

## Through the Gates

A sermon by Larry Kirkpatrick

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Today, a brief exploration of a chapter in Isaiah; the “gospel” prophet talks to us apocalyptically! Heaven has a purpose for the end-time church. We are all to be watchmen on the wall, all to enter in through the gates into the Most Holy with Jesus, all to gather the stones out of the road to Jesus.

God has a purpose for His people. He’s not done with us yet. Listen:

For Zion’s sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem’s sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth (Isaiah 62:1).

God will not keep quiet; He will not wander away from us leaving His work finished but in part. He says He will not let us be, no, not until the righteousness of His people goes forth. See how brightness is paralleled with a lamp that burns, and righteousness is paralleled with salvation? God has a purpose. He chose us for His work’s fulfillment, but He still gave us a choice. We have chosen to become involved. And God promises us that He will do what it takes to cause His people to experience a righteousness, a salvation, that shines out into a world in need of restoration.

And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name (Isaiah 62:2).

Let’s be clear here. God is the source of righteousness, yet here He speaks of us, referring to “thy righteousness,” and “thy glory?” Here is that mysterious cooperation between God and man as we see it elsewhere in the Scriptures. Revelation 19:7, 8 show us that His end-time people are a source of deeds of righteousness, but that their capacity to do this is but a gift given from above. Apart from God, they can do nothing.

His people will be called by a new name. Of course, a new name, in Scripture, signifies a new character. God's people will form new characters. They are revised. They are a different people than when they first believed. They will be, unambiguously and indisputably, Christians, in the sense that that they, in their own sphere, are echoing Christ.

Do you see His evangelistic thrust here? Gentiles and kings shall see what we are. That is, those who have not joined themselves to God's kingdom, both common people and yes, sometimes those recognized as authorities, will see and be persuaded that we are different, that there is a substance in our Christian walk.

### **Who Are the Watchmen? Look Again**

Further on in the chapter, we have verses 6, 7:

I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence, and give Him no rest, till He establish, and till He make Jerusalem a praise in the earth (Isaiah 62:6, 7).

First, let's notice something. Who set the watchmen? Who places them on the walls? God does. He says that they will never hold their peace. This reminds us of Revelation 14:12, doesn't it? God is the one there, who announces, "Here are they that keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus." God knows His people. He insists that there will be faithful believers among them.

The watchmen here are faithful. They are on the walls. Cities then were not like our cities now. Cities had walls for purposes of protection. The watchman was set upon the wall to sound a warning of emergency if the enemy should be seen approaching the city. The watchman was to alert the people of the city while the enemy was still coming, before he even reached the city.

Well may we ask, where are the watchmen today? Too often today the enemy brings error, openly walking into the city. The “watchmen” wave him on in. Such are false watchmen. The true watchman is faithful. He is alert. He sees danger coming while it is still approaching and he calls out warning.

The Jewish Publication Society translation has in the margin note, “O you, the watchmen just mentioned. . .”

Take no rest and give no rest to Him, until He establish Jerusalem and make her renowned on earth.

This is different. This is not the way we think of watchmen, is it? And yet, consider. Genesis 18:20, 21. God says to Abraham that He is going to go down to Sodom and Gomorrah and “see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto Me.” Or Exodus 2:23; 3:7, 9, where God says that the cry of His people is come to Him in their bondage.

God is always listening. And who are the watchmen? Those who cry out to Him. Recall Ezekiel 9:4?

And the Lord said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof.

We think of the watchmen as a few especially discerning pastors and laymen, standing on the walls, seeing error coming, calling out, identifying the latest error to God’s people. But that is not this picture. Rather, the watchmen on the wall are all of God’s faithful. They see trouble coming, error encroaching, and they cry out. To who? To God! They plead with God for the

triumph of His cause. These are the watchmen. These take the matter up with Him, directly. Their intervention enables His intervention.

This does not negate the other viewpoint. Isaiah 58:1 remains: “Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.” But it lends us a fresh perspective to think of ourselves all as watchmen, to realize that our prayers count, that our cry goes forth into the ear of the Infinite.

How easily we begin to use human methods to correct spiritual matters. Shall we do something as bold—and as simple—as doing our part and then resorting to God? We should talk with God in prayer. We should plead with Him for intervention and justice. That is part of our righteousness and our salvation going forth and burning like a light.

### **Entering into the Sanctuary**

After speaking of the justice that is coming (vv. 8, 9), at the end of verse nine an interesting observation. KJV says that those who have gathered their produce shall offer it “in the courts of My holiness.” The ESV gives “Those who gather it shall drink it in the courts of My sanctuary.” Then comes the statement in verse 10:

Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people; cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones; lift up a standard for the people.

What gates exactly are being spoken of here? The city Jerusalem and the sanctuary within the city of Jerusalem, are fused in this text. Remember, Isaiah’s most recent imagery, in context, is of the walls of Jerusalem. And the center of action in Jerusalem is always the sanctuary. What is our business, as the people of God in the end-times, in the times after Daniel 8:14 and the beginning of the cleansing of the sanctuary? Our business is to enter in, through the gates--into

the sanctuary, even into the Most Holy Place with Jesus our Great High Priest. There He makes atonement for us even now.

Consider further the words of Isaiah. Not only are we to enter in through the gates, but here it gets especially interesting. Our exegetes often suggest to us that the role of God's end-time people is here minimal. Jesus is in the Most Holy making atonement for us, but that is all a matter of His running down a list and affirming that we are in the kingdom. Here, the story is different.

Those who have gathered and brought the wine, these are those who eat it within the gates of the sanctuary. These are commanded to go through the gates, and also to prepare the way of the people. Remember, the watchmen were those who were crying out, praying to God, seeking His intervention and justice. And all of God's people are called to this watchman's duty. Here, the same are called to "prepare the way of the people." They are to "cast up [build up] the highway." They are called to "gather out the stones" and to "lift up a standard for the people."

This is unambiguous. These people are called to a work of reformation. They enter in themselves, but they prepare the way for others to come in. They build up the highway. That is, they mark out the way home to the Father's house. They are to gather out the stones. All those things that obscure the way home, the rocks in the road, the false doctrines, the misguided approaches, the almost thoughtless copying of church growth methods or of business practices and their adaptation to the work of the church, these things are called into question. More, they are to be detected and removed.

When these have been gathered out and removed, when the road has been built up and smoothed and is ready for traffic, then they are to lift up a standard. They are to boldly mark the

way home. This is no picture of an ambivalent people unsure of their message, confused about their purpose, or tentatively seeking recognition and legitimacy from other religious groups. Rather, these are a people who have fought their way through many challenges, and in the help of God, prevailed. They set forth a pathway home, and they do not hide their identity or linger in embarrassment at the side of the road. They clear it and direct fellow travelers to the Father's house.

### **Conclusion**

The chapter ends with God's people being called "the holy people." The chapter, which begins with Jerusalem ends with it. At the conclusion she is a city "sought out," a city "not forsaken." So when we feel discouraged, troubled, confused, unsure, along the journey, then we should look again at Isaiah 62. Here, a work is outlined for us, for each and every one to participate in. We are to be part of God's triumph. Don't forget to pray to Him, tell Him the injustice you see, plead for Him to intervene. He will hear your cry. He is listening, always listening to His watchmen.

That's me; that's you, He is listening for us. We are never to keep our peace, never content ourselves with the nonsense and injustice around us. The righteousness of Jerusalem shall go forth, but in concrete terms, that means through a people, an end-time people. May the salvation that is in God's city shine forth through a people redeemed. We can do all things through Christ who strengthens us (Philippians 4:13).

**Biographical Note:** Pastor Larry Kirkpatrick is a convert to the Adventist faith. Since 1994 he has served in the ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. He holds degrees from Southern Adventist University and the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary. His work has included research assistant for the Ellen G. White Estate, pioneering Adventist internet ministry, involvement in GYC, and presenter at the 50th Anniversary *Questions on Doctrine* Conference. He is author of the books *Real Grace for Real People* and *Cleanse and Close*. For many years his sermons and papers have been published on the internet. Larry and wife Pamela have served churches in Nevada, Utah, and California. The Kirkpatricks presently serve at the [Mentone church](#) near Loma Linda, California.