

Dr. Leslie Allen, Daniel, Session 15, Part 5 -- The Tide Turns (Ezek 33:1-33) Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Allen, Ezekiel, Session 15, Part 5 – The Tide Turns (Ezek 33:1-33), Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Allen's lecture focuses on Ezekiel 33:1-33, marking a turning point from judgment to salvation for the exiles. After the fall of Jerusalem, the message shifts to one of hope, though tempered with a call for moral responsibility. **Ezekiel's role transforms from announcing inevitable doom to warning against potential consequences of sin, symbolized as "judgment with a small j."** This new phase emphasizes the exiles' active participation in preparing for restoration through righteous living, hearkening back to earlier messages in Ezekiel and Leviticus. **The lecture also explores the exiles' complex relationship with those remaining in the land, addressing their claims of divine favor and Ezekiel's immense popularity, alongside their tendency to selectively heed his prophetic warnings.** Ultimately, the exiles are cautioned against complacency, reminding them that true hearing requires action, lest they face the consequences of ignoring the sentry's call.

2. 10 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Allen, Ezekiel, Session 1 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Old Testament → Major Prophets → Ezekiel).



**Allen_Ezekiel_Sessi
on15.mp3**

3. Briefing Document: Allen, Ezekiel, , Session 15, Part 5 – The Tide Turns (Ezek 33:1-33)

Okay, here's a briefing document summarizing the main themes and ideas from Dr. Leslie Allen's lecture on Ezekiel 33:1-33, focusing on the turning point in Ezekiel's message from judgment to salvation, the concept of "judgment with a small j," and the exiles' responsibility in light of God's grace.

Briefing Document: Ezekiel 33 - The Tide Turns

Main Theme: Ezekiel 33 marks a crucial shift in the book of Ezekiel, transitioning from pronouncements of impending judgment (specifically the fall of Jerusalem) to a message of hope, restoration, and *conditional* salvation for the exiles. This transition emphasizes that while radical judgment (capital J) has occurred, a lesser judgment (small j) remains a possibility, contingent on the people's moral and spiritual responsibility.

Key Ideas and Facts:

- **Shift from Judgment to Salvation:** The fall of Jerusalem, while a devastating event, serves as a prelude to a new phase in God's dealings with his people – a phase of reversal and gracious renewal. "Judgment gives way to salvation from now on."
- **Judgment with a Small "j":** Even with the promise of salvation, the possibility of "judgment with a small j" persists. This refers to consequences for sin, emphasizing the conditional nature of God's grace. It's likened to a doctor warning a patient about lifestyle choices that could lead to future health problems, a situation that is escapable/avoidable as opposed to an incurable disease. "There are if the people of God do sin, then there are consequences, and there needs to be a warning about that."
- **Moral and Spiritual Responsibility:** A recurring theme is the exiles' ongoing responsibility to live righteously, even during their exile. Salvation isn't a passive waiting game; they must actively "choose the good and resist the bad" to prepare for the "coming fullness of salvation." "They are to live now in the light of their hope. They are to choose the good and resist the bad in the way they live their lives as an appropriate way to prepare for the coming fullness of salvation." This builds on earlier themes from Chapters 3 and 18. "Yes, a message of salvation, but Israel still has to mind its Ps and Qs, and honor God in the way that they live."

- **The Watchman/Sentry Metaphor (Ezekiel as Sentry):** Ezekiel's role is redefined as a watchman or sentry, warning the exiles to stay on the "straight and narrow." This metaphor, drawn from earlier passages, emphasizes the prophet's responsibility to deliver God's warnings, and the people's responsibility to heed them. Failure to warn leads to the sentry being held responsible. "If the sentinel sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet so that the people are not warned, and the sword comes and takes any of them, they are taken away in their iniquity, but their blood I will require at the sentinel's hand."
- **God's Desire for Life:** God is presented as wanting the wicked to turn from their ways and live. This is evident in the quote: "Say to them as I live, says the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from their ways and live." This is meant to challenge the exile's perception of themselves as essentially already dead.
- **Relevance of Leviticus and Covenant Curses:** The lecture emphasizes that there is no "once and for all" ticket and cites Leviticus 18:5 in making this argument: "You shall keep my statutes and my ordinances, by doing so you shall live". The judgment against those remaining in the land (Ezekiel 33:27-29) draws heavily from the curses in Leviticus 26, demonstrating that covenant curses are the result when the covenant is broken through disobedience.
- **The News of Jerusalem's Fall:** The arrival of a survivor with news of Jerusalem's fall in Ezekiel 33:21 is dated to January 585 BC, later than expected if Jerusalem fell in 587 or 586 BC, and this is a pivotal moment. It is followed by Ezekiel's regaining his ability to speak freely, symbolizing the shift in his message.
- **Judgment on Those Remaining in the Land:** Ezekiel delivers a message of judgment against those who remained in the land of Israel, who believed their presence there proved they were the true people of God. Ezekiel refutes this, highlighting their moral corruption and reliance on violence. He counters their interpretation of Abraham's legacy and applies the curses of Leviticus 26 to their situation.

- **Ezekiel's Popularity and Superficial Hearing:** Ezekiel's popularity among the exiles is explored, but the lecture suggests that many were drawn to his positive messages while ignoring the warnings and provisos. They treated him like an entertainer, hearing the pleasant sounds but not truly heeding the message, much like those who heard the trumpet but failed to act in the watchman parable. "To them, you are like a singer of love songs, one who has a beautiful voice and plays well on an instrument...They hear your words, but they will not obey them, for flattery is on their lips."
- **Connection to New Testament:** Dr. Allen draws parallels to New Testament concepts, such as the judgment seat of Christ and the idea that Christians can experience providential judgment in this life (1 Corinthians 11:30). The warning to continue in God's kindness (Romans 11:22) and the warnings in Hebrews are also cited as examples of "judgment with a small j" in the New Testament era. The failure to act on Jesus' words in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 7:26) is a final parallel cited to conclude the lecture.

In essence, Ezekiel 33 is about second chances, but with a stern reminder that grace requires responsibility. The exiles have a future, but it hinges on their willingness to embrace a life of obedience and moral integrity.

4. Study Guide: Allen, Ezekiel, , Session 15, Part 5 – The Tide Turns (Ezek 33:1-33)

Ezekiel 33: The Tide Turns - Study Guide

Quiz

Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. What major shift occurs in the book of Ezekiel starting in chapter 33, and how does it relate to the fall of Jerusalem?
2. What is "judgment with a small j" according to Dr. Allen, and how does it differ from the "radical judgment" seen earlier in Ezekiel?
3. According to Dr. Allen, what role does moral and spiritual responsibility play in the relationship between God and the exiles?
4. Explain the metaphor of the sentry in Ezekiel 33:1-9. Who does the sentry represent, and what is their responsibility?
5. How does Ezekiel 33:10-11 challenge the exiles' perception of their situation and God's intentions towards them?
6. What is the main point of Ezekiel 33:12-20 regarding righteousness and wickedness?
7. Why was the date marking the arrival of the survivor with news of Jerusalem's fall not placed at the beginning of Ezekiel 33?
8. How did the lifting of Ezekiel's speaking ban symbolize a shift in his message?
9. What accusation does Ezekiel level against those who remained in the land of Israel after the exile, and how does he challenge their claim to the land?
10. How does the passage criticize the people who came to listen to Ezekiel, and how does it relate to the sentry metaphor?

Quiz Answer Key

1. The book shifts from focusing on the impending judgment and fall of Jerusalem to a message of hope, renewal, and eventual salvation. This shift occurs after the news of Jerusalem's fall is received, signaling a new phase in God's dealings with his people.

2. "Judgment with a small j" refers to the consequences of sin that God's people may still experience even after the major judgment of Jerusalem's fall. It's a warning about unhealthy spiritual lifestyles, in contrast to the "radical judgment" which was absolute and inescapable destruction.
3. Moral and spiritual responsibility is a necessary part of the new bond between God and the exiles. While God offers grace and salvation, the exiles must actively choose good and resist evil to prepare for the fullness of restoration.
4. The sentry represents Ezekiel, the prophet. His responsibility is to warn the people of impending danger (God's judgment), so they can take action to avoid it.
5. Ezekiel 33:10-11 challenges the exiles' despairing view of themselves as virtually dead in exile. God assures them that even in exile they have the opportunity to live and thrive if they maintain a moral and spiritual lifestyle.
6. Ezekiel 33:12-20 emphasizes individual responsibility. Past righteousness is no guarantee of future salvation if one sins, and past wickedness doesn't prevent one from finding life through repentance and righteous actions.
7. The date was placed later in the chapter to give priority to the message in verses 1-20, which emphasizes the exiles' obligation to live good lives despite the good news of potential salvation. The date was connected to the specific event of the survivor's arrival.
8. The lifting of Ezekiel's speaking ban symbolized the transition from delivering messages of inevitable judgment to conveying messages of life and salvation. It signifies that Ezekiel could now speak freely and openly about hope and restoration.
9. Ezekiel accuses those remaining in the land of religious and moral corruption, including idolatry, bloodshed, and injustice. He argues that their actions contradict their claim to the land based on their supposed connection to Abraham.
10. The passage criticizes the people for treating Ezekiel as an entertainer, enjoying his words without truly heeding the warnings and acting on them. This relates to the sentry metaphor because they hear the "trumpet" (Ezekiel's message) but fail to take warning and change their behavior.

Essay Questions

1. Discuss the significance of the fall of Jerusalem as a turning point in the book of Ezekiel, analyzing how it shifts the focus from judgment to potential restoration and renewal.
2. Explore the concept of "judgment with a small j" in Ezekiel 33, comparing and contrasting it with the "radical judgment" described earlier in the book. How does this concept reflect the complex relationship between God's grace and human responsibility?
3. Analyze the extended metaphor of the sentry in Ezekiel 33:1-9. What does this metaphor reveal about the role and responsibilities of the prophet in relation to God and the people?
4. Examine the conflict between the exiles in Babylon and those who remained in the land of Israel after the exile, as presented in Ezekiel 33. How does Ezekiel address this conflict, and what does it reveal about the nature of true faithfulness and covenant relationship with God?
5. Evaluate the criticism leveled against the people who listened to Ezekiel's prophecies without truly heeding them (Ezekiel 33:30-33). What does this critique suggest about the nature of true hearing and obedience, and how does it relate to the message of the book as a whole?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Exile:** The forced removal of people from their homeland, specifically referring to the deportation of the Israelites to Babylon.
- **Restoration:** The act of returning something to its former condition, referring to the hope of the Israelites returning to their land and rebuilding their nation.
- **Judgment (Capital J):** Refers to God's absolute and decisive punishment, particularly the destruction of Jerusalem in 587 BCE.
- **Judgment (Small j):** Refers to the consequences of individual or communal sins that can still be avoided through repentance and righteous living, even after the major judgment.
- **Sentry/Watchman:** A person appointed to keep watch and warn of impending danger. In Ezekiel, it refers to the prophet's role in warning the people of God's judgment.
- **Moral Responsibility:** The obligation of individuals and communities to adhere to ethical and righteous behavior in accordance with God's law and will.
- **Spiritual Responsibility:** The obligation to maintain a healthy relationship with God through worship, obedience, and seeking his will.
- **Leviticus 26:** The chapter in Leviticus that outlines the blessings for obedience to God's covenant and the curses for disobedience.
- **Covenant:** A binding agreement between God and his people, outlining mutual responsibilities and promises.
- **Providential Punishment:** Punishment that is of God, ordained by God.
- **Babylon:** The city and empire to which the Israelites were exiled.

5. FAQs on Allen, Ezekiel, , Session 15, Part 5 – The Tide Turns (Ezek 33:1-33), Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions: Ezekiel 33

Here are some frequently asked questions about Ezekiel 33, based on Dr. Allen's lecture:

1. How does Ezekiel 33 mark a shift in the book's overall message?

Ezekiel 33 signals a transition from primarily focusing on the impending and inevitable judgment (Judgment with a capital 'J') culminating in the fall of Jerusalem to a message emphasizing hope, renewal, and eventual salvation for the exiles. While judgment remains a factor (judgment with a small 'j'), it is now presented in the context of individual and communal moral responsibility and choices. The tone shifts from announcing unavoidable doom to offering the opportunity for life and restoration through repentance and righteous living.

2. What does Dr. Allen mean by "judgment with a small j" and how does it differ from the earlier judgment in Ezekiel?

"Judgment with a small j" refers to the providential consequences of sin that are still possible *after* the major judgment of Jerusalem's fall. It represents a more individual and group-level accountability where the exiles have the ability to choose right actions and avoid negative outcomes. This contrasts with the earlier judgment, where the fall of Jerusalem represented a radical, inescapable end to everything. Dr. Allen uses the analogy of a doctor giving different prognoses to patients: one incurable, the other preventable with lifestyle changes.

3. What is Ezekiel's new role as a "sentinel" and how does it relate to the exiles' responsibility?

Ezekiel's role as a sentinel or watchman is to warn the exiles of the consequences of their actions and to urge them to live righteously. He is responsible for communicating God's message, giving the people an opportunity to turn from wickedness and embrace new life. However, the exiles have a corresponding responsibility to heed the warning, choose the good, and resist evil. Their lives depend on both Ezekiel faithfully delivering the message and them actively responding to it.

4. How do the exiles perceive their situation, and how does God challenge this perception in Ezekiel 33:10-11?

The exiles view themselves as being in a state of despair and virtual death due to God's punishment for their sins. They feel weighed down by their transgressions and believe they are wasting away. God challenges this perception by asserting that even in exile, they have the opportunity to live and experience the beginnings of new life. He emphasizes that He takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked and desires for them to turn from their evil ways and live, highlighting His role as a defender of His people even in exile.

5. What is the significance of the news of Jerusalem's fall arriving in Ezekiel 33, and why is the date mentioned seemingly out of sequence?

The arrival of the news of Jerusalem's fall confirms the prophecies of doom that Ezekiel had been delivering, marking a definitive end to an era. The date, while seemingly out of sequence, is specifically tied to the arrival of the survivor and this particular incident. Dr. Allen posits that the placement of the all-important message in 33:1-19 was prioritized.

6. What message is Ezekiel given regarding those who remained in the land of Israel, and how does it relate to the exiles?

Ezekiel receives a message of judgment for those who remained in the land of Israel after the exile. These people falsely believed that their continued presence in the land signified God's favor and that the exiles were rejected. Ezekiel's message challenges their claim, pointing out their moral corruption and stating that they will face further desolation. This serves as a message of comfort and assurance for the exiles, reaffirming that God is with them despite their exile.

7. Why were people listening to Ezekiel and why was he so popular?

Ezekiel was popular among the exiles because he began to deliver messages of salvation and hope for new life, a stark contrast to his previous pronouncements of doom. His words offered comfort and the possibility of a better future. However, many were drawn to him like they would be to an entertainer, enjoying his beautiful voice and captivating delivery without truly internalizing the warnings and obligations that accompanied his message.

8. How does Ezekiel 33 conclude with a reminder of the prophet's role and the importance of heeding his message?

The chapter concludes by highlighting the exiles' superficial engagement with Ezekiel's message. They enjoyed his preaching but failed to obey or act upon it, selectively hearing the positive aspects while ignoring the necessary warnings and calls to righteous living. This reflects back on Ezekiel's role as a sentinel, emphasizing that hearing the message is not enough; true hearing involves taking heed, changing one's ways, and preparing for the consequences of disobedience.