

**I. Introduction:**

- A. Potentially two things could happen during our lesson this evening.
1. The most natural response would be to become bored out of your mind as we read through this chapter.
  2. Or, with the Spirit's blessing you might see some potential lessons and applications to yourselves.
  3. You might become fascinated with the accuracy of the map I gave you.
  4. Or your ears might perk up with the mention of a few of the names in this chapter.
  5. I will do my best to keep you awake, but the as to the rest, the choice is yours.

**II. Nehemiah 3:**

A. *Then Eliashib the high priest rose up with his brethren the priests, and they builded the sheep gate; they sanctified it, and set up the doors of it; even unto the tower of Meah they sanctified it, unto the tower of Hananeel.*

1. The sheep gate is at the top of your map – the most northerly part of the city.
  - a. It was the gate closest and easiest for access to the temple.
  - b. It was the way in which the live animals were brought into the temple for sacrifice.
2. Now notice that the most important man in the city was not unwilling to do his part in the wall building.
  - a. The lesson is: no one has a pass; no one has an excuse not to do the work which needs to be done.
  - b. We can't argue that we have other important responsibilities; this wall was essential at this point.
  - c. And if dirty hands and tired muscles are necessary, then let's get to work.
3. There are two other things; what do you know about Eliashib? Where were you Sunday night?
  - a. This is the Eliashib, the high priest, whose grandson married the daughter of Sanballat.
4. And notice *"they sanctified the wall."*
  - a. Sanballat mentioned this in verse 2 of the next chapter – *"making a sacrifice."*
  - b. We often don't think of secular things as potentially spiritual, but these people did.
  - c. The rebuilding of the wall was dedicated to the glory of God.
  - d. How much more of our day-to-day lives could or should be sanctified unto the Lord?

B. *Verse 2 – And next unto him builded the men of Jericho. And next to them builded Zaccur the son of Imri.*

1. I think it is interesting, and wonderful, that men whose families originally came from other cities were involved in the rebuilding of this city – the holy city.
  - a. Were these men living in Jericho, or did they have homes in Jerusalem now?
  - b. Whether or not they Jerusalemites, they committed themselves to the work which protected others.
2. Furthermore, in this case, these men came from **Jericho** – a city once condemned by God.
  - a. After the fall of Jericho, *Joshua adjured them at that time, saying, Cursed be the man before the LORD, that riseth up and buildeth this city Jericho: he shall lay the foundation thereof in his firstborn, and in his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it – Joshua 6:26.*
  - b. **1 Kings 16:34** -- *In his days did Hiel the Bethelite build Jericho: he laid the foundation thereof in Abiram his firstborn, and set up the gates thereof in his youngest son Segub, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by Joshua the son of Nun.*
  - c. But Jericho **was** rebuilt and the people who eventually lived there became good servants of God.
  - d. It doesn't matter what the heritage of man might be, when God saves him, he may become a useful saint of the Lord.
3. Also in regard to this verse, I'll point to Zaccur who was basically alone in the building of his section.
  - a. Just to be a part of Lord's work, no matter how small a roll we might play – just to be a part is wonderful

C. *Verse 3 – But the fish gate did the sons of Hassenaah build, who also laid the beams thereof, and set up the doors thereof, the locks thereof, and the bars thereof. And next unto them repaired Meremoth the son of Urijah, the son of Koz. And next unto them repaired Meshullam the son of Berechiah, the son of Meshezabeel. And next unto them repaired Zadok the son of Baana.*

1. The Fish Gate opened up the road either to the Sea of Galilee through Samaria or down to Mediterranean.

2. You'll notice that not unlike in our society some names were more popular than others – Urijah and Zadok.
3. One of the challenges of Bible study is keeping people with the same name separated in our minds.

**D. Verse 5** – *Next unto them the Tekoites repaired; but their nobles put not their necks to the work of their Lord.*

1. In every work, there will always be shirkers – or worthless workers.
2. Oh, they will have their excuses, but as this verse reminds us, the Lord is taking notes.
3. Tekoah was a Judean village not far from Jerusalem.
4. **Verse 6** – *Moreover the old gate repaired Jehoiada the son of Paseah, and Meshullam the son of Besodeiah; they laid the beams thereof, and set up the doors thereof, and the locks thereof, and the bars thereof. And next unto them repaired Melatiah the Gibeonite, and Jadon the Meronothite, the men of Gibeon, and of Mizpah, unto the throne of the governor on this side the river.*
5. This group built the wall up to the house of the Persian governor.
6. The “old gate” may have been the Mishnah gate; but you’ll see that not all the gates are named on map.

**E. Verse 8** – *Next unto him repaired Uzziel the son of Harhaiah, of the goldsmiths. Next unto him also repaired Hananiah the son of one of the apothecaries, and they fortified Jerusalem unto the broad wall.*

1. Apparently this broad wall had formerly been a double wall or a highly fortified section of the original.
2. It is interesting where we might learn little bits about Judean society.
  - a. Apparently, the Jews have always been in the jewelry business.
  - b. But, in this case, from where did they get their gold? It was not mined locally as far as I know.
  - c. Solomon had it imported from Ophir and other places.
  - d. Then what did they do with their product? Was their work sold locally or was it exported? To where?
3. Not even these men who used their fingers for the most delicate work, kept those fingers from lifting rock and slapping mortar.
4. And then there were the apothecaries – either druggists or perfume makers.
5. **Verse 9** – *And next unto them repaired Rephaiah the son of Hur, the ruler of the half part of Jerusalem.*
  - a. Do you remember the Hebrew word for “son”? It is “ben.”
  - b. Rephaiah was one of several men who were also called “ben Hur.”

**F. Verse 10** *And next unto them repaired Jedaiah the son of Harumaph, even over against his house. And next unto him repaired Hattush the son of Hashabniah. Malchijah the son of Harim, and Hashub the son of Pahathmoab, repaired the other piece, and the tower of the furnaces.*

1. Now we have covered the entire north side of the city, with a major dip to the south
2. Some think the furnaces refer to the city’s commercial bakery, but most bread was baked at home.
3. This was probably more like a place for burning bricks.

**G. Verse 12** – *And next unto him repaired Shallum the son of Halohesh, the ruler of the half part of Jerusalem, he and his daughters.*

1. Apparently Halohesh, who was important in local government, had no sons.
2. But the man’s daughters refused to let anyone speak ill of their father, so they did the work that any man might have done. You have to think well of these ladies.
3. It also makes me wonder how many other women were involved, and how they served.
4. They may have toted or slung mortar, or watched as guards, or carried food and water.
5. There were lots of things they could have done which was essential, but not in the spot light.

**H. Verse 13** – *The valley gate repaired Hanun, and the inhabitants of Zanoah; they built it, and set up the doors thereof, the locks thereof, & the bars thereof, & a thousand cubits on the wall unto the dung gate.*

1. The Valley gate was the portal through which Nehemiah left on his initial night-time survey.
2. It seems that Hanun and his friends built the largest single section of the wall – half a mile or so.
3. I wonder if there was friendly competition between families? There can be great joy in doing God’s work.

- I. Verse 14** – *But the dung gate repaired Malchiah the son of Rechab, the ruler of part of Bethhaccerem; he built it, and set up the doors thereof, the locks thereof, and the bars thereof.*
1. The dung gate was the most southerly part of the city and overlooked the valley of Hinnon, the city dump.
  2. Bethhaccerem was the district between Jerusalem and Tekoah.
  3. *But the gate of the fountain repaired Shallun the son of Colhozeh, the ruler of part of Mizpah; he built it, and covered it, and set up the doors thereof, the locks thereof, and the bars thereof, and the wall of the pool of Siloah by the king's garden, and unto the stairs that go down from the city of David.*
    - a. Remember that the City of David was on one of the hill tops of the region.
    - b. It was the place which the original occupants, the Jebusites, said could not be taken by any enemy.
    - c. Apparently stairs were built to the southeast in order to make easier access to the area.
  4. *After him repaired Nehemiah the son of Azbuk, the ruler of the half part of Bethzur, unto the place over against the sepulchres of David, and to the pool that was made, and unto the house of the mighty.*
    - a. This was some of the oldest, most important, and most famous parts of the city.
  5. **Verse 17** – *After him repaired the Levites, Rehum the son of Bani. Next unto him repaired Hashabiah, the ruler of the half part of Keilah, in his part.*
    - a. The tribe of Levi were the helpers to the priests and they had various responsibilities in the temple.
    - b. They were supposed to have fields out in the country, but these families may have moved into the city.
  6. **Verse 18** – *After him repaired their brethren, Bavai the son of Henadad, the ruler of the half part of Keilah.*
    - a. What do you remember about Keilah?
    - b. David saved Keilah from an attack of the Philistines in **I Samuel. 23.**
  7. **Verse 19** – *And next to him repaired Ezer the son of Jeshua, the ruler of Mizpah, another piece over against the going up to the armoury at the turning of the wall. After him Baruch the son of Zabbai earnestly repaired the other piece, from the turning of the wall unto the door of the house of Eliashib the high priest.*
    - a. What do you suppose Nehemiah meant when he said Zabbai worked earnestly?
    - b. Was he more diligent and exact? Quicker? Did he sweat more?
    - c. We see here that Eliashib didn't work on the wall which was nearest to his house.
    - d. He worked around the important area of the Sheep Gate.
  8. *After him repaired Meremoth the son of Urijah the son of Koz another piece, from the door of the house of Eliashib even to the end of the house of Eliashib. And after him repaired the priests, the men of the plain.*
    - a. Once again we see more of the priests working with their hands.
    - b. Originally, the priests, like the Levites, lived in the country, and came into Jerusalem for their service.
- J. Verse 23** – *After him repaired Benjamin and Hashub over against their house. After him repaired Azariah the son of Maaseiah the son of Ananiah by his house.*
1. *After him repaired Binnui the son of Henadad another piece, from the house of Azariah unto the turning of the wall, even unto the corner.*
  2. *Palal the son of Uzai, over against the turning of the wall, and the tower which lieth out from the king's high house, that was by the court of the prison. After him Pedaiah the son of Parosh.*
  3. Note the reference to the prison.
  4. It doesn't matter how religious, or even holy, general society might be, there will always be law breakers.
  5. And where there are law-breakers there is need of a place to remand the accused before they stand before their judge.
- K. Verse 26** – *Moreover the Nethinims dwelt in Ophel, unto the place over against the water gate toward the east, and the tower that lieth out.*
1. The Nethinims have always found a warm place in my heart. Who can tell me about them?
  2. When Israel was taking control of the Promised Land the Canaanites of Gibeon tricked Joshua and the leadership of Israel into a peace treaty.
  3. When their duplicity was discovered, it was decided that their lives would be spared, as promised, but they would forever be **“hewers of wood and drawers of water”** for the work of the Lord.

4. They became servants to the priests and Levites, and history declares their faithfulness to the Lord.
5. Over time, they were so blessed of God that they became a rather large tribe, and as we can see their allegiance was to God and to Judah rather than falling away to escape with the northern tribes of Israel.

**L. Verse 27** – *After them the Tekoites repaired another piece, over against the great tower that lieth out, even unto the wall of Ophel. From above the horse gate repaired the priests, every one over against his house.*

1. Is this another group from Tokoah, or was the same bunch so zealous that they labored at two sites?
2. Why was this called the horse gate, and why was it at this place in the wall?
3. Israel was not supposed to keep horses, and when she did it was only the king, so the stables were close to the royal palace.
4. **Verse 28** – *After them repaired Zadok the son of Immer over against his house. After him repaired also Shemaiah the son of Shechaniah, the keeper of the east gate.*
5. *After him repaired Hananiah the son of Shelemiah, and Hanun the sixth son of Zalaph, another piece. After him repaired Meshullam the son of Berechiah over against his chamber.*
6. *After him repaired Malchiah the goldsmith's son unto the place of the Nethinims, and of the merchants, over against the gate Miphkad, and to the going up of the corner.*
7. *And between the going up of the corner unto the sheep gate repaired the goldsmiths and the merchants.*

### III. Conclusion:

- A. The population of Jerusalem in Nehemiah's day was relatively small – compared to the days of her glory.
  1. And the residents were probably scattered throughout the city limits.
  2. There was nothing to protect them from animal and human predators.
  3. Nehemiah considered the situation to be shameful; the glory of the holy city was gone.
  4. He saw the rebuilding of the walls as the second most important part of the beautification of Jerusalem.
  5. What was the most important part? The temple.
- B. Again, thinking of Jerusalem as a picture of the Lord's church.
  1. The first and foremost aspect of our congregational existence is worship – our corporative vertical relationship.
  2. But there is so much more – from discipleship, to doctrine, to discipline, to joy, and to spiritual growth and prosperity.
- C. Under Nehemiah, Jerusalem was one step closer to what she was supposed to be.