

# Ezekiel's Call

Ezekiel 2:1-3:15

## **MEMORY VERSE**

EZEKIEL 3:10

“Son of man, receive into your heart all My words that I speak to you, and hear with your ears.”

## **WHAT YOU WILL NEED:**

Masking tape, small balloons and blindfolds (old clean socks or rags will do).

Tortillas (one for each child in your class) and honey.

A copy of both templates for each child, scissors, crayons or markers, and paper fasteners.

## **ATTENTION GETTER!**

### **Balloon Rebellion**

For this game, you will need masking tape, small balloons, and blindfolds (old clean socks or rags will do).

Using masking tape, make a square 4' x 4' (make bigger if needed). Divide the class in half and ask half the class to stand inside of the square. Give them each blindfolds. Ask everyone else to blow up a small balloon. Ask the children with the balloons to stand against the walls around the classroom. Ask the children to tap the balloons into the air and keep them in the air using no hands, blowing them to propel them up. They need to keep blowing on the balloons to keep them airborne. The children inside of the square must listen for the balloons and keep the balloons from coming into the square. They also cannot use their hands, only their breath. If a balloon lands in either area, a point will go to that team. Keep playing until all of the balloons have landed or set a time limit of a few minutes.

The people in the center square are like the people of Israel in today's lesson, blinded by their sin. The balloons are like the Word of God. The people of Israel did not want the Word of God anywhere near them. They did not want to hear Ezekiel's message. But, the people learned that when they disobey God, they miss out on blessings. When we do not obey, we also miss out on blessings. The other children trying to get the balloons into the square are like Ezekiel. They keep faithfully trying to deliver the Word even though the children in the square are trying to keep it far away. God may call us to do something for him. Other people may not appreciate our service or want to hear what we have to say. But we need to be strong and do what we know is right.

## LESSON TIME!

Ezekiel was chosen to be God's prophet to those Israeli's who, as a result of God's judgment, had been carried away to Babylon. It was not an easy task. He was born and raised in the land of Judah and was preparing to become a priest in God's temple when the Babylonians attacked in 597 BC and carried him away along with 10,000 other captives (see 2 Kings 24:10-14). Five years later, living as a captive in Babylon, Ezekiel would see one of the most glorious and awesome displays of God's presence and power (verse 1:4). Through this vision, God called Ezekiel to be His prophet.

The Israelites in exile had lost their perspective on God's purpose and presence in their life. They continued to ignore God's loving attempts to call them to repentance and chose instead to listen to "false prophets" who spoke comforting lies. Though Ezekiel knew he faced a rebellious people and that he was sure to suffer hardship because of his message, he was faithful, choosing to respond to God's calling. He preached to a rebellious people for 22 years! **To love God is to obey God.**

EZEKIEL 2:1-7

And He said to me, "Son of man, stand on your feet, and I will speak to you."

Then the Spirit entered me when He spoke to me, and set me on my feet; and I heard Him who spoke to me.

And He said to me: "Son of man, I am sending you to the children of Israel, to a rebellious nation that has rebelled against Me; they and their fathers have transgressed against Me to this very day.

"For they are impudent and stubborn children. I am sending you to them, and you shall say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD.'

"As for them, whether they hear or whether they refuse; for they are a rebellious house; yet they will know that a prophet has been among them.

"And you, son of man, do not be afraid of them nor be afraid of their words, though briars and thorns are with you and you dwell among scorpions; do not be afraid of their words or dismayed by their looks, though they are a rebellious house.

"You shall speak My words to them, whether they hear or whether they refuse, for they are rebellious.

Ezekiel is no different than many in the Bible who behold God's glory—his response was to fall to the ground in fear, reverence, and awe. As God reveals His glory, Ezekiel can do nothing more than to lay on the ground in humble adoration.

The Creator addresses His creation by calling him “son of man” (or son of dust). It is amazing that God chooses to work His divine will on earth through mortal, imperfect beings. We are made from dust, yet God chooses to place within us life and breath and indwell us by His Spirit.

God encouraged Ezekiel not to be afraid. Ezekiel would be asked to carry out a very difficult ministry—declaring God’s Word to a stubborn and rebellious against God. Rather than acknowledging and repenting of the sins that had brought God’s judgment upon them, the Jewish exiles chose to think of their time in Babylon as a temporary setback that would soon end. Ezekiel, standing upon the truth of God’s Word, would not be welcome. The people’s response would be sharp, barbed like a thorn, stinging like a scorpion. Ezekiel’s love for God would truly be tested. To **love God is to obey God.**

### EZEKIEL 2:8-3:3

"But you, son of man, hear what I say to you. Do not be rebellious like that rebellious house; open your mouth and eat what I give you."

Now when I looked, there was a hand stretched out to me; and behold, a scroll of a book was in it.

Then He spread it before me; and there was writing on the inside and on the outside, and written on it were lamentations and mourning and woe.

Moreover He said to me, "Son of man, eat what you find; eat this scroll, and go, speak to the house of Israel."

So I opened my mouth, and He caused me to eat that scroll.

And He said to me, "Son of man, feed your belly, and fill your stomach with this scroll that I give you." So I ate, and it was in my mouth like honey in sweetness.

What an awesome responsibility Ezekiel had in presenting God's message to people who were ungrateful and abusive. Three times God told Ezekiel not be afraid or dismayed. His ministry would demand that he remain strong and unshaken as others would threaten him and possibly even try to kill him.

We may also be called to be an example and to share our faith with people who may be unkind to us. Just as Ezekiel was faithful and could not be discouraged, so we are to be faithful in sharing the Gospel with others in those times that are easy to share as well as those times when it is difficult (2 Timothy 4:2). **To love God is to obey God.** We need not fear experiencing criticism, for God's strength will be ours under every circumstance.

"But you, son of man, hear what I say to you. Do not be rebellious like that rebellious house;..." Ezekiel could have refused God's call on his life. He could have looked at what God asked him to do and said it was too hard. He could have told God to find someone else to do this difficult task. How sad that would have been. Ezekiel would have missed out on the very purpose of His life—to serve and bring pleasure to His Creator. Though indeed it was a difficult task, Ezekiel could be sure that it was God's task. He would supply the strength and grace to carry out his will.

God asked Ezekiel to eat a scroll. It seems like a strange request. But, God was creating an illustration. The Word of God tasted as sweet as honey. If Israel had only listened and obeyed God's Word; it would have been as honey to their lives. His Word would not only build their faith, but its wisdom would sweeten their lives

with blessings. Though God's Word tasted sweet to Ezekiel, those who refused to obey God's Word would taste only the bitterness of judgment.

Can you imagine being asked to eat a scroll? God does call us to feed on His Word, the Bible. We must absorb it and allow it to become a part of our own lives before we can give it out to others. As we prepare ourselves, becoming saturated with God's Word, God will send us out as He did Ezekiel to reach those who need hear.

## Honey Dipped Scrolls

Bring some tortillas and honey. Have the children take one tortilla each. They can gently tear off the edges to make squares. From the squares let them make scrolls. Pass the honey around and let them dip their scroll in honey and eat them (no double dipping though...☺), just like Ezekiel ate the scrolls.

### EZEKIEL 3:4-11

Then He said to me: "Son of man, go to the house of Israel and speak with My words to them.

"For you are not sent to a people of unfamiliar speech and of hard language, but to the house of Israel,

"not to many people of unfamiliar speech and of hard language, whose words you cannot understand. Surely, had I sent you to them, they would have listened to you.

"But the house of Israel will not listen to you, because they will not listen to Me; for all the house of Israel are impudent and hard-hearted.

"Behold, I have made your face strong against their faces, and your forehead strong against their foreheads.

"Like adamant stone, harder than flint, I have made your forehead; do not be afraid of them, nor be dismayed at their looks, though they are a rebellious house."

Moreover He said to me: "Son of man, receive into your heart all My words that I speak to you, and hear with your ears.

"And go, get to the captives, to the children of your people, and speak to them and tell them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD,' whether they hear, or whether they refuse."

God had called the nation of Israel to be a light among the rebellious nations around them. They were called to live as God's representatives, drawing all men to Him so they too could experience His mercy and grace. But now the people of Israel had turned away from God, choosing to live in the darkness of His judgment. The far off foreign nations would have listened to Ezekiel's message, but God's people turned a deaf ear to his words.

God gave Ezekiel the ability to be as hard and stubborn as the people of Israel were in order to proclaim His message. God makes His followers strong enough to stand against anything or anyone, including those who hate what is right. Just as God gave Ezekiel tough love and tough faith, He will also give us the stability, perseverance, and insight we need to live up to the task He has given us. He will prepare us to carry out His calling in our life. We need only to respond in obedience. In Romans 8:31 we read, "If God is for us, who can be against us?" **To love God is to obey God.**



God desired that Ezekiel receive “into his heart” all the words He had given him. Again, in preparation for the ministry, God wanted His Word to sink deep into his own heart before he spoke it to others. If we desire to be effective in ministry, God’s Word must sink deeply into our hearts.

### EZEKIEL 3:12-15

Then the Spirit lifted me up, and I heard behind me a great thunderous voice: "Blessed is the glory of the LORD from His place!"

I also heard the noise of the wings of the living creatures that touched one another, and the noise of the wheels beside them, and a great thunderous noise.

So the Spirit lifted me up and took me away, and I went in bitterness, in the heat of my spirit; but the hand of the LORD was strong upon me.

Then I came to the captives at Tel Abib, who dwelt by the River Chebar; and I sat where they sat, and remained there astonished among them seven days.

Ezekiel must have been in awe as the Spirit of the Lord lifted him up to take him to the place where he was to begin his ministry. Distracted by a loud rushing sound, Ezekiel heard the wings of the cherubim brushing against each other and a thunderous voice of praise: "Blessed is the glory of the LORD from His place!"

Ezekiel was carried to his destination to begin ministry “in bitterness, in the heat of my spirit.” Understanding the situation and purpose of his calling, he was passionate—feeling deep sorrow and anger over the people’s rebellion. How could so many people foolishly turn away from God’s love and concern for them?

By the river Chebar, Ezekiel sat quietly for seven days. This was a customary period of mourning for the dead (Genesis 50:10, 1 Samuel 31:13, Job 2:13). It appears that Ezekiel was mourning for the spiritually dead. Sorrow over the sins of the people had gripped his heart.

Note: “The strong hand of the Lord” was upon Ezekiel—this was the secret of His ministry. God would be Ezekiel’s strength as he faced a rebellious people who would not heed his message and as he endured disdain, threatenings, and persecution. The message of repentance burned in his heart as he proclaimed God’s judgment and salvation for the next 22 years. Ezekiel was faithful and obedient to his calling. **To love God is to obey God.**

In 2 Timothy 4:2 we are exhorted, “Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.” In other words, whether you feel like it or not—in good times and in difficult times—be faithful to serve the Lord! As we walk with the Lord there will be times of great joy, times we feel especially “close” to the Lord; but, there will also be times when we feel overwhelmed--struggling with sin, hardships, or everyday tasks. No matter what your mood, what your state, be faithful to show God’s love and share His Word. Ezekiel demonstrated faithfulness and love for God even in the midst of great trials. **To love God is to obey God.**

## God’s Promises

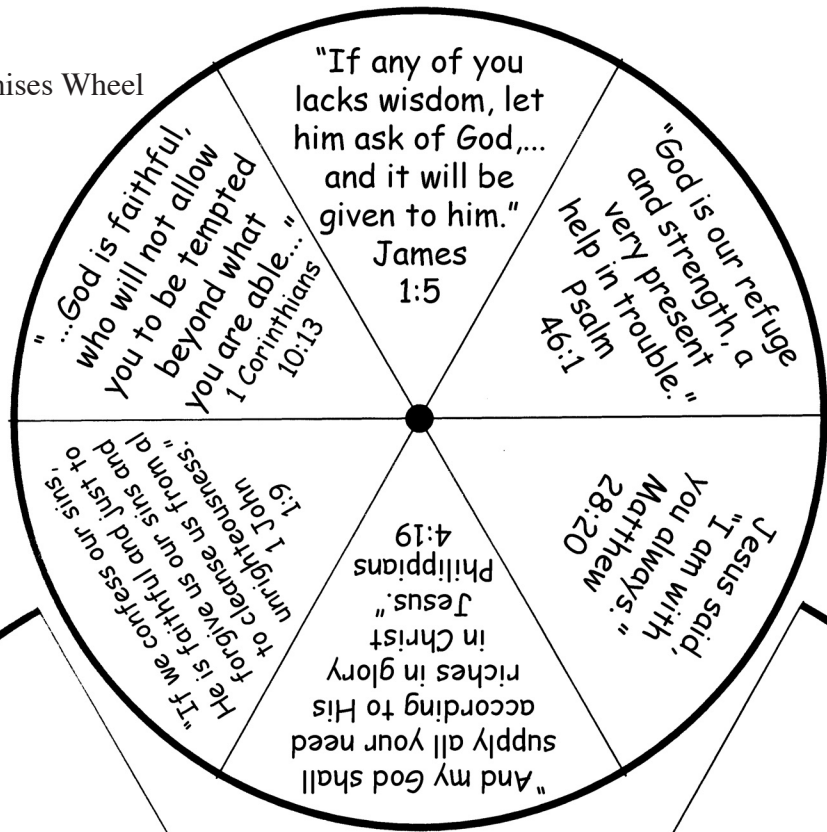
God promised to be with Ezekiel and to give him strength. God has also promised to be with us in everything we do. Here’s instructions to make a “God’s Promises” wheel. You will need a copy of both templates for each child (provided with the curriculum), scissors, crayons, or markers, and paper fasteners.

Cut out all of the circles. Color the pictures and the writing using markers or crayons. Place the circle with the pictures on the bottom. The smaller circle with the scriptures will go on top of the circle with pictures. Then the "God's Promises" circle goes on top. Poke a hole through the center of the three circles. Place a paper fastener or brad through the hole. All three wheels should be able to spin.

Have the children turn the picture circle and to find a picture. Then challenge them to match the scripture verse with the picture. Anytime we have a problem, we can go to the Lord for help!

## **PRAYER**

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to follow God and to obey Him. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the Gospel, give them opportunity.



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# GOD'S PROMISES

EZEKIEL 3:10

