

Watchman

“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” (Ezekiel 3:17).

The term “watchman” has both a temporal and a spiritual meaning. Temporally, watchmen in the past were sentries appointed by city dwellers to warn them of approaching threats to life and property from an outside enemy. For example, *“there stood a watchman on the tower in Jezreel, and he spied the company of Jehu as he came, and said, I see a company. And Joram said, Take an horseman, and send to meet them, and let him say, Is it peace?”* (2 Kings 9:17). While the watchman in this example did his job, we read in following verses that he could do little else to avoid the ensuing disaster. As we’ll see later, neither can we!

Spiritually, a watchman is appointed by God to warn people not of threats to their physical well-being but of threats to their eternal souls. According to our subject text, a spiritual watchman is to warn the church, *“the house of Israel”*, but only according to the specific warning given to him by God. The greatest threat to any church is to have false doctrine preached from its pulpit. God’s watchmen are church elders who have experienced much and thus are skillful in the Word and are able to discern right doctrine from wrong: *“But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil”* (Hebrews 5:14). Once a watchman senses something scripturally incorrect in the church he is obliged to warn the church leaders of it and they then become responsible to take appropriate action or everyone suffers the consequence.

Thus, both the church leaders and the watchmen are accountable to the Lord for their own souls as well as those of others. If the watchman warns the church, as God has appointed him to do, *“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”* (Ezekiel 33:4) *“but thou hast delivered thy soul”* (Ezekiel 33:9). On the other hand, if the watchman does not issue a warning, God will hold him personally liable for any soul lost to the enemy: *“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”* (Ezekiel 33:6).

Although God appoints watchmen for His church, He does not give authority to anyone to rule the lives of believers (the Holy Ghost does that). Instead, He gives them one command, *“that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations...”* (Luke 24:47). Therefore, the aim of the watchman is to ensure that the way of reconciliation is

preached in the church. As already mentioned, watchmen are to give warning only when God inspires them to do so: *“I will make thy tongue cleave to the roof of thy mouth, that thou shalt be dumb... But when I speak with thee, I will open thy mouth, and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; He that heareth, let him hear; and he that forbeareth, let him forbear”* (Ezekiel 3:26-27). From this we learn that it is not up to the watchman to convert anyone; merely to reveal false doctrine, and then, only as God gives him utterance: *“...give them warning from me”*.

Just as God requires the watchman to warn the church leaders of false doctrine, similarly He also holds each believer responsible to be on guard against spiritual misconduct at any level; both to heed God’s warnings and to let others know when spiritual danger approaches. God calls all believers to be ever watchful for not all spirits are of God: *“Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man”* (Luke 21:36). Together, church leaders, watchmen and all other believers are to work as one unit in remaining faithful until the end.

*God’s Peace,
Charles Korhonen*

<u>May Speakers</u>		
May 2	Ken Storm	11:00 a.m. Holy Communion
May 9	Charles Korhonen	11:00 a.m.
May 16	Ken Storm	11:00 a.m.
May 23	Bruce Estola	11:00 a.m. Potluck Meal
May 30	Herb Jarvi	11:00 a.m.

Church Schedule

- Sunday School/Adult Bible Study...10:00 a.m.
- Wednesday Bible Study.....7:00 p.m.
- Church Cleaning.....Congregation

TAPIOLA APOSTOLIC LUTHERAN CHURCH

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