

all who believe (Rom.4:11) and that only those of faith are the sons of Abraham (Gal.3:7)

2. God's response to that sin - judgment, 33:25-28
3. The end result of this judgment of God, 33:29

VI. The LORD's revelation to and the strengthening of His faithful watchman, Ezekiel, 33:30-33

- A. People are talking about you, 33:30. Whenever light comes into darkness, it will be noticed.
- B. These people are willing to come hear what you have to say. They may even enjoy hearing you speak God's word to them, but they will not give themselves to doing what God's word commands them to do (33:31, 32). They will not repent of their sins against God and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, living their earthly lives for His glory.
- C. The people "...will know that a prophet has been among them." 33:33 They will know that God, in His mercy, sent them a God-appointed, spiritual watchman, who proclaimed to them the truth of God regarding their wickedness and their desperate need of the Savior. They will know, without failure, that the God of the Bible is the only true and living God, whether it be in this life or only in the next life.

VII. Applications

- A. **Every born again pastor, husband, father and mother is a spiritual watchman**, appointed by God, to warn people under their care, of the coming judgment of God's wrath that will be executed upon those who continue in their wicked way of living and upon those who are only hearers of God's word, and are not doers. God's wrath will be poured out upon the wicked, both collectively (nationally) and individually.
- B. **Every Believer in Christ Jesus is God's ambassador**, spreading forth the Gospel of Hope to sinners, urging sinners to repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.
- C. To every other person I would ask this question, **What is your heart pursuing?** Are you pursuing what you consider to be gain for you? (Ezek.33:31) To those who are still living in the wicked, sinful ways of the world and do not live for Christ Jesus, I would remind you that **the wrath of God is already abiding upon you** (Jn.3:19). I would urge you to **Turn, turn from your evil (sinful) manner of living and turn to God** asking for His pardon of all your sins and for the righteousness of Christ to be imputed to you. Those who do so will be saved from the coming wrath of God (Matt.11:28-30; Jn.6:37).

A God-Appointed Watchman

Ezek.33:1-33

Intro.: The Babylonian captivity of Judah was accomplished in 3 parts, according to Jer.52:28 & 29:

- 606 B.C. Some captives were taken to Babylon, including **Daniel**. Then 9 years later, in...
- 597 B.C. More captives were taken to Babylon, including **Ezekiel**. Then 11 years later, in...
- 586 B.C. **Jerusalem was destroyed and burned**; more captives were taken.

I. The Duty Plainly Stated – 33:1-6

- A. **To be watchful** for "...the sword coming upon the land..." 33:3
- B. **To warn his people** of the danger that he sees coming against **his people** – namely that of an armed enemy that is coming to conquer and take them away captive
- C. Obedience to this duty will determine whether or not the blood of the people will be upon the people's **heads** individually or upon the watchman's **hand** 33:4-6

II. The Appointment and Duty Spiritually Applied to Ezekiel – 33:7-9

- A. The Appointment: "...I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel..." 33:7a > 3:17
- B. The Duty applied to this appointment: "...you shall hear a word from My mouth and warn them for Me." 33:7b > 3:17b
 1. Hearing God's word concerning the judgment that God will bring upon the wicked – 33:8 "...you shall surely die!"
 2. Accurately Giving the wicked God's warning about His coming judgment of wrath upon them
- A. Ezekiel's Responsibility of being a **spiritual watchman** for the Israelites in Babylonian captivity **in the country**, 33:8-9
 1. If Ezekiel DOES NOT warn the wicked from their wicked way of living:
 - Then "...that wicked man **shall die in his iniquity**..." 33:8
 - But "...his blood I will require at your (Ezekiel's) hand."
 2. If Ezekiel DOES warn the wicked from their way and the wicked, having heard that warning, do not turn from their wicked way of living (behavior, manner of living):
 - Then the wicked man (person) "...**shall die in his iniquity**;..." 33:9
 - But "...you (Ezekiel) have delivered your soul." Ezekiel will have **done his duty** as a spiritual watchman. He will

have saved himself from the judgment (chastisement) of God. (1st Tim.4:16)

3. Needed Clarifications

- The lack of a warning from a spiritual watchman, DOES NOT nullify or reduce God's divine judgment against the wicked. Whether warned or not, they will die physically and eternally (spiritually) because of their own sins against God. Note the phrase "*shall die in his iniquity*" in 33:8 & 9. (see also 33:20b; Ezek.18:4, 20; Rom.6:23a)
- The lack of a warning from a spiritual watchman, WILL render the spiritual watchman guilty of disobedience to God's revealed will. He will be guilty of sinning against God and God will hold him accountable for his disobedience. BUT that disobedience WILL NOT and CANNOT result in the loss of that spiritual watchman's eternal salvation!

III. The Divine Exhortation Compassionately Given, 33:10, 11

- A. The Inquiry: "*If our transgressions and our sins lie upon us, and we pine away in them, how can we then live?*"
 - Notice in 33:10 it says "...say to the house of Israel: 'Thus you say...'"
 - This is indicating that Ezekiel's hearers have been thinking about and considering what God has been telling them through His watchman, Ezekiel. They are asking, "If such is our state, How can we then live? Are we doomed to eternal despair and misery? Is there no hope for us?"
- B. The Declaration: "*As I live*", says the Lord GOD, "*I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live.*". God's judgment of wrath upon wickedness and sin, is God's necessary work. God's delight is in His works of mercy (Micah 7:18). Nevertheless the Lord God does bring death upon the wicked dying in their wickedness to fulfill His word, secure the honor of His truth and holiness, and glorify His justice.
- C. The Exhortation (imperative): "*Turn, turn from your evil ways! For why should die, O house of Israel?*" Here is hope! The hope that is found exclusively in the gospel!
- D. It is astonishing that these wicked Israelites, living in captivity, were still living in their wicked ways having already experienced and observed 2 separate occasions of God's judgment upon their nation and themselves for their abominations against the LORD God! (see 33:25, 26 > 22:3-12, 17-22 > 8:3, 5-18)

- E. So who are "*the wicked*" that will experience the wrath of God upon themselves?

IV. The Fairness of God's Judgment Criticized – 33:12-20

A. Stated

1. 33:13 "*When I say to the righteous that he shall surely live, but he trusts in his own righteousness and commits iniquity, none of his righteous works shall be remembered; but because of the iniquity that he has committed, he shall die.*" (see also verse 12)
 - This is true because all of a person's own good works are as filthy rags in God's sight. (Isa.64:6) The righteousness that God requires for eternal acceptance in His sight, is perfect, perpetual obedience to all of God's commandments all the days of a person's earthly life. (Jas.2:10)
 - It is only the imputed righteousness of Christ Jesus, that is able to make a person acceptable in God's holy sight. (Rom.4:20-25; Phil.3:9, 10)
 - Example: Nicodemus was a righteous man outwardly. YET it was to Nicodemus that Jesus said, "*You MUST be born again.*" Jn.3:1-8
2. 33:14-16 "*Again, when I say to the wicked, 'You shall surely die,' if he turns from his sin and does what is lawful and right, 33:15 if the wicked restores the pledge, gives back what he has stolen, and walks in the statutes of life without committing iniquity, he shall live; he shall not die. 33:16 None of his sins which he has committed shall be remembered against him; he has done what is lawful and right; he shall surely live.*" (see also verse 12)
 - Example: the thief on the cross, Lk.23:40-43

- B. Criticized: "*Yet the children of your people say, 'The way of the Lord is not fair,'..."*

- C. Answered: "*...O house of Israel, I will judge every one of you according to his own ways.*" 33:20

V. The Fall of Jerusalem – 33:23-29

- A. The fall of Jerusalem announced, 33:21

- B. The judgment that was yet to come upon those surviving that destruction of Jerusalem, 33:23-29

1. Their sin noted, 33:23, 24. Still clinging to their heritage (bloodline) connection with Abraham and thinking that they were therefore entitled to God's blessing given to Abraham. What they did not realize was that Abraham is the father of

Rom.1:18 > “For *the wrath of God* is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of *men who suppress that the truth in unrighteousness.*”

- Jn.3:19 > “He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but *the wrath of God abides on him.*”
- Let me exhort you to be a doer of the word of God and not a hearer only. (Jas.1:22 >)
- **What is your heart pursuing?**

Other Information about the book and prophet named “Ezekiel”.

○ Halley’s Bible Handbook

- ✚ Ezekiel was a prophet of the Babylonian captivity. He was carried away to Babylon in 597 B.C., 11 years before Jerusalem was destroyed.
 - The Assyrian Captivity of Israel had been 120 years earlier:
 - 734 B.C. Galilee and North and East Israel by Tiglath-pileser
 - 721 B.C. Samaria and the rest of Israel, by Sargon
 - 701 B.C. 200,00 of the inhabitants of Judah, by Sennacherib
 - The Babylonian Captivity of Judah was accomplished:
 - 606 B.C. Some of the captives taken to Babylon, including Daniel. Then 9 years later, in...
 - 597 B.C. More captives taken to Babylon, including Ezekiel. Then 11 years later, in...
 - 586 B.C. Jerusalem was burned
 - The Babylonian Captivity lasted 70- years, 606-536 B.C. Ezekiel was there from 597 B.C. to at least 570 B.C.
- ✚ Daniel had been in Babylon 9 years when Ezekiel arrived; and had already attained to great fame (14:14) Daniel was in the palace; Ezekiel was in the country. The may have met often.
 - Jeremiah was the older. Ezekiel may have been his pupil.. Ezekiel preached among the exiles the same things that Jeremiah preached in Jerusalem: the certainty of Judah’s punishment for her sins.

✚ The phrase “*they shall know that I am God*” appears some 62 times in this book of Ezekiel.

- Ezekiel’s mission seems to have been to explain the action of God in causing or permitting Israel’s captivity. It was because of the unspeakable abominations of which they had been guilty; abominations for which other nations had been blotted out. But for Israel it was punitive. By their punishment they would come to KNOW THAT GOD IS GOD. They did. The Babylonian Captivity CURED the Jews of idolatry. Up to that time they just would be idolaters. From that day to this, whatever other sins the Jews have been guilty of, they have not been idolaters. (Depends upon you definition of “idolaters”)

✚ The Chronology of the book of Ezekiel

- **The pivot** around which the book centers is **the Destruction of Jerusalem** (announced in 33:21, 22), which occurred 586 B.C. Ezekiel’s prophecies began 6 years before that, and continued 16 years thereafter, covering a period of 22 years. Until Jerusalem fell, Ezekiel was increasingly predicting its certainty (chapter 1-24) After that his prophecies deal with the overthrow of surrounding Heathen Nations (chapters 25-32); and the Re-establishment of Glorious Future of Israel (chapter 33-48).
- His visions, with minor exceptions, are given in chronological sequence. They years are dated from King Jehoiachin’s Captivity, which was 597 B.C. The “30th year” (1:1), which was the equivalent of the “5th year” of Jehoiachin’s captivity (1:2), is thought to have been the 30th year of Ezekiel’s life (age at which Levites began their service [Numbers 4:3]: Jesus and John the Baptist began their work at age 30). Or, it may have been the 30th year in the Babylonian calendar of Babylon’s independence of Assyria, won by Nebopolasar 625 B.C.
 - *Dates of Ezekiel’s visions are as follows:*
 - Chap.1:2 5th year 4th mo. (July) 5th day 592 B.C.
 - Chap.8:1 6th year 6th mo. (Sept.) 5th day 591 B.C.
 - Chap.20:1 7th year 5th mo. (Aug.) 10th day 590 B.C.
 - Chap.24:1 9th year 10th mo. (Jan.) 10th day 587 B.C.

- *Siege of Jerusalem began 9th year 10th month 10th day*
- Chap.26:1 11th year 5th (?) Mo. (Aug.) 1st day 586 B.C.
- Chap.29:1 10th year 10th mo. (Jan.) 12th day 586 B.C.
- Chap 29:17 27th year 1st mo. (Apr.) 1st day 570 B.C
- Chap.30:20 11th year 1st mo. (Apr.) 7th day 586 B.C.
- Chap.32:1 12th year 12th mo.(Mar.) 1st day 584 B.C.
 - *Jerusalem Fell 11th year 4th month 9th day*
- Chap.32:1 12th year 12th mo. (Mar.) 1st day 584 B.C.
- Chap.32:17 12th year 12 (?) mo. (Mar.) 15th day 584 B.C.
- Chap.33:21 12th year 10th mo. (Jan.) 5th day 584 B.C.
- Chap.40:1 25th year 1st (?) mo. (Apr.) 10th day 572 B.C.

- Since Ezekiel was so meticulous in dating his visions, even to the exact day, it is assumed that all follows a given date belongs to that date, till the date is mentioned.

✚ Ezekiel's Abode and Date, 1:1-3

- "*son of man*": Ezekiel is thus addressed 90 times. In Daniel 7:13 it is used of the Messiah. It was the title by which Jesus commonly spoke of Himself (see under Jn. 1:14)
- Visions and symbolic actions are characteristic of Ezekiel's book. Some of symbolic actions were accompanied by most painful personal sufferings. He had to remain dumb (speechless) for a long period (3:26; 24:27; 33:22). He had to lay on his side in one position for over a year (4:5, 6). And eat loathsome food (4:15). His wife, whom he dearly loved, was suddenly taken (24:15-18).

✚ Chapter 22 The Sins of Jerusalem, 22:1-12

- Over and over Ezekiel names the sins of Jerusalem: defiles herself with idols, sheds blood, profanes the Sabbath, practices robbery, promiscuous adultery; and the princes, priests and prophets are ravening wolves after dishonest gain.

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- R.C. Sproul