

ZEAL FOR THE LORD: NEHEMIAH 3:1-32

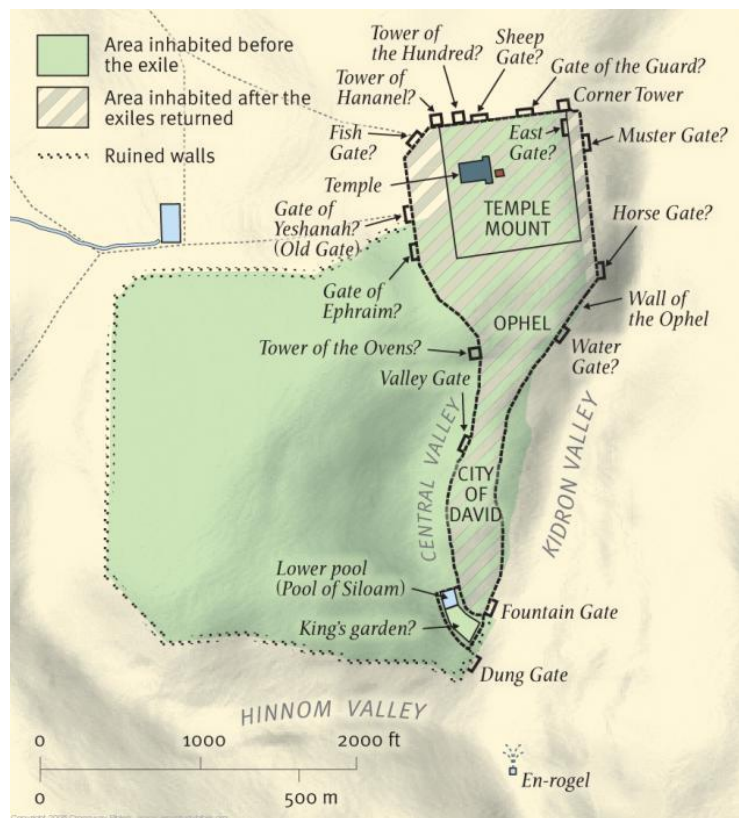
I. Review

- A. God punishes Israel’s unbelief through an imposed exile at the hands of the Babylonians. Jerusalem is destroyed in 586 BC.
- B. God raised up Cyrus, King of Persia, to conquer Babylon and release Israel to their homeland.
- C. Nehemiah hears a “state of the union” about Jerusalem. Prays and petitions Artaxerxes for release.
- D. Nehemiah returns to Jerusalem to survey the damage and exhort the Jews to the rebuilding work.

Then I said to them, "You see the trouble we are in, how Jerusalem lies in ruins with its gates burned. Come, let us build the wall of Jerusalem, that we may no longer suffer derision." ¹⁸ And I told them of the hand of my God that had been upon me for good, and also of the words that the king had spoken to me. And they said, "Let us rise up and build." So they strengthened their hands for the good work. (Neh 2:17-18)

Jerusalem at the Time of Nehemiah (c. 445)

Though Nehemiah gives a careful listing of the sections of Jerusalem’s walls that were rebuilt, it is difficult to be certain exactly which walls and gates he was referring to. The city had extended beyond the city of David and the Temple Mount by the time of Hezekiah, but it appears that only the Temple Mount and the city of David were enclosed within Nehemiah’s walls. An ambitious project nonetheless, it was completed in only 52 days, providing Jerusalem with some measure of protection from its enemies. (From ESVSB)



II. Nehemiah 3:1-32

Then Eliashib the high priest rose up with his brothers the priests, and they built the Sheep Gate. They consecrated it and set its doors. They consecrated it as far as the Tower of the Hundred, as far as the Tower of Hananel. ² And next to him the men the men of Jericho built. And next to them Zaccur the son of Imri built. ³ The sons of Hassenaah built the Fish Gate. They laid its beams and set its doors its bolts, and its bars. ⁴ And next to them Meremoth the son of Uriah, son of Hakkoz repaired. And next to them Meshullam the son of Berechiah, son of Meshezabel repaired. And next to them Zadok the son of Baana repaired. ⁵ And next to them the Tekoites repaired, but their nobles would not stoop to serve their Lord. ⁶ Joiada the son of Paseah and Meshullam the son of Besodeiah repaired the Gate of Yeshanah. They laid its beams and set its doors, its bolts, and its bars. ⁷ And next to them repaired Melatiah the Gibeonite and Jadon the Meronothite, the men of Gibeon and of Mizpah, the seat of the governor of the province Beyond the River. ⁸ Next to them Uzziel the son of Harhaiah, goldsmiths, repaired. Next to him Hananiah, one of the perfumers, repaired, and they restored Jerusalem as far as the Broad Wall. ⁹ Next to them Rephaiah the son of Hur, ruler of half the district of Jerusalem, repaired. ¹⁰ Next to them Jedaiah the son of Harumaph repaired opposite his house. And next to him Hattush the son of Hashabneiah repaired. ¹¹ Malchijah the son of Harim and Hasshub the son of Pahath-moab repaired another section and the Tower of the Ovens. ¹² Next to him Shallum the son of Hallohesh, ruler of half the district of Jerusalem, repaired, he and his daughters. ¹³ Hanun and the inhabitants of Zanoah repaired the Valley Gate. They rebuilt it and set its doors, its bolts, and its bars, and repaired a thousand cubits of the wall, as far as the Dung Gate. ¹⁴ Malchijah...repaired the Dung Gate. He rebuilt it and set its doors, its bolts, and its bars. ¹⁵ And Shallum...repaired the Fountain Gate. He rebuilt it and covered it and set its doors, its bolts, and its bars. And he built the wall of the Pool of Shelah of 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, ... repaired to a point opposite the tombs of David, as far as the artificial pool, and as far as the house of the mighty men. ¹⁷ After him the Levites repaired: Rehum the son of Bani. Next to him Hashabiah, ruler of half the district of Keilah, repaired for his district. ¹⁸ After him their brothers repaired: Bavvai the son of Henadad, ruler of half the district of Keilah. ¹⁹ Next to him Ezer the son of Jeshua, ruler of Mizpah, repaired another section opposite the ascent to the armory at the buttress. ²⁰ After him Baruch the son of Zabbai repaired another section from the buttress to the door of the house of Eliashib the high priest. ²¹ After him Meremoth the son of Uriah, son of Hakkoz repaired another section from the door of the house of Eliashib to the end of the house of Eliashib. ²² After him the priests, the men of the surrounding area, repaired. ²³ After them Benjamin and Hasshub repaired opposite their house. After them Azariah the son of Maaseiah, son of Ananiah repaired beside his own house... ²⁷ After him the Tekoites repaired another section opposite the great projecting tower as far as the wall of Ophel. ²⁸ Above the Horse Gate the priests repaired, each one opposite his own house. ²⁹ After them Zadok the son of Immer repaired opposite his own house... After him Meshullam the son of Berechiah repaired opposite his chamber. ³¹ After him Malchijah, one of the goldsmiths, repaired as far as the house of the temple servants and of the merchants, opposite the Muster Gate, and to the upper chamber of the corner. ³² And between the upper chamber of the corner and the Sheep Gate the goldsmiths and the merchants repaired. (Neh 3:1-32)

1. Why do you think the Sheep Gate had that name (v. 1)? Why do you think the priests worked there?
2. What does the fact that the priests grabbed a shovel say about true leadership (see v. 5)? What are the avenues in our modern (Dallas) church where we as pastors and church members ought to exhibit this spirit?

“The stairway to the ministry is not a grand staircase but a back stairwell that leads down to the servants quarters.”
-Dr. Edmund Clowney

3. Describe the diversity of the workers represented here? What does this say about what the church might be capable of?
4. How does Philippians bear out this reality?

*“Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are **standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel,** ²⁸ and not frightened in anything by your opponents. This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God.” (Phil 1:27-28)*

5. What is the significance of the fact that there are no “professionals” (no stonemasons, no carpenters, etc.) mentioned in this building project? Who is involved? Implications?

“And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, ¹² to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, ¹³ until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood...” (Eph 4:11-13)

“Your life is much bigger than a good job, an understanding spouse, and non-delinquent kids. It is bigger than beautiful gardens, nice vacations, and fashionable clothes. In reality, you are part of something immense, something that began before you were born and will continue after you die. God is rescuing fallen humanity, transporting them into his kingdom, and progressively shaping them into his likeness—and he wants you to be a part of it.”
- Paul David Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer’s Hands*, 20.

6. What name is conspicuously missing from the record of builders? Why? What does this imply?

“So the wall was finished on the twenty-fifth day of the month Elul, in fifty-two days. ¹⁶ And when all our enemies heard of it, all the nations around us were afraid and fell greatly in their own esteem, for they perceived that this work had been accomplished with the help of our God.” (Neh 6:15-16)