

THE SHEPHERD'S CARE

Ezekiel 33-35

The mighty Niagara River plummets 180 feet at the Falls.

Just before the falls, there are violent, turbulent rapids.

Farther upstream, however, where the river's current flows more gently, boats navigate.

Just before the Welland River empties into the Niagara River, a pedestrian walkway spans the river.

Posted on this bridge's pylons is a warning sign for boaters:

DO YOU HAVE AN ANCHOR? DO YOU KNOW HOW TO USE IT?

There is a point on the Niagara River that is the point of no return.

Once that current takes control, there's no turning back!

Jerusalem was headed for judgment, which was about to bring destruction.

The people would no longer need the message of judgment.

They haven't listened to it anyway; they're not going to believe it now.

After the destruction of the city, people will be discouraged.

Jeremiah's lamentation will be on the lips of all the people.

Everyone will believe that Israel is finished.

"God has certainly abandoned them now."

God wants to assure the people that **He isn't done with them.**

He had to discipline them to get them to come back to Him.

He wants to assure them of His love,
and of His plan to complete His promise.
Ezekiel's structure assures God's people that they can trust Him.

He announces the restoration to console and encourage them to trust God.

Ezekiel's first, initial message (1-32)–a warning: judgment is coming–was fulfilled just as God told them it would be.

Key to change of message – hinge book turns on:

33:21 announcement of fall of Jerusalem:

*“... a man who had escaped from Jerusalem came to me and said, “**The city has fallen!**”*

Based on that fulfillment, . . .

They can trust Ezekiel's 2nd message (33-48) – a promise: God will restore His people–also.

God will fulfill His purpose: He will glorify His name
When Israel sees the whole plan, *ALL* God will do,
they will know He's GOD!

[PROPHECIES AFTER THE FALL OF JERUSALEM 33-48] THE APPOINTMENT OF THE WATCHMAN 33

This time he's spokesman for the fulfillment of *God's blessing* for Israel.

Although destruction won't occur until v. 21,
beginning of chapter anticipates announcement
and prepares for its fulfillment.

Ezekiel's commission:

God appoints Ezekiel as a watchman 33:1-9

The watchman's responsibility:

Ezekiel is responsible to sound the warning concerning the coming judgment.

People's responsibility:

They are accountable for their own response.

Watchman isn't responsible to make people take action

Watchman is to watch and to warn people danger is coming.

The people have to do something about what they hear.

He can't respond for them; *they* have to respond to his cry

We get frustrated because *we* try to control *their* part—the part of the equation *we* aren't responsible for!

We can't control their response!

That's between them and God.

All we can do is sound the warning.

But God DOES hold us accountable for sounding it!

Ezekiel faithfully fulfills the assignment to the end.

But his work isn't over

Ezekiel's message: God is just 33:10-20 Reminder of God's justice

Attitude of people: no longer think judgment won't come on them

They think God doesn't want anything to do with them.

He'll never restore them! **10**

God's answer: He takes no delight in their destruction.

He wants them to turn back to Him and live! **11**

God is faithful in dealing with them.

God's people can turn from Him and go too far.

The result, as for Israel, is physical death.

They don't lose their salvation, but *they may lose their life!*

Both O.T. and N.T. demonstrate that it's possible for God's people to die *physically* because of the public scandal they create when they turn away from God's ways!

Basic principle of God's judgment:

God judges His people according to their present walk.

People who walk in wickedness, He judges.

People who walk in righteousness, He blesses.

Doesn't mean everything always works out the way we *want* it to!

When people change direction,—either way—

God changes His response. 14-15

That's why He calls sinful people to repent and warns righteous people about the danger of a fall!

God Himself answers their question.

Implication: God's people need to turn from their sin and turn back to Him

God doesn't want them to die—God *isn't willing that any should perish!*

Ezekiel's mouth opened 33:21-33

Announcement of the fall of Jerusalem 21

The centerpiece of book! It all revolves around fall of Jerusalem.

The prophet's mouth opened 22

God opens His mouth in preparation for his *new* message

The remnant's attitude 23-24

1st concern: attitude of those left:

“God left them because they were *better* than those carried off”

—“God would surely bless *them!*”

The remnant's sin 25-26

Answer to their pride: reminder of *their* sin.

They *aren't* holier!

The remnant's judgment 27-29

God will judge them for their sin and leave their land desolate.

The remnant's response 30-32

They haven't changed;

they *still* don't pay attention to what God says!

They listen to his words out of curiosity.

They want to hear what he has to say;

but *they don't want to DO what God says!*

Not same today But it's still a danger

Paul warns that in end times people with “itching ears”

—with insatiable curiosity to hear more

—as long as it's the kind of truth they *want* to hear
 —the kind that tickles their curiosity but doesn't
 demand a change of lifestyle
 —that kind of people will rally around teachers who
 will tell them what they *want* to hear
 Their teachers will echo the sentiments of their
 culture, but they won't speak for *God!*
 The people *listen*, but they don't *do!*

Swindoll: “Beware of the temptation to alter your theology instead of adjusting your life. By accomodating one's theology, it is remarkable what the mind can to to remove even the slightest trace of guilt!”

Remnant's acknowledgment:

When judgment comes, they'll know GOD has spoken 33

They still aren't going to obey what he says
 But when judgment comes, *they'll know that GOD has spoken.*

THE SHEPHERDS IN ISRAEL 34

False shepherds 34:1-10

Their shepherds are seeking personal profit,

NOT the people's welfare (good)

They're getting fat at people's expense but don't care about them

They aren't watching out for the people's good.

They allow the people to go on in their sin,
 not caring enough to lead them away from danger.

In fact, not only do they leave the people in danger,
they ravage them themselves, for personal gain!

Therefore, **God will judge them**

True shepherds 34:11-31 **11-16**

In contrast to false shepherds, *God Himself will*
shepherd His people.

What the shepherds haven't done for them GOD HIMSELF
will do!

God will fill void; **He will care for them**, since leaders failed to.
He will correct the wrongs the sheep have done *to each*
other! **17-22**

God will establish David as the true and faithful
shepherd 23-24

God will make a Peace Treaty with them 25-31

God promises to be our shepherd.

When human shepherds fail us, God promises to
fill the void!

***Ps 23: "The LORD's my shepherd; therefore I don't want
for anything!***

When God intervenes, **30** ***Then they will know that I, the
LORD their God, am with them and that they, the house of
Israel, are my people, declares the Sovereign LORD. 31 You
my sheep, the sheep of my pasture, are people, and I am your
God, declares the Sovereign LORD."***

**WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS OF THIS PASSAGE
FOR OUR TIMES?**

What are the implications FOR ISRAEL today?

God still watches over them. *He hasn't changed!*

God will restore them.

God will deal with any nation that harms His people

What are the implications FOR GOD'S PEOPLE (the church) TODAY?

While these promises are specifically directed to Israel in the midst of Babylonian captivity,

God's promises are as true for God's people today. as for Israel.

The situation in the church in the 20th century is very different than that of Israel at the time of the captivity.

God loves and cares for His people today just as much!

He is in control

He will provide all we need

We can trust Him to watch over us.

He wants us to trust Him WE CAN TRUST
GOD IN DARK!

"More secure is no one ever than the loved ones of the Savior"