

## Fourteen Feet Thick Walls!

During a recent visit to Scotland, it was my pleasure to take a couple of days and go into the Highlands. Though Jenny and I never got beyond Inverness, we did get to travel down past Loch Ness. No, we did not see the monster . . . but we looked! Traveling west toward the Isle of Skye we visited the 800 year old castle, Eilean Donan. This amazing fortress served as a set for a number of movies, including "The Highlander" and the James Bond movie, "The World Is Not Enough." When we arrived, the wind and rain was blowing so hard that it was difficult to walk out to the castle. Upon entering the great edifice we went into the first room. It was a large area where soldiers would have lived. The most amazing thing was the thickness of the walls. Each window was tall and very narrow, perhaps not more than ten inches wide, but the access to the window was a fourteen foot walkway that funneled down to the window, revealing that the walls of the great castle were fourteen feet thick. This made the castle virtually impregnable.

As we toured the great castle, thoughts of those who lived there hundreds of years ago entered my mind. Knowing that men manned the walls and kept vigil through the days and nights to defend against any attacks gave much fodder for the imagination. Thoughts came to mind of Peter's admonition to, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour," 1 Peter 5:8.

The word, "vigilant," comes from the word which means to "watch" or to be "watching." Paul used the word in a warning of error that would arise affecting the Ephesian church, "For I know this that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. Therefore **watch**, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears," Acts 20:29-31.

Watching is not just a duty for elders, but for all the church. The church at Corinth were chided, "**Watch**, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong," 1 Corinthians 16:13. To Colossae he said, "Continue earnestly in prayer, being **vigilant** in it with thanksgiving," Colossians 2:4. To Thessalonica he said, "Therefore let us not sleep, as others *do*, but let us **watch** and be sober," 1 Thessalonians 5:6.

One of the seven churches of Asia, Sardis was told, "Be **watchful**, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God. Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent. Therefore if you **will not watch**, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you," Revelation 3:2,3

In discussing the end of time, and the fact that its coming was going to be a surprise, Jesus said, "It is like a man going to a far country, who left his house and gave authority to his servants, and to each his work, and commanded the

doorkeeper to **watch**. **Watch** therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming—in the evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning—lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping. And what I say to you, I say to all: **Watch!**”

Castles and ancient lands are filled with lore and romance. But they all fail when compared to the strength of our God. The words from the pen of Martin Luther in 1529 still ring true, “A mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing; Our helper He amid the flood of mortal ills prevailing: For still our ancient foe doth seek to work us woe; His craft and power are great, and, armed with cruel hate, on earth is not His equal.”

—Scott