

Gatekeepers: An Introduction

A Teaching by Ron Brown

“And the name of the city from that day shall be, ‘The LORD is there.’” Ezekiel 40:35

Today we’re going to talk about being gatekeepers standing in the gap. This is a very critical time for the church. Jesus said in Matthew 16 that when Peter received the revelation that Jesus was the Christ, Jesus said, “Upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of Hell will not prevail against it.”

Gatekeepers Don’t Hide Behind the Gate

Many times people think that means the Church is hiding behind a brass gate, hoping the devil doesn’t shake the gate loose and get in. But that’s not what Jesus was talking about because the church is in an offensive posture against the spirits of darkness. We’re not hiding behind a gate but we are seated at the gate and we are standing at the gate and saying, “You will not be able to come in here, in the name of Jesus.”

We are also advancing the message of salvation from the gate and publishing to the world—in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost parts of the Earth—that God has come to bring freedom through the Lord Jesus Christ.

So as gatekeepers, we are to warn, we are to teach, we are to rebuke, we are to preach in season and out of season the word of God and that there is a message of hope that God wants to bring through the church, through the people of God and for us in particular here at Teen Challenge Southern California.

God Strategically Calls and Places Gatekeepers

Psalms 119:89–91 says, “Forever, O Lord, your word is settled in heaven. Your faithfulness continues throughout all generations. You established the Earth and it stands. They stand this day according to your ordinances for all things are Your

servants.” (NASB) And then Psalm 89:34 says, “My covenant I will not violate, nor will I alter the utterance of my lips.” (NASB)

When God speaks a word, his word stands forever. And so when God talked about the gates being established and us being watchmen at the gate, God’s word will not be violated and nothing can cause it to be moved when we stand upon his word.

Ezekiel 48 talks about the 12 tribes of Israel and how each one of them had a position that God gave them in the Promised Land. There were gates that each tribe was responsible for. I think about us at Teen Challenge Southern California and the way Southern California is divided up—with Kern County, the Tri-County area, Riverside, Orange County, San Diego, and in Los Angeles with TCMI—and the layout of how God has each one of our centers and the responsibilities that we have. They all touch each other. And when you look at the 12 tribes, all of the territory was lying next to each other and there were responsibilities that each person had, or each tribe had, for the enemy

that would try to come into the territory or into the land through the area they had gatekeeper responsibility for.

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his word stands forever.**

And so God has each one of us strategically placed, strategically located and laid out for the purposes of us taking this entire region for the Lord. And I believe that’s what God has called us to do. We’re not here just to raise up a Teen Challenge program but we are here to evangelize and bring the kingdom of God into manifestation throughout Southern



Stirrings—inspired by 2 Timothy 1:6, Amplified Version—is an abridged summary of devotionals and leadership teachings by Ron Brown, Executive Director of Teen Challenge of Southern California. They are presented at regular meetings of the TCSC Leadership Team as part of its commitment to excellence, personal growth, and spiritual vitality. The complete audio is available at <http://www.teenchallenge.org/stirrings>.



California and from here leverage it out to the world. But if each person is not on their watchman/gatekeeper responsibility, we will miss out on what God has as the enemy will be able to come in, plunder, and take advantage of weak spots or weak areas and we will not be able to fulfill completely what God has for us.

Gates are ports of access. And each tribe had a place to serve in the gates, as we will read in just a moment. And when God's order is established properly, the Word of God says that "he is there." In Ezekiel 48, God says, "My name will be there." The Lord is there.

Ezekiel 48:30–35 talks about these city gates. It says, "These are the exits of the city: on the north side, 4,500 cubits by measurement, shall be the gates of the city, named for the tribes of Israel, three gates toward the north: the gate of Reuben, one; the gate of Judah, one; the gate of Levi, one. On the east side, 4,500 cubits, shall be three gates: the gate of Joseph, one; the gate of Benjamin, one; the gate of Dan, one. On the south side, 4,500 cubits by measurement, shall be three gates: the gate of Simeon, one; the gate of Issachar, one; the gate of Zebulun, one. On the west side, 4,500 cubits, shall be three gates: the gate of Gad, one; the gate of Asher, one; the gate of Naphtali, one. The city shall be 18,000 cubits round about; and the name of the city from that day shall be, 'The LORD is there.'" (NASB)

Gatekeepers Usher in Unity

So when God's order is established and everybody is in line and in the place where they're supposed to be, then God says, "I will be there" in the fullness of his strength and in the fullness of his power. There's great unity that is released when the people of God are where they're supposed to be. When we're not on our gatekeeper responsibility, if we're not stationed where we're supposed to be, then the strength of what God wants to bring forth will not be manifest.

Again, laying the foundation of how important it is for us to take our gatekeeper duties and responsibilities, Psalm 127:1–2 says, "Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it.

Unless the Lord guards the city, the watchman keeps awake in vain. It is vain

for you to rise up early, to retire late, to eat the bread of painful labors; for He gives to his beloved even in his sleep." (NASB)

When we're right where we're supposed to be, we can enter into the rest of God and from that position of rest, God says he gives to his beloved even when they're sleeping. And so when we are where we're supposed to be and we are

postured the way we should be, not only should we have a rest in our spirit, but God comes to fight for us. The battle belongs to the Lord. And so we do our part but we know that if there's victory, if the battle is going to be won, as Isaiah 48:35 says, it's because "The Lord is there." And

when each one of the tribes was in their place, the Lord was there.

So you keep your eyes open. You pray. You intercede. You stand in the gap. But understand and know that when we are where God wants us to be, victory is assured because the Lord is there. That's exciting to me.

God has an ideal plan. God is a God of plan, purpose and destiny.

Gatekeepers Declare the Gospel

Ezekiel 3 describes part of the vision that Ezekiel received. Much of this has end-time implications and so does the layout of the tribes. We'll take a look at that because I believe that we are living in the end times. And as the church of the Lord Jesus Christ, this has implications for what we're supposed to be doing in our own lives.

Ezekiel 3:16 says, "At the end of seven days, the word of the Lord came to me"—this is part of Ezekiel's commission—"saying, 'Son of man, I have appointed you a watchman to the house of Israel; whenever you hear a word from My mouth, warn them from Me. When I say to the wicked, 'You will surely die,' and you do not warn him or speak out to warn the wicked from his wicked way that he may live, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at your hand. Yet if you have warned the wicked and he does not turn from his wickedness or from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you shall have delivered yourself.'" (NASB)

In other words, we need to open our mouths and declare the full mystery of the gospel. We need to warn people and let them know that there is a heaven and a hell, that there is an eternity standing before them—and before us. That evangelism is part of our responsibility and one of the pillars of Teen Challenge. We can't get so wrapped up in trying to take care of the program that we forget we have to reach out, to look out in our gatekeeper responsibility, and we have to warn all the people in our sphere of influence about the mystery of the gospel and about Jesus coming back again, and how they need to get ready and have their robes washed in the blood of the Lamb.

So this is part of our gatekeeper responsibility. Not only are we to be there to watch over the sheep and to guard the sheep and to protect the sheep, but we also have a responsibility to reach out to those who are lost and let them know

about the salvation that has been made free and available to them through the Lord Jesus Christ.

As mentioned in Ezekiel 48, the land wasn't laid out like this anytime in history. When you look at the history of Israel, the way the land and tribes were laid out, it wasn't the same as the initial apportionment that Moses gave. So it's interesting that Ezekiel would give out this layout. Then when you look in the book of Revelation, it talks about the 12 tribes and they were laid out differently there. This is the only place that they're laid out like this. And I believe that they're laid out this way for the specific purpose of a message that God wants to bring to the church here in the end times so that we can be prepared, bring in the harvest and fulfill all that God has for us in our time and in our season.

God has an ideal plan. God is a God of plan, purpose and destiny. He doesn't do anything by accident and when God does something, he doesn't just throw things up in the air and hope the pieces of the puzzle come down a certain way. But he plans everything that he does and he lays it out in order because he has a prophetic purpose and a prophetic mandate that he wants to bring about. And as we begin to look in the series following, as we look at all the 12 tribes of Israel, I believe that God is going to give us some keys as to why things may have been laid out this way so that we would be able to fully understand what God's role is for us in the end-time move of the spirit of God and also what is the overarching plan and purpose of God through the church.

There is Power in Unity

Each tribe, of course, was from the family of Jacob's sons. These 12 brothers were supposed to love each other and they were supposed to support each other. How many of you know that didn't always occur? They fought with each other. They competed with each other. They were always not doing exactly what they were supposed to.

Psalms 133 talks about the power of unity and the tribes did not always move in unity. But at Teen Challenge Southern California, we operate in unity and I'm honored to serve with you because I see, as our territory is laid out in Teen Challenge Southern California, everybody here supports one another. We're not competing with each other. We're warring against the devil and when we walk forward in the power of unity, nothing can stand against the kingdom of God.

Psalms 133 says, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious oil upon the head, coming down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard, coming down upon the edge of his robes. It is like the dew of Hermon, coming down upon the mountains of Zion; for there the Lord commanded the blessing—life evermore." (NASB)

Again, Ezekiel 48 says, "The Lord is there." Here in Psalm 133, it says that he "commanded the blessing—life evermore." Again, the Lord is there. This is God saying, "I am in the midst. When you are watchmen on the wall where I have commanded and ordained you to be, when you walk in unity with one another, praying for one another, loving one another, serving one another, being faithful to preach the gospel and demonstrate the Word of God in your part of the kingdom," he says, "I am there and I command my blessing, even life forevermore."

What is God's blessing? God's blessing is his financial provision. God's blessing is his peace. God's blessing is his anointing. God's blessing is his power.

And when he gives us the power of the Holy Spirit, Teen Challenge gives birth in the revival fires of the Holy Ghost. And if we ever lose that place, if we step back from that place, we are no longer being faithful in our watchman role because as watchmen on the wall, we have to continually challenge people that they need to be filled with the Holy Ghost. That this is "Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit," says the Lord." (Zachariah 4:6, NASB) We have to continually stand upon what the foundation, upon what the mission of Teen Challenge is all about—and it's about the power of the Holy Spirit, the proclamation of the word of God and living out that word on a day-to-day basis in a spirit of humility. And then we are fulfilling our responsibility.

So the tribes were supposed to support each other. They didn't always do that. From the beginning, they argued with each other, they fought, there were wars between the tribes. Israel became a very divided nation and that was not what God wanted. That was not what he had ordained.

But the way this land was laid out no tribe would have worse land than the other. All of them had access to water. All of them had trade routes. God thought about all of it. Each one of them had an equal share of land. No tribe could pretend to be greater than another. Each tribe's lands reached across the whole country from East to West. As you know, the land of Israel is pretty narrow and small. But each tribe had access from East to West across the entire country. The tribes were all next to each other. They were to be friends. They were to enjoy fellowship with one another and to support each other. And that's what God has called us to be. And right in the middle of the tribes was the Temple so that everybody could come to seek the Lord there and it speaks of God being in the middle and in the center of his people.

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Gatekeepers Need to Focus on God

Psalm 37:4 says if we delight ourselves in the Lord, he will give us the desires of our heart. To delight yourself in the Lord means to keep him at the center of what you're doing. And so the Temple area was right in the center of all of the tribes and it was God's way of saying, "I must be the focal point. I must be the center of your heart and your attention." He says in Matthew 6:33 that if you seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, all the things that you need will be added to you, gatekeepers—to those who are on the gates of the tribes.

But if anytime we take our eyes off the Lord and we start looking even at the ministry itself and we start looking at our success—you know that we're coming up on the 50th anniversary—if we start looking at anything and we start congratulating ourselves and we get our sight off of the Lord, who is the center of it all, then we will begin to move away from being real watchmen on the wall and we'll start watching each other and when we start watching each other, we'll start finding fault with each other. When we start watching each other, we'll start having a fleshly competition that will begin to arise. When we start watching each other, then we are not watching the most important thing and that is the Lord Jesus Christ.

Remember the story of Mary and Martha. Martha was busy about many things so you would think she's being a good gatekeeper. Gatekeepers are very busy people. You've got to watch. Whatever comes into the city is whatever you allowed. Whatever goes out is what you allowed. So it's a very busy responsibility to be a gatekeeper. You're always watching. You're always doing stuff. And Martha was busy about many things but Mary chose the good part. She sat at Jesus' feet and learned of him, and Jesus said, "This will not be taken from her." So it's okay for us to be like Martha and to be busy about our gatekeeper responsibilities but in our hearts we must

always have a posture that the Lord is there, that God is the one who commands the blessing and that we must listen to the King of Kings and the Lord

of Lords, to receive instruction from him, to receive guidance from the Holy Spirit so that we are able to be effective in the work that God has called us to do.

We cannot allow ourselves to get to a place where we say, "Well, I've been a gatekeeper for a while so I know how to do this," and just start going through things from memory. But we must be those who continually, as Paul said in Philippians 3:12, I want to apprehend him that has apprehended me (KJV). So we have to keep straining after the Lord. That's how

we keep him at the center of our responsibilities as gatekeepers—we have to keep straining after the Lord. Don't get to a place where you become complacent and put it on automatic because you know how to do something. I think our success sometimes can spoil us. The worst thing that can happen to us can be that we have success because we start congratulating ourselves and we come down from the wall and we start inspecting what's around us and say, "Boy, we're doing a pretty good job!" instead of looking at that stuff. And when we're doing that, we're leaving a door of access open for the devil.

Ephesians 4:27 says to leave no door of access open to the enemy. When we start looking around and inspecting the vineyard and start congratulating ourselves, the enemy is going to slip in and get in the way. So we need to be very careful that we continue to keep our eyes upon the Lord. Keep him at the center of what you're doing.

In the layout of the city in Revelation, it's different—in there, there was no need for a temple because Jesus was the center. But for the Jewish people, there needed to be a temple. For us in the church age, we don't need a temple because we are living in eternity now. The word of God says we're seated in heavenly places in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2:6) and Jesus comes to live inside of us so the temple is our earthen vessels. Therefore, we need to be entertaining Jesus like we're going to be entertaining him in heaven—because he's the center of the church. Jesus is the head of the church and all power and authority has been given unto him and we are to continue to look to him. So it's a little bit different for us in the church age. We're not so much concerned with all the animal sacrifices. The temple had to be set up in an arranged way so there was land nearby for the animals to graze in while they were waiting to be slaughtered. So we don't need all of that because the Lamb of God has been slain for us once and for all.

So at the center of it must be our heart. It's the kingdoms of our heart that have to continually be brought under subjection to the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords.

The New Jerusalem is for Every People of Every Nation

Now the names of the gates may tell who uses the gates, who lives in that part of the city. Every tribe was there, every tribe has a place, every tribe has a gate and of course the city has a new name, which is Jehovah Shama, which means "the Lord is there." But I think the implication of the layout of the tribes will speak to us in our coming sessions together and I'm looking

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forward to getting into these and talking about what all those tribes meant, the name of the tribe, some of the surroundings of the tribe. Because I believe it tells us some of the things that God wants to reveal to us as the people of God here in the last days.

Also, in the vision that John had, the city of New Jerusalem was a thousand times larger and a thousand times higher. It was much bigger than the land that was being apportioned to the 12 tribes. We'll take a look at some of those things as we move forward.

Also, in Ezekiel, the city was for the Israelites only but foreigners could live among them. But in the New Jerusalem, it's for every people of every nation. And for us today, it's for every people and every nation.

Psalm 2:8 says, "Ask me for the nations and I will give them to you as an inheritance." So I believe that part of the gatekeeper responsibilities of Teen Challenge Southern California is not only to take care of the area where God has apportioned us, but also to have an eye for the world because he says, "Ask me for the nations." So not only are we supposed to take care of Bakersfield, San Diego, Los Angeles, Ventura, Riverside, and Orange County, but we have to have an eye for the nations. I think sometimes we dream too small and our dream is not big enough for what God has for us.

When God prophesies and he speaks something, there's always a local, immediate fulfillment of the word, and then there are other fulfillments of the word that come later on. Because when you think about it, Acts 2:17 talks about the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. It says, "Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy." How many of you know that the Holy Spirit wasn't just poured out on the day of Pentecost but he's still being poured out today? So that was a local fulfillment of the word of God that had been prophesied in Joel and Amos, but there's always further fulfillment of God's word in succeeding generations because God is a God of the generations. And so, just as the Holy Spirit is being poured out, just as he was poured out on the Day of Pentecost, I believe there is still fulfillment of what God spoke when the priestly blessing came from Jacob over his children.

Gatekeepers Are Needed in the End Times

I believe studying these tribes is important for us, because it does have end times implications. Genesis 49:1–2 says, "Then Jacob summoned his sons and said, 'Assemble yourselves that I may tell you what will befall you in the days to come. Gather together and hear, O sons of Jacob, and listen to Israel your father.'" (NASB) One translation says that when he will tell you what is to come in the days, it says, "I will tell you what will befall you in the last days." (KJV) So I believe that there is a fulfillment that has happened with the children of Israel through

the tribes that was fulfilled through Simeon and Joseph and all of the sons, but I believe that there is further fulfillment that will be fulfilled in eternity.

I also believe that there are some implications for the church in our dispensation of time that God wants to fulfill. This was the first prophecy from a man in the Bible. Of course, God prophesied in Genesis when Adam and Eve fell in the garden and he said that there's going to be one who's going to be born of a woman, but this is the first recorded prophecy in the Bible from a man. This prophecy was when Jacob began to prophesy over his sons and set the destiny and the course for their future. And when you look at the law of first mentions, I believe that there's something in here about this being the first prophecy. In fact, Jesus said that the entire volume of the book speaks of him and the spirit of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy, so I believe that there is prophetic relevance for us today from what was spoken in this very first prophecy from a man that's recorded in Genesis.

Then you look at Ezekiel and how he talked about the tribes. Why would God include that in Ezekiel, in that very prophetic end times book? Because I believe that there's greater fulfillment that God wants to bring in the church age and then we will see the ultimate fulfillment when we all stand before the Lord in heaven. Because not only in heaven do they have all of the tribes' names on the gates, but the foundation has the apostles' names on it. The tribes' names are on the gates of the city in New Jerusalem, and we're all looking forward to going there someday. But Ephesians 2:20 says that the foundation of the church is the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. So I believe in these last days that there is an apostolic and prophetic dimension that God is releasing in the church that has

to do with the foundation that we are to stand on so that we can fulfill our role as watchmen on the

wall. So this is a season that I believe God is really doing some things in the prophetic and in the apostolic.

Ephesians 2:19–20 says, "So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone," or the center of attention, the one who bears all the weight, "in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit." (NASB)

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And so our watchmen-on-the-wall role as we are laid out according to God's order, God's purpose, God's destiny and God's design, is so that we would be built together in a spirit of unity as a dwelling place for the spirit of God. And so when you look in Revelation, it talks about the spirit of God, about the foundation of the apostles. You have all the tribes there. I believe there is an apostolic and prophetic foundation that God has for us. Even in the ministry of Teen Challenge, there was an apostolic call that came to David Wilkerson to go to New

York City to see if he could make a difference in the lives of those gang members that he read about in the magazine. And so "apostle" just means "sent one." So he was sent by God. We still are being those who are sent by God in our generation and that apostolic, prophetic anointing that is the undergirding of what Teen Challenge is, I believe God is going to bring more and more into the forefront as we are faithful as watchmen on the wall in our generation.

