

~GATEKEEPER (302)

- **In The Temple**
- **In Homes**
- **Shepherds**
- **Christians**

- In ancient times gatekeepers, also called doorkeepers, served at various places, such as city gates, temple gates, even at the gateways or doorways of homes.
- Gatekeepers of city gates were appointed to see that the gates were closed at night, and they acted as watchmen at the gate. Other watchmen might be posted as lookouts on top of the gate or in a tower where they could get a broad view and could announce those approaching the city. They cooperated with the gatekeeper.
- Now David was sitting between the two gates. Meantime, the watchman went to the roof of the gate by the wall. At length he raised his eyes and saw and, look! There was a man running by himself. (2 Samuel 18:24)
- The watchman now saw another man running. The watchman therefore called to the **gatekeeper** and said; Look! Another man running by himself! At which the king said; This one also is a news bearer. (2 Samuel 18:26)
- It was a very responsible position, inasmuch as the safety of the city depended on the **gatekeeper** to a considerable degree and he was an instrument of communication between those outside the city and those inside.
- So they came and called to the **gatekeepers** of the city and reported to them, saying; We came into the camp of the Syrians, and, look! There was nobody there nor sound of a man, but only the horses tied and the asses tied and the tents just as they were. (2 Kings 7:10)
- At once the **gatekeepers** called out and they reported to the king's house inside. (2 Kings 7:11)
- The doorkeepers of King Ahasuerus, two of whom plotted to assassinate him, were also called court officials.

- In those days while Mordecai was sitting in the king's gate, Bigthan and Teresh, two court officials of the king, **doorkeepers**, became indignant and kept seeking to lay hand on King Ahasuerus. (**Esther 2:21**)
- And the thing came to be known to Mordecai, and he immediately told Esther the queen. In turn Esther talked to the king in Mordecai's name. (**Esther 2:22**)
- So the matter was sought out and eventually found out, and both of them got to be hanged on a stake, after which it was written in the book of the affairs of the days before the king. (**Esther 2:23**)
- At length there was found written what Mordecai had reported concerning Bigthana and Teresh, two court officials of the king, **doorkeepers**, who had sought to lay hand on King Ahasuerus. (**Esther 6:2**)

•• In The Temple

- Shortly before his death, King David thoroughly organized the Levites and temple workers, including the **gatekeepers**, of whom there were (4,000)
- In their divisions they would come in for seven days at a time. They were responsible to guard Yehowah's house and see that the doors were opened and closed at the proper times.
- And they and their sons were over the gates of the house of Yehowah, even the house of the tent, for guard service. (**1 Chronicles 9:23**)
- It was to the four directions that the **gatekeepers** came to be, to the east, to the west, to the north and to the south. (**1 Chronicles 9:24**)
- And their brothers in their settlements were to come in for seven days, from time to time, along with these. (**1 Chronicles 9:25**)
- For in office of trust there were four mighty men of the **gatekeepers**. They were Levites, and they proved to be in charge of the dining rooms and of the treasures of the house of the true

God. (1 Chronicles 9:26)

- **And all around the house of the true God they would spend the night, for guard service was upon them, and they were in charge of the key, even to open up from morning to morning. (1 Chronicles 9:27)**
- **And David himself had grown old and satisfied with days, and so he made Solomon his son king over Israel. (1 Chronicles 23:1)**
- **And he proceeded to gather all the princes of Israel and the priests and the Levites. (1 Chronicles 23:2)**
- **Accordingly the Levites were numbered from the age of thirty years upward, and their number, head by head of them, able-bodied man by able-bodied man, came to be thirty-eight thousand. (1 Chronicles 23:3)**
- **Of these for acting as supervisors over the work of the house of Yehowah there were twenty-four thousand, and as officers and judges six thousand. (1 Chronicles 23:4)**
- **And four thousand **gatekeepers** and four thousand givers of praise to Yehowah on the instruments that David said; I have made for giving praise. (1 Chronicles 23:5)**
- **Then David distributed them in divisions to the sons of Levi, to Gershon, Kohath and Merari. (1 Chronicles 23:6)**
- **Besides guard duty, some took care of the contributions brought in by the people for use at the temple.**
- **Jehoiada the priest now took a chest and bored a hole in its lid and put it beside the altar on the right as a person comes into the house of Yehowah, and there the priests, the **doorkeepers**, put all the money that was being brought into the house of Yehowah. (2 Kings 12:9)**
- **Go up to Hilkiah the High Priest, and let him complete the money that is being brought into the house of Yehowah that the **doorkeepers** have gathered from the people. (2 Kings 22:4)**

- At a later time, when Jehoiada the High Priest anointed Jehoash as king, special guards were assigned to the gates of the temple to protect young Jehoash from the usurper, Queen Athaliah.
- And in the seventh year Jehoiada sent and then took the chiefs of hundreds of the Carian bodyguard and of the runners and brought them to himself at the house of Yehowah and concluded a covenant with them and made them swear at the house of Yehowah, after which he showed them the son of the king. (2 Kings 11:4)
- And he went on to command them, saying; This is the thing that you will do; One third of you are coming in on the Sabbath and keeping strict watch over the king's house. (2 Kings 11:5)
- And one third will be at the Gate of the Foundation, and one third will be at the gate behind the runners, and you must keep strict watch over the house by turns. (2 Kings 11:6)
- And there are two divisions among you that are all going out on the Sabbath, and they must keep strict watch over the house of Yehowah in behalf of the king. (2 Kings 11:7)
- And you must encircle the king all around, each one with his weapons in his hand, and anyone entering within the rows will be put to death. And continue with the king when he goes out and when he comes in. (2 Kings 11:8)
- When King Josiah destroyed idolatrous worship, the **doorkeepers** assisted in removing from the temple the utensils that had been used in the worship of Baal. These were then burned up outside the city.
- And the king went on to command Hilkiah the High Priest and the priests of the second rank and the **doorkeepers** to bring out from the temple of Yehowah all the utensils made for Baal and for the sacred pole and for all the army of the heavens. Then he burned them outside Jerusalem on the terraces of Kidron, and he brought the dust of them to Bethel. (2 Kings 23:4)
- When Jesus Christ was on earth, priests and Levites were assigned as **doorkeepers** and watchmen in the temple rebuilt by Herod.
- These were required to be on the alert, for the overseer or officer of the Temple Mount would make his rounds, appearing at

unannounced times, and it was necessary for the watchman to remain awake at his post constantly in order not to be caught off guard.

- There was another officer who was in charge of the casting of lots for the temple services. When he came and knocked on the door, it was necessary for the guard to be awake to open it for him. He, too, might catch the guard asleep.
- On this matter of wakefulness, the **Mishnah [Middot 1:2]** says; The officer of the Temple Mount used to go round to every watch with lighted torches before him, and if any watch did not stand up and say; to him, O officer of the Temple Mount, peace be to thee! And it was manifest that he was asleep, he would beat him with his staff, and he had the right to burn his raiment.[Translated by H. Danby, see also ([Revelation 16:15](#))]
- These **gatekeepers** and guards were posted at their stations in order to safeguard the temple from robbery and to keep out all unclean persons and all intruders who had no proper business there.

.. In Homes

- In the days of the apostles, some homes employed doorkeepers. At the house of Mary the mother of John Mark, a servant girl named Rhoda answered Peter's knock when he returned from prison after being released by an angel.
- And after he considered it, he went to the house of Mary the mother of John who was surnamed Mark, where quite a few were gathered together and praying. ([Acts of Apostles 12:12](#))
- When he knocked at the door of the gateway, a servant girl named Rhoda came to attend to the call. ([Acts of Apostles 12:13](#))
- And, upon recognizing the voice of Peter, out of joy she did not open the gate, but ran inside and reported that Peter was standing before the gateway. ([Acts of Apostles 12:14](#))
- The girl who was employed as a doorkeeper at the home of the High Priest asked Peter whether he was one of Christ's disciples.
- The servant girl, the doorkeeper, then said to Peter; You are not also one of this man's disciples, are you? He said; I am not. ([John 18:17](#))

•• Shepherds

- **Shepherds** in Bible times used to keep their flocks of sheep in a sheepfold, or sheepcote, during the night. These **sheepfolds** consisted of a low stone wall with a **gateway**.
- The flocks of one man or sometimes of several would be kept in the fold during the night with a **doorkeeper** to keep watch and to protect them.
- Jesus apparently drew on this custom for illustration when he mentioned a **doorkeeper** in speaking of himself not only as the **shepherd** of God's sheep but also as the **door** through which the sheep could enter.
- Most truly I say to you, he that does not enter into the sheepfold through the door but climbs up some other place, that one is a thief and a plunderer. (**John 10:1**)
- But he that enters through the **door** is **shepherd** of the sheep. (**John 10:2**)
- The **doorkeeper** opens to this one, and the sheep listen to his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. (**John 10:3**)
- When he has got all his own out, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, because they know his voice. (**John 10:4**)
- A stranger they will by no means follow but will flee from him, because they do not know the voice of strangers. (**John 10:5**)
- Jesus spoke this comparison to them, but they did not know what the things meant that he was speaking to them. (**John 10:6**)
- Therefore Jesus said again; Most truly I say to you, I am the **door** of the sheep. (**John 10:7**)
- All those that have come in place of me are thieves and plunderers, but the sheep have not listened to them. (**John 10:8**)
- I am the door. Whoever enters through me will be saved, and he

will go in and out and find pasturage. (John 10:9)

.. Christians

- Jesus emphasized the need for Christians to keep alert and on the watch concerning his coming as Yehowah's executioner.
- He likened the Christian to the **doorkeeper** who was commanded by his master to keep on the watch and look for him on his return from traveling abroad.
- Keep looking, keep awake, for you do not know when the appointed time is. (Mark 13:33)
- It is like a man traveling abroad that left his house and gave the authority to his slaves, to each one his work, and commanded the **doorkeeper** to keep on the watch. (Mark 13:34)
- Therefore **keep on the watch**, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming, whether late in the day or at midnight or at cockcrow or early in the morning. (Mark 13:35)
- In order, that when he arrives suddenly, he does not find you sleeping. (Mark 13:36)
- But what I say to you I say to all. Keep on the watch! (Mark 13:37)

See Also GATE, GATEWAY

See Also GUARD