Rebuilding the Wall: Every Worker in His Place

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References: Nehemiah 3-4, Nehemiah 3:1; Nehemiah 3:2-3; Nehemiah 3:4; Nehemiah 3:5; Nehemiah 3:6-7; Nehemiah 3:8-9; Nehemiah 3:10-12; Nehemiah 3:13-15; Nehemiah 3:16; Nehemiah 3:17-21; Nehemiah 3:22-25; Nehemiah 3:26-30; Nehemiah 3:31-32; Nehemiah 4:1-3; John 5:2

Leaders Leading the Way

All right, well, we're going back to Nehemiah chapter 3 and verse 1. And we made some comment on this verse last week when we finished off. It says:

> [Nehemiah 3:1 NKJV]
> 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, and consecrated it, then as far as the Tower of Hananel.

And we pointed out last week that it was wonderful that Eliashib the high priest was the one who started the work. It wasn't just—what's the word I want now—it wasn't just that he did some work; he **started** the work. And it's most fitting that as a high priest, he would be the one who started the work.

I've been meditating a fair amount on that kind of a theme recently, and it is important that the leaders lead. It's easy to say, "I'm the leader, you guys get to work. I got a long whip, and I go bang, bang, and you guys got to do the work." But that's not the way it is in the work of God. Thank you, I probably will need that water. So good for Eliashib; he set a wonderful example.

And I'm not sure whether we commented on the next verse, which says:

> [Nehemiah 3:2-3 NKJV]
> [2] Next to Eliashib the men of Jericho built. And next to them Zaccur the son of Imri built. [3] Also the sons of Hassenaah built the Fish Gate; they laid its beams and hung its doors with its bolts and bars.

So what do we learn from all this? Well, the men of Jericho were working next. How far is Jericho away from Jerusalem? Well, it's a long distance. Last time I made that trip, I think it was a three-quarter of an hour drive, maybe an hour drive. And if you're walking, it's uphill all the way. And if you're on a donkey, it's not very pleasant all the way. The men of Jericho were involved. Praise the Lord.

Is there a work of God going on somewhere? Have you ever taken a trip to go somewhere to help and to build the work of God? And many of you say, "Yeah." Well, what a wonderful thing that is.

God Keeps the Record

And so what have you got here in chapter 3 of Nehemiah? Many of you have read the whole chapter. It's just a list of names of people who worked and what work they did. So I ask you the question: it's amazing, but somehow God saw fit to record, and to retain, and to print a list of all the things these people did.

So what if there was a list made of the work that was done by people at 16th Avenue Gospel Chapel on the eleventh day of October 2026? And it would read one name after another—your name. And then what comes after that? Were you working on the wall? Did you speak to somebody about Jesus? Did you get on the phone and encourage somebody? Did you spend the time between the first meeting and the second meeting downstairs talking about Jesus? What did you do today? And I wonder, is it possible some could have a name and nothing beside it, and some might have a name and a lot of things beside it?

So all that is: what if the Lord were to have made a list today of what the people at 16th Avenue Gospel Chapel did for Him today? And what is wrong with that sentence? Well, what's wrong with the sentence is "what if"—because He did, didn't He? Doesn't He keep a record of everything? And you can imagine on Judgment Day, going through the long list, and the Lord says, "Isn't that interesting? This is Thursday," and the Lord looks at Thursday, and He says to you on Judgment Day, "This is Thursday, the whatever on whatever in whatever year, and there's absolutely nothing that you did for Me today. What's the matter?" Has there ever been a day like that? Is it possible there could be a day like that in the future?

What are you going to learn from Nehemiah chapter 3? Well, you're going to get a lot of names. You'll mispronounce most of them, but they'll be there. And you're going to learn that God keeps a record. It's not what if; it's because He **does**. That's what the record is all about. Praise the Lord.

So anyway, that's what we learned on these first three. What did they do when they built the gates? Verse 3:

> [Nehemiah 3:2-3 NKJV]
> [3] Also the sons of Hassenaah built the Fish Gate; they laid its beams and hung its doors with its bolts and bars.

How did they build? They built thoroughly. They built not only for tomorrow, but they probably built for a hundred years. They built in a rigorous, in a well-planned, well-designed, and complete fashion. Have you ever seen a job half done? What do you think about a job half done? You say, "Well, it would have been better if the job had been finished." And these men, they didn't just build a gate, but they laid the beams, set up the doors, they set up the locks—that's what this wall is all about: to keep the bad things out and to let the good ones go out so that they can do the work of God and come back—and lastly, the bars thereof. So you say, "Well, that's pretty good."

Practicing on the Wall

Let's keep reading.

> [Nehemiah 3:4 NKJV]
> And next to them Meremoth the son of Urijah, the son of Koz, made repairs.

You know him? No. You know anything about him? No. If you were to study more, would you learn much about him? No. What's his name there for? Well, God knew what He was doing. It's going to be a big day on Judgment Day for this man we've never heard of, Meremoth the son of Urijah, the son of Koz. Big day coming up for him. Hallelujah.

> Next to them Meshullam the son of Berechiah, the son of Meshezabel, made repairs.

Do you know him? I thought to myself, "I've seen that name, Meshullam. I've seen that name." So this evening, I decided to look up Meshullam. I've got it right here in the concordance. Let me read you what it says about Meshullam. It says right here at the top: Meshullam. And it says: number one, he was a scribe; number two, he was; number three; number four; number five; number twenty-one—there were twenty-one different Meshullams! Okay, is that a big deal? Yeah! You didn't know much about Meshullam; I didn't know much about Meshullam. God says there are twenty-one of them, and they're all good guys doing big work. Most of them are listed in the book of Nehemiah. So you're going to read a lot about Meshullam.

What do we know about him? It says here, verse 4:

> Next to them Meshullam the son of Berechiah, the son of Meshezabel, made repairs.

Okay, turn over now to verse number 30:

> [Nehemiah 3:30 NKJV]
> 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.

Where's Meshullam again? He's in this list twice! The first time, where's he working? He's working between Meremoth and Zadok. That's all we know. Meremoth working here, Zadok there, Meshullam working in the middle. Now we've got Meshullam in verse 30, and where's he working? He's working in front of his dwelling. What's that mean? Well, he started working for somebody else, and he did the work for somebody else, and then he said, "I think I better go and build a wall near me too." By the time he finished building the wall for somebody else, that would mean that the enemy weren't going to come in there, but he hadn't done the work in his own house. So he goes back and he does his own house next.

Is that a good policy? Yeah! Why would that be a good policy? I got to be careful when I say things like this, but I'm going to say it anyway: if you're going to make mistakes, make it on somebody else's house! Get all the practice and do it on your own house. Does that make sense? If you were going to be a parent, where would you start? Well, you'd start on somebody else's kids, wouldn't you? And you'd have a Sunday school class, and you'd have

youth group here and there, and you'd spend all your time working with these kids, and you'd make all your mistakes on somebody else's kids so when you had your own kids... Is that just a joke? No. There's a whole lot of seriousness in that.

A lot of people say, "I'll look after myself." When you get there, will you have enough knowledge to look after yourself? And many people don't. What a tragedy. It isn't just you make a mistake looking after your own kids; if you didn't start looking after somebody else, where would you make your most serious mistake? On yourself! If you don't know how to look after somebody else, how could you possibly know enough to look after yourself the way you ought to? You're blinded when you look at yourself. You look in the mirror—many of you even choose the right mirror so you look good!

Okay, so I'm stretching some of these thoughts here, but they're important thoughts. There's a wall to be built. That wall, we've learned, that wall is going to keep evil out and it's going to give peace within. Make sure you build the wall right. Good man, Meshullam. And so we're going to read a lot about him here and there, and it'll be him or some other people. Actually, I said Strong in his concordance lists twenty-one different Meshullams, and then later on he says, no, there are seventeen. So what's that mean? Can't believe Strong's concordance either? Or does it possibly mean that some of these twenty-one listed are actually the same as some of the other twenty-one, and you put them all together and there's maybe only seventeen? We don't know much about them, but it's interesting that we get those two numbers.

The Tekoites and Nobles Who Refused

All right, let's keep on reading here. Verse 5:

> [Nehemiah 3:5 NKJV]
> Next to them the Tekoites made repairs; but their nobles did not put their shoulders to the work of their Lord.

So what do we know about the Tekoites? They come from Tekoa. And Tekoa was a small town, I think ten miles, ten kilometers—maybe more or less—away from Jerusalem. Amos, the preacher whose book is named in the Old Testament, Amos was from Tekoa. And he was a good man. What do we know about the Tekoites? Well, their leaders didn't do very much. Shame on them. Their members did. The villagers, the workers, they worked, praise the Lord, but their leaders didn't do very much. What a shame.

And I guess we'll get to that later. Here we are, pick it up in verse 27:

> [Nehemiah 3:27 NKJV]
> After them the Tekoites repaired another section, next to the great projecting tower, and as far as the wall of Ophel.

These guys were zealous! Their leaders weren't zealous, but they were zealous. And they worked in one area, and they worked in another. Oftentimes, you sit there and you say, "I'm going to follow the boss." And other times you say, "My boss isn't worth following. I'm going to do what's right. My boss doesn't do what's right; I'm going to do what's right." In a family, you often will say, "My father didn't do what's right. By the grace of God, I'm going to do what's right." Often in an assembly, you see exactly the same thing: the leaders, the men in oversight, the men leading the group, the older ones, they didn't always do what's right, but by the grace of God, I can do what's right.

I keep on telling you the story about John Reed. He's the good guy who preached here when he was a hundred years old. His sermon was lovely; his sermon was simply, "I love Him, don't you?" Okay, that's a good thing to say when you're a hundred years old! When he first became a Christian, he was twelve years old. He said to the man who led him to the Lord, he said, "Where should I go to church?" The man said, "I think you should go to that little gospel hall just down the street from you." He said, "Well, I could, but..." He said, "What do you mean?" He said, "I've been down there; there are no men in that church." And this man said, "You go down there, and you can be a man in that church." Twelve years old, just saved! I think he was there for twelve or fifteen years. He always was the only man in that church. What do you think happened to him? He became a mighty man of God, and his family did a great work for God right here in the city of Vancouver.

Okay, don't wait for your fathers to do what's right. You go do what's right. Get started! Do something! And after you've done something, the next day you can do something more. Hallelujah.

All right, let's keep reading here. Maybe that's as far as we should go; let some of you others comment. Anything on those first five verses? We'll get to some other guys in a minute. Any other comments on Zoom or here at the chapel? And by the way, welcome to all of you on Zoom. Some of you may have joined recently. We're in Nehemiah chapter 3. I think you all know that, but you know it more now. Very good.

A Unified Pattern and Purpose

Gene: Okay, Harold, if I could make a few comments as we're going.

Harold: Yeah, you go right ahead, Gene.

Gene: Yeah, okay. Well, in the beginning of this chapter, we read that in the very first verse, it's the high priests that are mentioned and their brethren. And they're the ones that are to be setting the examples for the people of Israel. And they're the people to set the example for the people that are going to be living inside the walls of Jerusalem. And, you know, Jerusalem's a pretty big city. And it's amazing that the Lord put into the hearts of all these different people to do their part in building this great wall, this long wall, large wall. And it's amazing.

The Lord mentions all these different names to their credit. Whenever the Lord mentions names, it's usually for their credit or for their discredit. So the Lord is mentioning these names here. He's put into their hearts to join in this wonderful work of building the wall, which was to protect the people that would be living inside there, and also the temple as well in case of invasion by outsiders. So they're the first ones that are mentioned there. And then it's got the next building was the men of Jericho, and the next to them was building Zaccur the son of Imri. So all these names are mentioned there, and they got a credit for doing their work.

In verse 3, it says the Fish Gate did the sons of Hassenaah build. Now, there were many, many gates going into the city of Jerusalem because it's such a large city, it was such a large perimeter. So people had to get in from different directions into the city. So there were many gates that had to be built. But anyways, the Fish Gate was built on that side where the sea would be, and all the merchants that would bring their fish from Galilee or from Tyre and out from the ocean, they would come in through that Fish Gate to sell their fish to the citizens inside the wall there. So that was the Fish Gate.

And now it also talks about the Sheep Gate. Now, the Sheep Gate is a pretty important gate, and that's where all the sheep that would be slaughtered or put on the altars for the temple came in. And the temple was fairly close to where that gate was. So the shepherds would bring in those sheep that were to be sacrificed in through the Sheep Gate. And if you recall reading in the New Testament—now I can't remember exactly where it was, it was just before Jesus was going to go to the cross—and He came in through the Sheep Gate privately. It wasn't sort of a public thing, but He came in through the Sheep Gate because He was the Lamb of God that was going to be sacrificed there outside of Jerusalem. So that gate was

pretty important that the shepherds would go through that gate bringing their sacrifices of lambs in there to be sacrificed to the Lord.

Now all these gates, they had meanings. They had the East Gate, which was on the east side of Jerusalem. So people that were coming from that eastern side would be people that would be living far away in the east and coming that way. So anyways, the Lord has organized this thing just meticulously. It's not a city that's disorderly like Vancouver City is, where there's so much chaos and everything else. But this city was organized in the hands of the Lord. It wasn't left to man to organize the city and the walls and the temple and everything else; it was all done and prepared. The plans were all blueprinted and everything else by the Lord, because Jerusalem was a city of the great King. And so it had to be according to the pattern that the King would set for His city.

So it's just wonderful reading these things, the way the Lord had organized all these things here, and that He would put into the hearts of all these people to participate in doing their little bit or large bit to finish this wall off. And so we read on that the wall was finished, and Nehemiah, he went back to Babylon after that. And it's wonderful. You know something: when a city gets left in ruins like that from an invasion, it's almost impossible to rebuild a city like that. And it was only the mercies and the grace of God that He would gather people together like that to come back to Jerusalem and build the walls and build the temple and continue the worship to their God. Otherwise, they would have been scattered all over the world, and there would be no temple, there would be no city, there would be no walls. But the Lord always fulfills His promises. And this was one more promise that the Lord had fulfilled using all these men. And so that's why the names are all mentioned here, so that they would get a credit to their names in the building of the wall and fulfilling the Lord's desires for this city. Amen.

Harold: Any other comments, verses 1 to 5? Is the mic okay from here? Roy, can he be heard? Yeah? Okay.

Kenneth: Thanks, Brother Gene. Just follow up on his comment: the Sheep Gate is also mentioned in John 5, verse 2. And in a sense, in Singapore, my local church is Bethesda Hall Ang Mo Kio. So Ang Mo Kio is the area in Singapore, but we take our name from Bethesda Hall, which is also from John 5. John 5:2, reading from the NASB:

> [John 5:2 NKJV]
> Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew, Bethesda, having five porches.

So about this Sheep Gate, I have the same kind of reference where they believe that it's very close to the temple. It's a part of Jerusalem close to the temple, and therefore it's called the Sheep Gate where many of the sacrificial animals for the temple sacrifice, they will pass through this Sheep Gate, and therefore it's named that way.

And I think devotionally, when we read John chapter 10 as well, when the Lord Jesus says He is the door, the gate of the sheep, and no one can enter the sheepfold—the thief, they will try to come and steal, but the Lord Jesus is the door and He is also the shepherd which guards the door of the sheep. Therefore, devotionally in Nehemiah chapter 3, maybe that's why this Sheep Gate is mentioned the first, because it is a type of the Lord Jesus where He guards the sheep. The Lord Jesus is the one who is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

Also, the name of Eliashib is a theophoric name; it has the name of God in his name, El, Eliashib. So it's a reminder again that God has His presence. Even as Nehemiah took the leadership to gather all the different people, so we see all the different names. They may be from different tribes of Israel, and some of them, yeah, they're just friends and so on, and yet they're working together. All of them are working together. So under the leadership of God Himself actually, through Nehemiah and through the people, through the high priest, they consecrated the Sheep Gate and they built the doors. And then verse 1 in the Hebrew and in the NASB also, they consecrated the wall to the Tower of the Hundred. So again, some notes say that this Hundred is like, maybe this is a tower where the centurion commands a hundred men, so the Tower of the Hundred. There's a possible—so it's like a guard tower. So all the protection that the people of God need in the city of God is being built up, and everyone has a part to play.

So in a way, it's a picture again of how they built the tabernacle, of how in the New Testament we all have different spiritual gifts and we build the house of God, the body of Christ together. And really everyone has a responsibility. There's no role that's too small; there's no service too small for God. Right? And everyone, when they play their part—that's why later on in Nehemiah, you read that the wall was finished in fifty-two days. In a way, it's an unbelievable time, right? That the whole city wall could be built! And we see many times in verses 3 and 4, some of them were not building anything; they were just repairing. Maybe there was a part of the wall where they just needed a touch, touching up, more repairs, but not so much the building. But there are people willing to do that. They didn't think that their role was too small, that they were just doing repairs. They were not building a real wall, but all of them had a part to play. So this is a very beautiful picture of the unity of the people of God.

And even in—so I basically learned computing when I was in university. And one of the modules we learned is problem solving. And one of the key methods of problem solving is to break a big problem into smaller problems, and then you assign different responsibilities to different people, and each of us works on a module to solve the problem. And then we piece together into a big software, big programming. And that's how we solve a big problem in computing. So what I'm trying to say is even way before computing, modern technology, God had this way. How do you solve a problem? We can say that maybe we are only ten people; how do we build a big wall for the whole city? We need this problem solving. And God already had this kind of problem-solving technique: to make a big problem, break it up into smaller problems, and everyone has a part to play to solve the big problem.

Circling the City: From the Old Gate to the Dung Gate

Harold: Very good. So did you notice as you were reading through chapter 3 the simple phrase, "and next to him"? They started out at the Sheep Gate. Go to the last verse of chapter 3. What's it say?

> [Nehemiah 3:32 NKJV]
> And between the upper room at the corner, as far as the Sheep Gate, the goldsmiths and the merchants made repairs.

So they started at the Sheep Gate and they went all around the city and came back to the Sheep Gate. Okay, so they took the problem, they've broken it into little problems, and then all kinds of people volunteered and said, "I could help solve a problem." And so they started working together. And what we've been doing is looking at the people who volunteered to be part of the solution. And that's the way the work of God goes on: everybody working together here and there, and the problem gets solved.

Okay, anything else on 1 to 5? Verse number 6:

> [Nehemiah 3:6-7 NKJV]
> 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.

Do you want to work on the Old Gate, or would you rather work on the new gate? Well, I don't really care that much about the Old Gate. Who worked on the Old Gate? Well, Jehoiada. You ever heard of Jehoiada? Who was Jehoiada in the Bible? One of the high priests? I don't think so. I think Jehoiada was the man who rescued Joash from that wicked queen, whatever her name was. How old was Jehoiada? Interestingly, Jehoiada is one of the oldest men you'll read about in the age he lived; I think he was 137, but that's just a guess. So who was repairing the Old Gate? The old guy was repairing the Old Gate! That's good. If everybody gets excited about the new gate, somebody's got to repair the Old Gate. Who wants to work on that? Jehoiada says, "I've seen blessing. It came from old guys. I'm going to build the Old Gate so that the new gate people can rush in there and there's place for the old people to go through the Old Gate." Good for Jehoiada.

All right. And next unto him, Meshullam the son of Besodeiah. Who is he? Well, he was another Meshullam. There were a lot of Meshullams. Don't be surprised, and so here's Meshullam number two, and he's at work. He's the son of Besodeiah.

> 7 And next to them Melatiah the Gibeonite, Jadon the Meronothite, the men of Gibeon and Mizpah, repaired the residence of the governor of the region beyond the River.

What do you know about the Gibeonites? We go all the way back to the book of Joshua. And they went into the land and they made a covenant with the Gibeonites, and the Gibeonites were those sentenced to death by the Lord. They were Canaanites; they were bad Canaanites. And they tricked the people of God into believing that they were from far away, and they were right across the street. Joshua and the children of Israel made a contract with them without consulting the Lord. And then when it was over, they determined that they would live up to that contract, and that the Gibeonites themselves would have to live up to their part of the contract.

Interestingly, the city of Gibeon is at the top really of the mountain. Well, there's a central mountain channel that goes right through Israel; Jerusalem's at the south end. You go farther up, and on that top of the mountain range is the little town of Gibeon. And there's a couple of things associated with it: because it's on the east side of the Mediterranean, it gets a lot of water, and there's forests there. And so the Gibeonites ended up being hewers of wood for the work of God. They took their forest, they chopped it down, they took their firewood, and they carted it down to Jerusalem, and they used it to burn the sacrifices. But because the forests were there, they needed water to grow on, so there was lots of water there. So one of

the biggest reservoirs in the land of Israel then, and I believe even today, is at Gibeon. So the Gibeonites became hewers of wood and drawers of water, all because of the great confusion that arose because the children of Israel didn't fulfill their responsibility.

And instead of being slaughtered like the rest of the Canaanites were, the Gibeonites were not slaughtered. What did the Gibeonites do after that? Well, they were hewers of wood and drawers of water. And what did they do after that? They continued hewing the wood and drawing the water. How many years between Joshua and Nehemiah? A few hundred years. Many hundred. I think Joshua was pretty close to, let's say, 1,300, 1,400 years before; this is around 500 years, so let's say it's only 800 years. Can you imagine that? Eight hundred years ago, there was injustice; 800 years ago, things were wrong; 800 years ago, a lot of problems. But the Gibeonites were thankful that they were able to stay in their land. They were given grace and mercy by the Lord, and they were consigned to a servitude in perpetuity. Here they are, 800 years later, honoring that servitude. They didn't live in Jerusalem; Gibeon is—I didn't look it up—seventy miles, a hundred miles north of Jerusalem.

You honor the Gibeonites? Yeah! Some people, you know, they look back at grandpa, and they go farther back, and they say, "That was great injustice! Do you know what those people did to us?" We had our Truth and Reconciliation Day last week. What's our Truth and Reconciliation Day say? Well, it says that the native peoples of the province of British Columbia weren't treated perfectly right, and therefore we've got to—and many people say, give the land back to them. The Gibeonites said, "We weren't killed. Hallelujah! Hallelujah! It's only the mercy of God we weren't killed." And here they are serving the people of God, or better put it, the God of the people, by rebuilding the wall 800 years later. We need men and women like that in our society, don't we?

Do you remember what happened to your forebears that far back? No. Do you remember what happened to your forebears maybe one or two or three or four generations back? No. And Norm and I can remember a little bit about what we were told about some of our forebears back there. And we had a great-grandmother we never knew much about; she loved God. And Norm and I say she was a good woman; we'd like to be like her. We'd like to love God too. And so we try to serve the Lord because God was gracious to our great-grandparents, and I guess maybe even our great-great-grandparents. We don't know much; all we know is that somehow Jesus saved some of them, and through that knowledge, we came to trust the Lord. And by God's grace, we're going to build the wall too. Hallelujah. All right, so good for you, Gibeonites.

Verse 8:

> [Nehemiah 3:8-9 NKJV]
> [8] Next to him Uzziel the son of Harhaiah, one of the goldsmiths, made repairs.

What? Goldsmiths? What would you do if you were a goldsmith? Sell gold. You'd sell gold, you'd refine gold, you'd get in there and make some jewelry. Okay? Now somebody comes knocking on your door and says, "How would you like to leave your gold and grab a trowel and make some concrete, build some bricks?" And do you think some of these people were good at building bricks? Some of them go all the way back to the days when they were building bricks. I don't know that they used bricks; I think they used stones. Israel is full of stones and not many bricks. But the goldsmiths got to work! And you say, hallelujah! The leaders of Tekoa wouldn't go to work, but the goldsmiths went to work. Good for you, goldsmiths.

> Also next to him Hananiah, one of the perfumers, made repairs; and they fortified Jerusalem as far as the Broad Wall.

What's an apothecary? We would call him a pharmacist in our day, wouldn't we? He made the medicines. "What's your job?" "Well, my job is to make sure people have got all the right medicine." "What are you going to do today?" "I'm going to go build a wall." "What about all the sick people?" "Some of them are going to have to wait longer for their pills. Maybe they'd be healthier if they were to go to work too—wouldn't need the pills!"

> [9] And next to them Rephaiah the son of Hur, leader of half the district of Jerusalem, made repairs.

He's a politician! He's big chief. What's he do? Like his family, go to work building the wall as well. Have you ever heard of politicians who somehow managed to lead a double life? Okay, if you say no, you haven't read very much! But these people did; they knew what was going on. I've read recently about people who live in Iran. They're political leaders in Iran, and they have children, and many of their children they have exported to the wicked, wicked, evil United States. And when they send them over there, they give them lots of money, and they tell them they don't have to wear that foolish Islamic stuff. They can party all the time. And all kinds of the political leaders who are saying one thing have children living in the United

States, and they're living high on the hog and enjoying all the sin that Americans can give them, and their fathers are saying, "Down with America! We're going to wipe out America!" And you say to yourself, what we need are some politicians who will get to work and do what's right and not run around and hide.

Did anybody ever tell you that there was a man by the name of—can't remember—he was the ruler of Cuba. What was his name? Ben-Gurion? Fidel Castro. Castro, yeah. What do you know about Fidel Castro in that impoverished country of Cuba? What do you know about him? He's a billionaire! How did he get to be a billionaire? The answer is he didn't get to be a billionaire by building walls, I'll tell you that! But these politicians did.

Verse 10:

> [Nehemiah 3:10-12 NKJV]
> 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.

He said, "I live here and I want my house to be safe." He might even have lived on the wall, and so he built over against his house.

> 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.

When was the last time you saw a really good bricklaying woman? You say to your daughter, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" She says, "I want to be a bricklayer!" And these women, they put off their clothes and they put off whatever other things women do, they grabbed a trowel and they built the work of God. Why are all these names here? Well, in part, we can be inspired by them—marvelous examples of those who said, "There's a problem." Their problem is the wall of Jerusalem was broken down.

What's our problem? Well, the wall for the truth of God is broken down. All manner of evil has crept into the church. And instead of standing up and fighting for the truth of God, most of the leaders, most of the people in the church have gone to sleep. And they say, "I can't do it today. I've got other important things to do. I'm a goldsmith. I'm an apothecary. I'm a

woman. I can't, I can't, I can't!" Ever heard of anybody making an excuse why they can't? The answer is yep. What is the fact? We can't? What is the fact? We **must**. Responsibility of God is upon us to do the work—not to talk about it, to do it.

Verse 13:

> [Nehemiah 3:13-15 NKJV]
> [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.

Did they do a good job? Yeah. Did everybody do a good job? Not necessarily. They all did something.

> [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.

Again, another politician!

> [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.

A lot of these politicians have got going here. Good for you guys!

The Pool and the Tunnel

Ah. I don't understand why, but in the Bible, we read a lot about the stairs that go down to the pool of Siloam in the city of David. And I think somehow, Kenneth, it's tied in with what we're going to get to at the end again, the Sheep Gate. I don't quite see how they fit together. But anyway, down they went. What happened at the pool of Siloam? John chapter 5—no, John chapter 6; John chapter 5. John chapter 5, the lame man was healed. And so the

Lord gives us a little bit of an insight here: this is Jerusalem, where God was working way back in the days of Nehemiah and in the days of the Lord Jesus Christ.

All right. Verse 16:

> [Nehemiah 3:16 NKJV]
> 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 of David, to the man-made pool, and as far as the House of the Mighty.

After him repaired Nehemiah. That's interesting. Who is Nehemiah? Well, Nehemiah number one is the man who wrote this book. And Nehemiah number two is the son of Azbuk, the ruler of the half part of Beth Zur.

How did that pool get made, by the way? Well, it's the pool of Siloam. And what happened was that in the days of the Assyrian king Sennacherib, in that day, they surrounded or were about to surround the city of Jerusalem. And Hezekiah said, "We've got a problem. The water for the city of Jerusalem is outside the wall. We've got to do something." So he went to the water on the east side of the city of Jerusalem, and he said, "We're going to build a tunnel into the center of the city; through the mountain we'll build this tunnel." And so he sent his engineers to work, and his engineers built the tunnel. It is an S-shaped tunnel. It wiggles through—it's more than an S-shape, it wiggles and waggles through the mountain! And it was designed in such a way that they started tunneling on both sides of the mountain, and they finally came together, and I think at most they were six or eight inches off plan. Absolutely brilliant engineering in the days of Hezekiah! And the result was that the water from the east side was now flowing into this pool that was made. And that phrase "that was made" refers back to this engineering miracle in the days of Hezekiah.

All right, after him repaired the Levites:

> [Nehemiah 3:17-21 NKJV]
> [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.

Lots of rulers of half part!

> [18] After him their brethren, under Bavai 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 carefully repaired the other section, from the buttress to the door of the house of Eliashib the high priest.

What?

> [21] After him Meremoth the son of Urijah, the son of Koz, repaired another section, from the door of the house of Eliashib to the end of the house of Eliashib.

Why didn't Eliashib build the wall at his house? Because the responsibility was for him to build the Sheep Gate! And he started up there. And he said, "Lord, what's going to happen to my house?" And the Lord said, "Don't worry, Eliashib. I got a few other guys who will build the wall at your house." Is that characteristic of the goodness of our God? What happens if you build the work of God? Is it possible somebody else might build something around your house? You'll remember the lament in the Song of Solomon that he worked in everybody else's vineyard, but my own vineyard I have not kept. Eliashib could have said that: "I built everybody else's vineyard. I was building the Sheep Gate. Nobody was building my house. When the enemy comes, they're going to come right through my front door!" "Oh," says the Lord, "I'll send some other fellas to build the wall around your house." And you and I sit back and we say, "Lord, that's pretty kind. You're a good God. Thank You for taking care of Eliashib." He did the work that God wanted him to do, and God sent somebody else to do his work that he couldn't do himself.

All right, I've talked a lot. I've gone down through all kinds of verses. Others have got some comments on those verses? Carry on.

So verse 22 says:

> [Nehemiah 3:22-25 NKJV]
> [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.

Okay, where are you going to do the work? Well, if you're like Eliashib and you've been told to go somewhere else, go somewhere else. And if you haven't been told to go somewhere else, you might build your own house. That's what they did.

And verse 24, again:

> 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.

Somebody had to repair the house of the king, and they did that too.

> [Nehemiah 3:26-30 NKJV]
> 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.

Good for you, Tekoites! Your leaders wouldn't do it; you did it. And then when you finished doing what your leaders wouldn't do, you took on another job and you repaired another piece. Good for the men of Tekoa.

> 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. 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.

Why would we be told he was the sixth son? Okay, God cares. He keeps all kinds of interesting notes. And I think when you sit down with God, He'll maybe tell you a few things about yourself that you thought weren't very interesting. He says, "I got your number; I got

it all figured out." Okay. After him repaired Meshullam the son of Berechiah—who's he? He's the same guy we ran into in verse 4. He's Meshullam the son of Berechiah, and he's doing double duty in front of his dwelling.

Verse 31:

> [Nehemiah 3:31-32 NKJV]
> 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 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.

So the goldsmiths, they were active; they did a lot. We've gone right around the wall, from the Sheep Gate to the Sheep Gate! And the Sheep Gate: the priest, Eliashib, started repairing the Sheep Gate, and the goldsmiths and the merchants, the businessmen, they were repairing the Sheep Gate on the other side.

All right, that's chapter 3. That's a lot of names, a lot of people, and the God who is interested in a lot of names and a lot of people. And frankly, we are going to find Judgment Day very, very interesting, because He's going to remember all kinds of things we forgot, and we're going to forget all kinds of things that it is jolly good we forget because they weren't very good in the first place! But one day, by the grace of God, every man will have praise of God.

And we're going to say, "Lord, tomorrow, Monday, could You please tell me where I could do some repair work? I'd like to get involved in the work of God tomorrow. I'd like to tell some people about Jesus. I'd like to repair that problem that I allowed to go out of control way back then." Lord, if they did it all, as Kenneth tells us, in fifty-two days, what would have happened if they decided to take Monday off? Remember, tomorrow's a holiday. What are you going to do? Okay? You're going to say, "Well, that's a holiday; I could use a fair amount of time tomorrow to build the work of God." Or you could say, "No, it's a holiday; I'm going to put my feet up."

All right, any more on chapter 3?

Spiritual Lessons in the Gates

Kenneth: So maybe I just share a bit. I was just tracing the number of gates and the different types of gates. It seems like if we talk about city planning, there's a kind of city planning in the number of gates and the type of gates. So we started in verse 1, the Sheep Gate; verse 3, the Fish Gate; then verse 6, the Old Gate; and verse 8, the Broad Wall; and verse 11, the Tower of the Ovens; verse 13, the Valley Gate; and then the Refuse or Dung Gate in verses 13 and 14—the Dung Gate is mentioned twice; and then verse 15, the Fountain Gate; and then the pool of Siloam or Shelah is beside this Fountain Gate; and then verse 19, the armory at the buttress—okay, I'm using the NASB, so your versions may be slightly different—and the armory at the angle is near to Eliashib the high priest's house, and I imagine the high priest's house is near the temple. Verse 24: again the house of Azariah, as far as the angle and as far as the corner; verse 26: the Water Gate toward the east and the projecting tower—again, water is important for everyone, for any city; verse 28: the Horse Gate, the priests carried out repairs each in front of his house—apparently the priests stayed beside the Horse Gate; verse 29: the keeper of the East Gate carried out repairs, beside him was Zadok in front of his house, these people stayed beside each other; finally, verse 31: the Inspection Gate; and verse 32: the Sheep Gate again, as you mentioned, it makes one whole round.

So maybe this, practically, is like what an architect would do: they would design a city with different gates for different usage so there won't be jams and there won't be confusion. But at the same time, I think that God also has the design. What I think devotionally is I'm reminded of the New Jerusalem with these twelve gates, each with the name of the sons of Israel. And it's a really marvelous work of grace that we know in Genesis and we know subsequently even in Joshua, the tribes of Israel, they are all from the same family, but they were not united. They were fighting against Joseph and they were fighting among each other; they were not faithful in keeping their father's flocks, and that's why Joseph had a bad report of them. Subsequently, when they are supposed to take the Promised Land after they come out of Egypt, three tribes wanted to stay on the east of the Jordan because it's better for their flocks. Only nine and a half tribes went into the Promised Land promised by God to Abraham. In a way, that was one of the divisions, even though they tried to build a tower between them to remind themselves that they are actually one family.

So throughout the Old Testament, there's no unity. Jacob had twelve sons, but all his twelve sons are so different. Even though Israel is quite a small place and they are beside each other, right? But all throughout the Bible, they are not united until we get to Revelation in the New Jerusalem, that they all need the grace of God. And they all enter the New

Jerusalem where there's no more sin and no more death and no more sickness because of the grace of God. And maybe that's the picture: so there's unity in God, there's the grace of God which brings us finally to His Promised Land, the New Jerusalem, the real Promised Land in heaven, not only on earth. And yet these gates in Nehemiah 3, it tells us that God, even in the earthly Jerusalem, God sent these people to build the walls again. If a professional architect looked at it, I think they will be satisfied that it covers everything: it covers all the needs of a city, from the water to the sheep to the fish and so on. Amen.

Gene: It's interesting that the Dung Gate was the place where all the refuse was thrown by the city. It's a pretty big city, and this Dung Gate was at the very southern tip of the city, so it was far away from the rest of the city. And it's in the Valley of Hinnom, and that's where the fires were burning all the time. And the Lord refers to that valley a few times in the Bible as well. And many times when people couldn't find—they didn't have any burial place, or there were strangers or whatever—they would throw their bodies into the fires and that would be burned in there. So it's not like some of the cities that we have even today, modern cities where people just throw the garbage anywhere on the streets or whatever and that's their garbage place. But this was a very clean city in that people brought their garbage to this valley, to the Dung Gate, to be burned. And it wasn't just for landfill or anything like that; it was to be burned to ashes so that—you know, if you just keep piling garbage up and piling garbage up, you run out of space, but if it's burnt, then the ashes take up much less space. So it was very well run. It's just amazing how well it was done. Amen.

Harold: Well, just a couple of comments on this now. Number one, I've got a picture at home of the city of Jerusalem maybe fifty years ago with a fire burning. The fire is burning just outside the Dung Gate. It's exactly the same today as it was in the days of Nehemiah 2,500 years ago. That Dung Gate was very, very important. It's actually called the Gate to the Valley of Hinnom. And the name for hell in the Bible is Gehenna, named after the Dung Gate and the garbage dump outside the city of Jerusalem. It's a very visible reality today. What is hell? It's like that Dung Gate where they burn up all the garbage. That, by the way, is where the children of the worshipers of Molech offered their babies that they didn't want. That's the warning against abortion in our day: abortion and hell, both part of the same picture. Our God loves children. We live in a wicked day.

Just one other comment: I was giggling to myself as I was listening. I haven't heard a preacher talk about the gates for a long time. The last time I heard a preacher talk about the gates was probably when I was a teenager. My uncle was a preacher; I thought it was a good sermon, but I forgot everything! So you begin to remind me of some of those gates. It's a good sermon. Thank you, I like it.

I like what we've heard of the Sheep Gate. The chapter starts and ends with the Sheep Gate. The Sheep Gate is a picture of the Lord Jesus, and it just reminds me of that verse: He is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. It starts and ends with Him. Amen. Amen.

Stella, were you suggesting you had something to say to us?

Stella: Yes. I would like to add that in chapter 3, verse 12, the ruler of half of Jerusalem, his daughters also came out to help repairing. Wasn't that wonderful? Women come out, ladies come out, girls come out. Don't get very far in life without good women.

Harold: Amen. Thank you.

Kenneth: Brother Gene, another question is, I found this is also repeated many times about the gates. The way they repaired the gates is quite interesting. They will say, for example in verse 14, he built it and hung its doors with its bolts and its bars. So I'm not a doormaker or furniture person, so does anybody have insight into this: hanging its doors with its bolts and its bars? It's repeated many times throughout chapter 3.

Harold: Yeah, it is. I would think it's a little bit more complex than a lot of things. I've got a door at home; it's only a cabinet door, but it wasn't closing properly. So I got my screwdriver in and I fixed it. The problem is that now it's worse than when I started to fix it! And I said to myself, "Harold, you don't know much about hanging doors." I think probably these guys did a pretty good job.

Chapter 4: Opposition Arises

Maybe just a few thoughts on chapter 4:

> [Nehemiah 4:1-3 NKJV]
> [1] But it so happened, when Sanballat heard that we were rebuilding the wall, that he was furious and very indignant, and mocked the Jews. [2] And he spoke before his brethren and the army of Samaria, and said, "What are these feeble Jews doing? Will they fortify themselves? Will they offer sacrifices? Will they complete it in a day? Will they revive the stones from the heaps of rubbish--stones that are burned?" [3] Now Tobiah the Ammonite was beside him, and he said, "Whatever they build, if even a fox goes up on it, he will break down their stone wall."

It's true: when you start doing the work of God, opposition arises. Sanballat was the leader of the opposition. What was he? He spoke, verse 2, before his brethren and the army of Samaria. Who was Sanballat? He was a leader of the Samarian region, his headquarters in Samaria. He commanded an army in Samaria; he was a big guy, and he had the potential of putting an army together and attacking.

At this point, he's still talking: talking, talking, talking. The devil loves to talk, and he talks and talks and talks. We were on that last week. But here he is: he's doing what he can against the people of God—mockery and laughing. Tobiah, he says, "If a fox goes up, he'll knock the wall down!" And I think everybody had a great big laugh. And he probably made the headlines in the paper the next day, mocking the work that these people were trying to do. And they picked up that line, and the Spirit of God says, "I like that line; I'm going to put it in here too." You can make fun of God if you want, you can pretend that nothing that God does is important, but God is God. And the wall is going to be built. And Tobiah can laugh and do all kinds of other things as he does.

I think it's marvelous that these men, at every step in this book so far, every step forward, they attack. As soon as it became obvious that the king had sent letters with Nehemiah to allow Nehemiah to get started, as soon as that happened, it grieved Sanballat that someone had come to seek the welfare of the children of Israel. If you start seeking the welfare of the people of God, you're going to be mocked, and you're going to be laughed at. And here they are now: they're still mocking, but Sanballat has stopped keeping this problem to himself, and he has gone to his brethren and to the army of Samaria. And I think Nehemiah said, "You've got a problem here; this could be really serious." So anyway, Tobiah comes up, he laughs along with Sanballat.

All right, well, our time is gone. We're going to pick it up again next week in chapter 4, and the Lord will bless us. Thank you for being with us tonight. Thank you on Zoom, all you who are there, and thank you all here at the chapel. By the grace of God, we learned something this evening. Someone will close in prayer, please.

Closing Prayer:
Heavenly Father, we thank You for this time that we've had together tonight with You. Thank You for the time we've spent in Your Word. Thank You for, again, all the details that You have for us in it. We just thank and ask for Your help, Lord, because we ask that You would work in each one of us and use us and guide us. And we thank You for the gifts You've given us. Use those gifts, Lord; bring them out, build them, that we can work side by side, as we heard, next to each other as You do Your work through us. We ask that You raise up gifts that may be lacking, if there are any, and we just ask that You do a great work. We praise You for all of

the ministries that You do every day through the week, and we ask that You be with each one of those ministries, and each one who works in those ministries. Protect each one, and just let Your Word go forth in a great way and save souls this week. And we ask that You protect our youth this week, both in elementary, high school, and university. Protect them from all that is thrown at them. Remind them this week as they go through school of all that they heard even today in the Sunday school or wherever it was. Remind them of Your Word through it all, that they may see You and see the difference. And we ask that You strengthen the ones who are saved and save the ones who are not. Be with each one of us in whatever we will go through this week. You know the details that every one of us goes through; You know the truth of it. Encourage each one, strengthen each one. Open the doors that You want open for us, and close the doors that need to be closed. Just keep us all, be with all who travel this week, keep them safe. We just praise You; we praise You that You have saved us, we praise You that we have You every day, and we praise You that You're so faithful to us and good to us. We thank You. Be with us as we go. We praise You in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.

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