

The Watchmen – Part 2

(Sermon Notes) By Warren Zehrung – 8/3/2013

In God's Church, it seems, we have always had a sense that we were preaching the Gospel for the purpose of "getting members," in order to grow the Church. Some ministers boast of their growth and receiving increasing numbers of responses to their "work."

All the Churches of God are competing to see who can be the biggest – with the most members. That is not correct! We are not to have any grandiose idea that we are to build a work that will gather all the sheep into one flock – that is what Jesus, Himself, will do at His return.

Ezekiel 34:

- 11 For thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out.
- 12 As a shepherd seeks out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day.

That is what Jesus will do upon His return. In God's Church we have a duty to preach the Gospel and feed the flock.

John 21:

- 15 So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, love thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou know that I love thee. He saith unto him, **Feed my lambs.**
- 16 He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, love thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou know that I love thee. He saith unto him, **Feed my sheep.**
- 17 He [Jesus] saith unto him [Peter] the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, do you love me? Peter was grieved because He said unto him the third time, 'Do you love me?' And he said unto him, Lord, you know all things; You know that I love you. Jesus saith unto him, **Feed my sheep.**

In this verse we see that the resurrected Jesus Christ was **defining** the role of a **shepherd** or **minister**.

The role of the ministry is to have the flock look to the True Shepherd and Bread of Life – and that is Jesus Christ. A shepherd gives his sheep 'good pasture' so that they are well nourished. What is a spiritual shepherd supposed to feed the **flock of God** so that they might grow to the stature and fullness of Jesus Christ?

Of course, the answer to that question is the true **spiritual food**, which is Jesus Himself – His life, principles and teachings.

John 6:

- 35 Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst...

John 6:

- 48 I am that bread of life.

The Church of God is also to be preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom. The Church exists to serve God in **witnessing** the Gospel to the world by our lives, as well as by preaching.

Can the Good News of the Kingdom of God be preached without an **element of warning** to sinners?

I am going to show in today's sermon that there is a outstanding **element of warning** in the preaching of the Gospel.

We have always said that the commission of the Church was two-fold: Preach the Gospel, and Feed the flock. The first is primarily external – to the world that has not heard what we are so privileged to know.

We know and believe the Gospel – and that is that Jesus will return soon to establish His Father's Kingdom over all the earth.

But, today I would like to focus on a part of the Gospel presentation that we do not often emphasize enough. Let's read closely:

Mark 1:

14 Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God,

15 And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: **repent ye**, and believe the Gospel.

The very first thing that Jesus calls for after He has established the fact that the Kingdom of God is at hand – is a call for **repentance**.

And that is important to understand. I wish to **emphasize that Jesus calls for repentance**, and then – believe the Gospel.

It is not enough to simply believe that Jesus Christ will come again and establish His Father's Kingdom – **repentance** is a required element to be in the Kingdom of God.

The Gospel is the Good News of the coming Kingdom of God – of which no one will be a part without **repentance**. And we are keenly aware that:

Matthew 10:

23 ... Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come.

Jesus is telling us that the Gospel message will not have gone to all the cities of Israel, till He has returned. Jesus has not yet returned – and it is a fact that most cities have not yet been witnessed to in a proper way.

Though there are some who contend that Herbert W. Armstrong completed the work of bringing the Gospel to the world – I read in these verses that the assignment of spreading the Good News of the Gospel message is not yet complete.

Matthew 24:

14 This Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

These are the words of Jesus Christ making clear that the Gospel **will yet** be preached in the entire world for a witness unto all nations.

It has become common place for the Churches of God to serve up spiritual dainties and spiritual hors d'oeuvres each Sabbath to feed the brethren. What about “Preaching the Gospel?”

As appetizing as that may be – it begs the question of the Gospel being preached to the entire world for a witness unto all nations.

Have the Churches of God become so complacent as to **forget** the words of Jesus Christ:

Matthew 28:

19 Go ye therefore, and **teach all nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit:

20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

It is insufficient to perform only the second one-half of our two-fold commission of Preaching the Gospel, and feeding the flock. While this evil world abides in sin – we have forgotten what we have been called to do, and how to do it.

When the true Gospel is being preached in the entire world it will contain the necessary element of **repentance**. It was the same in Ezekiel’s day:

Ezekiel 3:

17 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.

18 When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou give him **not warning**, nor speak 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.

Ezekiel’s warning message is about the necessity of **repentance** from dead works.

It is just as Jesus taught – **repent** and believe the Gospel. Too many members shirk their responsibility to witness to those in the world by saying “It wouldn’t do any good – they are not about to change.”

That is not the point – God wants them to be witnessed to. How many times did God send His prophets to a nation to **witness** to them? Even reluctantly – like Jonah:

Jonah ran away from the LORD and jumped overboard from the ship because he did not wish to go to Nineveh to preach **repentance** to the people as God had commanded him to do.

Matthew 12:

36 But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.

37 For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.

38 Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee. [They sought a miracle proving that Jesus was the Messiah]

39 But He answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonah:

40 For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

That is the only miracle that Jesus gave them of His Messiahship – and yet, the professing “Christian” world rejects the three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

Only God knows who will respond to the calls for repentance – it is our job to be witnesses for Him.

Matthew 12:

41 The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: **because they repented** at the preaching of Jonah; and, behold, a greater than Jonah is here.

Notice how Jesus is referring to generations past present and future – interacting with one another over this issue of who **has repented** and who has not!

Matthew 12:

42 The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here.

Notice this: Jesus Christ is saying that we are accountable for what we know. We are also accountable for the quality of witness that we present to all others. Do we stand up for what is right.

*In every generation God has provided those who are His **witnesses** - those who will take a stand and warn the nations **to repent**.

And so I ask again, whose duty is it today to **warn** our people about the necessity of repentance from dead works?

Has God appointed anyone today to be an end-time watchman? Is it right for us to sit back and think that it is someone else's duty? Do we say to ourselves, “I need not witness, I need not prepare, I need not stand for God’s Truth?” No!

We, like the disciples and Jonah and a host of other faithful saints, must preach repentance and the Gospel.

When we know that calamity is about to come to pass on our nation – and we do not speak up to **warn** our people – how does the love of God abide in us?

We know the Truth of God. If you see it – you say it! If you know of it – you warn others. If you believe it – you live it – you share it!

Because the New Testament Scriptures are silent when it comes to anyone receiving a **direct** commission or specific command to warn the end-time nations of Israel – too many assume that it is someone else’s responsibility.

We have seen in Part 1 of “The Watchmen” that God gave Ezekiel a commission to be “a” watchman, not “the” watchman to the house of Israel. God told Ezekiel:

Ezekiel 3:

17 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.

There we have it. Ezekiel was told by God to warn Israel. Ezekiel's warning message is about the necessity of **repentance** from dead works.

Ezekiel 3:

18 When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou give him not warning, nor speak 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.

That was a very heavy responsibility that God placed on Ezekiel to **warn the wicked to repent**.

Ezekiel 3:

19 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.

20 Again, When a righteous man doth turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity, and I lay a stumbling block 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.

Again, that was a very heavy responsibility that God placed on Ezekiel to hold him accountable.

God is not a respecter of persons - He would not hold Ezekiel totally responsible while, at the same time, let us completely off the hook when it comes to our **witness** to others.

Ezekiel 3:

21 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.

Brethren, we must take these words personally – so that we too may deliver our lives. By extension, we need to examine the Biblical evidence that this commission to Ezekiel to warn Israel, also be for us – for our day – for us to lead lives that bespeak repentance.

Ezekiel did not have the means to warn the Israel of his day because they had already been carried away into captivity and were becoming the “Lost Ten Tribes,” as we saw last time.

And we can see that God did not mean for Ezekiel to single out only the Tribe of Judah because Jerusalem fell while Ezekiel was yet writing. (Ezekiel 33:21)

In Chapter 33 God talks about a warning commission going to **other watchmen** who are not specifically appointed by God.

Ezekiel 33:

2 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...

Why does it say speak to **the children** of thy people, when it was already too late for all Israel and all Judah to heed the warnings of Ezekiel?

And then the chapter ends this way – looking yet to the future?

Ezekiel 33:

32 ... for they hear thy words [Ezekiel], but they do them not.

33 And when this cometh to pass, (**lo, it will come,**) then shall they know that a prophet hath been among them.

Let's follow the sequence into the next chapter of Ezekiel. Chapter 34 is about "Accountability."

Ezekiel 34:

1 And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel,

For us today, brethren, those spiritual shepherds are the ministry of the Church of God.

Ezekiel 34:

1 cont: ...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?

Exactly as we saw when Jesus said "Feed my sheep."

Everybody knows that the shepherd takes the sheep out to green pastures to feed the sheep. But here are some ministers getting fat off the sheep. Making merchandise of the brethren.

Ezekiel 34:

3 Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed: but ye feed **not** the flock.

God says to the ministry what it is a serious matter to Him – how the brethren are preached to.

This is God's warning! God is saying that the ministry should be feeding the flock good spiritual food. It should be food that points them to Jesus Christ and to salvation.

There are men in organizations, who will tell you that these verses in Ezekiel apply to the Kings and rulers in Ezekiel's day.

Brethren, who is Ezekiel written to? The book of Ezekiel is written to us, end-time Israel. Ancient Israel did not get to hear Ezekiel's message in his day, because they went into captivity, and the book was not delivered to them.

The Hebrew indicates that this next verse refers to sheep that need 'extra' care from a shepherd.

To us, brethren, we could apply it to those who are scattered, shattered, abused, the elderly, the poor, those who are easily led astray, those who are imprisoned, uneducated, weak, and even gullible. This could include those who are more easily victimized.

Ezekiel 34:

4 The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away,

Conversely, when Worldwide Church of God went into apostasy – the evangelist and leading ministers were the chief antagonists against holding the body together.

They did not work together to uphold the brethren or the true doctrine of Jesus Christ.

Brethren, we have seen an incredible driving away of the brethren in our Church history.

Many, many people were driven away, and God says, “neither have ye brought again that which was driven away.”

Ezekiel 34:

4 cont: ...neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them.

God is holding the ministry accountable. The brethren have not been treated with consideration nor justice. When the apostasy hit the Church of God, no evangelist, no church leader, not a one stood for the truth.

Many of the faithful, left the Church before most of the ministry spoke up. We were all in one body, and we thought that was all that there was for a while. But the corporate organization broke up because of these wrong practices, and these wrong teachings.

Yes, the gospel went to all of the earth, and a great work was done. We are still reaping the benefits of that great warning witness of the Gospel that went out. But, many were lost in the break-up.

Where were the shepherds when everything came apart at the seams? Why did the Church scatter to the four winds? Here, in Ezekiel, we find out why from God's perspective:

There was no valid shepherd willing to step up and cry out.

Ezekiel 34:

5 And they were scattered, because there is no shepherd: and they became meat to all the beasts of the field, when they were scattered.

So many of the brethren were just devoured and used up, but thankfully, some have held on to the truth.

Brethren, there was not a single trained and experienced leading minister who stood up to help the flock.

It is true, that hundreds upon hundreds of ministers were not true Shepherds. If they had been, they would have been laying their life down to preserve the brethren, and the truth.

Ministers, senior Pastors and even the Evangelists, who were trained for years to understand God's way, did not stand up for the truth during the apostasy. They proved useless in the crisis following the death of Herbert W. Armstrong.

It is also true that because of the scattering, many brethren now have no shepherd to feed and lead them today.

Some brethren think that they are doing OK, but, all too often, their ministers are using them for their own personal aggrandizement.

There are those men who put themselves forward as high ranking ministers with some highfalutin title, but they are not shepherds of Jesus Christ. They are abusing the brethren.

Ezekiel 34:

6 My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and upon every high hill:

That describes the people today, but not just today it goes all the way back to the ancient Israelites as well, but it applies definitely to today. You can see God's people being tossed and turned, going from here to there, searching and looking:

Ezekiel 34:

6 cont: ...yes, my flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth, and none did search or seek after them.

God says that no one did seek after them. I think that what we can gather from this statement is that the church political corporate organizations are going about trying to build-up their own groups – and that is not valid in God's eyes.

Some of these groups say that they have 4,000 members, and are trying to get everybody out there. "We are searching for everybody," they say. Why would God say, "None did search or seek after them."

It has to be that no-one is searching, or pulling the people of God together into these large groups in a proper way.

Because from God's point of view, "none did search or seek after them."

So, the result is that the people of God are just floating around. We cluster in small numbers, but nothing that the world can see and know of.

Ezekiel 34:

7 Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the LORD;

Most ministers will not consider that these verses refer to them. God calls the ministry "My Shepherds," meaning that they had the responsibility, and are accountable and answerable directly to God.

Ezekiel 34:

8 As I live, said the Lord GOD, surely because my flock became a prey, and my flock became meat to every beast of the field, because there was no shepherd, neither did my shepherds search for my flock, but the shepherds fed themselves, and fed not my flock;

One of the most telling signs of the times is that God's people have been cast-out, and forced out of the church even for political reasons.

They have been disfellowshipped, not for sin, or not for heresy.

God says that not only did the ministry not search for His flock, even when their attention was called to those cases, but the ministry continued to be a part of the scattering!

Ezekiel 34:

9 Therefore, O ye shepherds, hear the word of the LORD;

God says that He holds the ministry accountable To Him! This includes especially those ministers who made merchandise of the members of the Church of God, and those who did not protect the brethren from false doctrines.

Ezekiel 34:

10 Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against the shepherds; and I will require my flock at their hand,

These verses apply directly to today – and notice how the ministry is held **personally responsible** – just as Ezekiel was.

Thankfully, God says that not a one will fall to the ground that God does not know about. God is eternally merciful, and we can thank God for that. But He is going to hold someone responsible!

Ezekiel 34:

10 cont: ...and cause them to cease from feeding the flock; neither shall the shepherds feed themselves anymore;

Now that is scary. God says that the time is coming when this ministry, who is not properly taking care of God's people, will not be able to feed themselves any more. This funny business, that we see masquerading as Servants of Jesus Christ, is going to come to a halt. The brethren will be so scattered – as Daniel says – our power will be broken and shattered.

Daniel 12:

7 And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever that it shall be for a time, times, and an half; and when he shall have accomplished to **scatter the power of the holy people**, all these things shall be finished.

But be sure of this, as God says:

Ezekiel 34:

10 continuing ...for I will deliver my flock from their mouth, that they may not be meat for them.

God is going to put a stop to it. Jesus does not leave us without hope. Look at what our Shepherd is doing.

Ezekiel 34:

11 For thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out.

Now that is beautiful. Jesus Christ will seek out His people, and when Jesus Christ seeks out His people, He finds them.

We have the choice and the opportunity to serve God, but if we do not, His Plan is sure, because He is the Good, the Great and the Chief Shepherd.

Ezekiel 34:

12 As a shepherd seeks out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and **will deliver them** out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day.

This is certainly an end time setting, because God uses an efficiency of words, and it pertains to our day!

Ezekiel 34:

13 And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land, and feed them upon the mountains of Israel by the rivers, and in all the inhabited places of the country.

This is Millennial in scope. Some conclude that since Jesus will gather the flock, we do not need to concern ourselves with doing so.

Their reasoning goes something like this. We did not do the scattering; therefore we do not have to do the gathering.

Or worse yet, “I’ll gather the sheep into my group (to shear them and to eat them, as we saw). But brethren, that is not the attitude of Jesus Christ.

On that Passover night, Jesus prayed five times, “Father let my people be together.” Let my people be as One Body.

Brethren we today had better have an attitude of building Godly ties with all of God’s people.

Ezekiel 34:

14 I will feed them in a good pasture, and upon the high mountains of Israel shall their fold be: there shall they lie in a good fold, and in a fat pasture shall they feed upon the mountains of Israel.

So brethren, we see this theme of peace, unity, togetherness, oneness, and rest developing.

Ezekiel 34:

15 I will feed my flock, and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord GOD.

If we are not being fellow Christians to all God’s people now, we are not going to be there then, on that beautiful day that Christ just described. Notice what Jesus promises us:

Ezekiel 34:

16 I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick: but I will destroy the fat and the strong; I will feed them with judgment.

God says that there is no free pass, no free ticket. We will all stand before Jesus Christ, and **give an account** of ourselves - ministers and brethren, it makes no difference.

Romans 14:

10 ...We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ

Romans 14:

12 So then every one of us shall **give account** of himself to God.

Notice how Jesus holds the members just as accountable. We have been talking about the shepherds and pointing the finger **away** from us.

Jesus Christ is going to turn the table on us, and as we go on we are going to see that we, the flock, are just as accountable as the ministry is.

Ezekiel 34:

17 And as for you, O my flock, thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I judge between cattle and cattle, between the rams and the he-goats.

God is saying that we cannot be taking advantage of other brethren. We have to be a part of the solution. We too go to our brother, and we too lay our lives down.

Members are also guilty of abuses. Some members bash the ministry without cause, and brethren alike.

Worse yet, members who received the **engrafted word** of truth that was able to save their souls are not making the Truth available to those called in this last hour.

James 1:

21 Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the **engrafted word**, which is able to save your souls.

It is a self-serving and selfish religion – it is not of God.

It is as though they were saying, “I am in the Church and I do not care about others. Unless I make my group bigger, and make me look better, then I might consider it.”

Ezekiel 34:

18 Does it seem a small thing unto you [members, sheep] to have eaten up the good pasture, but ye must tread down with your feet the residue of your pastures? And to have drunk of the deep waters, but ye must foul the residue with your feet?

We had the Correspondence Course, we had the big congregations, we had good sermons, we had weekly bible studies and we had all of the activities.

Some brethren are making sure by their criticisms, by their attacks on the whole church that no-one gets to eat of the good pasture.

It is not only the ministry that should provide good pastures (spiritual food), the members as well should make sure that there is ample good pasture for the other brethren.

Jesus says that the pastures have been turned to mud so that they who were newly baptized and received God’s Holy Spirit, only live now as if they were not brethren to anyone.

Members do not care about somebody brand-new coming into the Church, someone who is searching, somebody looking and crying out for a home, and people to meet with.

They make people stand alone and they close the door in their faces? Some members are now on a spiritual starvation diet because of selfish and thankless members who do not care if anybody else hears the truth of God.

Where is true Christianity being taught anymore? And God is holding the brethren responsible!

Ezekiel 34:

19 And as for my flock, [God’s true brethren] they eat that which ye have trodden with your feet; and they drink that which ye have fouled with your feet.

Because of the lackadaisical and complacent nature of church congregations today – it is hard to find good pasture in which to feed.

People are not getting God’s Truth in all its cleanliness, and they have to pick here and there, having to scavenge to find God’s Truth.

This should not be. God’s Truth needs to be available. Think of a lush deep green pasture. This is what we should be striving with all of our might to provide for whoever God calls to partake of the pasture.

Most messages today are not the good spiritual food that we once had in abundance. This is a clear warning to us brethren that we must be protecting, teaching and propagating the Truth of God.

Ezekiel 34:

20 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD unto them; Behold, I, even I, will judge between the fat cattle and between the lean cattle.

Just because we are in the Church, God is not going to come in and make a clean sweep and bring everybody into the Kingdom and say, “you stuck it out, you went to Sabbath services every week, and you get a free pass.”

No, there must be an attitude of living a covenant relationship with God, of living like Jesus Christ. No one is going into the Kingdom Of God without learning Godliness.

We must grasp the vision of the Kingdom, where we live by the Kingdoms rules. Our daily lives must come up to God's expectations and standards for us. We are assured of making it into God's Kingdom on the strength of **God's ability** to prepare us and to lead us.

And we will make it **if** we walk with God. We are told in:

Amos 5:

4 But let **justice** run down like water, and **righteousness** as a mighty stream.

Justice or judgment results when we live according to God's Will. **Righteousness** is following in the steps of Jesus Christ and His spiritual principles. God is serious about how we live our lives.

Many offenses occurred at the hands of hostile and overbearing members who caused weaker members to lose faith and drift away. God is going to hold them accountable.

Ezekiel 34:

21 Because ye have thrust with side and with shoulder, and pushed all the diseased with your horns, till ye have scattered them abroad;

So, brethren, when someone new comes in our midst we must handle them with tender loving care and patience and forbearance.

We must be the very first to reach out, and extend a hand to them.

We have to be very careful with them. So it shows, through these verse (starting back there in verse 12, that members did the same scattering that the ministers did.

Ezekiel 34:

22 Therefore, I will save my flock, and they shall no more be a prey; and I will judge between cattle and cattle.

We start seeing this millennial picture. But, brethren, we cannot wait until the millennium and say that Jesus will do it when He gets back. We will have lost our crown.

Ezekiel 34:

23 And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd.

24 And I the LORD will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them; I the LORD have spoken it.

Ezekiel 34:

30 Thus shall they know that I the LORD their God am with them, and that they, even the house of Israel, are my people, saith the Lord GOD. And ye my flock, the flock of my pasture, are men, and I am your God, saith the Lord GOD.

Let us make real sure that this is not talking about a shepherd and sheep, it is talking about **Jesus Christ and us**. We are the flock, and we are the sheep of God's pasture.

After reading and studying Ezekiel 34, we are waiting for Jesus Christ to come back and gather the Saints together.

We want to be a part of it, but brethren we have seen some terrible atrocities in our time.

Sometimes we can think that we are doing is so right, we are on track and God just winks at everything that we are doing.

But if we could stand back, like Jesus Christ, and see the great picture, this scattered church being scattered even more year by year.

There is something inherently wrong, and we need to examine ourselves.

I want to go back and reiterate this concept that God has called us at this time – not only to be saved – but to be a witness, and to give a warning that repentance is necessary. That is the message that has been preached down through the ages. From generation to generation God has His witnesses.

Let's look at a few biblical examples of those who took seriously this commission to preach **repentance as a witness**. Paul writes:

1 Corinthians 9:

16 For though I preach the Gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for **necessity is laid upon me**; yea, woe (Ezekiel 34) is unto me, if I preach not the Gospel!

Here is the specific commission that Paul was given by Jesus Christ:

Acts 26:

18 To open their eyes, and to **turn** them from darkness to light [that is **repentance**], and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

That specific commission was from Jesus Christ. Preaching the Gospel was not optional for Paul – he knew that he had to do it. Here's the question: The apostle Paul said a "necessity is laid upon me, woe unto me if I preach not the gospel."

*Brethren, the same necessity is laid upon all who are righteousness – to **warn people to flee from the wrath** to come. Woe (Ezekiel 34) be upon any of us who fails to warn people.

Paul also **warned** the Ephesian Elders in his farewell message to them:

Acts 20:

- 28** Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.
- 29** For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.
- 30** Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.
- 31** Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not **to warn** every one night and day with tears.

Again, in every generation God has provided those who are His **witnesses** - those who will take a stand and warn the nations **to repent**.

Matthew 3:

- 1** In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea,
- 2** And saying, **Repent ye:** for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

John the Baptist was preaching a warning message of the wrath to come.

Matthew 3:

- 7** But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath **warned you** to flee from the wrath to come?
- 8** Bring forth therefore fruits meet for **repentance**:

Brethren, be **bold** and live your faith – be a witness to all with whom you come into contact – especially those of the house of God. We cannot expect this window of opportunity to warn modern Israel to last forever.

Amos 8:

- 11** Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord.

Isaiah 55:

- 6** Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near.

End: The Watchmen – Part 2