

## The Rebuilding of the Wall

**Lesson Scope:** [Nehemiah 2:12-3:32](#) and [Chapter 6:15-16](#)

### Lesson Focus

The returned Jews had rebuilt the temple under the direction of Jeshua and Zerubbabel in response to the urging of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah. But nothing had been done to restore the walls of Jerusalem.

The report that came to Nehemiah concerning the remnant left of the captivity was that they "[were] in great affliction and reproach: the wall of Jerusalem also [was] broken down, and the gates thereof [were] burned with fire" (Nehemiah 1:3). When Nehemiah went by night to view the wall, he came to a place where he needed to dismount and walk, or turn back. The scoffing enemies referred to "the heaps of the rubbish" (Nehemiah 4:2). Things had been this way for many years.

Nehemiah came on the scene with fresh inspiration and zeal. Most importantly, he had a burning passion to remove the reproach of Jerusalem. In time he proved that neither heaps of rubbish nor the intimidation of the enemy could for a moment divert his focus.

God's work has always been demanding and urgent. He uses dedicated men, filled with His Spirit, to labor in His everlasting kingdom.

Nehemiah came to Jerusalem with the king's permission and promptly inspected the ruined walls. After this careful inspection, he gathered support from the leaders in Jerusalem. It would be inspirational to discuss Nehemiah's faith in God's leading and his ability to maintain his vision in the midst of adverse circumstances.

The people of Nehemiah's day provide several lessons as well. Many Jews labored diligently on the wall, laying their other duties aside. All the willing workers were needed, and many different gifts were used. In closing, point out that God blessed those diligent efforts in the past and He will bless diligent efforts today.

**Lesson Aim:** To glean principles for building the church.

**Theme Verse:** 1 Corinthians 3:10. According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.

## Lesson Text

### "Come, and Let Us Build"

**Nehemiah 2:12-18** <sup>12</sup> And I arose in the night, I and some few men with me; neither told I *any* man what my God had put in my heart to do at Jerusalem: neither *was there any* beast with me, save the beast that I rode upon. <sup>13</sup> And I went out by night by the gate of the valley, even before the dragon well, and to the dung port, and viewed the walls of Jerusalem, which were broken down, and the gates thereof were consumed with fire. <sup>14</sup> Then I went on to the gate of the fountain, and to the king's pool: but *there was* no place for the beast *that was* under me to pass. <sup>15</sup> Then went I up in the night by the brook, and viewed the wall, and turned back, and entered by the gate of the valley, and *so* returned. <sup>16</sup> And the rulers knew not whither I went, or what I did; neither had I as yet told *it* to the Jews, nor to the priests, nor to the nobles, nor to the rulers, nor to the rest that did the work. <sup>17</sup> Then said I unto them, Ye see the distress that we *are* in, how Jerusalem *lieth* waste, and the gates thereof are burned with fire: come, and let us build up the wall of Jerusalem, that we be no more a reproach. <sup>18</sup> Then I told them of the hand of my God which was good upon me; as also the king's words that he had spoken unto me. And they said, Let us rise up and build. So they strengthened their hands for *this* good work.

### "The God of Heaven ... Will Prosper Us"

**Nehemiah 2:19-20** <sup>19</sup> But when Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arabian, heard *it*, they laughed us to scorn, and despised us, and said, What *is* this thing that ye do? will ye rebel against the king? <sup>20</sup> Then answered I them, and said unto them, The God of heaven, he will prosper us; therefore we his servants will arise and build: but ye have no portion, nor right, nor memorial, in Jerusalem.

### "So the Wall Was Finished"

**Nehemiah 3:1-9** <sup>1</sup> 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. <sup>2</sup> And next unto him builded the men of Jericho. And next to them builded Zaccur the son of Imri. <sup>3</sup> 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. <sup>4</sup> And next unto them repaired Meremoth the son of Urijah, the son of Koz. And next unto them repaired Meshullam the son of Berechiah, the son of Meshezabeel. And next unto them repaired Zadok the son of Baana. <sup>5</sup> And next unto them the Tekoites repaired; but their nobles put not their necks to the work of their Lord. <sup>6</sup> 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. <sup>7</sup> And next unto them repaired Melatiah the Gibeonite, and Jadon the Meronothite, the men of Gibeon, and of Mizpah, unto the throne of the governor on this side the river. <sup>8</sup> Next unto him repaired Uzziel the son of Harhaiah, of the goldsmiths. Next unto him also repaired Hananiah the son of *one of* the apothecaries, and they fortified Jerusalem unto the broad wall. <sup>9</sup> And next unto them repaired Rephaiah the son of Hur, the ruler of the half part of Jerusalem.

**Nehemiah 3:20** <sup>20</sup> After him Baruch the son of Zabbai earnestly repaired the other piece, from the turning *of the wall* unto the door of the house of Eliashib the high priest.

**Nehemiah 3:27** <sup>27</sup> After them the Tekoites repaired another piece, over against the great tower that lieth out, even unto the wall of Ophel.

**Nehemiah 6:15** <sup>15</sup> So the wall was finished in the twenty and fifth *day of the month* Elul, in fifty and two days.

## Questions for Study

### "Come, and Let Us Build"

1. What did Nehemiah see when he inspected the walls?
2. What was the most convincing element in Nehemiah's request for help from the people?
3. What are some necessary elements of effective church building?

### "The God of Heaven ... Will Prosper Us"

4. In the midst of opposition, where did Nehemiah find his strength?
5. What are some principles of separation found in these verses?

## **"So the Wall Was Finished"**

6. What are some comparisons between the building of the wall and church building'?
7. How can we be effective church builders?

### **Analyzing the Passage**

Nehemiah began his work by choosing a few men and riding out at night to inspect the damage to the wall. It seems that Nehemiah kept his plans secret so that he could be fully prepared to address the opposition that was likely to come.

Nehemiah departed from the city through the gate of the valley on the south side of the city; then he traveled east and north. He traveled north along the brook Kidron at least as far as the king's pool (likely Hezekiah's aqueduct). Then he retraced his steps and returned through the same gate he had used to leave the city.

Nehemiah's conviction, coupled with his testimony of "the hand of [his] God which was good upon [him]" (in moving the king's heart), lit the fires of enthusiasm (Nehemiah 2:18).

Nehemiah stated some clear objectives (Nehemiah 2:20). God would prosper their efforts; therefore the Jews would work. The scornful heathen had nothing in it—no portion, right, or memorial. The Samaritans and their allies had no basis for involvement, and certainly they had no vision for the work.

The sheep gate (Nehemiah 3:1) held special interest for the priests. The animals for sacrifice came through this gate.

The common people of Tekoa labored faithfully despite the fact that their nobles were too indifferent or too opposed to help. The Tekoites repaired two sections of the wall (Nehemiah 3:27).

The work was successful, and the enemies' consternation was full. The completed wall represented more than normal human effort. God had obviously prospered the effort, just as Nehemiah had said He would.

### **Principles and Applications**

#### **"Come, and Let Us Build"**

1. To participate effectively in the work of the church, one must have a clear understanding of what is involved (Nehemiah 2:12-15). Nehemiah took time to plan and to view the walls before he started building. To-

day, we need a clear vision of the church's mission in the world. Jesus commissioned His followers to spread the Gospel through all the world. That commission included instructing believers thoroughly in the Word. The Spirit has given each member gifts that can contribute to this cause.

2. Sharing our vision and our burden with our brethren encourages participation in the work (Nehemiah 2:16-17). Nehemiah communicated his burden to his brethren clearly, and the builders united behind him. When church leaders share their vision effectively, the people are inspired to participate in the work. Nehemiah's appeal "Come, and let us build" rings in our ears today.

3. We inspire others to help when we testify of the good hand of God upon the work (Nehemiah 2:18-20). God's providential hand is evident in His work today. Many times He has opened doors in our mission efforts. Recognizing and testifying of God's blessings upon us encourages the spreading of the work to new areas. Let us live in a way that inspires others to build the church of God.

### **"The God of Heaven ... Will Prosper Us"**

4. We must fully recognize the threat of the enemy and draw clear lines of separation (Nehemiah 2:19-20). Nehemiah rejected the offers to help, the intimidation, and the threats of the heathen around him. He focused instead on building the wall, trusting the Lord for protection.

When the church joins hands across denominational boundaries in relief projects, the lines of separation are often blurred, and Biblical faith and practice are eventually compromised. Nehemiah set a good example of keeping these issues clear.

### **"So the Wall Was Finished"**

5. Faithful leaders pave the way in the work of the church (Nehemiah 3:1). It must have been inspirational to see the priests build the sheep gate and the wall around it. Nehemiah's example of faith and courage inspired other workers as well. The role of a leader is to lead, but the people should be diligent in doing their share of the work.

6. Faithful church builders forge ahead in spite of the indifference of others (Nehemiah 3:5). Faithful builders communicate that they will not allow the indifference of others to hinder them. The opportunity for church building is now, and the work is urgent. Will we respond to God's call with commitment, diligence, and faith?

7. There is work for all to do (Nehemiah 3:8-9). The church needs the

input of both the young and the old. Every member and every God-given gift can make a difference. God recognizes the smallest contribution and will reward it (Mark 9:41). Let us unite with our brethren and sisters to build a lasting spiritual heritage for our families.

8. The work of the church calls for earnest participation (Nehemiah 3:20). The Jewish builders finished the wall in fifty-two days. Building the church is quite different from building stone walls. In this spiritual work, we deal with intangibles and cannot measure our progress so easily. It is a work of faith that will not conclude until Christ returns. We must maintain our vision—a pure bride prepared for Christ at His coming.

9. The forces of evil cannot prevail against the church (Nehemiah 6:15-16). Jesus raised the question "When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" The answer is yes! Christ's church will prevail, but only those who endure to the end will be included in the victory and in the glory of His coming.

### **Important Teachings**

1. To participate effectively in the work of the church, one must have a clear understanding of what is involved (Nehemiah 2:12-15).
2. Sharing our vision and our burden with our brethren encourages participation in the work (Nehemiah 2:16-17).
3. We inspire others to help when we testify of the good hand of God upon the work (Nehemiah 2:18-20).
4. We must fully recognize the threat of the enemy and draw clear lines of separation (Nehemiah 2:19-20).
5. Faithful leaders pave the way in the work of the church (Nehemiah 3:1).
6. Faithful church builders forge ahead in spite of the indifference of others (3:5).
7. There is work for all to do (Nehemiah 3:8-9).
8. The work of the church calls for earnest participation (Nehemiah 3:20).
9. The forces of evil cannot prevail against the church (Nehemiah 6:15-16).

## Answers to Questions

1. What did Nehemiah see when he inspected the walls?

Nehemiah saw broken-down walls, gates burned with fire, and heaps of rubbish. A city without defense, Jerusalem was in a helpless, deplorable state. The people of Jerusalem did not have the zeal of faith to begin building. Nehemiah could clearly see the need that had been reported to him in Babylon.

2. What was the most convincing element in Nehemiah's request for help from the people?

Nehemiah spoke of God's blessing and favor on his plans. He emphasized "the good hand of [his] God ... upon [him]," especially in relation to his release from the king's service. Nehemiah had royal authority for his godly calling, and he attributed that to God's providence.

3. What are some necessary elements of effective church building?

We need energetic builders who have a mind to work. We need leaders who follow the example of Nehemiah, who was not afraid of threats or baffled by the enemies' schemes. Most of all, we need God's hand of blessing and protection.

4. In the midst of opposition, where did Nehemiah find his strength?

Nehemiah found his strength in the Lord. He could have emphasized the king's authority and the people's help, but instead he focused on God. He and the Jewish people built as the servants of God.

5. What are some principles of separation found in these verses?

We cannot allow the world's false accusations to shake our faith. The world scorns the practices of a separated lifestyle. God cannot bless a mixed multitude in the church. The world and the church do not have common goals. Consequently, we cannot be part of worldly organizations or join hands with nominal Christians in mission or relief efforts. The world has no claim in the work of the church.

6. What are some comparisons between the building of the wall and church building?

Everybody is needed and can be included—the leaders, the tradesmen, and the families. The completed work is the result of many individual contributions. Dangers accompany the work, but God offers His blessing and protection.

7. How can we be effective church builders?

We must work together with our brethren and sisters. We must put our

own agenda aside and work with a will in our assigned spot. We need a clear vision of the goal. We must build on the only sure foundation, Jesus Christ.

### **Summarizing the Lesson**

The combined efforts of Nehemiah and his people accomplished a great purpose in God's kingdom. Their ability to work together inspires us yet today. God's blessing rests on faithful church builders as they blend their abilities to contribute effectively to His cause.

### **Research Guide**

1. Read the complete lesson scope.
2. Read the information on Nehemiah in a Bible dictionary.