

This chapter is basically a listing of those responsible for building the different sections of the gates and the walls. By making this listing a part of His word, the LORD is making a statement concerning the fact that He knows who the workers are among His people; and He also knows those that shirk responsibility.

Nehemiah 3:1 ¶ Then Eliashib the high priest rose up with his brethren the priests, and they builded 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.

I think it is significant to note that the religious leaders of the people were listed as leading the way in the construction effort. Commentators note that the tower of Hananeel was on the north side of the city, the direction from which most attacks on the city were made.

The IVP OT Background Commentary adds: "The Sheep Gate (other times called the Benjamin Gate) north of the temple mount, exits from the area of the Bethesda Pool (known in this period as the Sheep Pool) into the Kidron Valley. It is toward the northern side of the east wall and would have led to the Jericho road."

I liked Guzik's observation on sanctifying the sheep gate: "Because the first of the work was specially set apart to God, it was a way for them to say, 'All of this work belongs to You, LORD. This is a special work done unto You.'"

Nehemiah 3:2 And next unto him builded the men of Jericho. And next to them builded Zaccur the son of Imri.

Nehemiah 3:3 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 Background Commentary again adds insight: "Two gate doors were generally set into stone sockets buried just under the ground. The beams flanked the gate on either side. They were made of wood and joined to the wall. The bars slid across the gates and the end fit into holes or brackets in the beam. These bars could be locked in place by a series of small wooden dowels that slipped into holes on a block mounted on the gate. One could therefore not exit the city without a key once the gate was locked."

Nehemiah 3:4 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.

Nehemiah 3:5 And next unto them the Tekoites repaired; but their nobles put not their necks to the work of their Lord.

These nobles of Tekoa evidently thought they were too good to do construction work. Anything and everything we do in obedience to God's will should be considered a privilege.

Nehemiah 3:6 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.

Nehemiah 3:7 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.

Nehemiah 3:8 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.

Nehemiah 3:9 And next unto them repaired Rephaiah the son of Hur, the ruler of the half part of Jerusalem.

Nehemiah 3:10 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.

Nehemiah 3:11 Malchijah the son of Harim, and Hashub the son of Pahathmoab, repaired the other piece, and the tower of the furnaces.

Nehemiah 3:12 And next unto him repaired Shallum the son of Haloheh, the ruler of the half part of Jerusalem, he and his daughters.

Notice that these women joined in to serve as part of the work force in a task that was probably considered “men’s” work.

Nehemiah 3:13 The valley gate repaired Hanun, and the inhabitants of Zanoah; they built it, and set up the doors thereof, the locks thereof, and the bars thereof, and a thousand cubits on the wall unto the dung gate.

Nehemiah 3:14 But the dung gate repaired Malchiah the son of Rechab, the ruler of part of Bethhaccerem; he built it, and set up the doors thereof, the locks thereof, and the bars thereof.

Nehemiah 3:15 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.

It’s interesting to note that the Pool of Siloam has been discovered in recent years. Consider this quote from the Los Angeles Times of August 9, 2005: “Workers repairing a sewage pipe in the Old City of Jerusalem have discovered the biblical Pool of Siloam, a freshwater reservoir that was a major gathering place for ancient Jews making religious pilgrimages to the city and the reputed site where Jesus cured a man blind from birth, according to the Gospel of John. The pool was fed by the now famous Hezekiah's Tunnel and is "a much grander affair" than archeologists previously believed, with three tiers of stone stairs allowing easy access to the water, said Hershel Shanks, editor of the Biblical Archaeology Review, which reported the find Monday.”

Nehemiah 3:16 After him repaired Nehemiah the son of Azbuk, the ruler of the half part of Bethzur, unto *the place* over against the sepulchres of David, and to the pool that was made, and unto the house of the mighty.

Nehemiah 3:17 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.
Nehemiah 3:18 After him repaired their brethren, Bavai the son of Henadad, the ruler of the half part of Keilah.

Nehemiah 3:19 And next to him repaired Ezer the son of Jeshua, the ruler of Mizpah, another piece over against the going up to the armoury at the turning *of the wall*.

Nehemiah 3:20 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.

Nehemiah 3:21 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.

Nehemiah 3:22 And after him repaired the priests, the men of the plain.

Nehemiah 3:23 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.

Nehemiah 3:24 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.

Nehemiah 3:25 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.

Nehemiah 3:26 Moreover the Nethinims dwelt in Ophel, unto *the place* over against the water gate toward the east, and the tower that lieth out.

Nehemiah 3:27 After them the Tekoites repaired another piece, over against the great tower that lieth out, even unto the wall of Ophel.

Nehemiah 3:28 From above the horse gate repaired the priests, every one over against his house.

Nehemiah 3:29 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.

Nehemiah 3:30 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.

Nehemiah 3:31 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.

Nehemiah 3:32 And between the going up of the corner unto the sheep gate repaired the goldsmiths and the merchants.

I liked this summary from the New Bible Commentary: "The overall picture to emerge is instructive. It demonstrates first a unity of intention by the people, some forty sections apparently working simultaneously. This could not have been achieved had there not been good supervision, close cooperation and an eye open for what was being done in neighbouring sections. Secondly, however, the interests and motives of those involved differed considerably. Some worked on the basis of family association, others as individuals, some in district associations, some on the basis of their position in society and yet others because of professional association. Moreover, in many cases the people were employed at that point in the wall where they had a vested interest."

Guzik made an interesting observation: “The names of the men who are said to have **made repairs in front of his house** are interesting:

· Nehemiah 3:10 mentions **Jedaiah**, and his name means *He who calls unto God*. Our homes must be places of prayer, where the family calls unto God.

· Nehemiah 3:23 mentions **Benjamin**, and his name means *Son of my right hand*, speaking of a protector. Our homes must be places of protection and peace.

· Nehemiah 3:29 mentions **Zadok**, and his name means *Justice*. Our homes must be places of justice and integrity, especially with integrity regarding our marital vows and promises.

· Nehemiah 3:30 mentions **Meshullam**, and his name means *Devoted*. Our homes must be places of devotion and separation to God.”