

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Ezekiel: Effective Ministry To The Spiritually Rebellious Part LI: God's Rebuke For Refusing To Heed His Ministries (Ezekiel 33:21-33)

I. Introduction

- A. To be pleasing to God, one must go beyond believing many truths about God or truths that are found in Scripture actually to **obey** God's Word. However, many times people develop a false kind of spirituality where they circle all around God and His Word but they never actually **obey** it!
- B. The people of Israel in Ezekiel's day were like that: they believed God's promises to Abraham regarding the Promised Land or they even listened to God's prophet Ezekiel minister, but they did not **obey** God's Word.
- C. Ezekiel 33:21-33 clarifies this truth, providing invaluable insight and application for us (as follows):

II. God's Rebuke For Refusing To Heed His Ministries, Ezekiel 33:21-33.

- A. Just before news of Jerusalem's fall to Babylon had reached Ezekiel, the Lord released the divine restriction on Ezekiel's speech, Ezekiel 33:21-22. Ezekiel's prophecy on Jerusalem's fall had been confirmed by its fulfillment, so there was no more need for God to restrict his speech, Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 1293.
- B. With Ezekiel being a *proven* prophet before his listeners, God had him address first the Hebrews still living in Israel and then his fellows Hebrew captives in Babylon on their failure to **obey** God's Word, Ezek. 33:23-33:
 1. God first had Ezekiel critique the Hebrews still living in Israel for claiming to be God's recipients of the Abrahamic Covenant to live in the Promised Land while failing to **obey** Scripture in life, Ezek. 33:23-29:
 - a. The Lord informed Ezekiel that the Hebrews still surviving in the land of Israel following Jerusalem's fall to Babylon were claiming that if Abraham as just one man had been given the land as an inheritance from the Lord, they who were more numerous than Abraham certainly had every right to inherit the land and enjoy God's blessing as had Abraham, Ezekiel 33:23-24.
 - b. However, God directed Ezekiel to critique and pronounce judgment against the wickedness of these Hebrews in the land, sin that Abraham did not commit, Ezekiel 33:25-26, 27-29:
 - i. The Hebrews in the land ate meat with the blood still in it, they worshiped pagan idols, they committed murder, they relied on their sword to kill the innocent, they did detestable things and committed adultery, so God rhetorically asked if they truly deserved to inherit the land like righteous Abraham did, Ezekiel 33:25-26.
 - ii. Accordingly, God predicted He would cause these wicked Hebrews who remained in the land to fall by the sword and give their bodies to be destroyed by the wild animals of the land while striking those who hid in the caves of the countryside with disease, leaving the land desolate of its Hebrews so that they would know that the Lord was God in punishing their sin, Ezekiel 33:27-29.
 2. God then had Ezekiel critique the Hebrews with him in Babylon for listening to Ezekiel while failing to **obey** what God's prophet directed, Ezekiel 33:30-33:
 - a. The Lord told Ezekiel that his fellow Hebrew captives in Babylon were talking among themselves about him, saying, "Come, and hear what the word is that comes from the Lord," Ezekiel 33:30 ESV.
 - b. They would then come as people would come to hear a speaker and sit before the prophet as the people of the Lord and hear what he had to say, but they would not apply it in their lives, Ezekiel 33:31a.
 - c. Ezekiel's listeners voiced devotion to the Lord, but they did not apply his words since they were greedy of unjust gain so as to wrong their neighbors in their business dealings, Ezekiel 33:31b.
 - d. His listeners viewed Ezekiel as someone who did nothing more than sing love songs with a beautiful voice or play an instrument well, for they heard what he said but did not apply it, Ezekiel 33:32.
 - e. Accordingly, when God fulfilled all of Ezekiel's prophecies of judgment, even these spiritually calloused Hebrews in Babylon would know that a prophet of the Lord had been among them, Ezekiel 33:33.

Lesson: (1) God critiqued the Hebrew survivors still living in Israel of claiming to be rightful heirs of the Promised Land like Abraham where unlike him they were guilty of great wickedness, and thus would be punished by the Lord. (2) God critiqued the Hebrew captives in Babylon for pretending to hear Ezekiel minister God's Word while not truly believing He was giving God's truth so as to continue in sin and pretend Ezekiel was merely entertaining them, what would result in their shock when God fulfilled all Ezekiel's words to signal he was God's true prophet.

Application: May we view God's true Word truly taught by God's true messengers as authoritative so as to heed it.