

PP Nehemiah: *Repairing Our Gates!*

Text **Nehemiah 3:30-32**

Part 13-9/1-2, 2012

We've been on a tour around the wall of Jerusalem and Nehemiah is our tour guide
We had the right pre-trip information so we'd know what to look for, understanding the biblical significance behind '*walls*' and '*gates*'

PP (Isaiah 26:1-2) We learned that walls were built to keep the wrong people out, while gates let the right people in

Walls around a city brought security and gates created community

Every church needs walls and gates, every believer needs walls and gates around their hearts

The vulnerable part of an ancient city's defenses was the gates, giving the need for gatekeepers
So on this tour, we pause at each gate to see if it is in good working order in our own lives

PP We began at *the Sheep Gate* that leads to the cross where the Lamb of God was crucified
that we might be forgiven of our sin

To *the Fish Gate* where we immediately begin to testify of our salvation, becoming fishers of men

The Old Gate is the gate where the Christian is established on the eternal, infallible Word of God
From the Old Gate, a long ways away, the wall descending, is *the Valley Gate* of trials and difficulty

These trials squeeze our hearts, forcing what is displeasing to God to the surface

That which God reveals we then take to *the Dung Gate*, the gate where Jerusalem threw out their trash to keep their city holy

This is the gate of confession and it has locks and bolts, so that when we cast our sin through it, we lock the door refusing to bring the guilt and shame of them back to our hearts

And immediately the Spirit of God fills us at *the Fountain Gate*, empowering us to live faithfully for God

And what He fills us with is the cleansing, purifying Word of God at *the Water Gate*

Enabling us to prepare for *the Horse Gate* of spiritual battle

We do not wage war against our enemies in our own strength of mind and heart, but with the Word of God

The battle itself is lifting our eyes to the East to the rising of the morning sun, which was the great and beautiful symbolism of *the East Gate*

Jesus Christ the Messiah will return and it is through this Gate He will come for His people

What a glorious day that will be and part of the purpose of regularly celebrating the Lord's table is to "*proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.*" **1 Corinthians 11:26**

To focus on the East Gate is live for eternity, for the glory of Jesus Christ, serving Him with everything we have in this life, for this world is just a blink in the scope of eternity

But there are actually two more gates to see today, one of which we see later in the book

And as Nehemiah walks us toward them, he pauses us to introduce us briefly to some builders

PP Let's meet '*Hanani the sixth son of Zebadiah*' in 3:30

He has 5 older brothers and if you believe as we do, that every word in the Bible is specifically inspired by God, then there is an encouragement here for the younger saints in this church

Likely, Hanun is a younger man, and if so, we see that God treasures and honors the faithful
Young
Not only is he the sixth son of Zalaph, he is the junior builder in this work crew as his name is
given after '*Hananiah*', suggesting his subordinate role
You may be in college or have not yet graduated from high school, but your service in the
kingdom of God is worthy of honor
Hanun, *the sixth son*, was honored in the eternal record of the Word of God!
Matthew Henry wrote, "*They are most honorable that are most useful.*"
And notice that there is no mention of his 5 older brothers working anywhere on the wall,
the younger surpassed the older
You may not yet be married, or figured out your purpose in life, or even finished school, but God
has a great purpose for your life...now!
You are not the next generation of the church, you are part of the current generation
Serve well in your youth and God will honor you well!

PP And as we move down the wall, let's notice '*Meshullam*', who we first met in verse 4, there
building a portion of the wall between the Fish and Old Gates
It wasn't until afterwards he then worked on his own chamber: "*After him Meshullam the son
of Berechiah repaired opposite his chamber.*" **Nehemiah 3:30**
Here, he is repairing the part of the wall where his own chamber was located
A '*chamber*' was used a word describing a storage area or small room, possibly an office area
You see, often homes were built right into or against the wall itself
This is either where he lived or worked, but in either case, it wasn't safe until it was repaired
With enemies all around Jerusalem, most people would have first rebuilt their own personal
section, then helped with what time they had remaining
Meshullam served others as his first priority and put himself last
He didn't give himself the best and the people of God what was left over
He was selfless, dedicated, tireless, putting others above himself
So Nehemiah honors him specifically on our tour through chapter 3

We pass Meshullam and we glimpse the 10th gate of Nehemiah's tour, called
PP 10-*"the Muster Gate"*

The '*Muster Gate*' in my version or in the NIV the Inspection Gate, or the Gate Miphkad
The word in Hebrew is *Miphkad*, which is translated in a number of ways: review, registry,
review or numbering of a census
When a stranger or foreigner came to the city of Jerusalem, he was stopped at the gate for the
purpose of registry, that his visit would be recorded
It was also the gate for review which gives it the name I have in the ESV, the Muster Gate, a
military word for the assembling of troops for inspection
When a king would review his soldiers, they would be gathered at this gate for inspection
And here is where we begin to see the great meaning of this gate in the gospel
We have moved from the East Gate which reminds us of the return of Jesus Christ for His
people, and He will gather all people before Him on the Day of Judgment

**PP "When the Son of Man comes in His glory... He will sit on his glorious throne. Before
Him will be gathered all the nations, and He will separate people one from another as a**

shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. And He will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world...Then He will say to those on His left, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.' Matthew 25:31-34, 41

That these two gates are next to each is important and we see a glimpse of this in 2 Timothy 4:2,

PP *"There is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved His appearing."*

PP We can see in here the East Gate: *'all who have loved His appearing'*

PP And in the Muster Gate: *'the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day'*

PP We see both gates in the words of Christ, *"For the Son of Man is going to come with His angels in the glory of His Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done."* Matthew 16:27

The Muster Gate points us to the examination we will all undergo by Jesus Christ

There is no person who will be exempt from the Day of Judgment

PP *"So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please Him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or bad."* 2 Corinthians 5:9-10

PP The Old Testament spoke of this day as well: *"For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or bad."* Ecclesiastes 12:14

Furthermore, there will be nothing to conceal our hearts from His Holy penetrating gaze

PP *"And no creature is hidden from His sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of Him to Whom we must give account."* Hebrews 4:13

This giving of an account is consistent throughout the Scriptures, and Paul reminds us of it as

PP well: *"For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God; for it is written, 'As I live,' says the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then each of us will give an account of himself to God."* Romans 14:10-12

Every person will stand before God, and His people will be placed on the right, and all those who have rejected Him, who had not come through the sheep gate will be placed on His left

And on that Day Christ will reward His sheep and punish the goats, the non-believers

PP *"The nations raged, but your wrath came, and the time for the dead to be judged, and for rewarding your servants, the prophets and saints, and those who fear your name, both small and great, and for destroying the destroyers of the earth."* Revelation 11:18

Brothers and sisters, listen to this, because it needs to motivate us to get on the wall and serve our Lord

PP Writing to believers in Corinth, Paul says, *"Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive his commendation from God."* 1 Corinthians 4:5

For believers gathered on that Day of Judgment, it will be not be terrifying, for there is no longer any condemnation for those in Christ Jesus
God has no more charges to bring to then He does His own Son, we are covered in His righteousness
He will not recite our blood-covered sins, for He has promised to throw them into the deepest sea and scatter them as far as the east is to the west
He will not violate His own Word and again write a charge on the account of our souls

But listen, all of what we have done with our lives will be laid bare before Him, and before others on that day

PP *“Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw— each one’s work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. If anyone’s work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.” 1 Cor. 3:12-15*

We will be at the Muster Gate for review and inspection for how we served on the wall of the kingdom of God

I find it interesting that “Malchijah, one of the goldsmiths *“repaired opposite this gate”*
Jesus Christ, the Master goldsmith, will see the gold, silver and precious stones of our service, and He will know what we’ve done out of our own vain glory and what we didn’t do
And that which doesn’t live up to His inspection will be burned up and we will lose the rewards we could have had

For the believer, salvation is not in question here, that was settled at the cross!
This inspection for believers will be for rewards
Everything will pass before Him in review, all our words and all our works
How we served, how we testified of Him and how we persevered in our faith
The Muster Gate serves to remind us that there will be a Day when our Lord will show us whether we lived our lives in service of Him, and I pray that on that Day we all will hear Him say, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant!’

As we conclude our tour of the gates of Nehemiah, it is important to remember that there were in total 12 gates

While only 10 are mentioned in this chapter, two more are introduced later in the book
You can see the other two in chapter 12:39, as a great choir travels around some of these gates, except now in a clockwise rotation, passing the Gate of Ephraim, just before the Old Gate
Ephraim means doubly fruitful, and symbolizes the spiritual growth that takes place as we begin to establish our lives on the foundation of the Word of God

But there is 12th gate in that verse

PP Clockwise, passing the Old Gate, and the Fish Gate and the Sheep Gate, you find the *“Gate of the Guard”*, which was just before arriving back at today’s Muster Gate

The Gate of the guard symbolizes those who failed the inspection of Jesus Christ
Those who would not go through the Sheep Gate of salvation
Lawbreakers who rejected the Savior, and who stand before Him on their own merit, their own

Righteousness

Their names were not put into the census of the lamb's book of life, called out at the Muster Gate

PP *"And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire"* **Revelation 20:15**

The *Gate of the Guard* is for all who say no to the offer of salvation through Jesus Christ

They will be thrown into the prison of eternity, the lake of fire

PP But look carefully at how Nehemiah's tour ends; right back at *'the Sheep Gate'* of salvation

PP *"The Lord is not slow to fulfill His promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance."*

2 Peter 3:9

The gospel tour does not end at the Gate of the Guard but at the Sheep Gate, the gate of salvation

The way to your salvation is still open before you, straight through the Sheep Gate to the cross where the Son of God gave up His life to save yours!

Friends, we will all stand at the Muster Gate, but will the Gate of the Guard be the last gate you will ever see?

Pray