

2025
JAN

Dreaming of a Solid Church (The Sheep Gate)

「Introduction」

• Nehemiah's time

About 140 years after Judah's destruction by Babylon, Nehemiah became a cup-bearer of the king of Persia. While in the palace he heard of news about Jerusalem that the people "who had survived the exile is in great trouble and shame" and "the wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates are destroyed by fire." Upon hearing this news, Nehemiah "wept and mourned for days" and "continued fasting and praying before the God of heaven" for the restoration of the wall. And with God's help he began to restore the broken wall of Jerusalem, starting with the 10 gates.

• Nehemiah 3

Nehemiah 3 records the list of the 10 gates and the people in charge of repairing each gate. The chapter contains important principles on how to be a solid city, solid people. The firmness of the wall prevents the temple from being destroyed and humiliated. We are the temples of the Holy Spirit. For us to remain pure, holy, and set apart temple for the worship of God our walls must remain strong.

• The authority of the "door/gate"

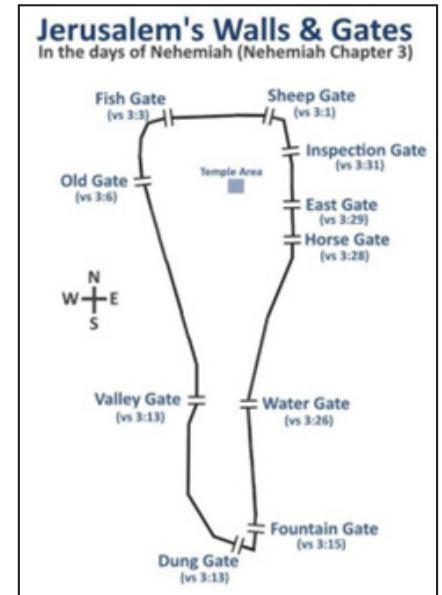
The gate is where the authority of entrance is given. The gate is where we manage access. When the wall is torn and burned down there is no longer any control on who can come in or leave. Since the church is the temple and we are the temples of the indwelling Spirit if our walls are destroyed, then all the chaotic things of the world – secularization, heresies, various kinds of lust and idolatries – can freely enter one's church, home, and heart. That is why the wall must stand strong for the temple-centered community to remain firm and shine light. And the wall was built around the following 10 gates.

• The 10 gates that connected the wall

Starting from the Sheep Gate at the top going counter clockwise:

- | | |
|----------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Sheep Gate | 6. Fountain Gate |
| 2. Fish Gate | 7. Water Gate |
| 3. Old Gate | 8. Horse Gate |
| 4. Valley Gate | 9. East Gate |
| 5. Dung Gate | 10. Muster Gate ¹ |

In this year's small group meetings, we will be looking at these 10 gates and their spiritual significance. Some gates might be standing firm, some damaged, and others ruined beyond repair. In the next 10 meetings, we will have a holy opportunity to examine and renew ourselves in refreshing ways.



• First Gate: The Sheep Gate

The Sheep Gate was located in the northeastern corner of Jerusalem and also known as the Lions Gate (or the Stephen's Gate; Neh. 3:32; 12:39). It is the same as the Benjamin Gate (Jer. 37:13). It was built by Eliashib the high priest when Nehemiah rebuilt the wall after the return from the Babylonian exile (Neh. 3:1). Near the gate was the Pool of Bethesda which was also called the Sheep Pool.

Nehemiah 3:1-2

¹ 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. ² The men of Jericho built the adjoining section, and Zaccur son of Imri built next to them.

The rebuilding of the wall began with the Sheep Gate. At that time, the sheep were brought in through this gate to be sacrificed. Jesus called Himself "the door of the sheep" (John 10:7). That the gate is built firmly means that we can boldly confess our faith that "we have been justified through Christ's redemptive sacrificial death and have become His people." This gate the first step towards becoming solid saints. Without the Sheep Gate we cannot be connected to other gates. I hope that through this small group your wall of faith will stand more firmly on Jesus Christ who is the door/gate of the sheep.

¹ Also known as the Inspection Gate or Hammiphkad Gate.

1. Who is Jesus?

Matthew 16:16

¹⁶ Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Philippians 2:6

⁶ Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped

「 Sharing 」

From these two verses, choose a word that touches you the most and share the reasons behind your choice with other members.

2. Why did Jesus come to this world?

Luke 5:32

³² I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

1 John 3:8

⁸ He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.

3. What did Jesus do for the ungodly?

Romans 5:8

⁸ But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

「 Application 」

Read Romans 5:8-11 together and thank the Lord for His grace.

⁸ but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

⁹ Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. ¹⁰ For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. ¹¹ More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation."

4. Fill in the blanks.

Jesus

_____ us from God's _____. (John 3:17-18)

redeemed us from _____ of the law. (Gal. 3:13)

in him we have redemption through his blood and _____. (Eph. 1:7)

Jesus stood in the place of sinners bearing our sins and died on the cross but defeated death and rose again and set us free.

5. Have you accepted this Jesus as the Lord of your heart?

John 1:12

Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God

God does not reject you into His covenant. Read the following verse together.

"For he says, "In a favorable time I listened to you, and in a day of salvation I have helped you." Behold, now is the favorable time; behold, now is the day of salvation." (2 Corin. 6:2)

6. Read together the following prayer with all the members.

If you have not personally received Jesus, participate together by putting your heart into this prayer.

Lord Jesus who lives forever,
I am a sinner. But I believe that You paid the price for all my sins on the cross and rose again. Now I open up my heart to receive You as my Lord and Savior. Come into my heart and reign over me, and help me to live according to Your will. In Jesus's Name, amen.

7. What kind of life awaits me now?

John 10:10

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

1 John 3:16

This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.

8. Let us praise our Lord Jesus who has given us a new life.

Read the following verse aloud, writing it on your heart.

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation." (2 Corin. 5:17-18)

「 Sharing 」

The ministry given to us with the new life is the ministry of reconciliation. How well have you been doing with this ministry? Share with other members where and how you can be a peacemaker.

[Reference] The Abundant Life of the Christian - The 7 Steps Bible Study

Have you heard about "The Table"?

The Table is an evangelistic ministry program that shares about Jesus to those who have not been baptized. The next Table will be held for 4 weeks in May 2025. Starting today, think and pray for one person that you can share the gospel with and invite that person to the Table! *문의 : 이명철 목사 (mcleee@njchodae.org)