

10th February 2025

Warnings

**“The word of the Lord came to me:
‘Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the people;
so hear the word I speak and give them warning from me.’”**

Bible, Ezekiel 3:16

The evening before our country was about to be battered by Storm *Éowyn* a few weeks ago, I was at the movies. My phone was on “silent” so as not to disturb anyone. But I was surprised when, a few minutes into the movie, my phone began to vibrate *and* make a strange sound – and wouldn’t stop. My wife’s phone did likewise, as did several other phones in the cinema. It was an alert from the authorities, a “Red Weather Warning” about the impending storm, giving instructions about “danger to life” and what to do to keep safe. To be honest, it was quite scary!

We don’t always get weather-warnings about storms. Maybe they’re not severe enough, or they happen all of a sudden. When life throws troubles at us, we rarely get warnings about these either. The severe storms that come upon us, or even the not so traumatic ones, are seldom predictable, but they have to be coped with none the less.

Things happen in life over which we have no control. So we have to react as best we can. But what do we do where there *are* warnings: that high cholesterol adds to the risk of heart disease; smoking can lead to cancer; global warming can raise sea-levels dangerously; inner-city pollution can cause breathing problems for children; carrying a concealed weapon can lead to violence and killings; working on a computer for too long before bedtime can disrupt your sleep; scams are on the rise? When warnings *are* there – like my “Red Weather Warning” about Storm *Éowyn* – should we not take heed? Is that not what warnings are for?

In *A Clash of Kings*, one of the books by American writer George R R Martin which morphed into the remarkable *Game of Thrones* series, he has one of the characters, Meera Reed, say this:

*Why would the gods send a warning
if we can’t heed it and change what’s to come?*

From God’s word to the prophet Ezekiel quoted above, to you and me today, we might well ask with Meera Reed, “Why indeed?”

A prayer for today

Warnings abound, both divine and human. Why don’t I heed them as I should? Amen

An original reflection @ Tom Gordon

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