

## THE LORD TAKES NO PLEASURE IN THE DEATH OF THE WICKED

Ezekiel 33:11 “As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live.”

God appointed Ezekiel a Prophet and sent him to minister to the tribe of Judah during their exile (enslavement) in Babylon. Their “daubers” were down! Their spirits were in the tank. In verse 10 they cried out, “Surely our transgressions and our sins are upon us, and we rot away because of them. How then can we live?” Their life and end of life looked pretty dour.

In the commentary, Opening up Ezekiel, the commentator wrote, “The fact that Ezekiel was in Babylon ministering to Judah was more than an indication that God had not totally abandoned his people. There was still hope for them!” The commentator points out that God appointed Ezekiel “a watchman for the house of Israel.” What is the role of a watchman? He was to watch for pending danger and give warning when he saw it. God appointed Ezekiel watchman over His people Judah because of His mercy and grace toward them. Ezekiel was to point out their sins because God took “. . .no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live.” Ezekiel was sent by God to call Judah to repentance.

The God of the Old Testament is as full of grace as the God of the New Testament, and that is because He is the same God. Grace runs throughout all of God’s dealings with mankind. God’s law has not been rescinded. He continues to send Prophets (Pastors) to proclaim it so the hearers will recognize their sins and recognize their need for His forgiveness. And, He also sends them to speak His Gospel message of pardon of their sins in Christ.

As God was patient with Judah, so He is patient with you and all sinners today. “The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.” (2 Peter 3:9) God has given you a pastor to be “a watchman over your soul.” God’s kindness is meant to lead you to repentance. His desire is that you will come to know the truth of the Gospel that Jesus Christ saved you from God’s punishment for your sins with His life, death on the cross and resurrection from the grave.

Prayer: Bless, O Lord, my pastor(s) as he (they) watch over my soul. Equip them for this role that they, under your guidance and blessing, call me to repentance so I receive Your forgiveness for Jesus' sake. In His name. Amen.

The Law of God is good and wise And sets His will before our eyes,  
Shows us the way of righteousness, And dooms to death when we  
transgress.

Its light of holiness imparts The knowledge of our sinful hearts  
That we may see our lost estate And turn from sin before too late.

To those who help in Christ have found And would in works of love abound  
It shows what deeds are His delight And should be done as good and right.

But those who scornfully disdain God's Law shall then in sin remain;  
Its terror in their ear resounds And keeps their wickedness in bounds.

The Law is good; but since the fall Its holiness condemns us all;  
It dooms us for our sin to die And has no pow'r to justify.

To Jesus we for refuge flee, Who from the curse has set us free,  
And humbly worship at His throne, Saved by His grace through faith alone.  
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