

The Watchmen – Part 1

(Sermon Notes) By Warren Zehrung – 7/27/2013

Who today is warning of the impending destruction and imminent danger as the Tribulation draws near?

Ministers are asleep at their post, unable to see the approaching ruin.

When the Apostle Paul wrote his first letter to the Thessalonians, he said to the Church of God:

1 Thessalonians 5:

- 5 Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.
- 6 Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us **watch** and be sober. [wide awake spiritually]

There is the “Action Step” in today’s sermon – right up front.

“Let us **watch**,” let us be **watchmen** and **watchwomen**.

In the Scriptures the one watching the **godless** and **immoral** condition of the nation and issuing a stern warning is called the “**Watchman**.”

When is the time for the warning to go out to the English speaking Israelitish nations? Has it been done – is it yet future?

Ezekiel 3:

- 17 Son of man [God speaking to Ezekiel], I have made thee a **watchman** unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me.

This means that the Lord, is sending the prophet Ezekiel to the people to **warn them** of their sins against God, and to appeal to them to turn their **hearts back to God**.

God gave a warning message to Ezekiel that is meant to be heard by all the Israelites today.

Ezekiel’s warning **never** went to **Israel** because they had already dispersed in the nations. Israel became the ten lost tribes – lost to the knowledge of who they are. Now is the time for the warning to go out.

Ezekiel 33:

- 2 Son of man [God speaking to Ezekiel], speak to the children of thy people, and say unto them, When I bring the **sword** upon a land, if the people of the land take a man of their coasts, and set him for their **watchman**...

Brethren, the sword has touched our land. We are at risk – we are under attack.

Is the enemy too invisible for us to see and realize that we are besieged?

"Sword," is the Biblical word for all the weapons and means of waging war against us.

As we speak, our nation is in the throes of imminent collapse at the hands of those who are waging war by plundering our national strength.

Our national leaders – the President and Congress – have been given a mandate by their political electorate to pursue every godless way possible to obliterate the blessings that have been bestowed on us.

That is our physical blessing being plundered.

But worse than that, we are being overwhelmed by **spiritual** and **moral** decay.

Just as an aside: I had a request recently from a member who does **not** like hearing **doom and gloom** end-time messages.

This person wanted to hear sermons that were **exciting** and **fun** – how to get ahead and be successful in today's world.

This trait of wanting to hear only things that are **amusing** and **entertaining** is a long standing one among Israelitish peoples.

Isaiah was writing for a people who had rebelled against God and were not repentant.

Isaiah preached what God told him to preach – and that was a **message of judgment**. The people did not like it.

Isaiah 30:

- 9** That this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the LORD:

Just like the US and England today... the people were considering their own **feelings, desires, and emotions** instead of repentance toward God.

Isaiah 30:

- 10** Which say to the seers, **See not**; and to the prophets, **Prophecy not** unto us right things, [straight forward things], [but instead] **speak unto us smooth things**, prophesy **deceits**:

Speak unto us **easy things**. Speak unto us **flattering** things (as the Hebrew has it.)

They wanted Isaiah to preach that everything was **fine and dandy** and hunky-dory. They wanted fun and games – they wanted to hear **deceit** and flattery.

They wanted to be like the world around them. The last thing they wanted to hear was the **righteous truth** of God, and the things that God wanted them to understand.

However, God admonishes us to:

Isaiah 58:

- 1** Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob (Israel) their sins.

As a minister of Jesus Christ – we have no choice... That's what God requires us to preach.

Isaiah 1:

- 2** Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the LORD hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me.

Isaiah 1:

- 4** Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward.

Why? Because our land has become corrupt past the point of where God will allow us to go on existing.

It is like in Noah's day where there was corruption, immorality and wickedness in all things.

Genesis 6:

- 5** And GOD saw that the **wickedness** of man was **great** in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

Perhaps you do not think we've reached that point of depravity yet – what about the days of Sodom and Gomorrah? Can't you see that we have arrived there?

As we read these verses – ask yourself [what about us?]

We are God's chosen and elect people.

2 Peter 2:

- 4** For if God spared not **the angels** that sinned, [what about us?] but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;
- 5** And spared not **the old world** [what about us?], but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly;
- 6** And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes [what about us?] condemned them with an overthrow, [raining fire and brimstone from heaven] making them an example unto those that afterward **should live ungodly**;

Will you concede that Peter is referring to that segment of society that hates traditional marriage that is driving the political and cultural narrative of our country?

Brethren, as America is in a cultural, moral, and ethical **death-spiral**, let's read God's own assessment of our status from His perspective:

Hosea 4:

- 1** Hear the word of the LORD, ye children of Israel: for the LORD has a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land.

That is a fairly accurate picture of the United States and England today. In the past, prophets were sent by God to warn the nations of the impending doom that was coming upon them as a result of their rejection of our Creator God. Few people believe it, but we are the modern Israelites that the Bible refers to so often. America has willfully rejected God and the things of God.

Hosea 4:

- 2** By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood touches blood.

"Marriage" has become *passé*. Unwed mothers are the norm.

Hosea 4:

- 3** Therefore shall the land mourn, and every one that dwells therein shall languish, with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven; yea, the fishes of the sea also shall be taken away. [No beef, chicken or fish means hunger and starvation.]
- 4** Yet let no man strive, nor reprove another: for thy people are as they that strive with the priest.

Every sin in America has become praiseworthy and acceptable and even laudable – except for faith based opinions – they are strictly prohibited. Children are being sent home from school for mentioning God’s name! Perverts are being elected to high office ‘*en masse*’ (in great numbers) – but those who revere God are publically ridiculed and looked upon with contempt.

Then speaking of the nation and the false ministry, God says:

Hosea 4:

- 5 Therefore shalt thou fall in the day, and the prophet also shall fall with thee in the night, and I will destroy thy mother.
- 6 My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, **I will also reject thee**, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.

Brethren, you need to go back and read in your Bibles how the Assyrians and Babylonians viciously treated the Israelites and Jews as they carried them off into captivity. It was atrocious – as it will soon again be brutal for those who are the survivors. God has opened the windows of heaven and blessed this glorious land immeasurably – but the more He blessed us the more we sinned.

Hosea 4:

- 7 As they were increased, so they sinned against me: therefore will I change their glory into shame.

National sins will soon bring about the demise of our entire nation – but the people who are having their way have no intention of relenting.

Hosea 4:

- 8 They eat up the sin of my people, and they set their heart on their iniquity.

The first place that the term “**watchman**” appears is in:

2 Samuel 18:

- 24 And David sat between the two gates: and the **watchman** went up to the roof over the gate unto the wall, and lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold a man running alone.

“Watchman” literally means someone who is the **lookout**. He leans forward and peers into the distance.

He is observant as he waits and watches. The watchman surveys the horizon in every direction to make sure the coast is clear. The **watchmen** were ever on guard, scanning the horizon for an approaching enemy. A watchman must be alert and circumspect. The townspeople could sleep at night knowing that a watchman was on the wall, and if attacked the watchman would warn them and awake them. A faithful watchman knows that the enemy’s attack can come at any moment and is therefore ever vigilant.

An alert watchman warns of imminent danger. His duty is to warn of coming devastation. From his vantage point he was able to monitor the activities of the community.

Isaiah 21:

- 5 Set a ... **watch in the watchtower**, ...
- 6 For thus hath the Lord said unto me, Go, set a **watchman**, let him **declare what he sees**.

I am always reminded of:

Leviticus 5:

1 ...if he does not utter it, then he shall bear his iniquity.

Where is the warning cry to America going out today? Why is the ministry so **reticent**, so reluctant, so unwilling to Cry aloud! God is rapidly becoming fed-up with the national sins of America and Britain. I'm beginning to believe that we have crossed the line of no return.

I received an email this morning that more than agreed with me on this point: Here is a part of that email:

"I believe the United States crossed the **line of no return** and died in 1998 when our Congress failed to remove the immoral sitting president. Even though the President was "impeached" it was nothing more than a gentle slap on the wrist. That line in the sand was completely sealed when our U.S. Supreme Court recently struck down the Defense of Marriage Act and opened the door all the way for [all those with a reprobate mind] to do whatever they want to in their quest to slam their lifestyle down the throats of Americans. The next step in this immoral evolution is that anyone who does not go along with [all those with a reprobate mind's] lifestyle will be persecuted, fined or even be prosecuted. It is already happening!"

Romans 1:

28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over **to a reprobate mind**, to do those things which are not convenient.

The email continues:

"We as individual Christians should be both **watchmen** and **watchwomen** in God's service to warn people whenever possible of God's coming judgments on our sinning nations, especially the U.S. It seems obvious that the majority of those who are the **modern descendants of Israel** are not going to repent anytime soon and not even after the first six trumpet plagues have been poured out on mankind." [end email]

In case of danger the watchman would sound the trumpet or shout out a warning to the people. Who is warning the President, Who is warning the Congress, Who is warning the American and Israelitish peoples? In Ezekiel we see this term expanded in a moral and ethical sense so that we find the watchman observing the **spiritual condition of Israel** and issuing God's prophetic messages to them.

We know that Ezekiel was the watchman appointed by God. We find the renewing of the commission to Ezekiel to be the Watchman in Ezekiel 33:

Ezekiel 33:

- 1** Again the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,
- 2** Son of man, speak to the children of thy people, and say unto them, When I bring the sword upon a land, if the people of the land take a man of their coasts, and set him for their **watchman**:

Brethren, Who is supposed to warn the English speaking peoples of the earth of the trouble to come?

Some 300 years after the time of King David and Solomon... in 721-718 B.C., the 10 northern tribes of Israel were carried away into captivity from their land by the Assyrians / Germanic nation.

Ezekiel wasn't born yet when Israel was carried away into captivity. One hundred and twenty years later the Jews were still in Judah and Jerusalem. Judah did not fall to the Babylonians until 586 (587-585).

Ezekiel time period of writing was before, during and after the fall of Jerusalem. Ezekiel's prophecies are concerned the **future** of both Judah and Israel. We've seen before that Ezekiel's writings are for us today – because that were given to Ezekiel way too late to have been heard by Israel before their going into captivity beginning in 721-718 B.C

As such, it was evidently meant in a dual sense – applying in part to Jerusalem's fall to ancient Babylon but also the fall of Judah *and* Israel to *end-time* Babylon. The catastrophe that strikes our nations is going to be **unprecedented** in the annals of history.

The greatest time of trouble ever, which is yet to come, is called, "The time of Jacob's trouble" (Jeremiah 30:7), Jacob's trouble is **Israel's trouble**.

The *chief* nations of Jacob – are the lands in greatest need of warning – English speaking peoples of the world in a large part.

Ezekiel 2:

- 2 And the Holy Spirit entered into me when he [God] spoke unto me, and set me upon my feet, that I heard him that spoke unto me.
- 3 And he said unto me, Son of man, **I send thee to the children of Israel**, to a rebellious nation that hath rebelled against me: they and their fathers have transgressed against me, *even* unto this very day.

Remember, Israel had gone into captivity some 120 years before.

Israel went into captivity for Sabbath Breaking and Idolatry.

America today has the same sins 1. No Sabbath worship and 2. Taking God out of everything (Idolatry).

This Watchman's message can be heard by all who read their Bible. But very few know how to understand his warning.

Ezekiel 2:

- 4 For *they are* [today's Israelites] are impudent children and stiff-hearted. I do send thee unto them; and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD.
- 5 And they, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, (for they *are* a rebellious house,) yet **shall know** that there hath been a prophet among them. [who warned them]

Proclaiming the warnings to Israel is a **part** of the work of God's Church today.

*Who's responsibility is it to be a watchman today?

There is a two-fold commission for the Church of God to perform. Feed my Flock. Preach the Gospel.

I do not believe that being on a few religious TV stations is fulfilling the commission to preach the Gospel to the world in the same way that Radio did some 50 years ago.

The Scriptures make clear that the Church must, until Christ returns, continue to preach the gospel – the good news of the coming Kingdom of God – accompanied by a **watchman warning message** and a call to repentance.

Worldly ministers are teaching that the scriptures say nothing about homosexuality or, if they do admit that, they do not condemn the sin.

The amazing thing is that there is not a single religious figure who will cry aloud and spare not for the abominations that are increasing in our countries.

Ezekiel 33:

- 3 If when he sees the sword come upon the land, he blow the trumpet, and warn the people;
- 4 Then whosoever hears the sound of the trumpet, and takes not warning; if the sword come, and take him away, his blood shall be upon his own head.

What will happen to America and Britain if they do not heed God's warning?

That is not what God desires – He wants us to heed the warning and save our lives.

Ezekiel 33:

- 5 He heard the sound of the trumpet, and took not warning; his blood shall be upon him. But he that takes warning shall deliver his soul.

Ezekiel is the prophet in captivity prophesying against Judah and against Israel for what they have done and what was yet to come in the future.

Ezekiel – in his day fulfilled his warning responsibility.

Do we have a responsibility to warn modern Israel?

I want to lay a foundation showing that it is not someone else's job to be the watchman. People are quick to say, "It's not my job to warn Israel." "Let someone else do it." "I'm not trained for it." "I'm not paid to do it." "It's not my responsibility."

We who understand the blessings and cursings, and who know that **Israel is supposed to be warned** – are given the responsibility for Ezekiel's warning.

Isaiah 52:

- 7 How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that brings good tidings, that publish peace; that brings good tidings of good, that publish salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigns!

Keep in mind that Isaiah had lived 140 years before Ezekiel – so Ezekiel knew of Isaiah's prophecies – and did not need to repeat them.

Isaiah 52:

- 8 **Thy watchmen (Plural) shall lift up the voice**; with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the LORD shall bring again Zion. (Zion = Church)

We see that there are multiple watchmen – who in the future would lift up their voices.

Who today is supposed to be warning the English speaking peoples of the earth?

What are the people of the land to be warned of? God says to warn men of their wickedness.

Who, on the face of this earth, knows and understands that an end-time warning must go out to Israel – besides us? Notice what God says to the **watchman**:

Isaiah 62:

- 6 **I have set watchmen (Plural)** upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the LORD, keep not silence.

That is not a reference to the Two Witnesses – because the brethren are also supposed to be watchmen.

Luke 21:

24 ... and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

Jerusalem has labored under Gentile rule since the days of Nebuchadnezzar – these verses, Isaiah 62:6-7, are **yet future** after the time of the Gentiles comes to the full.

Isaiah 62:

7 And give him no rest, till he establish, and till he **make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.**

That is the time when **Jesus will rule** from Jerusalem.

So we see that the watchmen's jobs still need to be done.

*** 2 Chronicles 23:**

6 But let none come into the house of the LORD, [the Tabernacle or the Temple] except the priests, and they that minister of the Levites; they shall go in, for they are holy: **but all the people shall keep the watch of the Lord.**

In ancient Israel there were ordinations for special duties like that of the priests and the Levites.

But notice how the verse ends: **“But all the people shall keep the watch of the Lord!”**

Just because the priests had the hands-on jobs – it did not mean that the people were let off the hook... **“But all the people shall keep the watch of the Lord!”**

And we, the True Church of God, are the only ones who know and understand!

It is only the Church of God today that can warn modern Israelitish nations to avoid the judgment God that is coming on all those who are rejecting Him.

And let's not look over the fact that Ezekiel's warning is for those of us in the Church of God as well, who have let down and are not serious about the warning to repent and are liable to miss out on the future salvation.

It was future because Ezekiel's folks had already gone into captivity; Ezekiel, Daniel, Shadrack, Meshack, and Abendigo, were among the captives.

Every minister had better hear and fear – those who do not take seriously God's directive to be a watchman to modern Israel!

There is a time for each of us to **stand our watch.**

Habakkuk 2:

1 I will stand upon **my watch**, and set me upon the tower, and will **watch** to see what he will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved.

2 And the LORD answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that reads it.

3 For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.

4 Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the **just shall live by his faith.**

Paul quotes this verse in Habakkuk a number of times – and Paul comments:

Hebrews 10:

- 38** Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, [God says,] my soul shall have no pleasure in him.

There are many self-proclaimed watchman today who are selling out their duty for security and status.

*Another member also emailed me this morning:

“Wow! What a warning. If I was a minister I would be trembling at God's words about admonishing the brethren. How **terrifying** to be on the receiving end of God's wrath for not fulfilling His command.” [end email]

Brethren, rather than **living by faith** – too many ministers are providing for their **own future security** by **feathering** their **own nest** – rather than warning the nation.

We read about that in:

Habakkuk 2:

- 9** Woe to him that covets an evil covetousness to his house, that he may **set his nest on high** [today we say, “he’s feathering his own nest”], that he may be delivered from the power of evil!
- 10** Thou hast consulted shame to thy house by cutting off many people, and hast sinned against thy soul.

We all have a responsibility from God to warn when things are dangerous, when war is at hand, when sin is confronting us.

Ezekiel 33:

- 7** "So you, son of man [Ezekiel]: I have made you [Ezekiel] a watchman for the house of Israel; therefore you shall hear a word from My mouth [God says] **and warn them for Me.**"

What are the people of the land to be warned of?

God says to warn men of their wickedness and sin – and rejection of Him.

Ezekiel 33:

- 8** When I say unto the wicked, O wicked *man*, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked *man* shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.
- 9** Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.
- 10** Therefore, O thou son of man, speak unto the house of Israel; Thus ye speak, saying, If our transgressions and our sins *be* upon us, and we pine away in them, how should we then live?

Ezekiel's role as watchman was not limited to warnings of sin, he was also supposed to proclaiming the Gospel of coming salvation.

Ezekiel 33:

- 11 Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?
- 12 Therefore, thou son of man, say unto the children of thy people, The righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression: as for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall thereby in the day that he turns from his wickedness; neither shall the righteous be able to live for his *righteousness* in the day that he sins.
- 13 When I shall say to the righteous, *that* he shall surely live; if he trust to his own righteousness, and commit iniquity, all his righteousnesses shall not be remembered; but for his iniquity that he hath committed, he shall die for it.

God is not mocked. He wants us to be obedient and to live His way. We are in the last days – and we have responsibilities. Our job is to stand tall and encourage your weak ministers to take a stand and to demand that his political corporate organization start to warn modern Israel.

Lay your life down – use yourself up – to fulfill God's desire that Israel be warned.

Live by Faith. Cry aloud, and spare not and show My people, Israel, their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.

That is what God asks us to do.

End: The Watchmen – Part 1