

Isaiah 26:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in.

Analysis

"Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in." This verse presents the entrance requirements for God's strong city. "Open ye the gates" (פְּתַחוּ שָׁעֲרִים/pitchu she'arim) echoes Psalm 24:7—"Lift up your heads, O ye gates"—when the King of Glory enters. Gates in ancient cities controlled who entered; they were places of judgment and decision. Here the imperative pitchu (open!) commands the gates to swing wide for those who qualify.

"The righteous nation" (גּוֹי-צָדִיק/goy-tzaddiq) is remarkable because goy typically refers to Gentile nations, not Israel (am). This hints at the multi-ethnic composition of God's redeemed people—not ethnic Israel alone but "a righteous nation" from all peoples. The adjective tzaddiq (righteous, just) describes those declared righteous through faith, living in covenant faithfulness. **"Which keepeth the truth"** (שְׁמֹרֶר אֶמְנָה/shomer emunim)—shomer means guarding, watching over, keeping carefully, while emunim (faithfulness, truth, steadfastness) can mean both God's truth and human faithfulness. This describes covenant keepers who guard God's truth as their most precious treasure, maintaining fidelity to His word and ways.

Historical Context

In Isaiah's time, Jerusalem's gates literally controlled who entered the city. Gatekeepers examined travelers, merchants, and visitors. This imagery would have been immediately understood. After the Babylonian exile, Nehemiah's restoration of Jerusalem's gates (Nehemiah 3) was crucial to the city's revival. Jesus applied

this imagery to Himself: "I am the door" (John 10:9). Revelation 21:12-27 describes the New Jerusalem with twelve gates bearing the names of Israel's tribes, but verse 27 declares "there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth...but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. What does it mean to be part of a 'righteous nation' when righteousness is a gift through Christ, not ethnic identity?
2. How do you 'keep' or 'guard' God's truth in a culture that constantly challenges biblical authority?
3. If these gates represent entrance to eternal life, how does this verse relate to Jesus's claim to be 'the door'?

Interlinear Text

שְׁמָרֵךְ יְהִי שַׁעַר יְמִינְךָ אֶל־גּוֹיִם פָּתַח אֶל־צִדְקָה שְׁמָר יְמִינְךָ אֶל־גּוֹיִם פָּתַח אֶל־צִדְקָה
Open ye the gates may enter in nation that the righteous which keepeth
H6605 H8179 H935 H1471 H6662 H8104

אֶת־מְתֻמָּן:

the truth

H529

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 118:20 (Righteousness): This gate of the LORD, into which the righteous shall enter.

Isaiah 60:11 (Parallel theme): Therefore thy gates shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day nor night; that men may bring unto thee the forces of the Gentiles, and that their kings may be brought.

1 Peter 2:9 (Parallel theme): But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

Revelation 5:9 (Parallel theme): And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;

Isaiah 62:10 (Parallel theme): Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people; cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones; lift up a standard for the people.

Isaiah 62:2 (Righteousness): And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the LORD shall name.

Isaiah 60:21 (Righteousness): Thy people also shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified.

Isaiah 54:14 (Righteousness): In righteousness shalt thou be established: thou shalt be far from oppression; for thou shalt not fear: and from terror; for it shall not come near thee.

Acts 2:47 (Parallel theme): Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

Psalms 106:5 (Parallel theme): That I may see the good of thy chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation, that I may glory with thine inheritance.