

# Ezekiel 20:46

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Son of man, set thy face toward the south, and drop thy word toward the south, and prophesy against the forest of the south field;

## Analysis

**Set thy face toward the south** (שִׁים פָּנֵיךְ דֶּרֶךְ תֵּימָנָה, sim panekha derekh teimanah)—the idiom (sim panekha, set your face) indicates prophetic confrontation and coming judgment. Ezekiel must physically orient himself toward the south (תֵּימָן, teiman), meaning Jerusalem from his Babylonian perspective.

**Drop thy word** (הַטֶּף, hatef) uses agricultural imagery—letting words fall like rain or dew. **Prophesy against the forest of the south field** (וְהִנֵּא אֶל־יָעָר הַשָּׂדָה בְּצָבָה, v'hinabei el-ya'ar hasadeh negev)—'forest' symbolizes proud Jerusalem, soon to be burned. The threefold command (set, drop, prophesy) emphasizes urgency. Ezekiel's contemporaries complained he spoke in riddles (20:49), prompting God to plainly name Jerusalem in chapter 21.

## Historical Context

From Babylon, 'south' (negev) indicated Judah and Jerusalem. The forest imagery resonated with Judah's wooded hill country. Ezekiel's symbolic actions and cryptic oracles were designed to provoke questions, forcing the exiles to grapple with God's message.

## Related Passages

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**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

## Study Questions

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1. Why does God sometimes communicate through symbols and parables rather than direct statements?
2. How do you respond when God's word challenges your comfort or security?

## Interlinear Text

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בָּן	מִן	אָדָם	שָׁמֶן	פָּנִים	כְּנָזֶב	תִּמְמָה	רַיִם	אֶל
Son	of	man	set	thy face	toward	the south	and drop	H413
H1121	H120	H7760	H6440	H1870	H8486	H5197		

דְּרַר	וּמָ	אֶל	וְהַנִּבְאָה	עַר	כָּלֵד
thy word	toward the south	and prophesy	H413	against the forest	field
H1864		H5012		H3293	H7704

תְּהִבָּה:  
of the south  
H5045

## Additional Cross-References

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**Amos 7:16** (Word): Now therefore hear thou the word of the LORD: Thou sayest, Prophesy not against Israel, and drop not thy word against the house of Isaac.

**Ezekiel 21:2** (Word): Son of man, set thy face toward Jerusalem, and drop thy word toward the holy places, and prophesy against the land of Israel,

**Jeremiah 13:19** (Parallel theme): The cities of the south shall be shut up, and none shall open them: Judah shall be carried away captive all of it, it shall be wholly carried away captive.

