

Background Scriptures: Ezekiel 18:1-32; 33:1-20**Print Passage: Ezekiel 33:7-16a**

L12 To Everything Turn, Turn, Turn

REFLECT



Do you know where today's lesson's topic came from? Here's the background to it: "Turn! Turn! Turn!" (subtitled "To Everything There Is a Season") is a song that was written by Pete Seeger in 1959. The lyrics—except for the title, repeated throughout the song, and the final two lines—consist of the first eight verses of the third chapter of the biblical book of Ecclesiastes.



The tutoring session with Shayla was helpful. Jevonia could see that Shayla grasped the various concepts in algebra, geometry, and calculus, with which she struggled. Jevonia had a way of "breaking stuff down" into manageable concepts.

Now, it was Shayla's session with Malia. Malia showed up promptly at 2:00 p.m. After hugging Shayla, Malia asked, "Are you ready to plunge into biology?"

"I'm ready," Shayla replied.

"Great!" Malia responded. Instead of opening the biology textbook, Malia opened her Bible to the book of Ecclesiastes. She then read the following from the third chapter of the book of Ecclesiastes, verses 1-3:

*There is a time for everything,
and a season for every activity under the heavens:
a time to be born and a time to die,
a time to plant and a time to uproot,
a time to kill and a time to heal,
a time to tear down and a time to build.*

Shayla was curious as to why Malia read those verses from the Bible, so she asked her. In response, Malia gave Shayla the textbook meaning of *biology*. She said, "Biology is a branch of science that deals with living organisms and their vital processes. It is the study of everything that is (or was once) alive, including plants, animals, and microorganisms. But I wanted to show you the connection between biological life and what the Bible says about life. Remember, Shayla, that life begins with God."

"Wow!" Shayla responded. "I never thought of biology like that. I can see that this session is going to be exciting."



"Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the people of Israel; so hear the word I speak and give them warning from me." (Ezekiel 33:7)



INSPECT

Ezekiel 33:7-16

7 “Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the people of Israel; so hear the word I speak and give them warning from me. 8 When I say to the wicked, ‘You wicked person, you will surely die,’ and you do not speak out to dissuade them from their ways, that wicked person will die for their sin, and I will hold you accountable for their blood. 9 But if you do warn the wicked person to turn from their ways and they do not do so, they will die for their sin, though you yourself will be saved. 10 Son of man, say to the Israelites, ‘This is what you are saying: “Our offenses and sins weigh us down, and we are wasting away because of them. How then can we live?”’ 11 Say to them, ‘As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live. Turn! Turn from your evil ways! Why will you die, people of Israel?’ 12 Therefore, son of man, say to your people, ‘If someone who is righteous disobeys, that person’s former righteousness will count for nothing. And if someone who is wicked repents, that person’s former wickedness will not bring condemnation. The righteous person who sins will not be allowed to live even though they were formerly righteous.’ 13 If I tell a righteous person that they will surely live, but then they trust in their righteousness and do evil, none of the righteous things that person has done will be remembered; they will die for the evil they have done. 14 And if I say to a wicked person, ‘You will surely die,’ but they then turn away from their sin and do what is just and right— 15 if they give back what they took in pledge for a loan, return what they have stolen, follow the decrees that give life, and do no evil—that person will surely live; they will not die. 16 None of the sins that person has committed will be remembered against them.”



INTERSECT

THE SETTING OF THE BOOK OF EZEKIEL IS WHEN THE ISRAELITES WERE IN EXILE, FACING CONSIDERABLE CHALLENGES AND UNCERTAINTIES. Ezekiel, a prophet, was called by God to deliver messages of warning, hope, and instruction to the people. In verse 7 of Ezekiel 33, God appointed Ezekiel as a watchman for the house of Israel. This image signifies a role of great responsibility—a watchman guards against impending danger, alerting those in danger.

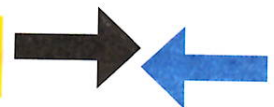
What does it mean to be a watchman? In biblical terms, a watchman is a person entrusted with the responsibility of alerting others to danger or truth. Here, Ezekiel’s duty was to observe and communicate God’s messages to His people.

By making Ezekiel a watchman, God emphasized the importance of taking responsibility and accountability in spiritual leadership. The watchman must speak up when danger approaches, ensuring that people are informed and have the opportunity to respond. This view extends beyond just Ezekiel; it applies to anyone with a position of influence or authority within their community.

As a Christian youth, you, too, are responsible for expressing your opinion to friends who may be taking the wrong path in life.

The message you can share is that God is merciful. If we want to change, we can. We must admit that we have sinned and want to change. God can and will give us a new life, a new direction, and a new love (*NIV commentary*). He does not wish death to come to anyone. He sends warning messages so that people can change before it is too late.

Inside Out



One Bible commentator stated, “Warning others of the consequences of judgment inherent in sin is never a popular assignment.” How do people react to warnings? In our culture, we often hear warnings such as these: one day, a giant asteroid will demolish the earth; our sun will not last forever; global warming is real. Lately, we have heard many warnings about additional terrorist attacks. What is many people’s first reaction when they hear those warnings? “Not that again. We hear that all the time, and nothing ever happens. . . .”



THERE'S AN APP FOR THAT!

Today's generation of youth is very different from the baby-boomer generation. Youth today are very independent, assertive, vocal, and extremely curious. They are not afraid to stand up for what they believe in. They fight for their causes. But sometimes, because of their in-

dependence, they can be rebellious. And because of their rebellion, they can be disobedient. Some turn their backs on God and join cults, Scientology, atheism, and other non-Christian movements. This is very similar to the Israelites.

In the "REFLECT" section, Malia's session with Shayla emphasized the role of God in all of life. Without God, there would be no life!



STEPPING OUT!

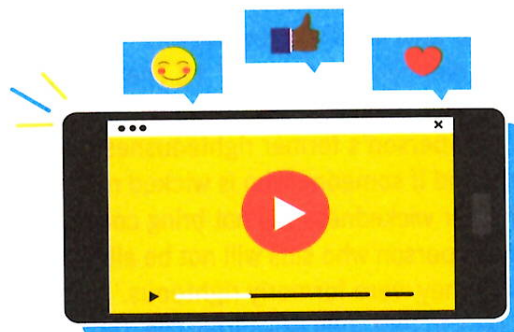
In what ways are your attitudes like those of the Israelites? Reflect on when you knew something was wrong but did it anyway. What were the short-term and long-term consequences of your decision? Did you attempt to reverse your decision? If someone else was involved and negatively impacted, did you approach that person and apologize? God says to turn, turn, turn. Do not be afraid to turn. Repent, and God will save you.



CONNECT

People do not believe that judgment could come at any time. What is our responsibility as Christians? Our job is to convince people of the truth of Hebrews 9:27. The message of the watchman today is that death and judgment are coming for all of us—but we can be ready for it.

God wants everyone saved. When He sees us going astray, He warns us to turn around. He requires obedience from us. Warnings of danger may come from parents, friends, pastors, dreams, or a strong gut feeling. Pay attention to and obey God's warnings!



MEDIA MISSION

Visit the link listed below to listen to the song by VaShawn Mitchell titled "Turning Around for Me." The Israelites were discouraged and cast down in Babylon as slaves. God encouraged them through Ezekiel that He could turn their situation around if they would turn back to Him. Be encouraged in knowing that God can turn your situation around. The song can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gQDhVZ1gzqk>.

