

## Ezekiel Part 39 (Ezekiel 33)

The Watchman and the Fall of Jerusalem (33:1-33)

1. Chapter 33 can be divided into three sections:
  - a. warning to heed the watchman (vv. 1-9)
  - b. exhortation to turn from evil (vv. 10-20)
  - c. Jerusalem's fall and Israel's failure to heed (vv. 21-33)
2. This message also summarized the principles of the new kingdom:
  - a. God desired that all people should live (v. 11)
  - b. the new kingdom would be populated by those who enter by choice as individuals (v. 12)
  - c. the conditions for entering the kingdom were repentance and faith (vv. 14-16)
  - d. individuals are free to choose repentance or continue their evil lives (vv. 17-20)
3. **33:1-9** This message parallels 3:16-21, where Ezekiel first was appointed watchman over Israel (3:17; 33:7).
4. The purpose of returning to this theme was to show that Ezekiel had been faithful to his assignment and to place the responsibility upon Israel to heed his warning.
5. The death of those who hear the watchman's alarm but refuse to listen is their own fault.
6. A watchman was guiltless if the alarm was sounded but no one responded, but he was guilty of the blood of those who perished if an attack came and the people were not warned (vv. 5-6).
7. Cities were constructed with towers on the walls where watchmen kept their vigil.
8. Ezekiel was a divinely called servant whose "trumpet" was his messages for Judah and Jerusalem (chaps. 1-24), sounding the alarm to warn of impending judgment.
9. Ezekiel's "alarming" messages were divinely imparted (v. 7) and specifically directed to the people of Judah.
10. As a watchman Ezekiel did not use his own powers of observation but was the channel of divine warning.
11. God explained that when the prophet delivered the messages - he fulfilled his responsibility as a watchman whether or not the people heard or responded.
12. Warning others of the consequences of judgment inherent in sin is never a popular assignment.

13. Believers have a duty to be “watchmen” who warn those who are in the world and are without God of the destructive nature of sin and its final irrevocable result—death and hell (33:1–33).
14. Our responsibility is to warn and proclaim as persuasively as possible, but how the message is received is beyond our control.
15. **33:10–11** Here an exhortation is followed by the principle of individual responsibility.
16. The question in verse 10 is answered in verse 11.
17. This was a call to repent so they could be healed and restored. God took no pleasure in the death of the wicked, so he was always careful to warn of judgment and to call for repentance.
18. **33:12–20** People who do wicked things are responsible for their actions, but the wicked who repent will be forgiven.
19. Every Jew who had ever lived in a walled city knew what Ezekiel was talking about when he referred to the watchmen on the wall - they were important to the city’s defense.
20. God had called Ezekiel to be His watchman (3:19–21) and it was his task to carry God’s warning and declare it to the people.
21. The faithful watchman had clean hands, but the unfaithful watchman had hands that were stained by the blood of the victims who died because he didn’t warn them.
22. Ezekiel was a faithful watchman who delivered God’s message to the Jews in Babylon as well as those back in Judah, and that message was, “Repent—turn from your sins!”
23. The word “turn” is used eight times in this chapter and it describes “repentance.”
24. The discussion in Ezekiel 33:10–20 reminds us of 18:1–32 where Ezekiel explained human responsibility before God.
25. The Jews had blamed the older generation for what had happened to the nation, but Ezekiel made it clear that God didn’t punish the children for the sins of their fathers.
26. Chapter 33:10 suggests that some of the Jews were now feeling the pain of their sins like a heavy weight on their shoulders, and day after day were “wearing away.”
27. However, this feeling of remorse fell far short of real repentance.
28. Remorse includes both the heart and the mind, and we feel disgust and pain, but we don’t change our ways.
29. True repentance includes the mind, the heart, and the will. We change our mind about our sins and agree with what God says about them - and we deliberately turn from our sin and turn to the Lord for His mercy.

30. **33:23–29** In the rest of chapter 33 Ezekiel addressed two groups of people.
31. First he condemned those Jews who remained in the land of Israel and expected a soon end to the Babylonian Captivity (vv. 23–29). Then he rebuked those who gathered to hear him in Babylon (vv. 30–33).
32. The people who remained in Judah after Jerusalem’s fall refused to acknowledge God’s judgment.
33. Comparing themselves to Abraham, they claimed to be the remnant left by God to possess His Promised Land.
34. If Abraham had a right to the land, certainly, they reasoned, the many Jews remaining there had a right to it.
35. **33:30–33** Ezekiel then spoke to the exiles in Babylon.
36. He had developed a popular following among the people who recognized him as a prophet. They frequently gathered to hear his messages.
37. The people did not put the prophet’s words into practice. They were paying lip service to God, but still harbored sin in their hearts.
38. With their mouths they were expressing devotion, but their hearts were greedy.
39. But a day of reckoning would come. When all his words of prophecy would come true ... then they would know that he was a prophet.
40. Each person would be held accountable for his actions and his responses to the warning from God Himself.

When their day of accountability came, then those “hearers of the warning” would be forced to acknowledge the prophetic nature—and thus the truth—of Ezekiel’s message.