



PITWM VERSE BY VERSE

EZEKIEL 33:12-20

LESSON: THE WAY OF THE LORD IS JUST—March 8, 2026

INTRODUCTION:

Ezekiel warns the exiles from Judah. **Chapter 33:1–6** ¹God compares a prophet to a city watchman who scans the horizon, blows the trumpet, and warns the people when danger approaches. If the citizens ignore the trumpet, their loss is on their own heads; if the watchman stays silent, their loss is still real—but the silent watchman bears guilt for their deaths.

33:7–11 The Lord tells Ezekiel, *“I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel.”* If he warns the wicked and they refuse to turn, he is innocent. If he keeps quiet, their blood is on him. Israel complains that its sins are too heavy to bear. God answers, *“I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked...turn back, turn back from your evil ways for why will you die O house of Israel?”*

LESSON: I. EZEKIEL 33:12-16

33:12 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.** Ezekiel was called Son of man, and he was to give warning to the children of his people: the Israelites. He warns the exiled captives of Judah in Babylon, so they could change. He tells them, A righteous life cannot nullify (abolish) ongoing sin. How is that? God got tired of their mess. There was no repentance or turning away from sin because they thought they were safe. James 4:17 says *“So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.”* Romans 6:1-2 *“What shall we say [to all this]? Should we continue in sin and practice sin as a habit so that [God’s gift of] grace may increase and overflow? Certainly not! How can we, the very ones who died to sin, continue to live in it any longer?”* (AMP). To call yourself righteous is one thing, but to live a righteous life is another. If you are joined to Christ, change must come about. *“Therefore...‘If someone who is righteous disobeys, that person’s former righteousness will count for nothing... The righteous person who sins will not be allowed to live even though they were formerly righteous.’* God is laying out the consequences of their actions when they sin. Have we slipped up and not repented? When we are called His children, we are to faithfully come back to Him in humility. If one turns from his righteousness and commits iniquity, he will face judgment.

Yet a wicked life of the wicked can be wiped clean by sincere repentance; *someone who is wicked repents, that person’s former wickedness will not bring condemnation.* This shows a changed behavior—returning pledges, restoring theft, and walking in God’s ways. God sees the heart; we look at the outside. The key is sincere repentance that will start on the inside, and will show on the outside as well. It’s like the spirit of wickedness was holding the person down,

¹ <https://mail.biblehub.com/chaptersummaries/ezekiel/33.htm>
<https://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>





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but it had to flee because of God's touch, and that person's life has been rearranged by the power of the Holy Spirit. He has been wiped clean without any lingering residue; his walk and talk became different (a changed behavior).

33:13 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. The righteous person will surely live, however he must not depend upon his own righteousness. The Word says in Proverbs 3:5-6 *"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding, (but) In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths."* This implies that our own righteousness does not matter when it has no connection with the Source because it had led him to be prideful; which is a sin. Look what I've done! It was all about them. Therefore, all of their righteousness will not be remembered. So, the warning is that he shall die for it! Yes, *"...the righteous sinned, and they expected their past righteousness to save them."* Ezekiel says *"none of their righteous acts will be remembered. I will destroy them for their sins."*

33:14 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;— If the doctor tells you to change your eating habits; your diet because you're going to die, what is it that you just heard? - that you should change or the part you're gonna die? God's warnings are for our good whomever it may come from! Here Ezekiel is speaking to the wicked: *"If the wicked stay in the state that they're in, he will surely die,"* however *"If he turn from his sin, and do that which is lawful and right..."* Turning can be a process or it can be instantaneous. But you've got to turn from sin! They are in that place because of their sin! The next verse speaks of what they have to turn from.

33:15 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. A wicked person may repent of his sins. And then he may do what is right. If so, the Lord will forgive his sins. That person will not die because of past sins. When possible, that person must undo the wrong things that he has done. And he must not continue to sin. He must do what is right: restore the pledge, give what you've stolen, walk in God's statues without sinning. Then, as he depends on the Lord, he will surely live and not die in his sin.

33:16 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. This verse hinges on the wicked doing the right thing—restore the pledge, give what you've stolen, walk in God's statues without sinning, then their past sins will be forgiven, and they will live because they have done right. And none of the sins he had committed will be mentioned to him. He's living a brand-new life!

II. EZEKIEL 33:17-20

33:17 Yet the children of thy people say, The way of the Lord is not equal: but as for them, their way is not equal. The people didn't think that God's way was "Just!" They thought it should have gone another way—their way. God wasn't being equal (fair; right; just). They were exiled from their home and God did it. They still had not recognized that they played apart in God's decision because of disobedience; sin. This was the human part of them, but how many times





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does a parent need to tell you that you are going in the wrong direction or path before you get it, and turn around? The conclusion is that their way was not “Just!” Instead of examining their own lives, they’re examined the Creator!

33:18 When the righteous turneth from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, he shall even die thereby. The Word of God speaks of a falling away in the last days (2Thess.2:3). Thereby stay close to the fire; stay praying; continue to forgive, for this verse continues to warn us of turning from your righteousness, and committing sin, you will die in your sin. This did not seem fair to the exiles. They thought that the good deeds of the past would save them, however, it didn't. How are we enduring? Matthew 24:13 says *“But he who endures to the end shall be saved.”* Stay committed to Christ!

33:19 But if the wicked turn from his wickedness, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall live thereby. Suppose the wicked people stop doing bad deeds. Then they do what is right and fair. They will live because of the good deeds that they do. Is that fair? Well God says it is. He's a longsuffering God, patiently waiting on all of us (stiff-necked people) to turn from our wicked ways! But what's important is the current state of that person life is to be in right standing with God in the end to live. Well done thy good and faithful servant!

33:20 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. This reminds me of the quote and play by James Weldon Johnson—*“Your arms are too short to box with God.”* However, Numbers 11:23 says *“The Lord answered Moses, “Is the Lord’s arm too short? Now you will see whether or not what I say will come true for you” (NIV).* God is not mincing with words. He mean what He says, and says what He mean! The Lord is a just and fair judge to the house of Israel and to all of His creation! God says I will be your judge! *“I will judge you; every one after his ways.”* So, people will get what they deserve.

SUMMARY:

12 A righteous life cannot nullify ongoing sin, yet a wicked life can be wiped clean by sincere repentance that shows itself in a changed behavior. **13** If the righteous trust in his own righteousness, and commit sin, all his righteousness will not be remembered; but he will die for his sin he committed. **14** If the wicked stay in the state that they're in, he will surely die,” however If he turns from his sin, and do that which is lawful and right...**15** restore the pledge, give what you've stolen, walk in God's statutes without sinning, then he shall not die. And **16** none of his sins he had committed will be mentioned unto him: for he had done what was lawful and right, and he shall surely live (**33:12-16**).

17 Yet the people say, the way of the Lord is not just, but it's their way that's 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 say, the way of the Lord is not just. O house of Israel, I will judge each of you according to his ways (**33:17-20**).

