

Who Were the **PROPHETS?**

Lesson 4 • September 25
Watchmen Who Warned

Let's listen carefully to [Ezekiel 3:16-21](#):

And at the end of seven days, the word of the LORD came to me: “Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel. Whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me. If 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, in order to save his life, that wicked person shall die for his iniquity, but his blood I will require at your hand. But if you warn the wicked, and he does not turn from his wickedness, or from his wicked way, he shall die for his iniquity, but you will have delivered your soul. Again, if a righteous person turns from his righteousness and commits injustice, and I lay a stumbling block before him, he shall die. Because you have not warned him, he shall die for his sin, and his righteous deeds that he has done shall not be remembered, but his blood I will require at your hand. But if you warn the righteous person not to sin, and he does not sin, he shall surely live, because he took warning, and you will have delivered your soul.”

Who were the prophets? God used them as watchmen who were expected to warn people that judgment was coming ([Ezek 33:1-11](#)). One of the most common ways the prophets described times of God's judgment? “The day of the Lord,” a phrase we hear in connection with:

- [Babylon](#) ([Isa 13:6, 9](#))
- [Egypt](#) ([Jer 46:10](#))
- The nations ([Ezek 30:3](#))
- [Israel](#) ([Joel 1:14-15](#))

In fact, the Old Testament ends by focusing attention on “the day of the LORD”:



“For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, when all the arrogant and all evildoers will be stubble. The day that is coming shall set them ablaze, says the LORD of hosts, so that it will leave them neither root nor branch. But for you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings. You shall go out leaping like calves from the stall. And you shall tread down the wicked, for they will be ashes under the soles of your feet, on the day when I act, says the LORD of hosts.

“Remember the law of my servant Moses, the statutes and rules that I commanded him at Horeb for all Israel. ([Mal 4:1-4](#))

There's much we can learn from this period of the Old Testament, but this is much more than just history. We also are told about a coming “day of the Lord” ([2 Pet 3:1-2, 10](#)), so let's talk about it...

For Class & Family Discussion:

- In your own words, what was the work of a watchman in ancient times? What did they need in order to do their work well?

- Looking back at the word of the LORD that came to Ezekiel in [Ezekiel 3:16-21](#)...
 - Is it always easy to “warn” people? If not, why would anyone even worry about it?

 - Even if the watchman does his job of warning, what important principles do we see in this passage?

 - In the similar words of [Ezekiel 33:11](#), what did we hear about God and what he wants for everyone? Why is it important for us to always remember this truth?

- What do we need to understand about all of those references to “days” of the LORD in the Old Testament? How do passages like [Isaiah 40:9-17](#) and [Jeremiah 51:20-24](#) put things into perspective for us?

- Do we have “watchmen” today? If so, who comes to mind? What is their role in our lives, and how should we feel about them and their work?

- Let’s go back and read [2 Peter 3:1-13](#) together.
 - What is Peter teaching us and warning us about?

 - How does this warning to us relate to the warnings of the prophets so long ago?