

GOD'S WATCHMEN (1)

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Who a watchman is can be understood by what he does. Elements which characterize a watchman are simple and straight forward: a watchman is to **“look at”** or **“keep his eyes on”** or **“look out for”** or **“be on guard over”**. The characteristic roles of a watchman compel him to “keep awake” all night. The whole essence of his roles will be understood to offer protection by either alerting or fighting or both. A watchman is motivated to so become, either due to personal drive for service or because he is moved by compassion otherwise he is under a mandate.

From the scriptural perspective the Jews had their typical night divided into 3 watches of 4 hours each but the Romans taught them later to divide a typical night into 4 watches of 3 hours each. The duty of a Jewish watchman was to ANNOUNCE or PROCLAIM the end of one watch and the beginning of another.

God's watchmen are seen to perform all the expected functions of a typical watchman but beyond this they act as shepherds, they wear the shoes of prophets, they are intercessors for men but God's spokesmen and they wield God's instrument for justice and for judgement. The Psalmist in Ps119 vs. 147-148 said, **“I prevented the dawning of the morning, and cried: I hoped in thy word. Mine eyes prevent the night watches, that I might meditate in thy word”**. A constant or what can be called habitual attitude of the Psalmist is here conveyed: **“I prevented the dawning of the morning... mine eyes prevent the night watches”**. This is to suggest that the Psalmist kept appointment with God in the place of prayers and the study of the word and this he does during the night watches. The night watches span between 6pm and 6am. It was usual with the Psalmist to lay awake in the night or rise long before dawn to come into and stay in God's presence. It is instructive to note that the Psalmist is here informing of what is wisest for watchmen, nay God's watchmen, to do in the night.

The night is a critical moment. The night is a moment of darkness, a time of confusion, a time of stark ignorance. The night conveys the thought of times when the direction as to which way to follow, what to do or how to do is very bleak, indeed dreary. It also connotes times of sickness, poverty, depression and degradation. It conveys the idea of a sense of loss. It also addresses itself to moment of apostasy. Desolations, troublous times of woes and wars and calamities and disasters can all be understood to contribute to or constitute a night season.

The night will also point to a time to change direction, a time of transition or a period, which indicates a phase change. In any circumstance of the night, the Psalmist counsels for God's watchmen to stay in God's presence in the place of (1) prayer and (2) the study of God's word. This is because, **“the entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple”**.

Incidentally the night is also bedevilled with the activities of the **“nighthawks”**. These are demonic activities that promise help for the confused humanity in the moment of darkness and confusion. Humanity longs for help in two broad ways in moment of darkness. It is either that there is a deep cry for deliverance from pain, sickness, some adversity or desolation; humanity on the other hand may yearn deeply to satisfy the spiritual longing of his soul.

In either of these two broad ways in which humanity cries for help, the greater majority may have the tendency to fall prey to the **“nighthawks”** due to ignorance or lack of sense of direction or simply because of faulty sense of sight. This is all because humanity has to handle the crises

of the night. God said, **“and these are they which ye shall have in abomination among the fowls; they shall not be eaten, they are an abomination.... the owl, and the nighthawk, and the cuckow, and the hawk after his kind...”**

(Lev 11 vs. 16; Deut 14 vs. 15). The reason for God’s counsel here is simple. These birds have ability to see in the night. They are humans who by reason of their trafficking in demonic activities have extraneous and extrasensory ability to perceive events or situations or circumstances in the world of spirits. God said such **“fowls”** should not be eaten. They are an abomination. This is simply to say that we should have nothing to do with men and women who use means, other than God’s through the instrument of His Son Jesus Christ, to serve human spiritual needs.

For God’s people not to fall prey to the birds of the night that is, men and women who pry into the world of spirits using demonic means and abilities, in moment of darkness, the Psalmist counsels that the antidote is for God’s people, God’s watchmen to be in God’s presence to watch unto prayers and to enquire in his mind through His word. **“One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple”**. (Ps 27vs.4). As we behold the face of God in His palace (temple), we become enlightened by the light of His Holy Spirit in the place of prayers made active and effective by the enablement of His presence and of His Spirit; in this way we will not only save our souls but God’s people from the snare of the night hawks.

“Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hold thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be over past... my soul trusteth in thee: yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be over past” (Is 26vs 20; Ps 57vs1). Here two prophets of God seem to be conversing or talking across. Isaiah breathing God’s wise counsel admonished for God’s people to enter into their chambers and shut the doors about them in the time of indignation, in the time of the night. The Psalmist in prophetic response affirmed that the chambers of God’s people in the time of calamities consist in God’s presence and this place of God’s abiding presence, is indeed the refuge that God’s people have in the time of calamities, in the night season, the time of utter darkness. **“My soul trusteth in thee: yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge until...”** Further in Ps 91vs 1-2 he said, **“He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most high shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress. My God, in him will I trust”**. The secret place of the most high speaks of the covering that God offers and the hiding that this place constitutes for us. The shadow of the Almighty is the protection and the safety we receive in the place of God’s presence in the moment or time of crises, in the hour of darkness when we refuse to sleep but stay awake as God’s watchmen.

The angel Gabriel has just delivered the message concerning the birth of Jesus to Mary. Two questions must have arisen in the mind of Mary: the first is how will such a miraculous conception come about **“seeing I know not a man?”**

The second is, if such a miraculous conception takes place without me knowing a man, how will I handle the crises and the confusion that may likely follow against the back drop of the law of Moses in such matters of conceiving outside of wedlock and almost knowing the zeal with which

my people will likely deal with the issue since they can really act with zeal without knowledge? The two-fold question was answered with a note of finality: **“the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that Holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God”**. The two-fold answer: the overshadowing to be provided by the power of the Highest was to: (1) Give power to conceive and (2) offer protection and safety in respect of the crises that might follow. Isaiah said, **“arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee for, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee,”** (Is.60vs.1-2).

When Isaiah prophesied concerning the moment of darkness that would come upon the earth and the gross darkness that would cover the people, he was speaking about the misery, destruction, death, ignorance, sorrow, wickedness, obscurity, adversity, the desolation and the helplessness that would overpower the world. He prophesied concerning a time when man will lose control and grip. At such a time, the only promise of light and glory is in the presence of God. A people of his presence! To be in a position to be able to offer true answer to what will be growing need of humanity or to have insight to God’s mind for his Church in a present time frame can only be as a people find expression under the over –shadowing influence of his presence.

It takes God’s watchmen to be a people of light for them to be in a position to distinctly discern the beginning and the end of the watch of a night. It is a people of light that can have insight into divine timings for divine events. **“For there shall be a day, that the watchman upon the mount Ephraim shall cry, arise ye, and let us go up to Zion unto the Lord our God,”** (Jer.31vs.36). It is the watchman who watches upon mount Ephraim that is in a position to discern when to cry or rather to urge God’s people to **“arise ye, and let us go up to Zion”**. The cry of the watchman here is very distinct. It is to provoke God’s people to: (1) arise and (2) go up. To arise will seem to be an address or a command to a people who either have been sitting in the place of lethargy or completely asleep in apostasy or in complete ignorance of God’s mind, purpose, will or counsel.

The watchman who has been watching from the vantage point that the mountain position offers, knows precisely by the instrumentality of the Spirit of God, the very time when God’s people who have been asleep or sitting in dejection or wary by reason of spiritual stagnancy, ought to **“arise”** and **“go up to Zion”**. The prophetic wisdom here expressed is to suggest that there is a time when God’s people will arise from a general platform where they have been finding spiritual expression and **“ascend”** or **“climb”** or **“go up”** to Zion. Zion is the city of the King. Zion is the place of the King’s presence. In the King’s presence we behold the King’s glory and radiance. In the King’s presence we are transformed to the King’s image. In the King’s presence we have insight to the inner workings of the King’s Kingdom. From here flows righteousness, wisdom, power, authority, boldness, confidence, certainty, light, understanding, skill and accurate knowledge of the Son of God.

Here the voice of the watchman urging to **“arise”** and **“go up”** is a prophetic voice to God’s people to change their song and change their taste and aspire higher for higher things---things that bother on matters of high calling in Christ Jesus.

When the Lord Jesus Christ said in Lk21vs25-26 concerning signs to be seen in the sun, **“and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; man’s hearts failing them for fear...”** in vs. 28 he said emphatically, **“and when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh,”** He spoke earlier in vs. 20-23 on a two-fold prophetic application when he said, **“and when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then let them which are in Judea FLEE TO THE MOUNTAINS; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter there into. But woe unto THEM THAT ARE WITH CHILD, AND TO THEM THAT GIVE SUCK, in those days! For there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people.”** Matthew complementing Luke’s account added, **“let him which is on the housetop not come down to take anything out of his house...”** (Matt.24vs.17-18). The fact of the matter is that on a second level of prophetic application, the hour of crises, the time of God’s vengeance, the moment of universal darkness is the time when (1) the redemption of God’s people draws nearer than ever (2) God’s people are expected to flee from Judea plain land into the mountains (3) those on the housetop of spiritual experience should not venture to come down to Judea’s plain of spiritual infancy. This is because a terrible time awaits those that are with spiritual babies (those who give suck) or those who are with child or spiritual infants. There is a solemn indictment unto shepherds-ministers who are incubators for producing spiritual imbeciles by reason of laziness to feed God’s people with mature word that is, able to save their souls. Great danger also awaits Christians who have continued to enjoy their milk teeth in their spiritual dwarfness because it is not in them to stir themselves beyond the rudiments of Christian experience that starts and end in what material benefits can be received from God.

Hear Paul indict spiritual babies, **“for every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.”** Prophet Isaiah agreeing with Paul said, **“Whom shall he teach knowledge? And whom shall he make to understand doctrine? Them that are already WEANED FROM THE MILK, and those who have been DRAWN FROM THE BREASTS”**, (Is. 28vs29). Spiritual infancy can neither cope with nor be in a position to handle the spiritual challenges that are ahead. Jeremiah had this insight when he proclaimed, **“If thou hast run with footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses? And if in the land of peace, wherein thou trustedst, they wearied thee, then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?”**(Jer.12vs.5). The fact is that a great many good people of God are so readily wearied and weighed down by elemental things. They have a tendency to feel carried away by things that are meant for spiritual infants that they have forgotten to get prepared for the hour of darkness!

“For there shall be a day, that the watchman upon the mount Ephraim shall cry arise ye, and let us go up to Zion unto the Lord our God.” (Jer. 31vs 6). Faithful watchmen are able to discern the timing for God’s people to move forward and they do not feel floppy in encouraging or urging God’s people when it is time for them to move forward. Watchmen can only be counted upon to alert God’s people to proceed beyond Mount Seir, the place of spiritual journey in a circle. For thirty and eight years, the Church in the wilderness ate one constant food. It was manna. It was angels’ food! It was miracle food! It gave them miracles: their sandals, their garments, their bodies; all were supernaturally sustained. Call it the earnest of resurrection

power! But as good as that experience was, the Church needed to press into Canaan. Theirs was the corn of Canaan! Theirs were the milk and the honey of Canaan. The irony was that instead for the Church in the wilderness to desire the food that awaited them in the land of promise, they rather would consider the fruits in Egypt as serving a better purpose for their need. While the gains and the benefits provided by the manna were always to be retained there was need to deeply yearn and long for that which bother on a higher constitution. Hosea speaking of God's people said, **"the iniquity of Ephraim is bound up; his sin is hid. The sorrows of a travailing woman shall come upon him: he is an unwise son; for HE SHOULD NOT STAY LONG IN THE PLACE OF THE BREAKING FORTH OF CHILDREN:"**

(Hos.13vs 12-13). The Lord Jesus Christ said, **" woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days.."** (Lk. 21vs 23).

The lesson is in not over staying in the place of raising spiritual infants. True watchmen are to produce men and women who are morally sound, spiritually alert and mentally stable and who are not only able to sustain their present spiritual experience, but are able to make further spiritual progress on the path of the mark of the high Calling of God in Christ Jesus, on their own.

Watchmen have prophetic eyes to see into God's mind for God's people. "For thus hath the Lord said unto me, Go, set a watchman, let him declare what he seeth. The burden of Dumah. He calleth to me out of Seir, Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night? The watchman said, the morning cometh, and also the night: if ye will enquire, enquire ye: return, come"

(Is 21 vs. 6, 11-12). Watchmen have a great responsibility under God. They are to be in a position to obtain the mind of God for the people and convey the same. They are custodians of God's information. The Spiritual state of being of a spiritual people depends a lot on the soundness and wholeness and healthiness of the office of the watchmen. When spiritual people appear to de-emphasise their place or fail in their primary role as God's watchmen, calamity looms!

Watchmen cannot but see clearly and distinctly and must be able to speak with distinct sound of the trumpet **"for if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?"**(1 Cor.14vs 8). Watchmen are priests and their eyes must not be blind neither must their vision be blurred nor their heavens clogged else woe betides the people over whom they are shepherd - watchmen! **"Watchman, what of the night? The morning cometh, and also the night."**The watchmen dare not fall asleep. If he does, the enemy's devastation of the city is certain. For **"the thief (enemy) comes not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy,"** (John 10vs10).

It is a dangerous act of gross irresponsibility for |God's watchmen to be asleep. The quality of the spiritual life of God's Church tells whether His shepherd-watchmen are either asleep or awake. The spiritual diet available to God's people and the general spiritual menu for which a people yearn, speaks a whole story of where the shepherd-watchmen stand.

Watchmen as God's shepherds, SEE and discern wolves, warn the sheep and save the sheep the embarrassment of a plundering and a devastation. The Lord lending weight to this assertion said, **"I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf**

coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth; and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.” (John 10vs 11-12). While the general understanding of this Scriptures is to be retained, the fact also remains that an hireling-Shepherd is a watchman who has failed to be responsible to his spiritual roles. The understanding does not suggest that the hireling- watchman does not know what his responsibility is, but knowing it, he chose to shirk and abandon his responsibility for his selfish reasons. What protection is offered the sheep against the day of the wolf consists in the spiritual food with which a spiritual people have been fed. Many good people of God are not well prepared for the evil day. They do not have enough inside themselves to cause them to stand! Paul counselled, **“take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore...”** (Eph.6vs.13ff). The whole essence in a Christian journey is for individual Christians to be able to stand spiritually. A Christian journey is not designed for men and women to be incapable of finding independent spiritual expression in God. The success of true shepherd-watchmen is measured not in quantitative terms with respect to the sheep over which they are shepherd-watchmen but it is by every means qualitative. What measure of life of the master is successfully imparted into the sheep becomes the true measure at the end of the day. If we rightly peruse of Eph 4.vs13-14, we shall be able to come to the following conclusions: that God expects us to (1) all come in the unity of the faith of the Son of God (2) all come to the unity of the knowledge of the Son of God (3) all come unto a perfect man (4) all come unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ and (5) henceforth be no more children. The word **“come”** as used in Eph 4. vs.13 means to **“arrive at”** or **“attain to”**. A shepherd-watchman who fails to create in the sheep, the awareness of the divine expectation for the place of attainment for each sheep and diligently create in the sheep the healthy hunger for this place of attainment as will be evident in the daily living and aspiration of the sheep, is a total, nay, a dismal failure. A similar burden expressed by Ezekiel puts the thought this way, **“there is a conspiracy of her Prophets in the midst thereof, a roaring lion ravening the prey; they have devoured souls; they have taken the treasure and precious things; they have made her many widows in the midst thereof. Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned mine holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they shewed difference between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from my Sabbaths, and I am profaned among them. Her princes in the midst thereof are like wolves ravening the prey, to shed blood, and to destroy souls, to get dishonest gain.”** (Ez 22.vs 25-27). This is interesting! Watchmen-princes shedding blood to destroy souls all to get dishonest gain! To shed blood is simple. The life of the flesh is in the blood!

When a Christian life is made to famish or is drained due to inadequate spiritual nourishment, it is like draining the physical blood that sustains biological life and once the “life” is shed, the soul is destroyed. To get dishonest gain, all need be done is keep a people perpetually in a state of spiritual impoverishment or sustain a good level of spiritual ignorance or succeed in keeping the people away from knowing what is their right which they can stand to obtain directly and independent of you. As a watchman-prince keeps directing the sheep’s attention to himself as the miracle worker or a major factor or a constant in the process of obtaining their spiritual sustenance, all glory and praise and all gains from the exploits are bound to return to the pot rather than the potter. How we need to keep learning from the master’s example of humility,

meekness and above all his love for the sheep, which was the motivation to lay his life for the sheep.

God's watchmen are to lay their lives. The vocation of the watchmen put their lives in danger. But this is a matter of the will. It is a matter of devotion. It is a matter of sacrificial love for the city over which they have a mandate to watch. Jesus said, **"I am the good shepherd....and I lay down my life for the sheep. Therefore doth my father love me, because I lay down my life... no man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself...."**(John 10 vs 14, 15, 17-18). Paul wrote, **"for the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach"**(Heb 13 vs 11-13). Jesus further admonished when he said, **"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it. For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away?"** (Lk 9 vs 23-25). To be God's watchmen is to be willing to lay down personal lives as an act of a willing offering. And for the offering to be acceptable its body will be "burned" without the camp. It takes a humbling. It involves a laying down. It addresses itself to accepting reproach. It is to follow in the master's step on a daily basis. The watchman's life is a way of the cross. A watchman must carry a cross for the cross is his trademark. The cross is not sickness or infirmity. The cross has nothing to do with suffering elemental oppression. The cross has everything to do with willing submissiveness to the master's daily instructions at the expense of personal will and desires and aspirations. The true test is in not struggling with the master's will when it is in conflict with ours. The cross enables the carrier to prefer the eternal glory to all the riches and the glories of the kingdoms of this world. The cross envisions a city that has foundations and whose builder and maker is God and the hope of this empowers the carrier to detest building a material city or a material kingdom for himself because the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdom of our God and of His Christ.

It is the cross that gives power to and enables the watchmen to **"lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing when the Lord shall bring again Zion...sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem...how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him.... That saith unto Zion, thy God reigneth!"** (Is 52 vs 8, 9, 7). The labour of the watchmen is to see the restoration of Zion—the city of the king. Their desire lies in beholding the beauty and the glory of the king in His city. Their singular ambition is the restoration of the waste places of Jerusalem.

Their eyes are single. They have singleness of purpose. They are undistracted. They have come to realise that here they have no continuing city, but seek one to come.

God's watchmen are spiritual eunuchs. Eunuchs are **"shepherds"** over the king's wives. They watch over and care for the wives of the monarchs. They had no right to touch any of the women over whom they watch. They are faithful to their master. They go about their vocation with a sense of duty. They stand in jeopardy of their lives if they do not properly feed the king's wives. In Mt 19 vs. 12, Jesus said, **"for there are some eunuchs, which are so born from their mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake."** One strong characteristic of the eunuch is his inability to reproduce. This

counts for him because there is integrity. His state ensures that he will not interfere with the women over whom he watches and for whom he cares. God's watchmen recognise that their appointment and responsibility bear on taking care of the bride of the master. Theirs is to prepare the bride and assist her to be properly dressed to appeal to her lover-husband- master-Lord. The eunuch-watchmen are not to defraud their master in the matter of his bride. They are not to underfeed the bride neither are they to deprive the bride of that which belongs to her; they are not to **"milk the bride dry"** as they devour the widows houses in the over-emphasis of giving to the advantage of the watchmen-shepherd and the disadvantage of the flock-bride. The watchmen-shepherd's lot is total consecration and dutiful dedication to and reverential love for their master's cause to their Lord's glory. Whatever the relationship is between the watchmen-shepherd and the bride-flock can only be to instruct in the way of righteousness and never for selfish reasons, covetousness or filthy lucre. If the watchmen –shepherds abide faithful in their calling, they have their reward. **"For thus saith the Lord unto the eunuchs that keep my Sabbaths, and choose the things that please me, and take hold of my covenant; even unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters: I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off,"** (Is 56 vs. 4-5) .The Lord gives to His watchmen pure, holy and undefiled zeal, which is according to knowledge.

Watchmen are great intercessors. Intercessors are God's spokesmen and men's advocates. God told the man Ezekiel, **"Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me"**, (Ez. 3 vs. 17). When there is a break down or a collapse of law and order that guides the life of God's people the role of a watchman becomes very critical. For God to be just there must be some bridge between Him and His people to allow for divine warning to point the people to the need of repentance. There has to be some form of arrangement for Him to reach His people however weak the arrangement may seem to be. There has to be a link, a human link between God and the people; the place of a spokesman for God is very crucial. When divine laws are violated, either of two things is possible. The enemy may exploit the situation to the people's disadvantage. On the other hand, God may have a justification to chasten His people back to line. In extreme situations of a total collapse, the two possibilities may result. Before the situations, which are capable of exposing God's people to conditions of judgement or of enemy's attack, God's spokesmen appear on the scene. In Ezekiel, God said, **"when I said unto the wicked, thou shalt surely die, and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand"** (Ez.3 vs. 18). The watchman-prophet here is God's appointed spokesman to warn of impending danger .The failure of the watchman is the calamity of a nation of God. The watchman that is thus used of God cannot but stand before the people as an example of justice and righteousness for the people to follow. Watchmen are not just to stand over the people in judgement to condemnation; they are themselves to be looked at as symbols of the message they deliver to the people. It is their faithfully standing to play their symbolic role which confers on them boldness; **"the righteous are bold as a lion"**. Righteousness confers boldness. Faithfulness in diligently walking in obedience in accordance with the divine assignment, which rests on a watchman's shoulder, will confer boldness on him. An unfaithful watchman is an unfaithful witness and an unfaithful witness is a weak judge; God's spokesman who is unfaithful has lost the cutting edge of his instrument of rule. **"He that**

ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God ...he shall be as the light of the morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain” (IISam.23vs. 3-4). A faithful spokesman for God becomes as a light in the morning! He speaks with clarity and his speech is not shrouded in deceit neither is it veiled. The right impact is also made on the people. The stateliness imposed by faithfulness is as the glory, which surrounds a tender grass after rain. Faithfulness in the ministry of God ‘s watchman commands God’s charisma, divine favour, the anointing of his presence which is imposing and able to make straight paths for those whose feet are out of the way.

Watchmen stand in the gap. Watchmen are God ‘s in-built divine arrangement or provision against the self-destruction tendencies in man. **“Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety”** (Prov11vs 14). God said to Ezekiel **“and I sought for a man among them, that should make up the edge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it but I found none”** (Ez. 2vs.30). In Ez.13vs 3-5 He further said, **“woe unto the foolish prophets, that follow their own spirit and have seen nothing. O Israel, thy prophets are like the foxes in the deserts.**

YE HAVE NOT GONE UP INTO THE GAPS, NEITHER MAKE UP THE HEDGE for the house of Israel to stand in the battle in the day of the LORD.” Watchmen are God’s safety valves in the midst of a spiritual people for they hold the hands of God against judgement. They are spiritual interventionists for the people. By reason of their voice they stay God’s wrath; they stop possible destructions. Their mere presence has an imposing, asserting, dousing and neutralising effect on a determined evil. Watchmen are like some chosen men of the tribe of Issachar: the scripture affirms that they have understanding of the times; they know what Israel ought to do. They have the answer. They are God’s standard in the evil day. **“When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him”** (Is59 vs.19). Watchmen can be God’s standard raised to counter the effort of all evil. Moses was God’s standard in Egypt. Daniel was God’s standard in Babylon.

Watchmen are God’s determinant factors over the nations. They are God’s constants by appointment. They are relevant in the destiny of a nation or of a people. God would not allow the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah except as he first related with Abraham over the matter. **“The froward is abomination to the LORD: but his secret is with the righteous”**(Prov.3 vs.32). **“Surely the Lord God will do nothing but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets,”**

(Amos 3 vs. 7). **“The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him and he will show them his covenant”** (Ps 25 vs. 14). They are referred to as **“them that have charge over the city”** In Ez. 9 God said, **“cause THEM THAT HAVE CHARGE OVER THE CITY to draw near even every man with his destroying weapon in his hand. And behold, six men came from the way of the higher gate...”**(Ez9vs.1-2). These men who are pointed to as **“them that have charge over the city”** are God’s watchmen.

When Nebuchadnezzar was to have a visitation of judgement by divine intervention the king himself narrating his dream said, **“this matter is by the decree of THE WATCHERS and the demand by the word of the HOLY ONES to the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men”** (Dan. 4 vs. 17).

God' watchmen, the "watchers" or call them "the holy ones" hold the ace.

The kingly Psalm in Psalm 2 is interesting. A few verses are highlighted here for emphasis.

"Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying, let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. Ask me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shall break them with a rod of iron, thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him,"

(Ps 2 vs. 1-3, 8-9,12) This is a prophetic song which expresses a dimension of the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ through **"they that put their trust in him"**, that is His watchers, His watchmen, His holy ones. They have demonstrable power of the King to break the kings with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel! God's true watchmen wield power; they wield immense authority. They operate a bestowed honour. Hear the Psalmist, "let the saints be joyful in glory:

LET THEM SING ALOUD UPON THEIR BEDS. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a TWO EDGED SWORD in their hand, TO BIND THEIR KINGS WITH CHAINS, and their NOBLES WITH FETTERS OF IRON; TO EXECUTE UPON THEM THE JUDGEMENT WRITTEN: THIS HONOUR HAVE ALL HIS SAINTS," (Ps. 149 vs. 5-9). The Saints here are men and women who have hearts after God and live their every day life by the principles of the full counsels of God's word. They are God's watchmen. They are called several names in the first four verses of Psalm 149. They are the congregation of saints, they are called Israel; they are christened the children of Zion; they are God's people and also the meek who will be beautified with salvation.

God's watchmen are night criers. In Matt.25 vs. 1-13 is an illustrative story that speaks about the kingdom of heaven. The story relates to an event at night. The Virgins are reported to have all slept because it is a situation which presents itself in the night. The nature of the night was such as to be able to bring out three distinct classes of God's people that are in the Church; the Church which is defined by a body of born-again, Christ-like men and women, who keep looking to God daily for continuous divine processes and dealings to bring them to be conformed to the image of His dear Son. Two out of these three classes are called virgins. Further division marks out the wise from the foolish virgins. One common thing to the virgins whether foolish or wise is SLEEP; both slept. Both became lethargic and apostate at night. Both submitted to the overpowering negative forces of the night. They lacked the will and the ability and the commitment it takes to watch in the night. Night watching is not exclusive to a section of God's people but some may be unavailable because they are not willing to pay the price. There is something that marks the third group in Matt.25 distinct from others. They were less visible. They did not appear to play any public role except at the very critical moment. At night this third group knew when the bridegroom was arriving because they have been watching. They refused to sleep when others slept. Nothing was mentioned about **"oil"** in relation to these night criers because it goes without saying that to have watched all night must have required that they have quality "oil" in a ceaseless flow. They were aware that there was the business of buying and selling of oil but they were not involved. At the most critical moment, when all others have slept both those who have sufficient oil and those who have little, those faithful ones who have kept

awake all night cried at midnight, **“behold the bride groom cometh, go ye out to meet him”** (Matt.25 vs.7). In their proclamation those faithful watchmen did not cry, **“let us go out to meet him”** rather it was a cry directed to the virgins, **“go ye out to meet him”!** God’s watchmen can only have effectively performed their **“watchmen”** roles as they are out with Him, in his presence! A watchman cannot afford to get locked up **“inside”**, he will fail in his role because the material comfort of the **“inside”** will also send him into deep **“sleep”**.

Woe betides watchmen who run from the discomfort of the outside to take solace on the inside for he will not only sleep, he will lose his watchman’s equipments to the enemy who like a roaring lion seeks whom to devour.

Watchmen have their place among sons for after they have suffered with him, they also become perfect, stablished, strengthened and settled. **“But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus after ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you”**(1 Pet.5vs10). Paul wrote, **“if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us,”**(Rom 8vs.17-18). He further exhorted when he said, **“for if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection,”** (Rom 6vs5). Writing to Timothy, Paul said, **“I endure all things for the elect’s sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. It is a faithful saying: for if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: if we suffer, we shall also reign with him: If we deny him, he also will deny us”** (IITim.2vs.10-12). To the Corinthian Church he said, **“the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God,”** (1Cor. 1vs18). God’s watchmen must identify with Christ who is their master and pattern in every sense. The way of the watchmen is the way of the cross. If they must follow in His steps, then they must carry their cross and follow Him. He said, **“if any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me,”**(Mt 16 vs. 24). Paul wrote, **“the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God,”** (I Cor 1 vs. 18). God’s watchmen acquaint themselves with the way of the cross. They line up behind the Master. They agree with the word of Peter which says, **“think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy,”** (I Pet 4:12-13). Expressed in another way, God’s watchmen are the **“off-scouring of all things”**. Paul puts it this way, **“we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day,”** (1Cor.4vs.13). Jeremiah had earlier confirmed the same when he wrote, **“thou hast made us as the offscouring and refuse in the midst of the people,”** (Lam. 4 vs. 45). Paul said, **“I am made all things to all men, and this I do for the gospel’s sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you,”** (I Cor 9 vs. 22-23). This is being a God’s watchman. It is a life of total abandonment for the sake of the Master.

“By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth: I sought him, but I found him not. I will rise now, and go about the city in the streets, and in the broad ways. I will seek him whom my soul loveth: I sought him but I found him not. The watchmen that go about the city found me: to whom I said, saw ye him whom my soul loveth? It was but a little that I

passed from them, but I found him whom my soul loveth..." (Sos. 3 vs. 1-4). The Song of Solomon is a song of loves. It is as romantic as it is prophetic. The song is unique in its style. It is referred to as the most excellent song. The entire Book types out a graphic picture of the Lord Jesus Christ and His bride in a most unique way. In chap.3 of the Book as quoted above, we see the unique role of the watchmen. The bride sought for her beloved but found him not. Every effort for intensive search failed. This was in the hour of the night. The contact by this bride with the watchmen that go about the city by night made a radical difference to the story of defeat, shame and failure. For shortly after coming across the watchmen, the bride **"found him whom my soul loveth."** **"It was but a little that I passed from them (the watchmen) but I found him whom my soul loveth"** (Sos.3 vs. 4). The truth is that the bride might not have found her beloved if she had not come in contact with the ministry of the watchmen. The watchmen make all the difference in the night. The watchmen are the hope of the Church in this crucial hour. They point the direction to the people of God. It is clear from the Scriptures that this woman was seeking direction. She needed to discover where and how to find her beloved. This is expressing the state of a people seeking true fellowship and communion with their Lord but the ministry of the Word to lift the people to this place of fellowship is grossly lacking in substance and so the souls of the people are dry, wary and famished, needing to discover the place of true fellowship and communion in the spirit. This is where the ministry of the watchmen become most relevant. Because they are watchmen, they have direction and are capable of guiding a people who have lost their way in the darkness of the night. The watchmen have the prophetic direction for the Church. Their ministry is strategic in pointing the direction to the Church particularly in moments when the Church seems oblivious of a time of change. They also alert the local congregation as to the shift in spiritual emphasis so as to catalyse a spiritual progress according to God's mind for His people.

The uniqueness of the ministry of the watchmen is their custodianship of the truth of Him who appointed them. They have the truth, they speak the truth, they live the truth and they reveal the truth in accordance with the hope of what they have seen; this hope serves the motivation for them to be able to purify themselves from all unholy ambition for the mundane and the inglorious desire for vain glory. What marks them different is that they remain faithful and untempted with evil desires for that which is fading in glory. Their faithfulness puts them in a position to provide the answer to the all-inquisitive mind of the bride for direction to find the beloved. The bride is wary of the comfort of her home. She is no longer satisfied with the material comfort, nothing will satisfy her longing soul but the sight of her beloved. Whoever can provide her with the golden answer as to how to discover her beloved in this midnight is the most desired friend. While she sought for her beloved, she found the watchmen and shortly after, she found her beloved. What a lesson to be learnt from this beautiful woman. Finding her beloved for fellowship and communion is beyond all description. This is evidenced in her soliloquies of Sos.1 vs. 13-15 and Sos.5 vs.10-16.

The picture painted in Sos.5 is uniquely interesting, **"I AM come into my garden, my sister, my spouse; I have gathered my myrrh with my spice; I have eaten my honey comb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk; eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved. I sleep but my heart waketh: it is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying, open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled: for my head is filled with dew and my locks with the drops of the night. I have put off my coat; how shall I put it**

on? I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them? My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door, and my bowels were moved for him. I rose up to open to my beloved; and my hands dropped with myrrh, and my fingers with sweet smelling myrrh, upon the handles of the lock. I opened to my beloved; but my beloved had withdrawn himself, and was gone: my soul failed when he spake: I sought him, but I could not find him; I called him, but he gave me no answer. **THE WATCHMEN THAT WENT ABOUT THE CITY FOUND ME, THEY SMOTE ME, THEY WOUNDED ME; THE KEEPERS OF THE WALLS TOOK AWAY MY VEIL FROM ME**" (Sos.5 vs. 1-7). What a graphic display of romantic Poetry! What a graphic picture of the Church in need of fellowship well painted. The Beloved is here pictured as having in abundance myrrh with spice speaking of the grace, the aroma and the savour of Christ in a unique way: anointing with freshness is also implied. Honey comb with honey speaks of the sweetness of the word of the Beloved, the Word of Truth, and the Word of Christ. Christ said, **"I am the Truth"** (John 14 vs. 6). The wine and the milk project the revelation of the truth that flows from the divine mind. The beloved invited the woman to enjoy fellowship of the spiritual endowments with him. The woman has been introduced to the **"gloriousness"** of these spiritual benefits and has been encouraged to open her door. By the time this bride of Christ is ready to open to her beloved, her beloved has withdrawn himself and is no longer to be found. The bride calls but the beloved gives no answer. What a disappointment! What a gloom! what a groping! Lack of fundamental truth must be responsible for the present predicament of the love lady. She needs the truth, which can set her free. **"You will know the truth, and the truth shall make you free"** (John 8vs. 32). The desperation of the Shulamite can only find answer in the ministry of the watchmen **"that go about the city"**. When she came in contact with these watchmen, their ministry affected her in three unique ways: the ministry of the watchmen smote her; their ministry wounded her; their ministry also took away her veil. This is found in vs. 7 of Sos.Chap.5. Reading between the lines, it will be evident that the Shulamite which types out the church must have been carried away by the visible myrrh that dropped from her hands and the sweet smelling myrrh that dropped from her fingers. But the ministry of the watchmen did not emphasize on the myrrh to the Shulamite, rather it emphasised on the truth. Truth smites! Truth wounds! Truth destroys the veil! The veil is the veil of ignorance and stupidity. The veil is the veil of blindness and of spiritual naivety. The veil is the veil of over-emphasis of the un-important and the total neglect of that which is needful for the glorious salvation, the ultimate purpose of God. The veil is the veil of stagnancy in the place of security for the material and non-provision of adequate security for the eternal.

Paul writing about the veil that was cast on the understanding of the Church in the wilderness said, **"and not as Moses, which put a veil over his face, that the children of Israel could not steadfastly look to the end of that which is abolished: but their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in reading of the old testament; which veil is done away in Christ. But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart. Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away,"** (2Cor 3 vs. 13-16). Paul affirms that the hope that is able to serve as anchor for soul is that which enters beyond the veil, (Heb. 6 vs. 19). It is the watchmen who are able to ride in faith, and power and might in the word of truth, through their ministry, that can mobilise total eradication of ignorance, unbelief, and spiritual blindness of the bride of Christ. When this is achieved, it

then becomes possible for a people to be spiritually lifted into the place of fellowship and communion with the spirit of the Lord. When the ministry of the watchmen fails or is unavailable, a spiritual people continue in darkness. God counts on the watchmen, they are the groom's friends, and they are God's arrangement to take the bride to the Promised Land through their waiting and watching and directional ministry.

In Isaiah 52, the watchmen began to awaken the people of God. **“Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O Zion, put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean. Shake thyself from the dust; arise, and sit down, O Jerusalem: loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion,”** (Is 52 vs. 1-2). The admonition to awake here in Is 52 is an evidence that the people being encouraged to awake have been asleep! **“Awake, Awake; put on thy strength, O Zion.”** What in the first instance must be responsible for the sleep but the loss of strength. When a spiritual people are said to be guilty of loss of strength, what does it imply but that they have been poorly fed spiritually or not been fed at all. It is what is eaten that releases energy in you. When there is in-sufficiency of what is to be eaten or non-availability or non-nourishment of that which is available, what results is lack of spiritual strength, wariness of soul, weariness of the mind, tiredness of spirit, powerlessness and spiritual impoverishment. A poorly fed spiritual people are a powerless people spiritually. **“Awake, awake... put on thy beautiful garments...”** Garments speak of characters. In Gal 5 vs. 19-23, a clear distinction is made between the works of the flesh and the fruits of the Spirit. They are marked characters of two sets of people. A poorly fed, spiritually impoverished people are bound to evidence **“adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envying, murders, drunkenness, revelling, and such like”** (Gal 5 vs. 19-21). Why will not a people manifest the vices, which are supposed to be alien to their culture? It is because as Jeremiah puts it, **“they have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, peace, peace, when there is no peace,”** (Jer. 6 vs.14; 8 vs. 11). What empowers the church is the ministry of the Word. The environment of the Church for one decade has been full of the ministry of the Word that has only healed the hurt of God's people LIGHTLY. This work of **the watchmen** is, to awaken from sleep those who have been overcome by the forces of the night of ignorance, spiritual powerlessness, weariness of the soul and all forms of spiritual decay.

When the genuine ministry of the watchmen is available, we are to be surrounded by a people of power who evidence or manifest the beautiful garments or character of **“love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance”** (Gal. 5vs.22-23). **“Awake, awake...put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city..”** Beautiful garments no doubt relate to holiness and holiness is here evidenced to be the culture of a people christened “Jerusalem” What a passionate call to a people who appeared to have abandoned their culture of holiness and reverence. A people who seem to have willed away or mortgaged their sole birthright. **“Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people! Oh that I had in the wilderness a lodging place of wayfaring men; that I might leave my people, and go from them!”** (Jer. 9 vs.1-2).

“Jerusalem hath grievously sinned; therefore she is removed: all that honour her despise her, because they have seen her nakedness; yea she sigheth, and turneth backward. HER FILTHINESS IS IN HER SKIRTS,” (Lam. 1 vs. 8-9). The Church culture was built on the foundation of holiness, on reverence and on the fear of God. That was why it was not possible for Ananias and his wife Sapphira to have escaped being indicted. Today we have many in the Church who rank worse than Ananias and Sapphira. This is due to the present state of the church. Somebody asked, where is the God of Elijah? But the issue is, where are the Elijahs of God? Where are God’s watchmen? Where are men and women who will look beyond their denominational barriers and join themselves to the Lord? Where are men and women who will refuse to be bound by the laws of men- the laws of the Medes and the Persians- but seek to be joined with the Lord in a perpetual **“covenant by sacrifice”**? **“Let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, spare thy people, O Lord...”** (Joel 2vs.17). When the watchmen play their unique role in the church and when they abide in their place, the Church will be in a position to sustain her power, authority and glory. May God reach your hearts

“Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion, put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean. Shake thyself from the dust; arise, and sit down, O Jerusalem: loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion.”(Is 52 vs. 1-2). The Bible is full of sign language. God employs signs many times to reach His people in some unique way. Here in Is 52, there is a voice going forth to two major groups of God’s people: the Zion of God and Jerusalem the holy city. To Zion the message is, **“awake.. put on thy strength”**; unto Jerusalem, the urge is, **“awake.. put on thy beautiful garments”** Jerusalem is supposed to be the capital of the natural nation of Israel and the mention of Jerusalem qualifies every one member of the nation. Jerusalem is representative. Whatsoever is said of Jerusalem is understood to have been said in representative sense of the entire nation. Zion is within Jerusalem. Zion sits on a mountain and is supposed to be the highest location within the capital city. The king’s seat is in Zion. David’s throne was in Zion. Rule and authority of king David flowed from Zion. **“The law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.”** (Mic.4 vs. 2). Amos corroborating this said, **“the Lord will roar from Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem”** (Amos 1 vs2). Zion typifies the Lord’s people and Jerusalem typifies the Lord’s people. While Jerusalem speaks of the generality of the good people of God, Zion relates to the place of the flow of authority- it relates to the place of governing authority within Jerusalem. Jerusalem is the Church; the generality of God’s people, the Body of Christ but within this is to be found the kingly people of power and authority. What makes the difference is the cross- how we relate to the preaching of the cross. What makes the difference is consecration. What make the difference are the vision and a goal. What makes the difference is where we stand in faith- of what material and quality is our faith-is it faith for the material, the temporal or faith for the more enduring eternal word? In Israel we have the people, we have the Priests and we have the Levites. Every one of these groups is guided by some sets of rules and regulations. What an average Israelite is permitted to do, a Levite will not dare go near it and there are boundaries between what a Levite can do as different from what a Priest is permitted to do. What keep each group within its boundary are the various demands for consecration and separation at the different levels, which are exclusive to each class of the people. In similar manner, Zion can be seen as being distinct from Jerusalem in Biblical sign language of prophetic Scriptures. **“Put on thy strength O Zion; put on thy beautiful**

garments O Jerusalem.” Hear the sons of Korah sing of Zion, **“the Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob. Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God”** (Ps. 87 vs. 2-3). Both Zion and Jerusalem are God’s people but some are more yielded, more obedient and more responsive than others. Esau and Jacob are both Isaac’s sons but the inheritance of each differs. Why? One was spiritual, the other carnal. **“And the boys grew: and Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field: and Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in tents.”** (Gen 25 vs. 27). In spiritual terms any of God’s children can rise in power and grow into the highest height in God if he feeds on other than swine’s food.

We read of a young man in Lk. 15. He was one of the two sons of his father. He had access to all of the father’s goods. He obtained his portion, gathered it together and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. After he had exhausted all his goods, there arose a famine in the land and he came to a state of lack and want for which reason **“he joined himself to a citizen of that country.”** And then tragedy struck; he was sent to the man’s fields to feed swine.

This young man experienced such a famine that swine’s food became golden for that was not even allowed him though, **“he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat”** (Lk 15 vs. 16). The most beautiful part of this story is that the young man came to himself. He remembered he was a son of destiny. He had access to his father any day. And he had unlimited access to the father’s wealth- he is an heir of the father’s kingdom. **“And when he came to himself, he said,... I WILL ARISE AND GO TO MY FATHER...”** (Lk.15 vs. 17-18). That was his deliverance. That was what commended him to the father’s love. That opened him up to the father’s UNLIMITED RESOURCES. Swine’s husks is food, pricely food indeed but there is a place for sons. A people must say, **“I will arise and go..”** A people must be ready to leave the Judea plains and rise to the crest of the mount Zion for all things **“are yours and ye are Christ’s...”** (ICor. 3 vs. 22). The “least” among the sons of Adam who has per used of the redemptive provisions through Jesus Christ has access to the best that is available in God through a consistent walk of obedience by the principles of the scriptures. Such ones who aim at and pursue the ultimate purpose of God in Christ Jesus and **“who through faith and patience inherit the promises”** constitute the “Zion” of God. Others, though God’s good children and all members of the same one body having the same Lord, are God’s Jerusalem. **“But the law shall go forth of Zion,”** Prophesied the beloved prophet, **“in those days, and in that time, saith the Lord, the children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah together, going and weeping: they shall go, and seek the Lord their God. They shall ask the way to Zion with their faces thither ward, saying, come, and let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten,”** (Jer. 50 vs. 4-5). Zion is a place to be desired. It is a place in God where we identify with His will, His counsels and His purposes, which are eternal. We thank God for the benefits of healings, miracles, deliverances, prosperity and indeed all the benefits of His Divine goodness. The highest calling of God in Christ Jesus is becoming one with His purposes. We are called to be like him, to rise in his image when we have been planted in the likeness of His death. To be like Jesus is the song.

In Is.52, the watchmen, knowing the father’s will, are the trumpeters. What is the message of their trumpet song? **“Awake, awake! Put on thy strength, put on thy beautiful garments.”** And to whom is the trumpet sound? To the Zion people as well as the Jerusalem people. Why the

need to sound the trumpet? Because the people have been asleep, fast asleep on the bed of spiritual infancy and lacking strength because they have been feeding on the spiritual milk, which is not sufficient for the evil day. The watchmen are always distinct and perhaps un-noticed in the dispensing of their roles and discharging their responsibilities. As important as both Zion and Jerusalem are, the ministry of the watchmen is vital in a critical moment to awaking the slumbering virgins. Something so peculiarly good about the account spoken of by the Lord in Mt. 25 is that the people so referenced were all virgins. But the greatest tragedy was that even the wise virgins **“slumbered and slept”**. But it is significant to note the vital role of the watchmen here, they cried at midnight, **“behold the bridegroom... go ye out and meet him”**

Usually the watchmen constitute or typify a unique group of God’s people who will refuse to slumber when others among God’s people have given in to the forces of the night characteristic of the state of apostasy as highlighted in II Tim 3 vs. 1-7. One thing to be understood is that there is no place in God to be seen as exclusive to some while others cannot attain to it. The problem of where we attain in God is two fold. The spiritual food we feed on is very vital to our spiritual attainment. The second issue is that of our personal ambition or goal or aspiration in matters pertaining to God. Some make themselves naturally un-interested in spiritual things but others are not satisfied but as they are able to quench their thirst and satisfy their hunger in God. The rule is **“seek ye first the kingdom of God and all its righteousness”** If any takes it on himself to conform to this simple principle and the Lord’s admonition, he is not only fulfilled in the things pertaining to the spirit in God, all blessings become naturally an outflow of his relationship with God. The problem is not being blessed materially; the issue is that material blessing is not to be taken aside from the life of Him who blesses. When we live our lives in conformity with the rules and the life of the kingdom we derive all the attendant benefits automatically. There is chaos and confusion when the material is magnified and the eternal is dwarfed by reason of the over-emphasis on the material. The evidential result is predictable. Shallow spiritual experience that is incapable of independent expression of the life of the spirit in Christ Jesus, shallow spiritual experience that is incapable of independent expression, which is not above that, that cannot be faulted, that cannot falter and that is not just a noisy and empty cymbal that is not worth the substance. **“Shake thyself from the dust; arise, and sit down, O Jerusalem; loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion.”** (Is 52 vs. 2). The ministry of the watchmen is a ministry for all who can fulfil the demands for sacrifice. It is a priestly ministry that bridges the gap between God and His people. They carry the dual burden of God’s purposes for God’s church and the burden of the Lord’s house to the Father’s bosom beseeching Him for mercy and for grace and where need be for His gracious intervention in the affairs of men.

“How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, thy God reigneth! Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion. Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem: for the Lord hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem. The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God,” (Is 52 vs. 7-10). God’s watchmen are to be seen as vital instruments in the great work of restoration, divine recovery and complete work of salvation, which is about to set in in the Church through their

intercession priestly office on one hand and in the world in general. The watchmen will be catalyst to many rapid world events that shall begin to unfold in our very eyes. First will be the work of beauty in the church, second will be the work of full salvation in the world. They will be instrumental to bringing the unity of the spirit about in the Church through their intercessory priestly office and through their ministry; all things must come under the Lordship of Christ.

“How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that saith unto Zion, thy God reigneth!”

“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.

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,” (Is 62: 1, 6-7).

Two great works of fullness of righteousness and salvation in full manifestation of Christ’s work of redemption will wind up this present age with attendant divinely motivated activities beyond the control of man. The watchmen are joint workers with God in bringing these about. God’s watchmen are reliable and can be trusted. They are covenant keepers and they do not sell their birthright because of a pot of porridge. The role and the vision of the watchmen go beyond their small Church denomination. God is not a denominationalist and so Jehovah’s true watchmen are not denominationalists. The world belongs to our God and the whole world is the sphere of operation of God’s watchmen.

Man is unique in God’s plan and purpose; God’s watchmen being aware of this make themselves available to bear on their shoulders, the burden for the whole counsel of God. Their instrument of rule is by prayer, not prayer for the material, which fades in glory, but prayer to establish God’s rule and God’s authority in the Church and in the earth. They have implicit faith in the Word of God, not in the letter of it nor in its interpretation to gratify our carnal desires and ambitions but in the spirit and the power of it. Paul said, **“my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God,”** (I Cor 2 vs.4).

He said further, **“the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power,”** (I Cor 4 vs.20). Earlier he has said, **“the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost,”** (Rm 14 vs. 17).

God’s watchmen have lost vision for self-goals and self-ambitions. Rather they are restless if they cannot identify what is the master’s burden so that they can identify with Him. Although they are humans in their flesh and blood and having the natural instincts of men like Elijah who the Bible says was a man of like passions, they have decided to abandon the path for personal glory but their Lord’s glory. They have chosen to identify with the lovely path of sacrifice- the way of the cross. It is a matter for personal choice because of the burning love for their master’s glory. They have their power in the gospel, but they will not abuse it. They are acquainted with success in their calling but they look away from any tendency for self-glory knowing that **“though I might also have confidence in the flesh...but what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and**

do count them but dung, THAT I MAY WIN CHRIST AND BE FOUND IN HIM....”

(Phil. 3 vs. 4, 7-9a). The Excellency of the knowledge of Christ! May God create in you what it takes to be God’s watchmen. Contact through: Box 4526, Ilorin. Tel. 234-31-226863. E-mail: lightpubs@ilorin.skannet.com.