

Ezekiel 33:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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:

Analysis

This verse continues the watchman theme central to Ezekiel's prophetic ministry. God appoints watchmen—whether prophets or pastors—to warn of spiritual danger, yet individuals bear responsibility for their response. From a Reformed perspective, this illustrates divine sovereignty working through appointed means while preserving human moral agency and accountability. The watchman metaphor emphasizes both the seriousness of ministry (those who fail to warn bear blood guilt) and individual responsibility (those warned but who ignore face self-inflicted consequences). This passage prepares Israel for restoration by establishing foundational principles: God's people must heed His warnings delivered through His appointed messengers.

Historical Context

This passage was delivered during the Babylonian exile (c. 586-571 BCE) after Jerusalem's destruction. The exiled community grappled with theological and practical questions: Why had judgment come? Would restoration occur? How should they live in exile? The historical context of ancient Near Eastern covenant patterns, conquest and exile practices, and prophetic literature provides essential background. Archaeological discoveries from this period illuminate the exile's realities and the return's historical fulfillment. Yet Ezekiel's prophecies extend

beyond immediate historical context to find fuller realization in Christ and the church, with ultimate consummation in the new creation.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does this verse deepen your understanding of God's character, purposes, or ways of working in history?
2. What specific application does this passage call you to make in your current circumstances or spiritual life?
3. How does this Old Testament passage illuminate New Testament teaching about Christ, salvation, or the church?

Interlinear Text

בָּנִי	אֶל	דְּבָרָא	אֵד	מִ	בָּנִי	אֶל	דְּבָרָא	אֵד	מִ	בָּנִי	אֶלְיוֹן	מִ	וְאָמְרָתִךְ
Son	of man	speak	H413	Son	if the people		and say	H413					
H1121	H120	H1696		H1121	H5971		H559						
בָּאָרֶץ	בְּ	כִּי		אָבָבָא	יְאָבָבָא		עַלְיָה		עַלְיָה	וְלֹא	חַדְרָה	וְלֹא	
of the land	H3588	unto them	When I bring	H935	H5921		the sword	H2719			take	H3947	
H776													
עַם	בָּאָרֶץ	בָּאָרֶץ	אִישׁ	אִישׁ	אֶפְקָד		מִקְנָאִים	מִקְנָאִים	וְ	מִקְנָאִים	וְ	אֶת	וְ
if the people	of the land	man	H376	a	H259		of their coasts	and set		of their coasts		H853	
H5971	H776	H376			H7097		H5414						
לְפָנֶיךָ	לְפָנֶיךָ												
H0	him for their watchman	H6822											

Additional Cross-References

Ezekiel 33:30 (Word): 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.

Ezekiel 33:17 (Parallel theme): Yet the children of thy people say, The way of the Lord is not equal: but as for them, their way is not equal.

Ezekiel 14:17 (Word): Or if I bring a sword upon that land, and say, Sword, go through the land; so that I cut off man and beast from it:

Ezekiel 3:11 (Parallel theme): And go, get thee to them of the captivity, unto the children of thy people, and speak unto them, and tell them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear.

Isaiah 62:6 (Parallel theme): I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the LORD, keep not silence,

Zechariah 13:7 (Word): Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the LORD of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones.

Ezekiel 3:27 (Parallel theme): But when I speak with thee, I will open thy mouth, and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; He that heareth, let him hear; and he that forbeareth, let him forbear: for they are a rebellious house.

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