



Watch and Pray for Our Nation

(Ezekiel 22:1-31; 33:1-7)

Ezekiel 22 gives a description of what happened in the years 593 -571B.C. Being far away in Babylon where idol worshipping and religious pluralism were pervasive, prophet Ezekiel was moved by God to warn against the chaotic situation in Jerusalem. How was Jerusalem at that time? Through prophet Ezekiel, God had described this city as one that defile herself by rampant idolatry, and shed blood in her midst. It was also a city full of tumult. (22: 2-4)

How could a city of the people of God become like this? Because the leaders neither fear God nor obey God's word, nor walk in His way. They perverted the order of leadership (22:6), perverted family ethics (22:7, 10-11), perverted the liturgical order (22:8-9), perverted the relationship of the sexes (22:9-11), perverted social justice (22:7, 9, 12), perverted business ethics (22:12).

From the priests, leaders and prophets, down to the people, they had all forgotten about God, and violated the Ten Commandments. The society of the people of God had already become rotten to its core, from social ethics to liturgy, they were beyond all hope. This city was indeed notorious and chaotic!

In His heartbrokenness, God pronounced the following judgment:

- the time has come (22:3); the day is near (22:4); the end of your years has come (22:4)
- The house of Israel has become dross to Me; they are all bronze, tin, iron, and lead, in the midst of a furnace; they have become dross from silver. (22:18)
- I will gather you into the midst of Jerusalem...I will gather you in My anger and in My wrath, and I will put you there and melt you. (22:19-20)
- You are a land that is not cleansed nor rained upon in the day of indignation. (22:24)

Jerusalem had come to such an extent that neither retribution nor rehabilitation could redeem her. She was going to be "melted in the midst of His wrath"! Before she was melted, God was still willing to give another chance to this city which was full of tumult. He was searching for a man who would stand in the gap before Him for the land. But he "found none" (22:30). In such situation, God moved Ezekiel to try his very best using all possible ways to call the people of God to return to Him. Nevertheless, the people of that time were not willing to listen to him (Eze 3:7, 33:30-33).


As a result, God struck! He "poured out his indignation upon them, consumed them with the fire of his wrath, and returned their way upon their heads" (22:31). Why did God do that?

- Because God heard the crying of the land, the land which had been greatly defiled by the sins of His people. The time had come, the people would be scattered among the nations, and the uncleanness of the land would be consumed! God would consume uncleanness out of them (22:15).
- Because only in this way His people who had forgotten Him will know that He is God.



From Eze 22, we notice that the “watchman” plays an important role for he/she would affect the prospect and destiny of the city. The watchman has to stand in the gap or on the tower, to keep watching till morning (Isa 21:11-12; 62:6). He has to stay alert and be watchful, and to give warnings of any danger or hostility towards the residents of the city (ref Eze 33:1-7). He also needs to wait upon the Lord, paying full attention to any sign of redemption from the Lord (Mic 7:7).

Our cities and country are not as bad as Jerusalem at the time of Ezekiel. Nevertheless, our eyes and ears tell us that our cities and country are not in the heyday of peace. When unjust things happen, we will shake our heads; we will comment; we will complain. We will even consider migrating... However, no matter in which country or city we are residing, God hopes that we will personally and collectively watch and pray for the land where we are staying. Since we were born in Malaysia, and we are also living here, let us begin to learn to watch and pray for our country. Are we willing?



How should we participate in this ministry of praying for our nation?

- Pray unceasingly to God that He will open our eyes and help us to watch out: Have we, as an individual, family, church, city or nation, in any area broken His law? (Ps 119:126) [Watching out is the basic quality which a watchman should possess and cultivate.] After we watch out, let us stand in the gap, and repent for our own iniquities, and also repent and pray on behalf of our family, church, city and nation. Ask for forgiveness from God, and ask also for His guidance and blessings upon our family, church, city and nation
- Lie prostrate at His feet to listen to Him: the more we fall at His feet, the farther we shall see and the clearer we shall hear. And this will enable us to discern accurately any suggestion that come from ourselves, our peers, spiritual elders and spiritual peers.
- Wait upon God and watch for His deliverance (Ps 130:5-6) because unless He watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain (Ps 127).
- Ask God for wisdom, courage and strength to speak out/ up for what we ought to speak in a humble and yet firm manner at an appropriate time, even though that means we may have to pay a price. Amen.

Pray for the peace of Malaysia

Prayer Point 1

Malaysian anti-terror unit nabs Isis leader in Kuala Lumpur on Jan 31, 2015. About 59 Malaysians are officially known to have joined Isis. Sex, money, power seem to lure Msian would-be jihadists to Isis. [Ref:<http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/anti-terror-unit-nabs-isis-leader-in-kuala-lumpur>, <http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/sex-money-power-lure-would-be-jihadists-to-isis-say-cops>]

Let us pray for Christians and churches to actively pray for the peace of our nation and that the destructive-terrorists plans will be exposed. Pray also that God's love will be shared in our communities.

Prayer Point 2

An anti-terrorism law will be tabled in parliament in March 2015 possibly bringing back portions of the now-repealed Internal Security Act, Emergency Ordinance and Prevention of Crime Act.

Let us pray for all our MPs to depend on God's wisdom and leading to make good decisions on this law, serving in the fear of the Lord, solely having in mind the safety and the wellbeing of citizens and not motivated by any political reasons.

Prayer Point 3

We read of continual racial tensions, political infightings and crisis, factionalism among and within political parties, with some even resorting to open dispute and fighting when our nation is facing a very challenging situation in the economy.

Let us pray that politicians will move away from selfish ambitions, power struggles and fighting for prominence, position etc to focus on the bigger agenda and manage our economic situation well.

Prayer Point 4

The church is called to be the salt and light of the world. May we live up to our high calling.

Let us pray that Christians will allow God to deal with and purge out any anger, hatred, unforgiveness, bitterness and disunity that still plague His Church so that our prayers may carry spiritual authority when the enemy has no hold on us. Pray that selfish ambitions and agenda, competition, jealousy, slander, power struggles and fighting for prominence, position and power be weeded out from His church. May we get our hearts right before God and settle conflicts in His ways. May we seek His heart for this nation and focus on building His church instead.

Prayer Point 5

Let us keep our eyes on Jesus, the Prince of Peace for He will keep us in perfect peace when our minds are stayed on Him. Let's take our eyes off the problems in our land and pray for His purposes to come to pass in Malaysia.

Pray that we will impact our neighbours, communities and nation with Christlikeness and set the example by walking in love, peace and mutual trust.