

Ezekiel 3:16-21 • “Give Them a Warning”

Background *This passage either follows Ezekiel's call and commission by God (Ch 1-3:15) OR is potentially the completion of it.*

3v16 What's the significance of 7 days? Time of consecration for a priest (Leviticus 8) or time of mourning (eg Num 19:11)? Or just when Ezekiel was ready?

“The Word of the Lord came to me” — repeated 41x in Ezekiel.
Ezekiel was in close, ongoing contact with God.

Where is the Lord leading us today?

3v17 Image of watchman shows up several times in Isaiah & Jeremiah.
Literal watchman was soldier posted on city walls looking for threats.
Watchman who failed to sound alarm would pay w/ life.
Ezekiel watching for spiritual threats not physical threats.
Called to warn people as God directs (“hear a word from My mouth”)
Important to differentiate our perspective from God's Word.

3v18-21 Verses 18-21 = series of warnings related to scenarios Ez could face.
Each scenario includes implications for hearer AND for Ezekiel.

First scenario (v18): Ezekiel fails to deliver warning to wicked.
Consequence: Ezekiel and the wicked person both die.
Lesson: failure to warn the wicked means Ezekiel shares his fate.

Second scenario (v19): Ezekiel warns wicked person who ≠ heed.
Consequence: wicked person dies; Ezekiel lives.
Lesson: Ezekiel not responsible for those who refuse to hear.

Third scenario (v20): Ezekiel doesn't righteous man veering of track
Consequence: person who stumbles and Ezekiel both die.
Lesson: failure to warn translates into personal guilt.

Fourth scenario (v21): Ezekiel warns righteous man to stay on track.
Consequence: righteous man and Ezekiel both live.

What are implications for us?

- (1) Christ-followers we are not under the law! We have been forgiven our past, present, and future sins. Our lives are not forfeit if we disobey. Our salvation is not forfeit if we disobey.
- (2) We ARE still called to obey God, and God DOES call us to be watchers. God chooses to use “sons of man” to accomplish His will on earth. We are called to warn sinners of hell and warn believers (see Rev 2-3).
- (3) Nowhere are we exempted from our calling based on whether we think we’re likely to be successful. We’re called to obedience, not calculus!
- (4) Our salvation doesn’t hang in the balance (but rewards do – 2 Cor 5:10).
- (5) Apart from rewards, our willingness (or lack of willingness) to be watchers is an interesting heart check. Are we eager to obey God or looking for reasons to ignore or run away from His call on our lives?
- (6) Our job is to speak the truth in love carefully and prayerfully. What happens next is between the listener and God (eg Acts 18:6; Acts 20:26).
- (7) Following God WILL cost. But God will be a debtor to no one. (Matt 19). Whatever following God costs us in this life WILL be rewarded in the next.