

Keeping Watch

On the evening of April 18, 1775, Paul Revere was summoned by Dr. Joseph Warren of Boston and given the task of riding to Lexington, Massachusetts, with the news that regular troops were about to march into the countryside northwest of Boston. According to Warren, these troops planned to arrest Samuel Adams and John Hancock, who were staying at Pastor Jonas Clark's house in Lexington. He thought they would probably continue on to the town of Concord, and capture or destroy military supplies that had been stockpiled there. So Revere and others made the ride to warn of the army's arrival. Paul Revere and his fellow riders were examples of "watchmen" who warned of approaching danger. By the way, Revere did not say, "The British are coming." He said, "The Regulars are coming!" The colonists were British at that time and saying that the British were coming wouldn't have made sense.

Ezekiel 33:7-9 (ESV)

⁷“So you, son of man, I have made a watchman for the house of Israel. Whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me. ⁸If I say to the wicked, O wicked one, you shall surely die, and you do not speak to warn the wicked to turn from his way, that wicked person shall die in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at your hand. ⁹But if you warn the wicked to turn from his way, and he does not turn from his way, that person shall die in his iniquity, but you will have delivered your soul.

The Watchman watches in order to warn of danger. He would have been given a place in a high tower on the city wall so that he could watch on behalf of his town. It is good if the people heed the warning of the watchman. If the watchman warns and they don't heed, he is not responsible; if he fails to warn, he is.

The Watchman is the picture of elders as overseers in the NT. It was not the idea of a taskmaster as an overseer of slaves but the one who sees over the town in order to prevent catastrophe. Listen to Paul's warning to the Ephesian elders in **Acts 20:26-30** (ESV):

²⁶Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all, ²⁷for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God. ²⁸Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. ²⁹I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; ³⁰and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them.

There is catastrophe looming for American churches. Too many church leaders are silent regarding the dangers for their members. What kind of responsibility do they have?

We are the modern Watchmen and are accountable for ourselves, for OUR actions. **Ezekiel 33:7** (ESV) again reads:

⁷“So you, son of man, I have made a watchman for the house of Israel. Whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me.

Ezekiel was personally responsible to God to do what God called him to do. Each of us is responsible for hearing and obeying the Word of God. Don't forget each of us is accountable to God, **Romans 14:12** (ESV):

¹²So then each of us will give an account of himself to God.

Some of us would all like to think that we are responsible, only for ourselves. It is a reason we don't share the gospel or get involved in the lives of people. "They are responsible for themselves, I am responsible for me." We might ask, "Am I my brother's keeper?" "They have the same Bible I have, they can find their own way to God. I'm too busy taking care of me and mine."

But that's not the way God sees it. In **Luke 12:48** (ESV) Jesus reminds us of a valuable biblical principle:

Everyone to whom much was given, of him much will be required, and from him to whom they entrusted much, they will demand the more.

We've been given the greatest gift of all in the Son of God. We are required to be watchmen with His news.

We are accountable for the present and not the past. **Ezekiel 33:12** (ESV):

¹² "And you, son of man, say to your people, The righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him when he transgresses, and as for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall by it when he turns from his wickedness, and the righteous shall not be able to live by his righteousness when he sins.

Live on past glories or in past failures – both can change in the present.

Yet, though we are accountable in the moment, that moment helps us prepare for the future. Jesus IS coming. Jesus WILL judge. There WILL BE accountability.

Keep the Light of God's Warning Burning as God's Watchmen!