

Ezekiel 3:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, eat that thou findest; eat this roll, and go speak unto the house of Israel.

Analysis

God commands Ezekiel to "eat this roll" (scroll), a vivid metaphor for internalizing God's Word before proclaiming it. The Hebrew 'akal (אָכַל) means to consume completely, not merely taste. This symbolizes total assimilation—the prophet must be saturated with divine revelation before delivering it. Jeremiah similarly describes God's words as food bringing joy (Jeremiah 15:16). The act teaches that effective ministry flows from deep personal communion with Scripture. The Reformed emphasis on biblical preaching requires ministers to digest God's Word thoroughly, letting it transform them before expecting to transform others.

Historical Context

In ancient Near Eastern cultures, written documents carried legal and binding authority. By consuming the scroll, Ezekiel becomes one with its message—he cannot separate himself from God's revealed truth. This occurred in 593 BC as part of his prophetic commissioning. The scroll's bitter-sweet nature (verse 3) reflects the dual reality of ministry: sweet communion with God, bitter rejection by people. Archaeological discoveries of ancient scrolls confirm their sacred status in Israel; deliberate consumption dramatizes the prophet's complete identification with God's authoritative word.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. How does the command to "eat" God's Word challenge superficial Bible reading habits?
2. What does it mean practically to internalize Scripture before attempting to teach others?

Interlinear Text

וַיֹּאמֶר	אֵלַי י	בֶּן	אָדָם	אֵת	אֲשֶׁר	תִּמְצָא
Moreover he said	H413	unto me Son	of man	H853	H834	that thou findest
H559		H1121	H120			H4672
אֲכֹל	אֲכֹל	אֶת	הַמָּגֵל הַזֶּה	וְלֹא	יִדְבַּר	אֶל
eat	eat	H853	this roll	H2063	H1980	speaking
H398	H398		H4039		H1696	H413
בֵּית	יִשְׂרָאֵל:					
unto the house	of Israel					
H1004	H3478					

Additional Cross-References

1 Timothy 4:15 (Parallel theme): Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all.

Ezekiel 3:15 (Parallel theme): Then I came to them of the captivity at Tel-abib, that dwelt by the river of Chebar, and I sat where they sat, and remained there astonished among them seven days.