

Messages From The Gates of Jerusalem
Lesson #2 - Sheep Gate - "Behold the Lamb of God"

Walls Symbolize: Strength & Protection

1. Ancient Cities - Only real means of protection and defense - Many were more like a fortress. The perimeter consisted of a massive stone wall with gates to permit or prevent the entry of people and animals. The gates were usually flanked by, or actually part of, one or more defensive guard towers.

2. When we are justified and our spirit is born again, a protective wall of Christ's blood is put around us - a wall of salvation. The enemies can gain entrance through the gates to possess "the city" if the gates are not properly built.

- Jerusalem had 10 gates, each depicting a significant step in the daily life and historical experience of natural Jerusalem.
- Each gate has a spiritual counterpart; they are a "shadow" of the reality that was to come (Hebrews 8:5; 10:1; Revelation 21:10-13).
- Each gate in the New Jerusalem is a single pearl. (Rev. 21:21)
- Jesus is the pearl of great price (Matthew 13:45-46) and the only entrance into the City (John 10:9; 14:6).
- Each gate therefore depicts aspects of the finished work of the Cross of Christ, worked out in our experience.

The Gospel of the Gates of Jerusalem

Each gate, whose order and position is very specific (not a coincidence), speaks of a different experience and spiritual truth that must be applied in our Christian life.

a. Named 1000 years before the Lamb came

b. Give the perfect portrait of true salvation in Christ (author and finisher of our eternal salvation), from His sacrifice to the gathering together of His people in heaven.

The ten gates that Nehemiah rebuilt can be grouped into four categories.

First 3 gates = PRIORITY gates - Sheep, Fish and Old Gates.

All the other gates cannot be effectively restored until these three are in place.

Next 2 gates = PURIFYING gates - Valley and Dung Gates.

These gates test our character and purify us to be able to outwork the purpose of God for our lives revealed in the following gates.

Next 3 gates = POWER gates - Fountain, Water and Horse Gate.

These gates come after purification. We receive an empowering to do a specific work for God in His strength and the power of the Holy Spirit.

Last 2 gates = PROPHETIC gates - East and Miphkad Gates.

These should continually be in our vision and compel us to be faithful and diligent in seeing the other gates restored in our lives.

They speak of Jesus' return and of the final judgment.

Spiritual Truths to Discover:

1. God is a recorder of names.

Nehemiah specifically names each person that made repairs; recorded by God.

Malachi 3:16-18 Then those who feared the LORD spoke to one another, and the LORD listened and heard them;

So a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear the LORD and who meditate on His name. "They shall be Mine," says the LORD of hosts,

"On the day that I make them My jewels. I will spare them as a man spares his own son who serves him." ¹⁸ Then you shall again discern between the righteous and the wicked, Between one who serves God and one who does not serve Him.

2. Judgment Seat Appointment: Our lives and actions are recorded by the Lord for our rewards in the life to come. Nothing is done for the Lord in vain on this earth, even if no one else sees it. Remember: Heb. 6:10 For God *is* not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, *in that* you have ministered to the saints, and do minister.

3. Discover encouragement for an "overwhelming, impossible task."

Are your walls and gates broken down? Have your defenses crumbled?

Is the enemy having victory in your life? Are you discouraged in your spiritual walk?

Give special heed to the process of restoration set forth in the book of Nehemiah.

1. They listened to and were led by Nehemiah whose name means "Comfort of Yahweh."

Type of the Holy Spirit:

Directs the work of building the walls and gates. Required: Absolute surrender to Him

2. The people were willing to work and committed to the task. (Neh. 4:6)

3. Involved and immediately started doing something. 42 groups of people & 38 individuals

4. The work was voluntary. They knew that the glory of God's name was at stake.

Our motive should never be to receive temporal rewards. Live with eternity in view.

5. Defense of the walls and gates are necessary as you build and repair. Fight while building!

6. The enemy will make every effort to stop the work. (Neh. 4:7-8, 11)

7. Therefore, prayer and watchfulness are imperative. (Neh. 4:9) Enemy does not leave.

8. Encouragement from the Holy Spirit Neh. 4:14

4. Discover: Rev. 1:8 He is the Alpha and Omega; the beginning and the end.

The sheep gate is also mentioned at the very end once we have come full circle. Why?

Everything starts and ends with Jesus' death on the cross.

Apart from Him and His sacrifice, we would have nothing eternal and satisfying. He is the High Priest who builds and consecrates this foundation gate in our lives.

I. Sheep Gate - Where the Journey with Jesus begins

- a. Known as *Stephen's Gate* - Stephen was martyred by this gate.
- b. Also known as the *Lions Gate* (Suleiman, one of the Muslim leaders who captured Jerusalem, had a dream that lions were attacking Jerusalem and were going to devour him. He had been contemplating heavily taxing the inhabitants. His dream interpreter said it was a sign that God was going to punish him, so he built the gate to protect the inhabitants and appease God. (One lion was Satan, trying to bar God's people from entering His city and the other was Jesus, the Lion of Judah, claiming Jerusalem for His own.)
- c. Also known as *Herod's Gate* - The gate, believed to be named after Herod the Great who rebuilt the Jewish Temple around 26 BCE, was a place of non-stop bloodshed. Most invaders, including the Babylonians, Romans and Crusaders, came to Jerusalem from the North. They inevitably had to use the sheep gate and the adjacent walls to get into the city. It opens up into the heart of Muslim Quarter which is full of small shops and houses.

1. It is one of seven open gates in the Old City Walls of Jerusalem.
2. Located on the northeast wall (north of the Temple Mount); highest elevation point
3. The Sheep Gate was the first to be restored.
 - Sheep gate had no locks or bars, for the door of salvation is always open to the sinner.
 - The only gate that was consecrated (set apart as holy)
 - Used for the holy purpose of bringing in the sacrifices for the temple.
4. This gate led out to the sheep markets where lambs were sold for sacrifice in the Temple.
5. It also led to the Sheep pool (which became the Pool of Bethesda) where sheep were washed for sacrificing. It was at this gate that Jesus healed the palsied man as He entered into the city. (John 5:1,2) The pool was divided into two parts: one for cleaning sheep before the sacrifice; one used for healing when the angel stirred the water.
6. The Sheep gate led into the temple compound and the brazen altar.
7. This gate also led to Golgotha, the path Jesus took to the crucifixion. The entrance marks the beginning of the traditional last walk of Jesus from prison to crucifixion, the Via Dolorosa

This was a priestly work: Eliashib and his fellow priests were to build the Sheep gate. Neh. 3:1-2 "Eliashib the high priest and his fellow priests went to work and rebuilt the Sheep Gate. They dedicated it and set its doors in place, building as far as the Tower of the Hundred, which they dedicated, and as far as the Tower of Hananel. Next to Eliashib the men of Jericho built. And next to them Zaccur the son of Imri built."

- Eliashib (high priest), "God will restore" or "leads back," is a picture of Christ, our High Priest, building the Sheep Gate. Descendant of David in Judah after the

return from the Exile in Babylon. (1 Chron. 3:24)
His house was built into the city wall (Neh. 3:20).

Influence of Eliashib > Compromise and corruption from within:

After much of Nehemiah's mission was completed (about 12 years), he returned to Persia (Nehemiah 13:6). However, he later returned to Jerusalem to again enforce the Law of God after the people reverted to their evil and disobedient ways. (while he was away)

1. Eliashib's grandson married the daughter of Sanballat, who strongly opposed Nehemiah's efforts (Neh. 13:28). Nehemiah eventually drove out Eliashib's grandson.
2. Defiling the Sabbath - Non-Jews were permitted to conduct business inside Jerusalem on the Sabbath. (Nehemiah 13:15-22)
3. Involvement with idolatrous people (Nehemiah 13:23-29) - *the very same reasons* that caused the destruction of the city in the first place.
4. Non-Jews were storing items in rooms of the Temple. Eliashib defiled the Temple of God by leasing the storerooms of the temple to Tobiah, the Ammonite, who tried to stop the building of the wall and was a strong opponent to Nehemiah. (Neh. 13:7)
5. Eliashib compromised the work of God by giving the rations of the Levites to feed the Ammonites (enemy). He also gave them items that were for the singers and gatekeepers.

♣(It was during this period that the prophet Malachi was also active in the city.)

Nehemiah (type of the Holy Spirit) was greatly angered and bitterly grieved,

Neh. 13:11 *So I contended with the rulers, and said, "Why is the house of God forsaken?" I gathered them together and set them in their place. Thus I cleansed them of everything pagan.*

Sheep in Scripture: always viewed as a *symbol of sacrifice*

Jesus entered the city through the Sheep Gate; it was significant!

John 1:29 John the Baptist's words when he saw Jesus, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." The only time He did not enter through the Sheep Gate >

Christ entered the city from the Mount of Olives at His triumphal entry.

Luke 19:38-40 ...the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works they had seen, ³⁸ saying:

" 'Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the LORD!' Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" ³⁹ And some of the Pharisees called to Him from the crowd, "Teacher, rebuke Your disciples." ⁴⁰ But He answered and said to them, "I tell you that if these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out."

Jesus: Sheep Gate - The Good Shepherd

Once inside the city and within the temple courts, there was only one door where the sheep went in, and no lamb ever came back out after entering the temple precincts. They traveled in only one direction, and there they were sacrificed for the sins of human beings.

In the very temple area filled with sheep on their way to slaughter, Jesus declared there was a way out: John 10:7 "*Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door (gate) of the sheep.*"
"Behold THE LAMB OF GOD who takes away the sin of the world."

Jesus was the only LAMB that went to die, overcame death and rose from the dead.

Christ said you would go in and out and find pasture after you come to Him.

John 10:9-10 Jesus said, "*I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved.*

He will come in and go out, and find pasture. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly."

- Represents the experience of salvation made available by the Cross - a realization that Jesus was the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world.

Message: Cry of this gate: "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world."

1 Peter 1:19 Peter refers to the Lamb foreknown from before the foundation of the world.

You were redeemed with the precious blood of Jesus Christ. He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you

Rev. 13:8 ...Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

Revelation 5:13 John tells how the Lamb will take control of the universe.

"Blessing and honor and glory and power be to Him who sits on the throne, And to the Lamb, forever and ever!"

This is the foundation upon which our life is built.

Jesus is our example: Behold Him:

1. He was a PERFECT Lamb - no flaw or blemish
2. He was a SILENT Lamb. - Prophesied in Isaiah

Isa. 53:7 "as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth."

Matt. 27:12-14 And while He was being accused by the chief priests and elders, He answered nothing.¹³ Then Pilate said to Him, "Do You not hear how many things they testify against You?"¹⁴ But He answered him not one word, so that the governor marveled greatly.

Luke 23:9-10 Then he questioned Him with many words, but He answered him nothing.

¹⁰ And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused Him.

Jesus remained silent in order to FULLY bear our shame.

Jesus not only took the punishment of our sins, but also the shame and reproach that goes with them. If Jesus had defended Himself, His defense would have been so potent no one could have stood against it. Even if they had then killed Him out of hatred, He wouldn't have suffered the shame and guilt as if He were guilty. Was there guilt in Him? Yes. Ours! Even though He was sinless, He was willing to be counted as a sinner before man so that we could be counted as righteous before God.

They did not drag Him to the cross, kicking and screaming. He willingly laid down His life.

2. He was a SLAIN Lamb.

Even in His glorified body Jesus retains His scars. The disciples saw the nail prints after His resurrection, and we will see them in heaven. His scars will be an eternal reminder to us

in heaven of His sacrifice for us, and how much we are loved.

Jesus' death was the path to His glory - for the joy that was set before Him, He endured the cross. The cross was the birthplace of His everlasting glory.

Father: May death to self be the desire of my heart. The place of death will be the birthplace of a life of full fellowship with God and Christ. I desire absolute surrender to You so the power of the resurrected life of Jesus will be lived in me.

- Recognize the principle of the cross:
 - God will be moving in your life to utterly cancel out your own ego, your own plans, and your own self-interest.
 - The cross is that instrument in God's program that puts my ego to death. "You are not your own, you are bought with a price."
 - This is the place we must begin building for strength.

Col. 3:3 *For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.*

George Mueller: "There was a day when I died, utterly died, died to George Mueller, his opinions, preferences, tastes, and will - died to the world, its approval or censure - died to the approval or blame even of my brethren and friends - and since then I have only to show myself approved to God."

Apostle Paul reminds us: Gal 2:20 *I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but CHRIST LIVES IN ME; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.*

Emerging from the Sheep Gate to begin our journey in Christ, we travel in a counter-clockwise direction. Immediately, we notice 2 towers. Nehemiah 3:1-2 *They built as far as the Tower of the Hundred, and consecrated it, then as far as the Tower of Hananel.*

² *Next to Eliashib the men of Jericho built. And next to them Zaccur the son of Imri built.*

These towers were part of the city's defense system, and were close to the citadel where the soldiers guarded the temple and protected the northern approach to the city which was the most vulnerable to enemy attack.

Tower: The Hebrew word is megdal derived from the verb gadal which means TO GROW. Tower of the Hundred. The men of Jericho (fragrance; walk by faith) and Zaccur (mindful; remember promises), son of Imri (utter, speak, exalt) represent the process of discipleship.

Discipleship MUST follow the Sheep Gate. Sanctification begins immediately.

Passover > Christ was the Passover Lamb - Died at 3:00 = It is finished.

Feast of Unleavened Bread > started at 6:00 pm = Get the sin out

God's plan for Redemption > Absolute submission to the Father's will > He humbled himself

God's plan for Sanctification > Absolute submission to the Father's will > Humble myself

You are to be obedient to the point of "death to self."

Rom. 12:1-2 *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.*

² *And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*

1. Col 2:6-7 As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, ⁷ rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.

2. Feast on the Word > Prayer > Develop relationship > Bible study

3. The Holy Spirit begins to transform you into the image of Jesus Christ as you yield to Him.

This gate can be broken down as we get older in our Christian experience. If you move away from His grace and the joy of your salvation and move into works, this gate can get battered. Spiritual growth and maturity is a lifelong process.

4. II Pet. 3:18 But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Strong Christian? > This gate must be kept in repair if you are to grow.

As you continue your journey in obedience "to grow", you come to:

The Tower of Hananeel = God is gracious; receiving God's favor - It was a significant tower because God had prophesied through the prophet Jeremiah in Jer. 31:38 that it would be erected again (prophesied over a century earlier).

Peter's exhortation (below) to add certain qualities to our behavior is a marvelous explanation of what it means to repair the gates of our lives so we will be no longer unfruitful and unproductive.

II Peter 1:4 by which *have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.*

II Pet. 1:5-7 *For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith, goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love.*

Jesus came the first time as a silent lamb to the slaughter, but He's coming back as the Lion of the tribe of Judah!

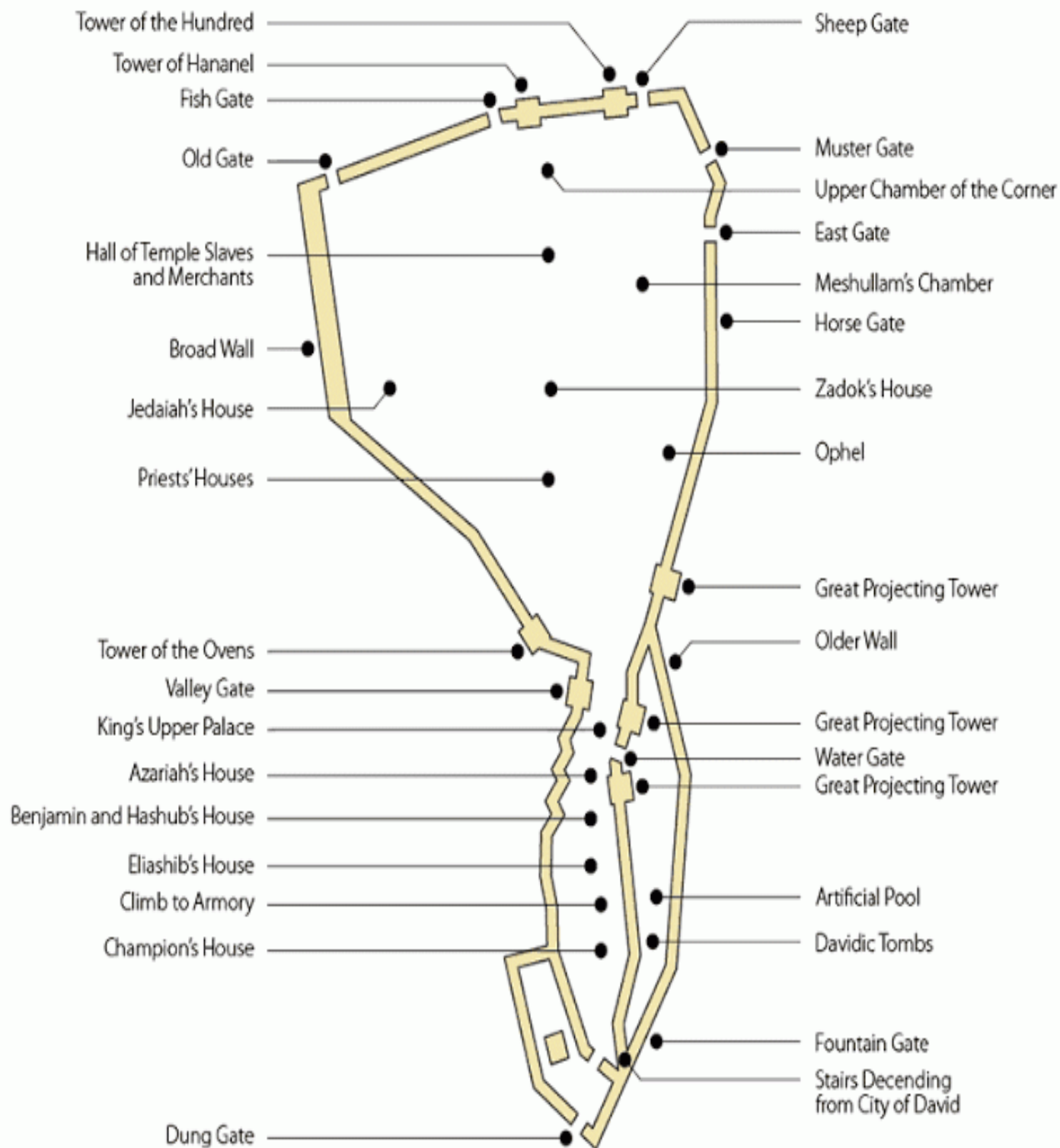
He came the first time for a tree, but next time for a throne!

He came the first time for a cross, but next time for a crown!

He came the first time as a Redeemer, but next time as a ruler!

Message: *It's All Because of Jesus*

Jerusalem's Wall in Nehemiah's Day



Nehemiah's Jerusalem

