

THE BROAD WAY OR THE BROAD WALL?

or

WALLS & GATES



TEXT: *Nehemiah 3:8 Next unto him repaired Uzziel the son of Harhaiah, of the goldsmiths. Next unto him also repaired Hananiah the son of one of the apothecaries, and they fortified Jerusalem unto the broad wall.*

THESIS: To show the extremes of no separation & isolation represented by the walls & gates of Jerusalem in Nehemiah's day.

INTRO.: A. Jesus said that "***broad is the way that leadeth to destruction.***" Mt.7:13 The "***broad way***" is the world's way. It cries liberty w/out restriction. That's why pornography is a way of life on TV, the internet & in cities & towns across America. That's why someone can paint a picture of the virgin Mary splashed w/elephant dung & call it art (& have it financed w/your tax money)! That's why homosexuals have *their* rights & take away *our* rights! Freedom was never meant to be w/out restrictions. In fact that kind of freedom is bondage!

B. In Nehemiah's day when the walls of the city were being rebuilt, ch.3,v.8 says "***they fortified Jerusalem unto the broad wall.***" Basically life is a choice between "**THE BROAD WAY OR THE BROAD WALL!**" It is either unrestricted freedom & destruction or salvation & separation.

TRANS.: Without "**WALLS & GATES**" there is "affliction & reproach..." 1:3

I. REBUILDING WALLS:

A. Walls Speak Of Separation: (To Keep Something In)

1. Broken walls don't bring liberty, they bring reproach & bondage.
2. Separation protects us from sin, from the world, from ourselves & from ruin.
3. God wants us to build some walls around our life & our relationship to Him.
4. If we don't live w/in the protection of those walls of conviction, principle & standards, we forfeit our safety, holiness & testimony.

B. Walls Speak Of Safety: (To Keep Something Out)

ILLUS.: Jerusalem was once a strong, proud, walled city in her glory days. When the walls went, her protection went & "***affliction & reproach***" began. Now the city was over run & plundered. The outline & evidence of the former walls were visible, but provided no protection. Many believers still have the outline or semblance of their former convictions or standards, but their glory days are gone & the world now dumps their rubbish there & makes a garbage dump of what was once a protected & restricted area.

1. The enemies of Israel got angry when Nehemiah began to rebuild the walls.
2. They would no longer be able to steal away the precious possessions of the people & the city. **Neh.4:1**

3. It was not just the preacher who rebuilt the walls, the people backed him & worked to keep the enemies out!

ILLUS.: If every person in the church realized the protection “walls” of conviction, standards, doctrine, etc. afforded them & their children, they would get behind the preacher & help him rebuild the walls.

The tragedy is that the church may have walls 30 ft. high, whereas the home may only have a 3 ft. wall. Too many objectionable things can scale a 3 ft. wall!!

C. Walls Speak Of Satisfaction: (To Make Life Peaceful)

1. When the **“broad wall”** was rebuilt the people inside could rest & relax.
2. They could even go up on top of the wall for a stroll & fellowship, it was not only high, but also broad!
3. They had great comfort knowing that the walls could protect them & keep out the enemies, while keeping their children & families & friends safe.

ILLUS.: I don’t want our youth activities to be worldly. I want them to be fun, but not carnal or appealing to the flesh. I want the walls intact. I want the support of the parents. I want mom & dad to understand that we are trying to protect their children & we need consistency & cooperation from them! You say *“I think your standards are too strict.”* O.K. let’s knock some holes in the walls. If we do, there will be no peace or protection for you or yours. Why don’t you talk to those parents whose children are outside the protective walls of our church because they thought we were too strict & they wish their children were back safely here in the church. Instead the world came in & stole them away because there was conflict between our high walls & their low walls (or no walls)! Remember the choice is **“THE BROAD WAY OR THE BROAD WALLS!”**

Right outside the broad walls is the broad way & the enemy. Cf. **Neh.13:21** As soon as Nehemiah built the walls & the enemy no longer had access to the city & those inside, they camped right outside & Nehemiah sent out a warning.

II. REPAIRING GATES: Neh.1:3b

TRANS.: Walls without gates result in isolation & stagnation. We need walls, but we also need gates. Nehemiah & his people worked to restore both **“WALLS & GATES!”**

A. Separation Is Not Isolation:

1. Gates provide limited access, it is a controlled & restricted access.
2. We want the walls to be high & broad, but we want gates so those who need the ministry of the church will be welcomed.
3. When you build a house you put in doors, but you don’t build them big enough to drive cars through.
4. When you build walls in the church you want to provide limited access, but you must tell folks what they can & can’t bring in with them.

ILLUS.: There are some things new converts or those applying to our church for membership, cannot bring into the church with them. If you get saved you might have to change some things before you can come thru the gate of membership here. If you are a bartender or cocktail waitress, you might have to quit your job. If you are sleeping w/someone not your spouse, you will either have to break off the relationship or get married. If you are practicing homosexuality, you need to repent & get right w/God & break off any sinful relationships. We have restricted access. On the other hand, we don’t expect folks to be perfect to join here. If you smoke or have some other problems, we want you to deal w/the sin, but we want you inside the gate in the protection of the walls of the church where we can help you.

B. Gates Need Gatekeepers:

Neh.13:22a *“And I commanded the Levites that they should cleanse themselves, and that they should come & keep the gates...”*

ILLUS.: It’s not enough to have walls & gates, there must also be gatekeepers! Someone must always be watching. The standard is only as good as the watchman!

Some folks get upset because somebody scrutinizes everything. But when you invest your life into building walls & repairing gates, you need to work just as hard on preserving what you built as you did in building it in the first place.

1. The pastor is a gatekeeper.
2. Parents are gatekeepers.
3. The church members are to be gatekeepers.

Prov. 24:30,31 *I went by the field of the slothful...and lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the **STONE WALL THEREOF WAS BROKEN DOWN.***

- a. If you don't have gatekeepers & watchmen, someone will dig thru the walls & the enemy will slip in thru the gates to destroy what has been built.
- b. Lots of folks can come and be loved & pastored and cared for & preached to, but not everyone who comes is qualified to be a gatekeeper (to take a position of leadership, just like not everyone who flies on a plane is qualified to fly the plane!).

CONCL.: Some want walls & no gates. Others want no walls, & just open gates. Both are extremes. We need both **"WALLS & GATES"** and we also need some *gatekeepers* to protect those inside the walls.

If you are on the **BROAD WAY** which leads to destruction, you need to *"enter ye in at the strait gate...because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."* **Mt.7:13a,14**
It is either **THE BROAD WAY OR THE BROAD WALL!**