

Hope for the Hopeless

Ezekiel 33:1-11



Chs. 1-24	Judgment on Judah
Chs. 25-32	Judgment on surrounding Nations
Chs. 33-48	Hope for the Future

1. A Warning (vv. 1-9)

- the Watchman ¹
- our responsibility ²
- our answerability

2. An Offer (vv. 10-11)

- Turn and live ³

¹ Old Testament Watchmen were military men stationed along the borders, on hills, walls and in towers to watch and warn the townspeople of impending threat and danger. The Old Testament prophets were spiritual watchmen.

² In **1 Corinthians 9:16** the Apostle Paul says, "Woe to me, if I do not preach the gospel." Probably appealing to **Ezekiel 33**, Paul sees himself as a Watchman responsible to "sound the trumpet" of the gospel, but not responsible to save the perishing from their sins (**Acts 18:1-6; Acts 20:26-27; 2 Corinthians 2:14-17**).

³ Compare **Ezekiel 18:30-32**.

Ezekiel's Theme: Life from God

Ezekiel was born into a priestly family in Jerusalem during the days of the Southern Kingdom of Judah (Ezekiel 1:1). But then disaster struck in the form of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon in 597/8 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar took the treasures of the royal palace and the Temple, put a new paper king on the throne (Zedekiah), and took away into exile 10,000 people including the old king (2 Kings 24:1-17) *plus* young Ezekiel whom God would call, as His prophet, from his place of exile along the river Kebar (Ezekiel 1:3). Very briefly, I'd say the theme of the Bible book that bears Ezekiel's name is simply this: God's presence is the key to life.

When God withdraws His presence due to our idols and rebellions, true life departs as well. Apart from God we are nothing more than dry bones; when we (re)turn to Him we find that God can make our dry bones come to life (Ezekiel 37:5). Real life, eternally satisfying life, is possible in the here and now.

About 600 years later, long after Ezekiel was dead and buried, God's special presence "temples" among us in truth and glory incarnated in a person (John 1:14). Jesus, the Christ, came as the life-giving presence of God among his people, namely, all those who receive him by faith: "In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind" (John 1:4). Jesus said: "Very truly I tell you, the one who believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life...which I give for the life of the world" (John 6:47-51).

Even when we feel discouraged and in despair as though we're in a spiritual exile, the death-erasing, hope-producing life that God produces within us will lead us to conclude (as Ezekiel did in his last verse): "the Lord IS there" (Ezekiel 48:35). Then, we will be drawn into his life-giving, life-healing, life-transforming presence. And where there is life, there is hope.

Pastor Bill

BIBLE TIMELINE

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