

## Ezekiel 3:16-21—Part 3—The Watchman’s Responsibility

### **Memory Verse**

Ezekiel 36:26-27 NKJV

I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. <sup>27</sup> I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them.

### **Revision: Repentance basics**

Last week we learned about the basics of Repentance:

1. **God sets the example of warning people of the consequences of sin:** out of love, both Jesus and the Holy Spirit warn people of the deadly consequences of sin; so must we by using the 10 commandments to reveal the condition of their heart.
2. **Without genuine repentance a person cannot be saved:** Jesus warned that a person could die at any time, so repentance must be a top priority. “*But unless you repent you will all likewise perish*” (Luke 13:3, 5).
3. **True repentance will result in godly fruit being produced in our lives:** A true believer will transformed from glory to glory by the Spirit of the Lord (see 2 Corinthians 3:18). Over time God will change how the genuine believer thinks, behaves, and speaks (also see Romans 12:1-2).

4. **Characteristics of a repentant heart:**

a) New attitude—from spiritual pride (I think that I’m a good person) to humility (I recognise that I am poor in spirit or morally bankrupt)—I understand that there is no moral goodness in my sinful human nature (see Romans 7:18); the entire human race was completely corrupted when Adam sinned. Also, all people are guilty of breaking God’s moral law, the 10 commandments, and are thus deserving of death. Overall we are morally bankrupt and, according to Jesus, we are poor, wretched, blind, and naked (see Revelation 3:17).

b) New priorities—genuine repentance means putting Jesus first: Jesus put it this way; for a man to be saved they must, comparatively speaking, hate their father, mother, brother, sister, and even his own life. “*So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple*” (Luke 14:25-33).

Jesus also said in this passage that a person must first **sit down and count/consider the cost**, the pros and cons, of both following and not following Jesus. A relationship with God is not something you take lightly—it’s a lifetime commitment. Jesus warned that an insincere commitment is a non-commitment. God demands control of all parts of our lives. We must be willing to give God permission to take away or change any part of our lives.

### **This Week**

This week we will seek to answer the following questions:

1. What are the different levels of responsibility that God has given to different people to warn others about the consequences of sin?
2. Why people are deceived (why are false prophets so popular)?

3. What damage is caused by false prophets, why God allows them, and the terrible judgement that awaits them?
4. What does God require of the everyday believer (those not in positions of authority in the church)?

## The Watchman's Responsibility

God appointed Ezekiel to be a prophet, a messenger of God. Remember that God is giving Ezekiel the responsibility to be the watchman for the nation of Israel. When God wants to give them a message, He will speak through Ezekiel. God's message to the nation of Israel through Ezekiel is for the nation of Israel to turn from or repent of their sins—if they don't they will die. Again, nothing has changed over the centuries and millennia; those who desire to be saved must repent (turn from sin and turn to God), and put their trust in Jesus sacrifice of Himself on the cross as being the full payment for all their sins.

Quote from Jon Courson:

*God told Ezekiel he was a watchman. In that day, watchmen walked the walls of the city. Their job was to look for enemies and also to shout out the time to the city. Ezekiel was to warn the people of what was coming and to make them aware of the times in which they were living. If the people didn't listen and died in their sins, it wouldn't be Ezekiel's fault. If, however, he failed to warn them, their blood would be upon his head. In Acts 20, Paul would reiterate this when he said:*

Acts 20:26-27 NKJV

Therefore I testify to you this day that **I am innocent of the blood of all men.** <sup>27</sup> For I have not shunned to declare [avoided declaring] to you **the whole counsel of God.**"

### **Ezekiel 3:16-17 NKJV**

**<sup>16</sup> Now it came to pass at the end of seven days that the word of the Lord came to me, saying, <sup>17</sup> "Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; therefore hear a word from My mouth, and give them warning from Me:**

v **16 Now it came to pass at the end of seven days that the word of the Lord came to me, saying:** This is after Ezekiel had been sitting with his countrymen for seven days. At the end of the seven days, God again reveals Himself to Ezekiel.

v **17 "Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; therefore hear a word from My mouth, and give them warning from Me":** "Ezekiel was not the first to define the prophetic office in terms of a [watchman]. The 8th-century prophet Hosea makes the identification in 9:8, and alludes to it in 5:8 and 8:1, where he calls for the blowing of the horn. Isaiah 56:10 refers to blind [watchmen], visionaries who are asleep, presumably false or negligent prophets." (Block)

This concept of being a watchman, of being responsible to warn people of coming judgement due to sin is not a new thing—it was common among the prophets in the Old Testament, and Paul, as an apostle/Bible teacher, assumes the same responsibility in the New Testament. At the end of his life, as he looks back over his life, Paul declares to the elders of the church of Ephesus that because he was faithful to share the whole counsel of God with all the people God called him to reach out to, he was therefore innocent of the blood of all men (see Acts 20:26-27 above). In the New Testament, Bible teachers/pastors are the watchman for the church.

### Ezekiel 3:18-19 NKJV

**18** When I say to the wicked, ‘You shall surely die,’ and you give him no warning, nor speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life, that same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at your hand.

**19** Yet, if you warn the wicked, and he does not turn from [repent of] his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered your soul.

v 19 Yet, if you warn the wicked, and he does not turn from [repent of] his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity: this is the central theme or the main point of Ezekiel’s message—**repentance**. It is defined both here and in the New Testament as *turning from sin and turning to God*. Repentance is required for someone to be saved. Thus why God keeps repeating it here and why we have spent so much time learning about what the Bible says about it.

v 18-19 **When I say to the wicked, ‘You shall surely die,’ and you give him no warning... his blood I will require at your hand. Yet, if you warn the wicked... you have delivered your soul:** Is God really saying to Ezekiel that he would be eternally damned if he failed to warn the people? No. We need to consider that under the Mosaic Law, life and death referred to physical death. It always referred to physical blessings and punishments for the nation of Israel. In Deuteronomy 18:20, the specific punishment for the false prophet was death.

*‘Life’ and ‘death’ in this context are to be understood as physical, not eternal, life and death. The concept of life and death in the Mosaic covenant is primarily physical.* (Alexander)

*“Death was part of God’s promised curse for disobedience to the Mosaic covenant.”* (David Guzik)

How does this work? Why would Ezekiel die (physically) if he turned from being a true prophet (one who spoke only what God told him to speak) to being a false prophet (one who spoke lies, the products of their own dreams and imaginations)? Because God often literally punished the false prophets with death. Here is an example (for the full story read Jeremiah 28:1-17):

Jeremiah 28:11-12a, 15-17 NKJV (*God’s judges the false prophet Hananiah*)

And Hananiah [a false prophet] spoke in the presence of all the people, saying, “*Thus says the Lord: ‘Even so I will break the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon from the neck of all nations within the space of two full years...’*”

<sup>12</sup> Now the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah...

<sup>15</sup> Then the prophet Jeremiah said to Hananiah the prophet, “Hear now, Hananiah, the Lord has not sent you, **but you make this people trust in a lie.** <sup>16</sup> Therefore thus says the Lord: ‘Behold, I will cast you from the face of the earth. **This year you shall die, because you have taught rebellion against the Lord.**’”

<sup>17</sup> So Hananiah the prophet died the same year in the seventh month [2 months later].

How would you be? Hananiah probably meant well, but he wasn’t actually helping, and as a result he was dead two months later. Why such a severe judgement? Because he claimed to be speaking in the name of the Lord, “Thus says the Lord”—but he wasn’t.

***Even though his message was positive and made the people feel good about themselves, he was actually hurting the people in the worst possible way—he was teaching rebellion against God by causing them to believe a lie—he was teaching the exact opposite of what God was saying. The lie he taught was that they didn't have to repent of their sin and turn back to God like Jeremiah and Ezekiel were teaching.***

Hananiah, just like every other false prophet, taught that everything was okay, that God loved them and would bless them, and they could continue to live as they were (they didn't have to repent). He taught that as long as they kept worshipping God at the temple, keeping/following/observing all the outward religious rituals, rules, and regulations, then they didn't have to change their wicked ways and God would make everything okay again. Hananiah specifically predicted that the Babylonians would be defeated and the captives would come home within two years. No wonder the people loved his message.

His lies (false prophecies/false teaching) resulted in many of the people being deceived, "**but you make this people trust in a lie.**" Therefore, the result of his lies was that they refused to repent of their sins, refused to humble themselves before God, and therefore, as predicted by God, they died as they vainly resisted both God and the Babylonian army. *(For further study: Jeremiah chapter 23 gives an excellent description of the terrible consequences of a false prophet on his followers)*

Jeremiah 20:6 NKJV *(God judges the false prophet Pashhur)*

And you, Pashhur, and all who dwell in your house, shall go into captivity. You shall go to Babylon, and there you shall die, and be buried there, you and all your friends, to whom you have prophesied lies.

Here is a different form of judgement. Pashhur would still die, but he would die in shame, with all the friends he deceived angry at him for deceiving them—he will forever be remembered as a false prophet. The fact that both the deceiver and the deceived both went into captivity illustrates the personal responsibility that the hearers have to discern truth from error—we are all ultimately responsible for what we choose to believe to be true. If a person chooses to believe a lie, it is just that—their free choice (they choose). The sad fact of the matter is that what most people choose to believe to be true is what they want to be true, whatever it is that makes them feel good. We read about this in 2 Timothy 4:1-5.

## **Why are people deceived? Why would they reject God's message?**

2 Timothy 4:1-5 NKJV

I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: <sup>2</sup> Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. <sup>3</sup> For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, **but according to their own desires**, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; <sup>4</sup> **and they will turn their ears away from the truth, *and be turned aside to fables.*** <sup>5</sup> But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

Notice the two stages of deception described in verse 4:

1. **But according to their own desires... And they will turn their ears away from the truth:** this means that they will deliberately deny or reject what they know is right and true. They are exercising their free choice to believe or not believe.
2. *And be turned aside to fables:* only once they have already decided to reject the truth will they then be ripe to be deceived. This is why those who are deceived by false prophets and false teachers are ultimately responsible for being deceived—**because they could only be deceived because they had first rejected the truth!** We also see this clearly in:

2 Thessalonians 2:9-12 NKJV

The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders,<sup>10</sup> and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, **because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.**<sup>11</sup> **And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie,**<sup>12</sup> **that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.**

*Have you figured out why God allows false prophets yet? It's so that people can exercise their free choice—to believe and accept the truth or reject it.*

The people should have known (really they did know) that Jeremiah and Ezekiel were true prophets because what they said came true and it agreed with the Scriptures. But they didn't believe (or more accurately receive) their message of repentance because it wasn't a positive message—God was asking them to humble themselves and repent, to turn from their sin and turn to God so that they could be saved. Like Jesus, Jeremiah and Ezekiel testified that the people's works were evil, and that without genuine repentance they would die. The people didn't like this message, so they chose to believe the false prophets instead. Why? Because they didn't want to give up their sin—**“they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved... but had pleasure in unrighteousness”.**

Here is another example of a false prophet who was judged by God.

Jeremiah 29:30b-32 NKJV (*God judges the false prophet Shemaiah*)

Then the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah, saying:<sup>31</sup> Send to all those in captivity, saying, Thus says the Lord concerning Shemaiah the Nehelamite: ***Because Shemaiah has prophesied to you, and I have not sent him, and he has caused you to trust in a lie***<sup>32</sup> therefore thus says the Lord: Behold, I will punish Shemaiah the Nehelamite and his family: he shall not have anyone to dwell among this people, nor shall he see the good that I will do for My people, says the Lord, ***because he has taught rebellion against the Lord.***

Now for one final warning against false prophets which includes those in authority who teach the Bible in the New Testament. Jude is like the New Testament version of Jeremiah 23, which is a very comprehensive description of a false prophet and the harm he causes the people.

Jude (selected verses) NLT paraphrase

<sup>3</sup> Dear friends, I had been eagerly planning to write to you about the salvation we all share. But now I find that I must write about something else, *urging you to defend the faith that God has entrusted once for all time to his holy people.* <sup>4</sup> I say this because some ungodly people have wormed their way into your churches, saying that God's marvellous grace allows us to live immoral lives. ***The condemnation of such people***

**was recorded long ago, for they have denied our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.**

<sup>5</sup> So I want to remind you, though you already know these things, that Jesus first rescued the nation of Israel from Egypt, but later he destroyed those who did not remain faithful. <sup>6</sup> And I remind you of the angels who did not stay within the limits of authority God gave them but left the place where they belonged. God has kept them securely chained in prisons of darkness, waiting for the great day of judgment. <sup>7</sup> And don't forget Sodom and Gomorrah and their neighbouring towns, which were filled with immorality and every kind of sexual perversion. ***Those cities were destroyed by fire and serve as a warning of the eternal fire of God's judgment.***

<sup>8</sup> In the same way, these people—who claim authority from their dreams [in contrast to the word of God]—live immoral lives, defy authority, and scoff at supernatural beings...

<sup>10</sup> But these people scoff at things they do not understand. Like unthinking animals, they do whatever their instincts [sinful human nature] tell them, and so they bring about their own destruction. <sup>11</sup> ***What sorrow awaits them! For they follow in the footsteps of Cain, who killed his brother. Like Balaam, they deceive people for money. And like Korah, they perish in their rebellion.***

<sup>12</sup> When these people eat with you in your fellowship meals commemorating the Lord's love, they are like dangerous reefs that can shipwreck you. They are like shameless shepherds who care only for themselves... They are like wandering stars, ***doomed forever to blackest darkness...***

<sup>16</sup> These people are grumblers and complainers, living only to satisfy their desires. They brag loudly about themselves, and they flatter others to get what they want.

#### *A Call to Remain Faithful*

<sup>17</sup> But you, my dear friends, must remember what the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ predicted. <sup>18</sup> They told you that in the last times there would be scoffers whose purpose in life is to satisfy their ungodly desires. <sup>19</sup> These people are the ones who are creating divisions among you. ***They follow their natural instincts because they do not have God's Spirit in them.***

<sup>20</sup> But you, dear friends, must build each other up in your most holy faith, pray in the power of the Holy Spirit, <sup>21</sup> and await the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will bring you eternal life. In this way, you will keep yourselves safe in God's love.

So the application here is to remain on the lookout for false prophets and avoid them, and, like Jude, warn others about them. Notice some of the characteristics of false teachers/prophets:

1. V 4—They encourage/allow immoral living
2. V 8—They have dreams and claim that God has spoken to them "who claim authority from their dreams," but they are mistaken:

Jeremiah 23:28-29 NKJV

*"The [false] prophet who has a dream, let him tell a dream;*

*And he who has My word, let him speak My word faithfully.*

*What is the chaff [the dream] to the wheat [the word of God]?" says the Lord.*

<sup>29</sup> *"Is not My word like a fire?" says the Lord,*

*"And like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?"*

<sup>30</sup> *"Therefore behold, I am against the prophets," says the Lord, "who steal My words every one from his neighbour. <sup>31</sup> Behold, I am against the prophets," says the Lord, "who use their tongues and say, 'He says.' <sup>32</sup> **Behold, I am against those who prophesy false dreams,**" says the Lord, **"and tell them, and cause My people to err by their lies and by their recklessness.** Yet I did not send them or command them; therefore they shall not profit this people at all," says the Lord.*

3. V 11—They deceive people for money
4. V 12—They shipwreck people's faith
5. V 12—They are useless shepherds who care only about themselves (they don't feed the flock)
6. V 16, 18—Their one purpose in life is to satisfy their craving for pleasure\*\*\*\*
7. V 16—The boast and brag about themselves, promoting themselves
8. V 16—They flatter others to get what they want
9. V 19—They create divisions among the church
10. V 19—They are led by their sinful human nature because they don't have God's Spirit in them

Doesn't this list remind you of the televangelists and many pastors today who are living the high life (typical of the churches who teach the prosperity gospel—health, wealth, physical blessings)? The false prophets of Jeremiah's and Ezekiel's day were no different. The bigger the following the false prophet had and the better they made the people feel, the more money they received, therefore the more incentive they had to lie to and flatter the people to impress them and make them feel good about themselves.

A caveat here: before you start stressing and thinking that, "Oh no, God's going to kill me if I fail to share the gospel with everyone I meet," I would like to clarify that there are different consequences for different people, based on their level of responsibility/authority in the church. It's the people in positions of authority in the church who teach the word that have the greatest responsibility, while others have a lesser responsibility, but still responsibility non-the-less. First we'll look at the responsibility of the Bible teachers in the church today.

## **The responsibility of teachers, pastors, and prophets**

James 3:1 NKJV

My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment.

1 Timothy 1:5-7 NLT paraphrase

The purpose of my instruction is that all believers would be filled with love that comes from a pure heart, a clear conscience, and genuine faith. <sup>6</sup> But some people have missed this whole point. They have turned away from these things and spend their time in meaningless discussions. <sup>7</sup> ***They want to be known as teachers of the law of Moses, but they don't know what they are talking about, even though they speak so confidently.***

The judgement of Bible teachers/pastors/church leaders that lead people astray is what we read about in Jude. Here's a sobering quote from a Bible Commentator called Clarke that all Bible teachers should take heed to. It captures the severity of the consequences waiting for false teachers/prophets as described in Jude.

*"Hear it, ye priests, ye preachers, ye ministers of the Gospel; ye, especially, who have entered into the ministry for a living, ye who gather a congregation to yourselves that ye may feed upon their fat, and clothe yourselves with their wool; in whose parishes and in whose congregations souls are dying unconverted from day to day, who have never been solemnly warned by you, and to whom you have never shown the way of salvation, probably because ye know nothing of it yourselves! O what a perdition awaits you! To have the blood of every soul that has died in your parishes or in your*

*congregations unconverted laid at your door! To suffer a common damnation for every soul that perishes through your neglect! How many loads of endless woe must such have to bear! Ye take your tithes, your stipends, or your rents, to the last grain, and the last penny; while the souls over whom you made yourselves watchmen have perished, and are perishing, through your neglect. O worthless and hapless men! better for you had ye never been born! Vain is your boast of apostolical authority, while ye do not the work of apostles! Vain your boast of orthodoxy, while ye neither show nor know the way of salvation! Vain your pretensions to a Divine call, when ye do not the work of evangelists! The state of the most wretched of the human race is enviable to that of such ministers, pastors, teachers, and preachers.” (Adam Clarke)*

Jesus was also very blunt when He warned of the serious condemnation that awaits those who lead others astray.

Matthew 18:6-7 NKJV

“Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea. <sup>7</sup> Woe to the world because of offenses! For offenses must come, but woe to that man by whom the offense comes!

## **What does God require of the everyday believer**

Do you remember what Paul taught in 2 Corinthians 5:17-21 about our calling? We are Christ’s ambassadors, God is pleading through us, “be reconciled to God.” We, as believers, are to represent and reflect the heart of God as He seeks to reconcile a lost world back to Himself through Christ. It’s our purpose in life.

2 Corinthians 5:17-21 NKJV

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. <sup>18</sup> Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, **and has given us the ministry of reconciliation,** <sup>19</sup> that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, **and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.**

<sup>20</sup> **Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God.** <sup>21</sup> *For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*

Just like in Ezekiel’s day, it’s still all about sin—we are all born with a corrupted nature, a sinful nature. We are telling people that Jesus is the payment for our sin (see 1 John 2:2), that He became sin for us. However, this means nothing if people don’t understand that they are sinners, and are therefore already condemned to eternity in the Lake of Fire. Although a difficult message, if we truly love people we will be willing to confront them and shine the light of God’s moral on their dark hearts, we will be willing to confront them about their sin.

John 3:36 NKJV

He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.”

Remember that telling people that Jesus died for their sins, *before* you use God's moral law (the 10 commandments) to show them that they are guilty sinners deserving of suffering for eternity in the Lake of Fire, is like a doctor trying to convince a patient to undergo chemotherapy before he has told them that they have cancer. It's also like me telling you that everything's going to be okay because I paid your \$30,000 speeding fine, when you don't even know that you have a speeding fine. In both examples, the cure or payment of the fine will not be appreciated or even accepted. People need to know that they are sick before they will accept the medicine, and will need to know that they have broken the law before they appreciate *and accept* my payment of their fine.

Again, the calling is for all believers. This is one of the things that we will be rewarded for at the Bema Seat Judgement.

2 Corinthians 5:9-10 NKJV

Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him.  
<sup>10</sup> For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

We will all have to give an account, but why are Bible teachers and prophets judged more severely? Because to whom much is given, much is required. With privilege comes responsibility (see Luke 12:48).

So what does God expect of all believers in general? What is the basic requirement that all believers should attain to?

1 Peter 3:15 NKJV

But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense [Greek: *apologian*] to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;

2 Timothy 2:15 NKJV

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

2 Timothy 2:15 KJV

Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Basically, all believers should know their Bibles, know how to effectively share the gospel, and understand the basic evidences that confirm the truth of the Bible—as God gives them the ability to do so. You may not be scientifically minded, so don't beat yourself up if, for example, you can't explain how DNA is evidence for design. Also, you may not be academically inclined, so don't beat yourself up if you can't remember all the ins and outs of Bible prophecy.

However, a believer who doesn't know how to share the gospel effectively is most definitely not equipped, and therefore not effective as an ambassador of Christ. The only way to become equipped is to be in the word personally, as well as be taught/trained/equipped by your spiritual leaders as they teach the word of God. Once you hear the word taught, it must be applied. Spend time\*\*\*\* during the week revising the message and seeing where God is showing you that you need to grow or change.

I am greatly encouraged to see many people here who are thirsty and hungry for the word. There are some who are actively seeking to equip themselves to share the gospel by committing to complete *The Way of the Master Basic Evangelism Training Course*, and some are studying the books of Daniel and Revelation to better understand the basics of Bible prophecy. We all need to be in the word and in fellowship to be equipped:

2 Timothy 3:16-17 NKJV

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, <sup>17</sup> ***that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.***

Ephesians 4:11-12 NLT paraphrase

Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. <sup>12</sup> **Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do His work** and build up the church, the body of Christ.

There's really no excuse. Our very purpose as a new creation in Christ is to bring others into relationship with God (reconciliation). God invites us to partner with Him in His mission to reconcile fallen humanity to Himself. Will I join Him in His work? What an awesome privilege this is. Will I take it seriously? Will I have reward at the Bema Seat Judgement? Will I hear God say to me, "well done good and faithful servant...?"

1 Corinthians 3:9 NKJV

***For we are God's fellow workers***; you are God's field, you are God's building.

Matthew 28:18-20 NKJV

And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. <sup>19</sup> Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.

Daniel 12:3 NKJV

Those who are wise shall shine  
Like the brightness of the firmament,  
And those who turn many to righteousness  
Like the stars forever and ever.

## **Application**

To summarise, the responsibility of all believers is to study the Bible according to their God given ability to do so, with the minimum expectation (based on the verses above) being the ability to be able to explain and share the gospel effectively, that is, to be equipped to "give a reason for the hope that is in you." If I have time to watch TV, play sport, play computer games, surf the internet, browse social media etc, but I don't have time to read the Bible and become equipped to share the gospel effectively, it leads to two possible conclusions. First, I'm saved but my priorities are messed up, or, I really don't care because I'm a false convert. Either way I need to repent of my worldliness, or repent and ask God to save me from my sins.