

Week #:	64	Text:	Nehemiah 3	Title:	Rebuilding the Gates
Songs:					

Rebuilding the Gates: Nehemiah Parallels to the Restoration of the Nation of Israel – and Parallels to Believers

- Israel was restored as a nation May 14, 1948
 - one of the greatest fulfillments of Biblical prophecy of any time in history
 - this event was the hinge pin to end time prophecies
- The past is the key to the future.
 - Events in the Bible have clues which can relate to something that will happen in the future.
 - Especially as in relates to Israel: we often find parallels from the past that point to future events
- One such parallel we can look at is Israel’s life as a nation, and the parallels to the gates of the city in Nehemiah.
- Restoration of Israel as a nation:
 - They went to Babylon, then they came back to the land and began to restore the city of Jerusalem under Ezra and Nehemiah and Zerubbabel
- The book of Nehemiah tells us of the ten gates that were restored when they came back from Babylonian captivity:
- The order and restoration of these ten gates shows us a parallel to the order and restoration Israel as a nation.

#1 Sheep Gate:

Nehemiah 3:1 says:

¹Then Elyashiv the *cohen hagadol* [high priest] set out with his fellow *cohanim* [priests], and they rebuilt the Sheep Gate

- Elyashiv is the high priest. His name means **GOD RESTORES**
 - God is saying in using this man – “I’m going to restore the city.”
- The sheep gate is restored first, because this is where they bring the sheep and the lambs through for the sacrifices at the Temple. This is the most important gate to them.
- Parallel: in 1948 God began to bring the sheep – the Israelites – the natural seed of Abraham – back to the nation of Israel and He restored them as a nation
- GOD RESTORED the first gate in Nehemiah’s time, and GOD RESTORED the sheep back to the nation in 1948
- *Personal aspect:* No prizes for knowing that this speaks of the very first experience we come into in our Christian life – that is, a realization that Jesus was the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world. The sheep gate then speaks to us of the cross and the sacrifice that was made for our sins. It is the starting point of everything but you will also notice if you read the entire chapter that the sheep gate is also mentioned at the very end once we have come full circle. That is because everything starts and ends with Jesus’ death on the cross.
- *Prophetic aspect:* This gate points to the first coming of Jesus Christ 2000 years ago to be the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world (John 1:29). He is the sacrifice foretold in this sheep gate. He is the door by which everyone must enter to be saved (John 10:7-9).

#2 Fish Gate:

Nehemiah 3:3 says:

³The sons of Hasna’ah rebuilt the Fish Gate; they installed its timber framework and set up its doors, along with its bolts and bars.

- This is the gate where they brought in fish from the country of Jordan.
- In 1948 when Israel was restored as a nation, by and large they did not return on planes – they returned by boat.

Jeremiah 16:16 says:

¹⁶“‘Look,’ says ADONAI, ‘I will send for many fishermen, and they will fish for them...

- This is a prophecy where God is saying that the Jews are going to come back to Israel, especially from the northern countries.
- God says in this prophecy that He is going to fish them out.
- Just like bringing in fish from the sea, God sent fishermen to bring His people back by way of the sea from the other nations – put hooks in their jaws and draw them back, by way of the sea.
- *Personal aspect:* For us, it speaks of evangelism as we have been called to be ‘fishers of men’ (Matt 4:19). It is a natural progression in our Christian life that after seeing that Jesus died for our sins, we would then want to tell others about it. Surveys have shown that believers who have been saved less than two years win the most people to the Lord. Their simple testimony of what Jesus has done in their lives qualifies them to be great ‘fishers of men.’ So this is the next step in the Christian life.
- *Prophetic aspect:* This gate speaks of the church in the first century (the apostolic era) where believers on fire for God sacrificed all and went out to turn the world upside down with the message of Jesus Christ! And that is what happened. Starting with the Jews and then travelling out to the Gentiles in the then known world, the Apostles and disciples of the Lord truly were ‘fishers of men’ and the growth of Christianity spread rapidly during the first century.

#3 Old City Gate:

Nehemiah 3:6 says:

⁶Yoyada the son of Paseach and Meshulam the son of B’sodyah made repairs to the Old City Gate; they installed its timber framework and set up its doors, along with its bolts and bars.

- This was one of the oldest gates in the entire city.
- The parallel here is that after restoring Israel as a nation, and bringing them back by way of the sea, now He is going to begin to restore the old things back to them.
- One of the things that was restored to them when Israel became a nation was the restoration of the old Hebrew language.
 - When the Jews returned, they were coming from many countries and were not speaking Hebrew, they were speaking the languages of those nations.
- Now the language they speak is the Hebrew language – it was restored to them.

Zephaniah 3:9 says:

⁹For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the LORD, to serve him with one consent.

- In this prophecy, God says that He will restore them to one language, the language which had been lost over the years among many of the European nations as the people were spread out.
- Other old things God restored was the land.
- *Personal aspect:* This speaks to us of the old ways of truth. A young Christian having experienced the sheep gate, then the fish gate, soon sees the need for experiencing the old gate. This means learning the old ways of truth that never change. Jeremiah 6:16 states ‘Thus says the Lord, Stand by the ways and see and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is and walk in it; And you will find rest for your souls.’ Too many Christian’s today want something new. The latest teaching, the latest experience... Or they try to change

truth to make it acceptable with what the world thinks is right 'today' (which may not be the same as what it thinks 'tomorrow'.) But the Ancient of Days calls us back to His long established ways that do not change and remain the same yesterday, today and forever.

- *Prophetic aspect:* Prophetically this speaks of the period of the Church Fathers around 100-325 AD (sometimes known as the Ante-Nicene era). This was a period where a defence of the faith and the truth of God were further established to counter attacks and persecution from unbelievers.

#4 Valley Gate:

Nehemiah 3:13 says:

¹³ Hanun and the people living in Zanoach repaired the Valley Gate;

- The Valley Gate speaks of a separation.
- In the city of Jerusalem, there's the upper part of the city, and the lower part of the city, and the Tyropeon Valley runs between the two.
- The parallel: the Jews came back as a nation in 1948, but Jerusalem was still a divided city.
 - The Eastern part of Jerusalem was the Arab sector.
 - The Western part of Jerusalem was the Jewish sector.
 - There was a great gulf of separation between the two areas.
- A valley is a separation between two mountains or two hills.
- *Personal aspect:* Examining the picture above you notice that there is a long distance before you come to the next gate, which is the valley gate. For a new Christian the Lord allows a 'honeymoon' type period where He teaches you and His presence is strong in your life. This can go on for some time as indicated by the positioning of the old and valley gates. But sooner or later the valley gate must come. The valley gate speaks to us of humbling and trials – valley type experiences used by the Lord for our personal growth. Never easy but the Christian needs to remember that in the natural nothing really grows on the mountain tops, but it certainly does down in the valleys. So it is in the spiritual. Never a nice experience but it always produces fruit.
- *Prophetic aspect:* In the history of the church the valley gate would speak of the humbling and suppression of the true church following on from when 'Christianity' was made a state religion under Constantine (~390AD). Pagan rituals were adapted and brought into the 'church' and spiritual regression ensued. This long period continued with the 'dark ages' and the further establishment of Roman Catholicism as the face of 'Christianity' to the world.

#5 Dung/Refuse Gate:

Nehemiah 3:14 says:

¹⁴ Malkiyah the son of Rechav, leader of the district of Beit-Hakerem, repaired the Dung Gate; he rebuilt it and set up its doors, along with its bolts and bars.

- This gate was where the dung from the animals was taken out of the city. The Temple had a lot of animals there all the time, and they would, of course, leave deposits. That had to be cleaned up, and it was taken out of the city by cart through the dung gate. It was then dumped in the Valley of Gehenna, where a perpetual fire was burning to clean up this refuse.
- Gehenna is the Greek word for hell.
- The dung gate speaks to us of sin – corruption – death.
- To enter to go to the Temple, you did not go through the dung gate. You had to go to the Eastern Gate.
- The parallel is: even though the people have been restored as a nation, many of them are still blind to the Gospel.
 - Around 2000:

- about 60% of Tel Aviv is atheist or agnostic
- 50% of Tiberius is atheist or agnostic
- The nation is restored, but they are still in unbelief – they are still in the refuse of their sin.
- *Personal aspect:* Again there is quite a distance to the next gate indicating that, unfortunately, the valley experience can carry on for some time. But the result of that experience is clearly seen in this next gate – the dung gate. This is where the rubbish is removed and this is what happens in our own life. Valley experiences are used by the Lord to clear away the rubbish so that true faith, refined by the fire, can come forth and produce fruit. Clearing away the rubbish in our lives is never easy but the benefits of this experience can be seen in the next gate. You will notice also that at this point of your Christian life there is a dramatic ‘turning of the corner’ that takes place. From the diagram above, up until this point we have been moving downward and the experiences have been hard, but having come to this point there is a sharp turn in the road and we begin to move upward again.
- *Prophetic aspect:* The dung gate speaks of the rubbish that became established within the ‘church’ during the dark and medieval ages leading up to the reformation. Some of doctrinal ‘rubbish’ that needed removing included the teachings of indulgences, purgatory, salvation by various sacraments and works, exaltation of Mary as the ‘Mother of God’ and the man-made church hierarchy and papal authority. There was a lot to be removed!

#6 Fountain Gate:

Nehemiah 3:15 says:

¹⁵ Shalun the son of Kol-Hozeh, leader of the district of Mitzpah, repaired the Fountain Gate...

- This gate was in the locality of the Pool of Siloam
 - John 9 tells of the blind man who was healed here by Jesus.
- In the future there will be a fountain opened in the House of David that will cleanse the uncleanness.
 - We know that this has come through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.
- The Fountain Gate speaks of cleansing – of salvation.

Zechariah 13:1 says:

¹ In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness.

Isaiah 12:3

³ Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.

- The Gate of the Fountain deals with the fountain of living water springing up.
- In the midst of Israel coming back in 1948 under such unbelief, God has begun a work in the Jewish people. There is a remnant who are being saved today, accepting Jesus Christ. So there is a fountain of salvation being opened to them.
- We also have a parallel here to the world:
 - God has opened up a fountain of salvation to the world.
- *Personal aspect:* You will notice from the picture that the fountain gate is located extremely close to the dung gate. In other words, after a valley type experience where rubbish in our lives is cleared out through the dung gate, true faith comes forth and the fountains begin to flow quite quickly! This speaks to us of the living waters of the Holy Spirit that cleanse our lives and empower us for our Christian life. Jesus said: ‘Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.’ (John 7:38)

- *Prophetic aspect:* In church history, this speaks of the period beginning with the reformation (1517-1600). It was a time when the truth of God's word was established again as Bibles were printed for the common man to read and the key truth of salvation by grace through faith opened the fountains of salvation to flow again.

#7 Water Gate:

Nehemiah 3:26

²⁶ (since the temple servants were living in the 'Ofel) as far as opposite the Water Gate to the east and the tower that projects out.

- Notice the order of the gates:
 - Refuse – represents sin
 - Fountain – represents salvation

John 7:37-39 says:

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.

³⁸ He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

³⁹ (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

- Water always speaks of the Holy Spirit

Isaiah 44:3 says:

³ For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring:

- Any time we see in the Bible it talking of rivers flowing, or water, it talks of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.
- The order of the gates:
 - Refuse – represents sin
 - Fountain – represents salvation
 - Water – represents the joy of the Lord through the Holy Spirit
- A parallel here is the order of your progression in Christ:
 - Ofel was the place of the Pool of Siloam – SALVATION
 - Zion was the place of deliverance – DELIVERANCE
 - Moriah was the place of the glory of God – INFILLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT
- *Personal aspect:* The next gate we arrive at is the water gate. The water gate is a picture of the word of God and its effect in our life. Eph 5:26 states '... having washed her by the water of the word.' Psalm 119:9 states that it is only through God's word that we can be clean. It is no coincidence that this gate was located next to the fountain gate as the two often go together. The Holy Spirit is the one who makes the word of God alive to us personally, allowing cleansing, encouragement and direction to take place in our life.
- *Prophetic aspect:* From 1600-1900 the word of God made a dramatic impact in the lives of many around the world. Some of the great men of God preached the word including John Bunyan in the time of the Puritans, John Wesley, George Whitefield, Charles Spurgeon, D.L Moody among others. The preaching and cleansing of the word went forth into countries and continents previously starved of the word through men such as Hudson Taylor, Adoraim Judson and William Carey.

#8 Horse Gate:

Nehemiah 3:28

²⁸ Above the Horse Gate the *cohanim* [priests] made repairs, each one opposite his own house.

- The horse gate was used in the time of war so that they could get the horses in and out of the city very swiftly.
- This speaks of warfare.
 - When you are saved, and delivered by the Blood of Christ, and then you receive the infilling of the Holy Spirit, it's not long until you know that you are in spiritual warfare.

Ephesians 6:12 says:

¹² For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

- It's not long before you realize there's a battle going on and warfare taking place.
- This is also the progression of Israel:
 - They have fought five major wars in their land:
 - 1948
 - 1956
 - 1967 – 6 Day War
 - 1972 – Yom Kippur War
 - They have found out that they are in a continual struggle for survival and a continual warfare

Jeremiah 12:5 says:

⁵ If racing men on foot exhausts you, how will you compete against horses? You may feel secure in a land at peace, but how will you do in the Yarden's thick brush?

- the running with horses speaks of warfare
- There is a progression in the natural world that parallels the progression in the spiritual world with regard to Israel and to us as believers.
 - If these gates were shifted around in a different order it would not make sense.
- *Personal aspect:* The horse gate speaks to us of warfare as horses were used in battle and became a symbol of war. Revelation 19:11 'I saw Heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness does He judge and make war.' Spiritual warfare, as we will see in this entire study on Nehemiah, is a requirement of every Christian because we are all in a battle whether we know it or not. It is also interesting that the horse gate follows the water (word) gate for as the word goes forth the spiritual warfare is sure to increase!
- *Prophetic aspect:* Horses speak of speed and war. From the 1900's onwards both of these certainly apply! The speed of medical, technological, industrial and scientific advancements was beyond comparison. And yet with it came two world wars, countless wars between nations and constant ethnic unrest. For the church it has been one battle after another with the rise of the cults, Biblical criticism. Modernism and liberalism leading to an increasing apostasy within the church. The ultimate fulfilment prophetically of the horse gate will be in the Tribulation – the Day of the Lord as described in Revelation 6-19.

#9 East Gate:

Nehemiah 3:29 says:

²⁹ ... After him Sh'ma'yah the son of Sh'khanyah, the keeper of the East Gate, made repairs.

- The progression for Israel is:
 - They are blind in part
 - The Lord opens up a fountain of salvation
 - God promised that He will pour out his spirit
 - in the tribulation period there will be 144,000 Jews that will be sealed with the seal of God.

- Then they will enter into warfare.
- The East Gate according the Zechariah is to be sealed until the Messiah comes.
- The East Gate always talk or speaks of the Messiah's return. When Jesus returns, He will open up that gate and enter the East Gate.
- After the four horses of the apocalypse, Jesus returns and sets up His kingdom here on earth in Jerusalem.
- *Personal aspect:* Ezekiel 44:1-3 '... the gate that looked toward the east, and it was shut. The Lord said to me, 'This gate shall be shut; it shall not be opened, and no one shall enter by it, for the Lord God of Israel has entered by it.' The east gate opens and looks toward the Mount of Olives and we know that when Jesus returns He will return to this mount. (Zech 14:4). He will then enter Jerusalem by the east gate. The east gate then speaks of the return of Jesus Christ. For our Christian life it shows us of our need to live with this hope and to long for His return. A specific crown is even given to those who do this (2 Tim 4:8).
- *Prophetic aspect:* Please take note how the last three gates (Horse, East and Inspection gate) in the picture are very close together because so are the events which they symbolise. Prophetically the east gate is very close to the horse gate because the day of God's wrath ends with the coming of the Lord Jesus to Jerusalem on earth. (See Zech chapter 14).

#10 Mustering/Inspection Gate:

Nehemiah 3:31 says:

³¹ After him Malkiyah, one of the goldsmiths, made repairs as far as the house of the temple servants and the merchants, opposite the Mustering Gate and on to the upper room at the corner.

- *Personal aspect:* The final gate is the inspection gate. This gate speaks to us of the examination of our lives by the Lord. This occurs in this life as indicated by Paul in 1 Cor 4:4: 'For I am conscious of nothing against myself, yet I am not by this acquitted; but the one who examines me is the Lord.' The ultimate fulfilment is at the Bema seat of Christ (as spoken of in 1 Cor 3:10-15, 2 Cor 5:10) where our lives are inspected and rewarded appropriately. In our Christian experience we should be living with this in mind. We are called to live our lives with eternity in view, caring more for the things of eternity than the temporal that we see around us.
- *Prophetic aspect:* Following the return of the Lord there is a judgement of the nations that will occur as well. This is recorded in the sheep and the goats judgement in Mathew 25:31-46. From here he will separate all the people who survived the tribulation into those that can enter into His kingdom on earth (sheep) and those that are to go into everlasting destruction (the goats). And then the Lion of Judah shall reign in His Messianic Kingdom!
- Leads back to the Sheep Gate - #1

Nehemiah's Jerusalem

