

Watchmen On The Walls

Part 1

Introduction

We have occasionally reminded you that the physical in the Old Testament can be understood as the spiritual in the New Testament. No place is this more true than the pictures given us of the walls of the city and the watchmen who stood guard on them.

In the fifth chapter of Matthew, Jesus compares the Christian to a city on a hill. The chief means of defense for ancient cities were the walls that surrounded them. In fact, throughout much of the Old Testament, the terms city and fortress were synonymous. It is easy to see why. City walls averaged approximately 10 feet wide; at strategic points they could be more than twice that thickness and as high as 30 feet.

Entrance could be gained only through the heavy gate(s) with adjacent towers being the most important defense feature in the wall. Special care was taken to increase the strength of the walls at the gateways. If the ordinary thickness of the wall was not considered sufficient, it was doubled here. These gates were securely locked each day at sundown. Watchmen were employed to watch day and night from the top of the walls to keep an eye out for any sign of enemy activity. Other watchmen patrolled the city streets and preserved order. This practice is referred to in Song of Songs.

Our Study

The Scripture: Song of Songs: 3:1-3

"I looked for the one my heart loves. I will go about the city. The watchmen found me as they made their rounds on the city."

1. What did Solomon's Beloved decide to do? _____

2. What happened to her? _____

Still other watchmen were hired by private landowners.

The Scripture: Matthew 31:33

"There was a landowner who planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a wine press in it and built a watch tower."

3. How did the landowner protect his vineyard? _____

In this parable of a landowner, Jesus described the kind of protection God wants to put around the His people. Just as these ancient cities were protected by their heavy walls, so we have spiritual walls as our main defense against our enemy.

Defensive Strategy

The Scripture: Isaiah 26:1

"We have a strong city; God makes salvation its walls and ramparts."

4. What are the walls according to this verse? _____

The Scripture: Isaiah 60:18

"You will call your walls salvation and your gates praise."

5. What are the gates? _____

The Scripture: Ephesians 2:8

"For it is by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not from yourselves. It is the gift of God."

6. How is salvation described in this verse? _____

The Watchman's Duty

Scripture also warns us of what happens to the watchman who does not warn the people and they suffer as a consequence.

The Scripture: Isaiah 21:6, 8

"This is what the Lord says to me: 'Go post a lookout and have him report what he sees... And the lookout shouted, "Day after day... I stand on the watch tower; every night I stand at my post.' "

7. What is the Lord's command? _____

8. When is the lookout on duty? _____

The Scripture: Ezekiel 33:3

"He (the watchman) sees the sword coming against the land and blows the trumpet to warn the people."

9. What is his job? _____

The Scripture: Ezekiel 3:17

"Son of man, I have made you a watchman."

10. What is Ezekiel appointed to do? _____

Our gift of salvation is a restraining wall God puts around us to protect us from our enemy, Satan. Just as He does Ezekiel, He tells us to be watchmen who warn of the approach of any enemy. We are not to take this position lightly.

The Scripture: Ezekiel 33:6

"I will hold the watchman accountable for his blood."

11. What is God's warning? _____

Personal Questions:

- Have we adequately warned the world and even God's people of the great danger that encompasses and threatens to overtake us?
- Have we spoken God's word to others?

The Scripture: Ezekiel 22:30

"I looked for a man among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it, but I found none. So I will pour out my wrath on them and consume them with my fiery anger."

12. But what happens when God finds no watchmen on duty? _____

Personal Questions:

- Where is your trust placed?
- Do you trust in the Lord in such a way you can rest in Him completely?
- Do you accept His word as truth or are there sections you have reservations about?
- Have you allowed the Holy Spirit to make Jesus real to you?

The Scripture: Deuteronomy 28: 15, 52

"If you do not obey the Lord your God and do not carefully follow all his commands and decrees I am giving you today, all these curses will come upon and overtake you....[Your enemy] will lay siege to all the cities throughout your land until the high fortified walls in which you trust fall down."

13. What particular sin is the Lord warning of in these verses? _____

14. What can happen to His people if they don't obey the Lord's commands? _____

Moses warned the Children of Israel what would happen to them if they did not keep God's statutes. In our lives, too, we must be obedient to God's commands. Jesus, in the Sermon the Mount, indicated that the sins of our minds and emotions are as grievous to the Lord as our overt sins.

Personal Questions:

- Is the Holy Spirit convicting you of any sins of disobedience?
- Are we bitter and unforgiving?
- Have we lusted?
- Have we given false witness by word or implication?
- Have we refused those in need?
- Have we hated our enemies and neglected to pray for them?
- Have we laid up our treasures here on earth?
- Are we serving mammon?
- Are we judgmental?

If we have been disobedient in any area of our life, we need to make our confession to the Lord, asking His forgiveness; then we need to covenant to be obedient in the future.

The Scripture: Numbers 33:52, 55

"Drive out all the inhabitants of the land before you. Destroy all their carved images and their cast idols and demolish all their high places...If you do not drive out the inhabitants of the land, those you allow to remain will become barbs in your eyes and thorns in your sides. They will give you trouble in the land where you will live."

15. What commands were the Israelites given when they came into the Promised Land? _____

The Scripture: Isaiah 2:6 in The Living Bible

"The Lord has rejected you because you welcome foreigners from the East who practice magic and communicate with evil spirits."

16. Why does the Lord say He is rejecting Israel? _____

Many immigrants to our country have brought their own religions with them and communicate with evil spirits. The Lord absolutely refused to tolerate the sin of idolatry.

Personal Question: Why do you think God hates idolatry so much?

When anyone practices idolatry, he is, in fact, worshiping another god. God will not tolerate this. Time and time again, as His people turned from Him to worship other gods, He punished them, eventually giving them over in captivity to the most idolatrous nation of all, Babylon. When the Israelites finally returned from Babylon, idolatry had been completely removed from them. Perhaps nowhere else is "idol worship" more disastrous than in the arena of spiritual warfare. When we have idols (other gods of ambition, material goods, other people, anything that stands between us and God,) we are in grave danger.

In the next part of this study we will continue to look at the rebuilding and restoration of God's wall around the believer.

The Answers

1. To go about the city, searching for her loved one
2. The watchmen found her.
3. He put a wall around it and built a watch tower.
4. Salvation
5. Praise
6. As a gift
7. To post a lookout and have him report back
8. Day and night
9. To blow the trumpet and warn the people if he sees the sword coming
10. To be a watchman
11. He will hold the watchman accountable
12. He is very angry
13. He warns of disobedience and not following His commands and decrees
14. Curses would come upon the people and overtake them, and the enemy would lay siege to their cities.
15. To drive out all the inhabitants of the land, destroy their carved images and cast idols, and demolish all their high places.
16. Because they welcomed foreigners who practice magic and communicate with evil spirits

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