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# What is the Work of the Watchman?

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BICOG Publication

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***Almighty God commissioned his New Testament Church to “Watch.” He also told them to “pray” always, but he specifically told them to WATCH! Is the Work of the Watchman to the House of Israel, put on the shoulders of the Church?***

The Work of the Watchman in the book of Ezekiel has attracted many of preachers. Many ministers and lay people alike attributed their ministry to the Watchman of Ezekiel. But there is a key to knowing whether this person or ministry is an actual watchman work that God has ordained. That key is in the chapter itself. The key that unlocks all bible prophecy, the key that most people in the Christian religion has REJECTED!

### **Who was Ezekiel?**

Let’s get a little background on who Ezekiel was and where he dwelt, so we can understand the time setting of his prophetic ministry of the Watchman.

Ezekiel was a man of the “son of Buzi” (1:3) “the priest.” He was a priest of God to the people of the captives by the “river Chebar” (v.1) in the place called “Tel abib” by the river (Ezekiel 3:15).

His Father, “...Buzi (Eze1:3), [was] a priest, and *he probably exercised the priestly office himself at Jerusalem*, previous to his captivity, *as appears from the matured priestly character to be seen in his prophecies*, a circumstance which much increased his influence with his captive fellow countrymen at Babylon” (JFB Commentary on the Whole Bible, Introduction to Ezekiel, emphasis added). He was of the priestly line of “Zadok” (Barnes Notes).

Zadok was the priest in David’s day that carried the *Ark of the Covenant*. He was the “Son of Ahitub and father of Ahimaaz, descended from Aaron through Eleazar and was a priest in the time of David (2 Sam. 8:17; 1 Chron. 6:3-8). He is named in company with Abiathar, who was descended from Aaron through Ithamar (1 Chron. 24:3)” (Holman Bible Dictionary). The prophecies of Ezekiel show the ministry of his priestly line, and God relates his ministry to future events. Ezekiel chapter 8 is one example of this, as God is speaking of the temple and the seat of Jealousy in the temple etc... God spoke to him as *the minister of the Ark of the Covenant*, and what was happening to God’s presence above the Ark, and how God threatened to leave, and his presence would no longer be with his people.

Ezekiel was “taken captive to Babylon in 597 B.C. by King Nebuchadnezzar along with King Jehoiachin and 10,000 others, including political and military leaders and skilled craftsmen (2 Kings 24:14-16). He lived in his own house at Tel-Abib near the river Chebar, an irrigation canal that channeled the waters of the Euphrates River into the surrounding arid region” (Holman Bible Dictionary).

Jehoiachin was king over Judah and would not listen to the prophecies of Jeremiah, and Jeremiah prophesied about the coming invasion of Babylon to Judah unless they repented. Of course they did not listen, and the Jews were taken captive to Babylon. This was the captivity in which Ezekiel was part of, and Zedekiah was the King of Judah for only 11 years after this. Prophecies about the coming invasion of Jerusalem again by the King of Babylon were uttered by the

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prophet Ezekiel about putting out of the eyes of Zedekiah while Ezekiel was exiled in Babylon. All the prophecies came true, and Ezekiel *established himself* as a prophet during those years.

### **The Arrangement of Ezekiel's book**

To also understand the context of Ezekiel's prophecies, the arrangement of the book of Ezekiel is also important. The way we have it in the King James Bible, the book of Ezekiel is pretty much a "whole collection of documents."

"Each documental section of the Book is carefully dated, and *it should be observed that in some cases the date covers a group of allied documents*, the matter of all of which was conveyed to the prophet at about the date given.

"These dates, and the order in which they are placed in the text, must be regarded as having a profound significance in the intelligent appreciation of Ezekiel's life-work, and the interpretation of his messages; especially his visions of a rebuilt temple at Jerusalem and the re-constitution of the then captive nation Israel on the basis of a revised and prolonged Levitical dispensation" (*Article Ezekiel's Temple and Sacrifices Pre-Christian? Zionist? Millennial? A Prophetic Enigma and its Solution By The Late Rev. Thomas H. Whitehouse, M.A., D.Litt., emphasis added*). The arrangements of the books in Ezekiel in our bibles today are arranged *poorly*. As the same author writes, "...it is very loosely arranged, without any consistent regard to the consecutive order of the dates given." (ibid).

The dates given are the key to the historical context of Ezekiel, and to understanding his prophecies.

In Ezekiel chapter one, Ezekiel says, "Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, in the fifth day of the month, as I was among the captives by the river of Chebar, that the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God." Many people think that this was the age of Ezekiel, that he started his ministry at 30 years old. But when one examines other places in the book-Ezekiel, when he again says the same statement, it always *meant the year of their captivity*."

One example is Ezekiel 8:1, "And it came to pass in the sixth year, in the sixth month, in the fifth day of the month, as I sat in mine house, and the elders of Judah sat before me, that the hand of the Lord GOD fell there upon me." Did Ezekiel receive the visions when he was six years old? Absolutely not! No scholar would even dare suggest this. Instead Commentaries like Gill's and Clarke's Commentary and others show that it means the "sixth year of the captivity of Jehoiachin; the sixth month was the month Elul," (Gill). So why should it mean something else in Ezekiel 1:1? The wording is the same.

Whitehouse explains the confusion: "All the dates given in the text *except that in chapter I, verses 2 and 3, were affixed by Ezekiel himself, writing in the first person; that one exception was added 'editorially' by some unknown hand, writing in the third person, and was probably an explanatory docket note affixed to the collection of documents, but, unfortunately, later incorporated into the text without anything to mark it as a parenthetical note - with very*

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*misleading results, for it seems to confuse, or even, on the face of it, contradict the date of the first placed documental set dated in chapter 1, verse 1, 'the thirtieth year'...Chapters 1 to 7 inclusive are dated in chapter 1, verse 1, as containing visions, etc., given 'in the thirtieth year'.*

“A somewhat similar expression occurs in chapter 40, verse 1, ‘the five and twentieth year’, but with the notable addition **‘of our captivity’**, i.e., the captivity of those who were carried away with Jehoiachin; and this, of course, is implied in chapter 1, verse 1, **where we should read ‘the thirtieth year (of our, or of Jehoiachin’s, captivity)’**; and so on throughout the Book, thus making this important system of dates both simple and harmonious....” (ibid, emphasis added).

Ezekiel’s book should be arranged in this way: “Actually, the earliest dated set of Ezekiel’s extant prophecies is that given in chapters 8-19 (‘in the sixth year’, etc.), and the subsequent sets go on in rather interrupted sequence up to those given in chapters 32-39, dated ‘the twelfth year’. Then occurs a long interval of silence lasting thirteen years, after which the temple series of visions, etc., is given in the set dated ‘the five and twentieth year of our captivity’, chapters 40-48.

“So then actually the last dated set of prophecies and visions is that which is placed at the beginning of the Book, chapters 1 to 7, which bears in chapter 1, verse 1, *the very latest date of all, ‘the thirtieth year’, that is to say, five years after those in chapters 40-48.*

“It cannot be too emphatically *stressed that the closing chapters of the Book* antedate the opening chapters by five years! This, indeed, is the key to the puzzle of the last nine chapters with their seemingly” (Whitehouse, ibid, emphasis added). Now that we understand the dating of the prophecies *we can understand which prophecies have future fulfillments in our day, and which have fulfillments in Ezekiel’s day.*

### ORDER OF THE DOCUMENTS IN THE TEXT

Numerical order	Date of writing as given in the text Month - Day - Year			Ussher’s date B.C.	Text arranged in chronological order Chapters & Verses
1st	?	5	5	594	1: 2-3
2nd	6	5	6	593	8: 1 to 19:14
3rd	5	10	7	592	20: 1 to 23:49
4th	10	10	9	590	24: 1 to 25:17 29:
5th	10	12	10	589	1-16

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6th	?	1	11	588	26: 1 to 28:26 30:
7th	1	7	11	588	20-26
8th	3	1	11	588	31:1-18
9th	?	15	12	587	32: 17 to 33:20
10th	12	1	12	587	32: 1-16
11th	10	5	12	587	33: 21 to 39:29
12th	10	4	25	574	40: 1 to 48:35 29:
13th	1	1	27	572	17 to 30:19
14th	4	5	30	569	1: 1-2 to 7:27

### Why a Watchman?

Why did God appoint Ezekiel as a watchman? This was the 30th year of their captivity. Jerusalem was destroyed. Zedekiah's throne was gone; Zedekiah was in prison and blind, (see Jeremiah 52:11). The Jews were captive in Babylon, yet God says to Ezekiel, "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" (3:17). Why the warnings? They were already in captivity! They already suffered the loss of the nation and land. Yet God appointed him. Why?

### What is the Role of the Watchman?

Holman Bible Dictionary writes, "WATCHMAN: One who stands guard. Ancient cities had watchmen stationed on the walls. *Their responsibility was to sound a warning if an enemy approached (2 Kings 9:17; Ezek. 33:2-3). Israel's prophets saw themselves as watchmen warning the nation of God's approaching judgment if the people did not repent.*" (Emphasis added). The Watchmen were posted on the city walls so they can "see the enemy a long way off [see Isaiah 21:6]" (Revell Bible Dictionary, p.1014). Yet the Jews however WERE ALREADY IN CAPTIVITY, yet God appoints Ezekiel a "watchman." Yes an earlier appointment to be a watchman for Ezekiel was ordained by God in Ezekiel 33. But then God *reinstates* it again in the 30<sup>th</sup> year of their captivity *later* on (Ezekiel 3:17), according to the true chronology of the book (see above). Obviously this has a future fulfillment IN THE END TIME!

In the end time there would be an Ezekiel *type* Watchman, watching the coming of the Judgment of God upon his people. The Judgment of God was taking Israel captive for their sins, "And the heathen shall know that the house of Israel *went into captivity for their iniquity: because they*

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*trespassed against me, therefore hid I my face from them, and gave them into the hand of their enemies: so fell they all by the sword.*

“According to *their uncleanness and according to their transgressions have I done unto them, and hid my face from them.*” (Ezekiel 39:23-24). As God says above, God uses pagan nations—the enemies of Israel to exact punishment on Israel for their sins. Yet, out of his mercy, God appoints a Watchman to warn the people of what will happen *unless they repent*. God says, “Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets.” (Amos 3:7). God makes it known to his prophets what will surely be, so Israel can receive the warning before it happens so they can repent (see Hosea 5:9).

Notice what God tells Ezekiel in the 33rd chapter, “Again the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

“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:*

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

“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 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.

“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.

“***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***” (Ezekiel 33:1-7). If the sword comes and the person listens to that warning, he will be saved, if not, he will be doomed.

Then God says, “SO THOU O SON OF MAN” Ezekiel had the same job as the watchmen that were appointed to watch over the people.

Ezekiel then blows the “trumpet.” This was a symbol of preaching against the sins of the people, and showing them what God wants from them, “Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice *like a trumpet*, and show my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins” (Isaiah 58:1).

Ezekiel 33:8-11 then describes the preaching of Ezekiel from the word of the Lord and says that the wicked, “turn” from their wicked ways.

The blowing of the trumpet was a means of communication back in the days of ancient Israel (see 1 Samuel 13:3). It was to warn the people of the coming calamities that were to come, “*Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the LORD cometh, for it is nigh at hand;*

“A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains: *a great people and a strong; there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it, even to the years of many generations.*” (Joel 2:1-2). The alarm, the trumpet is blown; *the watchman is warning Israel about the coming danger if they don't repent!*

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Joel continues, “Therefore also now, saith the LORD, *turn ye even to me* with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning:

“*And rend your heart*, and not your garments, *and turn unto the LORD* your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil.

“Who knoweth if he will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind him; even a meat offering and a drink offering unto the LORD your God?

“***Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly:***

“Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children, and those that suck the breasts: let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet.

“Let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare thy people, O LORD, *and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them:* wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God?” (Joel 2:12-17). The warning, the call for repentance, the coming invasion of the armies against Israel, is a huge responsibility for the Ezekiel Watchman to fulfill and *God says that there would be a watchman in this end time!*

### **Appointed for One Man?**

Many in the Church of God today believe that the work of the watchman is a job for one man to do. But the Bible says it is the job of the *whole* church to do. Jesus told his disciples, “And what I say unto you I say unto ALL, Watch” (Mark 13:37). The whole church is to be involved in the work, *not* just one man.

In the Old Testament God sets up “watchmen” *plural*, over his people Israel. “Also I set ***watchmen*** over you, *saying*, Harken to the sound of the *trumpet*. But they said, We will not hearken.” (Jer 6:17). The whole church of God comprised of many people “watchmen” and they are to engage in the “watchman,” work as Jesus told *all* his disciples to “watch.” Ezekiel represented the Whole Church of God! (The Watchman).

In Isaiah 62:6 and Jeremiah 31:6, the “watchmen” are lifting up their voices preaching repentance and the worship of Almighty God to Israel. If the whole church involved themselves in this work, the word of God would go far and wide all over the world. I urge all church members to get involved one way or another, and not leave it up to one or two individuals to do—we must all be involved in the work of God! The real “work of the watchman,” is a *collective* work, not the job of one man.

### **Where is the Watchman Work in the End Time?**

There is one vital and important key to understanding to which people Ezekiel was sent to, and when you understand who these people are, you can also find the Watchman.

The key is who the HOUSE OF ISRAEL IS IN THE END TIME!

Many believe it was the Jews of his time that dwelt with him by the river Chebar. But this was not the house of Israel, but the HOUSE OF JUDAH! Ezekiel himself makes that clear distinction, in

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chapter 4 he says, “For I have laid upon thee the years of their iniquity, according to the number of the days, three hundred and ninety days: so shalt thou bear the iniquity of the *house of Israel*. “And when thou hast accomplished them, lie again on thy right side, and thou shalt bear the iniquity of the *house of Judah* forty days: I have appointed thee each day for a year” (vv.5-6).

Where he dwelt there was the “elders of Judah” (Ezekiel 8:1), *yet the watchman work was for the “House of Israel.”* What happened to the house of Israel?

Over 100 years *before* the house of Judah was taken into captivity, the Northern ten tribe House of Israel got taken to Assyria in many waves of invasions between 734-669 B.C. fulfilling Isaiah’s 65 year prophecy, see Isaiah 7:8. The invasions took place in 2 Kings 15:19, 29; 17:5-6; 2 Chronicles 33:11; Ezra 4:2.

Now Ezekiel was near the vicinity of the captive Israelites. The book of Ezekiel shows that they visited him, and wanted to know about his teachings. The captivity of Judah and the captivity of Israel were pretty much adjacent to each other, Israel in Assyria, and Judah in Babylon.

Although Assyria got swallowed up by the Babylonian empire, the Babylonians took over the land, and its inhabitants. In fact, in the 30th year of the captivity, the same time Ezekiel was given the Watchman work again, Jehoiachin was given a throne over the other rulers of Babylon, “And it came to pass in the seven and *thirtieth year of the captivity of Jehoiachin king of Judah*, in the twelfth month, on the seven and twentieth day of the month, that Evilmerodach king of Babylon in the year that he began to reign did lift up the head of Jehoiachin king of Judah out of prison;

“And he spake kindly to him, and *set his throne above the throne of the kings that were with him in Babylon*;

“And changed his prison garments: and he did eat bread continually before him all the days of his life.

“And his allowance was a continual allowance given him of the king, a daily rate for every day, all the days of his life” (2 Kings 25:27-30).

Stephen Collins notes that with the appointment of the king of Judah over the other thrones of Babylon, “The King of Babylon was supreme ruler over the Babylonian Empire, but he was served by many subordinate rulers, who were vassal kings over assigned areas. That a Babylonian King gave Jehoiachin a throne indicates that Jehoiachin was made a vassal ruler over part of the Babylonian Empire. Indeed, the account states that he was set ‘above’ the other vassal kings. Since there were so many descendants of the ten tribes of Israel who were subordinate to the Babylonian Empire (which inherited them when it conquered Assyria), *it is most likely that Jehoiachin was made ruler over the Israelites in Babylon’s Empire*...Perhaps the Babylonians felt that the captive nations of the Assyrians (whom they inherited as subjects) *would exhibit less rebelliousness if they were given their own hereditary rulers as vassal kings*” (Lost Ten Tribes of Israel...Found, p.213, emphasis added). So it is very likely that Ezekiel had contact with them, and with the appointment of the Former King of Judah over them, they had the freedom to interact with each other during that time.



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Then, Babylon fell; the Jews got permission to go back to Palestine, BUT THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL NEVER RETURNED! WHERE DID THEY GO!

### God's Promises

God made major promises to Abraham Isaac and Jacob, also David, about their seed and where they would be in the end time. He promised them they would grow into a great power and multitude all over the world, and that David's seed would rule over them. Have these promises been kept? Is God a liar? No! God is faithful! To find these people, is to find the Watchman work, for that work is to the HOUSE OF ISRAEL!

God promised, "...a nation and a company of nations shall be of thee..." (Gen 35:11).

That "...kings shall come out of thy loins;" (Gen 35:11).

They would grow, "...into a multitude in the midst of the earth." (Gen 48:16).

God promised Abraham's seed, "For the promise, that he should be the *heir of the world*, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith." (Rom 4:13). These were global promises on a global scale. Where are these peoples?

In the days of Ezekiel, the people of the House of Israel were *not* known to the heathen as Israelites, or Hebrews at that time. The Assyrians place the name of "Humbri" or "Kimbri" to these peoples. They were named after their king Omri who was well known among the gentile nations.

In the Assyrian tablets long *before* Israel got taken away, the Assyrians were ALREADY calling Israel "Bit Humri" or "Khumri." It was more like "Kh" than "H" since the Assyrian dialect pronounced it more with a hard sounding "k" than an "h." So the surrounding nations when Assyria ruled, when they saw the Israelites, knew them, BY THEIR CAPTORS as the "Bit-Khumri."

In history, these peoples were known as the "Cimmerians." The Bethistun Rock in Persia during the time of the reign of the Persians shows that the Cimmerians and the Scythians were one and the same peoples. These people to the Greeks were known as the CELTS!

History shows that the Celts and the Scythians migrated into Europe, and settled in Scandinavia and Britain. Of course the British colonized much of the world and became the British Empire, the "company" of nations prophesied. The line of Kings can be traced back to David, as promised by God that his seed would be rulers over Israel always, "Thus saith the LORD; If my covenant be not with day and night, and if I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth;

"Then will I cast away the seed of Jacob, and David my servant, so that I will not take any of his seed to be rulers over the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: for I will cause their captivity to return, and have mercy on them" (Jeremiah 33:25-26).

The USA is the prophesied "Nation" that was to emerge from the seed of Manasseh, Ephraim his brother being of course Britain. The other Scandinavian countries comprise the rest of the HOUSE

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OF ISRAEL. (For a detailed study of this our booklet *the USA and the British Commonwealth in Prophecy*).

Now we are able to understand the End time mission of the Watchman! His mission, to warn of the coming Judgment of God, preach repentance, tell the peoples who the enemy is, and why he is coming, and what will become of the House of Israel unless they repent in the end time. To which peoples today do these prophecies pertain to? THE USA AND THE BRITISH COMMONWEALTH, AND THE SCANDINAVIAN PEOPLES, THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL! These nations IS where the WATCHMAN WORK RESIDES!

Notice what Hosea says, “The watchman of *Ephraim* was with my God” (9:8). The watchman are OF Ephraim! Ephraim in this end time is Britain and her Commonwealth!

Another prophecy in Jeremiah shows God calling people *among* Israel, out of sin and into his church, and then, those that are called, do God’s work among the Israelites, “Go and *proclaim* these words toward *the north*, and say, Return, thou backsliding *Israel*, saith the LORD... Turn, O backsliding children, saith the LORD; for I am married unto you: and I will take you *one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion:*

“And I will give you [*Israel*] *pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.*” (Jer 3:12, 14-15). Israel is in the North. Other prophecies reveal that the North means the North and the Western Isles of Britain, America, Canada etc.... These people are called and brought to Zion-**Zion is a symbol of the church of God**, (see Hebrews 12:22). This is where you will find the watchman work, in these nations of Israel! Giving these people understanding of the prophecies of the Bible, and what is going on in world affairs! (*Read below of the great Commission given to the church*).

Few people know that Jesus and the prophets spoke of a time called the “Great Tribulation” (Matthew 24:21; Daniel 12:1). This is also called “JACOB’S TROUBLE” (Jer. 30:7). Jacob being Israel, meaning the modern day peoples of the USA and the British, and the warning message from Ezekiel’s Watchman work is that the coming Great Tribulation is coming upon these peoples UNLESS THEY REPENT! When Ezekiel was appointed a watchman at the time when Israel was *already* in captivity shows that a coming captivity, national calamity, is going to come to the same peoples, a time called “Jacob’s trouble.”

### **The Watchman Work**

God ordained Ezekiel as a watchman to Israel, and God warns even Ezekiel what would happen to the Watchman if that work was not performed.

God says to Ezekiel, “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:

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

“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.

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“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.*”

“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*” (vv.2-6). God says that when HE BRINGS the sword on the land; that the people being “warned” and the person being “*taken away in his iniquity*” is one and the same thing, as God told Isaiah, “Cry aloud, spare not, *lift up thy voice like a trumpet*, and show my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.” (58:1). The watchman is to *cry aloud* like a trumpet, and show the people their sins. If they do not repent, a foreign invader will take them away in captivity. This is the WARNING MESSAGE! REPENTANCE AND THE REMISSION OF SINS!

If the people repent, “*he that taketh warning shall deliver his soul.*”

Now, if the Watchman sees these things, as God has shown him in his prophecies, and as he sees the events unfold before his eyes and *does not give the warning*, if “he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood *will I require at the watchman's hand.*” The Watchman is guilty of murder; he has blood on his hands. What a great responsibility the church has in this end time!

If you knew-God had given you knowledge of the coming disaster, you see it on the horizon, you know its coming, and you do nothing, what does that make you? God says you are a murderer! “...and therefore his death shall be laid to the watchman, and he must be answerable for it” (Gill’s Commentary). God gave you a job to do, and you don’t perform it, especially when you have peoples lives on the line, what else can you call someone who allows the countless number of lives to be put to death! This proves that God does not want his church sitting on the sidelines and waiting it out till the second coming of Christ. The church has a great job to do and we must all be involved.

The watchman message is also a message of *individual* responsibility towards God.

God says “He” that takes not warning, God will take “him” away. The message was aimed at the *individuals* that make up the nation of Israel. God says, “...O ye house of Israel, I will judge you every one after his ways” (v.20). Though “this is to be understood of a national repentance for national sins, to prevent national judgments, being an address to the whole house of Israel” (Gill’s Commentary), it starts with the individuals. After all, a nation is only as strong as the individuals who make it up, and the influence of a few good men and women can have a powerful effect upon the larger community.

Many people think that one person cannot accomplish much to change a nation. They feel they have no power and no influence to do so. But history shows men like, Jesus, Luther, Paul, others, individuals in their nations can make a difference. Reform has to start with the individual, from there, his or her influence, can touch others in their lives and eventually the nation. This is why God starts with the individual in the prophecy of the Watchman, one heart at a time, one home at a time, a city, state, province, and county. This is why, though God speaks to the individual, he says, “O HOUSE OF ISRAEL.” What we do as individuals affects the nation as a whole.

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So the message was for the individuals that make up the nation of Israel to repent. If *all* the individuals of Israel repented, *all* of Israel would be delivered. If not, *only those who chose to repent were delivered from the calamity to come*. How are those individual saved? (Read below).

The Ezekiel Watchman must care and love the people of Israel when he is appointed watchman. This is why God appoints the Watchman, because God himself loves his people, and wants them to live in righteousness, and give them the knowledge of his law of good and justice. The Ezekiel watchman message is just that. If Israel *chooses* not to, Ezekiel warns them what will happen if they do not repent. The Watchman work shows the love and grace of God. As God says, “Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets” (Amos 3:7). God, when he sees sin in Israel, God’s appointed watchman will be informed by God himself what will happen, and God will not go ahead with it until the warning message goes out! Then ISRAEL DECIDES! If they do not repent, and continually reject God, then, God will execute his judgments, but not without the warning first, what a Gracious God!

### **God’s Mark**

So if the nation is not saved and goes through the tribulation, how is the individual saved?

God plainly says in Ezekiel 33, “But he that taketh warning shall deliver his soul” (v.5). The individual is saved. He will be delivered from all the calamities that God will execute on the sinning nation. But how will God perform such a salvation?

In Ezekiel the 9th chapter we see a man dressed in a robe made of linen, which is a symbol of righteousness, see Rev 19:8. He “had the writer's inkhorn by his side;” (v.2). God tells the person with the inkhorn, “...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.*” (v.4). what do these things mean?

First, the man clothed in linen is most likely an angel sent from God. Angels appear dressed in this manner many times in the Bible, see Revelation 15:6.

The writer’s inkhorn is “Usually a flat case about nine inches long, by an inch and a quarter broad, and half an inch thick, the hollow of which serves to contain the reed pens and penknife. At one end is the ink-vessel which is twice as heavy as the shaft. The latter is passed through the girdle and prevented from slipping through by the projecting ink-vessel. The whole is usually of polished metal, brass, copper or silver” (Barnes notes).

The purpose for the inkhorn was to “... write in the Book of Life the names of those who shall be marked. The metaphor is from the custom of registering the names of the Israelites in public rolls” (ibid). The mark was to be placed, and then the named was written in the book of life. The mark was also to “... distinguish them from others, in a providential way; and *keep and preserve them from the general ruin and destruction that was coming upon Jerusalem*” (Gill’s Commentary).

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What does the “mark” mean? “*taw*, ‘mark’ (Eze 9:4, Eze 9:6). In Ezekiel’s vision of the destruction of the wicked, the mark to be set upon the forehead of the righteous, at Yahweh’s command, was, as *in the case of the blood sprinkled on the door-posts of the Israelites (Exo 12:22, Exo 12:23), for their protection. As the servants of God (Rev 7:2, Rev 7:3) - the elect - were kept from harm by being sealed with the seal of the living God in their foreheads, so the man clothed in linen, with a writer’s inkhorn by his side, was told to mark upon their foreheads those whom God would save from judgment by His sheltering grace. Taw also appears (Job 31:35) for the attesting mark made to a document (the Revised Version (British and American) ‘signature,’ margin ‘mark’)*

“The equivalent Hebrew letter *taw* in the Phoenician alphabet and on the coins of the Maccabees had the form of a cross (T). In oriental synods it was used as a signature by bishops who could not write. The cross, as a sign of ownership, was burnt upon the necks or thighs of horses and camels. It may have been the ‘mark’ set upon the forehead of the righteous in Ezekiel’s vision” (*International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, emphasis added*). The mark is basically a seal. Proof *that you belong to God*, and are “not appointed us to wrath,” (1 Thess. 5:9). Just like in the book of Revelation, the angels have the seal of the living God, and places them on the foreheads of his servants, see Revelation 7. In Ezekiel it’s the same people. For they “sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof” (v.4). *Only the righteous cry about the abominations that are being done in Israel.*

How are we righteous? What makes us know what is right and wrong? It is not something that we can discover for ourselves. It is a gift. A gift of “righteousness” from God, Romans 5:17. This gift is given to the sinner “imputed” to him by God. This gift is of course, the HOLY SPIRIT! It’s the Holy Spirit that IS THE MARK OR SEAL THAT GOD GIVES US!

The Bible says, “Who hath also *sealed* us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts” (2 Corinth 1:22).

“In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, *ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,*” (Ephesians 1:13). When we receive the Holy Spirit, we are sealed, or marked, and our names are written in the book of life, see Philippians 4:3. Then, when we receive the Holy Spirit the law of God is written, “...in fleshly tables of the heart” (2 Corinth 3:3; Rom 5:5). With the righteousness of God in us, we sigh and cry for the abominations being done on earth.

Then God says, “Go ye after him [the man with the inkhorn] through the city, and smite: let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity:” (Ezekiel 9:5). Just like in Revelation chapter 7, the Angels were holding back God’s judgments till the seal was given, “And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree....Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads...And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; *but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads*” (Rev 7:1, 3; 9:4). So, after the Watchman message is done. God’s judgments are executed, but first, the people of God who repented are marked with the Holy Spirit to protect them from the coming wrath of

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God. If you have the Holy Spirit *now*, and you continue in the faith, you ARE PROTECTED FROM THE COMING WRATH OF GOD!

## **The Watchman Work and the Church of God**

What of the church? Is the church supposed to engage in this work of the watchman?

First, was it the “church.”? Is it a building? A name? Some sort of club people go to meet with friends and talk? What is the church that Jesus said he would “build?”

The word “Church” in the New Testament is “ekklesia” in the Greek language, and it means, “a *calling out*, that is, (concretely) a popular *meeting*, especially a religious *congregation* (Jewish *synagogue*, or Christian community of members on earth or saints in heaven or both): - assembly, church” (Strong’s # 1577). The Church is the body of believers, the body of Christ, the “called out ones” out of this world into his body, his assembly.

Jesus being the “chief corner stone” (Ephesians 2:20), and we being “as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 2:5). Jesus would build his assembly of believers, and him as the “head” of the Church of God. The leader, the Shepherd of the Church into which the whole foundation of its doctrines, beliefs and practices would come. This is the Church of God!

## **Jesus’ Commission**

Jesus told his disciples in his great commission, “Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not:

“But go rather to the *lost sheep of the house of Israel*.

“And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matthew 10:5-7). Jesus told them NOT to go to the gentiles, but to go to the *“lost sheep of the house of Israel.”* The great commission of the church of God was to go to the HOUSE OF ISRAEL. As they went they were to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom of God! Was the Gospel a warning message? Yes! Jesus came preaching the Gospel saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: *repent ye, and believe the gospel*” (Mark 1:15). The Gospel message was a message of the Good news of the Coming Kingdom of God, and those who wanted to be apart of it, *needed to repent and believe that Good news!* Those who accepted it was saved and those who rejected it were condemned, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

“He that believeth and is baptized shall be *saved*; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16:15-16). This is a warning message to those who refuse to repent, (see also Colossians 1:28).

Jesus also said “And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a *testimony against them* [Kings and Governors] and the Gentiles” (v.18). If you look at the context of this verse, this does not mean that they *went* to the gentiles *with* the Gospel. But that they were “brought before” them. Why? At that time Israel was dispersed all over the known world under the authority of gentile kings and emperors. When the Gospel was preached to Israel, those who hated the message brought them before the rulers; therefore they gave testimony to them.

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Then Jesus says, "...for verily I say unto you, *Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come*" (v.23). Notice, Jesus is still dealing with Israel. The great commission is for them. To bear witness to the truth of the Gospel to his people Israel, a testimony or evidences to the truth of the Gospel. Then telling them to repent and believe. This was the warning message to Israel.

The Church of God Commentary says, "*Like Ezekiel, the Church of God even has a special responsibility to preach to Israel until Christ returns*. As Jesus told His disciples, 'You will not have gone through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes (Matthew 10:23)'" (p.540, emphasis added).

The message of the Gospel was to go out to Israel by the disciples of Jesus. But those disciples did not reach all Israel, till Jesus was to come as Jesus prophesied. This Gospel to Israel was to continue till the end, as Jesus said, "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come" (Matthew 24:14).

Eventually the Gospel was to be preached all over the world because Israel was to be scattered all over the world. Ezekiel says, "Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD unto the shepherds; Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flocks?" "My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and upon every high hill: yea, my flock was scattered *upon all the face of the earth*, and none did search or seek after them. "For thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out." (34:1, 6, 11). So the Gospel was to go out to the entire world because Israel would be scattered through out all the world, and the gentiles would also benefit to hear the Gospel as Jesus said they would in the great commission.

Will the gentiles hear, or reject it? The decision is up to them. But the same thing happened to Israel in the days of Moses. There was a "mixed multitude" (Ex 12:38; Num 11:4), of people that believed Moses, and followed Israel because of the message of the Gospel back in Moses day. This also happened in the days of Nehemiah, (see Neh. 13:3).

So the preaching of the Gospel was a warning message to Israel. A message of repentance, and believing the Gospel about Jesus, and the coming Kingdom of God. Those who did not repent were to be condemned. Does this fall in line with the Message of Ezekiel? Absolutely!

Ezekiel's commission was to be a watchman to Israel. He was to warn Israel of the dangers to come if they did not repent. "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).

God continues, "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. "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.*

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“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?*”

“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;*

*“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.*

*“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.”* (vv.7-11,14-16). Is this not the same message Jesus gave, and the commission he gave his church? To preach the Gospel and those that repent shall live and those who do not shall die? (Mark 16:15-16).

As noted above, God is calling his people out of Israel and into his church to do the work of the watchman *among* his people Israel, “Go and proclaim these words toward ***the north***, and say, Return, thou backsliding ***Israel***, saith the LORD...Turn, O backsliding children, saith the LORD; for I am married unto you: and I will take you ***one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion:***

“And I will give *you pastors according to mine heart*, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.” (Jer 3:12, 14-15). The Church of God is the one doing the work of the Watchman among the Israelites. Where the Israelite are is where you find this work.

### **“Keep Watch”**

Jesus told his disciples to “watch.” He spoke of end time events and the signs of his coming, and told his disciples, “And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch” (Mark 13:37).

The word translated “Watch” in the gospel is from 5 Greek words.

The first one, and the most common used in the gospel is from Strong’s # 1127. The word is, “gregoreuo. “ It means, “...to *keep awake*, that is, *watch* (literally or figuratively): - be vigilant, wake, (be) watch (-ful).

The second is from Strong’s # 5438, “phulake.” This means “...a *guarding* or (concretely *guard*), the act, the parson; figuratively the place, the condition, or (specifically) the time (as a division of day or night), literally or figuratively: - cage, hold, (im-) prison (-ment), ward, watch.”

The third is Strong’s # 5442, “phulasso.” Meaning, “...to *watch*, that is, *be on guard* (literally or figuratively); by implication to *preserve. obey, avoid*: - beware, keep (self), observe, save.”

The Fourth is, Strong’s # 69, “agrupneo.” Meaning, “... to *be sleepless*, that is, *keep awake*: - watch.”



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The final one is from Strong's # 3525 "nepho." Meaning, "...to *abstain* from wine (*keep sober*), that is, (figuratively) *be discreet*: - be sober, watch.

In Ezekiel 33, the word for Watchman in Hebrew is "tsaphah" (Strong's# 6822).

Brown-Driver- Briggs Hebrews Definitions says this word means:

"1) to look out or about, spy, keep watch, observe, watch

1a) (Qal) to keep watch, spy

1b) (Piel) to watch, watch closely."

This Hebrew word "tsaphah," its Greek equivalent is "phulasso" (Greek to Hebrew Dictionary of Septuagint Words). Basically all these words mean to "Keep Watch." Be vigilant. Watch events that Jesus said we are to watch. Also, to watch over the flock of God, the Church and Israel (see Acts 20:31; 1 Corinth 16:13; Col 4:2; 1 Thess 5:6; 2 Tim 4:5; Heb 13:17; 1 Peter 4:7; Rev 3:3). To Show them what is happening inside and out.

Jesus said, "Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming" (Matthew 24:42). This means that we should make sure we are prepared at all times because we do not know when Christ will return. The command to "watch" is another way of saying, "Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil...[and] that you may be able to withstand [or stand your ground] in the evil day, and having done all, to stand" (Ephesians 6:11,13).

The true "work of the watchman" is a work of preaching repentance and the remission of sins to as many as possible, and of providing faith-enhancing instructions for those who turn to God.

Of course the other meaning of "Watch" is to "Watch" the events in the world, as Jesus said to do in Matthew 24. Amos 3:7 reveals that before they come to pass, the church must lift up their voice to the house of Israel, show them their sins, and then tell them what will happen unless they repent. By God giving his church the understanding of the prophecies of the Bible, the church can do this work of the watchman. God told Ezekiel, "When I bring the sword upon the land, and the people of the land take a man of their territory and make him their watchman, *when he sees the sword upon the land*, if he blows the trumpet and warns the people...*So you, o son of man*, I have mad you a Watchman for the House of Israel...warn them from me" (Ezekiel 33:2-3, 7). Ezekiel was set as a watchman, to watch world events as they unfold in the light of Bible prophecy. So to "watch" means also to watch what is going on the world, and warn Israel about the things that are to happen. *But remember there are no set dates as to when Jesus comes, see Matthew 24:36. We just have to be prepared at all times!*

### **The Gospel According to Ezekiel**

Ezekiel's message is not all bad news. The prophet was to proclaim the good news of God's promise to re-gather the scattered people of Israel and Judah, reestablish His covenant with them, and restore the land of Israel to national greatness.

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Listen to God's promise as stated in Ezekiel 11:17-20: "Therefore say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will even gather you from the people, and assemble you out of the countries where ye have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel.

"And they shall come thither, and they shall take away all the detestable things thereof and all the abominations thereof from thence.

"And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new Spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh:

"That they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God."

After further expressing His disapproval of Israel's unfaithfulness, God again reiterates His promise to renew His covenant with her. In Ezekiel 16:60-63, God says, "Nevertheless I will remember my covenant with thee in the days of thy youth, and I will establish unto thee an everlasting covenant.

"Then thou shalt remember thy ways, and be ashamed, when thou shalt receive thy sisters, thine elder and thy younger: and I will give them unto thee for daughters, but not by thy covenant.

"And I will establish my covenant with thee; and thou shalt know that I am the LORD:

"That thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord GOD."

Again and again, God pronounces severe judgments against Israel and Judah, but in the midst of these dire descriptions are assurances of Israel's return to the land and restoration to fellowship with God. Notice the physical and spiritual blessings promised in Ezekiel 36:24-30: "For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land.

"Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you.

"A new heart also will I give you, and a new Spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.

"And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do *them*.

"And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God.

"I will also save you from all your uncleannesses: and I will call for the corn, and will increase it, and lay no famine upon you.

"And I will multiply the fruit of the tree, and the increase of the field, that ye shall receive no more reproach of famine among the heathen."

Remember, as Ezekiel proclaimed God's message to the captives in Babylonia, Jeremiah was proclaiming essentially the same message in Palestine. Both warned of the final destruction of Jerusalem and Judah; both spoke of a future time of restoration when God would reestablish His covenant with Israel and Judah; both spoke of a Davidic king who would rule from Jerusalem (Ezekiel 37:24-28; Jeremiah 31:31-34; 33:14-16).

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God promised Abraham that He would multiply his descendants and make them into a great nation, and that through his offspring all the families of the earth would be blessed (Genesis 12:2,3). This, in a nutshell, is the gospel of the Kingdom of God!

The government of God upon this earth will begin with the restored nation of Israel and spread to all nations. Israel, as model nation, will be the means through which all the families of the earth will partake of the blessings promised to Abraham. Israel's King Jesus Christ will begin His righteous reign in the Promised Land, and will ultimately bring all nations under His ruler ship. Ezekiel 37 describes the reconstitution of Israel and Judah as a single nation under one King. That's the good news of Ezekiel's message and it is an integral part of the message God's church today is commissioned to proclaim throughout the earth. It is essential to the real "work of the watchman," which is a *collective* work, not the job of one man. Ezekiel represented the Whole Church of God!

### **Don't Put It Off!**

We do not know how much time we have left. The final tribulation period may be only a few years away, or it may be in the distant future. We simply do not know. *But our job of the watchman must continue, and warn Israel of what will happen unless they repent!* After all, we are mortal! Any one of us could die at any moment. We simply have no guarantees. And that is precisely why you need to act now! We must be prepared at all times!

Don't put it off any longer! Turn to God in genuine repentance; resolve that you are going to begin obeying Him; accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, trusting Him to blot out your transgressions and give you the help you need in living a godly life.

Will you choose life by turning from your sins and trusting in God's provisions for redemption, or will you choose the way that leads to death? That's the question Ezekiel set before the people, and it's the question that has been set before you today.

The choice is yours. Which will it be?

Choose life!