Ezr. 33-34

The prophet Ezekiel has pronounce judgment to Judah faithfully, as well as to the Gentile nations. Ezk. 4-24, 25-32

Now, the prophet Ezekiel begins to pronounce restoration near and far by the message of repentance as the watchman, a common metaphor used by prophets. Is. 21:6; Jer, 6:17; Hab. 2:1

* All is in the background of the covenant promise, blessings and cursings. Deut. 27-28; Lev. 26

33:1-33 The watchman of the city.

33:1-6 The responsibility of the watchman to the people.

1) The illustration of the watchman. vs. 1-2
   a) The revelation is divine, marked by the usual prophetic formula. vs. 1
   b) The prophet was to speak to the people of God, his people as one of the people “Son of man”. vs. 2a-b
   c) The message of coming judgment and of warning by the watchman.
   1)) The word watchman “tsaphah” means a look out for spies, the practice against invaders, especially during war.
   2)) Placing a man with a trained eye at a high vantage point to scan the day and night in search of any approaching enemy and warn the people, who would take protection within the walls of the city.
   3)) God indicates, it is He who is their enemy in judgment, “I bring a sword upon the land”.

2) The function of the watchman is described. vs. 3-5
   a) The faithfulness of the watchman of the city was to sound the alarm to warn the people. vs. 3
      1)) The trumpet “sopar” was a long rams horn, used for both military and religious occasions. Josh. 6:4; 2Sam. 2:28; Ps. 81:3; Amos 3:6
      2)) It is used in Jewish synagogues, especially at the New Year.
   b) The people were personally and individually responsible to respond to the alarm. vs. 4-5
      1)) Every person was responsible for their own indifference to the alarm. vs. 4a
      2)) Every person was responsible for their own life. vs. 4b
      3)) The confirmation is stated. vs. 5a-c
4)) The person responding to the alarm would live. vs. 5d
* Chapter 18 focused on personal responsibility for sin, so as not to blame anyone else!

3) The failure of the watchman to blow the alarm to warn the people accused him of being guilty of his duty. vs. 6
a) Every watchman was responsible for the people under his watch. vs. 6a-b
b) Even though every person was guilty. vs. 6a-d
c) Every watchman was guilty and responsible for those lives. vs. 6e

33:7-9 The accountability of the watchman to God.
1) The application of the watchman made to Ezekiel for the house of Israel. vs. 7
a) The call of Ezekiel as the watchman is by God, not himself. vs. 7a-c
b) The warning would be from God for the prophet was only the vessel. vs. 7d
1)) The call of the watchman was a confirmation and re-commission given at his initial call. Ezek. 3:17-21
2)) The third chapter was private, this one is public.
3) The reiteration of the personal guilt and responsibility of Ezekiel as the watchman, if he failed to warn the wicked, is stated. vs. 8
a) Regarding the wicked. vs. 8a-d
b) Regarding his accountability to God. vs. 8e

4) The reiteration of personal faithfulness by Ezekiel to warn cleared him of any guilt. vs. 9
a) Regarding the wicked. vs. 9a-c
  * “Unless the LORD builds the house, They labor in vain who build it; Unless the LORD guards the city, The watchman stays awake in vain.” Ps. 127:1
b) Regarding his accountability to God.
  1)) This responsibility is found also back in chapter three. Ezek. 3:16-21
  2)) The prophet Ezekiel had been faithful, declaring all the messages of God of warning, through the various sign sermon. Ezek. 4-24
  3)) The prophet had warmed the Gentile nation of their judgment. Ezek. 25-32
  4)) Ezekiel had been made a sign to the house of Israel. Ezek. 12:6

4) Pastors have been are under the very same responsibility in the past and today.
a) Pastors who have failed to warn sinner of the coming judgment.
b) Movements that started right on fire with the word of God, proclaiming salvation but then loss their passion.

c) Denominations that became liberal in their theology, no longer preaching about the coming judgment.

d) Churches that do not preach the gospel but a seeker friendly gospel, that is cross-less and powerless.

e) People who were once on fire for God, used tremendously but now are in the world and no longer believe the need of warning about coming judgment.

* Paul told the Ephesians elders, “Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men”. Acts. 20:26

33:10-11 The prophet was to attend to the inquiry of the people wanting to repent regarding their sins.

1) The prophet Ezekiel was to confront the people with their own words. vs. 10

   a) This is the first time deep conviction is revealed by some. vs. 10a-e

   b) This also reveals their despair. vs. 10f-g

2) The prophet Ezekiel was to respond to the inquiry of the people. vs. 11

   a) The words were those of Yahweh by an oath. vs. 11a-c

b) The heart of God is revealed for the sinner. vs. 11d-e

   * Judgment is God’s strange way to act. Is. 28:21

33:12-16 The prophet gives various cases of responses to the warning and repentance.

1) The general principle is expounded. vs. 12

   a) The righteous. vs. 12a-d

      1)) A person’s past life of righteousness would not deliver him, if he turned to a life of sin.

      2)) God could not ignore the human choice nor the turning to evil.

   b) The wicked. vs. 12e-g

      1)) If he repents. vs. 12e-f

      2)) If he turns back to sin. vs. 12g

2) The specific cases explained. vs. 13-16

   a) Righteous living in the past does not oblige God to pardon, if there is turning to wickedness. vs. 13

   * Beacon’s commentary stated, “Ezekiel would have been shock
by even the suggestion of anything like the unconditional predestination of individuals as taught by John Calvin and his followers”. (Beacon:591)

b) Wicked living of the past does not obligate God to pass judgment, if there is repentance. vs. 14

c) An example of the wicked repenting is given. vs. 15

d) The verdict. vs. 16

33:17-20 The prophet was to reveal the justice of God that was being challenged by the people. vs. 17-20

1) God declared the false charges of the people by quoting the words of the people to the prophet. vs. 17a-b
   a) The word fair “takan” has the idea of measure and weight. Ezek. 18:25
   b) They were saying God’s scales of justice were off, in that He would forgive all past sins if one repented.

1)) Some people still have a real problem with God for forgiving some people, they think it unfair!

2)) Ezekiel chapter 18 focused on the inability to blame others, environment or anything else for one’s own sin by having a free-will to choose! Ezek. 18:2

2) God declared His charges against the people, they were being unjust. vs. 17c
   a) “But” marks the sharp contrast.
   b) They did not recognize the true weight of their sin, thinking it a light matter.

3) God re-affirmed the principle of His justice. vs. 18-19
   a) For the righteous. vs. 18
   b) For the wicked. vs. 19

4) God would certainly judge each person perfectly. vs. 20
   a) Despite the explanation by God to the various cases in detail, the people still charged God. vs. 20a-b
   b) Divine justice would be meted out. vs. 20
   c) There should be no doubt that the greater responsibility of warning falls on the pastor, that every person may be responsible for their own response and Jesus is the only way to be saved. 1Pet. 3:15, Jn. 3:16, 14:6
   d) Nor should there be any confusion of the need to abide in Christ and His doctrine to be transformed. Rom. 11:22; Col. 1:23; 1Jn. 1:5-10; 1Cor. 6:9-11

1) The entire book of Hebrews is about abiding, the five warnings are not fictitious or hypothetical case but real,
each becomes increasingly in danger and more severe in consequences.

**33:21-22** The fulfillment of the prophecy to Ezekiel. vs. 21-22

1) The prophet receives word of Jerusalem being captured. vs. 21
   a) The date is recorded by the prophet, 585 B.C., in the tenth month, January 5. vs. 21a-c
      1)) Six months after the fall of Jerusalem?
      2)) The fall of Jerusalem was the ninth day of July, 586 B.C. Jer. 39:2
   b) The messenger was one from Jerusalem. vs. 21d-e
      * July 5, 592 B.C. Ezekiel was called, it has been 6 1/2 years. Ezek. 1:2

2) The prophet received his ability to speak once again. vs. 22
   a) God loosened Ezekiel’s tongue. vs. 22a-b
      * God’s timing is perfect, never late!
   b) God had told Ezekiel this at his call. vs. 22c-e
      1)) The prophecy had been given to Ezekiel at his call. Ezek. 3:26-27c; 29:19-21
      2)) The specific prophecy was at the death of his wife. Ezek. 24:25-27
   c) God would begin to speak through Ezekiel for restoration, reconciliation.
      1)) Offering repentance and forgiveness to all. Ezek. 33
      2)) Promising future restoration of the nation in the latter days. Ezek. 34-39
      3)) Proclaiming the Millennial Kingdom and temple. Ezek. 40-48

**33:23-29** The folly of the people of Jerusalem.

1) The word is prophetic by the formula once again. vs. 23
   * The message falls under the same date. vs. 21

2) The word of the Lord revealed the words of the people in Jerusalem as arrogant and unrepentant. vs. 24
   a) Those left in the land by Babylon had bad theology, believed that God was now restoring to them the land and all those carried away were no longer entitled to the land. Ezek. 11:15
   b) The people were presumptuous and had not acknowledged their sin and need of repentance towards God.

3) The word of the Lord revealed the sins of the people, as the prosecuting attorney. vs. 25-26
   a) The first accusation is sin against God. vs. 25
b) The second accusation is sin against man. vs. 26

4) The word of the Lord reveals His verdict. vs. 27-29
   a) None would escape who was guilty of being unrepentant. vs. 27
   b) None of the land would be occupied. vs. 28
   c) None of the people would have any doubt that God had judged them. vs. 29
   * God had prophesied through Jeremiah’s vision of the two baskets of figs, the good was the remnant and the bad were the those to be judged. Jer. 24

33:30-33 The fickleness of the people in Babylon. vs. 30-33

1) The people seemed to be sincere when they came to Ezekiel. vs. 30
   a) This was a word of knowledge to the prophet. vs. 30a-d
      1)) God alone knows the heart of each person!
      2)) They were hard-headed but Ezekiel had been made harder by God. Ezek. 2:3-7; 3:4-9
   b) They seemed to be sincere, “Everyone saying to his brother. vs. 30e-f

2) The people were insincere when they came to Ezekiel. vs. 31-33
   a) The people were unrepentant. vs. 31
      1) The people were rebellious. vs. 31a-d
      2) The people were hypocrites, only interested in financial profit. vs. 31e-f
   b) The prophet Ezekiel words was a form of entertainment to them. vs. 32
      1)) They enjoyed listening. vs. 32a
         a)) The times have not changed, people still treat the teaching of God’s word as entertainment. Lk. 7:30-32; Acts 17
         b)) This is anther clue that perhaps Ezekiel delivered some of his sermons in song.
      2)) They had no intent to do anything about what they heard. vs. 32b
         * Joshua spoke to the men who were going to help them settle the land, “But if you do not do so, then take note, you have sinned against the LORD; and be sure your sin will find you out.” Num. 32:23
   c) The people in seeing the prophecies fulfill would know Ezekiel was a prophet of Yahweh. vs. 33
* This is repeated often in the book!

**34:1-31  The faithless Shepherds of Israel.**

**34:1-6**  The indictment and judgment against the greedy shepherds. vs. 1-6

**34:1-2**  The accusation against the shepherds is serious. vs. 1-2

* Ezekiel begins to focus on the future restoration, which consisting is laid out for us in three events.

1) The divine authority stands behind the judgment. vs. 1
   a) The prophet Ezekiel once again receive a revelation from God. vs. 1
   b) Ezekiel was a faithful prophet, in contrast to the false prophets. Ezek. 13

2) The prophet of God, Ezekiel. vs. 2
   a) The customary title of Ezekiel identifies him, “Son of man”. vs. 2a
      1)) Ezekiel is the watchman to warn the righteous and the wicked of coming judgment. Ezek. 3; 18; 33
   2)) The Lord Jesus gave many parables about rulers, land owners and servants that abused their position of authority and warned of their certain judgment, addressing the religious leaders and shepherds of Israel who had not been faithful to care for His sheep, while benefiting their own lives.

b) The command to Ezekiel was to prophesy against the shepherds of Israel. vs. 2a-b
   1)) The repetition emphasizes the intensity and severity of the proclamation.
   2)) Thirteen times the phrase” prophesy against” appears and indicates judgment from God. Ezek. 4:7; 6:2; 11:4; 13:2

c) The common metaphor of shepherds of Israel, indicated the leaders. vs. 2c
   1)) The term appears 15 times in the chapter and represents the Kings, princes, military generals, priests and Levies.
   2)) Jehoiakim and Zedekiah are a good example. Jer. 25:38; Ezek. 19:1-9

3) The general charges were of being self-serving exploiting the sheep. vs. 2d-f
   a) Being confronted by God. vs. 2d
   b) Being condemned by God for their self-centeredness. vs. 2e
   c) Being called out for their neglect. vs. 2f
      1)) Isaiah has many Woe’s. Is. 3:9, 11; 5:8; 5:11, 18, 20, 21, 22; 10:1
2) Jesus gave sever warnings to the spiritual leaders of His day, the Scribes and Pharisees. Matt. 23

**34:3-4** The human abuse of the shepherds was due to their position. vs. 3-4

1) The leaders abused their authority to become very prosperous at the expense of the people. vs. 3
   a) They possessed the best of material things. vs. 3a
   b) They ate the best foods, while neglecting to feed the flock spiritually. vs. 3b-c

2) The leaders abused their power to oppress the people. vs. 4
   a) They had been unconcern to the people. vs. 4a
   b) They had been unmerciful to the people. vs. 4b
   c) They had been uncompassionate to the people. vs. 4b-c
   d) They had been unloving about the people, “Nor brought back what was driven away.” vs. 4d
   e) They had been unmotivated for the people. vs. 4e
   f) They had been unwavering in their evil against the people. vs. 4f

* I believe, there is no severer judgment than the one that coming upon Pastors and leaders in the church who have failed to shepherd the flock of God.

**34:5-6** The horrible consequences to the sheep were also due to the shepherds.

1) The people were open to destruction. vs. 5
   a) The people had no shepherd to nurture them. vs. 5a
   * Yet Jehoiakim and Zedekiah secluded themselves in luxury.
   b) The people had no shepherd to protect them. vs. 5b

2) The leaders would be held responsible for the people’s destruction. vs. 6
   a) The leaders forgot the people were God’s sheep. vs. 6a-b
   b) The leaders forgot it was God’s flock. vs. 6c-d
   * Three times the word “scattered” is mentioned. vs. 5-6
   c) The leaders forgot God would hold them responsible for His people. vs. 6e

**34:7-10** The accountability of the shepherds to God for His sheep could not be escaped. vs. 7-10

1) The call of the shepherds to listen is declared. vs. 7
a) The decree of judgment is based on their greedy conduct.
b) “Therefore” marks the conclusion of verse one through six. vs. 7a
c) The call to hear is personal, “You shepherds, hear the word of the LORD” vs. 7b-c

2) The indicting crimes against the sheep by the shepherds are revealed. vs. 8
   a) The revelation is by an oath, in view of the One Who is Eternal. vs. 8a-b
   b) The leaders neglected the sheep. vs. 8c-d
   c) The leaders did not tend to the needs of the flock but only their own. vs. 8e-f

   * The Pastoral epistles warns very clearly those in authority regarding pride, money and women. 1Tim. 4:16

3) The verdict against the shepherds is pronounced. vs. 9-10
   a) The call to hear the verdict is personal and individual. vs. 9

   * The word “therefore” again marks the conclusion of what precedes.
   b) The One speaking was the One who had placed them in authority. vs. 10

1)) The indicated authority is divine vs. 10a

2)) The impending hostility was also divine. vs. 10b

3)) The inescapable responsibility was the leaders. vs. 10c

4)) The insidious evil of the leaders was to be interrupted. vs. 10d-e
   * Their privilege would be removed! Mk. 10:35-45

5) The inevitable deliverance of the people is stated. vs. 10f-g
   a)) God describes the shepherds or leaders as wolves devouring “My flock” over and over!
   b)) Jeremiah stated the same thing. Jer. 23:1-8

34:11-12 God will seek and find all of His sheep from where they have been scattered. vs. 11-12
1) God took full responsibility for His sheep. vs. 11
   a) The authority is the same, divine. vs. 11a

   b) The certainty of the safety of His sheep is revealed. vs. 11b

   * Jesus said, “What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it?” Lk. 15:4
2) God gave an example of His personal pursuit of His sheep. vs. 12
   a) The comparison. vs. 12a
   b) The application. vs. 12b
      1)) Cloudy and dark day refers to the Day of the Lord when He will deliver them for the Millennium.
      2)) “Hear the word of the LORD, O nations, And declare it in the isles afar off, and say, ‘He who scattered Israel will gather him, And keep him as a shepherd does his flock.’” Jer. 31:10

34:13-16 God would care for His sheep.
   1) In the land of Israel. vs. 13
      a) He would gather them from the countries. vs. 13a
         * Like the Exodus! Ex. 3:10
      b) He would placed them in the land of Israel. vs. 13b
         * The land and the people go together, it belongs to the Jews!
      c) He would nurture them when they occupied their own land. vs. 13c-d
   2) In that day they will look to God. vs. 14-16
      a) God will be their provider and protector. vs. 14
      b) God will be their guardian and overseer. vs. 15

3) In that day God reminds them He will be a faithful Shepherd and judge. vs. 16
   a) “I will seek what was lost.” vs. 16a
   b) “And bring back what was driven away.” vs. 16a
   c) “Bind up the broken.” vs. 16b
   d) “And strengthen what was sick.” vs. 16b
   e) “But I will destroy the fat and the strong.” vs. 16c
   f) “And feed them in judgment.” vs. 16d
      * 1Pet. 5:1-4; Acts 20:17-38

34:17-22 The charges and verdict between the sheep in the flock.
   1) The judge is God in view of the future restoration. vs. 17
      a) The address is to the nation of Israel. vs. 17a-b
      b) The judgment would be with critical discretion. vs. 17c-d
         1)) The sheep are symbolic of the ordinary citizens of the land.
         2)) The rams and goats are symbolic of the people of power and wealth who oppress the poor and needy.
         3)) God’s judgment would be between the righteous and the wicked. Ezek. 33
            * This has nothing to do with the judgment of the nations. Matt. 25
2) The judgment is for their greed and abuse like the example of the leaders. vs. 18-19
   a) The rhetorical questions regarding their conduct was for the purpose of exposing their shame. vs. 18
   1)) They helped themselves to the best. vs. 18a
   2)) They destroyed what was left, in order that no one else would have provisions. vs. 18b
   3)) They drank the drinkable water. vs. 18c
   4)) They polluted the water after they drank, to keep people from drinking. vs. 18d
* They freed the slaves, then enslaved them again. Jer. 34:8-11
b) The deplorable condition the people had to live under they would be held accountable in judgment. vs. 19
   1)) What they ate. vs. 19a-b
   2) What they drank. vs. 19c-d
* All these were social injustices. Amos 4:1
3) The verdict will be perfect and just. vs. 20-22
   a) God would deal with the bully dominant sheep. vs. 20
      1)) The “fat” are the perpetrators,
      2)) The “lean sheep are the victims.
   b) God knew all the facts. vs. 21
   1)) He knew their evil extortion and oppression. vs. 21a-b
   2)) He knew their vicious intent. vs. 21c
   c) God concluded He would intervene for his flock. vs. 22
      1)) They belong to Him. vs. 22a
      2)) They would be protected. vs. 22b
      3)) They would be vindicated. vs. 22c

34:23-31 The setting up of a faithful shepherd.
1) The identity of the shepherd and time period. vs. 23-24
   a) David will reign over the sheep of Israel in the Kingdom Age. vs. 23
      1)) David will be appointed by God as a faithful shepherd. vs. 23a-b
      2)) David will be the shepherd of Israel. vs. 23c
* Not all excepts this. Ezk. 37:24
   b) Messiah will reign supremely in the Kingdom Age. vs. 24
      1)) The Lord Jesus will reign supremely. vs. 24a
* The Righteous Branch, the New covenant. Jer. 23:5-6; 31:31-34; Ezk. 11:19; 36:26
      2)) The servant David will co-reign with Jesus. vs. 24b

3)) Short term Zerubbabel, Ezra, etc,
* “Behold, the days are coming," says the LORD, "That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; A King shall reign and prosper, And execute judgment and righteousness in the earth.” Jer. 23:5

2) The identity of the covenant and it’s nature. vs. 25-29

a) One of peace during the Kingdom Age. vs. 25
   1)) The Prince of Peace will be there. vs. 25a
   * The Kingdom. Ezk. 37:26; 40-48
   2)) The ferocity of the animals will not exist any longer, harmony of man and animal well exist. vs. 25b-c
   a)) Peace. Lev. 26:22; Is. 54:10
   b)) The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, The lion shall eat straw like the ox, And dust shall be the serpent’s food. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain," Says the LORD. Is. 65:25, 11:6-9, Matt. 19:28, Rev. 5:10, 20:4-6

b) One of blessings for Israel. vs. 26
   1)) In Jerusalem. vs. 26a
   * “Now it shall come to pass in the latter days That the mountain of the LORD'S house Shall be established on the top of the mountains, And shall be exalted above the hills; And all nations shall flow to it.” Is. 2:2
   2)) In the land of Israel. vs. 26b-c
   a)) Early and latter rains. Ezk. 37:25
   b)) “For the LORD will comfort Zion, He will comfort all her waste places; He will make her wilderness like Eden, And her desert like the garden of the LORD; Joy and gladness will be found in it, Thanksgiving and the voice of melody. Is. 51:3
   c) One of abundance in the land. vs. 27
      1)) The vegetation. vs. 27a-b
      2)) The security. vs. 27c-d
      3)) The deliverance. vs. 27e

d) One of protection. vs. 28
   1)) No more persecution from the nations. vs. 28a
   2)) No judgment from God. vs. 28b-c
   3)) No more living in fear, And no one shall make them afraid.” vs. 28d
e) One of honor. vs. 29
  1)) By their reputation. vs. 29a
  2)) By their provisions. vs. 29b
  3)) By their exaltation. vs. 29c
    * Scorn or disgrace. Ezek. 37:27-28; Lev. 26:1-7; Deut. 28:1-14

3) The indicated purpose. vs. 30-31
  a) For Israel to acknowledge their relationship to their God. vs. 30
  b) For Israel to acknowledge they are his creatures and He their Creator. vs. 31
    * All will be judged by our motives.
  1Cor. 4:5