

The Future Restoration of the Jews

Chapters 33 - 48

Given after the siege on Jerusalem

EZEKIEL

Chapter 33

The Watchman of Israel

Introduction: Ezekiel was originally called to be a watchman to the nation (Ezekiel 3:17). He was called to warn his people of the coming judgments from God; if they hearkened unto the words of the LORD and turn back to God, they would live and if not they would die. Unlike the false prophets in the land prophesying peace (Ezekiel 13:16), Ezekiel told his people the truth and proved to be a faithful watchman in Israel.

Israel continued however in their rebellious ways not obeying the words of the prophet, therefore the armies of Nebuchadnezzar have besieged the city walls, the land is become desolate and all of its inhabitants are being carried into Babylonian captivity.

However this is not the end of God's people: what they were unable to do in their flesh God will accomplish by His Spirit. What remains in the upcoming chapters is the restoration and exaltation of Israel.

Again the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, speak to the children of thy people, and say unto them, When I bring the sword upon a land, if the people of the land take a man of their coasts, and set him for their watchman: If when he seeth the sword come upon the land, he blow the trumpet, and warn the people; Then whosoever heareth the sound of the trumpet, and taketh not warning; if the sword come, and take him away, his blood shall be upon his own head. He heard the sound of the trumpet, and took not warning; his blood shall be upon him. But he that taketh warning shall deliver his soul. But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand. (Ezekiel 33:1-6)

The Roll of the Watchman (1-6): In these verses God revisits Ezekiel's original calling, his ministry as the watchman of Israel (Ezekiel 3:17). The roll of a watchman is described in these verses; he was to warn the people of invading armies by blowing the trumpet to warn the people. The watchman was called to be faithful in fulfilling this

roll; he was not accountable for the response of the people. If the people hearken to the warning of the watchman they will live. However, if they hearken not unto the watchman they will die. Israel did not listen to their watchman; now death has come upon them.

So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me. When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul. Therefore, O thou son of man, speak unto the house of Israel; Thus ye speak, saying, If our transgressions and our sins be upon us, and we pine away in them, how should we then live? Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel? Therefore, thou son of man, say unto the children of thy people, The righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression: as for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall thereby in the day that he turneth from his wickedness; neither shall the righteous be able to live for his righteousness in the day that he sinneth. When I shall say to the righteous, that he shall surely live; if he trust to his own righteousness, and commit iniquity, all his righteousnesses shall not be remembered; but for his iniquity that he hath committed, he shall die for it. Again, when I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; if he turn from his sin, and do that which is lawful and right; If the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die. None of his sins that he hath committed shall be mentioned unto him: he hath done that which is lawful and right; he shall surely live. Yet the children of thy people say, The way of the Lord is not equal: but as for them, their way is not equal. When the righteous turneth from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, he shall even die thereby. But if the wicked turn from his wickedness, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall live thereby. (Ezekiel 33:7-19)

Life and Death set before the Nation (7-19): When God originally called forth His nation out of Egypt He set before them His Law; this Law, if obeyed would grant them life; they would be blessed in all their life (Deut. 28:1-14). However, if they chose not to hearken unto the commandments of the LORD, curses would follow; they would die

(Deut. 28:15-68). All this was the covenant relationship that the nation of Israel had with the LORD, as Moses summarizes this idea he states, *"I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live"* (Deuteronomy 30:19)

Israel's dismal history is one of disobedience to the commandments of God. From the top of Mount Sinai, God told Israel they would be accountable for holding up their end of the covenant relationship between them (Exodus 19:1-8). Thus, God laid out the consequences for not obeying the commandments of their God (Lev. 26:14-39). Israel at the time of Ezekiel had not hearkened unto the voice of God throughout their long miserable history which had now reached its end: the Babylonian Captivity and the pining away in the land of their enemies (Lev. 26:39 cf. Ezek. 33:10). Israel had merited all the curses of the Law; they chose death.

Yet ye say, The way of the Lord is not equal. O ye house of Israel, I will judge you every one after his ways. And it came to pass in the twelfth year of our captivity, in the tenth month, in the fifth day of the month, that one that had escaped out of Jerusalem came unto me, saying, The city is smitten. Now the hand of the LORD was upon me in the evening, afore he that was escaped came; and had opened my mouth, until he came to me in the morning; and my mouth was opened, and I was no more dumb. (Ezekiel 33:20-22)

Ezekiel's Dumb Status Removed (20-22): At the call of Ezekiel's ministry God had stricken him dumb, only speaking when prophesying for the LORD (Ezekiel 3:26, 27). This non-speaking state would remain until a person comes from the destruction of the city announcing the city is fallen (Ezekiel 24:27); this prophecy is now fulfilled (Ezekiel 33:21, 22).

Then the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, they that inhabit those wastes of the land of Israel speak, saying, Abraham was one, and he inherited the land: but we are many; the land is given us for inheritance. Wherefore say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Ye eat with the blood, and lift up your eyes toward your idols, and shed blood: and shall ye possess the land? Ye stand upon your sword, ye work abomination, and ye defile every one his neighbour's wife: and shall ye possess the land? Say thou thus unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; As I live, surely they that are in the wastes shall fall by the sword, and him that is in the open field will I give to the beasts to be devoured, and they that be in the forts and in the

caves shall die of the pestilence. For I will lay the land most desolate, and the pomp of her strength shall cease; and the mountains of Israel shall be desolate, that none shall pass through. Then shall they know that I am the LORD, when I have laid the land most desolate because of all their abominations which they have committed. Also, thou son of man, the children of thy people still are talking against thee by the walls and in the doors of the houses, and speak one to another, every one to his brother, saying, Come, I pray you, and hear what is the word that cometh forth from the LORD. And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness. And, lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: for they hear thy words, but they do them not. And when this cometh to pass, (lo, it will come,) then shall they know that a prophet hath been among them. (Ezekiel 33:23-33)

God's Message from Ezekiel was not Harkened unto (23-33): The people had not recognized all their ungodly disobedience, for they say "the land is given us for inheritance" (vs. 24). However, there was a great deal of difference between Abraham and the apostate nation. Abraham believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness; they however, did not obey God, and therefore they will not possess the land (vs. 25). Ezekiel was unto them as a man that sings a song unto them, a man with entertaining words; they listen and walk away unchanged (vss. 30-33).

EZEKIEL

Chapter 34

The Shepherds of Israel

Introduction: God through Ezekiel now prophesy's against the shepherds of Israel, the apostate leadership of the nation; and looks out to the day in which the LORD will bring His flock into safe pastures of the Millennial Kingdom.

And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD unto the shepherds; Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flocks? Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed: but ye feed not the flock. The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them. And they were scattered, because there is no shepherd: and they became meat to all the beasts of the field, when they were scattered. My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and upon every high hill: yea, my flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth, and none did search or seek after them. Therefore, ye shepherds, hear the word of the LORD; As I live, saith the Lord GOD, surely because my flock became a prey, and my flock became meat to every beast of the field, because there was no shepherd, neither did my shepherds search for my flock, but the shepherds fed themselves, and fed not my flock; Therefore, O ye shepherds, hear the word of the LORD; Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against the shepherds; and I will require my flock at their hand, and cause them to cease from feeding the flock; neither shall the shepherds feed themselves any more; for I will deliver my flock from their mouth, that they may not be meat for them. (Ezekiel 34:1-10)

Prophecy Against the Shepherds of Israel (1-10): Ezekiel is called to prophesy against the Shepherds of Israel, the kings and rulers both spiritual and otherwise. Apart from a ray of light most of the ruling kings over Israel and Judah were corrupt. They ceased to feed the people both physically and spiritually (*Notice what happens when King Josiah*

finds the book of the Law - 2 Chron. 34:14-33). The rulership of all the house of Israel allowed the people to be devoured by the invading armies and be scattered among them. They were scattered because there was no shepherd to watch over them and care for them (vss. 3-6). Therefore God is going to cause the shepherds of Israel to cease feeding His flock (vs. 10 - Zedekiah is the last king - II Kings 24:17). This however is not to be the end of the rulers forever, for God states in the following verses that He will take the flock from the shepherds and place another shepherd over them, even David His servant (vss. 23-24).

This passage of scripture not only deals with the kings that ruled over the nation but also deals with another group of shepherds that ruled over the nation, spiritually. Upon the return of the remnant under Ezra and Nehemiah, another ruling class emerged: the Pharisees, scribes and Sadducees. These religious leaders gained their strength under the time of the Maccabees during, the inter-testament years; so that at the opening of the New Testament era they were fully entrenched in the leadership of the nation. One needs only to read over Matthew 23 to see the problems with this apostate spiritual leadership that were called to feed the people the Word of God. Thus, chapter 34 of Ezekiel gives us prophecy as to our Lord's ministry as the great Shepherd of Israel and in verses 20-22 we see these religious leaders for who they are, the bulls of Bashan (Ps. 22:12). John chapter 10:1-18 deals with this issue extensively. Our Lord came to do the very thing Ezekiel foretold of; He came to seek and save that which was lost (Luke 19:10), and to take from the apostate shepherds the flock of the house of Israel (Matt. 21:43, 19:28, Luke 19:10).

Lastly, this passage of scripture also deals with an individual known as the idol shepherd that will scatter the nation. The antichrist is known as the idol shepherd (Zech. 11:15-17) that seeks to devour the sheep of the house of Israel. When the idol shepherd comes into the land to annihilate the nation of Israel, a Remnant will be scattered throughout the land. The LORD will then return to destroy all Israel's foes and come and gather together all the lost sheep of the house of Israel in the "cloudy and dark day" (Tribulation) and place them safely back into the land (vss. 12-16).

As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land, and feed them upon the mountains of Israel by the rivers, and in all the

inhabited places of the country. I will feed them in a good pasture, and upon the high mountains of Israel shall their fold be: there shall they lie in a good fold, and in a fat pasture shall they feed upon the mountains of Israel. I will feed my flock, and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord GOD. I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick: but I will destroy the fat and the strong; I will feed them with judgment. And as for you, O my flock, thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I judge between cattle and cattle, between the rams and the he goats. Seemeth it a small thing unto you to have eaten up the good pasture, but ye must tread down with your feet the residue of your pastures? and to have drunk of the deep waters, but ye must foul the residue with your feet? And as for my flock, they eat that which ye have trodden with your feet; and they drink that which ye have fouled with your feet. Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD unto them; Behold, I, even I, will judge between the fat cattle and between the lean cattle. Because ye have thrust with side and with shoulder, and pushed all the diseased with your horns, till ye have scattered them abroad; Therefore will I save my flock, and they shall no more be a prey; and I will judge between cattle and cattle. And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd. And I the LORD will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them; I the LORD have spoken it. And I will make with them a covenant of peace, and will cause the evil beasts to cease out of the land: and they shall dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods. And I will make them and the places round about my hill a blessing; and I will cause the shower to come down in his season; there shall be showers of blessing. And the tree of the field shall yield her fruit, and the earth shall yield her increase, and they shall be safe in their land, and shall know that I am the LORD, when I have broken the bands of their yoke, and delivered them out of the hand of those that served themselves of them. And they shall no more be a prey to the heathen, neither shall the beast of the land devour them; but they shall dwell safely, and none shall make them afraid. And I will raise up for them a plant of renown, and they shall be no more consumed with hunger in the land, neither bear the shame of the heathen any more. Thus shall they know that I the LORD their God am with them, and that they, even the house of Israel, are my people, saith the Lord GOD. And ye my flock, the flock of my pasture, are men, and I am your God, saith the Lord GOD. (Ezekiel 34:12-31)

The promise of a new Shepherd over God's Sheep (12-31): What the LORD begins in the Gospel accounts He will accomplish in the "cloudy and dark day" of the Tribulation period. When the LORD, the true Shepherd of Israel (John 10: 1-18) arrived on earth He

began to call out His sheep (Matt. 10:6; 15:24; Luke 15:1-10). However what ended in Israel's rejection of the Kingdom and the ushering in of the Dispensation of Grace will find completion in the Tribulation period when the LORD, the great Shepherd of Israel comes back to gather His sheep. He will guide His sheep through the Tribulation period and lead them to feed in safe pastures of the future Kingdom (Ezekiel 34:11-14 cf. Psalm 23). Once the sheep of Israel are safely in the land of rest, the LORD will place David as their shepherd over the flock of GOD, and the curses that they had merited for not holding to the law contract will be forever lifted (Ezekiel 34:25-31 cf. Deut. 28) dwelling in their land and having access to the house of the LORD forever (Psalm 23 cf. Ezekiel 23-31).

EZEKIEL

Chapter 35

Desolation of Edom

Introduction: Mount Seir is the main mountain in Edom. Idumea is the Greek word for Edom (vs. 15; 36:5); with Bozrah as Edom's capital city. Edomites are the descendants of Esau (Genesis 25:30; 32:3; 36:1). Edom has a history of opposing the nation of Israel as well as being one of 10 nations that confederate against Israel in the future (Psalm 83:6). Edom will be judged for their hatred for God's people both historically and in the future day:

Because thou hast had a perpetual hatred, and hast shed the blood of the children of Israel by the force of the sword in the time of their calamity, in the time that their iniquity had an end: (Ezekiel 35:5).

Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Surely in the fire of my jealousy have I spoken against the residue of the heathen, and against all Idumea, which have appointed my land into their possession with the joy of all their heart, with despiteful minds, to cast it out for a prey. (Ezekiel 36:5)

In that day when the LORD will come and deliver Israel, He will exercise a great battle in the land of Edom:

Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. (Isaiah 63:1)

Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Edom, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because he did pursue his brother with the sword, and did cast off all pity, and his anger did tear perpetually, and he kept his wrath for ever: But I will send a fire upon Teman, which shall devour the palaces of Bozrah. (Amos 1:11-12) (See all of Obadiah, Malachi 1:1-4).

In these chapters we see the prophetic end of Edom. In the past, Edom gloried in the destruction of Israel and in the future they will do the same. However, God will make it so they will be the ones desolate, and Israel will be the blessed in the land (see 36:6-11).

In these chapters one needs to contrast these two peoples, Edom and its end (Chapter 35) and Israel and its end (36:16-38).

Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, set thy face against mount Seir, and prophesy against it, And say unto it, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, O mount Seir, I am against thee, and I will stretch out mine hand against thee, and I will make thee most desolate. I will lay thy cities waste, and thou shalt be desolate, and thou shalt know that I am the LORD. Because thou hast had a perpetual hatred, and hast shed the blood of the children of Israel by the force of the sword in the time of their calamity, in the time that their iniquity had an end: Therefore, as I live, saith the Lord GOD, I will prepare thee unto blood, and blood shall pursue thee: sith thou hast not hated blood, even blood shall pursue thee. Thus will I make mount Seir most desolate, and cut off from it him that passeth out and him that returneth. And I will fill his mountains with his slain men: in thy hills, and in thy valleys, and in all thy rivers, shall they fall that are slain with the sword. I will make thee perpetual desolations, and thy cities shall not return: and ye shall know that I am the LORD. Because thou hast said, These two nations and these two countries shall be mine, and we will possess it; whereas the LORD was there: Therefore, as I live, saith the Lord GOD, I will even do according to thine anger, and according to thine envy which thou hast used out of thy hatred against them; and I will make myself known among them, when I have judged thee. And thou shalt know that I am the LORD, and that I have heard all thy blasphemies which thou hast spoken against the mountains of Israel, saying, They are laid desolate, they are given us to consume. Thus with your mouth ye have boasted against me, and have multiplied your words against me: I have heard them. Thus saith the Lord GOD; When the whole earth rejoiceth, I will make thee desolate. As thou didst rejoice at the inheritance of the house of Israel, because it was desolate, so will I do unto thee: thou shalt be desolate, O mount Seir, and all Idumea, even all of it: and they shall know that I am the LORD. (Ezekiel 35:1-15)

The Desolation of Edom (1-15): This chapter deals entirely with the desolation of Edom. In this chapter the LORD will tell why it is that they are going to be judged by Him. The very thing Edom sought for themselves, the nation of Israel will receive; while the judgment they sought on Israel, Edom will receive.

The reasons for the Destruction and Desolation of Edom are:

1. Edom had a *perpetual hatred* for the children of Israel (vs. 5)

- a. Therefore God will make of Edom a *perpetual desolation* (vss. 6-9)
2. Edom desired the two nations of Israel and these two countries (vs. 10)
3. Edom boasted in the *desolation* of the mountains of Israel (vs. 12)
 - a. Therefore God will make Edom *desolate* (vs. 14-15)

Notice the LORD in these passages is doing to Edom the very thing it sought against Israel; where Edom had a perpetual hatred, God will bring them to perpetual desolation, where Edom boasted in the desolation of Israel, God will bring Edom to desolation.