4. CULMINATION

Here the idea is of that which will be at the end of the present age of grace. Scripture outlines the truths and one of the centers is the "east gate." (cf. Ezek. 43:1-5; 44:1-3). We believe the reprise of the church is next (1 Thess. 4:13-18), then comes the tribulation (Dan. 9:24-27). Next the Lord comes in His glory (Rev. 19:11-16). This is the east gate truth—the coming of the Lord in glory! Hallelujah! It will follow our pilgrim journey of which the previous 6 gates speak.

5. JUDICATION

Following the coming of the Lord, whether for the church or in connection with His glorious coming, there is judgment. The one is judgment of works, the other of sin itself. This is the meaning of the Niphkad gate, the word meaning review or numbering. How awesome to realize that this is the end—a reckoning with divine justice! Let no one trifle with this (3:32; Heb. 9:27; 1 Cor. 3:11-17).

Conclusion: Take to heart, my brother, the truths of these gates. Build them. Erect them. Live with them! Amen.

THE BOOK OF NEHEMIAH
"Building the Walls" (2)
Neemiah 2:1-32

Introduction

1. Nehemiah was a man of vision. He had an objective before him—the rebuilding of the walls and the restoration of the gates of Jerusalem (2:17). He felt this would remove the nation and the city from being a reproach to the world and to God (2:17).

2. Marvelous unity pervaded the nation in this effort (2:18, 20; 3:1-32). There could be no doubt that God was in the project (2:20). The Lord is pleased when God's people unite for His own glory (Psa. 113; Eph. 4:3). It is an expression of the oneness of believers in the body (1 Cor. 12). What was national in the O.T. is an organism in the N.T. This has nothing whatever to do with the ecumenical movement of today which is really a false unity without Christ and the Word of God.

3. The rebuilding process took 52 days (6:15). This demonstrates what can be done within a short period of time when hearts are knit together for a common cause in the Lord. The manner in which the various gates were reconstructed is given careful detail in the text. Their names are very instructive. Take them in order of their occurrence and see the teaching given by the Spirit of God:

1. HISTORICALLY

An important item in Scripture is the absolute historicity of every detail therein! Fundamental Bible believers take this for granted. Liberals and Neo-orthodox people deny it categorically. Some of the Neo-evangelicals have drifted to the same position. If there is no historical content to the Word of God, then there can be no spiritual veracity to it either! If one portion cannot be trusted for earth, another cannot be trusted for heaven!

The gates listed in Nehemiah include the following: sheep (3:1) and nearby were the towers of Meah and Hananeel (3:1; 12:39). Then came the fish gate (3:3), the old gate (3:6), the broad wall (3:8), and the tower of the furnaces (3:11). This was succeeded by the valley gate (3:18), the dung gate (3:14), then the gate of the fountain, the wall of the pool of Siloam by the king's garden at the stairs that go down from the city of David (3:15). To the east was the water
gate (3:26; 12:37). Various other indications of direction are given (e.g. sepulchres of David, pool that was made, corner, etc.) until one comes to the horse gate (3:28), east gate (3:29), and the gate Miphkad (3:31). A complete circle is made in this listing for one returns to the sheep gate (3:32).

Admittedly, all of these gates and points may not be identifiable today, but surely were well known then.

2. **PRACTICAL**

While the historical is surely to be given priority, it is also true that the events of the O.T. are written for the practical use of the N.T. believer (1 Cor. 10:11). Actually, the word "examples" is the word "types" and that is exactly what the bulk of the O.T. is—a pictorial presentation of truth as it is ultimately unfolded in the N.T. This is eminently seen in the study of the gates. Furthermore, the order in which the gates is given is enlightening. Study the gates!—

a. About Salvation

It is the "sheep gate" which speaks of this truth. No greater witness is given in the Bible than that the Lord Jesus is the "lamb of God" Who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29). Isaiah 53 speaks of the Lord as the sheep Who bore our sins (cf. Acts 8). Furthermore, Christ is the Great Shepherd of the sheep (Heb. 13:20). This is the first and last gate (3:1, 32). Without salvation, there is no sense talking about anything else! Start here and your soul is blessed. Raise up the sheep gate for your own soul!

b. About Propagation

Just the mention of "fish" points the direction to soul-winning. The call of our Lord was this (Matt. 4:17-20). It is the great truth which is to come on the heels of salvation—witnessing to others of the Saviour (Mark 5:19). Tragically, the gate of fishing is in ruins in many hearts today! Too many believers feel they are called to "help the saints" and they forget that it is also their responsibility to "preach the Gospel" (Mark 16:15). It does not take a special gift to reach the lost.

Get to the fish gate, brother, and do something to rescue the perishing!

C. About Sanctification.

Interestingly, the next 6 gates relate to one's walk with the Lord. No claim for deep spirituality is required for soul winning (fish gate). What is needed is salvation (sheep gate). Growth in the Christian life comes with and after the practise of soul winning. Don't wait for some spiritual height to begin to win souls.

1) Old gate. Jeremiah gave some light on this (6:16) and suggests a need to stick with what is from the very beginning. New-fangled ideas and ways are not to be fostered. There is a demand in our day to abandon the old stand and position of the fundamentalist. Why? People want the "old gate" to stand in ruins. God help us to rebuild it! It is the place of God's revealed will—the Word. Bend to the sovereignty of the living God and not to the whims of the day!

2) Valley gate. Clearly, this is a reference to humility. Numerous verses speak of this truth (James 4:6, 10; 1 Pet. 5:5, 6). Christ exalted this virtue (Phil 2:8). Pride is an offence to God (Prov. 16:5; James 4:6; 1 Pet. 5:5). Build the gate of the valley!

3) Dung gate. Probably this is one of the most neglected areas of Scripture truth today—cleanliness! How it is needed. The Bible clearly teaches the truth (2 Cor. 7:1). Our failure to preach it is fear of the pew. The pew resists it because it wants the acceptance of the made world which killed Christ (Gal. 1:4). Until there is recognized the stigma of the cross, clean living amongst the saints will not be found (Gal. 6:14, 17).

4) Fountain gate. We are assured of the meaning of this gate by a reference to our Lord's words (John 7:37-39). The Holy Spirit is involved here. Every child of God has the Spirit (Rom. 8:9), but the Spirit does not have every child of God (Eph. 5:18). Don't shun this! It is the greatest imperative amongst the saints today.

5) Water gate. This really should be tied in with the truth of the "fountain gate." Cleanliness comes about through the Word (John 15:3, Psalm 119:9, 11). No wonder John notes that there is victory