

A Fool in the Gate

As an opening in the defensive wall of an ancient city, the gate was a point of vulnerability. However, in peacetime the gate was a bevy of activity. Residents passed through the gate to and from their fields and livestock. Merchants approached the city gate to do business. In many cities the entrance was beautified and marketplaces were built at the gate.

As a central area of activity, the city gate was a natural place to address the citizens. Kings, judges and city leaders would meet at the city gate to hear legal cases, settle disputes, and engage in discussions pertaining to the welfare of the city and her citizens.

'The gate' was not merely a door, it was an opening in the city walls, walls which could be 15 to 20 feet thick. At the gate opening might be watchtowers and other structures built into the walls. Some 'gates' housed chambers of two, four, or six rooms.

Those who sat at the city gate were men of wisdom and discernment. It was no place for the childish 'fool.'

**Wisdom is too high for a fool,
He does not open his mouth in the gate.**

--Proverbs 24:7

The leaders of God's people today are 'elders' (or shepherds or pastors). The Apostle Paul taught that these are to be men who are dignified, godly, family men, and full of integrity. (More in 1 Timothy 3.)

God's leaders, elders, are not unlike the men who sat at the ancient city gate. They are mature and serious-minded about God, God's word, and God's people.



The Ishtar Gate (Berlin Museum)

In our entertainment crazed society there are fewer and fewer men who are true leaders; fewer and fewer who are serious about God; fewer and fewer who are serious about God's word. The Apostle Paul wrote:

When I was a child, I used to speak as a child, think as a child, reason as a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things.

--1 Corinthians 13:11

I wonder if today we have too many churches filled with adults captivated with fun, entertainment, and leisure; too busy to serve; too busy with their games, activities, and hobbies that they cannot even understand God's wisdom. I wonder if we are seeing a generation emerge with 'men' who are not men at all.

Who will be able to *sit in the gate* and open his mouth with God's wisdom in the years to come?