

# **The Book of Nehemiah**

## **Chapter 3**

### **The Work is Great, Our God is Greater!**

When we ended chapter 2 of Nehemiah, he had concluded his assessment of the situation with the destroyed walls surrounding Jerusalem and called together the Judeans of various levels of society to enlist them to the mammoth task of rebuilding. First, let's look at some data about human behavior and the church. A recent study on congregation behavior found that:

- 20% of the congregation provides for 80% of a typical Church's income
- 1 in 5 (20%) people who attend regularly contribute nothing at all stating they cannot afford to give
- 1 in 20 (5%) of church goers volunteer their time and labor
- 19 of the 20 (95%) decline to help at all and the usual reason given is "I'm too busy to help"
- 23% of Christians attend church regularly (weekly worship).
- 67% are content to sporadically attend as it fits in their schedule
- A group of Christians were asked why they attend church. The top 4 reasons are:
  1. To become a better person
  2. To introduce faith to their kids
  3. To find personal comfort
  4. Grow closer to God

This data is concerning because to be successful in completing your Kingdom assignment you are going to need to pursue God, accept Jesus Christ as your personal savior and be filled with the Holy Ghost. Clearly, this is simply not important to the average "Christian".

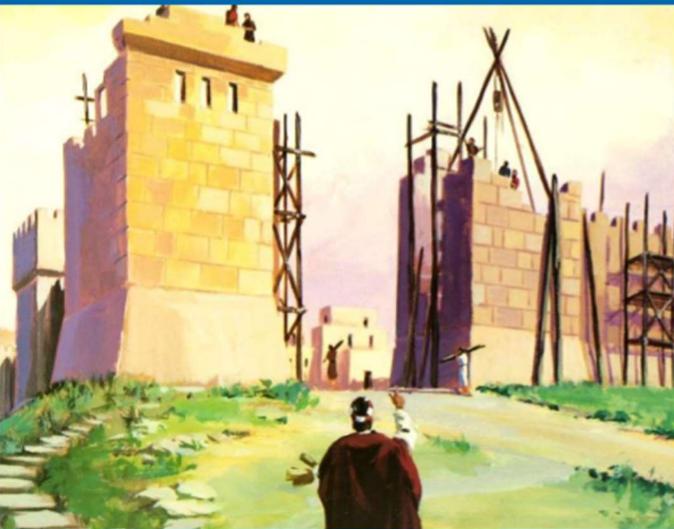
## THE REBUILDING BEGINS



- End of Chapter 2, assessment of wall damage completed
- Nehemiah appealed to the Jewish people on 3 levels:
  - 1) Practical
  - 2) Cultural
  - 3) Spiritual
- Only remaining issue: who would help and who would opt out?

Every Give (of their substance and time) as God has prospered you

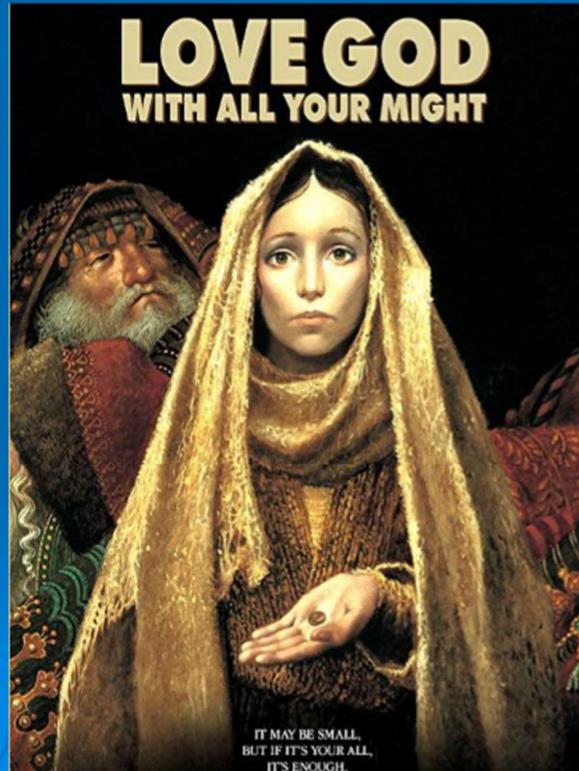
## THE CLIFF-NOTES VERSION



- Work divided up into 40 sections
- Result would be a smaller Jerusalem
- Groups worked on their sections simultaneously
- Some sections of the wall were demolished; some partly destroyed; some mostly intact
- **Eliashav**, High Priest, repaired the Sheep Gate and 2 Guard Towers
- Sheep herded into Sheep Gate for sacrifice

# PEOPLE OF ZANOACH REBUILD 1500 FOOT LONG SECTION

- EACH ACCORDING TO THEIR MEANS
- Zanoach had abundant means, so they rightly took on a bigger task
- Mark 12:41 – 44
- Poor widow giving small amount was what she was supposed to do in God's eyes
- Rich gave a lot, small in comparison to their wealth, so shouldn't be proud



All Kingdom plans display the wisdom of God - Mark 12:41-44, 1 Corinthians 16:2!

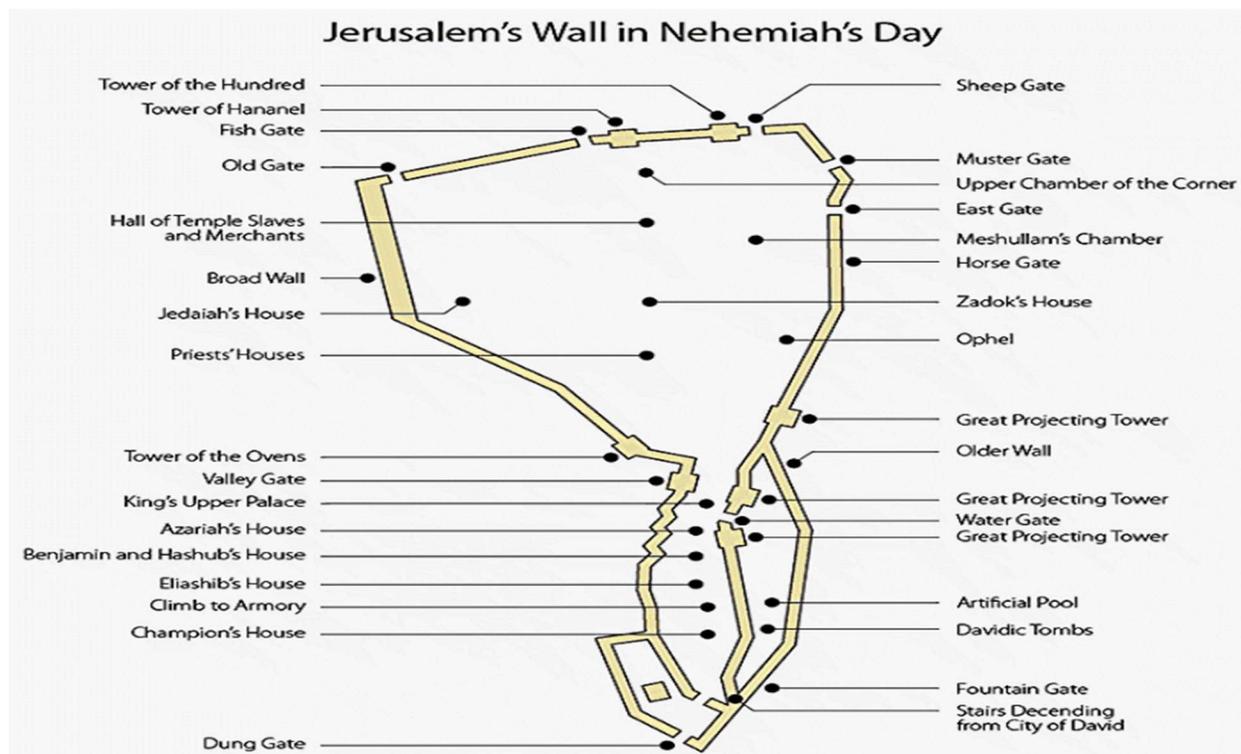
## The Opposition

The Opposition within

In verse 5 we get the first negative comment that a member of the Jewish community refused to participate and contribute. Tekoa is the hometown of the prophet Amos. It is said that the men from Tekoa made repairs **but the Tekoa leadership wouldn't help.** About all we can take from this is that some Jews didn't share the community's enthusiasm about the project. The town of Tekoa lay to the southeast of Jerusalem and all we can do is

speculate as to why the nobles of that town opted out. No doubt it was for economic or political reasons, but what they were we don't know. However note whom it was they were disappointing by their refusal: the passage says, they **"...would not put their shoulders to the work of their Lord."** In other words **it was God they were disobeying and going against His will, not Nehemiah and the other members of the community.** That is what we do as members of a congregation when some of us don't contribute; **it is not a trespass against the congregational leader that we are committing, rather it is a trespass against the Lord and that's the real problem.** The reality is that both Jews and Christians tend to see sins of omission as minor versus sins of commission as more serious. And we tend to have this false sense of security that if we don't do something we're supposed to do that we are less liable to suffer at God's hand than if we do something we shouldn't do.

## The Jerusalem Wall



This wall would be different. But, this wall was the plan of God. If you try to hold on to your traditions or your past, you could miss God.