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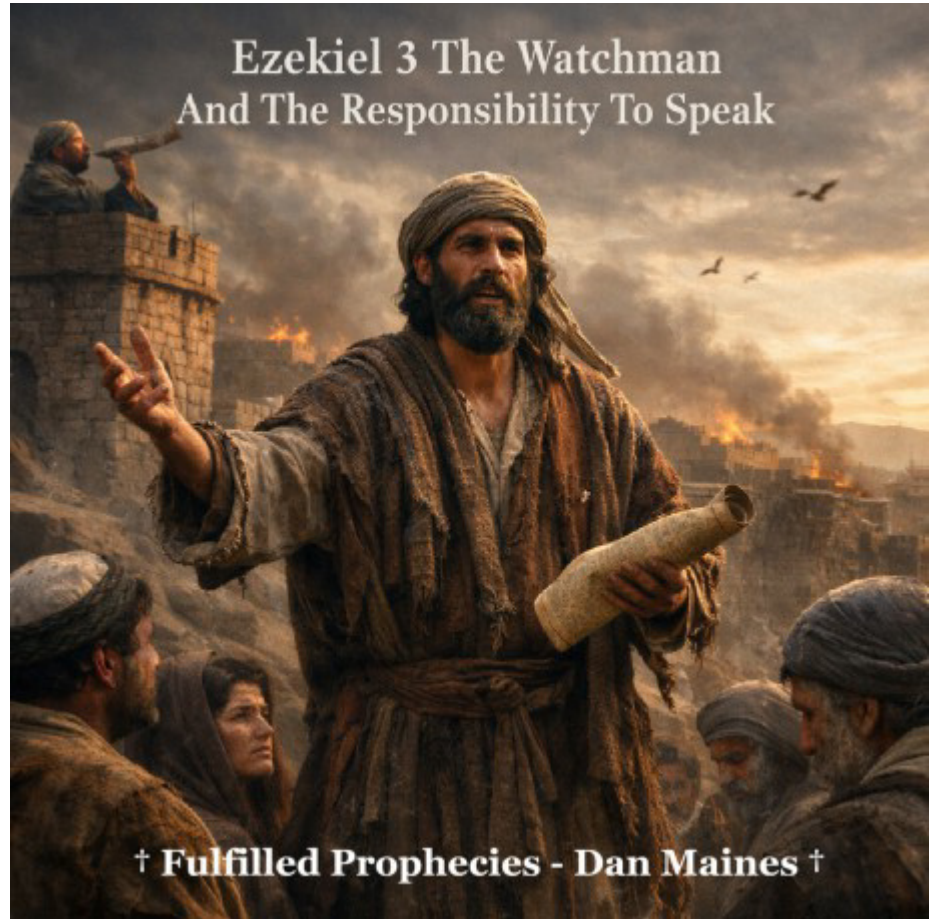
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## Ezekiel 3 The Watchman And The Responsibility To Speak



By Dan Maines

## Ezekiel 3 The Watchman And The Responsibility To Speak

### Introduction

† Ezekiel 3 continues the commissioning of the prophet, showing that God did not just call him to see visions, but to speak His word whether people listened or not (Ezekiel 2:5-7)

† The focus is responsibility, Ezekiel is made a watchman, and silence is treated as guilt, not neutrality (Ezekiel 3:17-18)

† From the fulfilled perspective, this points forward to the final warning period before the destruction of Jerusalem, when God's messengers were sent to call Israel to repentance before judgment fell in AD 70 (Matthew 23:37-38)

### **Ezekiel 3:1-3**

Then He said to me, Son of man, eat what you find, eat this scroll, and go, speak to the house of Israel. So I opened my mouth, and He fed me this scroll. And He said to me, Son of man, feed your stomach and fill your body with this scroll which I am giving you. Then I ate it, and it was sweet as honey in my mouth.

† God is showing that His word must be received internally before it is spoken outwardly, Ezekiel had to take it in first (Jeremiah 15:16)

† The sweetness shows that God's truth is good even when the message includes judgment (Psalm 119:103)

† This same imagery appears again in Revelation when John eats the scroll, showing continuity in prophetic responsibility leading up to fulfillment (Revelation 10:9-10)

### **Ezekiel 3:4-7**

Then He said to me, Son of man, go to the house of Israel and speak with My words to them. For you are not being sent to a people of an unfamiliar language or a difficult language, but to the house of Israel, nor to many peoples of unfamiliar language or difficult language whose words you cannot understand. But I have sent you to them who should listen to you. Yet the house of Israel will not be willing to listen to you, since they are not willing to listen to Me. Surely the entire house of Israel is stubborn and obstinate.

† Israel's rejection wasn't due to misunderstanding, it was rebellion, they understood but refused (Isaiah 6:9-10)

† God makes it clear that the issue is not the messenger but the heart of the people (John 5:40)

† This directly parallels Jesus' ministry, where Israel rejected Him even though they understood His message (John 12:37)

### **Ezekiel 3:8-9**

Behold, I have made your face as hard as their faces and your forehead as hard as their foreheads. Like emery harder than flint I have made your forehead. Do not be afraid of them nor be dismayed before them, though they are a rebellious house.

† God equips His messenger to stand firm, truth requires strength in the face of opposition (Jeremiah 1:18)

† The hardness here is not stubbornness, it is resolve to speak God's word without compromise (Acts 4:29)

† This same boldness was required of the apostles before Jerusalem's fall (Acts 5:29)

### **Ezekiel 3:10-11**

Moreover, He said to me, Son of man, take into your heart all My words which I will speak to you and listen closely. Go to the exiles, to the sons of your people, and speak to them and tell them, This is what the Lord God says, whether they listen or do not listen.

† The responsibility is to speak, not to control the outcome (Ezekiel 2:7)

† God's standard is obedience, not success in numbers or response (Galatians 1:10)

† This principle carries through to the New Covenant, where the gospel is proclaimed regardless of response (2 Timothy 4:2)

### **Ezekiel 3:12-15**

Then the Spirit lifted me up, and I heard a great rumbling sound behind me, Blessed be the glory of the Lord in His place. And I heard the sound of the wings of the living beings touching one another and the sound of the wheels beside them, a great rumbling sound. So the Spirit lifted me up and took me away, and I went embittered in the rage of my spirit, and the hand of the Lord was strong on me. Then I came to the exiles who lived beside the river Chebar at Tel-abib, and I sat there where they were living, causing consternation among them for seven days.

† Ezekiel feels the weight of the message, the bitterness reflects the seriousness of judgment (Jeremiah 20:9)

† Even though the word is sweet in truth, it is heavy in responsibility (Revelation 10:10)

† The seven days of silence show the gravity of what he is about to deliver (Job 2:13)

### **Ezekiel 3:16-19**

Now at the end of seven days the word of the Lord came to me, saying, Son of man, I have appointed you as a watchman for the house of Israel, whenever you hear a word from My mouth, warn them from Me. When I say to the wicked, You will certainly die, and you do not warn him or speak out to warn the wicked from his wicked way so that he may live, that wicked person shall die for his wrongdoing, but I will require his blood from your hand. But if you on your part warn a wicked person and he does not turn from his wickedness or from his wicked way, he shall die for his wrongdoing, but you have saved yourself.

† This is the central theme, silence equals accountability, God requires the warning to be given (Ezekiel 33:6)

† The watchman imagery shows urgency, danger is coming and must be announced (Isaiah 62:6)

† This points forward to the final warnings before AD 70, when the apostles warned Israel of impending judgment (Matthew 24:34)

### **Ezekiel 3:20-21**

Again, when a righteous person turns away from his righteousness and commits wrongdoing, and I place an obstacle before him, he will die, since you have not warned him. He shall die in his sin, and his righteous deeds which he has done shall not be remembered, but I will require his blood from your hand. However, if you have warned the righteous person so that the righteous person should not sin and he does not sin, he shall certainly live because he accepted the warning, and you have saved yourself.

† Responsibility applies to everyone, both wicked and righteous need warning (Hebrews 3:12-13)

† This shows covenant accountability, Israel was judged based on response to truth (Romans 2:6)

† It reinforces that obedience to God's command to warn is what delivers the messenger (Acts 20:26-27)

### **Ezekiel 3:22-27**

The hand of the Lord was on me there, and He said to me, Get up, go out to the plain, and there I will speak to you. So I got up and went out to the plain, and behold, the glory of the Lord was standing there, like the glory that I saw by the river Chebar, and I fell on my face. Then the Spirit entered me and set me on my feet, and He spoke with me and said to me, Go, shut yourself up in your house. As for you, son of man, they will put ropes on you and bind you with them so that you cannot go out among them. And I will make your tongue stick to the roof of your

mouth so that you will be unable to speak and be unable to rebuke them, for they are a rebellious house. But when I speak to you, I will open your mouth, and you will say to them, This is what the Lord God says, He who hears, let him hear, and he who refuses, let him refuse, for they are a rebellious house.

† God controls when Ezekiel speaks, showing that the message is fully God's, not man's (Exodus 4:12)

† The restriction shows judgment already set in motion, silence itself becomes part of the sign (Amos 8:11)

† This reflects the hardening seen in Jesus' time, where many no longer had ears to hear (Matthew 13:13)

## **Historical References**

† Josephus records that warnings were given before Jerusalem's destruction, yet the people refused to listen, confirming the pattern of rejection (Josephus, Wars of the Jews, Book 6)

† Eusebius notes that believers were warned and fled Jerusalem before its fall, showing the watchman role fulfilled in the first century (Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History 3.5)

† Tertullian affirms that the prophets and apostles were faithful in delivering God's warnings, even when rejected (Tertullian, Apology)

## **How It Applies To Us Today**

† The responsibility to speak truth still stands, we don't measure success by response, but by faithfulness (2 Timothy 4:2)

† We must receive God's word deeply before sharing it, just like Ezekiel eating the scroll (Colossians 3:16)

† Warning others is an act of love, not judgment, silence is not neutral (James 5:20)

† God is sovereign over the outcome, our role is obedience, not results (1 Corinthians 3:6-7)

## **Q & A Appendix**

**Q:** What does it mean that Ezekiel ate the scroll?

**A:** It means God's word had to be internalized before being spoken, Jeremiah 15:16, Revelation 10:9-10

**Q:** Why was Israel so resistant to the message?

**A:** Their hearts were hardened and rebellious, Isaiah 6:9-10, John 12:37

**Q:** What is a watchman?

**A:** One appointed to warn others of danger, Ezekiel 33:6, Isaiah 62:6

**Q:** Is the messenger responsible if people reject the message?

**A:** No, only if he fails to warn, Acts 20:26-27

**Q:** How does this connect to the fulfilled perspective?

**A:** It points to the warnings given before Jerusalem's destruction in that generation, Matthew 24:34

**† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †**

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## **Source Index**

† Ezekiel 3:1-27

† Jeremiah 15:16; Isaiah 6:9-10; Matthew 24:34; Acts 20:26-27

† Josephus, Wars of the Jews, Book 6; Eusebius, Ecclesiastical

## History 3.5; Tertullian, Apology

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