

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Ezekiel: Effective Ministry To The Spiritually Rebellious

Part L: Ezekiel's Accountability To The Lord For His Ministry

(Ezekiel 33:1-20)

I. Introduction

- A. In our country, elected government officials are constitutionally required to be the servants of the people.
- B. However, in God's interactions with His people, His human messengers are **NOT** supposed to do the will of the people, for God does **NOT** function in a republican or a democratic form of government, but in a theocracy where God is the King and Dictator over His people and over His human messengers.
- C. After Ezekiel's ministry of pronouncing judgments, God recommissioned him to encourage Israel on her reconstruction, exposing the theocratic nature of his ministry. We view Ezekiel's recommissioning for insight:

II. Ezekiel's Accountability To The Lord For His Ministry, Ezekiel 33:1-20.

- A. Similar to his first commissioning in Ezekiel 3:16-27 as a watchman for the Hebrew people in Babylon, God recommissioned Ezekiel for a ministry of encouragement regarding Israel's restoration in Ezekiel 33:1-9:
 - 1. The Lord told Ezekiel to inform his fellow Hebrew captives that if God brought an invading army on the land and the people took a man from their midst and set him up as their watchman, and if he saw the invaders coming and blew a trumpet to warn his people, and if one of his countrymen heard the trumpet but did not heed it to take protective action, he had only himself to blame for his death, Ezekiel 33:1-5.
 - 2. However, if that watchman saw the invaders coming but then failed to blow the trumpet to warn his countrymen, and if any of those people were slain as a result, that watchman would be held accountable by God for failing in his assignment as a watchman for his people, Ezekiel 33:6.
 - 3. Accordingly, God told Ezekiel that He had made Ezekiel a spiritual watchman for the house of Israel, that whenever he heard a word from God's mouth, Ezekiel was to tell Israel's people that message, Ezek. 33:7.
 - 4. Specifically, if God's word to the wicked person was that he would surely die for his sin, but Ezekiel did not speak to warn that wicked man to turn from his way, that wicked man would die in his sin, but God would require his blood at Ezekiel's hand, meaning God would punish Ezekiel by death, Ezekiel 33:8.
 - 5. However, were Ezekiel to warn the wicked to turn from his evil way, but the wicked failed to do so, though the wicked man would die in his sin, Ezekiel would have delivered his life from death, Ezek. 33:9.
- B. Following Ezekiel's recommissioning, the Lord then had him correct a criticism by God's people that the Lord was not dealing with them fairly, and God told Ezekiel to declare this message to his hearers, Ezek. 33:10-20:
 - 1. God told Ezekiel to inform his wayward, fellow Hebrew captives that they had errantly claimed they were just going to rot away and not live because of their sins, Ezekiel 33:10.
 - 2. Rather, God wanted Ezekiel to correct this view, to tell his countrymen that God had no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked was to turn from his sinful way, Ezekiel 33:11a. Thus, Ezekiel was to urge his wicked Hebrew countrymen to turn back and not die in divine punishment, Ezekiel 33:11b.
 - 3. Accordingly, God directed Ezekiel to tell his listeners that the righteousness of the **typically righteous** man would not deliver him from punishment if he chose to sin and the wickedness of the **typically wicked** man would not doom him to be punished if he turned from his wickedness, Ezekiel 33:12.
 - 4. The Lord then gave specific examples of how this principle applied to life so that there would be no confusion about God's perfect equity and justice in dealing with Ezekiel's hearers, Ezekiel 33:13-16.
 - 5. Regardless, the Hebrews in captivity in Babylon were complaining that the way of the Lord was not just when in reality it was the way of the people that was not just: God was not unjustly going to let a **typically righteous** man get away with sinning by counting on his past righteous deeds to excuse his later sin nor was God going to punish the **typically wicked** man for his wickedness if he repented, Ezekiel 33:17-19. Regardless what the people claimed, God would judge them with just judgment in fairness, Ezekiel 33:20.

Lesson: *God told Ezekiel that he was accountable with his life to give God's message regardless of the response of his hearers, and to tell those hearers of God's grace and fairness regardless of the hearers' charges to the contrary.*

Application: *(1) May we messengers of God to His people realize we are not accountable to the people, but to God. (2) May we all realize that God is neither swayed by a typically righteous man not to discipline him if he sins nor is He swayed by a typically sinful man not to reward his repentance. (3) May we also realize that God prefers to deal all men in grace, for He does not take pleasure in destroying the wicked, but in forgiving the truly repentant.*