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Watchman, what of the night?

The Christian as a watchman

'I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, and in His word I do hope. My soul waits for the Lord more than those who watch for the morning – I say, more than those who watch for the morning'.

Psalm 130:5-6

Waiting is not exactly easy. And waiting is something we all do. When you are young, you wait for maturity. Once I'm an adult! You may wait for a job, for satisfaction in your work. You may be looking forward to good relationships with your family and your surroundings, hoping for marriage, etc. You can also wait for God: waiting for His blessing, hoping for an answer to prayer.

Waiting for God may be a most difficult thing, but it is the most important thing we can imagine. For He is the Source of all blessing, of all true happiness, of true joy. The poet who wrote this psalm was such a person, who really kept his eye on the Lord, even in difficult circumstances. Psalm 130 is a psalm of penance, and the writer cried out from the depths to God on high: 'Lord, hear my voice! Let Your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications' (vs. 1-2).

He called for forgiveness of sins, for mercy in view of his iniquities, and he realized that all this was to be found with God Himself. With Him there is forgiveness, that we may honor and serve Him (vs. 4). That is also important for us, because that is

the point where our life as a Christian begins. But this is only the start of the new life. Every redeemed person has become a 'watchman', someone who hopes for God and His Word. And together we wait for God's Son from heaven, whom God raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come (1 Thess. 1:10).

He comes in the first place as the shining Morning Star for the Church to introduce her in His glory, and then He appears with His own as the Sun of righteousness to redeem the believing remnant of Israel and to judge the world in righteousness. He is coming quickly (Rev. 22), let us hold on to that.

The guards on the walls of Jerusalem also had to warn of doom and imminent danger. We also find this regularly in the letters of the New Testament, because the apostles point out wrong developments in the world and in Christendom. But the main thing is that each one of us becomes a guardian, someone who really hopes for the Lord Himself. For with Him is abundant redemption, and human help disappoints.

Watchman, what of the night?

'He calls to me out of Seir, "Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?" The watchman said, "The morning comes, and also the night. If you will inquire, inquire. Return! Come back!"'

Isaiah 21:11-12

'Knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation."'

2 Peter 3:3-4

Watchman, what of the night? The question is probably meant to be mocking, as we also see in 2 Peter. For Edom (i.e. Esau, Jacob's twin brother) was a 'profane person' (cf. Heb. 12:16). He symbolizes man without God, who does not take into account God's Word and His reliable promises. The answer of the prophet to the

mockers is: The morning comes, but first comes the night of the falling away and the judgment on the wicked (cf. 2 Thess. 2:3-12).

The morning comes, and also the night

The night falls over this sinful world and over a failing Church, that shows the features of Babylon the Great. 'The night also comes', says the prophet. The morning has come and will come for all those who really trust God's Word and accept the call of the watchmen. Christ will appear as the Sun of righteousness, and He will restore the kingdom to Israel (Mal. 4:1-3; Luke 1:32-33; 78-79). But those who refuse to listen will perish in the night of judgment.

Peter in his second letter agrees with the answer of Isaiah. People will mock the imminent return of Christ, but He will surely come to judge the earth in righteousness.

The judgment of the Flood

Peter reminds us of the all-encompassing consequences of the Flood in Noah's day. Then the world perished, being flooded with *water*. But the present world is kept in store by the same word, and is reserved for *fire* until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance (2 Pet. 3:3-9).

The night is far spent

The apostle Paul was also a watchman at the time when the New Testament was written. He wrote the following to the believers in Rome about the coming of the day of Christ:

'And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness,

not in licentiousness and lewdness, not in strife and envy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts' (Rom. 13:11-14).

The night is far spent and the day is at hand. The full salvation in Christ for all who have believed on Him is ready to be revealed. Therefore, we must walk as in the day and put on the weapons of light: faith, hope and love (1 Thess. 5:4-11). We should walk in newness of life and clothe ourselves with Christ. We should put on the Lord Jesus Christ and follow in His footsteps.

The day is at hand

He will come first as the Bright and Morning Star. He will take all His own to Himself and let them share in His heavenly glory (2 Pet. 1:19-21; Rev. 2:28; 3:10-11; 22:16-17, 20). After celebrating the feast of the marriage of the Lamb in heaven, He will appear with His own in glory and majesty as the Sun of righteousness.

Then breaks a new day for the world and for all creation. This is the day of Christ's kingdom, His public reign for a thousand years (Rev. 19:6-9; 20:4). But His judgment will fall on the apostate part of Israel that followed the antichrist, and on the pagan nations that have conspired against the Lord and against His anointed King (Rev. 19:11-16; cf. Ps. 2).

*'Make haste, my Beloved,
and be like a gazelle
or a young stag
on the mountains of spices'.*

Song of Solomon 8:14

*'He Who testifies to these things says,
"Surely I am coming quickly."
Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!'*

Revelation 22:20

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