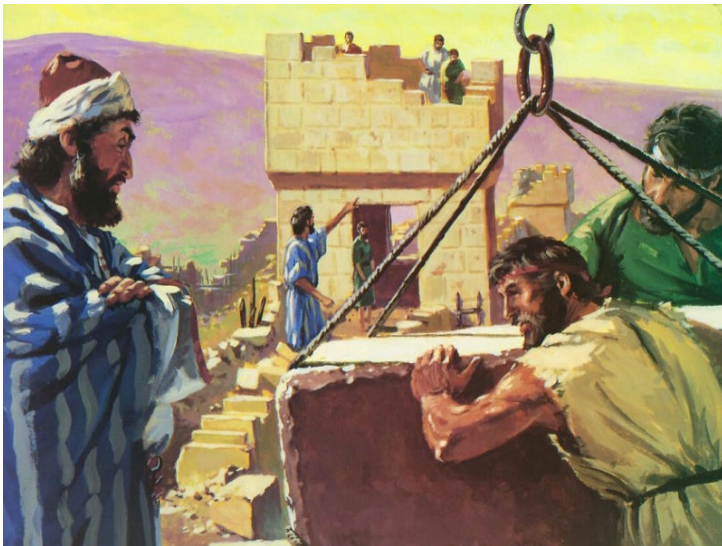


Nehemiah: God's Wall Builder, Principles in Leadership

4. Nehemiah Chapter 3: Building the walls and Gates of Jerusalem



Introduction to Chapter 3

In Nehemiah Chapter 2 Nehemiah prays and fasts for 4 months before coming before King Artaxerxes of Persia. Finally on Nisan 444 B.C., (March/April), he comes before the king and allows the king and queen to see his depressed and mourning face on the events taking place in Jerusalem. The king seeing his sadness asks him to explain. Nehemiah then describes the reason for sadness, and the condition of Jerusalem, then asks Nehemiah what he wants.

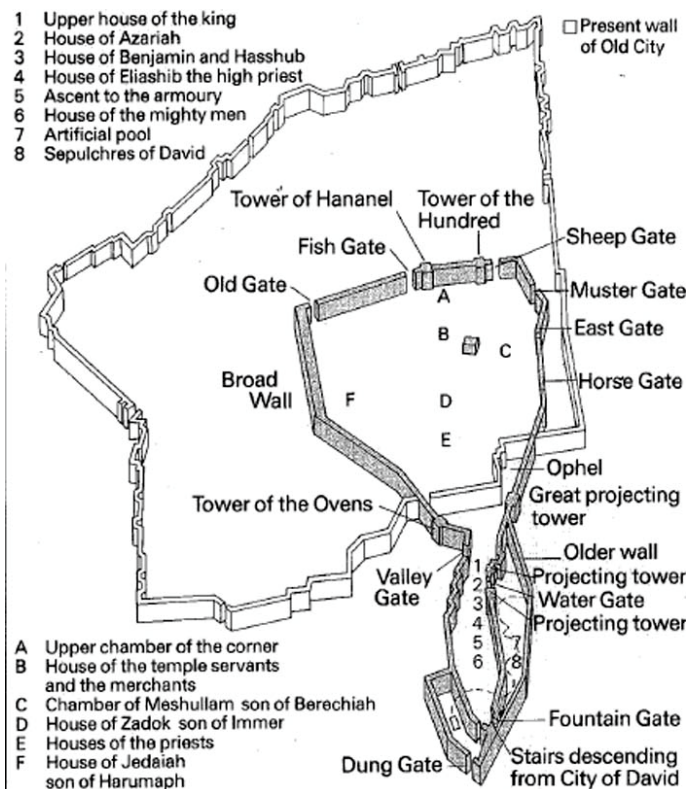
Nehemiah requests permission to go to Jerusalem, to rebuild the walls of the city, restoring its secure position in the land. Little did the king of Persia know, this is what Nehemiah was prayed. Artaxerxes I the first was merely a tool in God's hand to grant Nehemiah his prayers and allow Jerusalem to be restored, its walls and streets. Not only did the king grant Nehemiah the permission, resources and authority he even provided the security of his army captains to complete for his safe passage.

When Nehemiah arrives in Jerusalem from Susa, he remains quiet about his authority and mission for 3-days; he then goes out at night to survey the city from the Valley Gate. He heads south to the Dung Gate and around to the Fountain Gate and turns back and returns to the Valley Gate. He then proclaims his mission to rebuild the city of Jerusalem and its walls. The people agree, but opposition develops from Sanballat the Horite, Tobiah the Ammonite and Gershem the Arab.

In Chapter 3, the assignments to build the walls and gates of Jerusalem described. To really understand this chapter beyond its historical context, we need to understand the role the city of Jerusalem and its walls and gates play in the Bible. The first point is to understand the meaning of Jerusalem.

The Meaning of Jerusalem

Just why is Jerusalem so important? If you read the stories in today's paper, it seems as if the whole world



concerns itself with this city. Why does the Bible and God seem to think this city is so important?

The first mention of Jerusalem in the Bible goes back to the time of Abraham in Genesis chapter 12, God called Abraham from the city of Ur (Modern day Iraq) to the land of Moriah (Modern day Jerusalem) about 2100 B.C.. When Abraham arrived in the land God promised him, God told Abraham "All peoples on earth will be blessed through you" (Genesis 12:3). God promised to make him a "great nation" and to bless those who bless him. Later Abraham meets Melchizedek the King of Salem (Jerusalem) who is both the king and priest of the city. He blessed Abraham in the name of the God Most High, Abraham in turn tithed to the king of Jerusalem (Salem).

So from the earliest parts of scripture, we see Jerusalem has played an important role for the people of God, the descendents of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

God told David, Jerusalem was the only site he wanted for a Temple to be built. David purchased the land, and Solomon his son built God's House on Mt. Moriah in Jerusalem. Mt. Moriah, is the same location where God promised Abraham he would be a blessing to all peoples on earth. In Jerusalem God would establish His presence and identity on earth. Jerusalem was God's city, where the people of God would dwell.

God has great plans for Jerusalem, in the *Messianic Age*, Jerusalem will be the capital city of the earth.



From Jerusalem, the Lord of Host will reign over the world and his saints will reign and rule with Him.

16 And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles.

17 And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain. **Zechariah 14:16-17**

1 I lifted up mine eyes again, and looked, and behold a man with a measuring line in his hand.

2 Then said I, Whither goest thou? And he said unto me, To measure Jerusalem, to see what is the breadth thereof, and what is the length thereof.

3 And, behold, the angel that talked with me went forth, and another angel went out to meet him,

4 And said unto him, Run, speak to this young man, saying, Jerusalem shall be inhabited as towns without walls for the multitude of men and cattle therein:

5 For I, saith the LORD, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her.

10 Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the LORD.

11 And many nations shall be joined to the LORD in that day, and shall be my people: and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto thee.

12 And the LORD shall inherit Judah his portion in the holy land, and shall choose Jerusalem again.

13 Be silent, O all flesh, before the LORD: for he is raised up out of his holy habitation. **Zechariah 2:1-5,10-13**

Jerusalem is the city of God, it's the city where God Himself will dwell and have fellowship with the people of the earth. God plan's for Jerusalem go beyond this location in Israel. God has eternal plans for Jerusalem; Jerusalem will be eternal home of God's people. God will personally wipe away tears from our eyes, and we will live with God in Jerusalem.

1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.

4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. **Revelation 21:1-4**

So Jerusalem is the city of God, where the people of God will dwell. Nehemiah, in rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem was rebuilding the city of God, for the people of God. In the same way, we as Christians are rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem by restoring people to the Lord. In the New Jerusalem, there is no temple, because the whole city is the Temple. The people in the city are the bricks in the Temple. So everyone restored to the Lord is part of the House of God, the people of God.

4 unto whom coming, a living stone, rejected indeed of men, but with God elect, precious,

5 ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

6 Because it is contained in scripture, Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: And he that believeth on him shall not be put to shame. **1 Peter 2:4-6**

We are called to rebuild Jerusalem, stone by stone, by restoring people from their fallen state. As the stones and rubble of Jerusalem were restored, we can do the same and restore people.

The meaning of the walls and gates of Jerusalem

Why did cities have walls? The main purposes of walls were security, to keep the outside threats at bay behind the walls. Those threats included thieves, robbers, bandits, wild animals and strangers. Walls allowed cities to check who was entering and leaving, it allowed control and security over the city. People in the city could sleep as others kept post on the walls of the city. A city without walls was an insecure city.

The enemies of Jerusalem did not want a secure city. They wanted Jerusalem to be a weak city without walls, secondly they did not want the Jews in control of the city.



Jerusalem for eternity will be the capital city of the God of Creation. The walls will measure 1400 miles, long 1400 miles, wide and 1400 miles high (12,000 furlongs). The foundation of the city wall will be made of twelve precious stones, while the wall itself is described as pure gold, 144 cubits thick (216-feet).

10 And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, 11 having the glory of God: her light was like unto a stone most precious, as it were a jasper stone, clear as crystal:

12 having a wall great and high; having twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels; and names written thereon, which are [the names] of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel:

13 on the east were three gates; and on the north three gates; and on the south three gates; and on the west three gates.

14 And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

15 And he that spake with me had for a measure a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof.

16 And the city lieth foursquare, and the length thereof is as great as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs: the length and the breadth and the height thereof are equal.

17 And he measured the wall thereof, a hundred and forty and four cubits, [according to] the measure of a man, that is, of an angel.

18 And the building of the wall thereof was jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto pure glass.

19 The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, chalcedony; the fourth, emerald;

20 the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, topaz; the tenth, chrysoprase; the eleventh, jacinth; the twelfth, amethyst.

21 And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; each one of the several gates was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.

22 And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God the Almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple thereof. **Revelation 21:10-21**

The meaning of the gates of Jerusalem

The gate of the city is the entrance into a city. In the city of Jerusalem the gates had unique names and purposes. Different groups entered the city through these gates, the East gate for example was for the priest and the Levites to have direct access to the Temple. While the Dung Gate, was where people would take out their refuse or garbage to the Kidron valley. In the age to come, the city of Jerusalem will have 12 gates, with 12 angels guarding these gates, the gates will be named after the 12 tribes of Israel. Through Israel, we have admittance into the Kingdom of God, the Messiah is from Israel, and God promised Abraham the father of Israel, through him all the peoples of the earth will be blessed.

The gates of Jerusalem allow admittance into the city of God. Those who built of the walls and gates of Jerusalem in Nehemiah's day ranged from priests, to goldsmiths, to perfume makers to women. We also build gates into the city of Jerusalem, the city of God. We become the access point into Jerusalem, the city of God.

Nehemiah 3

Rebuilding the Wall

From the Sheep Gate to the Fish Gate

¹ Then Eliashib the high priest rose up with his brethren the priests and built the **Sheep Gate**; they consecrated it and hung its doors. They built as far as the Tower of the Hundred, ² and consecrated it, then as far as the Tower of Hananel. ² Next to *Eliashib* ³ the men of Jericho built. And next to them Zaccur the son of Imri built. **Nehemiah 3:1-2**

Eliashib the high priest: This was the descendent of Joshua the High Priest who is mentioned in Zechariah. The priesthood build the Sheep Gate, this was the gate which sheep were brought into the city. This group included the Jewish Priesthood, the continued the building to the Tower of the Hundred.

This is the location where the crippled, lame and blind were healed in the pool when the angel would trouble the water. Jesus healed a man who had been crippled for 38-years.

² Now there is in Jerusalem by the sheep [gate] a pool, which is called in Hebrew Bethesda, having five porches.

³ In these lay a multitude of them that were sick, blind, halt, withered, [waiting for the moving of the water.]

⁴ [for an angel of the Lord went down at certain seasons into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the waters stepped in was made whole, with whatsoever disease he was holden.] **John 5:2-3**

The priest did not see it beneath them to do the manual labor for the walls of Jerusalem under Nehemiah's leadership.



Tower of the Hundred: Is a military outlook to keep watch on the northern approaches to Jerusalem, the hundred could mean the height of 100-cubits, (150-feet).

Tower of Hananel: A second tower north of the eastern gate, these towers allowed the lookouts to have a view into the distance of any approaching groups of men. Today in Jerusalem the Tower of David stands as reminder of this ancient outlook at the walls.

The men of Jericho: The descendants and people all worked together with a common goal, to build the walls of Jerusalem. The priests and men worked together. This is how we are to advance the Kingdom of God, building Jerusalem together as one body.

¹¹ but all these worketh the one and the same Spirit, dividing to each one severally even as he will.

¹² For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of the body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ.

¹³ For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free; and were all made to drink of one Spirit.

¹⁴ For the body is not one member, but many. **Romans 12:11-14**

From the Fish Gate to the Old Gate

³ Also the sons of Hassenaah built the **Fish Gate**; they laid its beams and hung its doors with its bolts and bars. ⁴ And next to them Meremoth the son of Urijah, the son of Koz, ⁵ made repairs. Next to them Meshullam the son of Berechiah, the son of Meshezabel, made repairs. Next to them Zadok the son of Baana made repairs. ⁶ Next to them the Tekoites made repairs; but their nobles did not put their shoulders ⁷ to the work of their Lord. **Nehemiah 3:3-5**

Fish Gate: The is the gate where the fish caught from near Tyre and Galilee were brought to market. This gate is associated with the Damascus Gate today. The merchants brought their products to market here.

Meshullam: Had given his daughter to marriage to the son of Tobiah, the enemy of Nehemiah. His daughter could have been an informant against Nehemiah to Tobiah, reporting on the situation in Jerusalem. Even today, there are people who are considered in the body of Christ, but are opposed to the work of the Gospel.

¹⁷ Moreover in those days the nobles of Judah sent many letters unto Tobiah, and [the letters] of Tobiah came unto them.

¹⁸ For there were many in Judah sworn unto him, because he was the son-in-law of Shecaniah the son of Arah; and his son Jehohanan had taken the daughter of Meshullam the son of Berechiah to wife. **Nehemiah 6:17-18**

Tekoites: The nobles of Tekoah felt the physical labor beneath them to advance them. This was the home town of Amos the prophet. They were forever noted in Nehemiah's book for the lack of help. This group of nobles is a negative example of just how not to be. The most menial work in the Kingdom of

God is better than any earthly wage. Building the wall is called by Nehemiah “The work of the Lord”. When we hold back or think some aspect of kingdom building is beneath us, we are the looser.

From the Old Gate to the Valley Gate

⁶ Moreover Jehoiada the son of Paseah and Meshullam the son of Besodeiah repaired the Old Gate; they laid its beams and hung its doors, with its bolts and bars. ⁷ And next to them Melatiah the Gibeonite, Jadon the Meronothite, the men of Gibeon and Mizpah, repaired the residence^[a] of the governor of the region beyond the River. ⁸ Next to him Uzziel the son of Harhaiah, one of the goldsmiths, made repairs. Also next to him Hananiah, one^[b] of the perfumers, made repairs; and they fortified Jerusalem as far as the Broad Wall. ⁹ And next to them Rephaiah the son of Hur, leader of half the district of Jerusalem, made repairs. ¹⁰ Next to them Jedaiah the son of Harumaph made repairs in front of his house. And next to him Hattush the son of Hashabniah made repairs.

¹¹ Malchijah the son of Harim and Hashub the son of Pahath-Moab repaired another section, as well as the Tower of the Ovens. ¹² And next to him was Shallum the son of Hallohesh, leader of half the district of Jerusalem; he and his daughters made repairs. **Nehemiah 3:6-12**

Old gate: Also known as the Jeshanah Gate, it was at the northwest corner of Jerusalem. It was also known as the Ephraim Gate.

One of the goldsmiths: The broad wall was repaired by people noted for their professions. We have goldsmith and **perfumers** makers who involved in the construction. They all worked together with the common goal of building the walls of Jerusalem. A broad range people including leaders and daughters are listed as being involved in the work of the wall. The daughters are noted as working alongside their father in construction of the wall. Contrast this to the nobles of Tekoah who thought it beneath them.

Tower of the Ovens: Located on the western wall, this could have in the street of the bakers.

21 Then Zedekiah the king commanded, and they committed Jeremiah into the court of the guard; and they gave him daily a loaf of bread out of the bakers' street, until all the bread in the city was spent. Thus Jeremiah remained in the court of the guard. Jeremiah 37:21

From the Valley Gate to the Refuse Gate

¹³ Hanun and the inhabitants of Zanoah repaired the Valley Gate. They built it, hung its doors with its bolts and bars, and repaired a thousand cubits of the wall as far as the Refuse Gate. **Nehemiah 3:13**



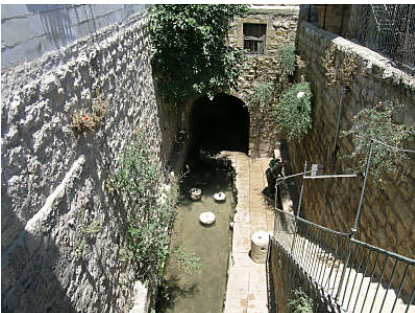
Valley Gate: This is the gate Nehemiah first left to examine the walls of Jerusalem. This was gate near the governor's residence as noted in verse 7, where Nehemiah was staying.

From the Refuse Gate to the Fountain Gate

¹⁴ Malchijah the son of Rechab, leader of the district of Beth Haccerem, repaired the Refuse Gate; he built it and hung its doors with its bolts and bars. **Nehemiah 3:14**

Refuse Gate: This gate is also known as the Dung Gate, garbage was taken to the Kidron valley.

From the Fountain Gate to the Water Gate



¹⁵ Shallun the son of Col-Hozeh, leader of the district of Mizpah, repaired the Fountain Gate; he built it, covered it, hung its doors with its bolts and bars, and repaired the wall of the Pool of Shelah by the King's Garden, as far as the stairs that go down from the City of David. ¹⁶ After him Nehemiah the son of Azbuk, leader of half the district of Beth Zur, made repairs as far as the place in front of the tombs^[a] of David, to the man-made pool, and as far as the House of the Mighty.

¹⁷ After him the Levites, under Rehum the son of Bani, made repairs. Next to him Hashabiah, leader of half the district of Keilah, made repairs for his district. ¹⁸ After him their brethren, under Bavai^[b] the son of Henadad, leader of the other half of the district of Keilah, made repairs. ¹⁹ And next to him Ezer the son of Jeshua, the leader of Mizpah, repaired another section in front of the Ascent to the Armory at the buttress. ²⁰ After him Baruch the son of Zabbai^[c] carefully repaired the other section, from the buttress to the door of the house of Eliashib the high priest. ²¹ After him Meremoth the son of Urijah, the son of Koz,^[d] repaired another section, from the door of the

house of Eliashib to the end of the house of Eliashib.

²² And after him the priests, the men of the plain, made repairs. ²³ After him Benjamin and Hasshub made repairs opposite their house. After them Azariah the son of Maaseiah, the son of Ananiah, made repairs by his house. ²⁴ After him Binnui the son of Henadad repaired another section, from the house of Azariah to the buttress, even as far as the corner. ²⁵ Palal the son of Uzai *made repairs* opposite the buttress, and on the tower which projects from the king's upper house that was by the court of the prison. After him Pedaiah the son of Parosh *made repairs*. **Nehemiah 3:15-25**



Fountain Gate: The gate to access the water of Siloam.

Pool of Shelah: Also known as the pool of Siloam.

Tombs of David: David was buried within the city of Jerusalem.

House of the Mighty: The tombs of David's mighty men, also in Jerusalem.

From the Water Gate to the Horse Gate

²⁶ Moreover the Nethinim who dwelt in Ophel *made repairs* as far as *the place* in front of the **Water Gate** toward the east, and on the projecting tower. ²⁷ After them the Tekoites repaired another section, next to the great projecting tower, and as far as the wall of Ophel.

²⁸ Beyond the **Horse Gate** the priests made repairs, each in front of his *own* house. ²⁹ After them Zadok the son of Immer made repairs in front of his *own* house. **Nehemiah 3:26-28**

Water Gate

Horse Gate



From the East Gate to the Miphkad Gate

After him Shemaiah the son of Shechaniah, the keeper of the **East Gate**, made repairs. ³⁰ After him Hananiah the son of Shelemiah, and Hanun, the sixth son of Zalaph, repaired another section. After him Meshullam the son of Berechiah made repairs in front of his dwelling. ³¹ After him Malchijah, one of the goldsmiths, made repairs as far as the house of the Nethinim and of the merchants, in front of the **Miphkad^[k] Gate**, and as far as the upper room at the corner. ³² And between the upper room at the corner, as far as the **Sheep Gate**, the goldsmiths and the merchants made repairs. **Nehemiah 3:29b-32**

East Gate: The gate of the Jewish Priesthood. The gate is sealed today, by Muslim whose goal was to prevent the return of the Messiah to Jerusalem.

Miphkad Gate: The inspection gate

Sheep Gate: The starting point.

- 1 Upper house of the king
- 2 House of Azariah
- 3 House of Benjamin and Hasshub
- 4 House of Eliashib the high priest
- 5 Ascent to the armoury
- 6 House of the mighty men
- 7 Artificial pool
- 8 Sepulchres of David

