

Nehemiah 3

# WORKING AS A TEAM

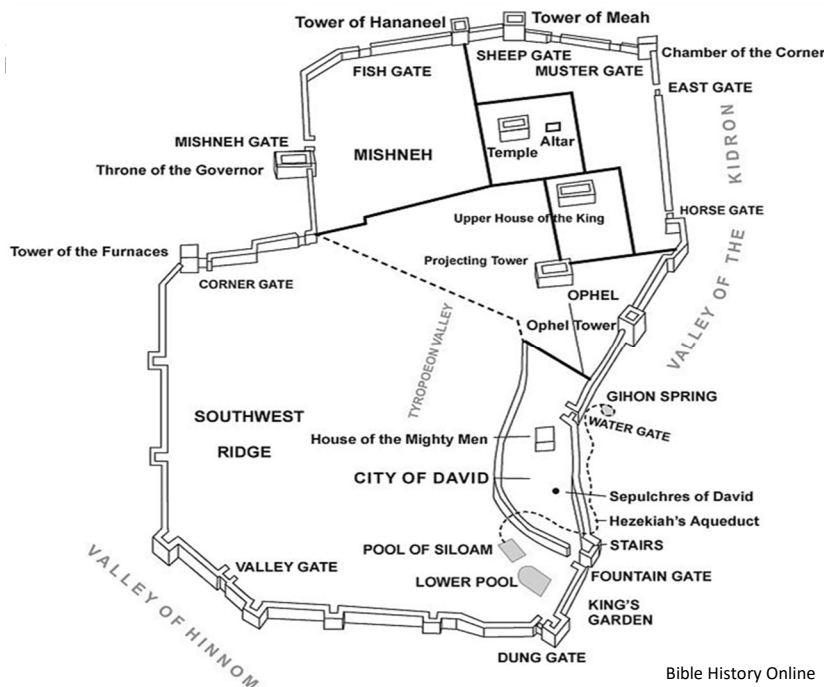
Nehemiah does what we need to do when faced with a mammoth task. He organized and mobilized the people, breaking the project up into small, manageable proportions. Think of it this way. Four miles of wall, allocated to the forty-two groups of workers recorded in chapter three, spread out over a fifty-two day period comes out as a mere three or four yards per day per section. "Wall-building" in God's kingdom likewise requires a lot of people doing their "bit" rather than a few virtuoso performers doing it all. ...One cannot leave this chapter without wondering why God should deem it important that thirty-two verses of His canon of Scripture should be devoted to what is seemingly a list of "employees" on an ancient building site. Is it just for the record? Yes, God's record: "God is not unjust, He will not forget your work and the love you have shown Him as you have helped His people and continue to help them" (Heb. 6:10). The reward for being a "city of God" builder, ancient or modern, will outshine the sun and outlast the stars.

—Dr. Steve Brady

In December 445 BC, Nehemiah receives news regarding the devastation of Jerusalem and the despair of his people, the Jews. His heart is broken. His spirit is stirred. And he begins to pray for God to remember His promise, to restore His people, and to give him success in his interaction with the king. Four months later (March-April 444 BC), his prayer is answered.

Now the real challenge begins. Rebuilding the wall!

Hezekiah's wall around Jerusalem (which Nehemiah appears to have rebuilt) was approximately 2 ½ miles long, 20 ft. thick, and 25 ft. high ([holysite.com/walls-of-jerusalem-history](http://holysite.com/walls-of-jerusalem-history)).



Bible History Online

*This catalogue of largely forgotten names and places reveals an extraordinary feat of organization and concerted effort.*

—Edwin Yamauchi

There are two views on how much of the city Nehemiah's wall enclosed. The minimalist view encloses about 90 acres and follows the older walls of David & Solomon. The maximalist view encloses about 220 acres and follows the wall that Hezekiah built in ~700 BC. See *Big City, Few People* (BAR, July 2005) by David Ussishkin for a defense of the maximalist view.

### The Ten Gates of the City

1. Sheep. Next to the temple.
2. Fish. Near fish market.
3. Old. Oldest gate of the city.
4. Valley. Led to Hinnom Valley.
5. Dung. Led to garbage dump.
6. Fountain. Near Pool of Siloam
7. Water. Near Gihon Spring.
8. Horse. Near horse stables.
9. East. Entrance to the temple.
10. Muster (or Inspection). May be the place where soldiers were called or decisions of the elders were rendered.

See [israelmyglory.org/article/the-gates-of-jerusalem-in-nehemiahs-day](http://israelmyglory.org/article/the-gates-of-jerusalem-in-nehemiahs-day)

The principles that we learn from Nehemiah are instructive to us today as we seek to build, strengthen, and expand the church of Jesus Christ, both locally and globally, for God's glory (cf. Acts 1:8).

- 1. God calls me to a task (and often puts me in a situation) that is way beyond my abilities so that I have to learn to depend on \_\_\_\_\_ and on \_\_\_\_\_ (2:11-16; 2 Cor. 1:8-11).**
- 2. A great work for God's glory requires a great \_\_\_\_\_ among God's people...and a great \_\_\_\_\_ among God's people requires all of us to be committed to the great work for God's glory (2:17-20; cf. John 17:20-21; Phil. 2:1-11).**
- 3. Everything we do is to be an act of \_\_\_\_\_ (3:1).**
- 4. I need others alongside me, working \_\_\_\_\_ to me (3:2ff).**
- 5. \_\_\_\_\_ hinders me from working with others (3:5).**
- 6. Everyone is vital. Each person has a specific \_\_\_\_\_ in God's work (3:8ff; cf. 1 Cor. 12:12-27; Eph. 4:16; 1 Pet. 4:10).**
- 7. When I don't know where to begin, start \_\_\_\_\_ to home (3:10, 23, 28-29; cf. 2 Cor. 10:13; Titus 2:1-15).**

*The way in which the children of Israel rebuilt the walls in Jerusalem is a beautiful illustration of what God had in mind when He designed the body of Christ—His church. God's plan is clear. He wants every Christian to participate in building the church.*

—Gene Getz

*Divisions in the church always breed atheism in the world.*

—Thomas Manton (1620-77)

*I have never yet known the Spirit of God to work where the Lord's people were divided.*

—Dwight L. Moody

*It is not what a man does that determines whether his work is sacred or secular; it is why he does it. The motive is everything. Let a man sanctify the Lord God in his heart and he can thereafter do no common act.*

—A. W. Tozer

*Pride is the first sin that ever entered into the universe, and the last sin that is rooted out. Pride is the worst sin. It is the most secret of all sins. There is no other matter in which the heart is more deceitful.*

—Jonathan Edwards

**Their nobles did not put their necks to the work of their Lord.**

*"This is a vivid touch, a glimpse of petty pride rather than half-heartedness. The unbending neck is a standard picture of this unbiddable attitude."*

—Derek Kidner

*When a general good work is to be done, each should apply himself to that part of it that falls nearest to him and is within his reach.*

—Matthew Henry