

# The Divine Tapestry

## PART 89

### Ezekiel 37

#### “THE PROPHET GETS HIS PH.D”

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Daniel Block in his commentary on Ezekiel says “Ezekiel is in a class of his own. The concentration of so many bizarre features in one individual is without precedent: his muteness; lying bound and naked; digging holes in the walls of houses; emotional paralysis in the face of his wife’s death; ‘spiritual’ travels; images of strange creatures, of eyes, and of creeping things; hearing voices and the sounds of water; withdrawal symptoms; fascination with feces and blood; wild literary imagination; pornographic imagery; unreal if not surreal understanding of Israel’s past; and the list goes on. It is no wonder that Karl Jaspers found in Ezekiel an unequalled case for psychological analysis. E. C. Broome concludes that Ezekiel was a true psychotic, capable of great religious insight but exhibiting a series of diagnostic characteristics: catatonia, narcissistic-masochistic conflict, schizophrenic withdrawal, delusions of grandeur and of persecution. In short, he suffered from a paranoid condition common in many great spiritual leaders.”<sup>1</sup>

“One cannot deny the uniqueness of Ezekiel’s style of ministry. But to attribute this uniqueness to a pathology arising from early abuse and an Oedipus complex misconstrues the profundity of his message and the sensitivity of his personality. His prophetic experiences, symbolic actions, and oracular pronouncements derive from encounters with God that have affected his entire being but were all directly related to his ministry. What other prophets spoke of, Ezekiel suffers. He is a man totally possessed by the Spirit of Yahweh, called, equipped, and gripped by the hand of God. Ezekiel is a *mopet*, ‘sign, portent’ carrying in his body the oracles he proclaims and redefining the adage, ‘The medium is the message.’”<sup>2</sup>

Commenting on this, Al Mohler writes, “That was Ezekiel – a pulpit committee’s nightmare, but a prophet of God nonetheless. Ezekiel used unconventional methods in his ministry. He received unconventional visions, used unconventional language, and combined it all in an unconventional style. But then he was living in an unconventional age – and so are we.”<sup>3</sup>

**HE SAID WHAT?**



# DOCTORAL TRAINING

- The **Problem**

- Ezekiel was shown...

- ◆ The true state of **man**
- ◆ The true condition of the **soul**
- ◆ The impossible task of the **minister**

- There is no hope in this **field** (v. 11)!

- The **Powerless** Prophet

- God best uses the man who has passed through **hopelessness** to **wonder** ... from **fear** of **failure** to **faith**.

- The **Prescription**

- God only gave Ezekiel two tools:

1. The **Word** of **God**
2. The **Spirit** of **God**

- These are still the only tools of a true **servant** of God.

- The **Promise**

- Immediate context:

- ◆ When all hope was lost, **Israel** would return first to the **land** and second to the **Lord**.

- Greater context:

- ◆ The **Word** of God and the **Spirit** of God will accomplish what the **will** of God has set out to do!

## THE APPLICATION



<sup>1</sup>Daniel I. Block, *The Book of Ezekiel* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998); <sup>2</sup>*Ibid*; <sup>3</sup>R. Albert Mohler, Jr., *He is not Silent* (Moody Publishers, 2008)