

Ezekiel 2:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But thou, son of man, hear what I say unto thee; Be not thou rebellious like that rebellious house: open thy mouth, and eat that I give thee.

Analysis

God warns Ezekiel not to imitate Israel's rebellion, using emphatic language: 'Be not thou rebellious like that rebellious house' (al-timror kemeri beyit-hameri, אַל-תִּמְרֹר כְּמֵרִי בֵּית הָמֶרִי). The repetition of 'rebellious' underscores Israel's defining characteristic. The command to 'open thy mouth, and eat that I give thee' introduces the prophetic scroll vision (2:9-10), but metaphorically commands complete reception and internalization of God's word. Jeremiah similarly 'ate' God's words (Jeremiah 15:16), and John later eats a scroll in Revelation (10:9-10). This imagery emphasizes that prophetic ministry requires personal assimilation of God's message before public proclamation. The prophet cannot remain detached or merely intellectual about divine revelation—it must be digested, metabolized, and integrated into one's being. Only then can authentic proclamation occur. This challenges superficial engagement with Scripture, calling for deep internalization that transforms the messenger before reaching the audience.

Historical Context

Prophets faced tremendous pressure to conform to popular opinion, deliver favorable oracles, and avoid confrontational messages. False prophets proliferated by telling people what they wanted to hear (Jeremiah 23:16-22, Ezekiel 13). Ezekiel's contemporaries wanted assurance of quick return from exile, not calls to repentance or warnings of further judgment. God's command not to be rebellious recognized the temptation to soften, modify, or withhold difficult messages. Eating

the scroll symbolized complete commitment to proclaim God's word regardless of reception, consequences, or personal cost. Historical prophets frequently suffered persecution, imprisonment, and death for faithfulness to their calling.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. In what areas are you tempted to be 'rebellious' by withholding, modifying, or refusing to apply God's word fully?
2. How can you cultivate deeper internalization of Scripture rather than mere intellectual knowledge?

Interlinear Text

וְאָתָּה	בֶּן	אָדָם	שָׁמַע	אֶת	אֲשֶׁר	אָנִי	מֵדְבָר
H859	But thou son	of man	hear	H853	H834	H589	what I say
	H1121	H120	H8085				H1696
אֶל יְיָ	אֵל	תְּהִי	הֵמָּה רִי	כֵּן יֵת	הֵמָּה רִי		
H413	H408	unto thee Be not	like that rebellious	house	like that rebellious		
		H1961	H4805	H1004	H4805		
פָּתַח	פִּי יְיָ	וְאָכַל	אֶת	אֲשֶׁר	אָנִי	נָתַן	אֵלַיְכֶם
open	thy mouth	and eat	H853	H834	H589	that I give	H413
H6475	H6310	H398				H5414	

Additional Cross-References

Revelation 10:9 (Parallel theme): And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey.

Jeremiah 15:16 (Parallel theme): Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts.

Isaiah 50:5 (Parallel theme): The Lord GOD hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back.

Ezekiel 3:10 (Parallel theme): Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, all my words that I shall speak unto thee receive in thine heart, and hear with thine ears.

1 Peter 5:3 (Parallel theme): Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.