

“The Work of Rebuilding”

Nehemiah 3:1-32

THE WORK OF REBUILDING IN NEHEMIAH’S DAY

1. The work of rebuilding was divided into about 40 different sections.

- The account begins at the northernmost gate (Sheep Gate), then moves counterclockwise around the city.

2. The work of rebuilding included people with all kinds of skills and abilities.

- high priests & priests v.1
- goldsmiths & perfumers v.8, 31, 32
- government officials v.9, 12, 14-19
- the Levites v.17 & temple servants v.26
- gatekeepers (guards) v.29 & merchants v.32

3. The work of rebuilding included people coming from other cities and towns.

- men of Jericho v.2; people of Tekoa v.5, 27; see also v. 7, 14-17, 19

4. The work of rebuilding included people working in the context of their homes and families.

- Shallum...and his daughters v.12
- Rehum, Hashabiah....and their brothers v.17, 18
- Benjamin & Hasshub (bachelors) in front of their house v.23
- the priests...each in front of his house v.28

5. The work of rebuilding also had some who wouldn’t support the work. v.5

- The nobles of Tekoa “would not stoop to serve their Lord.” Lit. did not “bring their neck to the work”

6. The work of rebuilding is what unified God’s people.

- They labored together ‘side by side’ for a common purpose.

7. The work of rebuilding was powerful—they rebuilt the walls in 52 days! Neh 6:15

THE WORK OF RESTORATION IN GOD’S PEOPLE TODAY

1. There is a sense in which we are the wall. 1 Peter 2:4-5

- The Scripture uses language to describe God’s people united together in a spiritual structure.
- *As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.*

2. There is a sense in which God is ‘building the wall’ through us. 1 Corinthians 12:4-6

- The Spirit of God is at work in and through His people today.
- *Now there are **varieties of gifts**, but the same Spirit; and there are **varieties of service**, but the same Lord; and there are **varieties of activities**, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone.*

3. The work of restoration is both a practical work and a spiritual work. I.e., It is “everyday” work.

- Practical: real people, real stones, real timber, hands-on work. Ref. Exodus 31:1-5
- Spiritual: used for His worship or used for idolatry. Ref. Exodus 32

4. Question: What is your section of the wall? Answer: _____.

THE WORK OF CHRIST FOR US

1. He has called you to worship Him with your whole life. Dt 6:4-5; Mt 22:37; Mk 12:29-31; Lk 10:27

2. He has called you to join the work of making disciples. Mt 18:28-30 (That is, disciple others *and* yourself.)

3. He is committed to rebuilding the rubble of your life (even the places that have been devastated for years!)

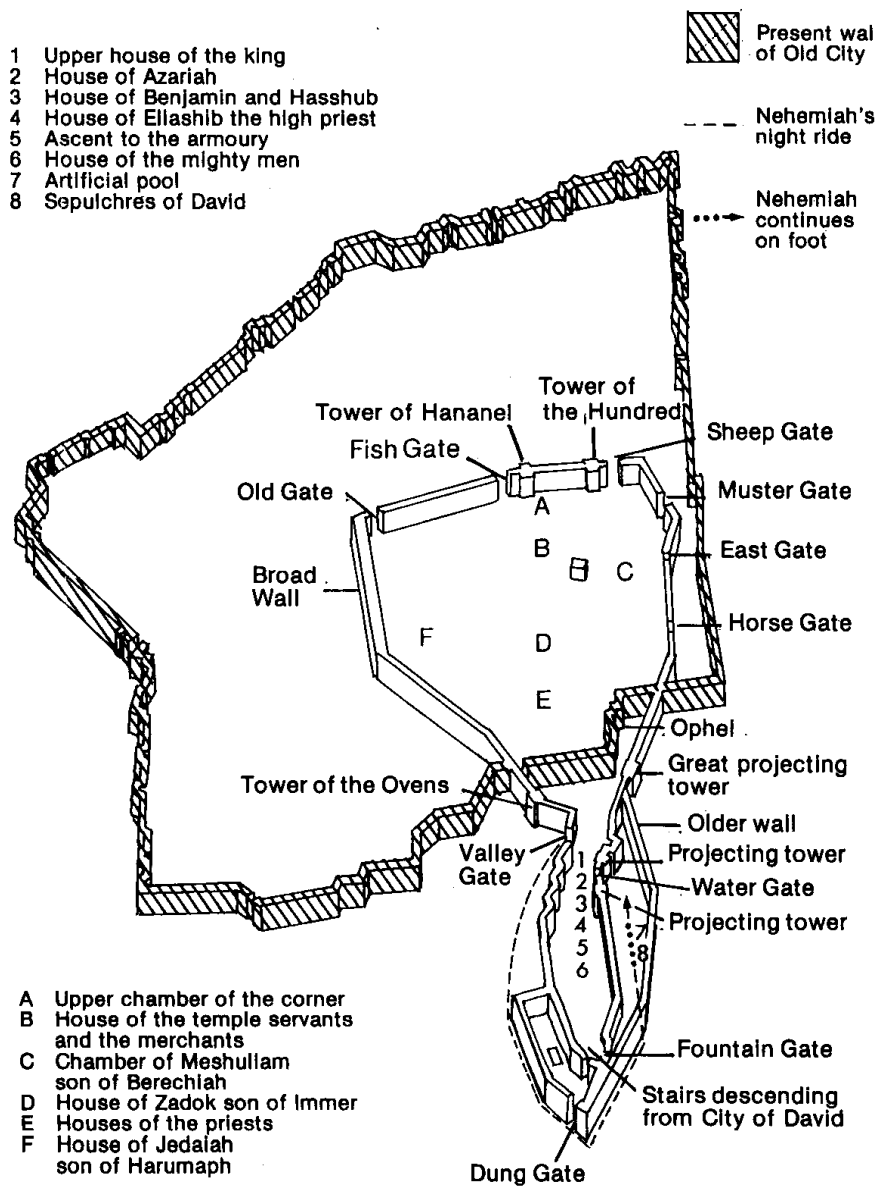
4. He is committed to sanctifying every area of your life (even the ‘worst places—remember the Refuse Gate.)

5. He is committed to sanctifying you completely—Jesus finishes the work He begins. Phil 1:6; Neh 2:18

Questions for small group discussions or further reflection:

1. After reading Nehemiah 3:1-32, what initial observations do you have?
2. Is there significance to the people working side by side one another?
3. Are we called to community or are we called to mission? How do these two relate?
4. Viewing Nehemiah as a type of Christ, in what ways have you seen Jesus rebuild the rubble of a fallen world in your own life?
5. In what areas of life might we tend to ignore or devalue the work of rebuilding? How is Christ committed to sanctifying even the most mundane and “insignificant” parts of your life?

JERUSALEM IN NEHEMIAH'S DAY



The diagram above is adapted from *Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, N Hillyer (Ed), Inter-Varsity Press and redrawn by David Simon, Edinburgh.

