

NEHEMIAH 3-4

Nehemiah 3 – Rebuilding the Gates and Walls of Jerusalem

A) *An organized and concerted effort (vv. 1-32)*

- 1) Starts and ends at the Sheep Gate [counter-clockwise around Jerusalem beginning in north-east corner – *see map*] (vv. 1, 32)
- 2) Separate groups work on stretches of the wall
 - a) Different family units, towns, crafts, trades, and callings
- 3) Nobles of the Tekoites “did *not* put their shoulders [lit. necks] to the work” (v. 5)
 - a) The faithful Tekoites given credit for double work (see v. 27)
 - b) Other leaders did *not* follow this bad example of forsaking the work (e.g. vv. 9, 12)
- 4) Shallum had his daughters help in the work (v. 12)
- 5) Tombs of David (see Acts 2:29)
- 6) At the beginning/ending point of the Sheep Gate there are priests (v. 1) working along side merchants and craftsmen – symbol of unity among people of God

Nehemiah 4 – Opposition by Enemies of God’s People

A) *Sanballat and Tobiah react negatively to the work of the Jews (vv. 1-3)*

- 1) Sanballat is furious, very indignant, and mocks the work of the Jews
- 2) Tobiah ridicules the quality of the wall restoration

B) *Nehemiah’s prayer and the continuing work (vv. 4-6)*

- 1) Nehemiah beseeches God to turn the reproach of their enemies on their heads and to hold them guilty for their sins (left vengeance to God – cf. Rom. 12:19)
- 2) The Jews continue the work, “for the people had a mind to work”
 - a) Entire wall is joined together up to half its height

C) *Enemies around Jews conspire to attack Jerusalem and create confusion (vv. 7-12)*

- 1) Jews pray to God and set a watch day and night
- 2) People of Judah complain about faltering strength and hard work
- 3) Adversaries speak openly of attacking Jews and worry the Jews who hear it

D) *Nehemiah organizes a fighting force to protect the work force (vv. 13-23)*

- 1) Positions men at lower parts of wall as a protective force
- 2) Tells people to not be afraid, remember the Lord, and fight for brethren and families
- 3) People return to work when enemies learn that their plans have been thwarted
- 4) Half of Nehemiah’s servants stand guard while the other half works
- 5) Those who worked did so with one hand and held a weapon in the other hand
- 6) Men with trumpets put in place to sound an alarm if necessary
- 7) Men remained in Jerusalem at night to stand guard after each full day of work

Conclusion

- 1) How is the unity of God’s people demonstrated in the organization of work on the city walls?

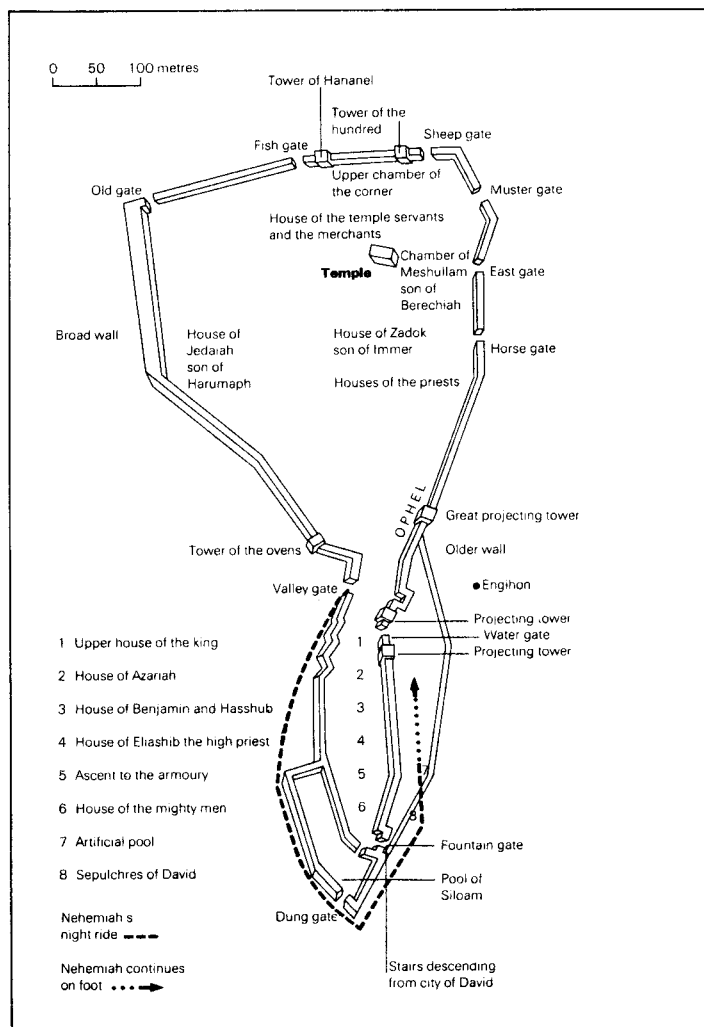
- 2) Why was the inaction of the nobles of the Tekoites wrong?

3) Why are the enemies of God’s people so angry when they see the work being done?

4) What is meant by the statement “the people had a mind to work”?

5) How did Nehemiah organize an armed force to protect the work force?

NEHEMIAH 3



Nehemiah’s Jerusalem (after Aharoni and Avi-Yonah). The site names are derived from Ne. 3: 1-32, proceeding anti-clockwise from the Sheep Gate at the NE corner.

(illustration from *Ezra-Nehemiah*, Derek Kidner, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, p. 85)