

<https://youtu.be/UC6f9737h9Y>

John 10:3-5

and because the gatekeeper knows who he is, he opens the gate to let him in. And the sheep recognize the voice of the true Shepherd, for he calls his own by name and leads them out, for they belong to him. And when he has brought out all his sheep, he walks ahead of them and they will follow him, for they are familiar with his voice. But they will run away from strangers and never follow them because they know it's the voice of a stranger."



Picture: Illustration of an Ancient Sheep Fold

This sketch contains a coloured illustration of a sheep pen in ancient Israel. Sheep pens in Jesus' era were constructed with sturdy rock walls of loosely stacked stones and a single doorway. This allowed easy control over what animals got in or out, and which people could access the sheep. There were often no physical barriers across that opening, since a gatekeeper was always on duty. The gatekeeper was not merely minding the opening. To rest, or even to sleep, the gatekeeper would literally lay across the gap. The sheep pen also provided protection from thieves, wolves and other animals of prey. More than one flock may be kept in the same pen. The gatekeeper of the pen would ensure that only approved shepherds—those who had claim on a flock inside—could get in or out. Anyone trying to climb over the walls was, by definition, up to no good. Those allowed in by the gatekeeper were legitimately allowed to be there. In the morning the shepherd would call his sheep and they would exit the fold because they knew his voice.

WHO IS THE GATEKEEPER/WATCHMAN?

Ezekiel 3:17-19

"Son of man, I've made you a watchman for the family of Israel. Whenever you hear me say something, warn them for me. If I say to the wicked, 'You are going to die,' and you don't sound the alarm warning them that it's a matter of life or death, they will die and it will be your fault. I'll hold you responsible. But if you warn the wicked and they keep right on sinning anyway, they'll most certainly die for their sin, but you won't die. You'll have saved your life.

- Watchman" (Hebrew: **צִפְּהָ** tsō-ṭēh or tsa-phah) or "sentinel":[3] the noun is derived from the Hebrew verb meaning to "look out or about, spy, keep watch"; properly "to lean forward", i.e. "to peer into the distance"; by implication, "to observe, await:—behold, espy, look up (well), wait for, (keep the) watch(-man)".

We see here that (son of man) we are the watchman/gatekeepers appointed by God. According to the Old Testament, a gatekeeper was a Levite. Gatekeepers were also watchmen on the walls. They were ministering priests from the tribe of Levi. Gatekeepers were trusted officials and high priests in the servant role of protecting the Lord's house. They were stationed at all 4 gates (N,S, E, W). They also appointed and taught others around them to guard the gate as well. Their hearts were fully committed to the Lord's will.

The Greek word used in **John 10** above also means "a doorkeeper" - a servant who "attends to what" comes in and out a particular door to the Kingdom. It is the same word Jesus uses for servants in **Mark 13:34**

For those days can be compared to a man who was about to leave on a journey, but before leaving he placed his servants in charge and gave each one work to do while he was away. Then he commanded the watchman to be on guard at all times.

THE GATEKEEPER/WATCHMAN

1. Know their authority

According to **Mark 13:34** the master placed his servants in charge.

Matthew 18:18

"I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father."

So we see authority is given to the servants/watchman/ doorkeeper the master leaves in charge "...to every man his work" - the work, the gifts, assigned or apportioned to him by the Father. Those who embrace the Life exemplified by Jesus become priests, doorkeepers, gatekeepers, to the house of the Father. They've received the keys to open or close doors. The faithful watchman must be willing to risk his life for the sake of the flock, and perhaps give his life for them. They are prayer warriors and intercessors for the people. They keep watch for the master's return; ready to usher in the King of Glory. So when the shepherd comes he - **John 10:3**: *"The gatekeeper opens the gate for him..."*,

2. They protect the Lord's Kingdom.

Just as with the sheep pen illustration the gatekeeper knew and understood his role. He had to know the Shepherd of the flock, to be able to distinguish between the thief and the Shepherd. The thief comes but to steal, kill and destroy but as our Good Shepherd JESUS not only risked his life for us, He actually gave Himself on our behalf. The shepherd cares so much for His sheep that he gives them names. The sheep responds when He calls their names. In Ezekiel 3 it says "whenever you hear me say something" indicating not just relationship but also fellowship between the shepherd and the watchman. Hearing means knowing the scriptures well and to be full of understanding in order to know what God is saying. We have to know His voice. God's method has always been to use those who are in touch with Him, to reach those out of touch with Him.

3. They are His mouthpiece

The instruction in **Ezekiel 3** is then to *"warn them for me"*. As a staff or sheepdog would keep the sheep together from straying, so the role of gatekeeper is the same. He is responsible to boldly speak out against deception in the body. To keep the people from drifting from the Lord, to gently guide the drifter back and keep those on the threshold of making wrong choices that lead to evil paths from taking another step in the wrong direction. They are bold and not afraid to tell the truth of God's word, knowing full well they are saving many from the fires of eternal hell. Through wickedness, people get out of touch with God.

To Summarize

A. Notice that Ezekiel was not called to convert them.

Sometimes we become discouraged in our Christian service because we seek to do more than God requires of us.

- 1.** Winning souls is the work of the Spirit.
- 2.** My work is to warn.
- 3.** My responsibility is fulfilled when I have witnessed. Now they are responsible before God for what they do with that witness.

B. God has called all of us.

1. His call is first to salvation - then to service.

a) Jesus said, "Come unto Me..." and once we respond there is relationship.

b) Then He says, "Take My yoke upon you." meaning we continue His work

2. God leaves us here on this earth for one reason only.

a) To serve Him.

b) Jobs and all else is incidental.

c) God seeks to use you who are in touch with Him to reach those who are not in touch with Him.

C. Serving God is not an option for the Christian, it is a responsibility.

1. God holds me responsible to warn the wicked.

a) God said to Ezekiel - their blood is on your hands.

b) But if you warn them, you have delivered your soul.

2. When I observe some wicked action, I should warn that person that God is not pleased with what they have done - and if they do not change, He will judge them.

a) They may laugh at you or mock you.

b) But I promise you, they won't forget what you said.

c) You don't have to argue over other religions.

d) You don't have to defend God, the Bible or your faith.

e) Just simply speak the truth - don't get caught in the trap of trying to defend the truth.

f) If they sincerely ask honest questions, seek to answer them.

g) If they seek to argue, just restate the truth and let it go at that.

h) Your silence (not arguing) will bug them far more than any eloquent arguments or debate.

i) They may defeat your argument but they can't defeat the truth

RUNNING AWAY FROM THIS IS NOT AN OPTION (Jonah didn't win) You are commanded to speak out and warn them

Micah 2:12-13

Deliverance Promised

"I will surely gather all of you, Jacob; I will surely bring together the remnant of Israel. I will bring them together like sheep in a pen, like a flock in its pasture; the place will throng with people. The One who breaks open the way will go up before them; they will break through the gate and go out. Their King will pass through before them, the LORD at their head."

Notice in **verse 13** that the Lord opens the way. He goes before them and leads them out. Christ never drives His sheep, but always leads them, clearing their way. He is our BREAKER who has broken all barriers and hindrances that obstruct our way to God and our destiny. The "Goliaths" among men cannot stand before Him or his weakest servant who is strong in His grace. Let this assurance be a source of comfort and confidence to your soul today. "He as the BREAKER has made the way POSSIBLE and PASSABLE." Let us follow Him