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## Nehemiah 3

(2021)

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## Nehemiah 3.

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### INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF NEHEMIAH

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In 445 B.C. the Persian King Artaxerxes gave Nehemiah, an Israelite who was a trusted official written permission to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. Nehemiah went with the third wave of returning Jewish exiles. There was intense opposition from other people in the land, and disunity within Jerusalem. Despite the strong opposition, Nehemiah rebuilt the walls and overcame many threats. He served twice as governor and did what God had put in his heart (Neh. 2:12) (Neh. 7:5), and found that the joy of the LORD was his strength (Neh. 8:10). For an overview of the entire book see the title: "Overview of the Book of Nehemiah" (at the beginning of the index to Nehemiah).

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### THE PREVIOUS CHAPTER

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King Artaxerxes not only gave Nehemiah written letters that gave him permission to return to Judah and build a house for himself and the walls and gates of Jerusalem, and to use timber from the king's own forest, but also sent officers of his army and horsemen to go with him. Sanballat and Tobiah an Ammonite mocked and despised him accusing those with him of rebelling against the king.

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### INTRODUCTION TO THIS CHAPTER

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The work on the walls, towers and gates of Jerusalem begins. In this chapter the names of those who repaired the walls of Jerusalem are commemorated because it was not only a work of religious devotion, faithfulness and nationalism but also a work of courage in the midst of so many enemies. Repairing the walls of the Holy City would protect worshippers of God, and allow them to safely serve Him and offer their sacrifices and ceremonial rites without fear of attack, which is why their names are honoured in this chapter. The great principal of life (Christian and secular) that we can learn from this chapter is that, "Many hands make light work," men and women, priests and nobles, goldsmiths, pharmacists, craftsmen, merchants and labourers of all kinds, gathered together and completed the work in fifty-two days, which was an amazingly short period of time.

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### NEHEMIAH 3:1

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- **Nehemiah 3:1:** Then Eliashib the high priest rose up with his brothers the priests, and they built the Sheep Gate. They consecrated it and set its doors. They consecrated (sanctified in KJV) it as far as the Tower of the Hundred (Meah in KJV) as far as the Tower of Hananel.

Eliashib the high-priest was the grandchild of Jeshua (i.e., Joshua the high priest), he was the first high-priest after their return from Babylon. His father's name was Joiakim (Neh. 12.10).

The sheep gate was in the neighbourhood of the priests' quarters near the temple not far from the pool of Bethesda and was the common entrance into the temple. It was through this gate that sacrifices passed through to be washed in the pool near Bethesda. Eliashib, with his brethren (the priests) set a noble example and no doubt greatly encouraged all others, by being the first that began to rebuild the sacred gate of the holy city (that the Babylonians had demolished) for it was through this gate that sheep for sacrifices were brought into the temple.

**They built the Sheep Gate:** the statement, "Eliashib the high priest and the priests built the Sheep Gate, may mean that they physically laboured, but more likely means that they had the oversight over those who did the work and directed them.

**The name of the sheep-gate:** most likely arose from the fact sheep were led through it to the sheep market near the temple where they were sold for sacrifices and to the pool of Bethesda (the sheep pool), where they were washed prior to being sacrificed. (John 5:2).

**They consecrated (sanctified in KJV) it:** for the following two reasons:

1. It was the first part of the work to begin, which means it was a type of firstfruits concerning the building work.
2. It was a sacred gate for animals to be used for sacred purposes were lead through it.

When the priests work was completed, they performed some type of religious ceremony, most likely a religious ceremony of dedication and blessing and thanksgiving and gratitude for its completion finishing with prayer for a blessing on it, and on the following work to be undertaken.

**The tower of the hundred (Meah in KJV):** the word Meah is the Hebrew word for "a hundred." Following are the three most common reasons various theologians suppose that the tower was given this name:

1. It was one hundred cubits from the sheep gate on one side, and one hundred cubits from the tower of Hananeel on the other side with the sheep gate standing between the two towers.
2. It was one hundred cubits high or a hundred cubits from the sheep-gate.
3. They not only rebuilt the sheep gate, but also completed a hundred cubits of the wall, which extended as far as the tower of Hananeel.

These two towers, may have been strong and solid and in no need of repair, because there is no mention of any work being done on them. However, it is also possible that they are one and the same tower. (Jeremiah 31:38).

- **Jeremiah 31:38:** Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that the city shall be built to the LORD from the tower of Hananeel unto the gate of the corner.

**Even unto the tower of Meah they consecrated (sanctified) it:** (v1) could mean they consecrated and sanctified the rest of the wall which they built as far as the tower of Meah to the tower of Hananeel, or they consecrated and sanctified the rest of the wall for another hundred cubits.

**Set its doors:** meaning they finished it.

Eliashib the high-priest and the priest with him, set a good example for ministers today, in that they should be first to set a good example in every good work, especially that work that brings a good name to the Lord Jesus Christ and adds to and extends the Kingdom of God.

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### NEHEMIAH 3:2-3

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- **Nehemiah 3:2-3:** And next to him the men of Jericho built. And next to them Zaccur the son of Imri built. 3 The sons of Hassenaah built the Fish Gate. They laid its beams and set its doors, its bolts, and its bars.

**Next to him:** (v2) the wall was divided into portions, which were assigned separately to each of the respected families that had returned from the seventy-year Babylonian exile. The expression, "next to him," is a common phrase throughout this chapter, highlighting the fact they all

worked alongside each other in the order of the building. The part of the wall that each group worked on was mostly the part that was nearest to their dwelling places. Following are some possible exceptions to this general rule:

- In situations where they completed their allotted portion and moved to help others.
- In situations where they arrived sometime after the repairs on the part of the wall that was nearest to their dwelling was completed, in which cases they went wherever their services were required.

**The men of Jericho:** (v2) the generations of the ancient inhabitants of Jericho began where Eliashib and the priests ended at the northeast corner of Jerusalem opposite their own city and from where the continuing work went on from.

**Zaccur the son of Imri:** was probably the chief of the men of Jericho.

**The fish-gate:** (v3) was on the north-west side of Jerusalem facing the sea, from which fish from the Jordan River and the Sea of Galilee were brought into Jerusalem and sold in the fish-market near this gate.

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### NEHEMIAH 3:4-5

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- **Nehemiah 3:4-5:** And next to them Meremoth the son of Uriah, son of Hakkoz repaired. And next to them Meshullam the son of Berechiah, son of Meshezabel repaired. And next to them Zadok the son of Baana repaired.

Notice the word, "repaired," is used here, (also used in following verses) rather than rebuild, this is probably because many parts of the wall were not completely demolished, but only weakened, and therefore did not need to be completely rebuilt, but only repaired.

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### NEHEMIAH 3:5

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- **Nehemiah 3:4-5:** And next to them the Tekoites repaired, but their nobles would not stoop to serve their Lord.

The Tekoites were the inhabitants of the city of Tekoa, in the tribe of Judah.

**Their nobles would not stoop to serve their Lord:** (v5) meaning they would not submit to doing any part of the work. Following are some of the possible reasons they may have felt this way:

- They were extremely prideful and therefore considered themselves too noble or holy to be involved in secular work.
- They didn't believe the LORD had called Nehemiah.
- They were in secret compliance with the enemies of the Jews.

No one in a position of ministry should ever think that anything that may benefit the Kingdom of God is beneath them.

**Their Lord:** (v5), the phrase, "their Lord" could refer to:

- To God who they claimed as their own Lord and whose work this was.
- Nehemiah, who was their lord and governor, and had given the command for the rebuilding of the work.
- The officers appointed over them.

- The Lord their God, Israel as a nation always claimed God as their own, this is because God called them out of Egypt

There is no other nation on earth that has history with their God as Israel does. Their history with the LORD their God goes back to the beginning of time no other nation or religion can claim such miracles and wonders or history no matter what god they may believe in. The following verses show that the United Kingdom of Israel has always been God's special and unique nation unlike any other nation, of them God said:

- Israel was his son who he called out of Egypt and he loved them when they were a child (Hosea 11:1).
- He gave birth to Israel and carried them from the womb even to their old age. (Isaiah 46:3-4).
- Israel is his allotted heritage (Deut. 32:9) and the apple of his eye (Deut. 32:10).
- Israel is a people holy to him (Deut. 7:6) and his treasured possession (Deut. 14:2).

The LORD has not spoken this way with any other nation, but God has not only spoken of Israel differently, but always dealt with them differently to any other nation:

- To Israel God gave the Ten Commandments and showed his great power. (Exodus 20:1-17).
- To Israel God declared his word, statutes and his rules. (Rom. 9:4)
- To Israel God gave the prophets, the worship and the promises. (Rom. 3:4)
- To Israel belonged the covenant, the adoption, the patriarchs and the glory. (Rom. 3:5)
- To Israel the oracles of God were entrusted. (Rom. 3:2)
- The people of Israel are the offspring of Abraham the father of faith. (Rom. 9:7)
- From Israel's race came the Christ the Saviour of the world. (Rom. 9:5)
- God declared his word to Jacob, his statutes and rules to Israel. He has not dealt thus with any other nation (Psalm 147:19-20).

The LORD has not given any other nations such great privileges, these are the many reasons the Jews of the Old Testament rightly believed God was their God.

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## NEHEMIAH 3:6

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- **Nehemiah 3:6:** Joiada the son of Paseah and Meshullam the son of Besodeiah repaired the Gate of Yeshanah (old gate in KJV). They laid its beams and set its doors, its bolts, and its bars.

This Yeshanah (old gate in KJV) is not mentioned anywhere else in Scripture, by speculative addition to the text it has been translated in some Bibles as, "the gate of the old wall." Following are some thoughts of what various theologians suppose this gate maybe:

- The modern Damascus gate, or the second or third gate (Zeph. 1:10).
- The main entrance to the city on the north side; or a gate a little further eastward.
- The gate of the old pool (Isaiah 22:11) or the gate of the old wall that led to the north of the land.
- Some think it was called the old gate because it led to the old city Salem.

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## NEHEMIAH 3:7

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- **Nehemiah 3:7:** And next to them repaired Melatiah the Gibeonite and Jadon the Meronothite, the men of Gibeon and of Mizpah, the seat of the governor of the province Beyond the River. (unto the throne of the governor on this side of the river in KJV)

**This side of the river:** refers to the river (Euphrates) and to the land of Israel and Jerusalem, while the other side of the river refers to Babylon (Iraq).

**The seat of the governor:** (v7) the King James Bible translates it, "unto the throne of the governor on this side of the river."

Amongst various theologians it is thought to refer to:

- The seat of the governor of the whole district this side the Euphrates, which was the place of his residence when he came to Jerusalem.
- The place where the governor of the country on this side of the Euphrates, under the Persian kings, at various times had a palace or throne.
- The men of Gibeon and Mizpah, who, even though they worked for Nehemiah, were not under his government, but belonged to the jurisdiction of the governor on this side the river Euphrates."
- The place where the governor of the country on this side the river Euphrates, under the Persian kings, sometimes had a palace or throne, to which all living in the surrounding areas were to come for judgment.
- The place where the governor of those parts under the king of Persia had his seat, which Nehemiah now had.
- The place where the Duke who governed the country in the king's absence would sit.

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## NEHEMIAH 3:8

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- **Nehemiah 3:8:** Next to them Uzziel the son of Harhaiah, goldsmiths, repaired. Next to him Hananiah, one of the perfumers, repaired, and they restored (fortified in KJV) Jerusalem as far as the Broad Wall.

Uzziel and Hananiah were two eminent men, one worked among the labours of gold, the other among the perfumers.

**The broad wall:** (v8) or double wall, that was four hundred cubits in length and extended from the gate of Ephraim to the corner gate. It was formerly broken down by Joash, king of Israel:

- And Joash king of Israel captured Amaziah king of Judah, the son of Joash, son of Ahaziah, at Beth-shemesh, and brought him to Jerusalem and broke down the wall of Jerusalem for 400 cubits, from the Ephraim Gate to the Corner Gate. (2 Chron. 25:23).

Sometime after this Uziah rebuilt it and fortified it, so that it was so strong the Chaldeans, found it difficult to demolish and therefore left it standing.

- Moreover, Uziah built towers in Jerusalem at the Corner Gate and at the Valley Gate and at the Angle, and fortified them. (2 Chron. 26:9).

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## NEHEMIAH 3:9-10

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- **Nehemiah 3:9-10:** Next to them Rephaiah the son of Hur, ruler of half the district of Jerusalem, repaired. 10 Next to them Jedaiah the son of Harumaph repaired opposite his house (over against his house in KJV). And next to him Hattush the son of Hashabneiah repaired.

Jerusalem was divided into two parts, one was in the tribe of Benjamin, and nearest to the temple and the other in the tribe of Judah. Both of these had various rulers, which at this time was Rephaiah, Jedaiah and Hattush, however all were submitted to the chief governor of the city.

**Opposite his house (over against his house in KJV):** (v10) refers to the part of the wall that was nearest to the person mentioned, which not only gave those living near this part of the wall motivation to repair it, but also obliged them to do the work.

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### NEHEMIAH 3:11-12

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- **Nehemiah 3:11-12:** Malchijah the son of Harim and Hasshub the son of Pahath-moab repaired another section and the Tower of the Ovens (furnaces in KJV).<sup>12</sup> Next to him Shallum the son of Hallohesh, ruler of half the district of Jerusalem, repaired, he and his daughters.

The fathers of Malchijah and Hashub were heads of families that came out of captivity with Zerubbabel.

**The tower of the ovens (furnaces in KJV):** (v11) The origin of this name is uncertain; it could refer to:

- A tower at the north-western corner of the city.
- A tower midway in the western wall.
- A tower near to where furnaces were used for baking of bread or making bricks.

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### NEHEMIAH 3:13

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- **Nehemiah 3:13:** Hanun and the inhabitants of Zanoah repaired the Valley Gate. They rebuilt it and set its doors, its bolts, and its bars, and repaired a thousand cubits of the wall, as far as the Dung Gate.

**Zanoah:** there were two towns called Zanoah in the territory of Judah, the Zanoah in focus here was a city of the tribe of Judah (Joshua 15:34) that lay about 16 km west of Jerusalem. Hanun with the inhabitants of Zanoah repaired the Valley Gate, plus another half a kilometre of the wall as far as the dung gate.

**The dung gate:** in ancient times the dung gate was situated near the southeast corner of the Old City of Jerusalem southwest of the Temple Mount on the walls of the City of David near the Kidron valley, adjacent to the pool of Shiloah. The gate's unusual name stems from the fact that in ancient times the garbage, the excrement of humans and animals and the ash from the temple was removed through this gate and taken into the Valley of Hinnom where it was burned and where the prevailing winds would carry odours away. This also earned it the name, "Gate of the Garbage." During the time of Nehemiah, the gates of the wall were broken and burnt.

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### NEHEMIAH 3:14

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- **Nehemiah 3:14:** Malchijah the son of Rechab, ruler of the district of Beth-haccherem, repaired the Dung Gate. He rebuilt it and set its doors, its bolts, and its bars.

Bethhaccerem was a town or territory of Judah between Tekoah and Jerusalem. Some feel Malchijah could not be a biological son of Rechab because the following verses shows that the Rechabites were forbidden to help with the work.

- **Jeremiah 35:7:** You (the Rechabites) shall not build a house; you shall not sow seed; you shall not plant or have a vineyard; but you shall live in tents all your days, that you may live many days in the land where you sojourn.'

Though it is likely that this man was not of the Rechabites family, it is also possible that even though they were not permitted to build houses for themselves to dwell in, they may have been permitted to help in the repairing of the walls since it was for the security and benefit of others.

**The dung gate:** see the notes titled, "the dung gate" following (v13) (above).

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### NEHEMIAH 3:15

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- **Nehemiah 3:15:** And Shallum the son of Col-hozeh, ruler of the district of Mizpah, repaired the Fountain Gate. He rebuilt it and covered it and set its doors, its bolts, and its bars. And he built the wall of the Pool of Shelah (Siloah in KJV) of the king's garden, as far as the stairs that go down from the city of David.

**Shallum:** refers to a region, district, town or city.

**The pool of Shelah (Siloah in KJV):** (v15) that part of the wall that was directly opposite the pool, which was by the king's garden, it originally had no wall on the west, but when the pool was taken in by Manasseh, he built a wall to protect it.

- Afterward he (Manasseh) built an outer wall for the city of David west of Gihon, in the valley, and for the entrance into the Fish Gate, and carried it around Ophel, and raised it to a very great height. He also put commanders of the army in all the fortified cities in Judah. (2 Chronicles 33:14).

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It was from this pool of Shelah (Siloah in KJV) that the king's garden was watered through a long subterranean conduit, it lies at the southwestern foot of the temple hill, near the lower end of the Tyropoeon.

**The king's garden, as far as the stairs: (v15):** refers to a flight of steps that led from the low valley of the Tyropoeon up the steep sides of Ophel to the city of David, and probably reached a point not far south of the temple. From this point it is very hard to trace the exact course of the building work on the wall.

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### NEHEMIAH 3:16-18

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- **Nehemiah 3:16-18:** After him Nehemiah the son of Azbuk, ruler of half the district of Beth-zur, repaired to a point opposite the tombs (sepulchres in KJV) of David, as far as the artificial pool (the pool that was made in KJV), and as far as the house of the mighty men. <sup>17</sup> After him the Levites repaired: Rehum the son of Bani. Next to him Hashabiah, ruler of half the district of Keilah, repaired for his district. <sup>18</sup> After him their brothers repaired: Bavvai the son of Henadad, ruler of half the district of Keilah.

The Nehemiah here is not the same Nehemiah who wrote this book or of the same family.

**Opposite the tombs (sepulchres in KJV) of David:** (v16) refers to the place that David appointed for his own sepulchre, and the sepulchres of his successors, the kings of Israel and Judah.

**The artificial pool (the pool that was made in KJV):** (v16) distinguishing it from a natural pool. The following verses shows that it was made by Hezekiah:

- The rest of the deeds of Hezekiah and all his might and how he made the pool and the conduit and brought water into the city, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah? (2 Kings 20:20).

**The house of the mighty men:** (v16) may refer to the dwelling place of the king's chief captains or to the barracks or place where the king's guards lodged, who were all valiant men.

- Now these are the chiefs of David's mighty men, who gave him strong support in his kingdom, together with all Israel, to make him king, according to the word of the LORD concerning Israel. (1 Chronicles 11:10).

**Opposite the tombs (sepulchres in KJV) of David:** (v16) refers to the burial place in which David, his family and the kings of his descendants to the time of Hezekiah were buried. This sepulchre was an excavation in a rock near the vicinity of the temple on its western side. Though the position of the burial-place was well known until the destruction of the city modern research has not yet discovered it.

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### NEHEMIAH 3:19-20

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- **Nehemiah 3:19-20:** Next to him Ezer the son of Jeshua, ruler of Mizpah, repaired another section opposite the ascent to the armory at the buttress (at the turning of the wall in KJV).  
<sup>20</sup> After him Baruch the son of Zabbai repaired another section from the buttress (at the turning of the wall in KJV). to the door of the house of Eliashib the high priest.

**The armory at the buttress (at the turning of the wall in KJV):** (v19) literally the armory of the corner, could refer the following three places:

1. To the house or tower on north-west corner of the city of David where weapons and armoury was kept.
  - Your neck is like the tower of David, built in rows of stone; on it hang a thousand shields, all of them shields of warriors. (Song of Songs 4:4).
2. To the forest of Lebanon, which was from Solomon's days their armoury.
  - He has taken away the covering of Judah. In that day you looked to the weapons of the House of the Forest. (Isaiah 22:8).
3. To some other place, that had been used as a smaller storage place for weapons and armour of the city lay for rebellions, riots and civil confrontations etc., rather than war.

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### NEHEMIAH 3:21-22

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- **Nehemiah 3:21-22:** After him Meremoth the son of Uriah, son of Hakkoz repaired another section from the door of the house of Eliashib to the end of the house of Eliashib.  
<sup>22</sup> After him the priests, the men of the surrounding area, repaired.

Since Meremoth was the head of the seven courses of priests established by David, this house would have been very large and notable, and from one end to the other would have been a considerable length and since we are told that this section of the wall was repaired from the door of the house, the door would not have been in the middle of the house, as they commonly now are, but at one end of it.

Meremoth carried on the work from the place where the others left off.

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### NEHEMIAH 3:23-25

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- **Nehemiah 3:23-25:** After them Benjamin and Hasshub repaired opposite their house. After them Azariah the son of Maaseiah, son of Ananiah repaired beside his own house.<sup>24</sup> After him Binnui the son of Henadad repaired another section, from the house of Azariah to the buttress<sup>25</sup> and to the corner. Palal the son of Uzai repaired opposite the buttress and the tower projecting from the upper house of the king at the court of the guard. After him Pedaiah the son of Parosh

In old times the king's palace generally had a prison, and near it was the prison-gate, which means that the words, "the buttress and the tower," refer to the tower by the court of the prison, which the king had built there as a watchtower or for defence, either near the royal palace or some other house that the king had built. The following verses show that the court of the prison was in or near the king's palace.

- At that time the army of the king of Babylon was besieging Jerusalem, and Jeremiah the prophet was shut up in the court of the guard (court of the prison in KJV) that was in the palace of the king of Judah. (Jeremiah 32:2).
- So they took Jeremiah and cast him into the cistern of Malchiah, the king's son, which was in the court of the guard (the dungeon in KJV), letting Jeremiah down by ropes. And there was no water in the cistern, but only mud, and Jeremiah sank in the mud.<sup>7</sup> When Ebed-melech the Ethiopian, a eunuch who was in the king's house, heard that they had put Jeremiah into the cistern (dungeon in KJV)—the king was sitting in the Benjamin Gate. (Jeremiah 38:6-7).
- Then they drew Jeremiah up with ropes and lifted him out of the cistern. And Jeremiah remained in the court of the guard (court to the prison in KJV). (Jeremiah 38:13).

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### NEHEMIAH 3:26-27

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- **Nehemiah 3:26-27:** and the temple servants (Nethinims in KJV) living on Ophel repaired to a point opposite the Water Gate on the east and the projecting tower.<sup>27</sup> After him the Tekoites repaired another section opposite the great projecting tower as far as the wall of Ophel.

**The temple servants (Nethinims in KJV) living on Ophel** were servants to the Levites, and repaired the part of the wall that was near their dwellings. Ophel was an area of land reaching from the water-gate toward the east, to the outlying tower of the king's stronghold in the west. The ancient temple servants dwelt on its sides separating them from others.

**The water-gate:** (v26) called the water gate for the following two reasons:

1. Through it, water was brought by the Gibeonites who were appointed as temple servants, for drawing water from the Kidron valley when the temple reservoirs were low as the following verse shows:
  - And the leaders said to them (the Gibeonites), "Let them live." So they became cutters of wood and drawers of water for all the congregation, just as the leaders had said of them. (Joshua 9:21).
2. It was also used in heavy rain seasons for the escape of water when the temple reservoirs overflowed.

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### NEHEMIAH 3:28-30

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- **Nehemiah 3:28-30:** Above the Horse Gate the priests repaired, each one opposite his own house.<sup>29</sup> After them Zadok the son of Immer repaired opposite his own house. After him Shemaiah the son of Shecaniah, the keeper of the East Gate, repaired.<sup>30</sup> After him Hananiah the son of Shelemiah and Hanun the sixth son of Zalaph repaired another section. After him Meshullam the son of Berechiah repaired opposite his chamber.

The horses gate was a chief gate between the temple and the palace on the east side of the city overlooking the Kidron valley. It is most likely called the horses gate for the following reasons:

- Horses commonly went out through it to the brook of Kidron to drink.
- It was near to the horse's stables and horses came and left through it.
- Horses were led out through it to be exercised in the valley.

**The priests repaired, each one opposite his own house:** it seems that there was a row of houses in which the priests dwelt, and each of them repaired as much of the wall that was nearest, or opposite their own house.

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## NEHEMIAH 3:31-32

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- **Nehemiah 3:31-32:** After him Malchijah, one of the goldsmiths, repaired as far as the house of the temple servants (the place of the Nethinims in KJV) and of the merchants, opposite the Muster Gate (gate Miphkad in KJV), and to the upper chamber of the corner.<sup>32</sup> And between the upper chamber of the corner and the Sheep Gate the goldsmiths and the merchants repaired.

The merchants probably refer to the temple merchants who brought the doves of sheep and sacrifices etc., to be sacrificed.

**The Muster Gate (Gate Miphkad in KJV):** (v31) nothing is known of this gate since it is the only mention of it in Scripture. It must have been in the east, or northeast, wall, a little to the south of the sheep-gate. Some think it was a place or house where the Sanhedrim sat and exercised justice, judgment and maybe even execution.

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## OVERVIEW OF THE CHAPTER

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**The rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem:** (v1-32) everyone knew what they had to do and that to achieve such a mammoth task, they would need to work without contention and strife. All worked for the collective good of each other and the building up of Jerusalem, even the nobles and women worked according to their skill to advance the work of God and for the good of their nation. There is an old saying, "If everyone will sweep before their own door, the street will be clean." The Israelites worked according to this principal, each did what was suited to their skill or lack of it, and as the following verse shows the work was completed in record time.

- So the wall was finished on the twenty-fifth day of the month Elul, in fifty-two days. (Nehemiah 6:15).

**Symbolisms:** the crumbled walls of Jerusalem lying in rubble can be seen as the despairing and distressed condition of the world around us, while those filled with malice who hindered the work, can be seen as enemies of the church and those working to expand the Kingdom of God. The building up of the walls to protect the city can be seen as the church standing up to defend the truth and the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Today this work must begin in the heart, for it is by firstly establishing God's Kingdom within our own lives that we can best advance the good of God's Kingdom outwardly. Like the Israelites, we must lay aside petty disputes and worldly interests to spread the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

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*As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.*

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