6x ‘devoted’ proskartereo/proskarterein is used (3 patterns in Acts, and 3 commands in epistles, literally means diligently occupied with, to persist in, or ‘constantly’

Jeremias writes, “When Paul says that he prays, “Continually,” “without ceasing”, “day and night” and “always,” we are not to think of uninterrupted praying but of his observance of the regular hours of prayer. The phrase “to be constant or devoted instant in prayer” (proskarterein, Rom. 12:12, and Col. 4:2) is to be understood in a similar way, for proskarterein here means “faithfully to observe a rite” (as in Acts 1:14, 2:46, 6:4).[[1]](#footnote-1)

-Upper Room, “these…were all continually **devoting** themselves to prayer.” Acts 1:14

-Early Church “**devoted** themselves…to prayer” Acts 2:42 It was one of the four marks of the Jerusalem church(apostles teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayers)

-Leaders/Elders “**devoted**’ themselves to prayer and the ministry of the Word” Acts 6:4

-Roman Christians commanded to be ‘**devoted** to prayer” Romans 12:12

“**Devote** yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful” Col. 4:2

-Ephesian believers to ‘pray **devotedly** for all the saints” Eph. 6:18

In Scripture, the term “watchmen” comes from the Old Testament and describes what we would today call “sentries,” “guards,” or “lookouts.” These individuals were responsible for protecting vineyards or fields (crops) from thieves and animals, as well as cities from invading forces. Those watching crops were stationed on rocks, buildings, or towers to provide a better range of vision. Towers or outposts in the fields usually had sleeping quarters because it was necessary to keep watch day and night during harvest. The watchmen would take shifts - one working, one sleeping - and thereby watch 24 hours each day.

Watchmen were also posted on city walls, where they functioned as sentries. From the walls, they watched for two things: messengers and enemies. They watched for messengers to inform the gatekeepers when to open the city gates and, more importantly, when not to. In those days, “runners” were used to carry messages from city to city, and when a known messenger was approaching, the watchmen would alert the gatekeepers that it was safe to open the gate (See 2 Samuel 18:27).

The watchmen on the city walls also looked for enemy soldiers. When they saw potential danger, they sounded an alarm, either by a shout or a trumpet blast. Soldiers could then prepare themselves for battle and defend the city:

*“For thus the Lord says to me, ‘Go, station the lookout, let him report what he sees. When he sees riders, horsemen in pairs, a train of donkeys, a train of camels, let him pay close attention, very close attention.’ Then the lookout called, ‘O Lord, I stand continually by day on the watchtower, and I am stationed every night at my guard post’”* (Isaiah 21:6-8).

Three Hebrew words are translated as “watchman” in Scripture: *natsar*,(1) *shamar*,(2) and *tsaphah*.(3) tsaw-faw')

In a broad sense, they all mean to watch in order to guard or protect. Another interesting meaning of *tsaphah* is “to lean forward and peer into the distance.” The spiritual connection to prayer should be obvious. Prophetic watchmen look ahead, into the future – “peering into the distance” – to foresee the attacks of the enemy. He or she must be proactive, not just reactive. This is prophetic intercession.

**THE LAW OF FIRST MENTION**

Theologians have what is known as “the law of first mention.” This refers to the general rule that the first time a major subject is mentioned in the Bible, it is “introduced”; significant facts are given concerning it, just as we might do when introducing a person.

For example, the first mention of the serpent, satan, is in Genesis 3:1: *“Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, ‘Indeed, has God said, "You shall not eat from any tree of the garden”?’”*

It is easy to see this law at work here, as the verse speaks of satan’s subtlety or craftiness. When God introduces satan, He informs us of one of the most important things we must remember about him: He is far more dangerous to us as the crafty serpent than as a roaring lion.

The first mention of a watchman in Scripture was Adam in Genesis 2:15, *“Then the LORD God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it.”* “Keep” is *shamar*, and introduces us to one of our primary responsibilities as watchmen: Keep the serpent out of our “gardens”! Guard or protect from the subtle attacks of the serpent that which God has entrusted to our care: our homes, families, churches, cities, and nations! KEEP HIM OUT!

The following are several more ways the three words translated as watchman are used in Scripture. These uses will help expand our understanding of what it means to be watchmen:

**Keep/Keeper** - This is by far the most frequent usage of these words— at least 250 times. Watchmen keep things, places, and individuals safe, ensuring against loss, theft, or damage. They keep things intact and in possession.

**Guard/Bodyguard**–Watchmen shield or guard individuals and places, protecting them from danger and harm. They are the secret service agents of the Kingdom.

**Doorkeeper/Gatekeeper**—Watchmen have the ability, through prayer, to determine who or what comes into their homes, families, churches, cities, etc. As sentries, they discern by the Spirit what to allow in and, through prayer, open and close the doors (Isaiah 22:22). They pray IN the work of theHoly Spirit and REJECT the works of darkness, keeping the serpent out.

**Preserve/Preserver**—Watchmen preserve, keeping things from ruin and destruction. They preserve lives, anointings, God's moves, and a host of other things by covering them in prayer.

**Pay Attention**—Watchmen must be alert and always pay attention. In Scripture, we are compared to soldiers; as good sentries, God tells us to “pay attention!"

**Observe/Behold**—Don't just look - see! Discern. Be observant. Watchmen observe what others fail to see. We can observe much in the place of prayer, often even before it happens!

**Beware**—Watchmen must be vigilant, aware, and on the alert. First Peter 5:8 warns us to be of sober spirit, watching for the devouring lion. When we see him at work, we must enforce Calvary’s victory - stop him! Jesus saw satan’s attack coming against Peter and prayed that his faith would survive the test. The prayer was effective! (Luke 22:31-32)

**Protect—**In the same sense as guarding and keeping, watchmen protect, building walls or boundaries of protection from the attacks of the devil.

**Maintain**—Watchmen maintain things for the Lord and for people. They are the maintenance crew. Though often not those who set vision, build ministries, or oversee congregations, intercessors maintain them, keeping things working well and preventing breakdowns. Watchmen help maintain the anointing, unity, health, purity, truth, and many other important things in the church.

**PRAYER SIEGES**

As important as all of this is, however, there is another very unique meaning to being watchmen. The concept is not limited to defensive, protective prayer; there is also an offensive or aggressive aspect to it! The Hebrew words for watchmen are also translated as “to lay siege,”(4) “spy,”(5) and “ambush,”(6) in order to conquer cities or people (see Judges 1:24; 2 Samuel 11:16; Isaiah 1:8; Jeremiah 4:17; Psalm 56:6; 71:10). The reason they are used in this manner is because all of the actions involve watching.

Dutch Sheets wrote back in the 90’s

*“I am about to release revelation to the praying church that will enable them to deliver individuals, cities, regions, and nations for Me. New strategies and concepts will emerge, discernment of satan's strongholds will be given, and sieges will begin that will eventually break his hold over people and places.*

*“This will be a broad work, with strategies and actions coming from many different ministries and nations. I will give part of a plan to one person or ministry, while simultaneously imparting another part to others. Often, they will not even realize they’re part of a larger plan. But I will orchestrate the efforts in order to lay sieges in the spirit realm, cutting off satan's ‘supply lines’ - iniquities that give him access; I’ll close his entry points and remove that which has enabled him to hold cities and nations in captivity. Through the watchman anointing, My intercessors will discern from Me and lay a prayer siege throughout the world.”*

Literally millions of believers around the world have come to understand and embrace these and other aspects of prayer, learning to pray more effectively. The learning curve in the recent prayer movement has shot up exponentially. Dozens of major prayer networks have been launched, thousands of prayer groups and houses of prayer have formed, and millions of believers are praying effectively. Dr. C. Peter Wagner, one of the leaders and fathers of this movement in the 1990s and early 2000s, once happily stated, “The prayer movement around the world is out of control.” And the growth has continued!

Certainly, we have not yet “arrived” in our understanding of prayer - there is more to learn - but we are moving forward at a rapid pace.

Currently, one of our great challenges is remaining cognizant of the fact that prayer *sieges* for cities and nations can take time to accomplish their purposes. They are *sieges!* Perseverance is required. We must remember that the prayers we release are being used to dismantle centuries-old, sometimes millennia-old strongholds of darkness. Also, millions of hearts and minds - traditions, cultural paradigms, religious beliefs, including doctrines in the church - must be changed. Revivals and outpourings do not occur simply because God “finally decides” to send them; they occur when the actions of people and conditions in a region finally allow it. And I believe those conditions are created through prayer sieges.

Blockades (another meaning of *natsar*, one of the Hebrew words for watchman) have now been placed in the spiritual realm against satan’s activities. Sieges are in place and accomplishing their purposes, all working together to produce history’s greatest harvest.

**IT IS TIME**

There are three different words in the New Testament associated with time. The first is *chronos*,(7) basically a general time or season; the second is *kairos*,(8) an opportune time that materializes in the *chronos.* For example, plowing the soil, planting and watering the seeds, weeding and tending them, etc., would all be part of the *chronos* season; harvest time, the opportunity to reap would be *kairos.*

Then there is *horaios,*(9) which means “the right time.” This is the “now moment,” the “take action” point in time. In farming, it would be picking the fruit or running the combine. In war, it would be charging, striking, or attacking! Surprisingly, in Acts 3, the name of the gate Beautiful is actually this word *horaios*. Only on rare occasions is it translated as beautiful because it isn’t beauty in the sense of lovely or attractive; it is a figurative beauty, that which is created when everything comes together at “the right time,” which creates a beautiful thing. Peter was used to work a *right-time* miracle at the *right-time* gate, which led to thousands of people believing in Christ.

The prayer siege (watchmen) Holy Spirit has orchestrated over the last 30 years (*chronos*) has created the greatest spiritual opportunity (*kairos*) and right time (*horaios*) in world history. God is now saying, *“Strike! It’s time for the rain—ask Me for it!”* (Zechariah 10:1.) A billion soul harvest is ripe, and the discipling of entire nations is now possible.

**7 Assignments for Watchman**

1. **A Watchman Watch’s**

Key Word: Observe

“But let no one come into the house of the Lord except the priests and those of the Levites who serve. They may go in, for they *are* holy; but all the people shall keep the watch of the Lord” – 2 Chronicles 23:6

“Prepare the table, Set a watchman in the tower, Eat and drink. Arise, you princes, Anoint the shield! For thus has the Lord said to me: “Go, set a watchman, Let him declare what he sees.” -Isaiah 21:5-6

“Therefore let us not sleep, as others *do,* but let us watch and be sober” – 1 Thessalonians 5:6

Observes what the enemy is up, observes the conditions of the harvest, most importantly observes and watches the Lord and what HE IS DOING

1. **A Watchman Waits**

Key Word: Expectation

“For since the beginning of the world *Men* have not heard nor perceived by the ear, Nor has the eye seen any God besides You, Who acts for the one who waits for Him” -Isa 64:4

“The Lord *is* good to those who wait for Him, To the soul *who* seeks Him” -Lam 3:25

“Therefore the Lord will wait, that He may be gracious to you; And therefore He will be exalted, that He may have mercy on you. For the Lord *is* a God of justice; Blessed *are* all those who wait for Him” -Isa 30:18

“But those who wait on the Lord Shall renew *their* strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint” -Isa 40:31

1. **A Watchman Wars**

Key Word: Confrontation

“Blessed *be* the Lord my Rock, Who trains my hands for war, And my fingers for battle— My lovingkindness and my fortress, My high tower and my deliverer, My shield and *the One* in whom I take refuge, Who subdues my people under me” -Psalms 144:1-2

“Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand…And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; 18 praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints” — Ephesians 6:13, 17-18

1. **A Watchman Warns**

Key Word: Communication

“Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; therefore hear a word from My mouth, and give them warning from Me” -Ezekiel 3:17

“so proclaim the Message with intensity; keep on your watch. Challenge, warn, and urge your people. Don’t ever quit” -2 Tim. 4:2 (MSG)

1. **A Watchman Wrestles**

Key Word: Position

“Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings. He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured” – Col 4:12 (NIV)

“For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*” -Eph 6:12

“In fact, no one can enter a strong man’s house without first tying him up. Then he can plunder the strong man’s house” – Mark 3:27

Desperate prayer – nothing casual in the bible about prayer – pleading – agonizing – contending prayer -

1. **A Watchman Weeps**

Key Word: Desperation

“Who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear,” -Heb 5:7

“But He answered and said to them, “I tell you that if these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out.” 41 Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, 42 saying, “If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things *that* *make* for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes” – Luke 19:40-42

“Those who sow with tears will reap with songs of joy. 6 Those who go out weeping, carrying seed to sow, will return with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with them” -Psalm 126:5-6

“You number my wanderings; Put my tears into Your bottle; *Are they* not in Your book? 9 When I cry out *to You,* Then my enemies will turn back; This I know, because God *is* for me” –Psalm 56:8-9

“Their heart cried out to the Lord, “O wall of the daughter of Zion, Let tears run down like a river day and night; Give yourself no relief; Give your eyes no rest. 19 “Arise, cry out in the night, At the beginning of the watches; Pour out your heart like water before the face of the Lord. Lift your hands toward Him For the life of your young children, Who faint from hunger at the head of every street.” – Lam 2:18-19

Paul wept often (Acts 20:19-20, 20:31, 2 Cor. 2:4, Phil 3:18-19, Romans 9:1-2)

Liquid prayer – Charles Spurgeon – weeping in order to reap – weep over the lost -

1. **A Watchman Worships**

Key Word: Exaltation

“After consulting the people, the king appointed singers to walk ahead of the army, singing to the Lord and praising him for his holy splendor. This is what they sang: “Give thanks to the Lord; his faithful love endures forever!” 22 At the very moment they began to sing and give praise, the Lord caused the armies of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir to start fighting among themselves” -2 Chronicles 20:21-22

“But You *are* holy, Enthroned in the praises of Israel”

“For from the rising of the sun, even to its going down, My name *shall be* great among the Gentiles; In every place incense *shall be* offered to My name, And a pure offering; For My name shall be great among the nations,” Says the Lord of hosts. -Malachi 1:11

“And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, 19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, 20 giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, 21 submitting to one another in the fear of God”

1. Joachim Jeremias, *The Prayers of Jesus*(Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1978), pg. 71 78 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)