

Ezekiel 33:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

"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." Faithful warning fulfills the watchman's responsibility regardless of response. The phrase "delivered thy soul" means freedom from guilt. Ministers cannot control conversion—that's God's sovereign work—but must faithfully proclaim truth. This liberates from false guilt over people's unbelief while maintaining responsibility for faithful witness. The Reformed understanding of effectual calling explains varied responses: the same message hardens some while saving others, according to God's electing purpose.

Historical Context

Among hard-hearted exiles (585 BC), Ezekiel needed assurance that faithfulness, not success, defined ministerial effectiveness. Many would reject his message, but that didn't negate his calling or make him unfaithful. This principle sustained prophets through generations of rejection. The same word that hardens Pharaoh saves the Israelites; that condemns Israel saves the remnant. God's Word never returns void but accomplishes His purpose—whether salvation or judgment (Isaiah 55:11). This freed ministers from manipulating for results and from despair over limited response.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How does this verse free you from false guilt over others' unbelief while maintaining your responsibility to witness?
2. What is the difference between faithful proclamation and results-oriented manipulation?

Interlinear Text

אֲתָהּ H859	כִּי H3588	הִזָּה רָפָה H2094	רָשָׁע H7563	מִדֶּרֶךְ H1870
		Nevertheless if thou warn	the wicked	from his way
	שֶׁ ב H7725	וְלֹא H3808	שֶׁ ב H7725	מִדֶּרֶךְ H1870
	from it if he do not turn	and he shall not	from it if he do not turn	from his way
וְהָ H1931	בְּעֶוֹנוֹ H5771	יָמָוֶה H4191	וְאֵת H859	הַנְּפֹשׁ H5315
	in his iniquity	he shall die	thy soul	but thou hast delivered

Additional Cross-References

Ezekiel 3:19 (Sin): Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.

Acts 20:26 (Parallel theme): Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men.

Proverbs 15:10 (Parallel theme): Correction is grievous unto him that forsaketh the way: and he that hateth reproof shall die.

Ezekiel 3:21 (Sin): Nevertheless if thou warn the righteous man, that the righteous sin not, and he doth not sin, he shall surely live, because he is warned; also thou hast delivered thy soul.

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