

# THE BULWARK

## NOT ALL CLOSED EYES ARE SLEEPING...

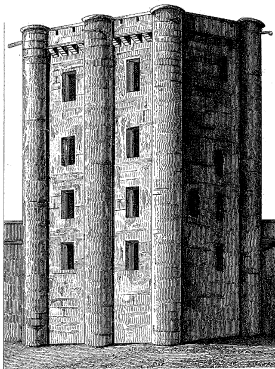
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*"Mark well her bulwarks,  
consider her palaces, that  
you may tell it to the  
generation following"*  
Psalms 48:13

"Every closed eye is not sleeping, and every open eye is not seeing." The noted quote is attributed to Bill Cosby, however, it can be traced back to an African Proverb. Regardless of origin, there is a significant lesson that can be garnered. There are a couple of take aways, one being, things aren't always as they seem. The other is not to assume that because someone may appear to not be paying attention, may in reality be paying rapt attention.

So does that suggest that open eyes mean attention is being paid? Hardly. There are times when you have farmed out your mind when a sermon was being presented, but from all outward appearances, you were locked in on every word. It is possible to hear what is being said, but not listening. To watch but not really see, to be present but yet far away. When such is in place we may very miss a vital message meant for us. *"Because I called; and you refused; I stretched out my hand, and no one paid attention."* (Proverbs 1:24)

*"He who give attention to the word shall find good, and blessed is he who trusts in the Lord."* (Proverbs 16:20) Such would seem to have been the mind set on the part of the people as seen in Nehemiah 8:3, as Ezra read, *"...and the ears of all the people were attentive to the Book of the Law."* The rapt attention of the people explains their willingness to repent and undergo a revival, inasmuch as they understood where they failed and the

steps needed to make correction. Notice what is found in the eighth chapter of Acts, *"And the multitudes with one accord were giving attention to what was said by Philip..."* (v. 6) The NIV renders that verse to read, *"paid close attention to what he said"*. The actions taken by those in Samaria clearly indicate they paid attention, as they obeyed what they had heard.

So how long can someone hold your attention? In a recent study if the topic is of interest to you, and the speaker is adapt at presentation, it was found that in most cases the adult attention span is between seven and ten minutes. If the topic is of no interest to you and the speaker is boring, then you'll tune out in about seven seconds. The speaker then needs to figure out a way to draw those who have wandered away mentally to come back, so to speak. *"Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things; for as you do this you will insure salvation both for yourself and those who hear you."* (1Timothy 4:6) Take ownership of what is being said.

Our minds can wander far afield and we can miss so much, even while seeming to be awake and attentive. The author of Hebrews apparently was aware of such as he wrote, *"we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it."* (Hebrews 2:1) Let us not be like that which is seen in Isaiah 42:20 (wbe)

