

Nehemiah 7

Smells like Victory

- **Book of Nehemiah**
 1. Time Period covered 485-420 BC
 2. Exiles returning to Jerusalem from Babylon
 3. Ezra the Priest has re-built the Temple
 4. Nehemiah has rebuilt the walls around Jerusalem

I. Guarding the Gates: Stopping the Breach

1 Then it was, when the wall was built....

- In spite of brutal/continuous opposition...God's purpose is not thwarted but fulfilled
 1. Protection from enemies from without
 2. Able to worship God in Temple without fear

Philippians 1:6 [I am...] confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you **will complete it** until the day of Jesus Christ...

**Nehemiah remembers observing devastation in Chapter 1
Now rejoicing at what God has done in only 52 Days!**

1b... I had hung the doors, when the gatekeepers, the singers, and the Levites had been appointed...

- **Enemies nightmare comes to fruition:**
 1. **Levites:** Those who served at the Temple respected the Law of God
 2. **Gatekeepers:** Judges; those who enforced the Law of God
- **Lawlessness defeated:** Like children secure when disciplined/given boundaries

Proverbs 11:10 When it goes well with the righteous, the city rejoices; And when the wicked perish, there is jubilation.

3. **Singers:** Those who praised God now had more reason

2 that I gave the charge of Jerusalem to my brother Hanani, and Hananiah the leader of the citadel, for he was a faithful man and feared God more than many.

- **Governors over Jerusalem appointed:**
 1. **Hanani:** Ch. 1; told Nehemiah of destruction of city/demoralization people
 2. **Hananiah:** Leader of citadel; armory
- **Qualifications for Leaders:**

1. **Faithfulness:** Integrity, keeps his word, does what says he will do and more

1 Corinthians 1:2 Moreover it is required in stewards that one be **found faithful.**

2. **Fear of God:** "More than many"? What does that look like

Psalm 24:3 Who may ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who may stand in His holy place?
4 He who has clean hands and a pure heart, Who has not lifted up his soul to an idol, Nor sworn deceitfully. 5 He shall receive blessing from the Lord, And righteousness from the God of his salvation.

- **Wall done:**

1. Levites
2. Gatekeepers
3. Singers
4. Governors

3 And [Nehemiah] said to them, "Do not let the gates of Jerusalem be opened until the sun is hot; and while they stand guard, let them shut and bar the doors; and appoint guards from among the inhabitants of Jerusalem, one at his watch station and another in front of his own house."

- **Guard the Gates of Jerusalem:** Home of God's people

Place where God's people could feel safe /secure
Able to worship God and fellowship with one another

- **What we are not...**

1. We are not a *seeker sensitive* church
2. We are not a *seeker friendly* church
3. We are not a *seeker oriented* church
4. We are not going to do anything it takes to get people in seats

We seek to be a Holy Spirit led church

- **Real Problems in "Churches" today**

Most Churches today are weak and impotent unable to save, restore, make lasting changes by the Holy Spirit *because they are not led by the Holy Spirit*

Breaches in the gates have been allowed / tolerated by both leaders and congregation

Story of the Dutch Boy

Dutch legend has it that there was once a small boy who upon passing a dyke on his way to school noticed a slight leak as the sea trickled in through a small hole. Even though he would be in trouble if he were to be late for school, the boy poked his finger into the hole and so stemmed the flow of water. Sometime later a passerby saw him and went to get help. This came in the form of other men who were able to affect repairs on the dyke and seal up the leak.

This story is told to children to teach them that if they act quickly and in time, even they with their limited strength and resources can avert disasters. The fact that the Little Dutch Boy used his finger to stop the flow of water is used as an illustration of self-sacrifice also teaching that a small trickle of water will soon become a stream and the stream a torrent and the torrent a flood sweeping away everything before it.

Breach...foot in the door...crack in the foundation must be stopped before it starts

- Nehemiah guarded the gates of Jerusalem
- **Spirit led Churches guard their gates...**

Paul to the Ephesian Elders on the beach: Final words...

Acts 20:25 [Read] ²⁵ "And indeed, now I know that you all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, will see my face no more. ²⁶ Therefore I testify to you this day that I *am* innocent of the blood of all *men*. ²⁷ For I have not shunned to declare to you the **whole counsel of God**. ²⁸ Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. ²⁹ For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves **will come in among you**, not sparing the flock.

- Guard the gates **from without**

...30 [Cont.] Also **from among yourselves** men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. ³¹ Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.

- Guard the **gates from within**

This church does not welcome everyone...we do welcome sinners who realize their desperate need of a Savior and who are willing to repent from what God calls sin and turn to Him in humility. [NJC]

Constant Guard against breaches in our wall of protection

- **The church does not exist to...**
 1. Fill seats
 2. Make money
 3. Make ourselves feel good
 4. Fix our marriage, kids, financial problems

**The purpose of the church is to equip the saints for the ministry of saving souls
We must guard against any inclination to do anything else**

Ephesians 4:11 [Read][Jesus]gave some *to be* apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, ¹² **for the equipping of the saints** for the **work of ministry**, for the **edifying of the body of Christ**, ¹³ till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ..

Churches in America need to grow up...

...14 that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful

plotting, ¹⁵ but, **speaking the truth in love, may grow up** in all things into Him who is the head—Christ— ¹⁶ from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

- To “grow up” in this context means understanding the purpose of the Church
- A place where *God’s people* **come in** to be equipped for service **to go out** [NJC]

We cannot accomplish God’s purpose as a church if we do not keep guard our gates against breaches from without and breaches from within

- **Brace yourselves**...Political Incorrectness ahead

Acts 20:26...I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. ²⁷ For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God.

Jonah 3:1 Now **the word of the Lord** came to Jonah the second time, saying, ² “Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and **preach to it the message that I tell you.**”

- Identified Breaches which left unguarded lead to disaster: Disaster seen all over
 1. Authority Breach
 2. Doctrinal Breach
 3. Appeasing/Compromising Breach
 4. Morality Breach
 5. Sympathetic/Feeling-Based Breach
 6. Legalistic Breach

Authority Breach: Spiritual Authority comes from God

Matthew 7:28 And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching, ²⁹ for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

God gives authority to leaders He chooses

- **Breach in today’s Churches:**
 1. Fail to recognize God-given authority
 2. Recognize authority that is not God-given
- **E.g. Pastors/Elders:** Always and without exception...men
- No Mr. and Mrs. Pastor

1 Timothy 2:12 ...I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. ¹³ For Adam was formed first, then Eve. ¹⁴ And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression.

- **Back to Genesis:** Eve deceived/Adam eyes wide open
- Women are more susceptible to Spiritual deception/usurp man’s authority Gen. 3

Revelation 2:20 [Jesus to the corrupted church or Thyatira] Nevertheless I have a few things against you, because you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols. ²¹ And I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent. ²²

Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds.

- Churches that recognize women as Pastors/Elders have an authority breach
- Disregard the authority of God's Holy Word leading to bigger breach. **Period.**
- Weak...impotent...in sin and need to repent to mend the breach

"[After small compromise] ...do not suppose that this is the end. This is only the beginning of the reckoning. This is only the first sip, the first foretaste of a bitter cup which will be proffered to us year by year unless by a supreme recovery of moral health and martial vigour, we arise again and take our stand for freedom as in the olden time." [Winston S. Churchill] [First step to homosexuality in the pulpit]

- Don't agree? You personally have an authority breach that is affecting/infecting

Doctrinal Breach:

- **Doctrine:** Teaching
- **Doctrinal Breach:** Within/Without but contrary to clear statement of church
 1. **E.g. Calvinism:** Man-made doctrine causing much division
 - God chooses who to save and we have no choice
 - Some pre-destined for heaven and some for hell
 - Those spouting off arrogantly...always the chosen
 2. Want to know what we believe? All on-line
 3. **Savage wolves:** Having you over for dinner; i.e. eating up the flock
 4. Un-dealt with division is destroying churches. Pastors...Man up.

Sometimes peacemakers need to make a little war before there is real peace! [NJC]

5. If you are drawing people away from what we are teaching you are causing division. Two strikes you're out!

Appeasing/Compromising Breach:

- We are to be a Jesus centered church
- All ministries are to be birthed from Holy Spirit's leading
- **Appeasement Breach:** Programs birthed from one's own mind
 1. Appeasing the crowd

"An appeaser is one who feeds a crocodile, hoping it will eat him last." [Churchill]

2. E.g. Santa
 3. E.g. Easter Bunny "for the kids" and killing churches
 4. Translations: Living Paraphrase
- Leads to Laodicea, puked-out...false-conversions watered down Gospel
 - If you are pushing for something that not birthed by Holy Spirit you are causing a breach. We will have a very uncomfortable talk that will stop the breach. You may get mad and leave...I will not run after you.
 - Praise God for our people redeeming October 31st for the glory of God

Morality Breach:

- **Allowing/not dealing with unrepentant sin:** Spreads like gangrene

1 Corinthians 5:11 [Do] not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner—not even to eat with such a person. 12 For what have I to do with judging those also who are outside? Do you not judge those who are inside? 13 But those who are outside God judges. Therefore **“put away from yourselves the evil person.”** [Guard the gates]

- Lack of Church discipline leads to a “church” that looks just like a hell-bound world

Sympathetic/Feelings Based Breach:

- Young people like secular music
- Older people need more hymns
- Singles don't have anything
- Youth need to do more fun stuff
- Carpet is wrong color
- They didn't say hi?
- I feel this way or that so you need to do something...

Keeps the naive Pastor hopping and not in the Word
Jesus hung on a cross to pay for your heinous sin. **Time to get over it.**

- Feelings based breach turns spirit filled churches into loud and lively graveyards

Legalistic Breach:

- **Danger of focusing on Breach causes a breach itself:** Losing Balance
 1. Ephesians warned to make sure to guard the gate
 2. Went too far and became cold and legalistic

Revelation 2:1 [Read] “To the angel of the church of Ephesus write, ‘These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands: 2 “I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars; 3 and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name’s sake and have not become weary. 4 Nevertheless I have this against you, that **you have left your first love.** 5 Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent. 6 But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.”

- **Guard the Gates...**
 1. Authority Breach
 2. Doctrinal Breach
 3. Appeasement/Compromise Breach
 4. Morality Breach
 5. Sympathetic/Feelings-Based Breach

6. Legalistic Breach

- Nehemiah set guards at the gates to protect God's people...

Isaiah 58:12 Those from among you shall build the old waste places; You shall raise up the foundations of many generations; And you shall be called the **Repairer of the Breach**, The Restorer of Streets to Dwell In.

Can't we all just get along? [Rodney King]

- Yes... if we understand our purpose and who we are before God...

To be equipped for the ministry of saving souls.
We must guard our gates and hearts against any other inclination

SUMMARY Guarding the Gates: Stopping the Breach

II. Exiles Returned

4 Now the city was **large and spacious**, but the people in it were few, and the houses were not rebuilt.

- **Jerusalem:** Large/Spacious City
 1. Homes newly built on perimeter of wall
 2. Homes within the wall still in ruins

5 Then my God put it into my heart to gather the nobles, the rulers, and the people, that they might be registered by genealogy. And I found a register of the genealogy of those who had come up in the first return, and found written in it:

- **God put it in my heart:**
 1. Not counting "his men" as David
 2. **Register of Genealogy as directed by God:**
 - Checking names coming in are same as names those who left
 - Checking with Ezra's registry in Ezra 2:1-70

6 These are the people of the province who came back from the captivity, of those who had been carried away, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away, and who **returned to Jerusalem** and Judah, everyone to his city.

- **Nehemiah 7:7-65**

7 Those who came with Zerubbabel were Jeshua, Nehemiah, Azariah, Raamiah, Nahamani, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispereth,[y] Bigvai, Nehum, and Baanah. The number of the men of the people of Israel: 8 the sons of Parosh, two thousand one hundred and seventy-two; 9 the sons of Shephatiah, three hundred and seventy-two; 10 the sons of Arah, six hundred and fifty-two; 11 the sons of Pahath-Moab, of the sons of Jeshua and Joab, two thousand eight hundred and eighteen; 12 the sons of Elam, one thousand two hundred and fifty-four; 13 the sons of Zattu, eight hundred and forty-five; 14 the sons of Zaccai, seven hundred and sixty; 15 the sons of Binnui, six hundred and forty-eight; 16 the sons of Bebai, six hundred and twenty-eight; 17 the sons of Azgad, two thousand three hundred and twenty-two; 18 the sons of Adonikam, six hundred and sixty-seven; 19 the sons of Bigvai, two

thousand and sixty-seven; 20 the sons of Adin, six hundred and fifty-five; 21 the sons of Ater of Hezekiah, ninety-eight; 22 the sons of Hashum, three hundred and twenty-eight; 23 the sons of Bezai, three hundred and twenty-four; 24 the sons of Hariph, [aa] one hundred and twelve; 25 the sons of Gibeon, ninety-five; 26 the men of Bethlehem and Netophah, one hundred and eighty-eight; 27 the men of Anathoth, one hundred and twenty-eight; 28 the men of Beth Azmaveth, [ac] forty-two; 29 the men of Kirjath Jearim, Chephirah, and Beeroth, seven hundred and forty-three; 30 the men of Ramah and Geba, six hundred and twenty-one; 31 the men of Michmas, one hundred and twenty-two; 32 the men of Bethel and Ai, one hundred and twenty-three; 33 the men of the other Nebo, fifty-two; 34 the sons of the other Elam, one thousand two hundred and fifty-four; 35 the sons of Harim, three hundred and twenty; 36 the sons of Jericho, three hundred and forty-five; 37 the sons of Lod, Hadid, and Ono, seven hundred and twenty-one; 38 the sons of Senaah, three thousand nine hundred and thirty. 39 The priests: the sons of Jedaiah, of the house of Jeshua, nine hundred and seventy-three; 40 the sons of Immer, one thousand and fifty-two; 41 the sons of Pashhur, one thousand two hundred and forty-seven; 42 the sons of Harim, one thousand and seventeen. 43 The Levites: the sons of Jeshua, of Kadmiel, and of the sons of Hodevah, seventy-four. 44 The singers: the sons of Asaph, one hundred and forty-eight. 45 The gatekeepers: the sons of Shallum, the sons of Ater, the sons of Talmon, the sons of Akkub, the sons of Hatita, the sons of Shobai, one hundred and thirty-eight. 46 The Nethinim: the sons of Ziha, the sons of Hasupha, the sons of Tabbaoth, 47 the sons of Keros, the sons of Sia, the sons of Padon, 48 the sons of Lebana, the sons of Hagaba, the sons of Salmai, 49 the sons of Hanan, the sons of Giddel, the sons of Gahar, 50 the sons of Reaiah, the sons of Rezin, the sons of Nekoda, 51 the sons of Gazzam, the sons of Uzza, the sons of Paseah, 52 the sons of Besai, the sons of Meunim, the sons of Nephishesim, 53 the sons of Bakbuk, the sons of Hakupha, the sons of Harhur, 54 the sons of Bazlith, the sons of Mehida, the sons of Harsha, 55 the sons of Barkos, the sons of Sisera, the sons of Tamah, 56 the sons of Nezhiah, and the sons of Hatipha. 57 The sons of Solomon's servants: the sons of Sotai, the sons of Sophereth, the sons of Perida, 58 the sons of Jaala, the sons of Darkon, the sons of Shephatiah, the sons of Hattil, the sons of Pochereth of Zebaim, and the sons of Amon. 60 All the Nethinim, and the sons of Solomon's servants, were three hundred and ninety-two. 61 And these were the ones who came up from Tel Melah, Tel Harsha, Cherub, Addon, and Immer, but they could not identify their father's house nor their lineage, whether they were of Israel: 62 the sons of Delaiah, the sons of Tobiah, the sons of Nekoda, six hundred and forty-two; 63 and of the priests: the sons of Habaiah, the sons of Koz, the sons of Barzillai, who took a wife of the daughters of Barzillai the Gileadite, and was called by their name. 64 These sought their listing among those who were registered by genealogy, but it was not found; therefore they were excluded from the priesthood as defiled. 65 And the governor said to them that they should not eat of the most holy things till a priest could consult with the Urim and Thummim.

- NOTE: 89% of the people exiled did not return to Jerusalem

III. Truth, Accuracy and Authority of the Word of God

- **Rationale for Genealogies:** Why include list on names in God's Word
 1. **Important** because each person/soul was **important to God**
 2. For the future use of Jewish people at that time
 3. **Names are recorded for us!**

Names are recorded as a witness to archaeology's *continuing revelation* of the truth of the Bible w/every shovelful of dirt...in contrast to the inaccuracy/falseness of other so-called "holy books"

- Smithsonian Institute taken great pains to disavow/distance itself from Book Mormon
- **Letter from Smithsonian states:**
 1. Never used [the Book of Mormon] as scientific guide
 2. No direct connection between archeology and "subject matter of the book"
 3. Native Americans are not of Jewish/Israeli descent
 4. No reputable Egyptologist...has discovered/confirmed any relationship between remains found in Egypt and remains in Mexico as described in BOM

On the other Hand...

The Bible: "... sixty-six books written by forty authors, written between 1446 B.C. & 90 A.D. But, now we discover that it is an integrated message system from outside our time and space domain." [Chuck Missler]

- God knew the earth was round before Columbus

Isaiah 40:22 It is He who sits above the **circle of the earth**, And its inhabitants are like

grasshoppers, Who **stretches out** the heavens like a curtain, And spreads them out like a tent to dwell in. [700 BC Way before the "New World was discovered"]

- God knew the heavens were expanding before modern science
- God knew the earth was spinning in space before NASA

Job 26:7 [Oldest?] He stretches out the north over empty space; **He hangs the earth on nothing.** 8 He binds up the water in His thick clouds, Yet the clouds are not broken under it. 9 He covers the face of His throne, And spreads His cloud over it. 10 He drew a circular horizon on the face of the waters, At the boundary of light and darkness.

- Science always follows the Word of God
- Science/Archeological discoveries only affirm the absolute authority of Word of God
- Names written in genealogies are inscriptions of God's faithfulness and truth

Enemy is defeated. Wall is built. God is Glorified City filled with Joy

66 Altogether the whole assembly was forty-two thousand three hundred and sixty, 67 besides their male and female servants, of whom there were seven thousand three hundred and thirty-seven; and they had two hundred and forty-five men and women singers. 68 Their horses were seven hundred and thirty-six, their mules two hundred and forty-five, 69 their camels four hundred and thirty-five, and donkeys six thousand seven hundred and twenty. 70 And some of the heads of the fathers' houses gave to the work. The governor gave to the treasury one thousand gold drachmas, fifty basins, and five hundred and thirty priestly garments. 71 Some of the heads of the fathers' houses gave to the treasury of the work twenty thousand gold drachmas, and two thousand two hundred silver minas. 72 And that which the rest of the people gave was twenty thousand gold drachmas, two thousand silver minas, and sixty-seven priestly garments. 73 So the priests, the Levites, the gatekeepers, the singers, some of the people, the Nethinim, [those dedicated to the Temple] and all Israel dwelt in their cities. When the seventh month came, the children of Israel were in their cities.

Tree house: Never really about the Tree house but about working together with my son

It was never really about the wall it was about God's people working together ...learning to love God and love one another in spite of faults/differences as the wall was built