Vs. 1-7 I think this, too, was a public declaration. Somewhere in the market square or in the official part of the city, Ezekiel took a stand and announced that he was facing (or maybe seeing) the mountains of Israel; and when he had their attention, the Lord let loose. The land was full of idols and the worship of these was most often sick and sexual. Notice how this section ends.

Vs. 8-10 Somehow in their exile, the people who live on will finally acknowledge that their punishment is the result of their *whoring heart*. Notice how this section ends.

Vs. 11-14 Those who are left in Jerusalem apparently were the worst of the worst. God promised to punish those who remained and those who ran. We saw this in Jeremiah, when the remnant there fled to Egypt and took Jeremiah hostage with them. God led Nebuchadnezzar to Egypt to find them. Interestingly, that event hasn't happened yet at this point in time. Notice how this section ends.

Guess what the important recurring phrase in this chapter is?

#### **Hebrews 4**

This chapter is just full of stuff. The one question you need to find some clarity in is "what is this *rest*?"

In the OT the *rest* had to do with entering the land, not specifically being saved. As mentioned, the disobedience of the people, including Moses, kept them from entering the *rest* that God had prepared for them.

In the land, as God's covenant people, God promised to care for them completely. They needed to work, but there was peace and security promised to them. They were to enjoy the Sabbath without fear or worry, but they didn't obey and hold the Sabbath. They were to give the land a Sabbath rest and rest themselves as God provided, but they didn't. They were to attend all of the feasts in Jerusalem, leaving their lands unprotected, because God would care for them; but they didn't. In the land they were to have had rest in God, perfect peace and security of heart; but it was dependent on faith and resting in His care and promises.

The situation with the people being addressed in this letter was such that they were being persecuted and they were afraid. They may have thought, "Wouldn't it be better to give in and conform to the pressure and go back to the practice of the law?" To do that would have been to turn their backs on the grace of God, the work of Christ and the promise of God to care for them. They would have been seeking rest by their own hand, seeking peace by compromise and becoming slaves to the law. It doesn't mean they would become "unsaved," but it would keep them from experiencing God's rest as promised in Christ. Jesus promised a rest that was more than salvation.

Vs. 1-3 We have entered into that rest through faith, just like the people who went over the Jordan entered into the land; yet, to experience that rest would be a matter of living by faith.

Vs. 4-10 Joshua wasn't able to give these people rest. Moses couldn't either. Entering the land didn't give them rest. The law didn't give them rest because the law reveals sin in people. The

people did religious stuff trying to get good with God, but works don't work. Only faith in God works and brings rest.

V. 11 Notice that this is applied to the believing and the writer includes himself, *Let us...* Entering that rest seems to imply striving to live by faith and continue in grace.

Vs. 12-13 The Word shows us whether we are living in the flesh (soul) or by the Spirit. It shows us if our faith is resting in us or in Him. It shows us where our devotion is focused.

Vs. 14-16 Again, Jesus becomes the object of our rest. Notice v. 16, *Let us...draw near*. And what do we find when we draw near: confidence, mercy and help. Maybe another way to say that is, we find rest.

Much of what the Lord said to His disciples to train them had to do with rest, borne out of faith and complete dependence on Him. Everything we read that seems so other worldly like turning the other cheek, not resisting a lawsuit, not being anxious about food or clothing, loving enemies, etc., implies that we know how to completely rest in Him, even in tribulation. Think that one through, resting in tribulation. When Jesus sent out the Twelve and then the 70, they were to take nothing with them. They were to work, for sure, yet they had no money or food and everything was unsure. And, they faced threat and animosity, but they were to rest in Him. They entered into His rest by trusting His grace and love and power.

There are many believers who are not in the harvest, who live by their own hand and effort, according to their desires and perceived needs. They know little about faith; they've forgotten what grace really means, and they do not live in His rest. They've missed it. Being comfortable does not mean you've entered His rest. If we can only be at rest when there is peace and comfort, that is not the rest of God that we have in following Jesus in the harvest as His disciples. *Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.* (John 14:27)

### **Psalm 104:24-35**

This is the second half of what we read yesterday.

Vs. 24-26 God's majesty and grandeur are seen in His wisdom. Who could possibly have had the power and wisdom to make and imagine all that lives in the oceans?

Vs. 27-30 And no matter how mighty or how small any of these creations are, they are all dependent on God to sustain them.

Vs. 31-35 The glory and awesome power of the Lord should lead to thanks and meditation. Verse 35 seems to indicate that not to acknowledge God for all He has done will get some people in trouble. He deserves to be praised, known and worshipped. Not to acknowledge God by getting to know Him through our Lord is to say to Him that we don't want to go to the next place He makes. Only those who know Him get to live there.

Reading this after reading Hebrews makes me think of God's care and that we can rest in Him. We need to have our hearts and minds renewed in Jesus.

### **Proverbs 26:27**

That should be something to calm God's people, remembering of course that God doesn't always pay on Friday. (He doesn't always repay the wicked immediately.) Jesus and Paul say that disciples should rest when mistreated, and show the love of Christ, overcoming evil with good.