



WATCHMEN ON THE TOWER

The structures used by those who looked out for dangers approaching ancient cities help us understand some important roles of prophets and apostles in our lives.

“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.”

Isaiah 62:6

Kinds of Towers

Towers in city walls were usually built at gates or in corners (see 2 Chronicles 26:9). Both gate and corner towers provided elevated positions from which to view approaching dangers and fend off enemy attacks (see 2 Chronicles 26:15).

Fortress or citadel towers were usually freestanding structures built on high ground or other strategic locations. They were sometimes large enough to be a final refuge for a whole city’s population when they were under attack (see Judges 9:46-52).

Towers in vineyards, fields, or pastures were small structures built to help protect crops and herds from thieves and animals (see 2 Chronicles 26:10; Isaiah 5:2; 27:3). Often, the lower level was a room where tools were stored.



PHOTOGRAPHS OF TOWERS, BACKGROUND © ISTOCK/THINKSTOCK; CHRIST IN A RED ROBE, BY MINERVA K. TEICHERT



Watchmen

Watchmen were sentries stationed on a wall or in a tower in order to look out for and warn of dangers approaching from afar. They were employed to protect cities as well as vineyards, fields, or pastures.

Watchmen on the tower:

Have an elevated view. As God’s called and authorized servants, prophets are separated from the world, draw closer to Him, and are allowed to see things from a more heavenly perspective.

See things the rest cannot see. “A seer can know of things which are past, and also of things which are to come, and by them shall all things be revealed, or, rather, shall secret things be made manifest, and hidden things shall come to light, and things which are not known shall be made known by them, and also things shall be made known by them which otherwise could not be known” (Mosiah 8:17).

Are vigilant. Prophets have a solemn responsibility to warn us of coming dangers, and they will continue to do so regardless of public opinion or trends in society.

Warn of things while they are still far off. “A prophet denounces sin and foretells its consequences. He is a preacher of righteousness. On occasion, prophets may be inspired to foretell the future for the benefit of mankind” (Guide to the Scriptures, “Prophet,” lds.org/scriptures/gs).

Offer safety and protection. By heeding prophets’ warnings, we can find safety and avoid the calamities that may befall us, individually or collectively, if we do not obey. **NE**



BIBLE FACTS

In the Old Testament, the Lord is sometimes compared to a fortress or citadel tower of refuge (see Psalm 18:2; 61:3; Proverbs 18:10; 2 Samuel 22:3), and prophets are sometimes compared to watchmen (see Isaiah 62:6; Jeremiah 6:17; Ezekiel 3:17; 33:7; Hosea 9:8; Micah 7:4).

“I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me.”

Ezekiel 3:17; see also Ezekiel 33:1-7.



THE DUTY TO WATCH

“Through the centuries, prophets have fulfilled their duty when they have warned people of the dangers before them. The Lord’s Apostles are duty bound to watch, warn, and reach out to help those seeking answers to life’s questions.”

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “God Is at the Helm,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2015, 25.