



Handout for week of 7/2/18 Mark 6:1-6 & Ezek. 2: 2-5

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Ezek. 2: 2: And spirit entered into me when He spoke unto me, and set me upon my feet; and I heard Him that spoke unto me. 3 And He said unto me: 'Son of man, I send thee to the children of Israel, to rebellious nations, that have rebelled against Me; they and their fathers have transgressed against Me, even unto this very day; 4 and the children are brazen-faced and stiff-hearted, I do send thee unto them; and thou shalt say unto them: Thus saith the L-rd GOD. 5 And they, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear--for they are a rebellious house--yet shall know that there hath been a prophet among them.

#### COMMENTARY:

Concerning the life of [Ezekiel](#) there are but a few scattered references contained in the book bearing his name. He was the son of Buzi, a priest of

Jerusalem (Ezek. i. 3), and consequently a member of the Zadok family, As such he was among the aristocracy whom Nebuchadnezzar (597 B.C.), after the first capture of Jerusalem, carried off to be exiles in Babylonia (II Kings xxiv. 14). Ezekiel therefore reckons the years from the abduction of Jehoiachin (Ezek. i. 2, xxxiii. 21, xl. 1). He lived among a colony of fellow sufferers in or near Tel-abib on the River Chebar (not the River Chaboras), which probably formed an arm of the extensive Babylonian network of canals (iii. 15). Ezekiel was married (xxiv. 16-18), and lived in his own house (iii. 24, viii. 1). On the fifth day of the fourth month in the fifth year of his exile (Tammuz, 592 B.C.), he beheld on the banks of the Chebar the glory of the Lord, who consecrated him as His prophet (i. 1-iii. 13). The latest date in his book is the first day of the first month in the twenty-seventh year of his exile (Nisan, 570); consequently, his prophecies extended over twenty-two years. The elders of the exiles repeatedly visited him to obtain a divine oracle (viii., xiv., xx.). He exerted no permanent influence upon his contemporaries, however, whom he repeatedly calls the "rebellious house" (ii. 5, 6, 8; iii. 9, 26, 27; and elsewhere), complaining that although they flock in great numbers to hear him they regard his discourse as a sort of esthetic amusement, and fail to act in accordance with his words (xxxiii. 30-33). If the enigmatical date, "the thirtieth year" (i. 1), be understood to apply to the age of the prophet—and this view still has the appearance of probability—Ezekiel must have been born exactly at the time of the reform in the ritual introduced by Josiah. Concerning his death nothing is known.

Ezekiel occupies a distinct and unique position among the Hebrew Prophets. He stands midway between two epochs, drawing his conclusions from the one and pointing out the path toward the other. Through the destruction of the city and the Temple, the downfall of the state, and the banishment of the people the natural development of Israel was forcibly interrupted. Prior to these events Israel was a united and homogeneous nation. True, it was characterized by a spirit totally unlike that of any other people; and the consciousness of this difference had ever been present in the best and noblest spirits of Israel. The demands of state and people, however, had to be fulfilled, and to this end the monarchical principle was established. There is undoubtedly an element of truth in the opinion that the human monarchy was antagonistic to the dominion of God, and that the political life of Israel would tend to estrange the nation from its eternal spiritual mission. The prophecy of the pre-exilic period was compelled to take these factors into account, and ever addressed itself either to the people as a nation or to its leaders—king, princes, priests—and sometimes to a distinguished individual, such as Shebna, the minister of the royal house mentioned in Isa xxii. 15-25; so that the opinion arose that the Prophets themselves were merely a sort of statesmen.