

a sermon paper:

LET US BE AS EZEKIELS - THE WATCHMEN ON THE WALLS!

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PREFACE

This sermon paper was written as a study of The Book of EZEKIEL and will attempt to glean essential messages of Ezekiel to his own age, that they may be applied in a manner consistent with The Holy Scriptures and to the honour of our Lord JESUS CHRIST in our own troubled present age.

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ABSTRACT

There comes a time for every society when human sin becomes so intense that GOD's longsuffering for the souls of men to repent no longer holds back His certain Divine judgement. Ezekiel lived in such a time - when the certain judgement upon ancient Israel and Jerusalem by The LORD could no longer be delayed because of the intensity of men's wickedness. Ezekiel was GOD's prophet to the still stiffnecked and hardhearted Jewish captives who had been mercifully carried away to Babylon by the instrument of GOD's wrath upon wayward Jerusalem - King Nebuchadnezzar.

In EZEKIEL we see that GOD's justice and holiness demands that all human sin must be judged and reap its just rewards. And apart from Divine forgiveness, no soul of man may presume to be found righteous before The Almighty. But at the same time, we see also GOD's grace and love in His Divine message of salvation and restoration offered to the penitent man and nation of humble and true faith in Him alone. And though the ages and means of grace have progressed from The Tabernacle and Temple to The Messiah JESUS CHRIST and The Cross, the Divine loving call for men to repent of their sins and return unto The LORD remains His constant desire for mankind.

The apostate state of spiritual, social and moral wickedness in Jerusalem in the days of Ezekiel is sadly a picture of our modern American society today. And just as Ezekiel was as a watchman upon the wall of the souls of his fellow Jews, so today we as Christians are called by Our Saviour JESUS CHRIST to be watchmen upon the wall of the souls of our neighbors. We are commanded to witness as GOD's watchmen to those who stand within The Church, to those who are faltering within The Church, to those who - by virtue of being outside The church - are lost, and to the age and society in which Our Maker has placed us. For if we truly love GOD with all our heart, mind and soul - and our neighbour as ourselves - we shall not shirk from this most needful and weighty Divine calling by our Lord JESUS CHRIST to our fellow man: to be as watchmen upon the wall of our neighbors' souls!

DEDICATION

To that Old Testament prophet Ezekiel, who did not shirk from the call of GOD to be a watchman upon the wall to his age. May we in The Church on earth today be found as faithful watchmen upon the wall when we stand before the throne of our blessed Saviour JESUS CHRIST! For has not The LORD GOD made us as watchman over our neighbors' souls?

EPIGRAPH

EZEKIEL 3:17: "Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at My mouth, and give them warning from Me." [KJV]

I. A PROPOSITION

Has not The LORD GOD made us as watchmen over our neighbors' souls?

II. A STORY

Imagine yourself a devout man of GOD living in a time and place where men have fallen away from GOD so severely that sin is paraded as righteousness and righteousness is spit upon as sin. Imagine yourself a faithful worshipper of The LORD in an age where most men around you have no love for either GOD or their neighbour, but rather bow down in self centered idolatry to worship false gods and mammon of this world.

Imagine next that The Creator - blessed be His Name! - comes to you to commission you as His holy prophet and messenger to the wayward society in which He has placed you. Imagine being given a glimpse of a vision of GOD's very being before your astounded eyes in a great whirlwind cloud with fire and brightness beyond imagination, out of which you are shown the living chariot of GOD's throne and "the appearance of the likeness of the glory of The LORD" Himself! ¹ Imagine yourself then hearing the very voice of GOD speaking to you, "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!" ²

Imagine yourself being overwhelmed by the presence of Your Maker, felling as it were yourself melting before Him, and crying out, "O LORD, who am I that You should send me to this rebellious and wayward people, for their hearts are hard and they will not listen to me?" Imagine The Holy Spirit coming upon you to fill you, that you would speak only GOD's Word to call men to repent and turn from their wickedness - not by your own power - but by the glorious might of The very Shekina Glory of GOD dwelling within you!

Such a man was that Old Testament prophet Ezekiel. Such was his mission given him by The Almighty. Such was his fear that caused him to cry out to The LORD in dread. Such was his anointing by The Glory of GOD. And such was his

¹ 1, KJV, EZEKIEL 1:28.

² 1, KJV, EZEKIEL 2:3.

obedience to JEHOVAH that he went as commanded to become as a watchman upon the wall, there by the might of Our Heavenly King to call his fellow man from their iniquity and return to the Law of GOD - to “love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind... [and to] love thy neighbour as thyself. ”³

And so you are compelled by The Holy Ghost Who has come upon you to do His will, “Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the... [the people]: therefore hear The Word at My mouth, and give them warning from Me!”⁴ And so as Ezekiel himself was sent to do, so you now call out to men as the watchman on the wall, “Repent, for the wrath of The LORD upon the wicked approaches!” My friends, has not The LORD GOD likewise made us as watchman over our neighbors’ souls?

III. A SCRIPTURE - THE WATCHMAN OF EZEKIEL 3:17-21

17: Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me.

18: When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.

19: Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.

20: Again, When a righteous man doth turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity, and I lay a stumblingblock before him, he shall die: because thou hast not given him warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he hath done shall not be remembered; but his blood will I require at thine hand.

21: Nevertheless if thou warn the righteous man, that the righteous sin not, and he doth not sin, he shall surely live, because he is warned; also thou hast delivered thy soul.⁵

IV. EZEKIEL THE MAN

Ezekiel was born in 623 BC during the restoration reign of King Josiah of Judah. His father was a Priest and Ezekiel studied to become a Priest as well. He never however had the opportunity to serve in The Jerusalem Temple. And it was not until “the fifth year of King Jehoiachin's captivity” in about 597 BC - that Ezekiel was touched by The Hand of GOD to begin his work as a prophet among the exiles of the Babylonian

³ 1, KJV, MATTHEW 22:37-39.

⁴ 1, KJV, EZEKIEL 3:17.

⁵ 1, KJV, EZEKIEL 3:17-21.

captivity.⁶ “This would place the beginning of Ezekiel’s prophecies at about 593 BBC.”

⁷ In the final years before the fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonians, there was “one lone prophet in the land of Judah for the last 25 years” - Jeremiah. It was Jeremiah’s calling to be the prophet of GOD “to the Jews of Jerusalem before the city fell” to the Babylonians.⁸ Ezekiel was a contemporary of Jeremiah, almost certainly having heard Jeremiah preaching in Jerusalem those many years as a young man. There in Jerusalem “Ezekiel probably heard and saw this great prophet at work.”⁹ The call of GOD through Jeremiah to Israel to repent, return and submit to Him must surely have seared the soul of Ezekiel deeply.

In 605 BC, King Nebuchadnezzar’s first invasion of Jerusalem took place, and many of Judah’s ruling and educated elite were taken as prisoner back to Babylon. One such man was the prophet Daniel. In the year 597 BC, King Nebuchadnezzar came against Jerusalem a second time. It was in this second wave of captives removed to Babylon in which the prophet Ezekiel was taken “along with King Jehoiachin and hosts of citizens.”¹⁰ Ezekiel was also a contemporary of the prophet Daniel. “Daniel served as GOD’s ambassador to the court of the captor King [Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon].” Ezekiel however came to be “the one whom GOD chose to be His prophet to the exiles [themselves].” Ezekiel was called to be GOD’s prophet both “before and after the [earth shattering] fall of Jerusalem.” It is well said that Ezekiel was “The prophet of the captivity.”¹¹

There were two great shattering events in his life of exile. First there was the terrible utter destruction and fall of Jerusalem. Second, “on this [same] day also the prophet’s beloved wife died.” Both of these blows came upon Ezekiel in about 587 BC.¹² Ezekiel was not to mourn the loss of his dear wife, but to carry on GOD’s work among the exiles without respite. Why? “Believers in GOD have been called upon to suffer many indignities through the ages, but in the suffering of Ezekiel, we learn

⁶ 1, KJV, EZEKIEL 1:2b.

⁷ 2, Dictionary of The Bible, EZEKIEL, page 368.

⁸ 3, EZEKIEL & DANIEL Study Guide, page 8.

⁹ 2, Dictionary of The Bible, EZEKIEL, page 369.

¹⁰ 3, EZEKIEL & DANIEL study Guide, page 8.

¹¹ 3, EZEKIEL & DANIEL study Guide, page 6.

¹² 2, Dictionary of The Bible, EZEKIEL, page 368.

something of the suffering of GOD Himself” over the sins and fates of men. For “our rebellion brings grief and hurt to GOD, against Whom our sin is directed!”¹³

It is for the reason then that GOD sent Ezekiel to His lost people Israel. It is the reason that GOD The Father sent CHRIST to redeem mankind. It is the same reason that GOD sends good Christian people in every age to lost men! To say to the wicked, “Thou shalt surely die“ if you do not repent and turn from your iniquity!”¹⁴ To warn the righteous man who has turned to sin, “GOD has placed a stumbling block before you, that you might turn back to your righteousness, so that your soul not die!” To encourage the righteous man who stays pure in his righteousness, “Sin not,” and your soul “shall surely live!”¹⁵ Thus did The LORD GOD make Ezekiel as a watchman over his neighbors’ souls!

V. THE TIMES OF EZEKIEL

Before her final fall, Jerusalem and the people of Judah were increasingly apostate and rebellious against The LORD. And it was for this very reason that eventually Divine judgement and punishment were required to come down upon The City and The Jews themselves. For even in their captivity, the people remained hardhearted and stiffnecked in the face of their own sins, refusing to confess them or repent of them before GOD. They had tragically “succumbed to the evil influences that surrounded them;” they had “lost faith in the covenant promises of JEHOVAH;” they had given ear to false prophets who were “contradicting all that Ezekiel preached,” telling the exiles that their captivity would be short and their return to Jerusalem imminent.”¹⁶

EZEKIEL 18 provides us with a glimpse into the immoral climate prevailing in ancient Israel for which Jerusalem was smitten with GOD’s justice, for Ezekiel exhorts the captives in Babylon to turn from those very sins of apostasy and idolatry that had caused their exile. The text paints a picture of a paganized people where adultery was rampant in the land with men taking their neighbours’ wives to themselves. There was

¹³ 2, Dictionary of The Bible, EZEKIEL, page 366-367.

¹⁴ 1, KJV, EZEKIEL 3:18.

¹⁵ 1, KJV, EZEKIEL 3:21.

¹⁶ 3, EZEKIEL & DANIEL Study Guide, page 9.

indifferent self defilement with things deemed to be unclean before The LORD. ¹⁷ There was rampant oppression of the vulnerable, taking of the very bread from the mouths of the hungry, violence against the weak and flippant violation of men's financial pledges. There was widespread sexual exhibitionism and public lewdness. ¹⁸

But there was more! Usury abounded and judgements were perverted in wickedness. ¹⁹ Men broke their oaths and dealt false one with another. ²⁰ Evil was not being purged from the nation as required by The Law of GOD which required the death penalty. Robbers and murderers were routinely set at liberty. ²¹ The poor were oppressed in the most vicious ways. ²² But there was more! Men stopped keeping The Laws, Judgements and Statutes of The Living GOD. ²³ The people refused to take ownership before The Almighty for their own sins, claiming GOD was unjustly punishing them for the sins of their fathers. ²⁴ And most heinous of all, there was rampant spiritual adultery in the worship of false gods and idol worship that had polluted the nation, the land and the people. The abominations of pagan idolatry topped the mountains and filled the valleys of The Promised Land by the very hands of GOD's Chosen People! ²⁵

So Ezekiel had a most daunting task before him – to call these exiled Jews from the stony hearts of idolatrous iniquity that they had not yet been purged of, though they had been carried off into captivity. Having received his first vision and direct commission as a watchman over the people from GOD Himself, he found himself as in EZEKIEL 3, by the river among the “captives at Tel-abib, that were dwelling by the river Chebar, and I beheld them dwelling there; and I sat down there seven days among them.” ²⁶ There he sat in stunned silence among his fellow captives. For having seen and heard directly a vision of The Glory of The LORD, he was lifted up in the spirit, and

¹⁷ 1, KJV, EZEKIEL 18:6.

¹⁸ 1, KJV, EZEKIEL 18:7.

¹⁹ 1, KJV, EZEKIEL 18:8.

²⁰ 1, KJV, EZEKIEL 18:9.

²¹ 1, KJV, EZEKIEL 18:10.

²² 1, KJV, EZEKIEL 8:12.

²³ 1, KJV, EZEKIEL 18:9.

²⁴ 1, KJV, EZEKIEL 18:2-4.

²⁵ 1, KJV, EZEKIEL 18:6,11.

²⁶ 1, KJV, EZEKIEL 3:5.

he “went in bitterness, in the heat of my spirit... and the hand of JEHOVAH was strong upon me.”²⁷

Ezekiel would need the indwelling power of The Holy Ghost, for “He had to plead the cause of GOD in an atmosphere of rebellion; prove himself to be faithful amidst many faithless; and, without... reserve, lay open evils in the condition of his companions in exile, which they sought most anxiously to cover out of sight!”²⁸ For as PSALM 137:1 records, the captives of the children of Israel in pagan Babylon wept in sorrow and were without hope: “By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion!”²⁹ Indeed, Ezekiel could only fulfill his Divinely appointed mission in the strength of The Almighty! And so did The LORD GOD make Ezekiel as a watchman over his neighbors’ souls!

VI. THE PURPOSE OF EZEKIEL’S MISSION THEN

Ezekiel’s mission as a watchman on the wall to Israel was of two parts. Before the fall of Jerusalem, he preached the need for repentance and of the coming inescapable Divine judgement to which the people must submit. But after the final fall of Jerusalem, his message changed to that of encouragement in GOD’s promise of Israel’s coming restoration. Ezekiel became a “consoler, a herald of salvation, an expositor of the necessity of inner religion, a prophet of the regathering, and the envisager of GOD’s restoration of The Temple, worship and land to a redeemed and purified Israel!”³⁰

One may ask why The Most High would even bother to send a prophet to these prisoners of Judah in this foreign gentile land. Throughout the Old Testament, we find our loving LORD GOD sending prophets to His Chosen People when they had fallen away from Him. First, “it was an indication of GOD’s good will to them, and His gracious designs concerning them in their affliction, that He raised up prophets among them, both to convince them when, they were secure and unhumbled.” Second, it was an indication of GOD’s Fatherly love for them, that He sent His prophets “to comfort them

²⁷ 1, KJV, EZEKIEL 3:14.

²⁸ 4, Exposition of EZEKIEL, page 2.

²⁹ 1, KJV, PSALM 137:1.

³⁰ 3, EZEKIEL & DANIEL Study Guide, page 12.

when, in the latter end of their troubles, they were dejected and discouraged.”³¹ This was the mission for which The Ruler of The Universe sent Ezekiel to the exiles of Judah captive in Babylon. For thus was Ezekiel sent to be a watchman over his neighbors’ souls.

VII. EZEKIEL’S MESSAGE TO HIS FELLOW JEWS THEN

The Book of EZKIEL identifies four classes of sinners to which Ezekiel – GOD’S watchman of the souls of his nation and his fellow man - was sent to call to repentance, that their souls may not perish. There is “the habitual sinner who is not warned, the sinner who is warned but does not repent, the righteous man who apostatizes but is not warned, and the righteous man who is warned and remains righteous.” Ezekiel is called to be a faithful deliverer of The LORD’S call to repent to all of these his fellow men, yet each man individually is responsible before The LORD for his turning from wickedness or lack thereof!³²

JEOHVAH warns the people in EZEKIEL 18 that, if they continue to walk in wickedness and idolatry, as EZEKIEL 18:13 records, "...shall he then live? He shall not live: he hath done all these abominations; he shall surely die; his blood shall be upon him!"³³ For GOD sees the iniquity of every man, and each soul is responsible before The Creator - blessed is His Name! - for his own sins. If a man then dies in his sin, having been warned to repent and yet chooses to continue in evil, he alone and no other man is responsible for his deserved Divine punishment! But GOD also declares that a man who turns from evil and walks in His Law will, as is declared in EZEKIEL 18:17, "...shall not die for the iniquity of his father, he shall surely live!"³⁴

It may well be that those left in Jerusalem, when the first and second waves of Jewish captives were lead away to Babylon, considered those who were deported to be suffering Divine punishment for their sins, while seeing themselves as having been left in their native land because of their own righteousness before GOD. But this was exactly opposite to the reality of the situation. In fact, “the exile was an act of grace on the part

³¹ 5, Matthew Henry Bible Commentary, Introduction to EZEKIEL, page 1337.

³² 6, Wycliffe Bible Commentary, EZEKIEL 3:17-19, page 712.

³³ 1, KJV, EZEKIEL 18:13.

³⁴ 1, KJV, EZEKIEL 18:17.

of GOD, and... the real sinners had been left in Jerusalem for dire punishment.” Only after the exiled captive Jews in Babylon came to see GOD’s providence in their exile were their hearts open to true repentance before The Almighty. GOD’s just punishment for iniquity came upon Jerusalem and her inhabitants, but He preserved His remnant in Babylon “that He might make them the beginnings of a renewed people!”³⁵ And as Scripture documents, 70 years later the refined remnant was indeed restored to Jerusalem under Ezra and Nehemiah!

So in PSALM 127 we find the Absolute Truth that a man, a city or a nation has assurance of deliverance and strength only when they place their trust completely in the right worship of JEHOVAH. “If GOD be not acknowledged, we have no reason to expect His blessing, and without His blessing all is [as] nothing!” For then our efforts at worldly and spiritual security and defense become as no more effective than the efforts of “the builders of Babel, who attempted in defiance of Heaven... [their future works] laid in [godless] pride and vanity” that crumbled before the Word of The LORD!”³⁶ It is against such folly that Ezekiel cried out to alert the ancient Israelites, giving warning to his neighbors as GOD’s watchman on the wall! And so we are to read with trembling hearts: So Solomon’s Words in PSALM 127:1-2 ring home for us: “Except The LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except The LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain. It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows...[apart from GOD!]”³⁷

VIII. WHAT EZEKIEL’S MESSAGE MEANT THEN

Jeremiah was as a watchman on the wall in his time to Israel from Jerusalem, but his words also spoke to all men in his age and not just the Jewish people. So The Almighty testified to all mankind through Ezekiel from the Babylonian exile that “the man who continued to love the paths of righteousness, and the man also who, after having forsaken, again returns to them, was to be assured of the blessings of life; these should as surely live as others should die!”³⁸ Here we see then not only GOD’s firm

³⁵ 7, Ezekiel - The Man and His Message, page 20.

³⁶ 5, Matthew Henry Bible Commentary, PSALM 127, Verses 1-5, page 933.

³⁷ 1, PSALM 127:1-2.

³⁸ 4, Exposition of EZEKIEL, page 42.

judgement and punishment of the unrepentant wicked, but also GOD's mercy, grace and love!

The man who listens for the voice of The LORD in Holy Scripture can hear clearly His Word calling out to mankind through the prophet, as in EZEKIEL 33:11, "...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?"³⁹ The Almighty Himself seeks for men to turn from their sin and live, as in JEREMIAH 8:6, "I hearkened and heard, but they spake not aright: no man repented him of his wickedness, saying, What have I done? every one turned to his course..."⁴⁰ The very heart of GOD lamented that "the stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times; and the turtle and the crane and the swallow observe the time of their coming; but my people know not the judgment of The LORD!"⁴¹

When Jerusalem fell to the Babylonians, the captives could not understand what had happened. They "wondered how their city could have fallen since GOD's Temple was there! In anguish they questioned if Judah's King, YHWH, was no longer there!" The LORD replied that Jerusalem's fall was because of the sins of the people, "not by His absence!"⁴² The forces of Babylon were brought upon the city and the people by Divine Will exactly because of the idolatry and wickedness of the people!

And so whenever and wherever men reject The Word of The LORD and refuse to repent of their iniquity, calling out "Peace, peace; when there is no peace," they assure their own destruction!⁴³ Who GOD is in His righteousness makes it necessary for Him to weigh men's souls in the scales of His glory and, if he finds them wanting, His justice must come! This is the lament of Ezekiel for the unpenitent soul of wayward men echoed in the words of Jeremiah, "...let us be silent there: for The LORD our God hath put us to silence... because we have sinned against the LORD!"⁴⁴ So did The LORD GOD send Jeremiah, as well as Ezekiel, to be a watchman over his neighbors' souls!

³⁹ 1, KJV, EZEKIEL 33:11.

⁴⁰ 1, KJV, JEREMIAH 8:6.

⁴¹ 1, KJV, JEREMIAH 8:7.

⁴² 8, Bible Knowledge Commentary – Old Testament, JEREMIAH 8:18-9:2, page 1141.

⁴³ 1, KJV, JEREMIAH 8:11.

IX. THE PROPOSITION AGAIN

Has not The LORD GOD made us as watchman over our neighbors' souls? As the watchman on the wall, are we not to call out as THE LORD did through Ezekiel, "...turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die," O sinful man?"⁴⁵ So does Our Lord JESUS CHRIST calls us as Christians to be watchman on the wall of the souls of men in all times and all places. For if we truly love GOD and our neighbour, we will not be silent when we see other men suffering in sin and in danger of earthly misery and eternal damnation! Indeed, the summary of The Law is to be written upon our hearts: first - "GOD, being good infinitely, originally, and eternally, is to be loved in the first place [beyond all others]..." in our hearts, minds and souls;⁴⁶ second - to have "a right love for our brother, whom we have seen, is both an instance and an evidence of our love to GOD, Whom we have not seen!"⁴⁷

So our call to be our brother's keeper to watch over his earthly and eternal welfare is ordained by CHRIST Himself in MATTHEW 22:37-40, "...Thou shalt love The LORD Thy GOD with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets!"⁴⁸

X. AS SINFUL ISRAEL THEN, SO SINFUL AMERICA TODAY

The spiritual, moral and social conditions of iniquity of Jerusalem before her final fall to Nebuchadnezzar sounds indeed remarkably like our current day society. Has not America in particular been showered by Heaven with great blessings beyond any nation in human history? And though this nation especially began as a Christian nation, do we not see both in The Church and in society at large a deep pervading atmosphere of iniquity and godlessness? The wicked and apostate society painted in EZEKIEL 18 in Ezekiel's day can just as easily paint a picture of our own today! Our society is a paganized culture where adultery is rampant in the land with men taking their neighbours' wives to themselves. There is indifferent self defilement with things deemed

⁴⁴ 1, KJV, JEREMIAH 8:14.

⁴⁵ 1, KJV, EZEKIEL 33:11.

⁴⁶ 5, Matthew Henry Bible Commentary, MATTHEW 22, Verse 34-40, III, 1., (2.), page 1730.

⁴⁷ 5, Matthew Henry Bible Commentary, MATTHEW 22, Verse 34-40, III, 1., (3.), page 1730.

⁴⁸ 1, KJV, MATTHEW 22:37-40.

to be unclean before The LORD.⁴⁹ There is rampant oppression of the vulnerable, taking of the very bread from the mouths of the hungry, violence against the weak and flippant violation of men's financial pledges. There is widespread sexual exhibitionism and public lewdness.⁵⁰

But there is more! Usury abounds and judgements are perverted in wickedness.⁵¹ Men break their oaths and deal falsely one with another.⁵² Evil is not being purged from our nation as required by The Law of GOD - especially when the death penalty is proscribed. Robbers and murderers are routinely set at liberty.⁵³ The poor are oppressed in the most vicious ways.⁵⁴ But there is more! Men have stopped keeping The Laws, Judgements and Statutes of The Living GOD.⁵⁵ The people refuse to take ownership before The Almighty for their own sins, claiming GOD is unjustly punishing them and abandoning them.⁵⁶ And most heinous of all, there is rampant spiritual adultery in the worship of false gods and idol worship that had polluted our nation, the land and the people, for the abominations of pagan idolatry tops - as it were - the mountains and fills the valleys of this new Promised Land by the very hands of GOD's once Christian people!⁵⁷

Men cry out today, "LORD, where were you when the terrorist struck us on 9-11 and when the winds and waves devoured our land in Hurricane Katrina? Do we not stamp our money with 'In GOD We Trust'?" See the mad rush of a people whose idols are money, material wealth, power, position and ease! Mark well the liquor stores and pornography shops that abound throughout the land! Look with shock upon the public lewdness, immodesty, sexual immorality and foul sodomy that proclaims itself from most every magazine, movie theatre and corner store in the nation! Listen for the blood of innocent tens of millions of slain aborted unborne babies whose shed blood stains the very earth of this country!

⁴⁹ 1, KJV, EZEKIEL 18:6.

⁵⁰ 1, KJV, EZEKIEL 18:7.

⁵¹ 1, KJV, EZEKIEL 18:8.

⁵² 1, KJV, EZEKIEL 18:9.

⁵³ 1, KJV, EZEKIEL 18:10.

⁵⁴ 1, KJV, EZEKIEL 18:12.

⁵⁵ 1, KJV, EZEKIEL 18:9.

⁵⁶ 1, KJV, EZEKIEL 18:2-4.

⁵⁷ 1, KJV, EZEKIEL 18:6,11.

Have you not seen the veritable armies of illegitimate children without fathers bome to mothers without husbands? Have you not cried in your heart for the generations of sloughful indolent on public charity whose right of passage is the welfare check, food stamps and a Section 8 housing voucher? Do you not observe the that this nation boasts of the largest prison population amoung all the nations of The West? Have you not seen the throngs of homeless wandering street people on the sidewalks of our opulent and decadent cities? Have you not driven with fear and trembling through our decimated and war-torn city slums?

Do you not hear the sirens of the armies of emergency vehicles speeding day and night to those fallen from self destruction and violence? Can you not see the hordes of broken families digested as if mere stubble by a godless and corrupt family court system? Do you not hear the moans of the souls of our children daily perverted and paganized in our public schools that defy The LORD and teach our young that there is no GOD? Have you not discerned the twisted judgments of our princes, parliaments and courts that reward the sinner and punish the upright? Have you not noted the many empty and dying Churches, while the sports arenas and shopping malls are filled on Sunday?

Observe the blasphemy and doctrines of the devil preached from many Church pulpits where iniquity is welcomed and righteousness is as wickedness! Shudder in sorrow and terror for the constant drumbeat of mockery of The very Cross of our Lord JESUS CHRIST across this land! See The Churches that have torn down The Ten Commandments of Moses and The Beatitudes of CHRIST! Note well the congregations of satan who take GOD's Name upon themselves in vain, defaming His Holy Name and casting away His Holy Scriptures! See the rot of perverted clergy who will preach anything but CHRIST as The Messiah and Son of GOD from their pulpits, deceiving themselves and the sheep charged to them, leading many astray into the very pits of hell!

Thus should we be able to see clearly that, just as ancient Israel and Jerusalem were so much in need of watchmen on the walls to call them from wickedness and abomination, so we today in this nation are in dire need for watchmen on the walls of our souls! And who but The faithful Church and those who are true to The Name of our Lord CHRIST JESUS should be today's watchmen on the walls of our neighbors' souls?

XI. WHAT EZEKIEL'S MESSAGE SAYS TO CHRISTIANS TODAY

Just as The LORD GOD said through Ezekiel to ancient Israel in EZEKIEL 7, so He proclaims to all men and all nations when His Divine longsuffering comes to its limits, “Now is the end come upon thee, and I will send Mine anger upon thee, and will judge thee according to thy ways, and will recompense upon thee all thine abominations... and ye shall know that I am The LORD! ⁵⁸ For “GOD will bestow eternal life on those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality... [in CHRIST JESUS, but] wrath and anger will be the portion of the self-seeking... who reject truth and follow evil. ...The just recompense by GOD is without regard to ethnic background or any other consideration except what each person has done.” ⁵⁹ Are our sins covered by the blood of The Lamb of GOD, or do we dare to stand before The Almighty – convicted by The Law – covered rather by our sins? Thus St. Paul warns us even today - as a watchman upon the wall - that GOD's call for men to repent has its end; that GOD sees all things and will judge all men; that GOD rewards the righteous, but condemns the wicked:

So Saint Paul writes in ROMANS 2:3-11: “And thinkest thou this, O man... that thou shalt escape the judgment of GOD? Or despisest thou the riches of His goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of GOD leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of GOD; Who will render to every man according to his deeds: To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: For there is no respect of persons with GOD!” ⁶⁰

GOD then appoints all Christians to be as Ezekiel was - a watchman upon the

⁵⁸ 1, KJV, EZEKIEL 7:1-4.

⁵⁹ 9, Bible Knowledge Commentary – New Testament, ROMANS 2:7-11, page 445.

⁶⁰ 1, KJV, ROMANS 2:3-11.

wall! And being so called in CHRIST, “His gifts and calling may not be repented of!”⁶¹ For ROMANS 11:29 declares that, “...the gifts and calling of GOD are without repentance!”⁶² If we are truly our brother’s keeper, we will be as a watchman on the wall as was the Good Samaritan recorded by St. Luke in LUKE 10. Recall the Jewish lawyer who wished to know what he should do to inherit eternal life and inquired as to CHRIST’s command to “love The LORD thy GOD with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself” with the impertinent response, “Who is my neighbour?”⁶³

By recounting how a mere Samaritan attended to the half-dead man who had been brutally robbed and beaten, “JESUS showed that the Samaritan had the attitude of love which The Law demanded,” for he cared for “a perfect stranger, simply because of good will.”⁶⁴ It was not the self-righteous Priest or Levite who was as a watchman on the wall over the very life of this stranger with his own hands, but one whom The Jews considered inferior in race and religion to themselves - a mere Samaritan! Here Our Lord ends with the command to us, “Go, and do thou likewise!” - be a watchman on the wall of your neighbors’ souls!⁶⁵

Here Saint Luke declares for us in LUKE 10:33-35 These Words: “ But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.”⁶⁶

XII. WHAT EZEKIEL’S MESSAGE MEANS FOR CHRISTIANS TODAY

Does this mean that as a watchman on the wall to other men we judge their souls? Is a Divine commission like unto Ezekiel then to be seen, as much of the apostate Church

⁶¹ 10, Commentaries on The Old Testament - EZEKIEL, Volume I, “Biblical Commentary on the Prophecies of Ezekiel - Introduction,” page 4.

⁶² 1, KJV, ROMANS 11:29.

⁶³ 1, KJV, LUKE 10:25-29.

⁶⁴ 6, Wycliffe Bible Commentary, LUKE 10:30-36, page 1047.

⁶⁵ 1, KJV, LUKE 10:37.

today would have us believe, “unloving” and “judgemental?” GOD forbid, for such voices today in The Church are as the lying false prophet Hananiah who opposed Jeremiah, as recorded in JEREMIAH 28, saying “that JEHOVAH would break the yoke of the king of Babylon, and within two years bring back to Jerusalem all the Temple vessels carried away by Nebuchadnezzar, ...King Jechoniah and all the captives who had been brought to Babylon!”⁶⁷

With all certainty, only The LORD Himself is the judge of the souls of men, but this does not relieve us today of the responsibility to be watchmen on the wall to our fellow man - Christian or heathen! As Jeremiah rebuked the lying prophets of his day who spread a “spirit of resistance to the decree of The LORD,” so the faithful Ezekiels of CHRIST must now in Christian love call one another and all men to confess our sins before GOD and repent.⁶⁸ So our Lord JESUS CHRIST counsels us in MATTHEW 7:1-5: “Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye!”⁶⁹

Should we then remain silent when we see our brothers suffering in sin and in danger of everlasting hellfire? GOD forbid! “A sinning saint needs restoration as well as Divine forgiveness. The one qualified to help him is spiritual, ...possessing a notable degree of the fruit of The Spirit, especially love... for the brother in trouble and also meekness..., seeing that he himself could some day slip into sin and need the same loving ministration for himself!”⁷⁰ For if we truly love others as CHRIST commands us, remembering how He loves us, we shall not seek to cast away this commission given to us as to Ezekiel, “Go, thou, and be as watchmen over your neighbors’ souls, bearing

⁶⁶ 1, KJV, LUKE 10:33-35.

⁶⁷ 10, Commentaries on The Old Testament - EZEKIEL, Volume I, “Biblical Commentary on the Prophecies of Ezekiel - Introduction,” page 6.

⁶⁸ 10, Ibid., page 6.

⁶⁹ 1, KJV, MATTHEW 7:1-5.

each other's burdens!" Thus St. Paul warns in GALATIANS 6:1-2, "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of CHRIST." ⁷¹

XIII. APPLYING EZEKIEL'S MESSAGE TO OUR WORLD TODAY

If we are then watchmen on the walls of our neighbours' souls as was faithful Ezekiel, we being dedicated servants of JESUS CHRIST, will seek to call ourselves, our loved ones, our brethren within the Church, the lost outside The Church and the age in which GOD places us to turn from wickedness and reconcile with The Almighty. For "a light is meant to shine and give direction." Christians are commanded to shine forth in this fallen world as watchmen upon the walls of men's souls, that men might "see their good deeds and give praise not to them but to their Father in Heaven!" ⁷²

This then is the fullness of being a watchman on the wall in CHRIST to our neighbours: to be as lights of righteousness and faith upon a hill to the world, thus encouraging those walking uprightly in GOD to continue to do so and those fallen into iniquity to repent and reconcile to GOD! Thus does St. Matthew record the Words of our Lord in MATTHEW 5:14-16, "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven." ⁷³

XIV. CONCLUDING THOUGHTS - EZEKIEL'S MESSAGE OF HOPE

In EZEKIEL 33, "Ezekiel had been named GOD's watchman to warn... Israel of coming judgement." That first commission ended when Jerusalem at last fell by Divine punishment for sin to the gentile Babylonian armies of the ruthless Nebuchadnezzar. But then GOD "appointed Ezekiel as a watchman for a second time," the purpose of which

⁷⁰ 6, Wycliffe Bible Commentary, GALATIANS 5:1-5, page 1297.

⁷¹ 1, KJV, GALATIANS 6:1-2.

⁷² 9, Bible Knowledge Commentary – New Testament, MATTHEW 5:13-16, page 29.

⁷³ 1, KJV, MATTHEW 5:14-16.

was to assure GOD's people of the coming "restoration of Israel" back to The Holy Land in less than a century. In both commissions, "the focus was still on individual accountability," but we seen Divine Providence going from judgement and punishment to renewal and restoration!⁷⁴

In a like manner Christians are called to be watchmen on the wall in the nation and age in which The Good LORD places them. First, we are to testify to GOD's sure judgement and punishment of sin upon nations second and upon individuals first, which shows our Maker's Divine justice and holiness. But second, we are also to testify to GOD's offer of restoration and salvation offered to all men through Our Lord JESUS CHRIST, which shows our Maker's Divine grace and love! And through the course of both, we may recall MATTHEW 3 in which John The Baptist called out in his day, "...Prepare ye the way of The Lord, make His paths straight. ...Repent ye: for The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!"⁷⁵ It is GOD's unfathomable justice and love that desires all men to turn from sin, repent and reconcile to Him.

And so we read JEHOVAH's loving call to His wayward Chosen people then and now, as well as to the saved and unsaved in CHRIST JESUS now and through the ages since His First Coming as in EZEKIEL 33:8-11: "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. 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. 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? 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?"⁷⁶

For then will our joy be fulfilled and our tongues will sing with gladness! The captives of sin who were the condemned sons and daughters of the first Adam shall be set free and released from captivity by the loving work and sacrifice of The Second Adam!

⁷⁴ 8, Bible Knowledge Commentary – Old Testament, EZEKIEL 33:1-20, page 1293.

⁷⁵ 1, KJV, MATTHEW 3:1-3.

As the psalmist wrote in PSALM 126, “Turn again our captivity, O LORD... [that we] that sow in tears shall reap in joy. [We that] goeth forth and weepeth... shall doubtless come again with rejoicing!”⁷⁷ Then, as CHRIST’s watchmen on the wall, we shall dwell forever with The Creator of The Universe in Heaven! Then, as CHRIST’s watchmen on the wall, we shall see The Kingdom of our Redeemer on earth as it is in Heaven - of which His reign there shall be no end!

Let us then seek deliverance of our souls and the souls of all men from the bondage of sin by the blood of The Lamb of GOD JESUS CHRIST at The Cross. And just as Ezekiel could not then escape GOD’s call upon him, neither we can escape the Divine commission to be as watchmen over our neighbors’ souls now. For it is written in EZEKIEL 3:17, “Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at My mouth, and give them warning from Me!” Truly The LORD GOD has made us all as watchmen over our neighbour’s souls!⁷⁸ Let us be as Ezekiels – watchmen on the walls! In The Name of GOD The Father, and The Son and The Holy Ghost. AMEN!

⁷⁶ 1, KJV, EZEKIEL 33:8-11.

⁷⁷ 1, KJV, PSALM 126:4-6.

⁷⁸ 1, KJV, EZEKIEL 3:17.

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