

Ezekiel 2:1-5^{iv v}

The LORD said to me: O mortal, stand up on your feet, and I will speak with you. And when he spoke to me, a spirit entered into me and set me on my feet; and I heard him speaking to me. He said to me, Mortal, I am sending you to the people of Israel, to a nation of rebels who have rebelled against me; they and their ancestors have transgressed against me to this very day. The descendants are impudent and stubborn. I am sending you to them, and you shall say to them, “Thus says the Lord GOD.” Whether they hear or refuse to hear (for they are a rebellious house), they shall know that there has been a prophet among them.

^{iv} About the [Track 2] First Reading: Ezekiel 2:1-5

Ezekiel was a priest (1:3) who was taken away to Babylon at the time of the first capture of Jerusalem in 597 BCE. In exile, he was cut off from the presence of God in the temple and from his priestly role as mediator between God and God's people. In today's reading, however, after a vision of God's glory appearing on a movable throne outside of the temple, Ezekiel is commissioned as a prophet and given a set of instructions (1:28b-3:27). He is to announce the Lord's will to “the people of Israel” (meaning the exiles of Judah not those in the former northern kingdom which no longer existed) whether they listen or not.

The “spirit” (v. 2) who entered Ezekiel is the Spirit of the Lord. In the times of the early prophets, the action of the Spirit was associated with ecstatic prophesy among the bands of prophets (1 Samuel 10:5, 19:20-24). This style of prophecy became associated with the cult of Baal, and thus, mention of the Spirit seems to have been avoided by the eighth-century prophets who speak instead of hearing the word of the Lord. Ezekiel (11:5, 37:1) and later writings of the book of Isaiah (Isaiah 61:1) reintroduce the role of the Spirit to prophetic literature. Ezekiel's success is not dependent upon the response of the people. The words of the Lord have an independent existence that will provide a framework of interpretation so that coming events will be seen as the acts of the Lord.

^v Psalm 123^v

To you I lift up my eyes, *
to you enthroned in the heavens.
As the eyes of servants look to the hand of their masters, *

and the eyes of a maid to the hand of her mistress,
So our eyes look to the LORD our God, *
until he show us his mercy.

Have mercy upon us, O LORD, have mercy, *
for we have had more than enough of contempt,
Too much of the scorn of the indolent rich, *
and of the derision of the proud.