
by

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Various studies undertaken on Ezek 3:16-21 and 33:1-11 focus more on the originality of the two passages rather than the content, which deals with the watchman. In contrast, this study intends to investigate the role of the watchman in the context of judgment and restoration based on those two passages. To facilitate this the historical-grammatical method of exegesis is employed.

Chapter I deals with the introductory issues, definition of the watchman, and the review of literature. In defining the watchman, the Hebrew word נָשִׁיך, "watchman," which is used also in the context of Ezekiel is the preferred word for this study. This is because it presents
the watchman as a person who is “looking out” rather than “watchman,” whose task is mainly to “look in.” In the review of literature, there are six characteristics that attempt to explain the role of the watchman: (1) as watching for the danger or enemy, (2) as a prophet, (3) as focusing on the nation of Israel, (4) as a Messiah, (5) as a trumpet to give warning as clear as a trumpet blast, and (6) as waiting on the Lord.

Chapter II deals with the exegetical investigation of Ezek 3:16-21, with special emphasis on the role of the watchman. Here, the primary meaning for the Heb root הָרָע, “warn,” is to “teach,” showing that the role of the watchman is not only to warn but to teach also. Interestingly, the presence of causal clauses indicated by the prepositional markers (ב, and כ, because, on account of, for) reveal that the reason for the death of the wicked and the righteous who turn away from YHWH is based on the account of their sins and not because of the failure of the watchman to perform his duty.

Further, the expression נֵרָע מֵית, אֲבָכֵי, “but his blood, I will require from your hand,” is a “synecdoche of species.” This means that the watchman is treated as a murderer. This phrase is also expressed in a legal terminology based on the law of retribution or equivalency.
The purpose of this is to discourage the watchman from being unfaithful to his responsibility.

The exegetical investigation of Ezek 33:1-11 in chapter III reveals the purpose of warning; that the people might turn and live. It also affirms the consistency and fairness of YHWH, in that YHWH does not hold anyone responsible for someone else’s sin.