

Lesson 4, NEHEMIAH 3

It is apparent to me how God strategically placed Nehemiah so that His kingdom work could be accomplished. We each have a calling on our lives for kingdom work. As you read through Nehemiah 3 notice how everyone from nobles and high priests to common everyday folk all work in unity to accomplish the task. Each person was strategically placed to repair the wall and restore protection to the city. The pattern of the repairs was from gate to gate in the ancient city. Each of these gates symbolize a reality of our Christian walk.

1. The first gate repaired was done by the spiritual leaders. It is the Sheep's Gate now known as St. Stephen's Gate. It was there the sheep to be sacrificed were kept. Reading John 1:29, what does John the Baptist say about Jesus? This gate symbolizes the cross. Why do you think this is the first gate to be repaired? Relate this to your spiritual journey.

2. The second gate was the Fish Gate where the fishermen brought in their catch to be sold. If the cross is the first step in a Christian journey, what do you think the Fish Gate represents? See Matthew 4:19 and Romans 10:9. Who have you proclaimed "Jesus is Lord" to recently? What keeps us from speaking forth our faith?

3. The next gate is the Jeshanah Gate which means "Old Gate". This seems to be a call back to spiritually time-tested truths. What does Jeremiah 6:16 say? In what ways do you think the Church or our nation has left the "old ways"?

4. The Valley Gate is next which symbolizes humility. Pride is the antithesis of the Christian walk. What does 1 Peter 5:5b-7 say about humility? Once we become humble, we need to look inside ourselves with an honest assessment which leads to the Dung Gate. This is where the refuse was disposed of in Jerusalem. It symbolizes confession and cleansing of our hearts. What does 1 John 1:9 tell us?

5. After we come to the cross, then confess our faith to others, revert to the time-honored truths of faith and confess our sins, we find ourselves at the Fountain Gate. What does Jesus promise in John 7:38? The Water Gate seemed to not need repair. Water in scripture represents the Word of God which never needs repairing. In Matthew 4:4, what does Jesus say about the Word?

6. At this point in our spiritual journey, we are full of the flow of the Spirit (Fountain Gate) and steeped in the Word of God (Water Gate). The last two gates are the Horse Gate representing warfare and the East Gate which is the one that faces the rising sun and by tradition will be the gate through which the return of Jesus will take place. Read Ephesians 6:10-12. What does it say about a Christian's life? Read Revelation 22:12-14; does this give you hope?

Application: Faith in the cross, willingness to profess our faith, returning to the old ways of faith and lifestyle, staying humble, and continual confession finds us full of the Holy Spirit, and ready for warfare. As we keep our eyes focused on the coming of Jesus to rule the world, ask the Lord in what area you need to tweak your faith walk.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, the journey of faith is not easy. Give us the strength that comes from you to march forward in ever increasing knowledge of your grace and power. Let us not stop short of being all you have called us to be. We pray this in the name that is above every name, Jesus Christ. Amen.