

## Understanding the Call of a Missionary

November 20, 2022

Ezekiel 1:1-3:11

Vol. 12 Num. 47

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### Using This Study

#### ❶ EXAMINE His Word

What does God SAY? Open your time with prayer. The words God uses to communicate matters, so go back and pay close attention to the details that are emphasized or repeated in the passage.

#### ❷ EXPLORE His Word

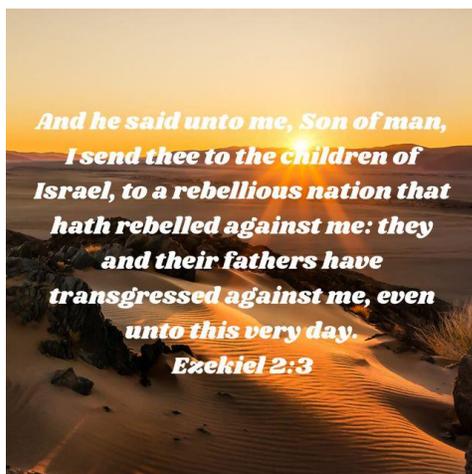
What does God MEAN? Asking questions of the text helps surface how the details relate to the message God wants to communicate.

#### ❸ EMBRACE His Word

Why does it MATTER to me? Embrace God by responding to what you discover in His word in faith and obedience.



If and when Clear Lake Bible Church supports additional missionaries, what kind of a person should be called as a missionary, according to the Bible? God's call of the prophet Ezekiel, which is found in the first three chapters of the book of Ezekiel, a major prophet based on both the length of this book and the content of its message, should be considered. As the son of a priest, Ezekiel anticipated becoming a priest in the Jerusalem temple when he became eligible to do so at age 30, but at the time Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem again in 597 B.C., Ezekiel was exiled to Babylon at the age of 26. We discover the transformation of Ezekiel in his call to be a prophet as he encounters the Lord in 593 B.C. at age 30, recognizes his human limitations, and agrees to speak for the Lord as His prophetic messenger. The similarities between the call of a prophet to speak for God and the call of a missionary to speak for God should cause us to apply similar principles in identifying a transformed missionary for the church to support.



## **EZEKIEL'S VISIONS OF GOD'S OVERWHELMING GLORY**

### **Ezekiel Chapter 1**

1 Now it came about in the thirtieth year, on the fifth day of the fourth month, while I was by the river Chebar among the exiles, the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God. 2 (On the fifth of the month in the fifth year of King Jehoiachin's exile, 3 the word of the LORD came expressly to Ezekiel the priest, son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chebar; and there the hand of the LORD came upon him.)

4 As I looked, behold, a storm wind was coming from the north, a great cloud with fire flashing forth continually and a bright light around it, and in its midst something like glowing metal in the midst of the fire. 5 Within it there were figures resembling four living beings. And this was their appearance: they had human form. 6 Each of them had four faces and four wings. 7 Their legs were straight and their feet were like a calf's hoof, and they gleamed like burnished bronze. 8 Under their wings on their four sides were human hands. As for the faces and wings of the four of them, 9 their wings touched one another; their faces did not turn when they moved, each went straight forward. 10 As for the form of their faces, each had the face of a man; all four had the face of a lion on the right and the face of a bull on the left, and all four had the face of an eagle. 11 Such were their faces. Their wings were spread out above; each had two touching another being, and two covering their bodies. 12 And each went straight forward; wherever the spirit was about to go, they would go, without turning as they went. 13 In the midst of the living beings there was something that looked like burning coals of fire, like torches darting back and forth among the living beings. The fire was bright, and lightning was flashing from the fire. 14 And the living beings ran to and fro like bolts of lightning.

15 Now as I looked at the living beings, behold, there was one wheel on the earth beside the living beings, for each of the four of them. 16 The appearance of the wheels and their workmanship was like sparkling beryl, and all four of them had the same form, their appearance and workmanship being as if one wheel were within another. 17 Whenever they moved, they moved in any of their four directions without turning as they moved. 18 As for their rims they were lofty and awesome, and the rims of all four of them were full of eyes round about. 19 Whenever the living beings moved, the wheels moved with them. And whenever

the living beings rose from the earth, the wheels rose also. 20 Wherever the spirit was about to go, they would go in that direction. And the wheels rose close beside them; for the spirit of the living beings was in the wheels. 21 Whenever those went, these went; and whenever those stood still, these stood still. And whenever those rose from the earth, the wheels rose close beside them; for the spirit of the living beings was in the wheels.

22 Now over the heads of the living beings there was something like an expanse, like the awesome gleam of crystal, spread out over their heads. 23 Under the expanse their wings were stretched out straight, one toward the other; each one also had two wings covering its body on the one side and on the other. 24 I also heard the sound of their wings like the sound of abundant waters as they went, like the voice of the Almighty, a sound of tumult like the sound of an army camp; whenever they stood still, they dropped their wings. 25 And there came a voice from above the expanse that was over their heads; whenever they stood still, they dropped their wings.

26 Now above the expanse that was over their heads there was something resembling a throne, like lapis lazuli in appearance; and on that which resembled a throne, high up, was a figure with the appearance of a man. 27 Then I noticed from the appearance of His loins and upward something like glowing metal that looked like fire all around within it, and from the appearance of His loins and downward I saw something like fire; and there was a radiance around Him. 28 As the appearance of the rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day, so was the appearance of the surrounding radiance. Such was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. And when I saw it, I fell on my face and heard a voice speaking.

## **EZEKIEL'S EQUIPPING AND COMMISSION**

### **Ezekiel Chapter 2**

1 Then He said to me, "Son of man, stand on your feet that I may speak with you!" 2 As He spoke to me the Spirit entered me and set me on my feet; and I heard Him speaking to me. 3 Then He said to me, "Son of man, I am sending you to the sons of Israel, to a rebellious people who have rebelled against Me; they and their fathers have transgressed against Me to this very day. 4 "I am sending you to them who are stubborn and obstinate children, and you shall say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD.' 5 "As for them, whether they listen or not – for they are a rebellious house – they will know that a prophet has been among them. 6 "And you, son of man, neither fear them nor fear their words, though thistles and thorns are with you and you sit on scorpions;

neither fear their words nor be dismayed at their presence, for they are a rebellious house. 7 “But you shall speak My words to them whether they listen or not, for they are rebellious.

8 “Now you, son of man, listen to what I am speaking to you; do not be rebellious like that rebellious house. Open your mouth and eat what I am giving you.” 9 Then I looked, and behold, a hand was extended to me; and lo, a scroll was in it. 10 When He spread it out before me, it was written on the front and back, and written on it were lamentations, mourning and woe.

### **Ezekiel Chapter 3**

1 Then He said to me, “Son of man, eat what you find; eat this scroll, and go, speak to the house of Israel.” 2 So I opened my mouth, and He fed me this scroll. 3 He said to me, “Son of man, feed your stomach and fill your body with this scroll which I am giving you.” Then I ate it, and it was sweet as honey in my mouth.

4 Then He said to me, “Son of man, go to the house of Israel and speak with My words to them. 5 “For you are not being sent to a people of unintelligible speech or difficult language, but to the house of Israel, 6 nor to many peoples of unintelligible speech or difficult language, whose words you cannot understand. But I have sent you to them who should listen to you; 7 yet the house of Israel will not be willing to listen to you, since they are not willing to listen to Me. Surely the whole house of Israel is stubborn and obstinate. 8 “Behold, I have made your face as hard as their faces and your forehead as hard as their foreheads. 9 “Like emery harder than flint I have made your forehead. Do not be afraid of them or be dismayed before them, though they are a rebellious house.” 10 Moreover, He said to me, “Son of man, take into your heart all My words which I will speak to you and listen closely. 11 “Go to the exiles, to the sons of your people, and speak to them and tell them, whether they listen or not, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD.’”

**o EXAMINE His Word (Observation)** (For personal preparation)

**What does God SAY? Prayerfully note significant details from this passage.**

Make 10 of your own observations from this passage. Avoid jumping to make interpretive decisions or drawing applications. Save those for the sections that follow. At this point just observe this passage and what it says. Look for things that are emphasized, repeated, and what stands out to you. Look at the verbs, what actions are in the text? Who is involved in the text? There is no right or wrong answer, just list 10 things you see in the text.

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**2 EXPLORE His Word (Interpretation)** (For Community Group discussion)  
**What does God MEAN?**

1. What came to Ezekiel in the first three verses of Chapter 1 of the book of Ezekiel? Where and when did they come to Ezekiel?
2. What do you think the four living beings are, how are the four living beings described, and how do the four living beings appear?
3. How are the wheels beside each of the living beings described, how is the movement of those wheels described, and what is in the rims of those wheels?
4. In verse 22, what is the first thing identified that was over the heads of the living beings? What is the description of the sounds (v.25) which came from under that first thing identified in verse 22? What is the description of the sounds (v.26) which came from above that first thing identified in verse 22?
5. In the last three verses of Chapter 1 of the book of Ezekiel, what appears high and above that first thing identified in verse 22?
6. How does the Lord address Ezekiel eight times in Chapters 2 and 3 of the book of Ezekiel, and why does the Lord address Ezekiel in this manner repeatedly? What enters Ezekiel?

7. How are the people to whom the Lord is sending Ezekiel described? What should Ezekiel speak to those people?

**③ EMBRACE His Word (Application)** (For Community Group discussion)  
**Why does this MATTER to me?**

8. Why does the content of Chapter 1 of the book of Ezekiel precede the content of Chapters 2 and 3 of the book of Ezekiel? Is this a logical progression for the call of a person who will speak for God?
9. Have you had a personal encounter with the true God Who has called you to His service? If so, how has that personal encounter with the true God impacted your life and the nature of your service of the Lord?
10. How is the call of the prophet Ezekiel in Chapters 1, 2, and 3 of the book of Ezekiel similar to the call of a missionary today to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ?

Summarize your thoughts on the passage

**Write about what God wants you to KNOW, to FEEL, and to DO...**

*Sermon Notes*