

## Used by God

"Then lie upon your left side, and I will lay the punishment of the house of Israel upon you; for the number of the days that you lie upon it, you shall bear their punishment. For I assign to you a number of days, three hundred and ninety days, equal to the number of the years of their punishment; so long shall you bear the punishment of the house of Israel." Ezekiel 4:4-5

God anointed His priest Ezekiel in Babylon at the beginning of Israel's captivity. He called Ezekiel to be a prophet, and then warned him not to emulate Israel in her rebellion.<sup>1</sup> Ezekiel became an object lesson for the nation, communicating God's displeasure by lying on his left side for over a year. In this you can see the utter disregard God has for the physical wellbeing of Ezekiel. God shows no pity on his discomfort or how he spends his life. When Ezekiel protests that he doesn't want to prepare food with human dung, God grants him cow dung!<sup>2</sup>

If you accept God's call to be His servant, you must understand that in your eyes your life here on earth counts for nothing. You must die to self, holding your life in utter disregard. "He who seeks to save his life shall lose it; but he who loses his life for My sake and the Gospel's shall find it."<sup>3</sup> This runs counter to every instinct in life. You cannot ascertain it naturally by reason, but only supernaturally by revelation. You cannot expect family and friends to affirm you; you must return to the Lord on a daily basis for renewed commitment to self-renunciation.

God may not call you to be an Ezekiel, but that is His decision, not yours. He does, however, call you to a life of total commitment to Him, predicated on the assumption that He is a debtor to no man; your eternal gain will be proportional to your temporal commitment. If you repudiate this, believing you must be motivated by altruism, you can force an occasional act of self-sacrifice, but you will be unable to sustain a life of perpetual self-destruction, as was the case with His servant Ezekiel.

<sup>1</sup> cf. Ezekiel 2:8 <sup>2</sup> cf. Ezekiel 4:16 <sup>3</sup> Matthew 16:25