

# The Visions of Ezekiel

## Lesson 24

### V. The Restoration of God's Chosen Family (32:17 – 49:35)

A. Vision Eleven – (32:17 – 33:20) 12<sup>th</sup> Year, 15<sup>th</sup> Day

Ezekiel's Fiftieth Assignment from the LORD – Egypt (32:17-31)

1. The Date (32:17)

**32:17 In the twelfth year, on the fifteenth of the month, the word of the LORD came to me saying,**

The month of vision eleven is missing from the prophecy. However, vision ten occurred on the first day of the twelfth month and it would be reasonable to assume that vision eleven occurred on the fifteenth of the same month. Therefore, this vision occurred fourteen days after its predecessor.

a) Egyptians to the Nether World (32:18-20)

(1) Down in the Pit (32:18)

**32:18 "Son of man, wail for the hordes of Egypt and bring it down, her and the daughters of the powerful nations, to the nether world, with those who go down to the pit;**

Vision eleven seems to continue where vision ten left off with the destruction of the Egyptians and their arrival in the “*nether world, with those who go down to the pit.*” Nether! What a strange word. It comes from the Old Saxon *nether* and it means “down, downward, lower, below, or beneath.” The world beneath this world as opposed to the world above this world. Sheol versus Heaven. Ezekiel was instructed to “*wail*” for these Egyptians because they were headed to this nether world, a place less glorious than this cosmic ball of life called earth.

(2) Bed with the Uncircumcised (32:19)

**32:19 'Whom do you surpass in beauty? Go down and make your bed with the uncircumcised.'**

“*Whom do you surpass in beauty?*” Or, rather, we would say, “Who do you think you are better than?” No one. You are headed in shame to sleep with all the rest of the heathen from this world. Down, down, down to the pit your body will go and down, down, down your eternal soul will go to Sheol. “*Make your bed*” there with all the rest of the shameful people! This prophecy was to the living, not the dead. Hophra was still alive at the time and so was Amasis.

(3) Slain by the Sword (32:20)

**32:20 "They shall fall in the midst of those who are slain by the sword. She is given over to the sword; they have drawn her and all her hordes away. 32:21 "The strong among the mighty ones shall speak of him and his helpers from the midst of Sheol, 'They have gone down, they lie still, the uncircumcised, slain by the sword.'**

How will these Egyptian hordes find their way to the nether world? By the edge of the sword. The place they are headed to is already filled with the shameful heathens of days gone by. Who are the shameful

heathens already in the nether world? “*The strong and the mighty ones ...?*” The LORD knows them and is about to reveal their names.

b) [Assyria in the Nether World \(32:22-23\)](#)

**32:22 "Assyria is there and all her company; her graves are round about her. All of them are slain, fallen by the sword, 32:23 whose graves are set in the remotest parts of the pit and her company is round about her grave. All of them are slain, fallen by the sword, who spread terror in the land of the living.**

The heathen hordes of the Assyrian Empire were already in the nether world. See them there in their beds where Nebuchadnezzar had sent them in 612 BC.

c) [Elam in the Nether World \(32:24-25\)](#)

**32:24 "Elam is there and all her hordes around her grave; all of them slain, fallen by the sword, who went down uncircumcised to the lower parts of the earth, who instilled their terror in the land of the living and bore their disgrace with those who went down to the pit. 32:25 "They have made a bed for her among the slain with all her hordes. Her graves are around it, they are all uncircumcised, slain by the sword (although their terror was instilled in the land of the living), and they bore their disgrace with those who go down to the pit; they were put in the midst of the slain.**

The heathen hordes of Elam were in the nether world. North, west and east of Babylon, a distance of about 1,000 miles, a mountain range can be found. On that range, east of Babylon, a group of people lived called the Elamites. The name means *highlanders* and they were descendants of Noah's son, Shem. Two dialects were spoken by the people but close enough to be considered the same language. The Assyrian kings attempted many times to conquer the Elamites but were unsuccessful until about 650 BC In that year, Assurbanipal, the king of Assyria, ravaged the Elamites with the sword and burned their homes and villages. Many died. Assyria controlled the land until it fell to Nebuchadnezzar. At that time, the land was given to Persia to manage. Persia had helped Nebuchadnezzar conquer it and it was nearer to them than Babylon. Maps often name it Susiana. Elam's bed was already made in Sheol. Ashurbanipal had sent them there in their disgrace as a nation which did not worship the LORD.

d) [Meshech, Tubal and Horders in the Nether World \(32:26-28\)](#)

**32:26 "Meshech, Tubal and all their hordes are there; their graves surround them. All of them were slain by the sword uncircumcised, though they instilled their terror in the land of the living. 32:27 "Nor do they lie beside the fallen heroes of the uncircumcised, who went down to Sheol with their weapons of war and whose swords were laid under their heads; but the punishment for their iniquity rested on their bones, though the terror of these heroes was once in the land of the living. 32:28 "But in the midst of the uncircumcised you will be broken and lie with those slain by the sword.**

Meshech and Tubal were descendants of Noah's son, Japheth. After the Tower of Babel scattering of the families by languages, these two descendants and their families settled just south of the Black Sea. Their armies were mighty and they defended their land well against the Assyrian Empire that attempted with great regularity to take over their land. They were uncircumcised and had long since lost any knowledge of the God of Noah. In the battles many were killed and many of the heroes of these tribes entered Sheol. But notice this about these families; not all of their heroes were killed. Some heroes were left to bring terror upon those still alive in the land. Their beds were not in Sheol, nor were they laid with the heroes of the shameful uncircumcised! Yes, some of their people are in the nether world, but not all. We will meet these two again with their cousins in chapters 38 and 39. They will meet their fate. They will be broken, slain by the sword, but not yet. They have a punishment awaiting them because of their sin, but that will have to wait until the end of time when this world is no longer influenced or controlled by Satan.

An interesting pause occurs in this prophecy. The LORD stopped in his message to Meshech and Tubal to speak to Pharaoh. *“But in the midst of the uncircumcised you will be broken and lie with those slain by the sword.”* Assyria, Elam, Meshech and Tubal were once powerful countries, but they had been defeated. They were object lessons for Pharaoh. He, too, would be defeated. Soon.

e) [Edom in the Nether World \(32:29\)](#)

**32:29 "There also is Edom, its kings and all its princes, who for all their might are laid with those slain by the sword; they will lie with the uncircumcised and with those who go down to the pit.**

The LORD continued the object lesson. Edom's kings and princes were in the nether world, killed by the sword. The powerful nation that populated the land below the Dead Sea – dead. The Edomites practiced circumcision. They were descendants of Isaac the son of Abraham. The covenant of circumcision was enacted between the LORD and Abraham. But Edom hated Israel. For that the LORD hated Edom. Remember the words in Malachi, “Jacob I have loved, Esau I have hated.” The Edomites were descendants of Esau. Down, down, down to the pit the Edomites went. Their circumcision could not save them and they, too, died in shame.

f) [Sidon in the Nether World \(32:30\)](#)

**32:30 "There also are the chiefs of the north, all of them, and all the Sidonians, who in spite of the terror resulting from their might, in shame went down with the slain. So they lay down uncircumcised with those slain by the sword and bore their disgrace with those who go down to the pit.**

The Sidonian chiefs were from Noah's son, Ham, through his son, Canaan. They practiced circumcision just as their cousins in Tyre did. But the ritual practice could not save them. Their sin was that of idolatry. They carved idols and sold them. It was their main source of income for the city as a whole. Other money was made by some of the men of the city who were rowers on Tyre's ships, but the prime product of Sidon was the manufacturing of idols. For their sin, they would “... *lay down uncircumcised ...*” in disgrace with all the other people of the strong cities and nations. No distinction from the other shameful dead. Nebuchadnezzar would send the Sidonians to the pit after he was through with Tyre. They, too, were going to be waiting for Pharaoh to arrive.

g) [Pharaoh in the Nether World \(32:31-32\)](#)

**32:31 "These Pharaoh will see, and he will be comforted for all his hordes slain by the sword, even Pharaoh and all his army," declares the Lord GOD. 32:32 "Though I instilled a terror of him in the land of the living, yet he will be made to lie down among the uncircumcised along with those slain by the sword, even Pharaoh and all his hordes," declares the Lord GOD.**

Can you imagine in your mind's eye the welcome party awaiting this Pharaoh when he arrived in Sheol – hell? How will this Pharaoh “... *be comforted for all his hordes slain by the sword?*” This Pharaoh said he was god. This Pharaoh said he had created the Nile. This Pharaoh will find himself among the vilest dead of this world.

Here we happen upon another reference to the topic of life after death. Pharaoh will have to comfort himself when he arrives in Sheol only to discover that he is not alone in his shameful circumstance of eternal life. Not alone will he be! He will be surrounded by “*his hordes.*” The word in Hebrew is *hamon* and it means *the abundance of a crowd or multitude.* Wycliffe, in AD 1390 did not use the word *hordes.* He rightly used the word *multitude.* Tyndale did not translate Ezekiel but his assistant, John Rogers did. He wrote under the pen name of Matthews and his AD 1537 addition to Tyndale's work used the word *host.* Interesting, the word *host* is from the AD 1200s Old French and it means *an army organized for war.* What word could be better in this place? None! When Pharaoh arrived with his army organized for war, he

would see them “*slain by the sword.*” Pharaoh was headed to the nether world, the world beneath this world as opposed to the world above. Down, below, in Sheol – torment - hell that is!

Ezekiel’s Fifty-first Assignment from the LORD – Watchman (33:1-20)

2. General Instructions for a Watchman for Israel (33:1-2)

**33:1** And **the word of the LORD came to me**, saying, **33:2** "Son of man, speak to the sons of your people and say to them, 'If I bring a sword upon a land, and the people of the land take one man from among them and make him their watchman,

In this fifty-first assignment, the LORD announced to Ezekiel that out of all of Israel, He was about to “*take one man from among them and make him their watchman.*” What is a *watchman*? The Hebrew word is *tsaphah* and it means a *lookout*. Think of it! The LORD was going to appoint one man to be the lookout for all the Israelite exiles at the *Chebar River* with Ezekiel. Who would that be? It would be the one man who would be able to see when the sword was brought upon the land – that is, if the LORD decided to bring the sword upon the land. The watchman would be required to keep his eyes open, to *behold* the coming of any threat as Wycliffe would translate the passage. He must warn the people when the people needed warning. He must be a faithful watchman. It seems here that the people would have the opportunity to select their own watchman. It also appears that the LORD would appoint the watchman chosen by the people.

a) A Faithful Watchman (33:3-5)

**33:3** and he sees the sword coming upon the land and blows on the trumpet and warns the people, **33:4** then he who hears the sound of the trumpet and does not take warning, and a sword comes and takes him away, his blood will be on his own head. **33:5** 'He heard the sound of the trumpet but did not take warning; his blood will be on himself. But had he taken warning, he would have delivered his life.

“*... and he sees the sword coming upon the land....*” Here is where Wycliffe used the word *behold*. The English word means *to pay attention*. The watchman must *pay attention* to the enemy that might be approaching and sound the alarm. That was his job. It did not matter if the people paid attention to the alarm or not, the job was to sound the alarm and warn the people. Failing to do so meant “*... his blood will be on his own head.*” But if the watchman sounded the alarm and the people ignored it, their blood would be on their heads, not the watchman’s.

b) An Unfaithful Watchman (33:6)

**33:6** 'But if the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet and the people are not warned, and a sword comes and takes a person from them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood I will require from the watchman's hand.'

Looking at the watchman’s warning from another angle, if he did not sound the alarm, he would die by the sword. Needless to say, the people he failed to warn would probably die by the sword too because they were not ready when the enemy struck. Failing to warn triggered a penalty. “*... his blood I will require from the watchman’s hand.*” Who would the people choose? Who would the LORD appoint?

c) Specific Instructions for a Watchman for Israel (33:7)

**33:7** "Now as for you, son of man, I have appointed you a watchman for the house of Israel; so you will hear a message from My mouth and give them warning from Me.

We have our answer. We have our watchman. We have the people’s choice. We have the LORD’s appointment. It was Ezekiel. It might need to be raised at this point, but it might be important for some. Ezekiel had already been appointed the watchman of Israel by the LORD in the first vision (3:17) twelve years before. By the time of this vision, the exiles at the *Chabar River* with Ezekiel had become well aware that the LORD and Ezekiel were in a close relationship. He spoke to Ezekiel and Ezekiel spoke to the

LORD. Many times we have seen the elders approaching Ezekiel to see what he was doing, but in reality, they were approaching to see what the LORD was doing. Ezekiel was the mouthpiece of the LORD and everyone knew it. Ezekiel would be the faithful watchman.

### (1) An Unfaithful Watchman (33:8)

**33:8 "When I say to the wicked, 'O wicked man, you will surely die,' and you do not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood I will require from your hand.**

Now that the LORD had told Ezekiel that he would be the new watchman for Israel, it was time for the LORD to tell Ezekiel the specifics about his new job. Ezekiel's relationship with the LORD had just changed. He had been the spokesman for the LORD for the nation of Israel for twelve years. But now he would be the watchman and he would be personally responsible for the delivery of the LORD's message to the *Nation of Israel*. Throughout the Scripture it seems that the LORD applies two standards upon humanity. Consider the words of James. "Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment," (James 3:1). Therefore, the LORD holds a general standard for the majority of the population and an extra standard for those who serve the LORD directly. In this passage we will see the two standards.

Wickedness must be pointed out by the righteous spokesman of the LORD. We might well assume that no evil person on this earth has ever lived and died without knowing that he has lived a life in direct opposition to the desires of the LORD. The one caveat to that point as it has been enforced by the LORD through the years depends on the amount of revelation the LORD has given to the people living on earth to that point. For instance, through the entire first 2700 years of the earth's existence as recorded in the book of Genesis, the LORD, Who created everything, sanctified and sinful, slowly presented to mankind the concept of sinful things. It started with one tree in the garden; one command, one sin, one penalty for committing that sin. Then, most likely over one hundred years later, He spoke to Adam's son, Cain, about his sinful murderous thought concerning his brother Abel. Down through time, the LORD slowly revealed what He wanted those who loved Him to do and what He wanted them not to do. He slowly revealed what He approved of and what He did not. Through the generations, Cain and his clan would continue the murderous sin he started until the LORD brought the world to an end with a flood. Noah, not a descendant of Cain, would be put in charge to carry humanity from one world to another floating on an Ark with three sons and four wives. All would start over, but with a base of knowledge delivered by the LORD from the world before. Yet, less than one hundred years later, yet while Noah was still alive, his family pressed hard to defy the word of the LORD. Noah's family was forcefully separated by God. Each new small family unit was driven across the world, from Babylon to lands we call today Africa, Europe, Asia and even North and South America. Yes, some of the cousins of Shem, Noah's son, traversed Asia, made it across the frozen Bering Sea forty-mile track from Naukan Haykah, Russia to Wales, Alaska and on across today's Canada, down through America and on to South America and developed as the Aztecs, Mayans and others. With the dawn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the world became extremely small in terms of information sharing. By comparing factual archeological discoveries, it has become clear that the people of South America had carried with them the ideas, thoughts, tools and ways of doing things that were characteristics of the family of Noah prior to the separation that occurred at the tower of Babel in the Babylon area. But they did not take all the messages from the LORD with them because the LORD had not given all His instructions at that time. The development of thought through the LORD's dealings with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph was still years into the future. Finally, with Moses, in the wilderness with the new *Nation of Israel*, the LORD spelled out in detail His laws for sin and salvation.

With the giving of the laws of the LORD, there were those for the general population of Israel and then there were the extra ones for the priests and prophets – His spokesmen. The priests and prophets had to adhere to both, the general population had to adhere only to those that applied to them. And so it was with Ezekiel as the watchman. There were requirements for him and requirements for the people with him. The wicked needed to be told they were wicked, and it was Ezekiel's job to do that. He would be told what to tell them to save them from their wickedness. They would not know what to do if he did not

deliver the message exactly as spoken by the LORD. If Ezekiel turned out to be an unfaithful watchman, the wicked would still die and be punished because of their wickedness but Ezekiel would also be punished for his failure to deliver the message. He would bear the same punishment of the wicked as the LORD said, *"his blood would be required from your hand."*

(2) A Faithful Watchman (33:9)

**33:9 "But if you on your part warn a wicked man to turn from his way and he does not turn from his way, he will die in his iniquity, but you have delivered your life.**

The second specific instruction to Ezekiel presented the positive side to his job. If he delivered the message to the wicked, it did not matter what the wicked did with the information, Ezekiel had completed his job and was free and clear from all penalty and punishment. If the wicked heard the message and turned from his wicked way, he would be saved; if not, he would be lost.

d) Conversation with the Watchman (33:10-11)

(1) Question from Israel (33:10)

**33:10 "Now as for you, son of man, say to the house of Israel, 'Thus you have spoken, saying, "Surely our transgressions and our sins are upon us, and we are rotting away in them; how then can we survive?"'**

The LORD forewarned Ezekiel of the words they would say to him as their watchman. *"Surely our transgressions and our sins are upon us, and we are rotting away in them; how then can we survive?"* By the time of this eleventh vision, all of Israel, the Northern and Southern Kingdoms were in exile. Jerusalem was destroyed. The Temple was in ruins, torn apart and scattered on the ground. Official word of the destruction had not reached Ezekiel and his comrades at the time, but the messenger from Jerusalem was on his way. Yet, there were so few left in the Promised Land at the time of this prophecy that the exiles could look back in their recent history and confidently say, "Surely our transgressions and our sins are upon us and we are rotting away in them; how then can we survive?" They knew they were in exile because of their sins. They knew they were unable to do anything at that time to regain their Promised Land. They knew they were being punished. They knew they did not have control of their destiny. How could they survive under the thumb of the Babylonian Empire? The LORD had an answer for them.

(2) Response to Israel (33:11)

**33:11 "Say to them, 'As I live!' declares the Lord GOD, 'I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn back, turn back from your evil ways! Why then will you die, O house of Israel?'**

When we look at the LORD's answer for Ezekiel's reply, it seems so simple. It is. *"Turn back, turn back from your evil ways!"* The meaning of "turn back" literally is *turn your back* to your evil ways. Whatever they were doing that was evil, the LORD wanted them to turn away from those actions, words and deeds and do that which is righteous and holy. They were in exile because of their sins. Why would they carry the same sins for which they were exiled into their new homes and expect anything than to be exiled from this life? The LORD cared enough about this group to give them a chance. He cared enough to give them a warning. He cared enough to spell out what they were doing wrong. But He also would punish them if they did not change. He did not want them to die because of their sins, but He would put them to death if they did not change their ways. "Turn back," He said. Turn your back to it. However, the LORD could see the hearts of the exiles and a problem existed that Ezekiel needed to know how to handle. It concerned both the habitually righteous and the habitually wicked.

## e) Message from the Watchman (33:12-16)

## (1) Righteous Who Transgress (33:12a)

**33:12a "And you, son of man, say to your fellow citizens, 'The righteousness of a righteous man will not deliver him in the day of his transgression,**

Righteousness is the same as justification. It is the judicial act of the LORD in which He pardons all the sins of a person based on His standards. It is how a sinner is justified by the LORD and allowed to have eternal life with Him. On this side of the cross, we understand that Christ was the final offering, the final sacrifice for sin. We cannot let that taint our understanding of this passage. On the other side of the cross, in the days of Ezekiel, the final offering and sacrifice had not been made and the exiles were still required to operate under the Mosaic Law. Therefore, their self-righteousness could have been just the outward acts that they did to be in compliance with the Mosaic Law without regard to their inward hearts. Man will judge another man by how he keeps the law. The law keeper would be considered a righteous man. However, the LORD can see the heart of a man and He knows the sin within. Man cannot see the sin of the heart. Therefore, the LORD will judge the man based on the sin of his heart regardless of all the righteous acts that the man may have done in his life.

## (2) Wicked Who Turns (33:12b)

**33:12b and as for the wickedness of the wicked, he will not stumble because of it in the day when he turns from his wickedness;**

Opposite from the righteous one who transgresses is the wicked one who turns from his wicked way. All the wickedness in that person's life will not keep him from a life with the LORD when he turns away from it.

## (3) Righteous Who Turns (33:12b)

**33:12c whereas a righteous man will not be able to live by his righteousness on the day when he commits sin.'**

In the same vein as the wicked one who turns to the LORD, the self-righteous one who turns from the LORD will not be able to count on all the things done in the past to counter the penalty of sin.

## (4) Righteous Deeds Forgotten (33:13)

**33:13 "When I say to the righteous he will surely live, and he so trusts in his righteousness that he commits iniquity, none of his righteous deeds will be remembered; but in that same iniquity of his which he has committed he will die.**

Here we come to a problem often seen and heard even today. Have you ever heard someone say something like, "Blah, blah, blah! I would never do that. I am a Christian." And, yet, eyewitnesses saw and heard the so called "Christian" do what he just said he would "never" do. Perhaps the best and stark application of this point in the last half century would be found in the ministries of religious leaders such as Jim Jones and his People's Temple, Warren Jeffs and his Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, David Koresh and his Branch Davidians, and many of the priests in the Catholic Church as well as leaders in all churches throughout time. In these examples, these religious leaders held themselves out as righteous and then trusted in their self-directed righteousness to justify their desire to commit detestable acts upon those under their watchcare who trusted them and acquiesced to their desires because of their positions of presumed power. Sadly, in all of these examples, these leaders began their religious journeys with a true desire to be righteous in the sight of the LORD. But along the way, something happened. They began to live warped lives built on the foundation of the appearance of their righteousness to the detriment of others. All their previous righteous acts will not offset their sinful deeds. In fact, "...none of his righteous deeds will be remembered...."

## (5) Justice and Righteousness Remembered (33:14)

**33:14 "But when I say to the wicked, 'You will surely die,' and he turns from his sin and practices justice and righteousness,**

Conversely, all the sin in the world cannot keep a person from experiencing the justice of the LORD if that person will turn from his or her wicked ways and begin to practice righteousness. The word “practices” is interesting. It comes from the Old French *pratiser*. When it was placed in the first English translation it meant *to follow or employ as in to carry on in a profession* (i.e. medicine). Another etymology source gives it the definition of one who *repeatedly performs to acquire a skill, to learn by repeated performances*. Therefore, we can properly understand that the LORD is saying here that the wicked can leave the profession of sin and enter into the profession of justice and righteousness. He can change careers. He can change his eternal destiny.

## (6) Wicked Who Follows Statutes Shall Live (33:15-16)

**33:15 if a wicked man restores a pledge, pays back what he has taken by robbery, walks by the statutes which ensure life without committing iniquity, he shall surely live; he shall not die. 33:16 "None of his sins that he has committed will be remembered against him. He has practiced justice and righteousness; he shall surely live.**

But here we see several important factors that the LORD required in turning from sin to righteousness. The wicked must restore the pledge, pay back what had been stolen and follow the LORD’s statutes. Simply acting righteously will not do. It has to be followed with restoration and obedience. Frankly, all of this would seem unfair to the Israelites with Ezekiel.

## f) Rejection of the Watchman (33:17-19)

**33:17 "Yet your fellow citizens say, 'The way of the Lord is not right,' when it is their own way that is not right.**

The LORD warned Ezekiel that his people would reject His instructions. The things the LORD required were totally opposite from the customs of the Israelites. How in the world could an Israelite think the LORD was wrong about anything? Yet, they did.

## (1) For the Righteous (33:18)

**33:18 "When the righteous turns from his righteousness and commits iniquity, then he shall die in it.**

Therefore, the LORD made it clear that when a self-righteous man sinned, all of his self-righteousness could not save him.

## (2) For the Wicked (33:19)

**33:19 "But when the wicked turns from his wickedness and practices justice and righteousness, he will live by them.**

Therefore, the LORD made it clear that when a wicked man turned from his sin and entered into the practice of righteousness, all his sins were forgotten.

## g) Words to the Watchman (33:20)

**33:20 "Yet you say, 'The way of the Lord is not right.' O house of Israel, I will judge each of you according to his ways."**

The omnipotent LORD knew that His people would not move in their hearts from the ungodly customs that landed them in exile. As the nation of the “*house of Israel*,” the rebellion against the LORD had returned. The ancestors of the *house of Israel* who were taken to exile were the ones who had balked at the idolatrous customs in the Northern Kingdom. Those ancestors had been removed from the kingdom

more than 137 years before this vision. The Israelites that Ezekiel was speaking to were children or grandchildren of exiles from the Northern Kingdom. They had returned to the evil ways of their ancient countrymen and abandoned the faith of their fathers.

But the *house of Israel* would not be judged as a whole. If that were to happen, not one would have been saved to return to the Promised Land. Rather, the LORD said, "*I will judge each of you according to his ways.*" The father would not be judged for the sins of his son. The son would not be judged for the sin of his father. Neither would he be judged for the sin of the Israelite leaders. Each person would be judged based on his own action, his own heart, and his own profession of faith. It is the same for you and me today.