

“REBUILDING BROKEN PLACES”
STUDIES IN THE BOOKS OF EZRA, NEHEMIAH, AND HAGGAI
Nehemiah 3:1-4:23
“Kingdom Leadership Under Pressure”

Introduction: Nehemiah and the remnant of Israel in Jerusalem overcame seemingly insurmountable obstacles and opposition by the grace of God.

I. Heavenly Types of Walls and Gates (Nehemiah 3:1-32)

- a. **Sheep Gate (northeast corner).** Possible location of the sheep market (John 5:2). Jesus declared “I am the gate for the sheep” (John 10:7 CSB). Shepherds would sit at the entrance of the sheep pen guarding the way from predators and thieves, also keeping the sheep in. **Fish Gate (northwest corner).** Possible site of the fish market (Nehemiah 13:16). It is mentioned by Zephaniah in a prophecy of judgment (Zephaniah 1:10). Jesus said he would make His disciples fishers of men (Matthew 4:18-19). Jesus uses the image of separating bad fish from good fish in the day of judgment (Matthew 13:47-50). **Old Gate (western side).** Tower of Hananel is mentioned in prophecies of Jeremiah (31:38) and Zechariah (14:10) regarding the end time restoration of Jerusalem.
- b. **Valley Gate (southwest).** Nehemiah began his inspection here. **Refuse Gate/Dung Gate (south).** City garbage dumped in Hinnom Valley. The Greek name of this valley is Gehenna (Mark 9:43). The Temple Mount is a symbol and foreshadow of heaven and Hinnom is symbol and foreshadow of hell (Isaiah 66:24). **Fountain Gate (southeast).** Gihon Springs is the major underground water supply. Springs of water symbolized salvation (Isaiah 58:11; John 4:14). **Water Gate (southeast).** Ophel is a hill in the southeast where temple servants lived.
- c. **Horse Gate (east).** Ataliah was put to death at this gate (2 Chronicles 23:15). Horses may have been kept here (2 Kings 23:11). **East Gate (east).** Glory of Yahweh will enter temple through the east gate (Ezekiel 43:1-5). Beautiful gate is where lame man was healed by apostles (Acts 3:1-10). **Miphkad (Inspection) Gate (northeast).** Possibly where the military gathered or enlisted.
- d. **Ephraim Gate** is not mentioned in rebuild but mentioned in the dedication ceremony passage (Nehemiah 12:39). **Corner Gate** is not mentioned in Nehemiah but mentioned in other Old Testament passages (2 Chronicles 26:9; Jeremiah 31:38).
- e. Earthly Jerusalem is a type and shadow of the heavenly Jerusalem. In Jerusalem we see the intersection of geography and theology. Jerusalem is not only one of the oldest cities in the world, dating back to the time of Abraham, but came to eventually symbolize the people of God (Isaiah 60:10-14). Walls and gates are also a symbol of salvation (Isaiah 26:1-2; Matthew 7:13-14). (Revelation 21:9-13)

II. Opposition Fuels Productivity When the People Have a Mind to Work (Nehemiah 4:1-6)

- a. Nehemiah’s prayer can be classified as a prayer of imprecation (Psalm 69:22-28; Galatians 1:6-9; Revelation 6:9-11). This is a healthy expression of emotion to God. He identified the opposition against his people as opposition against God (John 15:18).

III. **We War Not Against Flesh and Blood (Nehemiah 4:7-15)**

- a. The opposition became angry because the dignity of the city was being restored. The list of adversaries were ethnic enemies of ancient Israel. We have spiritual enemies (Ephesians 6:12). The opposition planned a physical attack against the people which was direct disobedience to the king of Persia.
- b. Workers start to complain about the difficulty of the labor. Enemies plan a surprise attack. Jews reported about the enemy's plan. Nehemiah took the threats seriously and organized the people by families with weapons. Nehemiah encouraged the people to be brave, remember the Lord, and fight!

IV. **Pray, Watch, and Be Ready to Lay Hands (Nehemiah 4:16-23)**

- a. Nehemiah split the force in half to provide security while people worked. They already had half the wall completed. The workers were armed with weapons and the trumpet blower were with Nehemiah. Nehemiah told the people to rally to wherever they hear the trumpet.
- b. They worked from daylight to nighttime. Everyone stayed in Jerusalem at night to provide security. Nehemiah and team were on 24-hour alert until the work was complete.

“FOR A GREAT AND EFFECTIVE DOOR HAS OPENED TO ME, AND THERE ARE MANY ADVERSARIES” (1 CORINTHIANS 16:9).

“BE SOBER, BE VIGILANT; BECAUSE YOUR ADVERSARY THE DEVIL WALKS ABOUT LIKE A ROARING LION, SEEKING WHOM HE MAY DEVOUR” (1 PETER 5:8).

“HE WHO BELIEVES IN THE SON HAS EVERLASTING LIFE; AND HE WHO DOES NOT BELIEVE THE SON SHALL NOT SEE LIFE, BUT THE WRATH OF GOD ABIDES ON HIM” (JOHN 3:36).

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