



"The Work Begins" (Nehemiah 3)

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Intro: These walls would fortify Jerusalem. To fortify is to strengthen. These walls and gates were for protection against the enemy. The gates were means of entry into and out of the city.

I. THE TEXT

v.1 This is for the most part a very positive chapter, so I hate to say something negative early in the study, but we need to know that despite the great work that Eliashib does here, chapter 13 tells us that later on, while Nehemiah was away, he was "closely associated" with Tobiah, who of course was a bitter enemy of Israel. He actually gave Tobiah a large room in the temple that was supposed to be used to store offerings and temple articles used in worship. Nehemiah 13:28 tells us that one of his grandchildren married a daughter of Sanballat the Horonite!

Starting a work well is one thing. Finishing well is quite another.

In order to finish well, one has to begin. That's what this chapter is about, the beginning of the work.

Next week we will look at how to persevere during tough times in the work.

v.5 The nobles of Tekoa and their insubordination

* They were accustomed to being in charge; They were not only insubordinate, they were lazy!

v.8 Today in Jerusalem you can see the remains of the broad wall. It is more than 20 feet wide.

v.13 They went a long way with their repairs, but stopped at the Dung Gate.

v.14 What a lucky guy - he gets the Dung Gate!

* Our Dung Gate is the East Lobby Gate - the smell of the dumpsters!

* See Ezra 10:31; here is a guy who had sinned earlier, had repented and gotten right with God, and now was involved in the work of God.

* Note: He is truly a humble made to be willing to work on the Dung Gate! This is the gate next to the Hinnom Valley ("Gehenna"), the local dump.

v.20 Baruch did his work with zeal. What an example he was to the rest.

Examples: Frank Dehn

v.32 Where the work begins and where it ends

II. LESSONS

A. Suggested Lessons From The Gates

1. The Sheep Gate. This where everything begins, and it where everything ends.

2. The Fish Gate (Matt.4: 19 "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men.").

3. The Old Gate. If its new, it is not true, and if its true, it is not new.

* Jer.6: 16 This is what the LORD says: "Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls. But you said, 'We will not walk in it.'

4. The Valley Gate. This is the gate of lowliness and humility.

5. The Dung Gate. This is of course the gate where all the rubbish is discarded from my life.

* II Cor.7:1 Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.

6. The Fountain Gate

* John 7: 38 Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him."

7. The Water Gate

* The Word

8. The Horse Gate.

* This gate was on the eastern wall. Jesus is coming on a horse through the Eastern Gate.

9. The East Gate

* The Turks sealed the Eastern Gate in about 1100 A.D. after hearing about Messiah returning through this gate. See Ezekiel 44:1-2.

10. The Inspection Gate

* II Cor.5: 10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

B. Other Thoughts

1. The variety of people who were involved in the work

* Priests, Levites, temple servants, rulers, one ruler's daughters, families, goldsmiths, perfumers a leader who had previously sinned and had gotten right with God (above, v.14)

* The only ability God is looking for is *availability*.

2. The families who were involved

* Seeing Pat Rinard and his sons working in The Grille; Frank Dehn and his sons

3. Those who made repairs opposite their own houses (v.10, 23, 28, 29, 30).

* Perhaps that is where the work begins for you? What is it that you need to do at home that will strengthen/fortify it home against the enemy?

* Prov.30: 21 "Under three things the earth trembles, under four it cannot bear up:

22 a servant who becomes king, a fool who is full of food,

23 *an unloved woman who is married*, and a maidservant who displaces her mistress.

* The best thing you can do for your children is love their mother.

4. Those who came from other districts to work

* Travel is involved for some people prison ministry, softball and soccer prison ministry, etc.

5. Those who completed their assigned task, then took on an additional portion of the wall to work on (vv.4, 21; 5, 27)

* Once a task is completed, look for other places that need work and jump in there.

6. The unity of the workers

* Gen.11: 6 The LORD said, "If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them.

* Eph.4: 16 From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

* Eph.2: 10 For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

CONCLUSION

- * What is keeping you from the work God has called you to?
 - Too distracted
 - Unwilling
 - Sin that has not been repented of (v.14)
 - Insubordination