

Ezekiel Part 3 (Ezekiel 3:4-27)

1. God would not send Ezekiel on mission without supplying all he needed to fulfill the mission.
2. The very name "Ezekiel" means "God strengthens" - also "God hardens."
3. Twice God told Ezekiel not to be afraid. (Ezekiel 2:6, 3:9)
4. The reference to "the house of Israel" in verse 7 is to all parts of Israel rather than every Israelite.
5. **3:8-9** Opposition was pictured as coming from people with hardened faces.
6. This pointed to a hardened-will set against the word and will of God.
7. God responded by promising the prophet that he would harden the forehead of Ezekiel so that it was like "hardest stone."
7. The word "hardest stone" (v. 9) probably was reference to a diamond.
8. The same word appears in Jeremiah 17:1 - where it is translated "flint." Ezekiel was assured of divine protection for his assignment.
8. **3:10-11** Ezekiel was instructed (literally) to listen with his ears and receive with his heart all that God said.
9. This verse implies a continuous relationship. Ezekiel was to keep on hearing as God kept on speaking to him.
10. Receiving the words of God was not to be confined just to the call - but to the ongoing revelation throughout his entire ministry.
11. In these opening words of the final charge the prophet was exhorted to listen, understand, grasp, and apply the words of God.
12. He was called to be God's spokesman in exile to his fellow countrymen.
13. In this assignment he shared the same burden as his contemporary, Jeremiah. Both men were called to preach messages of severe judgment.
14. But it is a mistake to conclude that either man was insensitive to the weight of the message of destruction they announced.
15. Ezekiel struggled with the task. There are subtle hints in the passage - such as this sad report of Judah's obstinacy in v. 11.
16. **3:12-15** Ezekiel was lifted by the Spirit (v. 12) see chapter 2 verse 2.
17. As he was "lifted," he also heard the sound of the wings of the creatures and the movement of the wheels, suggesting the movement of the chariot throne and the end of the vision (v. 13).

18. The Spirit took the prophet to his place among the captives by the River Kebar at Tel Abib (v. 15).
19. This was the same location identified in 1:1, where only the river was mentioned. But here in v. 15 the name of one city of the exile appears.
20. The name Tel Abib probably means “hill of ears.” The location in Babylon is unknown, but the name is preserved in its modern version, Tel Aviv, one of the principal cities of Israel.
21. When the Spirit took him, the prophet departed in great distress, compelled by “the strong hand of the Lord” (v. 14).
22. Ezekiel was not the first prophet to have a negative reaction to the reality of his call. Jonah rejected his call and fled until God turned him around (Jonah 1:1–17).
23. One other fact that contributed to the overwhelming weight of the moment was the prophet’s declaration in verse 15.
24. **3:16–17** When seven days elapsed, God appeared and began giving Ezekiel the words he was to deliver to the people.
25. In chaps. 2–3 God had told the prophet repeatedly that he was to deliver divine words (2:4, 7; 3:4, 11), but he had not yet given him those words.
26. Here in v. 16 is the first occurrence of the phrase “the word of the Lord came to me.” This phrase was to characterize Ezekiel’s prophecy, occurring in forty-one verses.
27. God told the prophet he was sent as a “watchman” to Israel (v. 17). Ezekiel’s divine appointment as watchman is unique, and only here are the duties and responsibilities specified.
28. A watchman was a city employee appointed to be a lookout from some high vantage point such as a tower or the city wall.
29. Such an office was extremely important because the safety of the entire population rested with the watchman.
30. If a watchman failed in his duty to warn inhabitants of the town of impending attack, he was held personally responsible for any loss.
31. God appointed Ezekiel as his watchman to warn Judah and Jerusalem of impending destruction. If he chose to remain silent, he would be held accountable.
32. **3:18–21** These verses focus on the prophet’s responsibility and accountability as God’s watchman.
33. **3:22–23** When Ezekiel obeyed and moved to the plain (v. 23), he again encountered the glory of the divine presence, which he had seen in 1:3–28.
34. **3:24–27** The prophet was empowered by the Spirit and set on his feet as he had been in his first vision (2:2).
35. The needs of the people could not be met by offering a new perspective on their problems. What the nation needed was a new perspective on God.