

## The Watchman

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by John Nickell

### Ezekiel 33:1-11

*<sup>1</sup>Again the word of the LORD came to me, saying, <sup>2</sup>Son of man speak to the children of your people and say to them: When I bring the sword upon a land, and the people of the land take a man from their territory and make him their watchman, <sup>3</sup>when he sees the sword coming upon the land, if he blows the trumpet and warns the people, <sup>4</sup>then whoever hears the sound of the trumpet and does not take warning, if the sword comes and takes him away, his blood shall be on his own head. <sup>5</sup>He heard the sound of the trumpet, but did not take warning; his blood shall be upon himself. But he who takes warning will save his life. <sup>6</sup>But if the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet and the people are not warned, and the sword comes and takes any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand. <sup>7</sup>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. <sup>8</sup>When I say to the wicked, O wicked man, you shall surely die! and you do not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at your hand. <sup>9</sup>Nevertheless if you warn the wicked to turn from his way and he does not turn from his way he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered your soul. Therefore you, O son of man, say to the house of Israel: Thus you say, If our transgressions and our sins lie upon us, and we pine away in them, how can we then live? <sup>11</sup>Say to them: As I live, says the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn, turn from your evil ways! For why should you die, O house of Israel?*

My wife was reading Ezekiel earlier this month and we came to chapter 33's warning from God to Ezekiel. The warning may have been written to Ezekiel, but the message applies to us today as well. Shortly afterwards a friend posted on Facebook about a Bible ban at Walter Reed Medical Center. The ban has since been rescinded. The action should serve as a reminder that we should be on guard at all times. Whether the ban was poorly written policy, or a deliberate attempt to continue the marginalization of God's word, we should take Ezekiel's warning to heart for ourselves. Jesus did not give us a word for word repeat of this warning in the New Testament using such plain language, but he repeated the essence of this warning in the **Sermon on the Mount** of Matthew 5. Here Christ's disciples are told they are the light of the world, we are not to be lit and then hid under a bushel, that would be the same as the watchman not blowing his trumpet at the sign of the coming sword. Paul utilizes the description of soldier's armor in Ephesians 6, to drive home the point that that our mission is one that takes preparation and determination to stand in the face of the wiles of the Devil.

Not all of the attacks are direct frontal assaults, we realize this, but each attack should be dealt with seriously. Whether it's an outright ban on Christianity, the coarse language of co-workers, or our choice of entertainment, each toe-hold we give Satan he will exploit to further his cause. A crack un-dealt with, can become an impassable canyon, and as unpleasant as it might be now, it will likely only get harder.

While the key emphasis of Ezekiel's warning is on his responsibility to relay God's message and his punishment if he should refrain. We cannot miss that Ezekiel's or our failure to warn others of the consequences of our actions doesn't free that other person from the consequences, no matter how much they might like to think so. As Christians who know the love that God has had for us, that He gave His Son for our sins, we must bear a similar zeal for other's souls and sow the seed. Our efforts should never be vindictive, "*I told him once before,*" each opportunity that we have, should be capitalized upon. The point of one responder to my friend's post was that the only reason Satan was winning today, is Christians are far to willing to let it go, and not stand up for God. Before we do so next time, please remember God's warning to Ezekiel!