

Nehemiah 3:1-32 – Study Leader’s Questions

1. *What historical information is recorded in chapter 3?*
2. *What is said regarding the nobles (compare with Luke 6:46)?*
3. *Why are goldsmiths and perfumers mentioned (Nehemiah 3:8)?*
4. *Why are the ‘daughters’ mentioned (Nehemiah 3:12)?*
5. *Was it important that many workers repaired in front of their own homes?*
6. *Why are outsiders (non Jews) allowed to work on the re-building (Nehemiah 3:2, 5, 7)?*
7. *What is the point of recording the information in this chapter? What practical lessons can we learn from this chapter?*
8. *Where are **our** names recorded by our Lord? Why are we told this? What will God do with this information (Revelation 20:12-13; compare with Matthew 16:27; Romans 2:6)?*

Nehemiah 3:1-32 – Answers to Questions

1. What historical information is recorded in chapter 3?

Nehemiah 3 records all aspects of that which had to be and was **“repaired.”**

The word **“repaired”** occurs 35 times in Nehemiah, all in Nehemiah 3, in 27 verses. The word **“repaired”** occurs a total of 44 times in 36 verses in the whole of scripture. Nehemiah 3 is therefore the repair centre chapter of the Bible.

Nehemiah 3 records what was repaired, which was mainly the gates and their component parts i.e. beams, doors, locks and bars as in 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.”

The word **“gate”** occurs 12 times in Nehemiah 3, in 11 verses.

Nehemiah 3 records who did the repairing, where they repaired and in what sequence they were deployed.

The expressions **“next unto”** and **“next to”** occur a total of 15 times in Nehemiah 3, in 10 verses, **“next unto”** occurring 13 times. The expressions **“next unto”** and **“next to”** occur a total of 21 times in 17 verses and 7 times in 7 verses respectively in the whole of scripture.

Nehemiah 3 is therefore the cooperative chapter of the Bible. It shows the literal, practical fulfilment in history of Isaiah 58:12 with Nehemiah and his co-workers being faithful servants from **“the house of Jacob”** Isaiah 58:1. See study on *Nehemiah 2*.

“And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places; thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in.”

2. What is said regarding the nobles (compare with Luke 6:46)?

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

Luke 6:46 states **“And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?”**

The word **“Lord”** in that form is used in Nehemiah 1:11, 3:5, 4:14, 10:29. Note especially the equivalent expressions **“the LORD our Lord”** and **“the LORD our God”** in Nehemiah 10:29, 34 respectively. It follows that the expression **“the work of their Lord”** in Nehemiah 3:5 matches the expression **“this work was wrought of our God”** in Nehemiah 6:16.

By carrying out **“the work of their Lord”** in Nehemiah 3:5 in an apparently half-hearted manner, the nobles were guilty of the same hypocrisy that the Lord Jesus Christ rebukes in Luke 6:46.

Half-heartedness is, however, characteristic of the church at the end of the Church Age and it brings down the Lord’s severe rebuke.

“So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth” Revelation 3:16.

It should be noted that the recipients of the Lord’s rebuke in Revelation 3:16 appear to have perceived themselves as **“nobles.”**

“Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked” Revelation 3:17.

Solomon therefore rightly warns in Proverbs 1:32 “...the prosperity of fools shall destroy them.”

Applied spiritually, it is probable that the nation of Britain and her churches are, on the whole, still too prosperous to expect a revival.

3. *Why are goldsmiths and perfumers mentioned (Nehemiah 3:8)?*

Men come from all walks of life to do “the work of the LORD” when called upon.

“...and all the people among which thou art shall see the work of the LORD: for it is a terrible thing that I will do with thee” Exodus 34:10.

For an example of men from different walks of life being brought together as “fellowworkers” Colossians 4:11 in a great enterprise as Nehemiah 3:8 describes, see this extract from *The Struggle for Europe* by Chester Wilmot, Collins, 1965, p 233:

“On the evening of June 5th, 1944, as the last glow of twilight was fading from the western sky, six RAF Albemarle were drawn up on the runway of Harwell airfield. Gathered around them, drinking tea and smoking cigarettes, were 60 men of the 22nd Independent Parachute Company, pathfinders who were to guide the 6th British Airborne Division to its landfall behind the Atlantic Wall near Caen...

“...Beside the leading aircraft were the ten men who were due to land first, at the point of the invasion spearhead, a Berkshire hod-carrier and a toolmaker from Kent, a bricklayer from Edinburgh, a Worcestershire kennelman and a lorry driver from Dumfries, two ‘regulars,’ a deserter from the ‘army’ of the Irish Free State and a refugee from Austria, led by a young lieutenant, who, when the war began, had been in the chorus of a West End musical comedy...These men were the torch bearers of liberation.”

In type, they were like “the fishermen” from Galilee, Luke 5:2, “a publican...at the receipt of custom” Luke 5:27, “a Levite...of Cyprus” Acts 4:36 and “a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee,” led by “the carpenter’s son” from Nazareth, Matthew 2:23, 13:55, who were all called as torchbearers “of the hope and resurrection of the dead” Acts 23:6, as Amos testified in kind in Amos 7:14-15. “Then answered Amos, and said to Amaziah, I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet’s son; but I was an herdsman, and a gatherer of sycamore fruit: And the LORD took me as I followed the flock, and the LORD said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel.”

In like manner the Lord said to the goldsmiths and the apothecaries, see below, through Nehemiah “come, and let us build up the wall of Jerusalem” Nehemiah 2:17 for “this work was wrought of our God” Nehemiah 6:16.

The word for perfumers is actually “apothecaries.” The apothecary had an important responsibility to mix “holy anointing oil.” It was a perfume but a very special perfume.

“And thou shalt make it an oil of holy ointment, an ointment compound after the art of the apothecary: it shall be an holy anointing oil” Exodus 30:25.

“And thou shalt make it a perfume, a confection after the art of the apothecary, tempered together, pure and holy” Exodus 30:35.

“And he made the holy anointing oil, and the pure incense of sweet spices, according to the work of the apothecary” Exodus 37:29.

The occupations mentioned have some significance therefore with respect to “this work...wrought of our God.”

Gold in the correct context refers to God in scripture.

“And thou shalt make a plate of pure gold, and grave upon it, like the engravings of a signet, HOLINESS TO THE LORD” Exodus 28:36.

“And they made the plate of the holy crown of pure gold, and wrote upon it a writing, like to the engravings of a signet, HOLINESS TO THE LORD” Exodus 39:30.

“And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God” Revelation 9:13.

“The work of the apothecary” with respect to **“the holy anointing oil, and the pure incense of sweet spices”** indicates Spirit-led prayer, essential for **“this work...wrought of our God.”**

“...God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him” Acts 10:38.

“And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel’s hand” Revelation 8:3-4.

“Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered” Romans 8:26.

That kind of Spirit-led prayer was no doubt behind Nehemiah’s prayer of Nehemiah 1:4-11.

4. *Why are the ‘daughters’ mentioned (Nehemiah 3:12)?*

Aside from Nehemiah 4:6 **“for the people had a mind to work”** including the young women, Nehemiah 3:12 refers to the father of these daughters **“Shallum the son of Halohesh, the ruler of the half part of Jerusalem.”**

In that sense, therefore, these daughters could picture the **“daughter of Zion”** to whom the Lord speaks words of comfort with respect to promising an end to her captivity.

“The punishment of thine iniquity is accomplished, O daughter of Zion; he will no more carry thee away into captivity...” Lamentations 4:22.

Note that presence of Shallum’s daughters at this restoration of Jerusalem also points to the **“daughter of Zion”** at the Second Advent. In that sense, therefore, Nehemiah 3:12 could be looking toward both Advents.

“Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the LORD” Zechariah 2:10.

“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass” Zechariah 9:9. See Matthew 21:4, 5. In that sense, in the light of Isaiah 58:12 and the expression **“The restorer of paths to dwell in,”** see *Question 1*, Shallum’s daughters assist in type to **“prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight”** Matthew 3:3, Mark 1:3, Luke 3:4.

That is a good *spiritual* application for the Christian in steadfastly going on with the Lord. **“And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed”** Hebrews 12:13.

Note also that the name **“Shallum”** means recompense according to *The New Compact Bible Dictionary*, which in addition to the Lord bringing salvation at the First Advent could also point to a blessing for the **“daughter of Zion”** at the Second Advent, again pictured by Shallum’s daughters. **“Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD’S hand double for all her sins”** Isaiah 40:2.

Note, however, that women contributed to the destruction of Jerusalem. They ***“burned incense to the queen of heaven, and...did...make her cakes to worship her”*** Jeremiah 44:19. It was therefore appropriate that women should help repair the city.

5. *Was it important that many workers repaired in front of their own homes?*

The actual expression is ***“over against.”*** It occurs 11 times in Nehemiah 3, in 11 verses, so the repetition of the expression itself suggests that it was important for the repairs to be carried out this way.

Spiritual application could be made with respect to self correction before attempting to correct others, according to Matthew 7:3-5.

“And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother’s eye.”

Observe how Nehemiah applies the above principle to himself in Nehemiah 5:7 in rebuking the nobles and rulers who had made bond servants of and were exacting usury from other Jews.

“Then I consulted with myself, and I rebuked the nobles, and the rulers, and said unto them, Ye exact usury, every one of his brother. And I set a great assembly against them.”

The direct application with respect many of the workers repairing ***“over against his house”*** Nehemiah 3:10 would be the long term effect of Haggai’s rebuke to the returned exiles 75 years earlier. See the *Ruckman Reference Bible* pp 697, 1210.

“Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, This people say, The time is not come, the time that the LORD’S house should be built. Then came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet, saying, Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your cieled houses, and this house lie waste?” Haggai 1:2-4.

Nehemiah’s exhortation in Nehemiah 2:17-18 about the walls of Jerusalem therefore appears to have revived a sense of Haggai’s rebuke about ***“the LORD’S house”*** to judge by his listeners’ response.

“Then said I unto them, Ye see the distress that we are in, how Jerusalem lieth waste, and the gates thereof are burned with fire: come, and let us build up the wall of Jerusalem, that we be no more a reproach. Then I told them of the hand of my God which was good upon me; as also the king’s words that he had spoken unto me. And they said, Let us rise up and build. So they strengthened their hands for this good work.”

6. *Why are outsiders (non Jews) allowed to work on the re-building (Nehemiah 3:2, 5, 7)?*

Some of those mentioned may have been Jews living in other parts of Judah e.g. ***“the men of Jericho”*** and ***“the men of Gibeon, and of Mizpah”*** Nehemiah 3:2, 7. Note Nehemiah 11:1 that indicates that not all of the returned exiles lived in Jerusalem in Nehemiah’s time.

“And the rulers of the people dwelt at Jerusalem: the rest of the people also cast lots, to bring one of ten to dwell in Jerusalem the holy city, and nine parts to dwell in other cities.”

That said, the following scriptures would explain the presence of outsiders working alongside the returned Jewish exiles.

“But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God” Leviticus 19:34.

“Also the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the LORD, to serve him, and to love the name of the LORD, to be his servants, every one that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it,

and taketh hold of my covenant; Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people” Isaiah 56:6-7.

It also appears that among “*the men of Gibeon*” were the Hivites in perpetual servitude to Israel as “*hewers of wood and drawers of water unto all the congregation...for the house of my God...and for the altar of the LORD, even unto this day*” Joshua 9:21, 23, 27. God required that the king himself had to honour the terms of that servitude, 2 Samuel 21:1-9.

Note that “*the Nethinims*” of Nehemiah 3:31 were evidently descended from these Hivites. See the study Nehemiah 3 Part 1 and Dr Ruckman’s commentary *The Books of Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther* p 219.

Spiritually, the encouragement for the Christian is in Ephesians 2:12-13.

“That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.”

7. What is the point of recording the information in this chapter? What practical lessons can we learn from this chapter?

The information is recorded because it shows the fulfilment *in part* of Isaiah 58:12, see *Questions 1, 4*, the complete fulfilment of which will take place at the Second Advent, in accordance with the sure fulfilment of all the Lord’s words, as set out in Isaiah 55:11.

“So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.”

The practical lessons from the chapter include:

- the importance of sheer hard work to get things done, Proverbs 14:23
- the importance of cooperative effort along with hard work, Ecclesiastes 4:9
- the importance of ensuring that it is God’s work, Nehemiah 6:16
- the importance of obeying God’s calling for *new* ventures, *Question 3*
- the importance of persevering unto finishing the job, Nehemiah 6:15.

8. Where are **our** names recorded by our Lord? Why are we told this? What will God do with this information (Revelation 20:12-13; compare with Matthew 16:27; Romans 2:6)?

The Christian is the adopted son of God the Father, as Paul explains in Romans 8:15-16.

“For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God”

God therefore has a Book of birth certificates for all “*the children of God.*” It is “*the book of life.*” The first mention of “*the book of life*” is in the Pauline Epistles.

“And I intreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellowlabourers, whose names are in the book of life” Philippians 4:3.

It is this writer’s view that “*the book of life*” is revealed in Revelation 5:1 as “*a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals.*” Note that this design is characteristic of many editions of the 1611 Holy Bible, which is a Book consisting of 66 Books, which the Lord may have individually and collectively, Revelation 20:12.

See www.timefortruth.co.uk/bible-studies/ Timothy the Faithful p 3. The Christian’s name is in that Book as such.

“And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch” Acts 11:26.

“Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian. And Paul said, I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds” Acts 26:28-29.

“Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf” 1 Peter 4:16.

Note also James 2:7. *“Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called?”*

This is disclosed so that *“the children of God”* can have assurance of salvation, which John refers to as *“the record.”* The following verses on assurance should be memorised.

“And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.”

Since *“The Lord knoweth them that are his”* 2 Timothy 2:19, He will ensure that *“the children of God”* are saved from wrath, according to Romans 5:9.

“Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.”

Note that Matthew 16:27 is actually a reference to the judgement on the nations at the Second Advent, Matthew 25:31-46, not with respect to Christians.

Note that Romans 2:6, with Romans 2:7 is a review of Old Testament salvation* as outlined in Psalm 15 *requiring faith and works*, not New Testament salvation as set out in the Pauline Epistles e.g. in Romans 5:1, 9, 10:8, 9, Ephesians 1:5, 6, 7, 2:8, 9, Colossians 1:14, *requiring faith alone in the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.*

*Note, however, that Cornelius, Acts 10, is a post-Calvary example of God responding to a sinner’s desire for salvation after the manner of Romans 2:6, 7.

Note that Revelation 20:12, 13 is a reference to the Great White Throne Judgement, *where saints other than Christians* will be among those judged. The Christians’ sins are judged through the blood of Christ, see remarks immediately above with respect to the Pauline Epistles and the Christians’ works are judged at *“the judgment seat of Christ”* Romans 14:10, 2 Corinthians 5:10 approximately 1,000 years before the Great White Throne Judgement. See also 1 Corinthians 3:11-15. Study Job 26:1-4 for the questions the Lord will ask the Christian at the Judgement Seat of Christ.

See the *Ruckman Reference Bible* pp 752, 780, 1287-1288, 1448, 1487, 1497, 1500-1501, 1505, 1513, 1536, 1553-1554, 1567, 1667. See also Dr Ruckman’s commentaries *The Book of Job* pp 337-344, *Volume I of the Book of Psalms* pp 83-85, *The Book Of Minor Prophets Vol. I Hosea-Nahum* pp 21-28, *The Book of Matthew* pp 576-583, *The Book of Acts* Chapter 10, *The Book of Romans* pp 75-80, 545-547, *The Books of First and Second Corinthians* pp 60-72, 113-118, 240, 455-459, *The Books of Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians* pp 92-93, 206-212, 472-478, *The Book of Revelation* pp 530-559.

Dr Ruckman’s booklet *The Four Judgments* p 1 summarises a total of *seven* judgements in the scriptures as follows, those marked with an asterisk being the four that Dr Ruckman addresses specifically in his booklet; judgment of sin at Calvary on Christ*, 2 Corinthians 5:21, Galatians 3:13, daily self-judgement of sin by the believer, 1 Corinthians 11:31, 1 John 1:9*, possibly including judgement on the sins of other believers by those fitted to do so, 1 Corinthians 6:4, the Judgement Seat of Christ*, the Great White Throne Judgement* with Church Age saints participating, 1 Corinthians 6:2, judgement on the Jews during Daniel’s seventieth week, the Great Tribulation, Ezekiel 20:38, Daniel 9:25-27, Hosea 2:6-15, Zechariah 13:8, 9, judgement on the

Gentile nations, Matthew 25:31-46, and judgement of angels, 1 Corinthians 6:3, 2 Peter 2:4, Jude 6.

It is essential when studying God's judgements or any part of scripture to apply 2 Timothy 2:15.

“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”