Upon studying the Word regarding gates and gatekeepers, we find that Strong’s Concordance gives us these definitions:

Gate: (8179) an opening, door, gate, city, port; to split or open; to estimate or think; to act as gatekeeper.
Keeper (of the watch, of the door): (8104) to hedge about as with thorns, guard, to protect, attend to.
Watchman: (6822) to lean forward, to peer into the distance, to observe, await, behold.

The position of gatekeeper is active, a position of opening and closing a gate, an opening. The definition “to split or open” implies that gatekeepers can make an opening into a place that did not have a previous opening. Gatekeepers need the eyes of the watchmen to rightly discern what to let through the gates. Wisdom is needed to discern beyond a situation. At times, gatekeepers and watchmen are one position combined.

The following is an excerpt about “Gates” and “Watchmen” from Dictionary of Biblical Imagery; Ryken, Wilhoit, Longman III, editors:

Most of the nearly 350 references to gates in the Bible involve city gates. Passages describing the layout of the tabernacle and temple are likewise replete with references to various gates, some of which bear specific names. In all instances the image of the gate is that of an entryway into something. Because entryways are public places, there is also an emphasis on communal activities that occur at gates.

For ancient Israelites the most important element of defense against external forces was the fortified wall encircling a city. The city gate, however, constituted a breach in the wall, and hence the most vulnerable point of the defense. The elaborate gateways that have been revealed by excavation were both massive and ingenious. The gate of a city was closed each night (Josh 2:5) to protect the inhabitants. If the presence of a city gate represented safety and security, the ultimate horror was to live in a city “that has no gates or bars” (Jer. 49:31) or a city “without walls, and having no bars or gates” (Ezek 38:11).

Since gateways protected cities not only from military attack but also from the intrusion of unwanted strangers, their use was regulated. The position of gatekeeper is an OT fixture, with the majority of references occurring in connection with the temple. The position of gatekeeper implies the act of guarding against illegitimate entry, whether into a city (2 Kings 10), a king’s court (2 Kings 11:4-9) or the temple (2 Kings 12:9; 2 Chron. 23:9).

The connotations of a gate of defense are ambivalent. On the one hand, it is an image of safety, with the closed gate representing safety for residents by night or for a
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city under attack. Thus we find references to the strength of “those who turn back the battle at the gate” (Is 28:6), to the victorious gathering for celebration at the city gate (Judges 5:11), to God’s strengthening “the bars of your gates” (Ps 147:13). But gates were the vulnerable part of a city wall, hence an image of precarious safety and insecurity. They were the focal point of attack (Ezek 21:15, 22). If the gate fell (was “possessed”), the city itself was considered to have fallen (Gen 22:17; 24:60).

Because city gates were public passageways, they took on the nature of a “public square” where legal and civil events occurred. Even farmers slept in the towns at night, so that gateway was the most frequented place in town. The city gate was also the appropriate place to make public announcements and demonstrations. In Proverbs the personified figure of Wisdom cries out “at the busiest corner...at the entrance of the city gates” (Prov 1:21 NRSV; see also 8:3).

Of special note is the phrase “sitting in the gate” in the OT. Immediately inside many gates was an area where officials met and deliberated. To “sit in the gate” (or its variant “sit in the seat”) implied one’s prominence in the community. Even kings sometimes positioned themselves “in the gate” (2 Sam 18:24; 19:8). To sit in the gate was to have a voice in setting policy; thus in the list of three progressive actions listed in Psalm 1:1, the climactic identification with evil is to “sit in the seat of scoffers.”

Legal activity was common in the gate area. Already in the Mosaic Law the city gate was designated as the place of legal tribunal (e.g. Deut 21:19; 22:15; 25:7). Contending with one’s enemies in the gate (Ps 127:5) implies legal negotiations. When Boaz insists on carrying out his desire to marry Ruth with complete adherence to established rules, he negotiates with his rival at the town gate (Ruth 4:1). The pattern was established even before the Israelites settled in cities, with Moses judging the people “in the gate of the camp” during their wilderness wanderings (Ex 32:26). Sometimes punishment or justice was meted out at the city gate (Deut 17:5; 21:21). At Joshua’s command, the King of Ai was hanged and his body was thrown down “at the entrance of the gate of the city” (Josh 8:29; see also 2 Kings 10:8-9).

Because so much commercial and civil business was transacted at the city gate, it became a prime image for prophetic denunciations of a corrupt society. Thus we find references to the “afflicted at the gate” (Prov 22:22), about setting a “trap for the arbiter in the gate” (Is 29:21) and about the dishonest people who “hate the one who reproves in the gate, and abhor the one who speaks the truth” (Amos 5:10 NRSV). Jeremiah’s picture of desecrating the Sabbath is one of people’s bringing in burdens “by the gates of Jerusalem” (Jer. 17:21,24,27). The antidote is to “hate evil and love good, and establish justice in the gate” (Amos 5:15 NRSV).

The prophet is “a watchman for the house of Israel” (Ezek 3:17 NIV; Acts 20:28). His calling includes both watching out for the dangers of sin (Hosea 9:8) and watching for...
signs of divine deliverance (Micah 7:7). Like God Himself, those who watch over Israel are to give themselves no rest (Is 62:6), suggesting that they are in perpetual prayer for God’s people. Isaiah portrays a faithfully persistent watchman even when nothing but the routine seems to be taking place: ‘“Watchman, what is left of the night? Watchman, what is left of the night?”’ The watchman replies, ‘Morning is coming, but also the night’” (Is 21:11-12 NIV). When deliverance does come, the prophetic watchmen will be the first to “lift up their voices” and “shout for joy” (Is 52:8 NIV) as they proclaim salvation to the people of God. If the prophets are mute (Ezek 33:6), blind, asleep at their posts (Is 56:10) or simply ignored (Jer. 6:17), then the Lord’s people are vulnerable to spiritual or military attack. The bleak silhouette of an abandoned watchtower (Is 32:14) is a symbol of spiritual abandonment and vulnerability to attack. But even diligent watchmen do not guarantee security, for “unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchmen stand guard in vain” (Ps 127:1 NIV).