

The People Warned

Key Verse: “So you, son of man: I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; therefore you shall hear a word from My mouth and warn them for Me.”
—**Ezekiel 33:7**, *New King James Version*

Selected Scripture:
Ezekiel 33:7-20

There is a tendency among some to view the book of Ezekiel through the lens of novelty. As a result, books have been written proposing that the prophet chronicled an encounter with visitors from another planet. [This is not the view of this magazine’s Editorial Board] Others are interested in the apocalyptic scenario involving the invading forces identified as “Gog ... of Magog.” (Ezek. 38:2) That horde attacks Israel, precipitating the

battle of Armageddon. Advancing to the final chapters of Ezekiel, we find the promise of a new Temple and hints of coming Millennial glory.

These subjects are of great interest to students of the Bible, but it is well to bear in mind another level of teaching in this fascinating book. That lesson is to be responsible. Be a watchman who is ever vigilant and faithful. Look out for the safety and spiritual prosperity of God’s people. Christians will do well to emulate Ezekiel in this regard. By our actions, let us answer the age old question raised in Genesis 4:9, “Am I my brother’s keeper?” with a resounding “Yes, I am.”

Our Key Verse confirms Ezekiel’s previous commission from the Lord to be a watchman. To this commission God had added: “When I say to the wicked, You shall

surely die, and you give him no warning, nor speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life, that same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at your hand. Yet, if you warn the wicked, and he does not turn from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered your soul. ... Nevertheless if you warn the righteous man that the righteous should not sin, and he does not sin, he shall surely live because he took warning; also you will have delivered your soul.”—Ezek. 3:18-21, *NKJV*

We do not advocate busybodying; rather, shepherding and nurturing. Paul admonished, “Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.”—Phil. 2:1-4, *NKJV*

Acting as watchmen, we are mindful of our Scriptural bounds. Jesus Christ is the head of the church. We are merely colaborers with him, seeking to follow his teaching that one who desires to be great in God’s estimation should be a servant. (Matt. 23:11; John 13:14-16) Peter wisely counselled, “Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.”—I Pet. 5:2,3, *NKJV*

God ultimately gave Ezekiel the words and vision to shepherd Israel. Let it be so with us. While exercising vigilance we remember, “Unless the LORD builds the house, They labor in vain who build it; Unless the LORD guards the city, The watchman stays awake in vain.”—Ps. 127:1, *NKJV* ■