**Faith Foundations 2023-2024**

**The Book of Ezekiel**

**Session 20—Ezekiel 33**

**We have reached another turning point in the book of Ezekiel. The previous six chapters of the book all contained oracles against the nations who had set themselves against the people of Israel, Tyre and Egypt in particular. Now, God turns His attention back to His own people and continues to prophesy to them. The impetus for this renewed focus on Israel, as we will see, is the final destruction of Jerusalem at the hands of Babylon. The terrible judgment that had been foretold throughout the entire book of Ezekiel had finally arrived.**

**Read Ezekiel 33:1-6. What analogy does God use to describe Ezekiel’s work in this passage?**

**What is the role of a watchman? What does he need to do when his city is attacked?**

**If the watchman does not fulfill his duty, is he responsible for any lives that are lost in a city? What about if he does his duty, but the people ignore his warnings?**

**Read Ezekiel 33:7-9. How is Ezekiel the watchman for Israel? About what does he need to warn them?**

**Will Ezekiel be responsible for lost lives if he fails in his duty? What about if he fulfills his duty, but the people do not listen to him?**

**How is Ezekiel’s job even more important than that of a city watchman?**

**Read Ezekiel 33:10-11. Why was Israel despairing of its future?**

**What did God say to give his people hope? What did He encourage them to do?**

**Read Ezekiel 33:12-16. If a righteous person sins, will his previous righteousness save him? And if a sinful person repents and does what his right, will his previous sins condemn him?**

**What is the difference between sin that will be forgiven and sin that will not be forgiven?**

**Read Ezekiel 33:17-20. Why were the people claiming that God was not just? Who actually was unjust in this situation, and why?**

**Why was God actually the just one in this situation?**

**Read Ezekiel 33:21-22. What major event did a fugitive come and report to Ezekiel?**

**What happened to Ezekiel after he received this report? How did this fulfill the prophecy God made in Ezekiel 24:26-27?**

**Read Ezekiel 33:23-29. What were the Israelites saying about Abraham? How did this lull them into a false sense of security about their land?**

**How did God disabuse the Israelites of their optimism? Why did He do this?**

**What will God do to the people in Israel? What will He do to the land itself?**

**According to verse 29, why will God do these things?**

**Read Ezekiel 33:30-33. How have the Israelite exiles been treating Ezekiel? Have they been taking his words to heart?**

**What metaphor does God use to describe the effect that Ezekiel’s prophecies have on the people? Why does He describe it this way?**

**How will the people know that a true prophet from God has been among them?**

**Sadly, it all came down to this: the city of Jerusalem was besieged, conquered, and destroyed by the Babylonians, all because of the sins of the Israelites. Their lineage as children of Abraham did not save them; they still suffered the due penalty for their misdeeds. Those who listened to God and His prophets now knew that they had been punished by their Lord, and that their nation was receiving what it deserved. As God has prophesied through Ezekiel and others, the city of Jerusalem now lay in ruins.**

**However, things would not end there. The tone of the book of Ezekiel dramatically shifts after this chapter. Whereas the first thirty-three chapters of the book were very heavy on Law and judgment, the last fifteen are much heavier on Gospel and promises of restoration. God knew that His people had suffered greatly, and He wanted them to know that He had not abandoned them. So He spoke to them with kind and gracious words, and promised that their suffering would not last forever. He would be with them to protect them during their time in exile, and He would restore to them what He had taken away. And of course, as we Christians know, these promises found their ultimate fulfillment in God’s Son Jesus, whose death and resurrection won forgiveness and restoration for all sinners who would trust in Him. We too may suffer now, but God has promised us in Christ that our suffering in this sinful world will not last forever!**