**Ezekiel 33-36**

Renewal of Ezekiel’s Call as Watchman

**33**The word of the Lord came to me: **2**“Son of man, speak to your people and say to them: ‘When I bring the sword against a land, and the people of the land choose one of their men and make him their watchman, **3**and he sees the sword coming against the land and blows the trumpet to warn the people, **4**then if anyone hears the trumpet but does not heed the warning and the sword comes and takes their life, their blood will be on their own head. **5**Since they heard the sound of the trumpet but did not heed the warning, their blood will be on their own head. If they had heeded the warning, they would have saved themselves.**6**But if the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet to warn the people and the sword comes and takes someone’s life, that person’s life will be taken because of their sin, but I will hold the watchman accountable for their blood.’

**7**“Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the people of Israel; so hear the word I speak and give them warning from me. **8**When I say to the wicked, ‘You wicked person, you will surely die,’ and you do not speak out to dissuade them from their ways, that wicked person will die for their sin, and I will hold you accountable for their blood. **9**But if you do warn the wicked person to turn from their ways and they do not do so, they will die for their sin, though you yourself will be saved.

**10**“Son of man, say to the Israelites, ‘This is what you are saying: “Our offenses and sins weigh us down, and we are wasting away because of them. How then can we live?”’ **11**Say to them, ‘As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign Lord, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live. Turn! Turn from your evil ways! Why will you die, people of Israel?’

**12**“Therefore, son of man, say to your people, ‘If someone who is righteous disobeys, that person’s former righteousness will count for nothing. And if someone who is wicked repents, that person’s former wickedness will not bring condemnation. The righteous person who sins will not be allowed to live even though they were formerly righteous.’ **13**If I tell a righteous person that they will surely live, but then they trust in their righteousness and do evil, none of the righteous things that person has done will be remembered; they will die for the evil they have done. **14**And if I say to a wicked person, ‘You will surely die,’ but they then turn away from their sin and do what is just and right - **15**if they give back what they took in pledge for a loan, return what they have stolen, follow the decrees that give life, and do no evil - that person will surely live; they will not die. **16**None of the sins that person has committed will be remembered against them. They have done what is just and right; they will surely live.

**17**“Yet your people say, ‘The way of the Lord is not just.’ But it is their way that is not just. **18**If a righteous person turns from their righteousness and does evil, they will die for it. **19**And if a wicked person turns away from their wickedness and does what is just and right, they will live by doing so. **20**Yet you Israelites say, ‘The way of the Lord is not just.’ But I will judge each of you according to your own ways.”

Jerusalem’s Fall Explained

**21**In the twelfth year of our exile, in the tenth month on the fifth day, a man who had escaped from Jerusalem came to me and said, “The city has fallen!” **22**Now the evening before the man arrived, the hand of the Lord was on me, and he opened my mouth before the man came to me in the morning. So my mouth was opened and I was no longer silent.

**23**Then the word of the Lord came to me: **24**“Son of man, the people living in those ruins in the land of Israel are saying, ‘Abraham was only one man, yet he possessed the land. But we are many; surely the land has been given to us as our possession.’ **25**Therefore say to them, ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Since you eat meat with the blood still in it and look to your idols and shed blood, should you then possess the land? **26**You rely on your sword, you do detestable things, and each of you defiles his neighbor’s wife. Should you then possess the land?’

**27**“Say this to them: ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: As surely as I live, those who are left in the ruins will fall by the sword, those out in the country I will give to the wild animals to be devoured, and those in strongholds and caves will die of a plague. **28**I will make the land a desolate waste, and her proud strength will come to an end, and the mountains of Israel will become desolate so that no one will cross them. **29**Then they will know that I am the Lord, when I have made the land a desolate waste because of all the detestable things they have done.’

**30**“As for you, son of man, your people are talking together about you by the walls and at the doors of the houses, saying to each other, ‘Come and hear the message that has come from the Lord.’ **31**My people come to you, as they usually do, and sit before you to hear your words, but they do not put them into practice. Their mouths speak of love, but their hearts are greedy for unjust gain. **32**Indeed, to them you are nothing more than one who sings love songs with a beautiful voice and plays an instrument well, for they hear your words but do not put them into practice.

**33**“When all this comes true - and it surely will - then they will know that a prophet has been among them.”

The Lord Will Be Israel’s Shepherd

**34**The word of the Lord came to me: **2**“Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel; prophesy and say to them: ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Woe to you shepherds of Israel who only take care of yourselves! Should not shepherds take care of the flock? **3**You eat the curds, clothe yourselves with the wool and slaughter the choice animals, but you do not take care of the flock.**4**You have not strengthened the weak or healed the sick or bound up the injured. You have not brought back the strays or searched for the lost. You have ruled them harshly and brutally. **5**So they were scattered because there was no shepherd, and when they were scattered they became food for all the wild animals. **6**My sheep wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill. They were scattered over the whole earth, and no one searched or looked for them.

**7**“‘Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the Lord: **8**As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign Lord, because my flock lacks a shepherd and so has been plundered and has become food for all the wild animals, and because my shepherds did not search for my flock but cared for themselves rather than for my flock, **9**therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the Lord: **10**This is what the Sovereign Lord says: I am against the shepherds and will hold them accountable for my flock. I will remove them from tending the flock so that the shepherds can no longer feed themselves. I will rescue my flock from their mouths, and it will no longer be food for them.

**11**“‘For this is what the Sovereign Lord says: I myself will search for my sheep and look after them. **12**As a shepherd looks after his scattered flock when he is with them, so will I look after my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places where they were scattered on a day of clouds and darkness. **13**I will bring them out from the nations and gather them from the countries, and I will bring them into their own land. I will pasture them on the mountains of Israel, in the ravines and in all the settlements in the land. **14**I will tend them in a good pasture, and the mountain heights of Israel will be their grazing land. There they will lie down in good grazing land, and there they will feed in a rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. **15**I myself will tend my sheep and have them lie down, declares the Sovereign Lord. **16**I will search for the lost and bring back the strays. I will bind up the injured and strengthen the weak, but the sleek and the strong I will destroy. I will shepherd the flock with justice.

**17**“‘As for you, my flock, this is what the Sovereign Lord says: I will judge between one sheep and another, and between rams and goats. **18**Is it not enough for you to feed on the good pasture? Must you also trample the rest of your pasture with your feet? Is it not enough for you to drink clear water? Must you also muddy the rest with your feet? **19**Must my flock feed on what you have trampled and drink what you have muddied with your feet?

**20**“‘Therefore this is what the Sovereign Lord says to them: See, I myself will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. **21**Because you shove with flank and shoulder, butting all the weak sheep with your horns until you have driven them away, **22**I will save my flock, and they will no longer be plundered. I will judge between one sheep and another. **23**I will place over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he will tend them; he will tend them and be their shepherd.**24**I the Lord will be their God, and my servant David will be prince among them. I the Lord have spoken.

**25**“‘I will make a covenant of peace with them and rid the land of savage beasts so that they may live in the wilderness and sleep in the forests in safety. **26**I will make them and the places surrounding my hill a blessing. I will send down showers in season; there will be showers of blessing. **27**The trees will yield their fruit and the ground will yield its crops; the people will be secure in their land. They will know that I am the Lord, when I break the bars of their yoke and rescue them from the hands of those who enslaved them. **28**They will no longer be plundered by the nations, nor will wild animals devour them. They will live in safety, and no one will make them afraid. **29**I will provide for them a land renowned for its crops, and they will no longer be victims of famine in the land or bear the scorn of the nations. **30**Then they will know that I, the Lord their God, am with them and that they, the Israelites, are my people, declares the Sovereign Lord. **31**You are my sheep, the sheep of my pasture, and I am your God, declares the Sovereign Lord.’”

A Prophecy Against Edom

**35**The word of the Lord came to me: **2**“Son of man, set your face against Mount Seir; prophesy against it **3**and say: ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: I am against you, Mount Seir, and I will stretch out my hand against you and make you a desolate waste. **4**I will turn your towns into ruins and you will be desolate. Then you will know that I am the Lord.

**5**“‘Because you harbored an ancient hostility and delivered the Israelites over to the sword at the time of their calamity, the time their punishment reached its climax, **6**therefore as surely as I live, declares the Sovereign Lord, I will give you over to bloodshed and it will pursue you. Since you did not hate bloodshed, bloodshed will pursue you. **7**I will make Mount Seir a desolate waste and cut off from it all who come and go. **8**I will fill your mountains with the slain; those killed by the sword will fall on your hills and in your valleys and in all your ravines. **9**I will make you desolate forever; your towns will not be inhabited. Then you will know that I am the Lord.

**10**“‘Because you have said, “These two nations and countries will be ours and we will take possession of them,” even though I the Lord was there, **11**therefore as surely as I live, declares the Sovereign Lord, I will treat you in accordance with the anger and jealousy you showed in your hatred of them and I will make myself known among them when I judge you. **12**Then you will know that I the Lord have heard all the contemptible things you have said against the mountains of Israel. You said, “They have been laid waste and have been given over to us to devour.”**13**You boasted against me and spoke against me without restraint, and I heard it.**14**This is what the Sovereign Lord says: While the whole earth rejoices, I will make you desolate. **15**Because you rejoiced when the inheritance of Israel became desolate, that is how I will treat you. You will be desolate, Mount Seir, you and all of Edom. Then they will know that I am the Lord.’”

Hope for the Mountains of Israel

**36**“Son of man, prophesy to the mountains of Israel and say, ‘Mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord. **2**This is what the Sovereign Lord says: The enemy said of you, “Aha! The ancient heights have become our possession.”’**3**Therefore prophesy and say, ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Because they ravaged and crushed you from every side so that you became the possession of the rest of the nations and the object of people’s malicious talk and slander,**4**therefore, mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Sovereign Lord: This is what the Sovereign Lord says to the mountains and hills, to the ravines and valleys, to the desolate ruins and the deserted towns that have been plundered and ridiculed by the rest of the nations around you - **5**this is what the Sovereign Lord says: In my burning zeal I have spoken against the rest of the nations, and against all Edom, for with glee and with malice in their hearts they made my land their own possession so that they might plunder its pastureland.’ **6**Therefore prophesy concerning the land of Israel and say to the mountains and hills, to the ravines and valleys: ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: I speak in my jealous wrath because you have suffered the scorn of the nations. **7**Therefore this is what the Sovereign Lord says: I swear with uplifted hand that the nations around you will also suffer scorn.

**8**“‘But you, mountains of Israel, will produce branches and fruit for my people Israel, for they will soon come home. **9**I am concerned for you and will look on you with favor; you will be plowed and sown, **10**and I will cause many people to live on you - yes, all of Israel. The towns will be inhabited and the ruins rebuilt. **11**I will increase the number of people and animals living on you, and they will be fruitful and become numerous. I will settle people on you as in the past and will make you prosper more than before. Then you will know that I am the Lord. **12**I will cause people, my people Israel, to live on you. They will possess you, and you will be their inheritance; you will never again deprive them of their children.

**13**“‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Because some say to you, “You devour people and deprive your nation of its children,” **14**therefore you will no longer devour people or make your nation childless, declares the Sovereign Lord. **15**No longer will I make you hear the taunts of the nations, and no longer will you suffer the scorn of the peoples or cause your nation to fall, declares the Sovereign Lord.’”

Israel’s Restoration Assured

**16**Again the word of the Lord came to me: **17**“Son of man, when the people of Israel were living in their own land, they defiled it by their conduct and their actions. Their conduct was like a woman’s monthly uncleanness in my sight. **18**So I poured out my wrath on them because they had shed blood in the land and because they had defiled it with their idols. **19**I dispersed them among the nations, and they were scattered through the countries; I judged them according to their conduct and their actions. **20**And wherever they went among the nations they profaned my holy name, for it was said of them, ‘These are the Lord’s people, and yet they had to leave his land.’ **21**I had concern for my holy name, which the people of Israel profaned among the nations where they had gone.

**22**“Therefore say to the Israelites, ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: It is not for your sake, people of Israel, that I am going to do these things, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you have gone. **23**I will show the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, the name you have profaned among them. Then the nations will know that I am the Lord, declares the Sovereign Lord, when I am proved holy through you before their eyes.

**24**“‘For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land. **25**I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. **26**I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. **27**And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. **28**Then you will live in the land I gave your ancestors; you will be my people, and I will be your God. **29**I will save you from all your uncleanness. I will call for the grain and make it plentiful and will not bring famine upon you. **30**I will increase the fruit of the trees and the crops of the field, so that you will no longer suffer disgrace among the nations because of famine. **31**Then you will remember your evil ways and wicked deeds, and you will loathe yourselves for your sins and detestable practices. **32**I want you to know that I am not doing this for your sake, declares the Sovereign Lord. Be ashamed and disgraced for your conduct, people of Israel!

**33**“‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: On the day I cleanse you from all your sins, I will resettle your towns, and the ruins will be rebuilt. **34**The desolate land will be cultivated instead of lying desolate in the sight of all who pass through it.**35**They will say, “This land that was laid waste has become like the garden of Eden; the cities that were lying in ruins, desolate and destroyed, are now fortified and inhabited.” **36**Then the nations around you that remain will know that I the Lord have rebuilt what was destroyed and have replanted what was desolate. I the Lord have spoken, and I will do it.’

**37**“This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Once again I will yield to Israel’s plea and do this for them: I will make their people as numerous as sheep, **38**as numerous as the flocks for offerings at Jerusalem during her appointed festivals. So will the ruined cities be filled with flocks of people. Then they will know that I am the Lord.”