

The Lakeview Lamp

"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." - Psalm 119:105

March 11 , 2007

The Responsibilities of the Watchman - 1

Tim Smith

There is very little information available concerning the prophet Ezekiel, and with the exception of a reference to him by the historian Josephus all we do know about him comes from his own writings. We know that he was of the priestly aristocracy at Jerusalem, of the Eleazar or Zadokite order (**Ezekiel 40:45**). He was carried to Babylon with those of Jehoiachin's captivity (**II Kings 24:14-17**). We know that he was about 25 years of age when carried away, and that it was about 5 years after this, or when he was 30, that he received his call to the prophetic office. The mission of Ezekiel was fourfold: to beat down and dispel hopes of a speedy deliverance of Judah from the hands of their enemies, to expose the apostasy and incurable corruption of the nation, to awaken in individuals a sincere repentance, and to comfort the sorrowing community of pious hearts. (Historical information given above taken from notes by Rex A. Turner, Sr.)

In this study we shall focus on two areas of the prophet's work: namely, the responsibility of man to answer for his sin, and the responsibility of the "watchman" to faithfully proclaim the word of God as God has given it.

In **Ezekiel 3:17-21** God said, *"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. 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. 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. 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. 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."*

Notice that the first charge given to the prophet was to "hear the word" from the Lord. This is of the greatest importance to the faithful child of God. We are to teach and preach, not what we devise in our own mind, but that which is delivered to us through the scriptures from God. Whenever we attempt to teach or preach our own will and way we miss the mark. Paul said, *"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek"* (**Romans 1:16**).

If the gospel is God's power to save men, how can we teach or preach anything else? We, like the prophet of old, must hear the word from the Lord before venturing forth to instruct others. Jesus said, *"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free"* (**John 8:32**). These verses tell us that we are freed from sin by the truth; but what is the truth, and where can it be found? Hear again the Lord for the answer to this question: *"Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth"* (**John 17:17**).

Now, if the truth frees from sin, and if the word of the Lord is the truth, then we, too, must hear the word from the Lord. Peter said, “*Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever*” (**I Peter 1:22-23**). Herein we learn that our souls have been purified in obeying the truth, and we remember that the truth is the Lord’s word; therefore let us hear the word from the Lord. Herein we also learn that we are born again by the word of God. Jesus said that unless we are born again we cannot enter into the kingdom of God (**John 3:3-5**). Therefore we need to hear the word of the Lord. Peter said that we have “escaped the pollutions of the world” by or through a knowledge of the truth (**2 Peter 2:20**).

As Ezekiel was charged to hear the word from the mouth of God, so we must hear it if we are to be right in our day. Any message apart from the message of God is a false message and offers no salvation. As was the case in **Jeremiah 23**, even though we preach a message in all good faith, and even though the people to whom we preach the message accept it and obey it from the heart, if that message is not God’s message, it will not profit the people at all.



People are like tea bags – you have to put them in hot water to know how strong they are.

“The Lord is great and greatly to be praised; He is to be feared above all gods.” – Psalm 96:4

Family News

Cindy Burch, who Katie Greene knows, continues to recover from a car accident. She is off the ventilator and should soon be out of ICU. She still faces three months of rehabilitation. **Angela**, her daughter, had stomach problems, but has recovered very well.

Mary Burnett had a good week.

Quinton Coppage continues to improve after, and recover from, his fall.

Metty Fain is in Room B2, 215 Highland Circle Dr, Portland TN 37148.

Barry Fultz continues physical therapy. It has been helpful so far, however there remains much room for improvement. He started working part time this past week. Visit caringbridge.org/visit/nathanandsandlyn for details.

Susan Greene, Katie's mother, was admitted to the hospital yesterday. She was having chest pains. So far, they have eliminated a heart attack.

Sandra Hunt has much pain in her right shoulder and arm. This week she should see an orthopedic doctor for treatment options (these could include surgery).

Fred Newman, whom we currently support in Bratislava, will soon end his work there after 7.5 years. He and his family are moving back to NC

Fran Pickens is doing all right.

Cotton Read has a great amount of leg pain due to arthritis. Overall, he and **Nancy** are about the same.

Laura Reed is about the same.

Ame White has a doctor's appointment Tuesday morning to consider treatment options (these could include surgery).

Robert Wray eyes are much better (the eye doctor has dismissed him for six months). He still has very bad and frequent dizzy spells.

New Reports: **Allen Malone** (Vietnam).

Out of town, traveling, or visiting: **Allen Malone** (Vietnam); **John Moore**.

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"Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks" (1 Thes 5:16-18).