

<When I Bring the Sword>

Ezekiel Chapter Thirty-Three

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~ As we begin this leg of our Spiritual Safari expedition through the entire Word of God, at the time in history we are studying concerning Israel, the city of Jerusalem has been destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, the entire land has been decimated, the remaining children of Israel in the land have all been killed, Solomon's Temple has been crushed and burned by the Chaldean army, Tyre has been judged – and has passed off the world stage, Egypt has fallen, and Pharaoh has been killed – *and* Pharaoh is in hell, according to God. We've had an action-packed previous six chapters. So, as the captives receive confirmation in Babylon of all of these calamities, which have come to pass just as Ezekiel had prophesied, he now turns from repeating that message and begins to tell the captives they are going to have to learn to live in captivity, and make the best of it. Ezekiel is going to attempt to help them; and they're finally going to listen to God's message presented by Ezekiel – which is great. The problem is that most of them will not follow-through in *DOING* what they have promised God they would do. All hearing and little doing. Nothing has changed in the centuries between the prophet Ezekiel and us today. God still uses this same method of installing His messengers, and presenting His message, too. If you have not read at least our previous four reports from this prophecy, you will definitely want to go back and review those now.

Receiving correction and warnings in sound doctrine from the Word of God is almost never easy to accept. Even when warning is given in love, it is much easier to put our hands over our ears, close our eyes and pout, while phrasing pious platitudes and pithy expressions such as, "... *you have it out of context.*" Frankly, the old "*out of context*" argument is as worn out as a thirty-year old shoe. When someone tells me "... *you have this out of context, Andrew,*" I know immediately that I am dealing with someone who is either unwilling or incapable of learning. Of course, they never offer the correct context – they just know I don't have it right. Well, imagine if you were driving down a road and the bridge ahead was fallen. You see a sign that says "*bridge out*" – but you think that means it was written for

someone else at a different time. Maybe it's open again now. Assuming the sign is wrong is foolish thinking that may get you killed. Well, Ezekiel has done a really good job of giving God's message so far; he has gotten everything exactly right.

So, here is where the responsibility of a watchman is spelled out. We are leaving the black-hole of the Bible in chapters two through thirty-two of Ezekiel, and moving into an area that, at least, some Christian's have read once; although it is, generally, equally as misunderstood as the highly neglected thirty previous chapters we have recently traversed. When we get to chapter forty of this prophecy, we'll enter another black-hole that, frankly, no one I know even knows is in the Bible. The messages will get brighter and brighter for the legitimate and genuinely saved child of God; but darker and darker for the lost, apostate religious fraud. We're going from the history of Israel through the judgment of God, and we'll end this leg of the Spiritual Safari through Ezekiel in the Millennial Temple; where true worship is enjoyed. No one ever saw these visions quite the way Ezekiel is going to show them to us on safari.

Remember, Ezekiel is a hard-boiled prophet living in some of the darkest days the world has ever known. When Ezekiel saw the glory of God, he also saw the judgment of God; and, my friend today, we, as sinners, simply cannot rush into the presence of God the Father with unconfessed sins in our lives. Yes, God loves us – but He isn't going to save us – or anyone – by love. When you place your salvation on a merit basis or *ANY* other basis than the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, then you have polluted the Gospel of the grace of God – and you will be severely judged for doing so. It's just that simple. Don't think so? – Well, just keep reading....

1 Again the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

~ Ezekiel sounds like a broken record saying "... *the word of the LORD came unto me....*" He is not going to let us forget that this is not his opinion. This is not some idea Ezekiel dreamed up in the middle of the night. This is not Ezekiel's philosophy or religious theory. This is not even necessarily what Ezekiel wanted to see happen to Israel. No, this is the Word of God

that we are studying in this Spiritual Safari; and it has a message for each of us – then and now. Everything in this book of the Bible from here forward points to the *FUTURE* coming of the literal and physical Kingdom of Heaven, on this literal and physical earth; for the literal and physical nation Israel, where the literal and physical glory of the Lord will be displayed in a literal and physical temple, in the literal and physical Israel, in the literal and physical Jerusalem – where the literal and physical Christ Jesus sits on a literal and physical throne, and literally and physically rules the literal and physical earth. So, let's keep that in mind for the remainder of this prophecy....

2 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:

3 If when he seeth the sword come upon the land, he blow the trumpet, and warn the people;

4 Then whosoever heareth the sound of the trumpet, and taketh not warning; if the sword come, and take him away, his blood shall be upon his own head.

5 He heard the sound of the trumpet, and took not warning; his blood shall be upon him. But he that taketh warning shall deliver his soul.

~ Jerusalem was a walled-city, of course – as most cities were in that day. The king of the land would appoint watchmen that worked in shifts. Jerusalem had three shifts – the Romans later would have four shifts. At the end of each shift, the watchman would change watches by proclaiming, “*all is well!*” Here, God goes back to the commission He gave to Ezekiel in chapters two and three, but now it is likened to the watchman of Ezekiel's day. The watchman on the wall was a highly-skilled professional who could determine the slightest movement on the horizon of the desert by listening to the ground for the slightest movements. Unfortunately, while Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel had been warning that an enemy was coming, the false prophets had been crying “*all is well!*” Well, all wasn't well, obviously; and now the children of Israel are in captivity and their land is gone.

So, in their deep despair and dark dejection, the children of Israel are now given a ray of hope; whereas, before, they had no hope – only condemnation – because of their sins. Here, Ezekiel is looking way down into the future, to the Day of the Lord – when Israel will be regathered from the ends of the earth and placed back into the literal and physical land. That is *NOT* happening today. The church has a hope, too; but not because of gyrations or philosophies of men or something we do on earth. No, our hope rests on the Word of God. That which He has said will happen, will happen – in the *FUTURE*. The return of the Lord Jesus Christ to gather His church and take us to Heaven is the Blessed Hope of the legitimate, genuine child of God. It's not the same hope as Israel, either. Israel's hope is an *earthly* hope; the hope of the church is in the New Jerusalem – in Heaven....

6 But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand.

7 So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me.

8 When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.

~ Verse eight is a great comfort to me, friends; because, see, people will be judged – but I won't be responsible for them, because I am giving the warning in this so-called Spiritual Safari expedition through the entire Word of God. I am teaching it all, friends – anyone accusing me of "*cherry picking*" the Bible or theology is disingenuous. We take it all – and it all has to agree with itself – or it's not the Word of God. I am fulfilling my commission from God as Ezekiel did in his day. The responsibility of the watchman is to warn the wicked they will be judged; and once that warning

goes out, the responsibility of the watchman is complete. If the wicked won't listen and act upon the warning – that's their problem – not mine.

Today, the man teaching the Word of God is not required to get results. People sarcastically ask me all the time, “... well, how many people have you saved, Andrew?” My answer is, “first of all I don't save anyone; but, how many have been led to the Lord by me: I don't know – and I really don't care.” I rejoice when someone accepts Christ as their Savior as a result of something I've said, of course. However, I don't turn in a convert count to Christ; that's His business. All I am going to be asked to do is give an account of *MY OWN* life. The same goes for you, my beloved. You may claim to have led a billion people to the Lord – it won't mean a thing to Jesus – you can just write that down. The only question Jesus will have in this connection is, *“were My people warned by you about their judgment?”* It's a yes or no question. You had *REALLY* better start to think about that, my friends....

9 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.

10 Therefore, O thou son of man, speak unto the house of Israel; Thus ye speak, saying, If our transgressions and our sins be upon us, and we pine away in them, how should we then live?

11 Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?

12 Therefore, thou son of man, say unto the children of thy people, The righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression: as for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall thereby in the day that he turneth from his wickedness; neither shall the righteous be able to live for his righteousness in the day that he sinneth.

13 When I shall say to the righteous, that he shall surely live; if he trust to his own righteousness, and commit iniquity, all his righteousnesses shall

not be remembered; but for his iniquity that he hath committed, he shall die for it.

14 Again, when I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; if he turn from his sin, and do that which is lawful and right;

15 If the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die.

16 None of his sins that he hath committed shall be mentioned unto him: he hath done that which is lawful and right; he shall surely live.

17 Yet the children of thy people say, The way of the Lord is not equal: but as for them, their way is not equal.

~ Isaiah told us that judgment is God's "strange work." God doesn't want anyone to perish. Christ died to save men – not condemn them. Well, for some strange reason, this leads some people to lodge another complaint: that, because God judges everyone alike, He is not fair – and He is not just in judgment. These are the people who honestly and sincerely think they are fine, upstanding citizens. They genuinely believe they are super-duper saints – usually sinlessly perfect – or very close to it. The truth is: they are always totally and completely ignorant of the Word of God, and do err greatly not knowing the Scriptures that saith, "NONE are good but God. NONE are righteous; no, not one." ~

18 When the righteous turneth from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, he shall even die thereby.

~ Now, to be sure, we're not talking about losing salvation. When the child of God gets into sin, then God will judge it *in this life*. Remember, Ezekiel is speaking to Israel about the things of *THIS* life in this *PRESENT* world. Remember, Paul said, "... if we would judge ourselves we shall not be judged." That's where confession of sins in prayer and repentance become a vital part of our relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. John said, "... there is a sin unto death." That's not speaking to the lost man, because the

lost man is *already* dead in trespasses and sins. This speaks of physical and literal death for the child of God who continues in willful disobedience. Candidly, I am amazed at how few Christians catch-on to the fact that God judges their sins *IN THIS LIFE*. They have problem after problem, debt piles up, they experience sickness after sickness, and then more troubles come on top of more trouble; but they'll fight me tooth and nail about the need to get their sins straightened out with the Lord. They insist they are fine with God. You would think the message that things are not right would finally come through – but – it usually doesn't....

19 But if the wicked turn from his wickedness, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall live thereby.

20 Yet ye say, The way of the Lord is not equal. O ye house of Israel, I will judge you every one after his ways.

~ Okay, Ezekiel was a Godly man who had trusted the Lord, but he has been carried away captive to Babylon chained to some of the most evil, wicked and vile men that ever lived in Israel. That leads him to complain. Honestly, because I always am honest with you dear readers, I don't blame Ezekiel for complaining. From that perspective, it *DOES* seem as if God was being unfair. Well, the children of Israel were *ALL* carried away as captives because the nation was being judged. Remember, Jeremiah was permitted to stay in Israel, but Jerusalem is now destroyed and the land is decimated. Frankly, it might have been better to be a slave in Babylon because they were, at least, fed and housed. We have no claim on God, friends. God is not obligated to us. His judgment is righteous. Period. Full stop. This is His world – not ours. Oh, I know this theology is as unpopular as a train wreck. That's not my problem, friends; this is how it is. The total depravity of mankind has caused a catastrophic train wreck in this contemporary lost and dying world. This is what's real. This is the Word of God....

21 And it came to pass in the twelfth year of our captivity, in the tenth month, in the fifth day of the month, that one that had escaped out of Jerusalem came unto me, saying, The city is smitten.

~ Remember, Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel had *ALL* been warning the people that Nebuchadnezzar was going to decimate the whole land of Israel, destroy Jerusalem, kill all the remaining inhabitants, and crush and burn Solomon's Temple. The false prophets have been saying, "... *Isaiah was all wrong, Jeremiah was a false prophet and Ezekiel has no earthly idea what he is talking about.*" Well, Ezekiel had no information coming from back home – until now. So, here comes a man that has escaped the sword, and has no reason to do anything except tell the truth. This information was devastating to the people. The false prophets ran away and hid. The children of Israel were overwhelmed by the news. None of them could believe anything like this could ever happen – but it *DID* happen....

22 Now the hand of the LORD was upon me in the evening, afore he that was escaped came; and had opened my mouth, until he came to me in the morning; and my mouth was opened, and I was no more dumb.

23 Then the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

~ Well, here we go again, as we close out this leg of our Spiritual Safari expedition through the entire Word of God – the Word of the Lord is what this is all about, friends. If you won't understand and will not believe that this is the Word of God, then your best bet would be to forget about Ezekiel, forget about Andrew C. Hunt, renounce your Christianity, and throw your Bible in the garbage can. We're only going to look into the future now as we move forward in this book of the Bible. There's simply *NO WAY* to hang onto the message of the false prophets anymore. They have no credibility. Your choice now is to either believe God or die. To reject this teaching means God will *NOT* let you have the land. To continue on in your sins means abject, literal and physical judgment will continue upon you *IN THIS LIFE*.

I know it's nice to go to church and hear about love. It's nice to hear that God loves us. It's sweet to think that God thinks you are "*to die for*" and that "*God thinks you're awesome.*" "*Love, love, love*" is the order of business in the church of contemporary society. It sells well at the collection plate. Unfortunately, the people who talk the most about love haven't experienced *ANY* change in their hearts or lives as a result of

hearing the Word of God. The “*love, love, love*” crowd are usually the most hateful, gossiping, meanest bunch of people; and they *NEVER* study the Bible. They don’t love me. In fact, they don’t even like me. They don’t *WANT* to study the Bible. They think they know it all, and what they don’t know doesn’t matter to them. They’re morons. They’re hearers only – they never *DO* any of it. They don’t care one whit about studying to show themselves approved.

The Jewish captives at the time in which we are studying now *KNOW* for sure that Ezekiel is a prophet of God. Interestingly, while they refused to believe he was a prophet before, and they now know he is a prophet of God, they still won’t obey God. Unbelief is totally and completely willful, my friends. Unbelief is neither a mental problem nor an intellectual problem. No man alive has a brain big enough to create a hurdle that they can’t get over. The problem is: you have sin in your life that you refuse to give up; and the Word of God condemns it. So, most Christians do as a third-grade child does: they place their hands over their ears, close their eyes and shout, “*blah, blah, blah.*” That was the problem of the Jewish people at the time in which we are studying – and it is exactly what most so-called Christians are doing today. I *KNOW* people *HATE* my Spiritual Safari – but I don’t care – because Ezekiel’s message had no visible effect whatsoever upon his subjects, either.

In closing, as a side note, let me say this: I cannot get as elated about Israel as most people seem to be able to. Many people visit Israel and become so ecstatic that they appear to be on drugs. Israel is not a wonderful land; it’s as dangerous and desolate as any other desolate place in the world. They reject the True and Living God – the Lord Jesus Christ; and, as a result, the judgment of God is upon them. Israel isn’t flowing with milk and honey; the desert isn’t blossoming like a rose – they do not live in peace and safety. There is *NO POSSIBLE WAY* we are seeing prophecy fulfilled in Israel....

24 Son of man, they that inhabit those wastes of the land of Israel speak, saying, Abraham was one, and he inherited the land: but we are many; the land is given us for inheritance.

25 Wherefore say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Ye eat with the blood, and lift up your eyes toward your idols, and shed blood: and shall ye possess the land?

26 Ye stand upon your sword, ye work abomination, and ye defile every one his neighbour's wife: and shall ye possess the land?

27 Say thou thus unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; As I live, surely they that are in the wastes shall fall by the sword, and him that is in the open field will I give to the beasts to be devoured, and they that be in the forts and in the caves shall die of the pestilence.

28 For I will lay the land most desolate, and the pomp of her strength shall cease; and the mountains of Israel shall be desolate, that none shall pass through.

29 Then shall they know that I am the LORD, when I have laid the land most desolate because of all their abominations which they have committed.

30 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.

31 And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness.

32 And, lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: for they hear thy words, but they do them not.

33 And when this cometh to pass, (lo, it will come,) then shall they know that a prophet hath been among them ~

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