

Series: Isaiah

Title: Dumb Dogs and Faithful Watchmen

Text: Isaiah 56: 9-12

Date: January 8, 2015

Place: SGBC, New Jersey

In Isaiah 56 verse 8 Christ declared how he will gather his people. Then in verses 9-12, he shows us why his people became outcasts. It is because that same Shepherd and Bishop of our souls scattered his people when he broke up political Israel. Christ did the scattering. He said, "All ye beasts of the field, come to devour, [*yea,*] all ye beasts in the forest." (Is 56: 9)

The beasts of the field represent enemies. Christ declared that Israel's house was left to them desolate. Then at Christ's command the Romans destroyed Jerusalem in 70AD. The rebels in Israel were not without warning. God promised by the prophets that he would destroy them in Deuteronomy 28, Jeremiah 12, Ezekiel 29 & 39. Likewise, all who reject Christ in our day, all who shall be found rejecting Christ when he returns, shall be devoured.

Notice, the beasts of the field come to devour the beasts of the forest. Take out the italicized words and read it again, "All ye beasts of the field, come to devour, all ye beasts in the forest." (Is 56: 9) The "beasts of the forest" are the false preachers and their followers. They pretend to be the trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord. But here is the problem; here is where the fault lies; here is why the followers of these preachers will be devoured without warning:

**Isaiah 56: 10: His watchmen *are* blind: they are all ignorant, they *are* all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber. 11: Yea, *they are* greedy dogs *which* can never have enough, and they *are* shepherds *that* cannot understand: they all look to their own way, every one for his gain, from his quarter. 12: Come ye, *say they*, I will fetch wine, and we will fill ourselves with strong drink; and to morrow shall be as this day, *and* much more abundant.**

In those days, when they would build cities, they put up walls around them and built watch towers. Watchmen stood in those towers. Also, they had guard dogs. The watchmen and guard dogs were to sound the alarm at approaching beasts or if enemy armies came near. Christ's true preachers are watchmen. We sound the alarm through the gospel. We warn of the coming judgment: that you need righteousness. We warn of false preachers and false ways that will do you harm.

There are characteristics given here of all false preachers. We will contrast the false watchmen with Christ our chief Watchman and his true watchmen.

## **FALSE WATCHMEN HAVE NO SPIRITUAL DISCERNMENT**

False watchmen have no spiritual discernment, "His watchmen *are* blind: they are all ignorant..." (Is 56: 10) All false watchmen are spiritually blind, spiritually ignorant. Their blindness is obvious when they major on the minors and minor on the majors. Christ said of the religious leaders,

Matthew 23: 23: Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier [matters] of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. 24 [Ye] blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel.

False preachers use the law unlawfully. They teach that sinners must pay the laws demands. Every sinner must do so. But they teach that sinners can do it when truth is we cannot. They teach this lie by teaching that

righteousness is in such things as tithing, keeping a sabbath day, keeping ten commandments in outward, letter-obedience. But they omit the weightier matters when the Lord spoke of judgment, mercy and faith, he referred to Micah 6: 8.

Micah 6: 6: Wherewith shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? 7: Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body<sup>3</sup> for the sin of my soul? 8: He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?

“To do justly with thy God” is to confess your sin, your total inability to keep the law in righteousness. “To love mercy with God” is to confess your need of God’s mercy, your need for Christ to be your Righteousness. “To walk humbly with your God” is to come with a broken and contrite heart, to submit to Christ in faith, to cast all your care on Christ. Christ said, “This ought ye to have done.” Then the other will not be left undone because believers establish the whole law through faith in Christ. (Rom 3: 30-31) Abraham established the law before as yet the law was given at Mt. Sinai. He did it through faith in Christ. (Rom 4: 1-3)

But Christ said blind watchmen “strain at a gnat.” They strain to make men obedient to the lesser, outward, letter of the law. Christ said, “But swallow a camel.” They omit judgment of God settled in Christ at Calvary; they omit the mercy of God who chosses his people by grace, redeemed us by grace and regenerates us by grace; they omit faith in Christ which is the how God’s elect obtain the righteousness of God and come to the end of the law. So Christ says those watchmen are blind and ignorant.

Yet, blind watchmen reject Christ’s testimony against them. For example, when Christ healed the blind man,

John 9: 39: And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind. 40: And some of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, and said unto him, Are we blind also? 41: Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.

Sinner, are you spiritually blind? Do you need Christ to give you sight? Do justly with God, love mercy from God, humble yourself and come to Christ to save you. If you can say in truth, yes I am blind, I need Christ to save me then it is because Christ has begun a work of grace in you. Christ gives sight to true, helpless, needy sinners. He gives sight to behold their sins put away in Christ. But if you say you see, you understand, you are righteous by your works, that you do not need Christ then you are too proud for Christ to give you sight. Therefore your sin remains.

Then concerning blind watchmen, Christ said leave them alone.

Matthew 15: 12: Then came his disciples, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying? 13: But he answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. 14: Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.

The only sinners that follow blind watchmen are other blind sinners. Those with spiritual discernment cannot stand to hear God’s glory diminished and man exalted. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch and be devoured by the enemy. It is sad to say but the end of most in religion will be the same as it was with the majority in Israel. They rejected Christ in favor of their own works of righteousness. Therefore Christ called for them all to be devoured.

## **THE ALL-KNOWING WATCHMEN AND HIS FAITHFUL WATCHMEN**

Brethren, Christ Jesus is the all-seeing, all-knowing Watchman—the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls. The LORD God said, “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.” (Ez 37: 17) God made his Son--the Son of Man—the Watchman over his elect Israel, “I have made thee a watchman.” Christ is the Watchman over God’s true, spiritual house, God’s spiritual Israel made up of elect Jew and Gentile, “I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel.” Christ hears the word from God’s mouth and gives his people warning from God, “hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me.”

The warning from God is faithfully given by Christ to his people through his under-watchmen. Christ sends his preachers who he gives to be watchmen over his people. The apostle Paul said,

Acts 20: 28: Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost 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.

Only Christ makes true watchmen—“the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers.” But the problem with the false watchmen is that they, and their churches, made them watchmen. Christ said,

Jeremiah 23:32: Behold, I am against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the LORD, and do tell them, and cause my people to err by their lies, and by their lightness; yet I sent them not, nor commanded them: therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the LORD.

Therefore, the watchmen Christ sends feed his people with the truth of Christ because Christ sent them, “I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.” (Jer 3: 15)

## **FALSE WATCHMEN DO NOT SOUND THE ALARM**

Next, our text declares that false watchmen do not give the warning, “they *are* all dumb dogs [mute, silent dogs], they cannot bark; [have no ability] sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber.” (Is 56: 10)

People ask, “Why won’t my preacher preach the gospel you preach?” According to this word, they can’t! “They are mute. They cannot bark.” Picture old sleeping hound dogs laying in the dust under the porch of an old house. As they sleep the enemy tip toes right past them and robs the house.

“Sleeping” means they dream; they are “filthy dreamers.” They create vain doctrines of men, teach traditions of men, which are as fictional as a dream.

“Lying down” includes their bed of spiritual adultery and spiritual fornication, the way they prostitute themselves to the highest bidder. After our text, he says, “But draw near hither, ye sons of the sorceress, the seed of the adulterer and the whore....Upon a lofty and high mountain hast thou set thy bed: even thither wentest thou up to offer sacrifice. Behind the doors also and the posts hast thou set up thy remembrance: for thou hast discovered thyself to another than me, and art gone up; thou hast enlarged thy bed, and made thee a covenant with them; thou lovedst their bed where thou sawest it.” (Is 57: 3, 7-8) They dare not preach the gospel in truth but they will prostitute themselves to anyone that pays them a price. Rather than uniting with Christ and his people, they unite with every vain religion trying to build a big church, trying to make a big name. But in the process of exalting themselves to heaven they prostitute themselves to hell.

They are “loving to slumber” because they are weary from all their prostitution. God says, “Thou art wearied in the greatness of thy way; yet saidst thou not, There is no hope: thou hast found the life of thine hand; therefore thou wast not grieved. And of whom hast thou been afraid or feared, that thou hast lied, and hast not remembered me, nor laid it to thy heart? have not I held my peace even of old, and thou fearest me not? I will declare thy righteousness, and thy works; for they shall not profit thee.” (Is 57: 10-12)

Sinner, flee the idolatry of men who tell you salvation is in your decision and your works. Flee the message that tells you sanctification is by the works of your flesh in keeping the letter of the law. Flee those who prostitute the word to gain the rewards of men who can contribute money. God says, “I will declare thy righteousness and thy works; for they shall not profit thee.”

## **THE FAITHFUL WATCHMEN AND HIS CHASTE SERVANTS**

Christ is the Faithful One. He gives his watchmen the tongue of the learned that they may speak that which they do know. Christ the faithful Husband makes his people faithful, a chaste virgin unto him. He has made his everlasting covenant vow in our hearts that he will never leave us nor forsake us. Christ will make his word effectual in the heart of those who hear our gospel, even as he did ours.

Therefore, Christ’s true watchmen are not silent. Christ has given us the words of eternal life. And because Christ gave the words and sent us, we preach the words he gives, not our words. Christ’s watchmen must sound the alarm because Christ commands it, “I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the LORD, keep not silence, And give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.” (Is 62: 6-7)

Through the gospel, his watchmen sound the trumpet, “making mention of the LORD.” Our trumpet sound is “Salvation is of the LORD”, divine election by God the Father, accomplished redemption by the Son, and regeneration by the Holy Spirit. We preach to sleeping dead sinners saying, “Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.” “And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.” (Eph 5: 14; Rom 13: 11)

His watchmen sound the alarm, “Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision. For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.” (Php 3: 2-3) And as we preach to his people, we give Christ no rest, praying continually, “till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.”

Christ our chief Watchman is not only able to speak, he is able to speak effectually into the heart of each of his blood bought children. He does so through his earthen watchmen, by his gospel, into the heart. He makes the word effectual wherever he sends it

Men can only speak what they are able to speak. The only reason Christ’s true watchmen are able to speak the truth is because we have experienced the mercy and power of Christ in our hearts. It is only because he has given us the words in the power of his strength.

## **FALSE WATCHMEN ARE COVETOUS**

The underlying root problem with false watchmen is that they are covetous, “Yea, they are greedy dogs which can never have enough, and they are shepherds that cannot understand: they all look to their own way, every one for his gain, from his quarter.” (Is 56: 11) The sum and substance of every false preacher’s ministry is self, “greedy dogs which can never have enough.” And the fruit they bear is just like them.

The natural heart is the rule of natural religion. So they are greedy for the glory that belongs to God our Savior alone. Their choice gives their god permission. They make their Jesus' blood effectual. The spirit of their god to rebirth them is their own will. They hold up, hold on and hold out rather than their god preserving them.

Therefore, "they never have enough." Adam and Eve made a garment of fig leaves but when they heard God's voice in the garden they did not have enough. Will-workers never have enough works, never enough converts, never enough holiness.

Natural religionists "**cannot understand**" because "**they all look to their own way**" instead of to Christ the Way. "**Everyone for his gain**" instead of for the glory of God in Christ. Sinner, you wonder why I preach Christ's works instead of giving you works to do like other preachers do? It is because as long as you **look to your own way for your gain you will never understand Christ the Way and never see his glory and never have enough.**

### **CHRIST IS THE CONTENTMENT OF HIS WATCHMEN**

When Christ reveals himself in our hearts then we rest satisfied! Christ's watchmen and people have contentment in Christ.

Hebrews: 13: 5: Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. 6: So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.

Therefore, we are not afraid to speak the truth of Christ; therefore, we are not afraid to give all the glory to God. We do not want any of the glory; we want God in Christ to have it all! He chose us; he redeemed us; he quickened us; he grows us; he preserves us; he shall raise us; he shall glorify us together with him. Christ's people say, "Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake." (Ps 115: 1)

### **FALSE WATCHMEN ARE DRUNK**

Lastly, false watchmen keep the people drunk on the wine of Babylon's fornication, "Come ye, *say they*, I will fetch wine, and we will fill ourselves with strong drink; and to morrow shall be as this day, *and* much more abundant." (Is 56: 12) It is "I will and we will" by which they fill themselves from the 100 proof bottle of will-works religion.

Revelation 17: 1:...Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: 2: With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. 3: So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. 4: And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: 5: And upon her forehead was a name written, **MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.** 6: And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.

They presume tomorrow shall be another day in which I shall rob God of His due. Come, "we will tempt God another day; we will stand against God; we will use tomorrow to fasten ourselves firmer in the bondage

of sin; we will encourage others sinners to add twice the darkness to their sin by converting them to false religion with us.” But her drunkenness shall not continue for Christ says,

Revelation 18:3:…all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. 4: And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. 5: For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. 6: Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double. 7: How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. 8: Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.

### **CHRIST’S WATCHMEN HAVE CHRIST’S WARNING**

Christ’s watchman says to you right here, right now, “Be sober! Be filled with the Spirit! For what is your life? It is a vapor! Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he’s near! Tomorrow may be too late!”

Sinner, Jonathan Edwards said you are hanging over the fires of hell by one thin strand of a spiders web. You must have a righteousness that only Christ is and can provide. You must have holiness only Christ is and can provide. Seek Christ and don’t count on tomorrow!

Brethren, thank God for Christ our Watchman and for his faithful watchmen!

**Amen!**