

CHAPTER 3

INTRODUCTION TO NEHEMIAH 3

This chapter contains the names of the builders of the wall of Jerusalem, the order in which they worked, where they began, and where they ended, which was the sheep gate, (^{1680}Nehemiah 3:1-32).

Ver. 1. *Then Eliashib the high priest rose up with his brethren the priests,* etc.] This was the grandson of Jeshua or Joshua the high priest, his father's name was Joiakim, (^{1620}Nehemiah 12:10), being high priest, and rising first, he set a good example both to the priests and to the people, and served no doubt greatly to animate and encourage them:

and they built the sheep gate; so called, because the sheep were led through it to the temple, and near it was the sheep market, where they were sold, and the sheep pool, where the sacrifices were washed; and this being near the temple, and for the service of it, the priests undertook that; not that they laboured with their hands at it, though it is possible some of them might; but they were at the expense of it, employed labourers, and paid them, and directed them, and had the oversight of them: this gate was to the south of the city; and Rauwolff^{f20} says, it was still standing by Moriah, the mountain of the temple, which the Turks have taken to themselves, and built on it a Turkish mosque or temple. Near the gate you see still, he says, the sheep pond, which is large and deep, wherein the Nethinims used to wash the beasts, and then gave them to the priests; it is said^{f21} to lead to the mount of Olives, to Bethany, to Jericho, the desert, and all the east country to Jordan:

they sanctified it; this being for sacred use, and they sacred persons; and this the first part of the building, they prayed for a blessing on it, and in it on the whole work undertaken, of which this was the firstfruits:

and set up the doors of it; and so finished it:

even unto the tower of Meah they sanctified it, unto the tower of Hananeel; so far they built, and what they built they sanctified. The tower of Meah, or a "hundred", as the word signifies, might be so called, either

because it was one hundred cubits from the sheep gate on one side, and as many from the tower of Hananeel on the other side, standing between both; or because it was one hundred cubits high: these two towers, perhaps, were firm and strong, and needed no repair, since no mention is made of any; though they seem to me to be one and the same tower; (see ^{<483>}Jeremiah 31:38 ^{<3140>}Zechariah 14:10).

Ver. 2. *And next unto him builded the men of Jericho*, etc.] The posterity of those that formerly inhabited that city; these began where Eliashib and the priests ended, and went on from thence:

and next to them; or rather “to him”, the high priest:

builded Zaccur the son of Imri; who probably was the chief of the men of Jericho.

Ver. 3. *But the fish gate did the sons of Hassenaah build*, etc.] So called, because fish was brought from the sea coasts through it, and near it was the fish market; this also was southward, according to Dr. Lightfoot ^{f22}; others say northward; some say it led to the sea of Galilee, Jordan, and all the east and north country: but it is most likely to be westward towards the Mediterranean sea, Tyre, and Joppa, from whence fish were brought; and Rauwolff says ^{f23} it is still standing towards the west, behind Mount Sion, and over against Mount Gihon, (see ^{<4834>}2 Chronicles 33:14) he also says, this gate was called the gate of Hebron, because the road of Hebron went through it, which is about seven or eight hours’ walking distant from it:

who also laid the beams thereof, and set up the doors thereof, the locks thereof, and the bars thereof; completely finished it.

Ver. 4. *And next unto them repaired Meremoth, the son of Uriah, the son of Koz*, etc.] And the men under him; (see ^{<4833>}Ezra 8:33), this part of the wall on which they worked was not wholly demolished, only weakened, and therefore did not rebuild it, but repaired and strengthened it, and this phrase is used all along afterwards:

and next unto them repaired Meshullam, the sort of Berechiah, the son of Meshezabeel: and next unto them repaired Zadok, the son of Baana; but who they were cannot be said.

Ver. 5. *And next unto them the Tekoites repaired*, etc.] The inhabitants of Tekoa, a city in the tribe of Judah; (see ^{<300>}Amos 1:1)

but their nobles put not their necks to the work of their Lord; either of Nehemiah, as some, or rather of the lord and prince appointed over their families, as Aben Ezra, to whom they would not be subject; though it seems best, with Jarchi, to understand it of the Lord their God, by whose command this work was begun; but they refused to give any assistance to it with their purses or presence, but withdrew from it, as refractory oxen withdraw their necks from the yoke. This is observed to their disgrace, when the common people of their city were ready to work, and did.

Ver. 6. *Moreover, the old gate repaired Jehoiada, the son of Paseah, and Meshullam the son of Besodeiah*, etc.] Which some think was so called because it led to the old city Salem. Dr. Lightfoot ^{f24} thinks it is the same with the second or third gate, (³⁶¹⁰Zephaniah 1:10). According to Vatablus, it was the gate of the old pool, (²²²¹Isaiah 22:11), or rather, perhaps, it was the gate of the old wall Josephus speaks of ^{f25}; it led to the north of the land:

they laid the beams thereof; as in (⁴⁶⁸⁸Nehemiah 3:3).

Ver. 7. *And next unto them repaired Melatiah the Gibeonite, and Jadon the Merothite, the men of Gibeon and Mizpah*, etc.] Which places were both in the tribe of Benjamin, (⁶⁸²⁵Joshua 18:25,26) and one of these men was of the one place, and the other of the other:

unto the throne of the governor on this side the river; where the governor of those parts under the king of Persia had his seat, and now Nehemiah; but, according to Aben Ezra, Cisse, rendered “throne”, is the name of a man who was the governor.

Ver. 8. *Next unto him repaired Uzziel the son of Harhaiah, of the goldsmiths*, etc.] Or Tzorephim, which, according to Jarchi, was the name of a family so called from their trade and business:

next unto him also repaired Hananiah the son of one of the apothecaries; or confectioners, which also might be the name of a family so called for the same reason:

and they fortified Jerusalem unto the broad wall; which reached from the gate of Ephraim to the corner gate, which was broken down by Joash, king of Israel, but was rebuilt so strong by Uzziah, king of Judah, that it stood firm to this time; wherefore these men repaired up to it, but left that as they

found it; (see ^{<4273>}2 Chronicles 25:23 26:9), and were not careful to repair it, it not wanting any repair.

Ver. 9. *And next unto them repaired Rephaiah, the son of Hur, the ruler of the half part of Jerusalem.*] That city belonging partly to the tribe of Judah, and partly to the tribe of Benjamin; one part of it was under a governor that was of the tribe of Judah, as this man seems to be; and the other part under one of the tribe of Benjamin; (see ^{<4612>}Nehemiah 3:12).

Ver. 10. *And next unto him repaired Jedaiah, the son of Harumaph, over against his house,* etc.] That part of the wall which stood right against his house; and to take this part he could not well object to it, and it might be reasonably thought he would take care to repair it well, and make it strong for his own safety:

and next unto him repaired Hattush, the son of Hashabniah; but who he was is not known.

Ver. 11. *Malchijah the son of Harim, and Hashub the son of Pahathmoab,* etc.] The fathers of these were heads of families that came out of captivity with Zerubbabel, (^{<4516>}Ezra 2:6,32)

repaired the other piece: or second piece, below and next to that which Hattush repaired, the last builder mentioned:

and the tower of the furnaces; near to which were furnaces for the baking of bread, or of bricks.

Ver. 12. *And next unto him repaired Shallum, the son of Hallohesh,* etc.] So called, as Ben Melech says, from his being an enchanter of serpents, or a wise prudent counsellor:

the ruler of the half part of Jerusalem; of the other half; (see ^{<4610>}Nehemiah 3:9)

he and his daughters; who were rich widows or heiresses, and employed men to build at their own expense; he seems to have had no sons.

Ver. 13. *The valley gate repaired Hanun,* etc.] Of which (see ^{<4613>}Nehemiah 2:13),

and the inhabitants of Zanoah; a city in the tribe of Judah, (^{<4654>}Joshua 15:34),

they built it, and set up the doors thereof, etc. (see ^{<408B>}Nehemiah 3:3),

and a thousand cubits on the wall to the dung gate; that is, they repaired the wall to such a length from the valley gate to the dung gate; (see ^{<402B>}Nehemiah 2:13).

Ver. 14. *But the dung gate repaired Malchiah the son of Rechab*, etc.] If this was one of the Rechabites, they were forbid to build houses, (^{<248D>}Jeremiah 35:7) but, perhaps, though they might not build private houses for themselves to dwell in, they might be employed in building walls and fortresses for public security; though it is more probable that this man was not of that family:

the ruler of part of Bethhaccerem; or of the tract of Bethhaccerem, a place between Tekoah and Jerusalem; (see ^{<240E>}Jeremiah 6:1),

he built it, and set up the doors thereof; etc. as in (^{<408B>}Nehemiah 3:3).

Ver. 15. *But the gate of the fountain*, etc.] Of which (see ^{<4024>}Nehemiah 2:14)

repaired Shallum, the son of Colhozeh, the ruler of part of Mizpah; of a tract, district, town, or city so called; perhaps that in the tribe of Benjamin; (see ^{<408D>}Nehemiah 3:7),

he built it, and covered it; roofed it, which is not said of any of the other gates, whether because of the fountain at it:

and set up the doors thereof, etc. finished it completely:

and the wall of the pool of Siloah, by the king's garden; which was formerly without the wall, on the west, but afterwards taken in by Manasseh, who built it; (see ^{<4034>}2 Chronicles 33:14), and from hence the king's garden was watered:

and unto the stairs that go down from the city of David: Zion, which was built on an eminence, from which they went down by steps into the lower city Acra.

Ver. 16. *After him repaired Nehemiah the son of Azbuk, the ruler of the half part of Bethzur*.] A strong fortified place in the tribe of Judah, (^{<4058>}Joshua 15:58),

unto the place over against the sepulchres of David; where he and his family, and the kings of his race, were buried, which remained to this time untouched by the Babylonians, and to many ages after; (see ^{<412>}Acts 2:29)

and to the pool that was made; not a natural, but an artificial one, which was made by Hezekiah, (^{<20>}2 Kings 20:20),

and unto the house of the mighty; where was a garrison of soldiers in former time for defence.

Ver. 17. *After him repaired the Levites, Rehum the son of Bani*, etc.] Who was one of them, as he that follows was another:

next unto him repaired Hashabiah, the ruler of the half part of Keilah: a city of the tribe of Judah, (^{<63>}Joshua 15:4)

in his part; either with the men of that part of Keilah under his jurisdiction, or at the expense of that part of it.

Ver. 18. *After him repaired their brethren*, etc.] Either the brethren of the two before named particularly, or the Levites their brethren in general, as Jarchi:

Bavai, the son of Henadad, the ruler of the half part of Keilah; the other half of that place.

Ver. 19. *And next to him repaired Ezer, the son of Jeshua, the ruler of Mizpah*, etc.] Either of another Mizpah, or of the other half of Mizpah, (^{<15>}Nehemiah 3:15)

another piece; or a second piece; one of the two pieces; for another is mentioned in the next verse:

over against the going up to the armoury, at the turning [of the wall]; the western wall towards the south, near to which was a place where armour was laid up; perhaps the same with the tower of David, to which there is an allusion in (^{<4>}Song of Solomon 4:4).

Ver. 20. *After him Baruch the son of Zabbai earnestly repaired the other piece*, etc.] Towards and next to that Ezer the last builder mentioned had repaired; and this he did “earnestly”, or in anger as the word signifies, being angry with himself or others that there was any backwardness shown to the work; and therefore, with all haste and eagerness imaginable, attended to it:

from the turning of the wall; see the preceding verse:

unto the door of the house of Eliashib the high priest; of whom (see ^{<KRI>}Nehemiah 3:1), now either his house was upon the wall, or that part of the wall that was right against the door of his house is here meant.

Ver. 21. *After him repaired Meremoth the son of Uriah, the son of Koz, another piece*, etc.] He had wrought before in another part, (^{<KRI>}Nehemiah 3:4), but having finished that, he sets his hand a second time to the work:

from the door of the house of Eliashib, even to the end of the house of Eliashib; the door of his house seems to have been at one end of it, and from that end to the other was a considerable length; he being a great man, the high priest, had a large house.

Ver. 22. *And after him repaired the priests, the men of the plain.*] Either of the plain of Jericho, where, in later times at least, there was a station of the priests, or of the plain about Jerusalem; those also assisted in the repairs of the wall.

Ver. 23. *After him*, etc.] The last of the priests before mentioned:

repaired Benjamin, and Hashub, over against their house; as much of the wall as the length of their house, or houses, were:

after him repaired Azariah the son of Maaseiah, the son of Ananiah, by his house: as far as that reached.

Ver. 24. *After him repaired Binnui the son of Henadad, another piece.* etc.] Beginning where Azariah ended:

unto the turning of the wall, even unto the corner; the corner where the wall turned from the south to the east.

Ver. 25. *Palal the son of Uzai, over against the turning of the wall*, etc.] Who dwelt there, and so repaired what was right against him:

and the tower which lieth out from the king's high house: which might be built for prospect, or his upper house:

that was by the court of the prison; and we often read in Jeremiah of the court of the prison being in or near the king's house, (see ^{<KRI>}Jeremiah 32:2),

after him Pedaiah the son of Parosh; went on from hence with the repair.

Ver. 26. *Moreover, the Nethinims dwelt in Ophel*, etc.] An high tower upon the wall, in this part of it, (see ^{427B}2 Chronicles 27:3), these were servants to the Levites, and repaired here, where their dwellings were:

unto the place over against the water gate toward the east: and as one part of their work was to fetch water for the temple, they were here very properly situated; it led to the king's garden, the valley of Jehoshaphat, and from thence a plain way to Bethany:

and the tower that lieth out; from the wall.

Ver. 27. *After them the Tekoites repaired another piece*, etc.] Having finished what they undertook in another part of the wall, (^{408B}Nehemiah 3:5), they engage in this part of it; which shows their great zeal and diligence, when their nobles were so backward to it, and withdrew from it:

over against the great tower that lieth out; the same as in the preceding verse:

even unto the wall of Ophel; from right against the great tower unto the wall the Tekoites repaired.

Ver. 28. *From above the horse gate repaired the priests*, etc.] So called, either because near it were stables for horses; or through it horses were led to be watered at the brook of Kidron, to which it was near; or to be exercised in the valley; Josephus ^{f26} speaks of the "hippie", or horse tower, which might be near it:

everyone over against his house; for it seems there was a row of houses in which the priests dwelt, and each of them repaired as much of the wall as was right against his house.

Ver. 29. *After them repaired Zadok the son of Immer, over against his house*, etc.] After the last of the priests, this begun where they ended, and repaired as far as his house reached; and being, perhaps, a person of some note, his house might be a large one:

after him repaired also Shemaiah, the son of Shechaniah, the keeper of the east gate; that is, of the temple; for the gates of the city having been burnt so long, it cannot be thought there should be a keeper of any of them.

Ver. 30. *After him repaired Hananiah the son of Shelemiah, and Hanun the sixth son of Zalaph, another piece,* etc.] This last man had six sons; but only his youngest son wrought at this work, which is observed to his great commendation:

after him repaired Shelemiah the son of Berechiah, over against his chamber; the same as in (^{<1610>}Nehemiah 3:4) who having finished what he engaged in there, took his part where his chamber was, and repaired over against that.

Ver. 31. *After him repaired Malchiah, the goldsmith's son,* etc.] Or the son of Tzoreph, as some, so called from his business:

unto the place of the Nethinims, and of the merchants; he repaired up to the place where these dwelt:

over against the gate Miphkad; where some think was an house of visitation or correction; and others, where the sanhedrim sat, tried causes, and exercised justice:

and to the going up of the corner; from the east to the north.

Ver. 32. *And between the going up of the corner unto the sheep gate,* etc.] Where the building first began and where it now ended:

repaired the goldsmiths and the merchants; or druggists; which was done at their expense; and so the wall all round, with the gates of it, were rebuilt and repaired, which was all done in fifty two days, (^{<1615>}Nehemiah 6:15).