

Restoring the Gates (Part 1 of #7)

Nehemiah 3: 1-32

We have already spent a couple of weeks dealing with this chapter, but it has an abundance of truth and help for those who take the time to look at it in detail. We have discussed the workmen and the work they put forth in an effort to restore the walls.

Tonight I want to begin looking at the particulars involved with the restoration, the gates themselves. You might wonder what benefit there is considering the gates and the physical attributes of the wall. What could we possibly learn from a historic listing of the reconstruction of particular sections of the wall of Jerusalem? Each of these gates reveal a picture we all can relate to. They illustrate particular aspects of human life and our relationship to the Lord. If we are to rebuild that which has been torn down, we need to have a proper understanding of what we are engaged in. The gates in this chapter illustrate that for us.

We will look at each of the ten gates listed in the text this evening and next week I hope to consider the towers of the city and the landmarks mentioned within the city. Each of these elements has considerable application for our daily lives. So, let's begin by considering the [attributes](#) associated with: [Restoring the Gates](#).

I. The Gates of the City (1-31)

A. The Sheep Gate (1) (Sacrifice) – [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.](#) This is the first gate mentioned and it appears to be where the work began. This is the gate through which the sheep were lead for sacrifice at the Temple.

- Clearly this is the gate that was associated with sacrifice. When one saw or considered the sheep gate, sacrifices came to mind. This is a picture of the Lamb of God who came as the atoning sacrifice for all men. [John 1:29 – The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.](#)

- It is interesting to note that the work began at the sheep gate and we are brought back to it, coming full circle, in [V.32 – And between the going up of the corner unto the sheep gate repaired the goldsmiths and the merchants.](#) What significance does that have for us? Simply Jesus is the point of origin for all who believe. He is the source of salvation for all that are accepted of God and placed within His family. God began a work in us through the sacrifice of

His Son and one day we will come full circle as we meet Him in the splendors of heaven. He is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. If we are to restore the spiritual walls of our day and live according to the will of God we must see Jesus as the point of origin. Apart from Him there is no life and absolutely no victory! If we ever stray from where God would have us be, we must get back to Jesus. It all starts here!

B. The Fish Gate (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.](#) The fish gate was located on the northern side of Jerusalem through which fish was brought in from the Mediterranean Sea or Sea of Galilee. It too was an important gate for the inhabitants of Jerusalem. It was through this gate that much of their sustenance came. Those who sold and traded in fish sought a place in the market as near the fish gate as they could get. This offered the best and freshest of the daily supply. Quickly I want to offer three specific attributes of the fish gate that relate to our lives.

1. Satisfaction – It is apparent that the fish gate was the source of daily meals for many of the inhabitants of Jerusalem. It served a crucial role in meeting their daily needs. We need to be reminded and seek after the satisfaction that is found in the Lord. The world has much to offer, but it will never satisfy. We must ensure that we are receiving our nourishment from the proper source.

2. Sin – The area in and around the fish gate was also a place known for corruption and greed. It was a place where the proprietors of the market place would take advantage of others at any and every opportunity. I am in no way encouraging that we seek to repair a gate of sin, but we must be mindful of our lives and seek pure motives before the Lord and with men.

3. Service – As we consider the call our Lord gave the disciples we are reminded that He called them to be fishers of men. We need to regain the commitment of serving the Lord and seeking out those who do not know Him. I am convinced that the gate of service stands in great need of repair and restoration!

C. The Old Gate (6) (Sanctification) – [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.](#) The old gate was located on the northwest side of Jerusalem and speaks of the ancient gate. Apparently it was one of the original gates of ancient Jerusalem. Clearly there is a picture that needs to be heeded in our day. We need to seek the old paths and return unto the ways of God. [Jer.6:16 – Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the](#)

ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein.

- I know that this verse has been used by many who argue against anything that is different from well established traditions and many are labeled liberal by the legalist if they do things differently than those traditions. I am not worried about pleasing men by submitting to their time honored traditions, but I am interested in seeking the ways of God, returning to the righteous standard that He established in the Scripture. The ways of God have never changed and they never will. We need to get back to the old ways, the ways that have been established of God within His blessed Book!

D. The Valley Gate (13) (Suffering) – The valley gate repaired Hanun, and the inhabitants of Zanoah; they built it, and set up the doors thereof, the locks thereof, and the bars thereof, and a thousand cubits on the wall unto the dung gate. This was the gate on the west side that led out into the valley of Hinnom. Each of us can identify with the valley gate. I am sure that we have all passed through it many times. The valley is not an enjoyable place, but it does offer benefit. It is in the valley that God matures us and gets us to a place that we realize our need for Him. If you have ever met a strong Christian, you can rest assured they have passed through the valley gate many times.

- I sought the Lord in regard to application for our lives. We do not desire to pass through this gate. I don't know anyone who willfully seeks the valley. But, we need to ensure that the gate leading into the city from the valley is strong and functional. It will prevent much of the despair associated with the valley from entering our lives.

- Also, there are times that we and others will inevitably have to walk through the valley. We may have to go out into it and we will need a place of entrance when the journey is over. Our world is filled with those who are in despair, seeking help and direction for their lives. We need to get the valley gate restored so that we can provide a place of safety and rest for those who have endured the valley.

E. The Dung Gate (14) (Separation) – But the dung gate repaired Malchiah the son of Rechab, the ruler of part of Beth-haccerem; he build it, and set up the doors thereof, the locks thereof, and the bars thereof. This would not have been the most desired gate to have repaired. It was located at the southwest corner of the wall and led out into the valley of Hinnom where the waste and refuse of Jerusalem was dumped. It was the trash heap or landfill for the city.

- We may not see much value in this gate, but imagine the abundance of waste that was generated within a city the size of Jerusalem. Consider the smell and potential for disease that would generate over an extended period of time. This gate was crucial to the sanitation efforts of the city. Through it we see the need to rid our lives of sin and those things that would defile. We need to get rid of them, throw them out, and close the gate behind us. Sin must be forsaken and separated if we are to have a healthy, pleasing life before the Lord.
- Quickly we need to consider another important association with the dung gate. It led to the trash heap, an area that Jesus used to illustrate hell. In that day fire was set to the trash and it smoldered and burned continually. We see a picture of those who are lost before God, viewed as unworthy and cast out as garbage. All need to ensure that they are not cast out of the dung gate, separated eternally from God in the flames of a literal, eternal hell.

F. The Fountain Gate (15) (Salvation) – *But the gate of the fountain repaired Shallun the son of Col-hozeh, 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.* The fountain gate was located on the southeast corner of the city wall, near to the spring of Enrogel. We associate water with life. All of life depends upon water; it is essential to life.

- As I consider the fountain gate I am reminded of salvation in the Lord, the giver of eternal life. Even in Nehemiah's day the fountain was an illustration of salvation and redemption in the Lord. *Jer.2:13 – For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water. Consider the comparison our Lord gives.* *John 7:37 – In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.* *John 4:14 – But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.* As we seek application for our lives, this is the most important gate through which we must travel. Had it not been for the sheep gate we never would have had the opportunity to enter the fountain gate, but I rejoice that Jesus made a way for my redemption and I have received the living water that He gives. We need to point others to that spiritual fountain gate so that they too can drink of living water.

G. The Water Gate (26) (Scripture) – *Moreover the Nethinims dwelt in Ophel, unto the place over against the water gate toward the east, and the tower that lieth out.* Located north of the fountain gate on the east side of the wall, the water gate was near to the Gihon spring, an important water source for the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

- Water is often a picture of the Word of God in Scripture. Just as natural water brings life, the Word of God can bring conviction resulting in conversion, quickening the dead man to an eternal existence. [Heb.4:12 – For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.](#) [Ephes.5:26 – That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,](#) [John 15:3 – Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.](#)
- There is no mention of repair for the water gate, just as God's Word needs no repair. It needs nothing added to it or taken away. However, I fear that the gate of our lives leading to the Word has been neglected. Few are committed to read, study, and apply the Word as we should. May we keep that gate in proper order and frequent it on a daily basis?

H. The Horse Gate (28) (Security) – [From above the horse gate repaired the priests, every one over against his house.](#) The horse gate was located on the northeastern side of the city form which the horses of battle came and went. It was here that the defenders of Jerusalem would leave and reenter the city.

- The Christian can rest comfortably knowing that we are safe and secure in the Lord. He came the first time as a humble babe and entered Jerusalem riding on a donkey. He will come again as King, riding upon a white horse as He defeats the enemy and proclaims judgment. [Rev.19:11 – And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. \[14\] And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.](#) The enemy is advancing on every hand, but this gate will never be torn down. We may suffer defeat in the battle, but we will never lose the war. The redeemed are secure in Him!

I. The East Gate (29) (Sovereignty) – [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.](#) This was a prominent gate within the wall of Jerusalem. It was located north of the horse gate on the eastern side of the city. It was the first to be opened in the morning as the light of day began to be revealed upon the horizon. Most agree that this was the gate through which Christ made the triumphant entry and the gate through which He will return ([Ez.43:1-5](#)). It was referred to as the beautiful gate in [Acts 3](#).

- The eastern gate in Jerusalem is now closed, but one glorious daybreak the Bright and Morning Star will return to this earth and the gate will once again be opened. Through the power and influence of Satan many doors have been closed, but the Sovereign King will not be

deterred or held out by the power or influence of Satan. He will come for His church and we will return to this earth with Him when He comes in great power!

J. The Miphkad Gate (31) (Scrutiny) – [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.](#) The miphkad gate was located on the northern side of the city next to the sheep gate and near to the Temple. This is the only time that we find this word in the Bible. **Miphkad** has the idea of “*a review or registry; a place of inspection.*” We might liken it to a customs gate at a point of entry. It was there that strangers had to stop and register. They had to have the right credentials to be allowed entrance to the city.

- It was also used by the king to review or inspect the troops as they returned from battle. Imagine the king standing proudly as he inspected his triumphant soldiers as they returned from battle.
 - This presents a humbling thought. Only those who have the right credentials will be allowed entrance to the city. Only the redeemed of the Lord will be allowed to enter His presence. Every person who has ever lived is responsible for gaining access through the shed blood of Jesus Christ. Only those who are washed in the blood, born again, will be accepted.
 - It also brings to mind the Judgment Seat of Christ. One day all who have fought the battle in the Lord’s army will stand before the King and be inspected of Him. He will view our efforts and how we stood in the midst of battle. I know there will be much that will cause us great sorrow as we stand before our Lord. There will be much that we should have done and failed, but I want to do all I can in this life to honor and glorify Him as I stand before Him. All the redeemed will pass through this gate as we stand before the Lord.
- [Neh.3:32 – And between the going up of the corner unto the sheep gate repaired the goldsmiths and the merchants.](#) We began at the sheep gate on the north side of the city and made our way counterclockwise all the way around. We are now back where we started. I want to emphasize again that it all begins and ends at the sheep gate. That is a picture of our Lord. He alone in the means of salvation. We must come by the way of His sacrifice for any of the other things we talked about to be of any significance.

Many today are standing without the city because they have refused the Lamb that was slain. There is no other way. All must come by Him. Have you met Him in salvation?

Surely there are needs in all our lives. I am confident that we all have areas that need to be addressed and repaired. Are we willing to face reality and seek those changes that would honor the Lord? He gave His all for us, but what are we giving in return?