

Understanding the Role of the Watchman

This word *shamar* means to guard, to keep, to be a watchman. It emphasizes the protective element of the prophet's mantle. The preserving and guarding aspect of the prophet's ministry is needed in every local church. Many wellmeaning pastors have suffered unnecessarily due to the lack of understanding this aspect of the ministry of the prophet. The *shamar* aspect of the prophet's ministry is one of the most important ones, and it will benefit the church greatly.

The local church is kept safe through prophetic intercession, prophetic discernment, prophetic praise, prophetic preaching, prophetic teaching, and prophetic worship. This is how the church is best defended. Without a revelation of the *shamar* aspect of the prophetic ministry, a local church will suffer from many attacks that can be averted.

Each church should identify, develop, and train the *shamar* prophets who have been set in their assembly by God. A revelation of the importance of the ministry of *shamar* prophets is vital to the success and long-term health of every church.

Shamar can refer to guarding a flock, the heart, the mind, a nation, or a city from outside attack or ungodly influences. It is used in reference to keeping (guarding) the gates or entries to cities. Each local church needs a prophetic guard. This is not one prophet but a company of prophets who help guard the church from the invasion of the enemy. Churches that develop the prophetic ministry will have the advantage of being protected through prophetic intercession and the *shamar* aspect of the prophetic ministry.

To guard means a number of things. It can mean to protect,

to watch over, to stand guard over, to police, to secure, to defend, to shield, to shelter, to screen, to cover, to cloak, to preserve, to save, to conserve, to supervise, to keep under surveillance or control, to keep under guard, to govern, to restrain, to suppress, to keep watch, to be alert, or to take care. Synonyms for guard include protector, defender, guardian, custodian, watchman, sentinel, sentry, patrol, and garrison. These words help us visualize and define the *shamar* aspect of the prophetic ministry.

Without a revelation of the *shamar* aspect of the prophetic ministry, a local church will suffer from many attacks that can be averted. The *shamar* components of the prophetic mantle pertain to the prophet's role as a guardian tending to the flock over which he or she has care. It applies to the guardian function of the office, the aspect of prophetic ministry that makes a person like a sentinel or a protector. To *shamar* a people is to work prophetically, to encircle the people or the church with a divine wall or hedge of protection—or to reseal the gap in the hedge through which the devil has broken in with satanic assaults, attacks, and warfare.

Look at these examples from the Bible that use the word *shamar*:

- Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain. —Psalm 127:1
- My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning: I say, more than they that watch for the morning. —Psalm 130:6
- 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
- The watchmen that go about the city found me: to whom I said, Saw ye him whom my soul loveth? —Song of Solomon 3:3

We can see that watchmen duties in the church are accomplished through the prayer, intercessions, and petitions of the prophet on behalf of the local body of believers. Such a guard would consist of the prayer team, the special intercessors, dedicated psalmists, seers, and subordinate prophets. It is the word *shamar* that emphasizes the status of prophets as spiritual guards, warriors, supernatural enforcers, and keepers of the churches of God. Without the help of the watchmen, pastors cannot take care of their flocks. As a result, the people of God become open prey to the enemy forces:

Prophets Who Protect

My people hath been lost sheep: their shepherds have caused them to go astray, they have turned them away on the mountains: they have gone from mountain to hill, they have forgotten their restingplace. All that found them have devoured them: and their adversaries said, We offend not. —Jeremiah 50:6–7

Building a hedge of protection

Additionally, the word *shamar* identifies a prophet who encircles (or surrounds) to retain and attend to, as one does a garden. The prophet's spiritual authority acts as a fence or garrison around an assigned congregation to shield it from harm, attack, or demonic trespass. Protection from trespassers, as meant here, includes protection from the spoilage, destruction, invasion, and threats that result from spiritual and human trespassers in the church.

Behold, he that keepeth [*shamar*] Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord is thy keeper [*shamar*]: the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand. The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord shall preserve [*shamar*] thee from all evil: he shall preserve [*shamar*] thy soul. The Lord shall preserve [*shamar*] thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore. —Psalm 121:4–8

We can see from these verses that God *shamars* His people. God loves His people and protects them. The shamar aspect of the prophet's ministry is a part of the nature of God. God never slumbers or sleeps. He is always alert. God *shamars* us from evil. God *shamars* our souls (our minds, wills, and emotions). God *shamars* our going out and coming in (our travels). It is the nature of God to protect. Protection from God is a part of our covenant with Him, and shamar prophets are therefore a practical part of the working out of our covenant relationship with God.

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