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[0 : 00] But this vision begins with Ezekiel catching a vision of the glory of God.! A bit like Isaiah, similar story. We saw earlier in chapter 1 that the throne had wills that took it all over the earth, and the wills had eyes that could see all around them.

And underneath the throne were all the living creatures of the earth, of men and of the animals. And so this vision that Ezekiel saw of the Lord on his throne, he saw that God was all-powerful. God was omnipotent. God is on his throne.

Even though his people were in exile, even though his people had sinned, even though they thought the terrible things were happening, God was still on his throne. God was still seated high above the earth.

And Ezekiel saw God omnipresent, moving throughout the earth. God was there, even in Babylon. The people thought that they had left behind the temple and the worship, and they wondered how they could worship, but God was there.

God was there in Babylon. And they saw God omniscient, God seeing everything, with these eyes that moved throughout the world, and God saw it. God already knew the plight of his people.

[1 : 29] God already knew all that was going on. And for sure he was still on the throne. For sure he was still seated high above the earth, and he was still in control.

And so in verse 28, Ezekiel fell down on his face. He fell on his face in worship. He fell before the throne of God. And that's where Ezekiel's call began.

That's where he received his call to be a prophet. On his face, worshiping the Lord. May we catch a glimpse of the glory of the Lord. May we catch a glimpse of God on his throne.

We often talk about the state of our nations. I'm sure it's the same in Scotland as it is in Ireland, following after every philosophy of the world, and every craze that comes into the hearts of men, and everyone doing right in their own eyes.

But God is still on his throne. May we catch a glimpse of him seated high above the earth. May we fall in worship before his throne. May our knees be bent before him.

[2 : 37] And then we're ready to hear his voice. Then we're ready to hear what the Lord would have us to do. And the Lord spoke to Ezekiel. And first of all, the first thing he said in chapter 2, verse 1, was stand on your feet.

Stand on your feet. And Ezekiel stood up and the Lord spoke to him. And the Lord called him to take his word to the people.

For chapter 2 and verse 3, It's not just this generation that sinned, but the last generation, their parents did the same, and their grandparents, and their great-grandparents, such is the sin that has been going on for so long.

He's called to go to a nation, in verse 4, who are impudent and stubborn. To people who, even whenever they know they're wrong, won't want to admit it. They will refuse to admit the truth, even when the truth is right in front of their face.

Even whenever they know it's right, they will still say it's wrong. Even when they know it's white, they'll still say it's black. And when they know it's black, they'll still say it's white. They're so stubborn and so impudent.

[3 : 56] In verse 6, he's told that it will be like living among briars and thorns. What does a thorn bush say?

Have you ever, any thorn bushes in your garden? A thorn bush, what does it say? It says, go away. It says, leave me alone. It says, I'm right happy here, right where I am.

Just leave me here, but don't come near. Don't touch me. Don't come near. But he's going to be living among thorns. And what does a scorpion say?

If you ever see a scorpion, what do you do? You run away. You leave it alone. A scorpion says, leave me alone. Don't come near me. Just leave me here. But for Ezekiel, it's going to be like sitting on scorpions.

That's how uncomfortable it is to take God's word to these people because they're so stubborn, because they're so hard-hearted, because they do not want it. And they're going to say, Ezekiel, leave us alone.

[4 : 52] We are quite happy here where we are. We're okay. Go away. Keep your message to yourself. Don't bring it here.

And on in verse 6, it says that their words and their looks will be so harsh. Their words and their looks will be deadly.

The Lord says, don't be dismayed by their looks. When they see Ezekiel coming, they're going to look at him with a look that says, get out of here, Ezekiel. Don't come near me. Go away.

In verse 7, they will refuse to listen. He knows that right from the outset. You're called to take my word to these people, but they're not going to listen. What's it like to be called to take God's word to people who don't want it?

To be called to preach to people who don't want to hear it? And you might wonder, who is this crazy nation that Ezekiel's called to? Look on down in chapter 3 and verse 5.

[5 : 55] Who's he called to? Is it some foreign crazy tribe of cannibals that live on some island on the far end of the sea that he's going to have to go and travel for months to get there?

And then he's going to have to spend months learning the language. And even after he's learned the language, he'll not be quite clear if he's communicating the message clearly. Is it to some nation that's going to want to kill him and eat him?

No. It's to God's people, Israel. He's called to a nation that has been privileged with having God's word for generation after generation. To a nation that has endless preachers, endless prophets, that has easy access to the scriptures, but over generations has consistently rejected the word of God.

And he is now living on exile in Babylon because of their rebellion. He's called to his own people. And that can make us afraid, can't it?

It can be hard to speak to our own people. Maybe we'd rather go to the crazy tribe of cannibals across the sea because it might be easier to speak to them. But in chapter 2 and verse 4, he's called to his own people and he's to say to them, thus says the Lord.

[7 : 13] He's to go and he's to say, this is what God says. And whether they hear or refuse to hear, it's not Ezekiel's business. Whatever they say, whatever they do with it, that's not his business.

He's to go and say, this is what God says. But the purpose of it is in verse 5, that they will know that a prophet has been among them. That they will know that a prophet has been among them.

They might not admit it the first day or the first year, but over time, maybe not even in this generation, maybe in the next generation, they will come to realize that God's word has been spoken.

It will dawn on them eventually that a prophet has been among them. Or maybe it won't. Maybe they'll never repent. Maybe they'll never turn to the Lord.

But that's not Ezekiel's business. He's to go there and to speak God's word. And if we're right on down into chapter 3, it talks more about that, this idea of, if you go and warn them, then you've fulfilled your responsibility.

[8 : 23] But if you don't warn them and they die in their sin, not only are the people guilty, but Ezekiel would also be guilty. He's to go and speak, whether they hear or whether they don't hear.

A word of warning, maybe to the young Ezekiel, chapter 2 and verse 8, but you, son of man, do not be rebellious like that rebellious house. He's to be careful not to become like them because that can happen.

Sometimes we can be so enthused about going to these people to bring God's word to them but we get too close. We're to be in the world but not of the world.

We're to go to the world but not to become like the world. And so God says to Ezekiel, be careful that you don't become conformed and be like them, that you don't sink into sin yourself, but that you keep yourself pure and that you keep yourself in touch with God, that you're a man of the word and you're not swayed by the ways of the world.

You're not to endorse their lifestyle but you're to call them to repentance. That's what Jesus did when he went to the tax collectors and sinners. He never endorsed what they did but he called them to repent.

[9 : 37] And he's to be a man of the word, verse 9, chapter 2 and verse 9. Here's the scroll, very visual graphic illustration here. Here's the scroll of my words. Now eat it.

Eat the scroll. Chew on the scroll. Taste the scroll. We're to be men and women of the word. We're to take God's word and we're to chew on it and we're to receive it and we're to understand it and apply it to our own lives that we might be fit then to take it to others.

Chapter 3 and verse 10. Moreover, he said to me, Son of man, all my words that I speak to you receive in your heart. Receive in your heart and hear with your ears and then go and speak.

We're to take God's word and we're to hear it. And he was to be hard. He was to be fearless. He was to be steadfast and faithful, dedicated to the task that the Lord had given him.

Wouldn't be easy. Wouldn't be easy. God didn't say it would be easy. In fact, he said it would be very difficult. For many years, Ezekiel would preach to people who did not want to hear.

[10 : 46] For many years, he would feel like he's living in a big forest of thorn bushes and living among scorpions. And the looks of the people and the words of the people would make him shrink away in fear.

But God said, don't be afraid. Go and speak my words to those people. And through it all, no doubt he remembered the vision that he had seen of the glory of God and of God seated on his throne.

And no doubt he remembered that no matter what happens, God is still seated on the throne.

Taking God's word to the people of Ireland, and I've no doubt to the people of Scotland, can be very like this, can't it?

We can feel it. We're going to a people that have had free and easy access to God's word for many years, for hundreds of years, even thousands of years.

And now more than ever, anybody can read a Bible at any point in the day, wherever they're going, they can just put it on their phone and it's right there. It's not for lack of access to God's word.

[11 : 48] And it's not for lack of faithful preachers. Many have brought the gospel to these islands for hundreds, even thousands of years. And the word of God has been preached, but over generations, the people have rejected it in their hearts.

People have rejected the word of God consistently. Over many generations, they have preferred a gospel of works rather than a gospel of grace. They have preferred to do what's right in their own eyes rather than to do what God says is right.

And they prefer to follow every fad, every philosophy, every trend of the world than to follow God's word.

They will look everywhere for answers to this life's problems except the Bible. And when we try to talk to them about the things of God, they think we're crazy. They think we're mad.

They might say things about us that aren't true. They might just make us feel that we're definitely not belonging here. They might give us a look that says, go away, get out of here, just leave us alone.

[12 : 53] We're quite happy here what we're doing. We'll manage ourselves. Keep that message to yourself. They say, if that's for you, that's great, but it's not for us. But we know that it is for them because we know that we alone have the words of life that we have received from the Lord.

And so we must go because we are called. We must go because we are called. We must go because God is still seated on His throne.

We must go because God's Word is still true. We must go because people need to hear the gospel. There's only one Savior. There's only one way of salvation.

It's only through Jesus Christ. And unless we tell them, they're never going to find it. And so we must go. We must say to them, this is what God says. Whether they hear us or whether they refuse to hear, maybe at some point they'll come to a realization that God's Word has been spoken to them.

It might be in this generation, it might be the next. It might be our job to sow when somebody else gets to reap. But if the Lord calls us to go, then we must go.

[14 : 06] And we must be faithful to the call that the Lord has put on our lives. Where does the Lord call us to go? Well, it probably starts at home. It probably starts with our own people.

And then the Lord will take it from there. But we must be faithful. And we must go.