

# Ezekiel

## January 27, 2008

### Chapters 33-35, Emphasis 33

#### I. Background

In the first 24 chapters, we see judgment on Jerusalem and the exiles. In Chapters 25-32, we see judgment on the nations. Chapter 33 reminds us of Ezekiel's call, including the sin of Israel. Starting with Chapter 34 and for the rest of the book, we see the hope of future restoration.

This chapter reminds us that Ezekiel has been called to be a watchman for God to the people in Chapter 3. Of the five times that the word watchman is used in Ezekiel, four of them are in Chapter 33.

#### II. The Watchman

**Ezek 33:1-6**

**33:1 The word of the LORD came to me: 2 "Son of man, speak to your countrymen and say to them: 'When I bring the sword against a land, and the people of the land choose one of their men and make him their watchman, 3 and he sees the sword coming against the land and blows the trumpet to warn the people, 4 then if anyone hears the trumpet but does not take warning and the sword comes and takes his life, his blood will be on his own head. 5 Since he heard the sound of the trumpet but did not take warning, his blood will be on his own head. If he had taken warning, he would have saved himself. 6 But if the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet to warn the people and the sword comes and takes the life of one of them, that man will be taken away because of his sin, but I will hold the watchman accountable for his blood.'**

**NIV**

Ezekiel is the only Prophet specifically designated as a watchman to point out danger to the people, although other prophets appear to do the role. Verses 2-6 review the duties of a standard watchman, not of a watchman prophet like Ezekiel. His duties are similar in that he is to warn the people.

What happens if a watchman fails in his duties? What happens if he succeeds?

#### III. The Warning

**Ezek 33:7-9**

**7 "Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; so hear the word I speak and give them warning from me. 8 When I say to the wicked, 'O wicked man, you will surely die,' and you do not speak out to dissuade him from his ways, that wicked man will die for his sin, and I will hold you accountable for his blood. 9 But if you do warn the wicked man to turn from his ways and he does not do so, he will die for his sin, but you will have saved yourself.**

**NIV**

Ezekiel is sent to warn the deportees of what God has in store for them. We saw this done in many different ways in the first 24 chapters. It is now up to the Israelites as to whether they are willing to comply with God's will.

If we choose not to comply with God's will, what happens to us?

#### **IV. Time for Response**

**Ezek 33:10-11**

**10 "Son of man, say to the house of Israel, 'This is what you are saying: "Our offenses and sins weigh us down, and we are wasting away because of them. How then can we live?" ' 11 Say to them, 'As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live. Turn! Turn from your evil ways! Why will you die, O house of Israel?'**

**NIV**

The answer to sin is simply to turn from it. Why do we find it so difficult?

**NOTE:** Verse 11 is sometimes used to support incorrectly that God has nothing to do with the choice of salvation. All this verse does is to show that God wants people to choose life, but this does not disqualify that He is in charge.

#### **V. Impact of Choosing to Turn from Sin**

**Ezek 33:12-16**

**12 "Therefore, son of man, say to your countrymen, 'The righteousness of the righteous man will not save him when he disobeys, and the wickedness of the wicked man will not cause him to fall when he turns from it. The righteous man, if he sins, will not be allowed to live because of his former righteousness.' 13 If I tell the righteous man that he will surely live, but then he trusts in his righteousness and does evil, none of the righteous things he has done will be remembered; he will die for the evil he has done. 14 And if I say to the wicked man, 'You will surely die,' but he then turns away from his sin and does what is just and right— 15 if he gives back what he took in pledge for a loan, returns what he has stolen, follows the decrees that give life, and does no evil, he will surely live; he will not die. 16 None of the sins he has committed will be remembered against him. He has done what is just and right; he will surely live.**

**NIV**

There is also a great similarity in this chapter to information that we covered in Chapter 18. The deportees had this choice before the fall of Jerusalem, and the deportees, their children, and we have that choice each day that God allows us to continue living in this world.

#### **VI. Who is Just?**

**Ezek 33:17-20**

**17 "Yet your countrymen say, 'The way of the Lord is not just.' But it is their way that is not just. 18 If a righteous man turns from his righteousness and does evil, he will die for it. 19 And**

**if a wicked man turns away from his wickedness and does what is just and right, he will live by doing so. 20 Yet, O house of Israel, you say, 'The way of the Lord is not just.' But I will judge each of you according to his own ways."**

**NIV**

The deportees were in a difficult position. They had lost everything, and they wanted it back. They felt that God had not been fair with them, even though they sinned, continued to sin, and sinned without repentance. When the times get tough, we need to come to consider why sorrow has entered our lives and how we will respond to it:

**2 Cor 7:10-11**

**10 Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.**

**NIV**

It is only God who can truly judge. Why do people want to judge Him?

## **VII. Jerusalem Falls**

**Ezek 33:21-22**

**21 In the twelfth year of our exile, in the tenth month on the fifth day, a man who had escaped from Jerusalem came to me and said, "The city has fallen!" 22 Now the evening before the man arrived, the hand of the LORD was upon me, and he opened my mouth before the man came to me in the morning. So my mouth was opened and I was no longer silent.**

**NIV**

God is in charge; the people are not. Jerusalem falls despite the desire of the people that it would not fall. With that change, Ezekiel's position also changes; he is now allowed to interact with the people.

## **VIII. Desolation**

**Ezek 33:23-29**

**23 Then the word of the LORD came to me: 24 "Son of man, the people living in those ruins in the land of Israel are saying, 'Abraham was only one man, yet he possessed the land. But we are many; surely the land has been given to us as our possession.' 25 Therefore say to them, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Since you eat meat with the blood still in it and look to your idols and shed blood, should you then possess the land? 26 You rely on your sword, you do detestable things, and each of you defiles his neighbor's wife. Should you then possess the land?' 27 "Say this to them: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: As surely as I live, those who are left in the ruins will fall by the sword, those out in the country I will give to the wild animals to be devoured, and those in strongholds and caves will die of a plague. 28 I will make the land a desolate waste, and her proud strength will come to an end, and the mountains of Israel will become desolate so that no one will cross them. 29 Then they will know that I am the LORD, when I have made the land a desolate waste because of all the detestable things they have done.'**

**NIV**

Not only has Promised Land fallen, it will become completely desolate. It is the sin of the people that has caused this.

## **IX. Listening, but Not Hearing**

**Ezek 33:30-33**

**30 "As for you, son of man, your countrymen are talking together about you by the walls and at the doors of the houses, saying to each other, 'Come and hear the message that has come from the LORD.' 31 My people come to you, as they usually do, and sit before you to listen to your words, but they do not put them into practice. With their mouths they express devotion, but their hearts are greedy for unjust gain. 32 Indeed, to them you are nothing more than one who sings love songs with a beautiful voice and plays an instrument well, for they hear your words but do not put them into practice. 33 "When all this comes true — and it surely will — then they will know that a prophet has been among them."**

**NIV**

Ezekiel has been successful in God's eyes. He has been the watchman that God sent to warn the people. Most of them, however, do not respond to Ezekiel even when they recognize him as a Prophet of God.

## **X. Chapter 34: Follow God the True Shepherd**

Beginning with this chapter through the end of this book, we see the future promises of God much more than in earlier chapters. While occasional denunciations are still given as in the beginning of this chapter, they are much less than earlier and usually given as contrast to future blessings.

## **XI. Chapter 35**

We see another prophecy in this chapter against Edom. In part, it is here to set up chapter 36. The future judgment of Edom emphasizes the future blessings that will be given to Israel. Indeed, Israel will absorb Edom. The Edomites chose to be at odds with God's chosen people. We see the country getting its just rewards according to Genesis 12:1-3.

## **XII. True or False**

1. Nations seldom rise higher than their leaders.
2. Most of Israel's kings employed prophets who told them the truth.
3. The essential duty of a watchman was to warn of impending danger.
4. The prophet should accommodate himself to the wishes of his listeners.
5. The reason some sinners will not be saved is that God delights in seeing them perish.
6. In a legal system of attaining righteousness, past successes prevail over future failures.
7. It is possible for people to be truly repentant without showing any indication of it.
8. It is possible for people not to truly repentant and yet act like they are.
9. Israel's kings were hireling shepherds who cared nothing for the welfare of their flock.
10. Kings do not have to answer to anyone for their conduct.
11. The final solution to the problems of Israel is the military support of the current-day United States.