

THE DUTIES OF A WATCHMAN

BIBLE TEXT : Isaiah 62:1-7; Ezekiel 9:1-7; 33:1-19; Proverbs 22:6; 29:15.

LESSON 369 Senior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "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?" (Ezekiel 33:11).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Isaiah 62:1-7

1 For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp *that* burneth.

2 And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the LORD shall name.

3 Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God.

4 Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate: but thou shalt be called Hephzibah, and thy land Beulah: for the LORD delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married.

5 For *as* a young man marrieth a virgin, *so* shall thy sons marry thee: and *as* the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, *so* shall thy God rejoice over thee.

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

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

Ezekiel 9:1-7

1 He cried also in mine ears with a loud voice, saying, Cause them that have charge over the city to draw near, even every man *with* his destroying weapon in his hand.

2 And, behold, six men came from the way of the higher gate, which

Bible References:

I The Military Watchman

1. He is chosen by the people for a watchman of their land, Ezekiel 33:1, 2.
2. He who heeds not the warning shall have his blood upon his own head, Ezekiel 33:3-5.
3. The blood of the one who is not warned shall be upon the watchman's head, Ezekiel 33:6

II The Spiritual Watchman

1. He is chosen by God to warn Israel of his iniquity, at the mouth of the Lord, Ezekiel 33:7.
2. The blood of the one who is not warned shall be on the watchman's head, Ezekiel 33:8.
3. The blood of the one not heeding the warning shall be upon his own head, Ezekiel 33:9.
4. The equality of God's judgment is reiterated, Ezekiel 33:10-19.
5. The protection of the faithful and destruction of the careless watchman are seen by Ezekiel, Ezekiel 9:1-7; Isaiah 62:1-7.
6. All parents are watchmen of their children, Proverbs 22:6; 29:15.

Notes:

The Watchman at Work

"I see a company," shouted the watchman who stood on the tower in Jezreel. "Take an horseman, and send to meet them, and let him say, Is it peace?" ordered the king. Again the watchman sounded the alarm. "The messenger came to them, but he cometh not again." A second messenger was hastened out. "He came even unto them, and cometh not again: and the driving is like the driving of Jehu the son of Nimshi; for he driveth furiously," informed the watchman. "Make ready," was the king's response.

The watchman in his tower on the wall of the city was a familiar sight in the days of Israel. Many of their cities were built upon hills so that the view of the watchman would be unobstructed.

As the watchman looked out over the horizon from his vantage place, he warned the people of any apparent dangers – he told them what he saw. Death was the penalty if he should go to sleep on duty and fail to give warning. His was an important post, and on him rested a grave responsibility. If he failed to sound the warning when the enemy came, his city might be destroyed and many lives lost.

Ezekiel, the Spiritual Watchman

The Lord showed Ezekiel a watchman on the wall, and told him that was his work. He was chosen, not by the people but by the Lord Himself, to warn the people, not of temporal danger, but of eternal damnation through the inroads of sin in their land. If Ezekiel failed of his duty to warn the people, their blood would be required at his hands. In other words, he would be guilty of murder — not of the body, but the souls of men. It was a grave responsibility, which the Lord placed upon His prophet. Why did

lieth toward the north, and every man a slaughter weapon in his hand; and one man among them *was* clothed with linen, with a writer's inkhorn by his side: and they went in, and stood beside the brasen altar.

3 And the glory of the God of Israel was gone up from the cherub, whereupon he was, to the threshold of the house. And he called to the man clothed with linen, which *had* the writer's inkhorn by his side;

4 And the LORD said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof.

5 And to the others he said in mine hearing, Go ye after him through the city, and smite: let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity:

6 Slay utterly old *and* young, both maids, and little children, and women: but come not near any man upon whom *is* the mark; and begin at my sanctuary. Then they began at the ancient men which *were* before the house.

7 And he said unto them, Defile the house, and fill the courts with the slain: go ye forth. And they went forth, and slew in the city.

Ezekiel 33:1-19

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:

3 If when he seeth the sword come upon the land, he blow the trumpet, and warn the people;

4 Then whosoever heareth the sound of the trumpet, and taketh not warning; if the sword come, and take him away, his blood shall be upon his own head.

he do it?

"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 you die, O house of Israel?" "It is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish" (Matthew 18:14). God called Jonah to preach to Nineveh. He prepared a special fish and took Jonah down to "the belly of hell" to make him willing to go to that great city. Why? Because He had more than 120,000 souls there that needed to be warned.

Christian Responsibility

Christians today all have a responsibility to carry the Gospel to the world, and are under the same penalty that Ezekiel was if they neglect to perform their duty. "Outer darkness" was the doom of the man who failed to put his talent to use. God's great love for the souls of men compels Him to put a severe penalty on negligence, which might result in many going down to perdition. Many fatal accidents have been traced to neglect. Are souls being lost today because of your failure to sound the warning?

Parental Failure

The increasing problems of juvenile delinquency show a failure on the part of parents to discharge their responsibility as watchmen. "The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame" (Proverbs 29:15). Shame on the parents who fail in the use of the "rod of correction" (Proverbs 22:15). The land is full of child specialists and psychiatrists, but there is no substitute for bringing children up "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4). "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6).

A View from the Watchtower

As the Christian soldier looks from the vantage point upon the wall, what does he see? Sin, crime, violence, and destruction stalking through the land. Dare he keep silent and let his nation fall? As he scans the horizon and sees, the approaching army of the Antichrist, should he not blow the trumpet? As he looks in the Book and sees, "As the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (Matthew 24:37), should he not awaken the sleeper, that he might get ready?

The true child of God carries a burden for lost humanity. Not only is he warning the people, but he is prevailing before the Throne of God, that his mercy will be extended to a perishing world. God has ordained it thus. "I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night" (Isaiah 62:6). May God help us to faithfully discharge our duty!

"The burden of Dumah. He calleth to me out of Seir, Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night? The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night" (Isaiah 21:11, 12). If the Christian saw only the night into which this world is sinking, it would truly be a dreary picture; but "The morning cometh." On that morning, "the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air" (I Thessalonians 4:16, 17).

The Millennium

After a brief period in the air the Lord will descend with His saints, to set up His throne in Jerusalem. Then shall "the

5 He heard the sound of the trumpet, and took not warning; his blood shall be upon him. But he that taketh warning shall deliver his soul.
6 But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take *any* person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand.

7 So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me.

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?

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 turneth from his wickedness; neither shall the righteous be able to live for his *righteousness* in the day that he sinneth.

righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth" (Isaiah 62:1). "Ye that make mention of the LORD, keep not silence, and give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth." What a glorious morning it will be when "the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem" (Micah 4:2). The desert shall "blossom as the rose." "Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing" (Isaiah 35:1, 6). Saints of the Lord, give Him no rest until He answers the prayer, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10).

The Necessity of Enduring to the End

The Israelites were complaining that the way of the Lord was not equal. They were laying claim to being the chosen people of God and expected God's blessing upon them. The Lord told them very clearly: "The righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression: . . . neither shall the righteous be able to live for his righteousness in the day that he sinneth. . . . all his righteousness shall not be remembered; . . . When the righteous turneth from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, he shall even die thereby" (Ezekiel 33:12, 13, 18). These warnings very clearly set forth the possibility of a person's losing the love of God out of his heart and being lost after having once known the way of righteousness.

This message and others throughout the Scriptures warn the people of God of the necessity of continuing "steadfast unto the end" (Hebrews 3:14).

While there are some who say that once a person is saved it is impossible for him to be lost, these warnings as well as many others throughout the Word of God let us know that only "he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved" (Matthew 24:13). "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (I Corinthians 10:12).

Let us take warning from the example of Saul of whom it was said, "The Spirit of the LORD will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy . . . and shalt be turned into another man" (I Samuel 10:6). We are told that "God gave him another heart" (I Samuel 10:9). However, after this, Saul backslid to the extent that "the LORD answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets" (I Samuel 28:6). Being thus forsaken by God, Saul turned to a woman with a familiar spirit (witchcraft) for help. In the end Saul committed suicide by falling upon his own sword thus meeting his Maker a lost soul. (**Ezekiel 33:13**

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. **John 8:31** 31 Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, *then* are ye my disciples indeed; **2 Timothy 2:10** 10

Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. **Hebrews 10:28** 28 He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: **Hebrews 10:29** 29 Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?)

QUESTIONS

1. What was the duty of a watchman of Ezekiel's day?
2. By whom was the watchman to be appointed?
3. What was the penalty if the watchman failed to give warning?
4. What happened if the people failed to heed the warning?

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.

14 Again, when I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; if he turn from his sin, and do that which is lawful and right;

15 *If* the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die.

16 None of his sins that he hath committed shall be mentioned unto him: he hath done that which is lawful and right; he shall surely live.

17 Yet the children of thy people say, The way of the Lord is not equal: but as for them, their way is not equal.

18 When the righteous turneth from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, he shall even die thereby.

19 But if the wicked turn from his wickedness, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall live thereby.

Proverbs 22:6

6 Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

Proverbs 29:15

15 The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left *to himself* bringeth his mother to shame.

5. How did the duties of a watchman compare with Ezekiel's calling?
6. How could a wicked man find eternal life?
7. What was the punishment of a righteous man when he committed sin?
8. To what period does Isaiah 62 have reference?
9. In what way are all parents watchmen?
10. What position will Jerusalem hold in the Millennium?