

Sunday April 5, 2020 Nehemiah 3:11-13

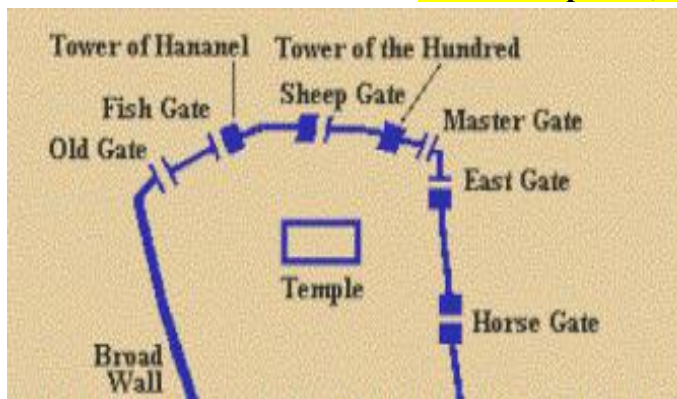
Spiritual Secrets of the names of the gates, towers and walls: The Eastern Gate

Palm Sunday: 7 days before Jesus' resurrection, 5 days before he was crucified when Jesus entered Jerusalem through the Eastern Gate and the people threw palm branches on the ground, worshiped Him, called Him Messiah, said Hosanna! Meaning "save us now!" As we study the gates, walls. And towers of Jerusalem, the Eastern Gate, where Jesus entered on Palm Sunday and went out to be crucified.

Our studies have been from Nehemiah 3 and they remind us the walls around Jerusalem were broken and how the people of Jerusalem rebuilt the wall under Nehemiah. (Though they had the freedom to rebuild the wall, they neglected it for 95 years and the people were plundered by criminal Palestinian enemies. Because it's Palm Sunday, we'll jump across to the other side of the city from where we've studied so far and look at the spiritual secrets revealed in the plan of Jerusalem, the foot shaped city, or another brother in Christ said it reminded him of the Hebrew letter, vav. The focus of the first 7 chapters of Nehemiah is that I'm broken, I need to be restored and I've been ok with that for too long. Like the walls...

You're broken, You need to be restored and You've been ok with that for too long.

HERE IS THE GOOD NEWS - **God is a repairer, restorer and a rebuilder of brokenness**



We covered the Sheep Gate, right above the temple, where the sacrifice animals entered, reminding us of Jesus, the Lamb of God. Everything begins with Jesus. His sacrifice is the beginning of everything. We covered "The Two Towers" (c'mon Tolkien fans!); The Tower of 100, 100 cubits or 13 stories tall, which is a reminder of heaven. The tower of Hananel, Hanan for "Grace" "El" of God. Salvation is surrounded by the

promise of heaven and salvation by grace. What followed was the Fish Gate, reminding us that when we're saved by grace, guaranteed heaven, we become fishers of men. We covered the Old Gate, reminding us to not go back to our old ways of the world, that God is the Ancient of Days, and that it's the oldest gate to the city when it was Salem, whose king was the mysterious Melchizedek. That was the 1,500 foot "Broad Wall" a story of hope and trust in God when Jerusalem looked to God. They did their part, built the wall, kept out the Assyrian army and God did His part, and killed 185,000 Assyrian soldiers overnight. Then 3 generations later, Jerusalem turned to other gods, practiced immorality, sacrificing children to other gods, and unbridled drunkenness. After God reached out many times pleading for them to turn around, they spurned Him and God brought Babylon in judgment to conquer them and tear down the wall. The walls are broken, 95 years overdue, time to repair them.

HOW MANY OF US BELIEVE THIS?

Believing in god and heaven... it's difficult in the here and now. I've done a lot of funerals for people who know they have security for eternal life but they didn't experience God in their daily life. One of the lies we believe is that we are happier living in our brokenness that living the life that Jesus has for us.

Famous guitarist Joe Walsh said he was only drunk once, and it lasted 20 years. He covered his brokenness with music and alcohol. He medicated instead of dealt with his brokenness. Too often we neglect our brokenness, when God wants to rebuild us. If we really choose to believe that God wants to rebuild our brokenness, why does He care?

If we choose to really believe this, then we have HOPE. WHAT IS HOPE or what does it mean to be hopeful?

HOPEFULNESS - Definition? *Looking ahead to something better than we have right now.* We have temporary hope like wanting financial relief in this crisis. But there is an eternal life hope for those that are in Christ that is beyond our temporary situation

Hope is believing we can be different tomorrow if we CHOOSE to be

My Story

I grew up knowing about God, Father Son, and Holy Spirit and heaven and Hell, but they didn't tell us the way to go to heaven. But I also knew I was a sinner. I knew if I died I'd cook. On May 21, 1976 I went to a prayer meeting with my mom and sister. I wanted God. Mark Reiter told me the gospel and I accepted Christ. I was so thrilled that I was finally going to heaven. I had a new reason for living. I lived for God. But then I lost my hope, I thought I'd lost my salvation. I didn't speak in tongues back then, I went to a meeting where everyone spoke in tongues, so I fabricated noises to sound like I spoke in tongues. Then I read the passage about the unforgivable sin, blasphemy of the Holy Spirit. So I thought making tongue noises was blasphemy of the Holy Spirit. I had thought I lost my salvation and was going to go to Hell. I lost my hope. So I thought about committing suicide. Then I thought, wait, if I have to go to Hell, I need to delay it as long as possible. Then I thought of going back to the world, but I thought, no I don't want to go back there! I like being with people that love Jesus! I decided I'd serve Christ even though I thought I was going to Hell. I went to a praise meeting and I realized it was stupid! Whoever wants God will get Him!

I got my hope back.

When was the last time you felt really hopeful? Take about 20 seconds to think about it.

How difficult is it for you - during this particular crisis to feel hopeful?

Where does our hope really come from?

The government?

Other people?

Money?

Our reputation?

East Gate Hope

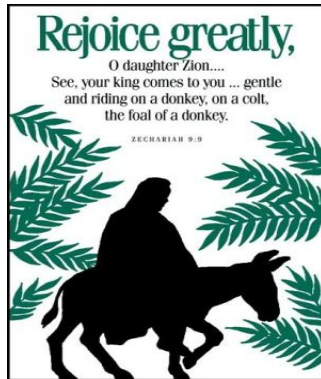


East Gate of Jerusalem filled in by Suleiman the Great to prevent Messiah from entering

The hope of Nehemiah and the Jewish people of His time was to have their city back, that it'd be a safe place, that they'd finally be safe as they rebuilt. We're going to look at the East Gate, the gate that was rebuilt that had very special significance. The East Gate today, is on top of the old East Gate that was at Nehemiah's time. The East Gate is prophesied to be the Messiah's gate. Ezekiel 46:12 prophesied that the Messiah would enter through there.

In Ezekiel 44:1-2 the gate would be closed. In the 16th century Suleiman the Great, the Muslim emperor of the Ottoman Empire, sealed the gate because he was afraid the Jewish Messiah would come in and take it from him.

But the Messiah, Jesus, had already come through the gate. Both Jews and Christians believe the Messiah will pass through the gate, but as Christians we know that He did, and that it was Jesus *and He'll return and do it again.* It was next to the Mount of Olives, where Gethsemane was and there



Jesus entered riding a donkey, fulfilling the prophecy of Zechariah 9:9, ***“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.”*** His actions declared, “I am the Messiah.” But then they were shocked 5 days later when the one they worshiped went to the cross. The Jews expect a Messiah that will come only once and rule only once. As Christians we see Him coming once to die for sins going out through the gate, and then returning in glory, entering through the gate.. This is a very important gate.

Nehemiah 3:29 ***“After them Zadok the son of Immer repaired opposite his own house. After him Shemaiah the son of Shecaniah, the keeper of the East Gate, repaired.”*** Zadok the son of Immer fixed the gate in front of His house, but little did he know, this is where Jesus came in to receive worship and went out to die. That’s what made Suleiman seal it. So much history in this gate! This is what my mother wrote in her study of Jerusalem about the East Gate:

“This gate speaks to us about looking for Jesus’ return from heaven to earth. The Mount of Olives is a place where the Glory of the Lord was beheld by prophets, a place where Jesus would lodge when here on earth, a place from which Jesus rode out to fulfill a prophecy about the King of Israel being mounted on a donkey’s colt, and the place where Jesus was taken up to heaven in a cloud. Everything was connected to the Mount of Olives and the East Gate.

So, while we are here on earth, let us keep our focus on our real citizenship, which is in heaven. We wait on our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly bodies to be like His glorious body, and who will award the crown of righteousness to all who have loved His appearing and told others that sin must be punished. Jesus is the way. The only way that God the Father has provided to allow us to escape the punishment for sin. We may have to endure suffering along the way, but it will not compare with the glory that is to be revealed to us.”

Did you see the picture? How the gate is blocked shut? Poor Suleiman didn’t understand the futility of his effort. Jesus walked through walls after He rose from the dead. Though we may not understand how much impact this gate had throughout history, or how Nehemiah and the people of Jerusalem worked to rebuild this gate that Jesus would enter on Palm Sunday, are we able to grasp the 3 important things about this gate? At this gate Jesus was declared King and Messiah. He exited this gate to go to the cross. He will come again, and enter this gate. To enter into a relationship with God, we must know that Jesus is King and Messiah. We must receive forgiveness from Jesus’ death on the cross. We must long for, expect, and let it be known that He’s coming back.

The people in Jerusalem threw palm branches on the ground to give Jesus a carpet. When they screamed “Hosanna Son of David” meaning “save us, now!” Son of David a title for Messiah. They cried for what Jesus would do, save. But they didn’t understand that salvation

started by being forgiven of sins, being granted eternal life in heaven, not just a comfortable existence when Jesus would kick out their enemies. Though that will happen when He returns. If we choose to believe this, then we will have hope. That is what we are looking for.

I'd like to tell you how Jesus has been faithful to me time after time, like when He carried me through the crisis when I'd thought I lost my salvation. Another one was when Jesus called us to come to Albuquerque. I was offered the position of Eastern European director of a mission organization. A church in Albuquerque had asked me to interview with them as a pastor. They flew me out, offered the job, and I told them I probably wouldn't take it because my son was committed to finishing high school in Budapest, Hungary. Everyone else in the family was OK with it, my wife Teresa said that God had moved us many times, but my son said, "No way! I'm not leaving my friends." I said, "OK, we won't go then. But can I ask you one thing? Would you pray about it?" He said, ok but I pray all the time and God never talks to me. I said ok, then you're off the hook. He went and prayed and came out and said, "You better tell them yes, before I change my mind." We came to Albuquerque with nothing but our suitcases. We lived with my parents for a few days, my sister for a few days, finally a member of the church had a mother in law house in the back yard, we lived there. We saw no way that we could ever buy a house. We looked anyway, trusting God, saw one house, my wife started crying and I knew that was the house, but we could never afford it. Long story short, 2 months later, some kind people wrote some big checks and we had a huge down payment and we were in the house.

What I want to say is that God showed His faithfulness because He called us to something and made sure we were able to do what He called us to do. What's God calling you to do? It may be a small or big thing, but say, "Lord, what are you calling me to do? Show me you're faithful so I can do it." Even the church, Heights Christian had said, "We know you aren't here for us, but for the kingdom. The stage was already set to start Desert Light Church.

- **Jesus will repair the damage that is inside you and me - IF YOU CHOOSE TO LET HIM, and choose to partner with him. Ask Him, what do you have for me? He'll show you, He's faithful.**

What do you hope in? If you haven't yet come to Christ, first, it's time to give your life to Jesus.

If you are saved, but let your brokenness be unattended you can call upon the Lord and say, "Lord, it's time, you can go to work on me."

It's interesting when we read the text several times, they rebuilt the wall of Jerusalem, people rebuilt where they lived. What it says is, "The best way to rebuild others' lives is to let God rebuild yours. When God rebuilds me, then I can help rebuild others. There is a wise saying among treatment center personnel that goes **"Never care more for someone else than they do for themselves."**

Too often we want to get everybody fixed. We need to say, "Lord what do you want to do with me?" And when somebody wants help, needs help, and asks for help, and shows they're willing to be helped, let's go help them. But always realize that the Lord is there for me in the same way He's there for someone else. Often we try to help people and they're not ready and they don't want to be. Are you ready? Do you want the Lord to rebuild you? Today? It's time. We can believe, it's true, the time has come. We don't have to leave our brokenness unattended, Jesus can rebuild us.

If you know you're broken but don't know the Lord, the first step is to ask Jesus to be your Lord and Savior. If you know Him, it's a good time to say, "Show me. Show me what you want to rebuild and restore me, remake me. God bless you on this Palm Sunday.