Nehemiah 3:1-32 – Rebuilding the Wall

Nehemiah, a cupbearer to king Artaxerxes, believed that God wanted him to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. With the king's blessing and provisions and with the backing of the leaders in Jerusalem, Nehemiah set out to rebuild the walls and repair the gates. A cupbearer seems to be an unlikely candidate to take on this task but God was with him.

Read Nehemiah 3:1-12.

Chapter 3 is an account of the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem. Nehemiah had inspired and encouraged the people to rebuild the walls. It is interesting that the first gate mentioned is the Sheep Gate. The Sheep Gate was at the northeast section of the wall. It was near the temple. Outside of Nehemiah, where else in the Bible is the Sheep Gate mentioned? Why do you think the priests took responsibility for the Sheep Gate? Eliashib was the grandson of Jeshua the high priest (Nehemiah 12:10). Jeshua was the chief priest when the 2nd temple was built. Note that this is the only gate that was consecrated. Why do you think that was? (3:1)

In the first two verses, the high priests and priests worked on one section of the wall, the men of Jericho worked on the next section and Zaccur the son of Imri worked on the section after that. What kinds of people worked on the wall? Were they professional builders? Did they all have a connection to the section of the wall that they worked on? (3:1-2)

The Fish Gate was in the northwest section of the wall. The account of the rebuilding of the walls starts in the northeast and goes around the walls counterclockwise. If Meremoth, son of Uriah is the same Meremoth, son of Uriah mentioned in Ezra 8:33 then he was a priest. (3:3-4)

In verse 5, we see that not everyone was willing to participate in the rebuilding project. Why do you think the nobles of Tekoa didn't want to work on the wall? (3:5)

What sections of the wall were rebuilt in verses 6-12? Does anything stand out to you in verses 6-12? What two professions were named in these verses?

Read Nehemiah 3:13-32.

Where was the Valley Gate? Where was the Dung Gate? If there was a sign up sheet where you could pick which gate you wanted to work on I would think that the Dung Gate would be picked last. I could be wrong. Why were all sections of the wall and all gates important? (3:13-14)

What was along the southeastern wall? There are a number of ties to David. (3:15-16)

The Levites are mentioned in verse 17. Where else is Keilah mentioned in the Bible? See 1 Samuel 23:1-13. (3:17-18)

In verse 19, most translations have "corner" or "angle" instead of "buttress". ESV and NKJV have "buttress". ESV has a note that the word could also be "corner". Verses 20 and 21 mention the wall repair by the house of Eliashib. Where would you expect the high priest's house to be?

In verse 22, the priests again were mentioned. Remember that Eliashib and the priests worked on the Sheep Gate. Verses 23 and 24 mention rebuilding sections of the wall near other houses. Verse 25 mentions the "house of the king". Did Jerusalem have a king living in it? What did this refer to? In verse 26, the temple servants were also involved in the rebuilding. Verse 27 mentions the Tekoites. Where else were they mentioned in this chapter? The wall of Ophel was probably near the center of the eastern wall.

In verses 28-32 we have arrived back near the temple area. Verse 28 mentions the priests for the third time. Where did they build this time? Where was the East Gate? What other areas are mentioned which were near the temple? (3:28-32)

Chapter 3 doesn't mention who organized the rebuilding effort on the walls and gates. It seems reasonable to assume that Nehemiah had a central role because that was a top priority in his coming to Jerusalem. From the work described in chapter 3 what can be said about the organization of the effort and the diversity of people involved in the effort? What lessons can be learned from this massive and effective rebuilding project?