

LESSON 12

PROPHET EZEKIEL

OBJECTIVES

1. To learn about the prophet Ezekiel, the watchman for Israel.
2. To know that there are severe consequences of having a rebellious and stony heart.
3. To learn of the importance of being a watchman for the people around us.

MEMORY VERSE

“I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them.”

(Ezekiel 36:27)

PRAYER

Thank You, God, for guiding us into Your presence on this holy Sabbath day. You have given us many reminders and warnings through Your word, Your Spirit, ministers, our parents and teachers so that we are safe in You. Remove any rebelliousness and stubbornness within us so that we can hear Your words and obey them. Let us take warning from the Israelites who did not pay attention to God’s warnings until it was too late.



Overview

1. Bible Discovery and Spiritual Teaching

- A. The Vision and the Scroll
 - The Four Living Creatures
 - The Scroll
- B. A Watchman for the House of Israel
- C. Messages to the House of Israel
 - Clay tablet
 - Laying on his sides
 - Shaving off his hair and beard
 - Going into captivity
- D. The People’s Response
- E. The Hope in the Night

2. Linking to the Ten Basic Beliefs—the Holy Spirit

3. Life Application

- a. The Spiritual Watchman
- b. Replace a Heart of Stone with a Heart of Flesh

4. Activity—Bible Charades



Background Knowledge for Teachers

The Prophet Ezekiel

Ezekiel’s name means “God strengthens,” which sums up the basic message of the book: in spite of the captivity, God’s strength will carry His people through these dark times and restore them to Him.

The son of Buzi, Ezekiel was born and raised in the land of Judah in a priestly family. In 605 B.C., when Ezekiel had already started preparing to become a priest in God’s temple, King Nebuchadnezzar invaded Judah and took many of Jerusalem’s wisest men to Babylon. Among the captives were Daniel and his three friends.

Then in 597 B.C., Babylon attacked Judah a second time, this time carrying away Ezekiel and 10,000 other captives. By this time, the nation was on the brink of complete destruction.

While in Babylon, God called Ezekiel to be a prophet at the age of thirty. While he preached to the exiles in Babylon, the prophet Jeremiah was with the Jews in Judah and Daniel was serving in Nebuchadnezzar’s court.

Although Jeremiah and Ezekiel worked in different locations, both preached the same message: the city of Judah would soon fall to the

Babylonians. The captives in Babylon shared with those in Jerusalem the same stubborn belief that Jerusalem would not fall and that they would soon return to their land. God wanted Ezekiel to help the captives see why they had been taken captive—their idolatry, acts of social injustice, and immorality had brought the judgment and discipline of God upon them. The prophet also reminded them that they needed to return to God, as God would restore them and give them renewed hope. The words of the prophets came to fulfillment when eventually in 586 B.C., the Babylonians invaded Judah a third and final time and completely razed the city, burned down the temple and deported the rest of the people.

Conquering a Fortified City

There were five ways of conquering a fortified city:

1. By entering the city from above through the high walls. This was done by scaling the walls, usually with ladders.
2. By breaking through the walls using hammers, axes, spears, swords, or special instruments, such as battering rams.
3. By entering the city from below by digging under the city walls.
4. By laying siege upon the city: starving the inhabitants until they surrendered and died.
5. Through trickery or deception.



Reaching Out to Your Students

Children should be reminded to be watchful of behaviors and attitudes that do not align with the Bible. If such behaviors persist, our hearts become hardened and unresponsive to God's message. While they work on improvement, remind your students to maintain positivity when they fail. God will forgive our sins and hardheartedness if we turn back to Him and purify our unrighteousness. If we submit to Him, our hearts will soften and we will find that obeying God is not difficult but a delight.



Opener

5 Minutes

[Before class, prepare a picture of a smoke detector or check if the classroom area has one installed.]

Ask the students, "Can you think of everyday objects that are used as alarms or that warn us of danger?" [Allow students time to answer. Possible answers: an alarm clock, smoke detector, traffic light, etc.]

Hold up a smoke detector, or a picture of a smoke detector, and ask the students if they know what it is. Once they identify the device, ask them what its purpose is (to let us know if there is smoke in the room). Next, ask the students if they have ever heard a smoke alarm go off. Why do you think alarms are so loud? (They are designed to grab our attention, regardless of whether we are awake or sleeping.) There are typically several smoke detectors placed throughout the house to keep us safe. However, some people get busy and forget to check the battery in their smoke detectors or some know that they have to change the battery but are too lazy to do so. Such behaviors are unwise and could jeopardize their safety.

God has given us and the Israelites a number of alarms or warnings throughout the Bible. In ancient Israel, these alarms came in the form of prophets, priests, or watchmen. God sent His servants to keep the people spiritually safe. They gave powerful warnings in the hope of grabbing the people's attention and waking them up from their spiritual slumber. Sadly, the people of God were annoyed by the warnings and refused to listen, putting their lives in great danger.

Today, we will study about the watchman who was sent to sound the alarm to the people of Judah.



Vocabulary

rebellion: to oppose or to refuse to obey the rules of a person in authority, the government, or God

watchman: a person who keeps watch or guard over a building, street, or city

siege: a situation in which police or soldiers surround a city, building, etc, in order to take control of it

battering ram: a military device consisting of a heavy beam with an iron ram's head, or sharp metal tip; attackers swung the device back and forth to batter down, pound, or punch castle gates, doors, and walls

pestilence: a contagious disease that causes many people to die

famine: a situation in which there is an extreme shortage of food, frequently resulting in numerous casualties



Bible Discovery & Spiritual Teaching

30-35 Minutes

FOR TEACHERS

Hand out the Bible Discovery worksheet to the students now. Pause at the appropriate sections to allow students to complete the worksheet. Keep a copy of the worksheet for reference.

The Vision and the Scroll

To prepare Ezekiel to serve as a prophet, God showed Ezekiel a vision so that he could know God and His will better. Let's read Ezekiel 1:1-11 to learn what Ezekiel saw.

Last week, we learned how the prophet Jeremiah was sent to warn the people of a great disaster that would come upon the land of Judah because of their sins. The people of Judah had become so comfortable in their sins; they had departed from God to pursue other gods, power, and money and had formed alliances with foreign powers. Despite Jeremiah's tears and pleas, the house of Judah not only refused to listen, they despised God's word and mistreated the prophet. Does anyone remember what King Jehoiakim did with the scroll that contained God's word? That's right; he cut up the scroll with a knife and cast it into the fire. How did they treat Jeremiah? Jeremiah suffered terrible things in the hands of the leaders. He was flogged and thrown into prison and, on one occasion, the princes threw Jeremiah into a dungeon full of mud, hoping that he would starve to death. Despite these persecutions, Jeremiah continued to be a faithful and loving messenger of God.

Today, we are going to learn how God warned the people of Judah through another prophet—the prophet Ezekiel.

Ezekiel was born and raised in the land of Judah. He grew up in a priests' family, which meant that Ezekiel learned how to serve as a priest in God's temple from a young age. However, when the Babylonians came and attacked the city of Judah for a second time, Ezekiel and 10,000 other captives were taken to Babylon. While Ezekiel was in Babylon, false prophets rose up, telling the captives that Jerusalem would not fall and that they would soon return to their homeland. This was certainly not true. It was at this crucial time that God called Ezekiel to be His prophet to dispel false hopes and to deliver the message that punishment and destruction for their sins was certain to pass in the years to come.

The Four Living Creatures

Each of the four living creatures had the face of a man, lion, ox, and eagle. In addition, they each had four wings, under which were four hands, one on each side. Their legs were straight with soles of calves' feet. God used the characteristics of each animal to show Ezekiel His perfect nature and the qualities that a true believer should have.

- **Man**
Man is created in the likeness of God, full of righteousness and holiness.
- **Lion**
The lion is the king of beasts; it is a powerful and fearless animal. We need to have the power and courage to overcome sin and preach God's words.
- **Ox**
We should imitate the diligence, patience, and long-suffering of the ox.
- **Eagle**
An eagle is a bird that flies to great heights and has keen eyesight. We need to rise above the things of the world and have spiritual wisdom.

The Scroll

Ezekiel then saw a hand holding out a scroll to him. In those days, a scroll was an ancient book made of one long page and rolled up from both ends. Normally, scrolls had writing on only one side. However, in this case, the scroll had writing on both sides containing

God's warnings, sorrows, and judgment that would come upon Judah.

God then instructed Ezekiel to eat the scroll (Ezek 3:1-3). Why do you think God wanted Ezekiel to eat the scroll? What do you think it tasted like?

We know that the scroll contained God's words and that Ezekiel first had to understand and know God's will before telling the people. He had to allow God's word to sink deep into his heart before he carried out his mission.

A Watchman for the House of Israel

God then spoke to Ezekiel, "Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel." Read Ezekiel 3:17-21. What is a watchman? [Allow students to respond.]

In ancient times, many great cities had thick, high walls around them for protection. The city of Jerusalem was one such city. A watchman was a guard who would stand upon the walls of Jerusalem and, from the vantage point in the tower, and look out upon the land. The watchman would peer forward and look into the distance to watch for messengers, unusual activity, or mostly importantly, any sign of an enemy or approaching army. If the watchman noticed enemies creeping up the wall or slipping into the city, he would blow the trumpet and sound the alarm. So, this was an extremely important job!

Ezekiel's role was to be a spiritual watchman. The prophet had the duty to deliver God's message to the people: Unless the citizens of Israel and Judah acknowledged their sins, turned from them, repented, and obeyed God's law, they would die in their sins. What would happen if Ezekiel did not give warning to the wicked? Just as a watchman on the wall would pay with his life if he failed to warn the city of approaching enemies, God told Ezekiel that he would be judged along with the wicked if he didn't pass on God's messages to the Israelites. So, regardless of whether the Israelites listened to the messages or not, Ezekiel had the very important task of warning the people.

Messages to the House of Israel

Have you ever played charades? [Allow students to respond.] Charades is a game in which a player uses silent gestures instead of speaking to convey the clue to the other players. This is what Ezekiel did. Instead of simply declaring God's words and messages, God told Ezekiel to act them out in the midst of His people. God gave Ezekiel specific instructions about what to say and do and each action had a meaning that would portray what was to happen to Jerusalem.

Why do you think God asked Ezekiel to use this unique method? By this time, the people of Israel were so stubborn that no matter what Ezekiel said, they would turn a deaf ear to him. Acting out the message would arouse the curiosity of the Israelites, causing them to inquire about what Ezekiel was doing (Ezek 12:9).

FOR TEACHERS

As you read the Bible passages, have the students take turns to be Ezekiel by performing the actions. Invite the class to guess the meaning of the actions. Prepare props such as a brick, an iron plate, a card with the numbers 390/40 written on each side, a piece of bread, a quart of water, and a plastic or foam sword for more effect.

1. Clay Tablet

Read and perform Ezekiel 4:1-3.

Ezekiel was to take a clay tablet and draw a map of Jerusalem on it. He then put a siege wall against it and set up enemy camps and battering rams around it. He took an iron plate and placed it as a wall between him and the city. All this he did to show how the enemy army would capture Jerusalem.

2. Laying on His Sides

Read and perform Ezekiel 4:4-17.

After this God instructed Ezekiel to lie first on his left side for 390 days to signify the number of years Ezekiel would bear the sins of Israel. Ezekiel was to then turn over and lay on his right side for 40 days, which represented the forty years that Ezekiel would bear the sins of Judah. God restrained Ezekiel from moving or turning over from one side to the other until the full 430 days had been fulfilled.

During this time, Ezekiel only had bread to eat and water to drink from time to time. The amount of food he ate was measured and limited by weight, and he was only allowed to drink a certain amount of water as well. While all the people were watching, Ezekiel was to bake the bread over a fire, using cow dung. This showed how great hardship would fall upon the people during the siege; there would be a great lack of both water and bread to the point that everything was rationed.

3. Shaving Off His Hair and Beard

Read and perform Ezekiel 5:1-10.

God instructed Ezekiel to shave off his hair and beard, and then using scales, he was to divide his hair into three equal parts. He burned one-third on the clay tablet that represented Jerusalem. Ezekiel took another

third and struck around it with a sword, and the last third he scattered in the wind. In addition, God told Ezekiel to save a few strands to tie to his robe.

Through these actions, God told the people that because they worshipped idols, God would not spare them nor pity them. One third of the people would die of pestilence and famine; the enemy would kill another third when they tried to escape from Jerusalem; the last third would be carried away to different lands as captives. However, the tiny bits of hair Ezekiel put in his robe were the small remnant of faithful people that God would keep safe.

4. *Going into Captivity*

Read and perform Ezekiel 12:3-10.

To show the people what being in exile would be like, Ezekiel was to pack whatever he could carry, and then leave his home to go somewhere else. By day, Ezekiel was to prepare his possessions and then at night, he had to dig through a wall and carry his possessions through the hole, with his face covered and unable to see. When the people asked what all this meant, Ezekiel told them that this would be the way that their King Zedekiah and his people would be driven out of their homes and taken into exile to Babylon.

The People's Response

Have you ever covered your ears because you refused to listen to what was being said to you? This was what the Israelites were doing when God spoke to them.

In Ezekiel 2:3-8, God repeatedly described the Israelites as a rebellious nation, a rebellious house who rebelled against Him. They were such a stubborn and stiff-necked people that they blocked their ears and refused to listen to God.

When they saw Ezekiel's actions, they were curious enough to ask Ezekiel what he was doing and what these

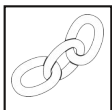
actions meant, but when Ezekiel told them God's messages, they did not believe him. They said that the prophecies and visions would not happen at this time and that the visions would not come true (Ezek 12:22). They would rather listen to the false messages that the false prophets were preaching. Even the elders and leaders said, "the Lord doesn't see us; He has gone away" and they persisted in their sins (Ezek 8:12; 9:9). Their stubbornness and rebellion left God no choice but to bring judgment upon them.

The Hope in the Night

In the fifth year of Ezekiel's service as prophet, the Babylonian army besieged Jerusalem for the third and final time. Only when Judah was completely destroyed—its temple in ruins and its people taken as captives—did the people finally realize that Ezekiel had preached the truth. God will do as He had said.

Though the city lay in ruins, and its people were captured to a foreign land, God still loved His people. Have you ever experienced doing wrong and getting punished? How did you feel when you were punished? What did you wish for most at the time? [Allow students to respond.] Yes, you might have wished that you never disobeyed your parents or did what you were not supposed to do. Perhaps the thing you wished for most is for your pain to go away and for your parents to comfort you and assure you that they still loved you. That is what God did. God is just and righteous, and when His people commit sins, He will judge and punish them. Yet, God still loves His people dearly.

When the people were in captivity, God sent His prophet to comfort them and tell them that if they returned to Him, He would forgive them and restore them to their homeland, where they could once again enjoy His blessings. God promised to make a new covenant of peace with them. He would remove their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh so that they could keep His commandments.



Linking to the Ten Basic Beliefs

2-5 Minutes

Receiving the Holy Spirit is the guarantee of our heavenly inheritance and is evidenced by speaking in tongues. Through the power of the Holy Spirit we can be sanctified and be transformed from our old sinful nature to a Christ-like nature.



Check for Understanding

5 Minutes

1. **When Ezekiel ate of the scroll it tasted very bitter.** False; it tasted like honey.
2. **The vision of the four creatures and the scroll enabled Ezekiel to know God and His will better.** True.
3. **Ezekiel lay on his side for 430 days to show the number of years the people would be punished.** False; he lay on his side for 430 days to show the number of years he would bear the sins of Judah and Israel.
4. **To show the people what being in exile would be like, God told Ezekiel to pack whatever he could carry during the day and dig through a wall at night.** True.
5. **As a watchman, Ezekiel had to declare God's message only when the people were ready to listen to him.** False; Ezekiel had to declare God's message when he received them, regardless of whether the people would listen.
6. **God instructed Ezekiel to act out the messages because the people loved Bible charades.** False; He instructed Ezekiel to act them out because the people were a rebellious nation that refused to listen to what Ezekiel had spoken.
7. **If Ezekiel did not pass on God's warning to the people, God would judge him.** True.
8. **To change a heart of stone to a heart of flesh, we need to repent, be filled with God's Spirit and words, put away our own will, and obey God.** True.



Life Application

10 Minutes

1. THE SPIRITUAL WATCHMAN

Ezekiel was called by God to be the watchman for the house of Israel. This was not an easy task. What kinds of difficulties do you think Ezekiel encountered as a watchman? [Write responses on the board.]

- He had to completely deny himself and obey God fully.
- He had to endure mocking and ridicule.
- He had to declare God's words faithfully, regardless of whether the people wanted to hear it or not.
- He had to be watchful at all times.

Today, we need to stand on the walls and be the spiritual watchmen of Israel. It may be the walls of our family, the walls of our church, or the walls of our school. As watchmen, not only do we have to sound the trumpet and declare God's teachings, we need to pray for others, too. Perhaps we think that we are too young to be watchmen, or that we don't have the courage to tell others about God. In fact, there are times when we only have to say a few simple words or say a prayer to bring others back to God. It may even be through our good behavior and example that allows others to see God in us, which will lead others to God.

As a watchman on the walls of your family, to whom do you need to sound the trumpet and why?

As a watchman on the walls of the church, to whom do you need to sound the trumpet?

As a watchman on the walls of your school, to whom do you need to sound the trumpet?

2. REPLACE A HEART OF STONE WITH A HEART OF FLESH

God said that the hearts of His people were like hearts of stone, because regardless what God told them, they refused to listen. Are our hearts like a heart of stone or a heart of flesh? God can work in our hearts if we give it to Him and be obedient to Him, but He cannot do anything if we do not trust in Him completely. The hard places will stay in our hearts until we allow God to help us get rid of them. If we choose to harden our hearts and refuse to listen to God's instructions, as the Israelites did, God may teach us a very painful lesson, or possibly even reject us.

What kind of heart is a heart of stone?

- A heart that keeps sinning
- Has a lot of worldly values
- Unrepentant
- Proud
- Has hurt, pain, hatred, doubt that is not given to God

What kind of heart is a heart of flesh?

- A humble heart
- Full of good thoughts
- A heart that is soft and can be molded for God
- Holds God as King

To change my heart of stone to a heart of flesh, I need to...

- Repent
- Read the word of God
- Put away my own will
- Be filled with the Spirit of God
- Do what God says
- Guard my heart from ungodly thoughts



Activity

Bible Charades

10-15 Minutes

Objective: To act out clues using only silent gestures for team members to guess.

Instructions

1. Come up with different categories. Examples have been listed below.
 - Characters from the Bible (Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, etc.)
 - Events (Jerusalem is destroyed and taken captive, Ezekiel is called to be a watchman, etc.)
 - Bible objects (the four living creatures, the scroll of God, etc.)
 - Books of the Bible
2. Write down each clue on a small piece of paper. Place the clues in a basket, bowl, or box, or simply hand a clue to each student who comes up to act.
3. Divide the students into two groups.
4. Appoint a time keeper who will set and watch the timer for each clue. A good time to set would be around thirty seconds to one minute.
5. Determine which team will go first.
6. During each round, one person from one team will go up to act out a clue silently.
 - If the team is correct, they score a point.
 - If the team is incorrect, the other team has a chance to answer and score a point.
7. Switch teams after each clue.
8. Continue the game until all clues have been acted out, or until time allows.

HOMEWORK ANSWER KEY

1. False; the scroll tasted like honey.
2. True
3. False; Ezekiel was not allowed to turn at all during those 430 days.
4. True
5. A
6. A
7. B
8. C

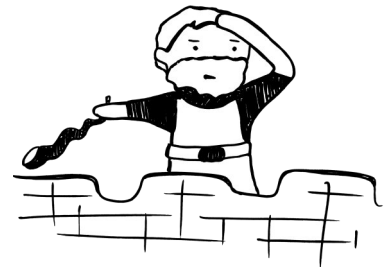
PROPHET EZEKIEL

A. The Vision and the Scroll

- Describe with words or draw a picture of each of the four living creatures.
- Why did God show the vision to Ezekiel and tell him to eat the scroll?

B. A Watchman of the House of Israel

- What did Ezekiel have to do as a watchman?
- What would happen to Ezekiel if he failed to do this?



C. Messages to the House of Israel

Fill in the blanks.

- Ezekiel was to take a _____ and draw a _____ of _____ on it to show how Jerusalem would be given over to the enemies.
- Ezekiel had to lie on his left side for _____ days and on his right side for _____ days. These were the years Ezekiel would _____ the _____ of Israel and Judah.
- Ezekiel had to _____ his _____ and the hair on his _____.
- Ezekiel had to _____ his bags, _____ through a _____, and go through the _____ to show what it was like to be in exile.



D. The People's Response

Despite so many warnings, the people _____ to _____ because they were a _____ and _____ nation.

E. The Hope In the Night

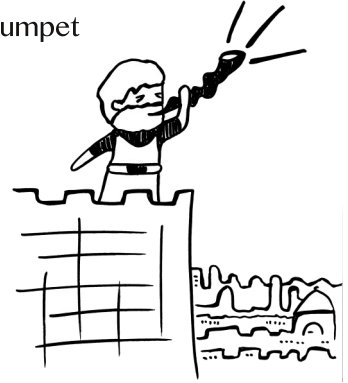
God promised to take away their _____ of _____ and give them a _____ of _____.

A. A Spiritual Watchman

1. Ezekiel was called by God to be the watchman for the house of Israel. What kinds of difficulties might Ezekiel face?

2. As a watchman on the walls of your family, to whom do you need to sound the trumpet and why?

3. As a watchman on the walls of the church, to whom do you need to sound the trumpet?



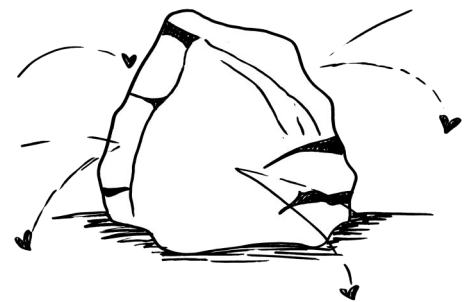
4. As a watchman on the walls of your school, to whom do you need to sound the trumpet?

B. Replace a Heart of Stone with a Heart of Flesh

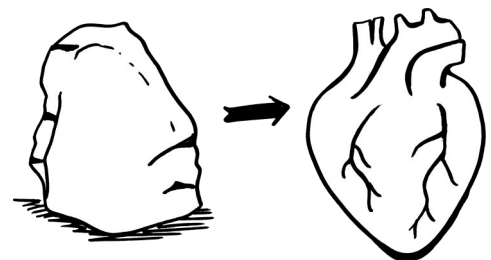
1. God's people had hearts like stone.

a. What kind of heart is a heart of stone?

b. Write or draw what is in our heart that makes it hard.



2. Describe a heart of flesh.



3. To change my heart of stone to a heart of flesh, I need to...

E2 Year 3 Book 4 Lesson 12—Prophet Ezekiel

Homework Assignment

Name: _____ Parent signature: _____ Date: _____

Weekly Bible Reading: _____

Bible Reading: Check each box when you complete that day's reading.

Prayer: Check each box after you pray to God that day.

	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Read	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pray	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

What I Learned from the Bible This Week

1. _____

2. _____

Memory Verse

Please write down this week's memory verse. **(Ezekiel 36:27)**

True or False

1. When Ezekiel ate the scroll it tasted very bitter. _____
2. The vision of the four creatures and the scroll enabled Ezekiel to know God and His will better. _____
3. As Ezekiel lay on his side for those 430 days, he was allowed to roll around and take a walk whenever he needed to stretch. _____
4. To show the people what being in exile would be like, God told Ezekiel to pack whatever he could carry during the day and dig through a wall in the midst of the people at night. _____

Multiple Choice

5. _____ : As a watchman, Ezekiel declared God's message to the people _____.
 - a. No matter if they listened or not
 - b. Only when they were ready to listen to him
 - c. Only when the message would not offend them
6. _____ : God instructed Ezekiel to act out the messages because _____.
 - a. It would attract the attention of the hard-hearted people.
 - b. Ezekiel was good at acting.
 - c. God wanted to try a new method of declaring the message.
7. _____ : The Babylonians came and invaded Judah _____.
 - a. 2 times
 - b. 3 times
 - c. 4 times
8. _____ : To change a heart of stone to a heart of flesh, we need to _____.
 - a. Repent and be filled with God's Spirit and words
 - b. Put away our own will and obey God
 - c. All of the above

Short Answer

9. Today, each of us is a spiritual watchman. Who are the people we need to declare God's messages to?