

Together For God Nehemiah 3; 4:1-6

Last week we discussed how God uses people who are **bound to Him** to do His work. God doesn't *need* us to do His work. He is **Almighty**. He can do anything that He wants. He created this world and all that you see in it in 6 literal days. Our God made the sun, the moon, and the stars. He made "space", a place so vast that we cannot - even with all our sophistication - see to the end of it. God made your bodies. He made your souls. He doesn't *need* us to do anything, but because He loves us He *wants* us to work alongside of Him. God saved **Abraham** and told him:

Genesis 17:1-2 And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, **I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect. {2} And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly.**

Abraham had his work to do, and God had His. **Abraham was to walk before God**, to live his life in a way that is pleasing to his Savior. The Lord expects His people to live for Him, and through Him. Pastor **Greg Laurie** rightly said:

"To be a golfer you need to golf. To be a surfer you need to surf. To be a Christian you need to walk with God"

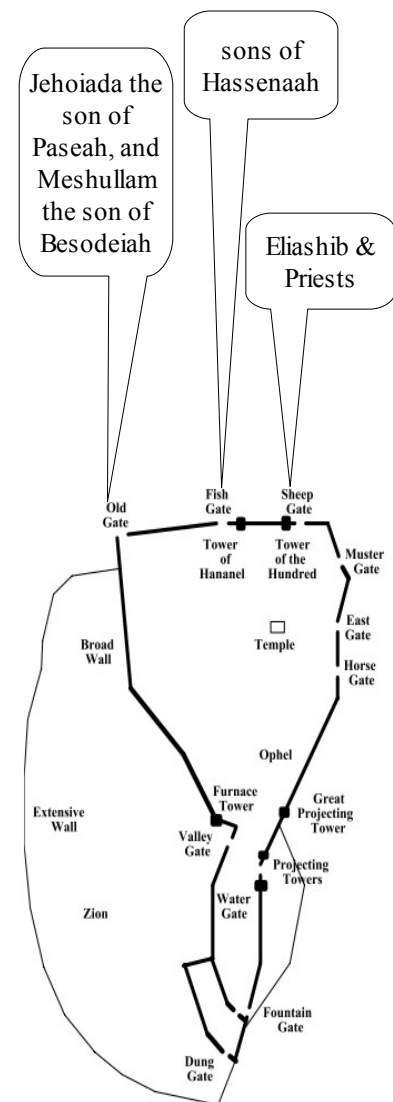
God's people *must* bind together both with God *and* with one another if His work is going to be done. That's what we see in Nehemiah Chapter Three.

Nehemiah 3:1-32 Then **Eliashib the high priest rose up with his brethren the priests, and they built the sheep gate; they sanctified it, and set up the doors of it; even unto the tower of Meah they sanctified it, unto the tower of Hananeel.**

It's significant that **God's leaders "rose up"** and did what they were supposed to do before the rest of the people moved. God's leaders should always set the example for the rest. Just as Jesus was always **"about the Father's business"** so should God's leaders be about His business. We read that **"Eliashib the high priest rose up"**. The words translated **"rose up"** is the **קום**, *qûm*, (pronounced *koom*), which means "to rouse oneself, to lift up, to approach with excitement". The leaders were excited about the work, and this excitement would transfer downward to the people.

1. Why does God - Who is infinite - call us to work with Him? _____

2. What do all the people who followed Nehemiah have in common? _____



The **sheep gate** was first built. The priests started at this point because, according to **John Gill**, " **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**". We read that they "sanctified it", that is, they *dedicated that area of wall* to the Lord their God.

3. Who were the first to "rise up" and build? Why is this significant? _____

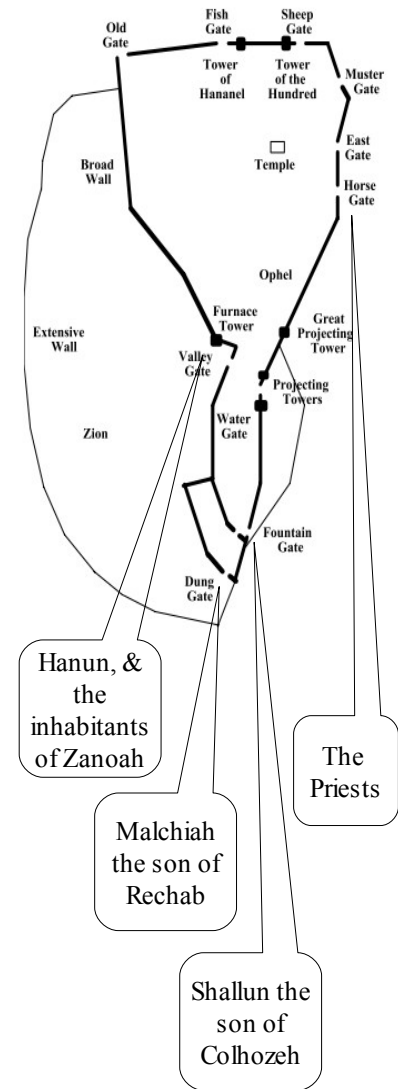
{2} And next unto him built the men of Jericho. And next to them built Zaccur the son of Imri. {3} But the fish gate did the sons of Hassenaah build, who also laid the beams thereof, and set up the doors thereof, the locks thereof, and the bars thereof.

The "sons of Hassenaah" worked on the **fish gate**. This was a commercial gate through which fish from the *Jordan* and the *Sea of Galilee* entered Jerusalem. Since their name means *thorny* or *prickly* these possibly could have been fishermen. They were, it is certain, hardened workmen.

{4} And next unto them repaired Meremoth the son of Urijah, the son of Koz. And next unto them repaired Meshullam the son of Berechiah, the son of Meshezabeel. And next unto them repaired Zadok the son of Baana.

Meremoth was the **son of Uriah the priest**. He returned to Jerusalem some 14 years earlier when **Cyrus the King of Persia** decreed:

Ezra 1:2-3 ... **The LORD God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah.** {3} **Who is there among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah,** and build the house of the LORD God of Israel, (he is the God,) which is in Jerusalem.



4. Is anyone too important to *not* work for God? Who thought they were too important? _____

The **Tekoites** worked on the wall, the *common people (Amos 1:1)*, **herdsmen from Judah**. Sadly, though the common people worked, the richer people - the **nobles** - felt that such efforts were below them.

{6} Moreover **the old gate repaired Jehoiada the son of Paseah, and Meshullam the son of Besodeiah**; they laid the beams thereof, and set up the doors thereof, and the locks thereof, and the bars

thereof.

Two men worked together on **the Old Gate**, a gate that was supposed to belong to the Old city of Salem. **Jehoiada the son of Paseah**, and **Meshullam the son of Besodeiah** received great honor for stepping out in faith and doing the work for the Lord. Contrast their efforts to the *apathy of the nobles of Tekoi*.

{7} And next unto them repaired Melatiah the Gibeonite, and Jadon the Meronothite, the men of Gibeon, and of Mizpah, unto the throne of the governor on this side the river. {8} Next unto him repaired Uzziel the son of Harhaiah, of the goldsmiths. Next unto him also repaired Hananiah the son of one of the apothecaries, and **they fortified Jerusalem unto the broad wall**. {9} And next unto them repaired Rephaiah the son of Hur, the ruler of the half part of Jerusalem. {10} And next unto them repaired Jedaiah the son of Harumaph, even over against his house. And next unto him repaired Hattush the son of Hashabniah. {11} Malchijah the son of Harim, and Hashub the son of Pahath-moab, repaired the other piece, and the tower of the furnaces. {12} And next unto him repaired Shallum the son of Halohesh, the ruler of the half part of Jerusalem, he and his daughters.

{13} , the locks thereof, and the bars thereof, **The valley gate repaired Hanun, and the inhabitants of Zanoah; they built it, and set up the doors thereof** and a thousand cubits on the wall unto the dung gate.

{14} But **the dung gate repaired Malchiah the son of Rechab, the ruler of part of Beth-haccerem; he built it**, and set up the doors thereof, the locks thereof, and the bars thereof.

The **Rechabites** were *dwellers in Israel* but were not Israelites, nor were they particularly worshipers of God. They were a *nomadic people* whose forefather **Jonadab** commanded that they **neither drink wine nor dwell in houses (see Jeremiah 35:6-7), nor sow seed, nor plant a vineyard...**

Jeremiah 35:6-7 But they said, We will drink no wine: for Jonadab the son of Rechab our father commanded us, saying, Ye shall drink no wine, neither ye, nor your sons forever: {7} Neither shall ye build house, nor sow seed, nor plant vineyard, nor have any: but all your days ye shall dwell in tents; that ye may live many days in the land where ye be strangers.

God often moves those who are not His people to do His work.

5. Why were the **Rechabites** significant? _____

Proverbs 21:1 The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will.

As God moved on the heart of the unbelieving Cyrus, the King of Persia:

Ezra 1:1-2 Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, **that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, {2} Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The LORD God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem,** which is in Judah.

so He moved on the heart of **Malchiah the son of Rechab, the ruler of part of Beth-haccerem** so that he worked to repair one of the gates of the Holy City of Jerusalem.

{15} But the **gate of the fountain repaired Shallun the son of Colhozeh, the ruler of part of Mizpah;** he built it, and covered it, and set up the doors thereof, the locks thereof, and the bars thereof, and the wall of the pool of Siloah by the king's garden, and unto the stairs that go down from the city of David.

{16} After him repaired Nehemiah the son of Azbuk, the ruler of the half part of Beth-zur, unto the place over against the sepulchers of David, and to the pool that was made, and unto the house of the mighty. {17} After him repaired the Levites, Rehum the son of Bani. Next unto him repaired Hashabiah, the ruler of the half part of Keilah, in his part. {18} After him repaired their brethren, Bavai the son of Henadad, the ruler of the half part of Keilah. {19} And next to him repaired Ezer the son of Jeshua, the ruler of Mizpah, another piece over against the going up to the armory at the turning of the wall. {20} After him Baruch the son of Zabbai earnestly repaired the other piece, from the turning of the wall unto the door of the house of Eliashib the high priest. {21} After him repaired Meremoth the son of Urijah the son of Koz another piece, from the door of the house of Eliashib even to the end of the house of Eliashib. {22} And after him repaired the priests, the men of the plain. {23} After him repaired Benjamin and Hashub over against their house. After him repaired Azariah the son of Maaseiah the son of Ananiah by his house. {24} After him repaired Binnui the son of Henadad another piece, from the house of Azariah unto the turning of the wall, even unto the corner. {25} Palal the son of Uzai, over against the turning of the wall, and the tower which lieth out from the king's high house, that was by the court of the prison. After him Pedaiah the son of Parosh. {26} Moreover the Nethinims dwelt in Ophel, unto the place over against the water gate toward the east, and the tower that lieth out. {27}

After them the Tekoites repaired another piece, over against the great tower that lieth out, even unto the wall of Ophel.

{28} From **above the horse gate repaired the priests, every one over against his house.** {29} After them repaired Zadok the son of Immer over against his house. After him repaired also Shemaiah the son of Shechaniah, the keeper of the east gate. {30} After him repaired Hananiah the son of Shelemiah, and Hanun the sixth son of Zalaph, another piece. After him repaired Meshullam the son of Berechiah over against his chamber.

{31} After him repaired **Malchiah the goldsmith's son unto the place of the Nethinims, and of the merchants, over against the gate Miphkad,** and to the going up of the corner. {32} And between the going up of the corner unto the sheep gate repaired the goldsmiths and the merchants.

Nehemiah 4:1-6 But it came to pass, that when **Sanballat heard that we built the wall, he was wroth, and took great indignation, and mocked the Jews.** {2} And **he spoke before his brethren and the army of Samaria, and said, What do these feeble Jews? will they fortify themselves? will they sacrifice? will they make an end in a day? will they revive the stones out of the heaps of the rubbish which are burned?** {3} Now **Tobiah the Ammonite was by him, and he said, Even that which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall.**

6. When enemies rise up against the work of God, what should we do? Who is our enemy? _____

Though **the people had a mind to work** those who had no part in the work stood outside and, mocking, attacked those who were honoring God. **Pastor John MacArthur** said:

"Christ gives life, but Satan takes life. ... Christ produces spiritual fruit in our lives: love, joy, patience, peace, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control (Galatians 5:22-23). But Satan loves the fleshly fruit of immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outburst of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these (vv 19-21). Christ permits tests or trials in our lives to help us grow spiritually (James 1:3), but Satan lures us with temptation to destroy us (1 Peter 5:8). Christ sets believers free (John 8:31-32), but Satan enslaves the lost (2 Timothy 2:26). Christ defends believers (1 John 2:1), but Satan accuses them (Revelation 12:10)¹"

Satan has agents in all places. The Bible says that he lured a third part of the angels of Heaven into following him (**Revelation 12:4**),

1 John MacArthur, *How To Meet The Enemy*, pages 16-17

and that he lures people daily into following his footsteps. The Apostle Paul spoke of

2 Corinthians 11:13-15 For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. {14} And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. {15} Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.

The difference between a **false prophet** and a **true prophet** is seen in the works. The false prophets - like Satan their leader - **transform themselves into the apostles of Christ**. But the Scripture says that true workers for God are **given by God to the Church**. As we read last week:

Ephesians 4:11-13 And (God) gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; {12} For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: {13} Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ:

How can we tell a **Sanballat** or a **Tobiah** from a **true evangelist, pastor, or teacher**? We tell by their works. The works of the true leader among God's people will always *point to and affirm the Word of God*. True, non-Satanic leadership will always **unify or upbuild the Body of Christ - it will not tear down!** The works of God's people are always upbuilding and edifying. Any work that we do *expecting God's approval* must meet His conditions.

1. **"Good or Godly Works" must always be done in faith.** The Bible tells us in

Romans 1:17 "For therein is **the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.**"

God expects His people to live their their lives by faith. The Bible says:

Hebrews 11:6 But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

God delights in His people when they step out - together - in faith and do as He directs. A faithless attitude and faithless apathy will never be commendable in His sight. **"Whatsoever is not of faith is**

7. How can you distinguish between a Sanballat or a Tobiah as opposed to a person of God? _____

8. Good or Godly works are always done in _____ and for the glory of _____. Godly works are never in opposition to the clear teachings of God's _____.

sin" (Romans 14:23).

The Bible records the names of **mighty men of God** who stepped out in faith. We all know the story of **the Shepherd David, and his battle with Goliath**. But how many of you know the Bible account of **Shammah the son of Agee the Hararite**? Though the **people fled from the Philistines at Bethlehem Shammah stood his ground**. We read that:

2 Samuel 23:12 **But (Shammah) stood in the midst of the ground, and defended it, and slew the Philistines: and the LORD wrought a great victory.**

Shammah refused to let fear rule him, but instead stood up against the enemy. And what of **Abishai, the brother of Joab, the son of Zeruiah**? He killed **three hundred men with a spear (2 Samuel 23:18)**. Then there was **Benaiah the son of Jehoiada**. Benaiah, we are told, **"slew a lion in the midst of a pit in a time of snow" (2 Samuel 23:20)**. Benaiah chased down a man eating lion when other men would have ran away, and then - despite slippery footing - killed that lion. **Benaiah, King David's bodyguard**, eventually rose in rank in King David's army until he became the **Commander in Chief of that army**, second in power to King David himself. Benaiah continually made himself available to God. He lived by faith. In fact, we are told that - as Israel fought against the Philistines at Bethlehem King David foolishly wished out loud:

2 Samuel 23:15 ... **Oh that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate!**

Three mighty men sprung into action. **Shammah, Abishai, and Benaiah**, the Bible says:

2 Samuel 23:16 ... **broke through the host of the Philistines, and drew water out of the well of Bethlehem, that was by the gate, and took it, and brought it to David:** nevertheless he would not drink thereof, but poured it out unto the LORD.

King David wouldn't drink of that water, but **poured it out unto the Lord**. He realized how foolish he was in asking such a thing, and instead donated such a mighty act to the glory of God. **Mark Batterson** wrote in his article *Chase the Lion*²:

"... The modern Church has become fixated mainly on sins of commission: Don't do this, don't do that, and you'll be okay. But here's the problem: You can do nothing wrong and still do

9. What can we learn about spiritual growth through the lives of **Shammah, Abishai, and Benaiah**? ____

nothing right. Holiness is more than the byproduct of simply subtracting something negative from our lives. It involves maximizing our God given potential to live like Jesus. Our calling is much higher than simply running away from obvious sin; we're called to chase lions."

God calls each and every one of us to *minimize our complaining* while *maximizing our effectiveness for the Lord*. We should - by every action we do - strive to glorify God.

1 Corinthians 1:31 "That, according as it is written, **He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.**"

The purpose of the Christian way of life is not merely to arrive safely at death. **The Christian is sanctified, just as the Sheep's Gate of Nehemiah 3:1 is sanctified.** We are set apart for God's use. We should live our lives so as to glorify God while pointing others toward Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. The Apostle told the Corinthian believers:

1 Corinthians 6:9-11 **Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, {10} Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. {11} And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.**

You who belong to God have been *set apart* or sanctified for God's use. As Jesus said:

John 10:10 ... **I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.**

Jesus Christ came and gave Himself for us - not just to give us a better life after death, but also to give us a better life *now*. We who are His are expected to be world changers. World changers can expect to be attacked. Jesus said:

John 15:18-20 **If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. {19} If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. {20} Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you;** if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.

10. Define holiness _____

11. Go back to **chapter 3, verse 1**. When the priests sanctified the sheep's gate, what were they doing? How does this illustrate the Christian way of life? _____

Expect attacks from Satan's minions when you are living for the Lord. But don't run away from the attacks. Find your place of service, and then serve God with all your might. As **Adrian Rogers** once said, "**Many folks are plowing water and shoveling smoke. They're living to exist and existing to live, but they do not have a purpose for life**". What Nehemiah and his merry band were doing in faith would last long after they left this life. And remember, **you cannot build a strong wall, nor do a great work for God if divided**. God has called us to unity. He has called us to live our lives for Him.

{4} Hear, O our God; for we are despised: and turn their reproach upon their own head, and give them for a prey in the land of captivity:
{5} And cover not their iniquity, and let not their sin be blotted out from before thee: for they have provoked thee to anger before the builders. {6} **So built we the wall; and all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof: for the people had a mind to work.**