

Ezekiel 3:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

"Then I came to them of the captivity at Telabib, that dwelt by the river of Chebar, and I sat where they sat, and remained there astonished among them seven days." Ezekiel identifies with the exiles' condition—sitting where they sat, sharing their circumstances. The seven days of astonished silence demonstrates empathy: feeling the weight of their suffering before speaking. This models incarnational ministry: identifying with people's struggles before addressing them. The silence shows wisdom: understanding context precedes proclamation. Effective ministry requires compassionate identification, not distant criticism.

Historical Context

Tel-abib by Chebar canal (593 BC) housed Jewish exiles displaced from Jerusalem. Ezekiel's seven-day silence demonstrated solidarity with their trauma. This parallels Job's friends initially sitting silently (Job 2:13)—shared suffering precedes helpful speech. The prophet's identification shaped his credibility: he wasn't a distant critic but fellow sufferer. This principle guides pastoral ministry: shepherds share sheep's struggles, identifying with weakness while pointing toward strength.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does sitting where others sit shape ministry that addresses real struggles rather than abstract theories?
2. What does seven days of silence teach about listening and understanding before speaking?

Interlinear Text

אָל	וְאֵשׁ	בְּ	אֶת־בֵּיב	לְ	הַגּוֹלָה	אֵל	וְאֵב	וְאֵל
				H0				
			at Telabib		to them of the captivity		Then I came	
			H8512		H1473		H935	
שָׁמָּה	וְאֵשׁ	בְּ	שָׁמָּה	וְאֵשׁ	בְּ	כְּבָר	נְהַר	
			and I sat		and I sat	of Chebar	by the river	
			H8033		H8033	H3529	H5104	
בְּתוֹכָם:	מִשְׁמָחָה	יָמֵי	שִׁבְעָה	תְּ				
			among		there astonished	days	them seven	
			H8432		H8074	H3117	H7651	

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 137:1 (Parallel theme): By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion.

Job 2:13 (Parallel theme): So they sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spake a word unto him: for they saw that his grief was very great.

Genesis 50:10 (Parallel theme): And they came to the threshingfloor of Atad, which is beyond Jordan, and there they mourned with a great and very sore lamentation: and he made a mourning for his father seven days.

Ezekiel 1:1 (Parallel theme): Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, in the fifth day of the month, as I was among the captives by the river of Chebar, that the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God.

Jeremiah 23:9 (Parallel theme): Mine heart within me is broken because of the prophets; all my bones shake; I am like a drunken man, and like a man whom wine hath overcome, because of the LORD, and because of the words of his holiness.

Ezekiel 10:15 (Parallel theme): And the cherubims were lifted up. This is the living creature that I saw by the river of Chebar.

Habakkuk 3:16 (Parallel theme): When I heard, my belly trembled; my lips quivered at the voice: rottenness entered into my bones, and I trembled in myself, that I might rest in the day of trouble: when he cometh up unto the people, he will invade them with his troops.