

The Watchman's Trumpet and the Good Shepherd

The Law and Gospel Hinge of Ezekiel's Prophecy

Unit 28: Ezekiel 33:1-33

A (Backward Looking)

- 1 ^{33:1} The word of the Lord came to me: ² "Son of man, speak to your people and say to them, If I bring the sword upon a land, and the people of the land take a man from among them, and make him their **watchman**, ³ and if he sees the sword coming upon the land and blows the trumpet and warns the people, ⁴ then if anyone who hears the sound of the trumpet does not take warning, and the sword comes and takes him away, his blood shall be upon his own head. ⁵ He heard the sound of the trumpet and did not take warning; his blood shall be upon himself. But if he had taken warning, he would have saved his life. ⁶ But if the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet, so that the people are not warned, and the sword comes and takes any one of them, that person is taken away in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at the watchman's hand.
- 2 ¹⁰ "And you, son of man, say to the house of Israel, Thus have you said: 'Surely our transgressions and our sins are upon us, and we rot away because of them. How then **can we live?**'
- 3 ¹² "And you, son of man, say to your people, The **righteousness of the righteous** shall not deliver him when he transgresses, and as for the **wickedness of the wicked**, he shall not fall by it when he turns from his wickedness, and the righteous shall not be able to live by his righteousness when he sins. ¹³ Though I say to the righteous that he shall surely live, yet if he trusts in his righteousness and does injustice, none of his righteous deeds shall be remembered, but in his injustice that he has done he shall die.
- 4 ¹⁷ "Yet your people say, 'The way of the Lord is not just,' when it is their own way that is not just. ¹⁸ When the righteous turns from his righteousness and does injustice, he shall die for it. ¹⁹ And when the wicked turns from his wickedness and does what is just and right, he shall live by this. 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.**"

B (Forward Looking)

⁷ "So you, son of man, I have **made a watchman** for the house of Israel. Whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me. ⁸ If I say to the wicked, **O wicked one, you shall surely die**, and you do not speak to warn the wicked to turn from his way, that wicked person shall die in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at your hand. ⁹ But if you warn the wicked to turn from his way, and he does not turn from his way, that person shall die in his iniquity, but you will have delivered your soul.

¹¹ Say to them, As I live, declares the Lord God, **I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked**, but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways, for **why will you die**, O house of Israel?

¹⁴ Again, though I say to **the wicked**, 'You shall surely die,' yet if he turns from his sin and does what is just and right, ¹⁵ if **the wicked** restores the pledge, gives back what he has taken by robbery, and walks in the statutes of life, not doing injustice, he shall surely live; he shall not die. ¹⁶ None of the sins that he has committed shall be remembered against him. He has done what is just and right; he shall surely live.

²¹ In the twelfth year of our exile, in the tenth month, on the fifth day of the month, a fugitive from Jerusalem came to me and said, **"The city has been struck down."** ²² Now the hand of the Lord had been upon me the evening before the fugitive came; and he had opened my mouth by the time the man came to me in the morning, so my mouth was opened, and I was no longer mute.

5 ²³ The word of the Lord came to me: ²⁴ “Son of man, the inhabitants of these waste places in the land of Israel keep saying, ‘Abraham was only **one man**, yet he got possession of the land; but we are **many**; the land is surely given us to possess.’ ²⁵ Therefore say to them, Thus says the Lord God: You eat flesh with the blood and lift up your eyes to your idols and shed blood; shall you then possess **the land**? ²⁶ You rely on the sword, you commit abominations, and each of you defiles his neighbor’s wife; shall you then possess the land?

6 ³⁰ “As for you, son of man, **your people who talk together** about you by the walls and at the doors of the houses say to one another, each to his brother, ‘Come, and hear what the word is that comes from the Lord.’ ³¹ And they come to you as people come, and they sit before you as my people, and they **hear what you say** but they will not do it; for with lustful talk in their mouths they act; their heart is set on their gain. ³² And behold, **you are to them** like one who sings lustful songs with a beautiful voice and plays well on an instrument, for they hear what you say, but they will not do it.

²⁷ Say this to them, Thus says the Lord God: As I live, surely those who are in the waste places shall fall by the sword, and whoever is in the open field I will give to the beasts to be devoured, and those who are in strongholds and in caves shall die by pestilence. ²⁸ And I will make **the land** a desolation and a waste, and her proud might shall come to an end, and the mountains of Israel shall be so desolate that none will pass through. ²⁹ Then they will know that I am the Lord, when I have made the land a desolation and a waste because of all their abominations that they have committed.

³³ When this comes—and **come it will!**—then they will know that **a prophet has been among them.**”

A

1 ^{34:1} The word of the Lord came to me: ² “Son of man, prophesy against the **shepherds** of Israel; prophesy, and say to them, even to the shepherds, Thus says the Lord God: Ah, shepherds of Israel who have been **feeding** yourselves! Should not shepherds feed the sheep? ³ **You** eat the fat, you clothe yourselves with the wool, **you** slaughter the fat ones, but **you** do not feed the sheep. ⁴ The weak **you** have not strengthened, the sick you have not healed, the injured you have not bound up, the strayed you have not brought back, the lost you have not sought, and with force and harshness you have ruled them. ⁵ So they were scattered, because there was no shepherd, and they became **food** for all the wild beasts. My sheep were scattered; ⁶ they wandered **over all the mountains** and on every high hill. My sheep were scattered over all the face of the earth, with none to search or seek for them.

B

⁷ “Therefore, you **shepherds**, hear **the word of the Lord**: ⁸ As I live, declares the Lord God, surely because my sheep have become a prey, and my sheep have become food for all the wild beasts, since there was no shepherd, and because my shepherds have not searched for my sheep, but the shepherds have fed themselves, and have not fed my sheep, ⁹ therefore, you shepherds, **hear the word of the Lord**: ¹⁰ Thus says the Lord God, Behold, I am against the shepherds, and I will require my sheep at their hand and put a stop to their feeding the sheep. No longer shall the shepherds feed themselves. I will rescue my sheep from their mouths, that they may not **be food** for them. ¹¹ “For thus says the Lord God: Behold, I, I myself will search for my **sheep** and will seek them out. ¹² As a shepherd seeks out his flock when he is among his sheep that have been scattered, so will I seek out my sheep, and I will rescue them from all places where they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness. ¹³ And I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own land. And I will feed them **on the mountains** of Israel, by the ravines, and in all the inhabited places of the country. ¹⁴ I will feed them with good pasture, and on **the mountain heights** of Israel shall be their grazing land. There they shall lie down in good grazing land, and on rich pasture they shall feed on the mountains of Israel. ¹⁵ I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I myself will make them lie down, declares the Lord God. ¹⁶ I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, and the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them in justice.

2 ¹⁷“As for you, my flock, thus says the Lord God: Behold, I judge between sheep and sheep, between rams and male goats. ¹⁸Is it not enough for you to feed on the good pasture, that you must tread down with your feet the rest of your pasture; and to drink of clear water, that you must muddy the rest of the water with your feet? ¹⁹And must my sheep eat what you have trodden with your feet, and drink what you have muddied with your feet?

²⁰“Therefore, thus says the Lord God to them: Behold, I, I myself will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. ²¹Because you push with side and shoulder, and thrust at all the weak with your horns, till you have scattered them abroad, ²²I will rescue my flock; they shall no longer be a prey. And I will judge between sheep and sheep. ²³And I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd. ²⁴And I, the Lord, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them. I am the Lord; I have spoken. ²⁵“I will make with them a covenant of peace and banish wild beasts from the land, so that they may dwell securely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods. ²⁶And I will make them and the places all around my hill a blessing, and I will send down the showers in their season; they shall be showers of blessing. ²⁷And the trees of the field shall yield their fruit, and the earth shall yield its increase, and they shall be secure in their land. And they shall know that I am the Lord, when I break the bars of their yoke, and deliver them from the hand of those who enslaved them. ²⁸They shall no more be a prey to the nations, nor shall the beasts of the land devour them. They shall dwell securely, and none shall make them afraid. ²⁹And I will provide for them a renowned place for planting so that they shall no more be consumed with hunger in the land, and no longer suffer the reproach of the nations. ³⁰And they shall know that I am the Lord their God with them, and that they, the house of Israel, are my people, declares the Lord God. ³¹And you are my sheep, human sheep of my pasture, and I am your God, declares the Lord God.”

Ezekiel 33:1-34:32

Pulpit Crimes

Many years ago, my dad started a website called *The Prophet's Call*. Perhaps its central message was the one found in Ezekiel 33 about a watchman, called by God to de-

liver a message to sinful rebels. If he commands the watchman to proclaim a message of doom because those people are so sinful that judgment is now immanent, and he refuses to deliver that message to them, *their* blood will be on *his* head. However, if he delivers the message, they may still die, but he will have saved himself.

Not much ever happened with that website, but around the same time, James White had written a book called *Pulpit Crimes*.¹ In it, he argued that the pulpit in many modern churches has become a scene of repeated crimes against God's Word. He contends that the sacred pulpit — where God should speak through faithful exposition of Scripture — is too often abused by careless, self-serving, or man-pleasing preaching. His thesis is that the ministry of the Word is a high, divine calling. When preachers fail to handle the Bible accurately, faithfully, and courageously, they commit serious “crimes” against God and His people such as *felonious eisegesis*—reading foreign meanings into the text instead of drawing out what it actually says; *prostitution of the Gospel*—using preaching for financial gain or personal enrichment; *pandering to pluralism*—diluting or softening truth

¹ James R. White, *Pulpit Crimes: The Criminal Mishandling of God's Word* (Solid Port St. Lucie, Florida: Solid Ground Christian Books, 2006).

to avoid offending people; *entertainment without a license*—turning the pulpit into a stage for performance rather than proclamation; *cowardice*—failing to reprove, rebuke, and teach sound doctrine out of fear of man; and neglecting the full authority, sufficiency, and *centrality of Scripture* in worship. White took as his main text 2 Timothy 4, but he very well could have taken Ezekiel 33.

Ezekiel 33 and 34 in Context

The *content of Ezekiel 33* is fascinating because it shares a significant overlap with Ch. 18 that it is impossible to miss. I asked the A.I. to estimate how much direct overlap there is in the two chapters and its said between *40-45% is duplicated* or strongly parallel. Of course, that means that 55-60% is *not* brought over. But most of that deals with family examples and a proverb about eating sour grapes that does not reappear in our chapter. The reason is fascinating and very important and relates directly to the placement of each chapter in the book.

Ch. 18 came in the *middle of the Jerusalem cycle*—those warnings against Jerusalem. In fact, it was the chiastic center of chs. 12-24:

- A. “Know That I Am the Lord” (12:15) Symbolic Acts of Exile (12:1–28)
- B. “Lying Divination” (13:6) False Prophecy Condemned (13:1–23)
- C. “Idols in Their Heart” (14:3) Idolatry Indicted (14:1–23)
- D. “Like a Vine” (15:2) Unfaithfulness Allegorized (15:1–8)
- E. “Played the Whore” (16:15) Adultery Allegorized (16:1–63)
- F. “Rebelled Against Him” (17:15) Rebellion Parabled (17:1–24)
- G. “Turn and Live” (18:32) Repentance Urged (18:1–32)**
- F'. “Rebelled Against Me” (19:2) Leadership Lamented (19:1–14)
- E'. “Played the Whore” (23:5) Adultery Allegorized (23:1–49)
- D'. “Like a Vine” (21:10) Judgment Imaged (20:45–21:32)
- C'. “Made Your Idols” (22:3) Sins Indicted (22:1–31)
- B'. “Lying Divination” (22:28) False Prophecy Judged (22:23–31)
- A'. “Know That I Am the Lord” (24:27) Symbolic Acts of Judgment (24:1–27)

That entire series of oracles culminated in [the severe prediction of Jerusalem’s end in ch. 24](#). Those people in Jerusalem were full of excuses as to why God wouldn’t destroy their city and send them into exile. They were self-justifying while blaming others. So Ch. 18 becomes the final major warning before the siege begins—destroying their favorite excuses and laying out the clearest statement on individual responsibility and God’s desire for repentance in the book. It was like a theological treatise on sin and its implications.

On the other hand, [Ch. 33 finally brings us to the actual destruction of Jerusalem](#). We were prepared for this in the previous chapter in a most unusual way, in that list of six

nations (Assyria, Elam, Meshech-Tubal, Edom, and Sidon), which crept ever nearer, not to Egypt, but *to Israel* the last two of which are now right on their eastern and western border. While God was coming for Egypt and the nations, those oracles came to the prophet a mere handful of months prior to the destruction *of Jerusalem*.

Suddenly, the scene shifts back to The City of Peace; God is finally coming against his own people. This places them in a very different historical situation than Ch. 18. **There's nothing they can do to stop Babylon.** They know Nebuchadnezzar is at the front porch. Their attempt to ally themselves with Egypt has resulted in disaster for both countries. Now, in Ch. 33, those same people who were so arrogant and self-justifying find themselves **in the pit of despair**, crushed, and fatalistic. Many have surely forgotten the theology of Ch. 18 or, if they did remember it, they likely now completely misinterpreted it as many people do when God finally comes to cut them down. **They forget just what kind of a God he is—not for worse, but for better.** They become consumed with his justice, holiness, and wrath (something they previously couldn't have cared less about). They forget that **he never changes** and is still **the God of**

love who does not delight in the death of the wicked (something they previously took great advantage of as they mocked him in their sin).

Of the new material in Ch. 33 (55-60% is not from Ch. 18), this chapter also brings back content from Ch. 3—specifically regarding the theme of “the watchman.” In fact, 85-90% of 3:17-19 is reused in 33:7-9 while about 60-65% of 3:16-21 is carried over into 33:1-9. That’s lots of two chapters now repeated. Why?

Ezekiel 3:16-21 was very early in Ezekiel’s ministry, right after his initial call to proclaim doom. But 33:1-9 takes place at the exact turning point of the entire book. Thus, like two pillars, the two watchman passages frame Chs. 3-32 and all the judgment that we’ve seen. Everything between them is under the watchman’s responsibility. But after the fall of Jerusalem is confirmed in 33:21, from this point forward, the tone of the entire book shifts dramatically towards ... hope (Chs. 34-48). Bringing the watchman back up here signals Ezekiel is being given a new calling. His new calling is not to watch for enemies at the gate, but for God in his grace!

The change occurs this way. In 3:26 the LORD said, “I will make your tongue cling to the roof of your mouth, so

that you shall be *mute* and unable to reprove them, for they are a rebellious house.” He could still speak—but only words of judgment (27). After the great prediction of the fall of Jerusalem in 24:27, God makes another prediction. “On that day *your mouth will be opened* to the one who has escaped, and you shall speak and no longer be mute. So you will be a sign to them, and they will know that I am the LORD.” Today, the key verse fulfilling this promise comes immediately after the news comes about the fall of the city. “Now the hand of the LORD had been upon me the evening before the fugitive came; and *he had opened my mouth* by the time the man came to me in the morning, so my mouth was opened, and I was no longer mute” (33:22). God had fulfilled his word. Ezekiel had become a sign. The judgment was brought to pass, just as prophesied. God always tells the truth.

Now, astonishingly, with his new calling and the duplication of the heart of God regarding repentance comes the end of Israel’s fatalistic “*we’re finished*” attitude and with it a great anticipation of what God is going to do positively for his people.

This great hope is what I want you all to hear up front, before I get into the text. You need to hear it. We always

need to hear about the possible good news! It begins immediately after the announcement of Jerusalem's doom. But because it is so important for you to understand in the context of judgment being fulfilled, and because of how closely Ch. 33 also matches with Ch. 34, I'm going to try the impossible today and **preach both chapters together**. I want this to be a classic *law-gospel* sermon. And I'm going to do it **from the point of view of a watchman**.

Not just Ezekiel as a watchman, for as Caesarius of Arles (470-543) said, “**Mine is the burden that you just heard about when the prophet Ezekiel was read ... Such a lesson was read to excite great fear in us, so we will think about what we are carrying**” (**Caesarius of Arles**, *Sermon* 231.2).² Do you understand and realize the burden of your pastor? I never used to, until God told me I had to be one. This is **the burden of all preachers** and you must understand this. Why is it our burden? *Pulpit crimes*! As another Father said from this same passage, “**May your trumpet never cease to resound! It should warn some of the sword that comes on the disobedient and stubborn, so that even if they ignore you, you may save your soul from the terrible wrath of God**”

² In **Kenneth Stevenson** and Michael Gluerup, *Ezekiel, Daniel*, Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture OT 13 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008), 98. Unless otherwise noted, all Father's quotations in this sermon are from this resource.

(**Symeon the New Theologian** [949-1022], *Discourses* 18.15). Do you understand that God's word says that your blood is not merely on Ezekiel's head, but the head of all your elders in the church? If we will not tell you of what is coming, that's on us!

All the Fathers and all faithful preachers take this burden seriously. Why? Augustine I think rightly said, “**Overseers or rulers are set over the churches to reprimand sin, not to spare it ... He is blameworthy if he fails to do this out of fear of hurting feelings or of losing such things as he may rightfully enjoy in his life but to which he is unduly attached**” (**Augustine**, *City of God* 1.9). You see, we spend our lives doing this because we are called by God to do it and we understand the reality that you may not. God may not call us pastors to have great riches like some of you. That's also our burden. Nevertheless God is real. God hates sin. God judges sin. God carries through with his promises. God does not change. You are going to face him one day. And I am obligated to tell you. But this **God is also a God who is merciful** and full of love and compassion and kindness every day. Both are true! It is my burden to tell you the one and my great privilege to tell you the other!

In what follows, rather than the tedious theological justification of Ch. 18, you are going to hear this **great plea from God** as you see the judgment finally come upon those rebels so that you will know that God in fact carries out his prophecies of judgment. But then you are going to see **just how God still cares for people**. He does not delight in the death of the wicked. He is not sadistic, callous, heartless, vicious, or cruel. Some of you need to hear the former, and badly. Others, the latter!

A short word about the way these chapters come to us. Ch. 18's weave was three columns, while its mirror in Ch. 33 is only two. I think this shows the difference between a kind of theological explanation under dire circumstances of grave sin to a much more binary problem/solution of a preacher to the people. Its two columns generally look **backward** (A Column) and **forward** (B Column). **Ch. 33 is also chiastic**, but not entirely through the whole chapter. It **hinges** upon **the people's despair** and God's grace in the midst of it, a perfect turning point to the newness of the rest of the book. It finishes with two sections (matching the last two rows) that apply the message to the post-Jerusalem fall reality (these match the last two rows of the weave).

- A. The Watchman Principle (General Case) — 33:1–6
- B. Ezekiel Appointed as Watchman for Israel — 33:7–9
- C. The People’s Despair (“Our sins are upon us... how can we live?”) — 33:10–11**
- B'. Individual Responsibility & Repentance (Theological Core) — 33:12–20
- A'. The Fall of Jerusalem Reported + Ezekiel’s Mouth Opened — 33:21–22
- D. Message to the Remnant in the Land (33:23–29)
- E. People’s Hypocritical Response (listening like entertainment) (33:30–33)

God’s grace explodes like a firework in **Ch. 34** which is also chiastic, centering on how God himself will come **to shepherd his people** after the evil shepherds of Israel are judged. He will do this in remarkable ways that especially John’s Gospel picks up on with Jesus as the Good Shepherd.

- A. Woe to the selfish shepherds of Israel (34:1–3)
- B. The sheep were scattered and became prey because of bad shepherds (34:4–6)
- C. God holds the shepherds accountable (34:7–10)
- D. Center / Pivot – God Himself will now become the shepherd (34:11)**
- C'. God will search for, rescue, and gather His scattered sheep (34:12–16)
- B'. God will judge between the fat and lean sheep (34:17–22)
- A'. God sets up One Shepherd (Davidic/Messianic) and establishes peace & blessing (34:23–31)

I truly pray that each of you will listen to these astonishing chapters of God’s word.

Ezekiel 33: The Watchman of Israel

The Word of the LORD came to Ezekiel (**Ezek 33:1**). Hear this anew. As he has so often in this book, **Jesus himself**

in his preincarnate form comes to the prophet. Perhaps you have a difficult time with God in the OT, especially reading so much judgment from him. Perhaps you have a skewed view of who God is because of this. Perhaps you have not rightly considered who he is because you see Jesus in the *NT* and think he is so different from that God of the OT. Keep in mind from the beginning today that **this is the same Person who came to us in the Gospels.**

It all starts off much the way we've been seeing for dozens of chapters now. Ezekiel, the "**son of man**" is commanded to **speak to his people.** This changes where we've been recently with all those nations back to the covenant people of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The Word is not happy.

He gives what seems a hypothetical, which isn't hypothetical at all. "**If God brings the sword upon a land and those people take a man from among them and make them their watchman...**" (2). As we saw back in Ch. 3, "watchman" (*šōpeh*) is a military term. It "**derives from a common root meaning 'to look out, to spy, to keep watch' ... Persons chosen for sentry duty were generally stationed on lookout towers strategically placed on the walls of the city, the roofs of gatehouses (2 Sam. 18:24), or towers outside the city (2 K. 9:17). The watchman's charge involved paying careful attention to the enemy's movements. In the face of**

an imminent attack, he would blow his horn (šōpār), summoning the soldiers to arms, and civilians to take cover (Ezek 33:3–6).”³

Thus it continues, “If he sees the sword coming upon the land and blows the trumpet and warns the people, then if anyone who hears the sound of the trumpet does not wake warning, and the sword comes and takes him away, his blood shall be upon his own head. He heard the sound of the trumpet and did not take warning; his blood shall be upon himself. But if he had taken warning, he would have saved his life. But if the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet, so that the people are not warned, and the sword comes and takes any one of them, that person is taken away in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at the watchman’s hand” (5-6). Do you understand your personal responsibility here? If you were to have heard Paul Revere shout out, “The British are coming!” and you took no heed, then when you are killed by them, that’s on you. If Paul Revere knew they were coming and said nothing, when you die, that’s on him.

In Ezekiel’s day, however, it is not the people who appointed whomever they wanted to be the kind of watchman

³ Daniel Isaac Block, *The Book of Ezekiel 1-24*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997), 144.

God has in mind here. That was just an illustration. It is **the God himself who does the appointing**. Vs. 7, “So you, son of man, *I have made a watchman for the house of Israel.*”

What kind of a watchman? **A spiritual watchman**. He is God’s prophet. **His only job** is to speak the word of God to the people. It was a warning of impending physical danger because of their spiritual evil. “*Whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me. If I say to the wicked, O wicked one, you shall surely die, and you do not speak to warn the wicked to turn from his way, that wicked person shall die in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at your hand. But if you warn the wicked to turn from his way, and he does not turn from his way, that person shall die in his iniquity, but you will have delivered your soul*” (7-9).

Skip ahead to vv. 21 so that you will understand that **the disaster came**. God brought about what he had for so long promised. “*In the twelfth year of our exile, in the tenth month, on the fifth day of the month, a fugitive from Jerusalem came to me and said, ‘The city has been struck down.’*” It is impossible for us to envision, but we can try. Imagine that you are not sitting in church right now, but in a Chinese prison of war, having been captured years ago and

exported across the pacific along with others here in this room. Suddenly, the news comes that your home, your school, your family, your park, your entire city back in Colorado has been brutally destroyed and most everyone who was still there is dead. This really happened to these people, even as all those prophecies against the nations really were fulfilled as well.

But as I said, this is really **more spiritual** than it is even a physical disaster. Notice the language: a **wicked** person. He call them “wicked” five times in those verses. That’s about **sin**. He says they die in their “**iniquity**.” That’s sin, not invasion. The prophet will save his own **soul**. Not body, soul. The *nephesh*, the soul, is the totality of the person, not just physical death. This is why Jesus will say “**For whoever would save his life (psyche — the Greek equivalent of nephesh) will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it**” (**Matt 16:25**). He isn’t talking about never physically dying.

This is about **dying with unresolved, unforgiven sin**. And Jesus spoke of this often, not merely to religious leaders, to even to the people. You know what he said, you’ve heard it often. “**Whoever says, ‘You fool!’ will be liable to the fire of Gehenna**” (**Matt 5:22**). “**If your right eye [or**

right hand] cause you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into Gehenna” (29-30). “Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell (Gehenna)” (10:28). This is Jesus teaching a sermon, effectively, on the consequences of not trust him and in trying to attain perfection apart from him. He doesn’t merely warn about death, but about the second death—eternal fire.

John 8:24 should be heard directly in light of Ezek 33:8-9. “Unless you believe that I am he, you will die in your sins.” This is almost a direct echo of Ezekiel’s “die in his iniquity.” Do you understand how serious this is for both you and I? Thus the application carries on into today. If you come to church and you are warned about your own coming doom and do nothing, *that’s on you*. If I come to church and do not warn you, *that’s on me*. Woe to the one who heeds not the warning of God.

Notice how this *stays at this more spiritual level* as we move through the chapter (and rows). “And you, son of man, say to the house of Israel, Thus have you said, ‘Surely our *transgressions* and our *sins* are upon us, and we rot away

because of them. How then can we live?’” (33:10). Transgressions and sins. That’s not physical death. But you need to see something very important here. This is a very different attitude coming out than we saw in Ch. 18. There, they were *boasting in their evil*. Now, they are *resigned to it*. “*Oh well. God’s hand is upon us. This is our fate.*” And amazingly, this fatalism did no more to stop their evil behavior than their pride!

But beloved, *look at the good news*. For if this is you, and you know you are a sinner but have still done nothing about it, then you are like Israel, who has forgotten who God says that he is. “*Say to them, ‘As I live, declares the Lord GOD (Sovereign LORD), I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways, for why will you die, O house of Israel?’*” As we’ve seen, this is said as Jerusalem is fallen. So it can’t be talking about staving off Babylon now. It is talking about *eternal* death. Repent. Turn back to God. He is a good God, a loving God, a merciful God. He does not want any of you to perish in eternity. That says nothing about his decree, but it does mean he takes no pleasure in it. This is God’s heart. Have you turned God into a monster that the Bible explicitly says he is not? Is that why you will

not turn to him? Or have you failed to internalize that he does judge sin as this chapter proves, and that is why?

Vv. 12-13 has the Word of God telling the prophet to **speaK to the righteous**. This happened in Ch. 18 as well. “The righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him when he transgresses.” But **then the wicked**. “And as for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall by it when he turns from his wickedness.” Then **back to the righteous**. “And the righteous shall not be able to live by his righteousness when he sins.” It is a chiasm: **righteous-wicked-righteous**. This is about pretending you are righteous when you are not, or being burdened that you are unforgivable when you know you are wicked. Opposite attitudes. All the wicked can be forgiven if they will come to Jesus. But no righteous person standing on his own merit can, for he refuses the righteousness of God.

The next three verses just **say it over again**. God hammers on this nail until it goes deep into the brain. If you trust in your righteousness and do injustice, none of your righteous deeds will be remembered, but you will die eternally for your injustice (**13**). Back to the wicked. But if God says to the wicked that you will surely die, if you turn from your sin and then by faith do what is just and right (**14**) ... if you

restore pledges, give back what you have taken by robbery, if you walk in the law of life, if you put away your injustice, you will live and not die (15). This is the sanctifying power of salvation after you turn and repent by faith! None of your sins committed will be remembered against you. You have turned, repented, forsaken your evil ways. You will live eternally (16). You think Jesus and Paul just made all that up in the NT? No. Jesus himself said it way back to Ezekiel who was commanded to tell them as I am burdened to tell you.

We've seen vv. 17-20 before in Ch. 18 as well. "Yet your people say, 'The way of the LORD is not just,' when it is their own way that is not just" (17). They get angry at God because he punishes a supposed righteous person for doing injustice and they die (18)? There is no one good, no note one. They get mad at God when he forgives the wicked who turns and does what is just and right (19)? "Yet you say, 'The way of the LORD is not just?'" To Israel God says, and to you the preacher says, "I will judge each of you according to your ways" (20). And as proof, a fugitive from Jerusalem comes with the news that Jerusalem is struck down (21). And as further proof, like Zechariah at the birth of his son John the Baptist, God opens the mouth of the

prophet for the first time in seven years (592-585 BC; vs. 22).

At first, his mouth was opened for this. “The word of the Lord came to me” (23), “Son of man, the inhabitants of these waste places in the land of Israel keep saying, ‘Abraham was only one man, yet he got possession of the land; but we are many; the land is surely given us to possess.’ Therefore say to them, Thus says the Lord God: You eat flesh with the blood and lift up your eyes to your idols and shed blood; shall you then possess the land? You rely on the sword, you commit abominations, and each of you defiles his neighbor’s wife; shall you then possess the land?” (24-26). This is an attitude many Jews still have, and many Christians still have about them, and many actually have about themselves because they grew up in Christian homes and went to church. We were given the land unconditionally! I am a Christian because I went to church.

The fact of the matter is, not all who are descended from Israel and Israel and the only people who are Christians are those who turn to Jesus and believe in him. You don’t get to sit there in filthy sin, committing idolatry and murdering people and say, “The land is mine,” any more than you get to say, “I get the promises of God.”

And so the prophet is told from the Sovereign LORD (27) to tell the people that the living God will continuing hunting down even the survivors of the fall of Jerusalem. They fled the city to go to the waste places—they shall fall by the sword. They go into the open field—they will be devoured by beasts. They flee to the caves and castles—they will die by pestilence (27). God will desolate the land and its mountainous high places and cause the proud to come to an end (28). “Then they will know that I am the LORD, for he will never stop hunting proud rebels down because of their abominations” (29).

The chapter ends with Christ himself consoling the prophet, for he will need God’s word to prop him up. Your people will hear these things and talk together about you by the walls and at the doors of their houses and because you are faithful to my words they will say, “Come, and hear what the word is that comes from the LORD” (30). They will sit before you as my people. They will hear what you say *but they will not do it*. So many people do the same thing in churches today.

But these were exiles in Babylon and even after their own captivity and after the destruction of their own City of David, they still have not repented. Their mouths are full

of lustful talk; their hearts are set on their own personal gain (31). Daniel Block explains this well,

Two symptoms of their attitude are cited. First, the people's presence before the prophet is motivated by a craving for the sensuous and sensational. Erotic speech is on their lips, and he has become for them a singer of erotic songs. Ezekiel's oracles titillate his hearers, offering temporary satisfaction, but like any other addiction, they drive the audience back for more. Second, they are motivated by greed. Their heart commitment is to gain, and any means, violent or unjust, is to be used to satisfy their avarice (cf. 22:13, 27). These then are the twin sins of insincerity: sensuality and greed. The former explains the people's interest in Ezekiel's message; the latter their refusal to heed it.⁴

And perhaps the worst part of all that? Ezekiel, the faithful preacher, will sound to them like one who sings lustful songs with a beautiful voice on his lovely instrument. He's a rock star! And they will hear what he says. But they will not do it (32).

If ever there was a time since his where people in mass go to churches to have their ears tickled, it is today. But this

⁴ Daniel Isaac Block, *The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 25–48*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997–), 266.

is even worse, for they often come even to hear the truth. And they think it wonderful. And yet they do not heed it. They will not turn to Christ. They will continue in their own sinful ways all while patting their pastor on the back for how flowerily his sermon was. It is the ultimate sadness to all preachers.

And the chapter ends, “**When this comes—and come it will!—then they will know that a prophet has been among them**” (33). When you see people continually sit before the word and do nothing, yet feign and pretend religiosity, then you know you are living in a time exactly like Ezekiel’s friends in Babylon. When you see them not even wanting to hear the truth at all, then you know you are living in a time right before **the end** of their very way of life.

Ezekiel 34: Shepherds and the Shepherd

But I told you I was going to try the impossible, and so I am. So now we move into Ch. 34. If the word of 33 ended on **law**, this one now, finally, after 30 plus chapters, truly begins to take us to the **gospel**. Because beloved, no amount of proclaiming the law is ever going to change a hardened heart. That’s precisely the point of why Ch. 33 ended the

way that it did. All that happens to hardened people when they hear bad news is that they ignore it and pretend that they care when they don't.

I told you to remember that the Word of the LORD who comes to Ezekiel is the preincarnate Christ. And now he comes again, and in a moment you will see why I think this is so important. For the same Christ who came with that message in Ch. 33 about how he does not delight in the death of the wicked even though they continue to want death themselves, is about to say something extraordinary.

“The Word of the LORD came to me, ‘Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel’ (Ezek 34:1-2a). Shepherds. We’ve moved from the metaphor of a watchman, which Ezekiel was, to that of a Shepherd. We have not seen this metaphor before. You all know what a shepherd is, but did you know that the NT calls overseers and elders “shepherds” of the flock (Eph 4:11; 1Pet 5:2)? And yet, among these shepherds are false teachers who infiltrate Christian churches, “shepherds who feed themselves” (Jude 12). Who are the shepherds in mind in Ezekiel?

The prophet is to prophesy to the shepherds of Israel “who have been feeding yourselves...” (Ezek 34:2). Precisely the language Jude uses. That’s interesting because

Jude is talking to Christians, not the nation of Israel! Yet, he thinks it is a one-to-one application. He gets it from this verse! “Should not shepherds feed the sheep? You eat the fat, you clothe yourselves with wool, you slaughter the fat ones, but you do not feed the sheep” (2c-3). What an extraordinary litany of taking advantage of the sheep, sheering them, fleecing them getting rich off them, killing them!

This has been noticed by our secular poets. Dire Straits mockingly sang about getting your ticket to heaven, “Now I send what I can to the man | With the diamond ring | He's a part of heaven's plan | And he sure can sing | Now it's all I can afford | But the lord has sent me eternity | It's to save the little children | In a poor country.”⁵ That very same year Genesis sang, “Do you see the face on the TV screen | Comin' at you every Sunday? | See the face on the billboard? | Well, that man is me | On the cover of the magazine | There's no question why I'm smilin' | You buy a piece of paradise | You buy a piece of me | I'll get you everything you wanted | I'll get you everything you need | You don't need to believe in hereafter | Just believe in me | Cause Jesus, He knows me and He knows I'm right | I've been talkin' to Jesus all my life | Oh, yes He knows me and He knows I'm

⁵ Dire Straits, “Ticket to Heaven,” *On Every Street*, Warner Bros (1991).

right | And He's been tellin' me everything is alright.”⁶ And Poison famously saw right thought it all only a few months prior to those songs when they sang, “Well I see him on the TV Preachin' 'bout the promised lands He tells me to believe in Jesus And steals the money from my hands Some say he was a good man But Lord I think he sinned.”⁷ Lustful songs with a beautiful voice played well on an instrument. They hear what you say, but they will not do it.⁸

“The weak you have not strengthened, the sick you have not healed, the injured you have not bound up, the strayed you have not brought back, the lost you have not sought, and with force and harshness you have ruled them” (Ezek 34:4). But suddenly, the Word calls them “*my* sheep,” not their sheep! “*My* sheep were scattered” because there was no shepherd, and they became food for all the wild beasts (5). *My* sheep? “The LORD is my Shepherd” (Ps 23:1), king David himself said. Remember?

They wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill. They were scattered over all the face of the earth,

⁶ Genesis, “Jesus He Knows Me,” *We Can't Dance*, Atlantic (1991).

⁷ Poison, “Something to Believe In,” *Flesh & Blood*, Capitol (1990).

⁸ Apparently, this theme is now alive and well in Christian rap! Bryson Gray, “All them false teachers, you gon' pay for it | And He's coming back soon, so just wait for it | Better hope He have mercy, better pray for it” (“False Teachers” *God Wins*, 2020); Kieran the Light (KRL), “Beware of false prophets, I'm on a road today | Ceasing the ops from all the sheep that they slayed...” (“Beware of the False Prophets” (2024).

with no one to search or seek them out (**Ezek 34:6**). Therefore, the Sovereign LORD has a word to these evil shepherds (**vv. 7-16**). Because all these things have happened and there are **no shepherds** to search for and feed his sheep (**8**), he is against the shepherds. He will require his sheep at their hands. The shepherds will stop this behavior (**9-10a**). “**For I will rescue my sheep from their hands**” (**10b**). Did you hear that? **Who is the I?** It is the Word of the LORD, the Sovereign GOD! “**Behold, I, I myself will search for my sheep and will seek them out**” (**11**). “**As a shepherd seeks out his flock when he is among his sheep that have been scattered, so will I seek out my sheep, and I will rescue them from all places where they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness**” (**12**). “**And I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own land. And I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the ravines, and in all the inhabited places of the country.**”

Harkening to **Psalms 23**, “**I will feed them with good pasture, and on the mountain heights of Israel shall be their grazing land. There they shall lie down in good grazing land, and on rich pasture they shall feed on the mountains of Israel**” (**14**), “**I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep,**

and I myself will make them lie down, declares the Lord God. I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, and the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them in justice” (15-16).

If visions of the NT are not racing through your mind, then you are either ignorant of those words or hardened to them. This is why I told you that the Word of the LORD in Ch. 33 is Jesus. For he is the same Word as Ch. 34. He is the same Word who came and dwelt among us. For in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word *was* God (John 1:1). Never has this truth been more important in Ezekiel to digest than now. For this same God whom many forget does not delight in the death of the wicked, but resign themselves to fate forgetting what he is like, *is ... Jesus*.

Have you not read? Jesus is the good shepherd (John 10:14, 16; Heb 13:20; 1Pet 2:25; 5:4)! *The weak*, “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden...” (Matt 11:28). *The sick*, “Those who are well have no need of a physician” (Matt 9:35, etc.). *The injured*: He had compassion on the harassed and helpless (Matt 9:36; Luke 4:18). *The strayed*: The parable of the Lost Sheep (Matt 18:12-14). *The lost*, “The

Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost” (John 10:16). *Ruled with force and harshness*, “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down the life for the sheep” (John 10:11, 14-15). For “I am gentle and lowly in heart” (Matt 11:29). *The scattered*, “The wolf snatches them and scatters them” (John 10:12). But “the good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep” (John 10:11) so that after they scatter at his death (Matt 26:31; cf. Zech 13:7), he might “gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad” (John 11:51-52), so there might be *one flock, one shepherd* (John 10:16). Jesus is the one who made these very promises to Ezekiel that he would one day come and fulfill in person. That’s astonishing.

It continues, “As for you, my flock, thus says the Lord God: Behold, I judge between sheep and sheep, between rams and male goats. Is it not enough for you to feed on the good pasture, that you must tread down with your feet the rest of your pasture; and to drink of clear water, that you must muddy the rest of the water with your feet? And must my sheep eat what you have trodden with your feet, and drink what you have muddied with your feet?” (Ezek 34:17-19). This takes us from the *shepherds* (Row 1) *to the sheep* themselves (Row 2). Now the Word isn’t just going

after the **leadership**; he is going after **the community**; the individuals within it who hurt one another! The problem is not just that the leadership is bad. It's that the entire community needs cleansing and reordering.

Does the language sound familiar to anything in the NT? At the Second Coming, Jesus said, “**When the Son of Man comes in his glory ... he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats**” (**Matt 25:31-32**). The Word of God **condemns fat/strong sheep** for pushing, shoving, and trampling the weak, who are forced to eat what the strong have trampled and drink what they have muddied. Jesus condemns **the goats** for failing to care for the hungry, thirsty, stranger, naked, sick, and imprisoned (**37-46**). It's the same thing. The implication is clear and necessary. **Jesus is claiming to be the very Word of the LORD who spoke these things to Ezekiel!**

It gets even more incredible. God's word is truly astonishing. 600 years before Jesus ever began his public ministry, the Sovereign LORD says again, “**Behold, I, I myself will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep**” or as he added in **vs. 17's** parallel, “**between rams and male**

goats.” Fat sheep and male goats are two sides of the same coin. These are rich, powerful, influential, self-centered members of the religious community (or today we would call them the visible church) who take advantage of others. These are distinguished from the rams, who are the evil leadership. In Daniel 8:3-4, 20, rams are kings of Media and Persia. Sometimes the Hebrew word for a ram *’ayil* (אֵיל) can mean a leader or chief (see Ex 15:15). Curiously, the plural form of *’ayil* is *’ēlīm* (אֵילִים). The place where there were seventy palm trees was called *’ēlim* (אֵילִים), while the seventy gods of the nations are *’ēlīm* (אֵלִים). These are all cognates of El—strong or mighty. And given that rulers such as Alexander the Great depicted themselves as rams, it only goes to reinforce that rams is a word for the rulers, not the people, those who are acting like the gods of the nations.

These three are thus contrasted with the actual sheep (for is fat sheep can also be called goats, then they aren’t sheep; they are falsely professing sheep. They are wolves). The sheep are the poor, widows, orphans, oppressed, and marginalized who were being pushed around and exploited. But they are also as Luke says, “The poor in spirit,” the humble, the contrite of heart, the meek who have repentance and faith.



Alexander the Great Ram-Coin, circa 242 BC

So the Word says, “Because you push with side and shoulder, and thrust at all the weak with your horns, till you have scattered them abroad, I will rescue my flock; they shall no longer be a prey. And I will judge between sheep and sheep” (21-22). This is precisely what Jesus will do on the Great Judgment Day in the future. But it is also precisely what he is doing today through the Gospel!

For it says next, absolutely incredibly, “And I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd” (23). Obviously, this isn’t talking about a reincarnation of David! No one ever took it that way. This rather refers to an offspring of David—the Messiah. This refers as David himself says to his Lord (Ps 110:1). It refers, as David himself say to

his Shepherd (**Ps 23:1**). That's the OT background to Jesus calling himself the Good Shepherd. Jesus didn't make it up. He is fulfilling the prophecy right here.

It says, “**And I, Yahweh, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them. I am the LORD; I have spoken**” (**Ezek 34:24**). This is wild language, classic two-powers language of the OT that blurs the distinction between two persons both called Yahweh. The Word of God who is the Sovereign LORD speaks for his Father, Yahweh, who is speaking about the Sovereign Lord—the prince of David, who then identifies himself as Yahweh who has spoken.

And for good measure, he says next, “**I will make with them a covenant of peace**” (**25a**). This is **the new covenant** that will be greatly expanded upon in Ch. 36. And who made that covenant? Jesus did, in his blood!

Here, the language of that covenant is slightly different from how we normally think about it. He will “**banish wild beasts from the land, so that they may dwell securely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods**” (**25b**). This is about **re-storing** the land itself, the place of the new covenant. This isn't about the nation of Israel. You must read Ezekiel with

the NT itself. It is about the **Kingdom of God** coming down upon it and the whole world.

He will “make them and the places all around my hill a blessing, and ... send down the showers in their season; they shall be showers of blessing” (26). This is the language the NT uses for **Pentecost**, when God opens the floodgates of the Holy Spirit to Gentiles (**Acts 2**; cf. **Joel 2**). This is **blessing the nations** through Christ (**Gal 3:14**).

“And the trees of the field shall yield their fruit, and the earth shall yield its increase, and they shall be secure in their land. And they shall know that I am the Lord, when I break the bars of their yoke, and deliver them from the hand of those who en-slaved them” (**Ezek 34:27**). This is comprehensive restoration that takes place in stages, first through abiding in the Vine (**John 15**), then entering into true rest (**Matt 11:28-30**; **Heb 4**), then freedom in Christ (**Gal 5:1**), then deliverance from the spiritual powers (**Col 1:13**; **2:15**). All through the recognition that **Jesus is Lord** (**Php 2:10**).

“They shall no more be a prey to the nations, nor shall the beasts of the land devour them. They shall dwell securely, and none shall make them afraid. And I will provide for them a renowned place for planting so that they shall no more be consumed with hunger in the land, and no longer

suffer the reproach of the nations. And they shall know that I am the Lord their God with them, and that they, the house of Israel, are my people, declares the Lord God. And you are my sheep, human sheep of my pasture, and I am your God, declares the Lord God” (28-31).

If all of this sounds like Romans or John’s Gospel or the end of Revelation, it should. The NT takes heavily from Ezekiel. John in fact nearly follows its outline in the last third of his book.

Some of Ezekiel 22-48 in Revelation 16-22				
First Column (Ezekiel order)		Second Column (Revelation Order) (see 184)		
Ezekiel	Revelation		Revelation	Ezekiel
22:31	16:1		16:1	22:31
24:7	18:24		17:4; 18:16	28:13
26:13	18:22		18:10	26:17
26:16	18:19		18:11, 15	27:36
26:17	18:10		18:12-13	27:12-13
26:21	18:21		18:12-13	27:22
27:12-13	18:12-13		18:17	27:27-29
27:22	18:12-13		18:18	27:32
27:27-29	18:17		18:19	26:16
27:30-34	18:19		18:19	27:30-34
27:30-35	18:19		18:19	27:30-35

27:32	18:18		18:21	26:21
27:36	18:11, 15		18:22	26:13
28:13	17:4; 18:16		18:24	24:7
37:10	20:4		19:6	43:2
37:27	21:3		19:17-18, 21	39:17-20
38:2	20:8		20:4	37:10
38:22	20:9, 10; 21:8		20:8	38:2
39:6	20:8		20:8	39:6
39:17-20	19:17-18, 21		20:9, 10; 21:8	38:22
40:2	21:10		21:3	37:27
40:3	21:15		21:10	40:2
40:5	21:15		21:12-13	48:30-35
43:2	19:6		21:15	40:3
47:1	22:1		21:15	40:5
47:12	22:2, 14, 19		22:1	47:1
48:30-35	21:12-13		22:2, 14, 19	47:12

My point today in going through these two long chapters together has been two-fold. **First**, that you see the bad news and that it comes through Christ the Word of God. **Yet**, you must see that this Word of God is identical in person and character to Jesus the Word in the NT. And that's where the good news comes in.

My dear friends, many of you will be greatly encouraged by all of these things, if not blown away by their majesty and glory. But some of you continue to sit there, week after week, never openly professing Christ. I plead with you as the prophet of old did, whether you are old or young—turn from your sins. You have no idea the horror you unnecessarily bring upon yourself. For God does not delight in the judgment he must bring. **Humble yourself.** Stop thinking so highly of yourself as if you have done nothing wrong towards God and it is always someone else's fault. You have been told the truth and your blood is not going to be on my hands.

But why would you even need your spiritual blood spilt at all? God is merciful and kind. Not only does he offer hope to exiles who continually harden themselves if they will but still repent, but he has **sent Jesus** to fulfill all the things that his watchman and shepherds, like those in your very church, have failed to do perfectly. Jesus is the Great Watcher from Heaven and the True Shepherd of his people.

Allow me to finish with Psalm 23 in its opposite form as my friend Dr. Judd Burton has written as a kind of anti-

translation that is meant to teach through the use binaries or opposites the clarifying roles and themes in the passage.⁹

The Shepherd is my Lord, I shall be ever wanting.¹⁰

He forces me prostrate in barren wilderness; he misleads me to the stagnant waters.¹¹

He depletes my soul, he instructs me in the ways of wickedness, for his own schemes.¹²

Because I crawl through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, I panic. For you menace me from a distance; Your sword and your spear, they terrify me.¹³

I prepare a table before you in the presence of your council, I give placation to you and offering.¹⁴

Surely evil and heartlessness pursue me every day, and I will wander the Tomb of the Shepherd for eternity.¹⁵

⁹ The translation is found in our forthcoming book, *The Dragon of Damascus*.

¹⁰ Azazel, Azaga, Pan. Ever wanting like the fate of the Watchers and Nephilim. [My addition. The watchers are called “Shepherds” in Enochian literature (cf. 1En 89:59). [The gods are called Shepherds](#) in pagan literature (cf. Baal in The Baal Cycle: KTU 1.12.II; Adonis in Virgil, *Eclogues*; Osiris in Egypt with his shepherd’s crook staff; Tammuz in Babylon; etc.). Furthermore, Enoch at this point may have the Messianic Banquet in mind. See Phillip J. Long, “[The Origin of the Eschatological Feast as a Wedding Banquet in the Synoptic Gospels: an Intertextual Study](#).” *Dissertation* 86. St. Andrews University (2012), 246-47. That Messiah was also viewed as a shepherd is found in Aus’ discussion immediately after the Leviathan discussion, (pp. 155-59).

¹¹ Compulsion to worship. Misdirects to the abyss, the stagnant waters of the ancient Hula swamp.

¹² Takes away humanity. Misleads by way of the Watchers and Rephaim instruction for their evil, rebellious ends.

¹³ Hula Valley, disease. Panic. Azazel’s weapons.

¹⁴ Your vessels are emptied. Cult of the dead, meal, at area sites and [stone-table] Dolmens. Vessels for libation and offerings.

¹⁵ Tomb, Cult of the dead, abode of El.

If I were to have to merely sung Psalm 23, perhaps you would say that is a lustful song with a beautiful voice played well on an instrument and then heard the words and not obeyed it. But [do you really want to sing the anti-song](#)? It should stun you out of complacency to sing the real song. Heed and turn to your Good Shepherd through the good news of Psalm 23, and you will finally become a true singer yourself that the LORD is *Your* Shepherd.

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