

## Ezekiel 33 – God’s Watchman to the Land

By Holly Effiom

### VV1-9 (Ezekiel 3:4-27)

Have you read something like this before?

How are the two chapters the same? How are they different?

Who is the audience in each?

Where had you seen this differentiation before? Eze 7:2-7

Is God leaving the people of the land without warning, since they are not among his “chosen” people?

What is the job of the watchman? Is it to save people from the impending judgment?

What is God’s message in this section of scripture?

LESSON: When I first read this section of scripture, I thought perhaps it was an editing error, in that they stuck a chapter in two places in the book, but then I noted the target audience in each.

Ezekiel, the prophet, in chapter 3 is being sent to the children of the land of Israel (Eze 3:11); in Ezekiel 33, the prophet is being sent to the land. Ezekiel 7 clearly differentiates between these two groups and two periods of time going forward in the book – the land of Israel is representative of the children of Israel, and the land, or “multitude” (Eze 7:2,12), is describing the Gentiles, at the end-time.

God’s message to the prophet regardless of the time is the same, give warning. Someone losing his/her life because the prophet refused to give warning, will result in God requiring it at the hand of that prophet.

### VV10-11

What is the question being posed in this section of scripture?

What do we learn about the attitude of the people in their questions?

What do we learn about God in his answer?

What is God’s response to this attitude?

Is this conversation a repetition? Eze 18:31

Who was the audience in Eze 18:31?

Who is the audience now?

What was the question put forward by God to these audiences?

LESSON: Don’t give up! People might feel the effort is useless, if they have already been condemned, but God is saying, “Don’t give up!” When you think about it, the message is the same for the righteous as well as the wicked persevere toward righteousness, *and live!*

### VV12-20 Righteousness v. Wickedness

In Eze 3, who was Ezekiel’s audience exactly?

What was Ezekiel’s message to the “chosen” people – that they were doing good, but everyone else (all the nations surrounding them) was wicked?

Who exactly was God accusing of wickedness?

Why is the expectation *different* from those of the other nations? Why isn’t God telling the Muslims about their own wickedness?

So, during the Gentile age, toward whom is God’s servant’s (the Church’s) message directed – toward the “righteous” or the “wicked”?

Who exactly is God accusing of wickedness, during the Gentile age?

What exactly is God’s message to those who consider themselves “righteous”, during the Gentile age?

So, during the end of the Gentile age, what *should* the Church be doing – what *should* its message be?

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Why is the expectation *different* from those of the other nations, faiths, creeds? Why isn’t God telling the Muslims about their own wickedness in the end of the Gentile age?

LESSON: The question that keeps coming to mind, in Eze 33, is just *Who is God speaking to?* Well, toward whom was His message directed before? The children of Israel – the “chosen” people. *This* is the whole point: the people, who had been set apart, *by God*, from everyone else on the planet, were doing *wickedness!*

The message is the same as that to Israel in its day and as to the Gentiles in their day... *today!* God has *not* changed. The righteous shall live, that is, until the day in which they sin. Then they will *die*. The wicked shall die, that is, until the day they *repent and depart from their sin*. Then they will *live* – and *their sin* will not be rehearsed.

This is *justice* from a God who finds no pleasure in the destruction of *anyone*. Yet, and still, men accuse God of being unfair. This statement proves the corruption of the hearts of those who speak such words.

Think about it: these “righteous” ones want to be able to *do* wickedness *now* and not be punished because of their righteousness of the *past*. This runs *counter* to justice; it runs *counter to God* – *the king of righteousness!* This is why only God can judge such wicked corruption, as David prophesied in his own final message, 2 Sam 23:6-7.

VV21-29

How long have the children of Israel, the people of Jerusalem, been in captivity? Eze 1:2

Who is it that comes to Ezekiel to bring news of Jerusalem?

Why would this escapee of Jerusalem travel to see Ezekiel? Eze 1:3

What happened to Ezekiel the night before the “escapee” arrived? Eze 24:27; Eze 3:26-27

Why did God make Ezekiel dumb? What did the prophet being made dumb symbolize?

What is it that the people of the “wastelands of Israel” saying? V24

Why is the term ‘wastelands of Israel’ being used?

What is the meaning of the people’s words? Eze 11:15

What is the question that God is putting to the people?

What is the significance of these transgressions?

Eating “with the blood”, Lev 17:10-14. Why is this a sin?

Lifting “your eyes toward your idols”. What does idolatry cause?

Defiling “his neighbor’s wife”. What does this term encompass? Eze 22:11?

Are these transgressions that are wrong for just Jerusalem?

Are there similar laws today against the same things?

Since God has adjudged the nation guilty of these transgressions, what is the punishment?

Compare/Contrast to Jerusalem in Eze 6:12.

LESSON: This section of scripture is a snapshot of the attitude of the people of the time – irreverent, not honoring of their forebearers’ sacrifice(s). During Jerusalem’s time, the heart of the people was that of entitlement, as if their inheritance was their *due* because of their *affiliation with Abraham*. The hearts of the people in the time of the Gentiles will also be that of entitlement based upon *ancestry*.

I have returned to Ezekiel 3 in writing this lesson. It seems we are to stop and rehearse what we’ve learned until this point on our journey. We have gone over lessons from the nations – each of which was a horn – to even the father of them all, Egypt’s Pharaoh. What is the message God wants us to get? I had proposed

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in Ezekiel 3 that it seemed that those first few chapters were about God just dealing with the *prophet’s* bad attitude, and, reminding him of his purpose – his job was not to save people, it was to *warn* them. Whatever they decide to do is on *them*.

I believe, this chapter is God dealing with the *church’s* bad attitude – The Christian church, the *prophet* speaking on behalf of God in the time of the Gentiles.

If you can, picture Rev 10:8-11 preceding Ezekiel 33:1, just like Eze 3:1-3 precedes the message to the watchman to the house of Israel. Now, compare and contrast the two scenes. Notice how they are both directed to ingest the word of God, but Ezekiel is force-fed the roll, where John *goes* to the angel holding the “little book” and *asks* for it.

The mental picture that I get is, in one instance, a father feeding a child nourishment because the child doesn’t know enough, or is *unable*, to understand that nourishment is good for him. And in the other instance, a father directing an older, wiser child from where to get nourishment, and the older child going himself to get and eat the nourishment. The difference between the two scenes is time.

The taste of the nourishment is sweet to the mouth in both scenes, and is followed by bitterness as it moves through the body – the bitter message to the house of Israel; and then the bitter events through which the church lives, grows wiser, and ultimately *dies* – for it must go the way of Jesus Christ – to inherit eternal life.

The directive is the same whether they hear or whether they forebear – speak the *truth*.

VV30-33

What is God telling us the people are saying and doing?

Were the people at the time of Jerusalem’s kingdom doing this? Eze 11:15

Are the people openly disparaging the prophet? Why is this noteworthy?

What is meant by the phrase “...they come unto thee as the people cometh...”?

Is God accusing the whole church of being against the prophet? How do you know?

What do these people come before the prophet to do? Isa 58:2

Do these people apply the prophet’s words to their own lives?

What does this tell you about these people in the church?

Is this what is being prophesied in Dan 7:27; 11:34; Matt 24:23-24?

LESSON: This section of scripture was hard for me to complete. When I read verse 32, I wept. I cried because it was describing *exactly* what I felt as I saw so many in the congregation, among whom I served, yield to the 45<sup>th</sup> President’s siren song. That it happened so quickly let me know that *his* words had been in their hearts all along.

I had often wondered why God placed me to serve in that church and one day God gave me the answer. A Latino man told me after a service that when he visited that day and saw me up on the platform, that he felt that he, too, could be there and *worship* God in that church.

And I stayed, through all the years that I lived and grew up in the congregation; the years in which I served in the Children’s ministry, and Adult ministries through Bible studies, choir, and the worship team; the years that I wept when they wept and rejoiced when they rejoiced and bound up wounds where I could, for 20+ years; and then, to discover these same people, including leadership, running headlong after a man who cared about no one but himself, and absolutely *hates* the church of Jesus Christ – not everyone

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in the church is rich and White! Some of us have to work for a living, and yes, we smell after a day of honest work! No, we are not all educated in the same ways or the same places; and yes, we make mistakes and have to clean them up ourselves! But hey, this is the church of Jesus Christ – the same Jesus who has a heart for His brethren; Who loves the poor and downtrodden; Who prefers the company of honest *sinner*s to self-righteous *liars*!

The church of Jesus Christ was established to be a “little sanctuary”, to *minister*, during this time of the Gentiles in which the outer-court of the temple is being tread under foot. The leadership of that church is not exempt from the same greedy influences and mad power-grab to which the world is being subjected.

This Ezekiel 33 is a powerful chapter! We learned:

1. Who the true audience for this word is – *not* the world, but the church leadership *itself*. Just as the hard words of Ezekiel were for temple leadership, during the time of Jerusalem.
2. Yes, you have sinned, but DON’T GIVE UP! Get back in the fight and continue to persevere toward righteousness. *GET BACK TO WORK!*
3. You are not babies who have to be taught *how* to live. You *know* Who you belong to; you *know* what you’re supposed to be doing – *living* in truth – and saying to the world, *CHOOSE LIFE!*