

Finishing Well

Lesson #41 Old Gate: Nothing New Under the Sun Nov. 3

The ten gates that Nehemiah rebuilt can be grouped into four categories.

You proceed counterclockwise from the northeast corner. The circumference of the walls was approximately two and one-half miles, encompassing approximately 220 acres.

First 3 gates = PRIORITY gates - Sheep, Fish and Old Gates.

- All the other gates cannot be effectively restored until these three are in place.

Word "built" meaning "rebuilt" is used 6 times in Nehemiah 3.

George Morrison: "This restoration needed NO new material. In the debris of the ruined masonry lay ALL the material required. It is not by inventing clever new things that we take away our (or the church's) reproach, but by going back to the old truths of God's Word.

- They lie like stones in the dust, waiting for someone with a burden to recover and use them."

Old Gate - Jeshanah Gate > Stands for TRUTH = Written LOGOS

Jer. 6:16 Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.

Rom. 15:4 For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.

Man, since the Garden of Eden, has searched for and been easily enticed by a new, a better or an easier way other than God's way. Satan endeavored to deceive Adam and Eve by discrediting God. "Hath God really said?" His sly twisting and contradictions of God's clear instructions stoked sin in the human heart. The creation was now cursed, and mortal man would now die. In the generations that followed, mankind strayed further and further from the living God. Many cultures fashioned and worshiped false gods. "Satan and his entourage of rebelling spirits lurked behind every idol crafted by the hands of men."

Ecclesiastes 1:9-10 The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun.

¹⁰ Is there anything whereof it may be said, See, this is new? it hath been already of old time, which was before us.

Satan, your flesh, false teachers, etc., are continually enticing you by appealing to your flesh, your comfort, your feelings, and your pride. Exalt the Flesh! Reject God's Way.

Do you want to avoid catastrophe? You have drifted away from the Lord. You are on a wrong path. Destruction is ahead because you have departed from the Lord and His ways.

Prov. 14:12 There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.

Jeremiah 6:16 Thus says the Lord, Stand by the ways and see and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is and walk in it; And you will find rest for your souls.'

But they said, We will not walk therein.

Graves of Craving: Children of Israel wanted to market God to OUR IMAGE

Please men and their flesh. Consider what we think, our comforts. Don't offend
Num. 11:18-20 And say thou unto the people, Sanctify yourselves against tomorrow, and ye shall eat flesh: for ye have wept in the ears of the LORD, saying, Who shall give us flesh to eat? for it was well with us in Egypt: therefore, the LORD will give you flesh, and ye shall eat.

¹⁹ Ye shall not eat one day, nor two days, nor five days, neither ten days, nor twenty days;

²⁰ But even a whole month, until it come out at your nostrils, and it be loathsome unto you: because that ye have despised the LORD which is among you, and have wept before Him, saying, Why came we forth out of Egypt?

Numbers 11:31-34 And there went forth a wind from the LORD, and brought quails from the sea, and let them fall by the camp, as it were a day's journey on this side, and as it were a day's journey on the other side, round about the camp, and as it were two cubits high upon the face of the earth. ³² And the people stood up all that day, and all that night, and all the next day, and they gathered the quails: he that gathered least gathered ten homers: and they spread them all abroad for themselves round about the camp. ³³ And while the flesh was yet between their teeth, ere it was chewed, the wrath of the LORD was kindled against the people, and the LORD smote the people with a very great plague. And he called the name of that place Kibroth-hattaavah [graves of lust or desire]: because there they buried the people that lusted.

Ps. 106:13-15 They soon forgot His works; they waited not for His counsel:

¹⁴ But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert.

And He gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul.

Wiersbe: "The greatest judgment God can send to disobedient people is to let them have their way and reap the sad, painful consequences of their sins."

Num. 32 Reuben, Gad and $\frac{1}{2}$ Manasseh > "let this land be given to your servants as a possession. Do not take us over the Jordan." Desired the pastureland for the cattle

- Crossing the Jordan = die to self; follow God's leading
- They want their plan > Good Life

Consequences of NOT crossing: Deprived their wives and children of Divine miracles

- Parting of the Jordan River; Stones for memorial; Destruction of Jericho;

Led into paganism and idolatry much sooner due to distance from Temple; 1st to go into captivity

Sad: I did it my way.

Solomon was the wisest man that ever lived; wrote some of the Bible.

God had given him wisdom and understanding beyond measure.

He excelled all the kings of the earth in riches and wisdom.

Question: How could a man of great wisdom and discernment end his life so far from God?

I Kings relates his downfall.

God's Command: You shall not enter into marriage with foreign women. They will surely turn your heart away to their gods.

Solomon's Direct Rebellion & Rejection of God's Word

He clung to those he loved > 700 wives, princess and 300 concubines. He built shrines for the sacrifices of his foreign wives to their gods.

I Kings 11: Solomon's "wives turned his heart after other gods," their own national deities, to whom Solomon built temples, thus incurring divine anger and retribution in the form of the division of the kingdom after Solomon's death.

Warning: Solomon had great wisdom from God who had appeared to him twice.

He had heard the Lord command him not to turn after other gods, but he still turned away.

Prov. 19:27 Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causes to err [stray] from the words of knowledge. [KJV]

Stop listening, my son, to discipline, *And you will stray from the words of knowledge.* [NASB]

Jeroboam was the 1st king of Israel after Judah and Israel split into 2 separate nations.

a. Solomon was rebuilding Fort Millo: He recognized Jeroboam's abilities and valor.

He placed him over the forced labor to build the Temple.

b. Capable administrator and Valiant Warrior

c. Stood up for the downtrodden and challenged overbearing authority

Popular with the northern tribes = Humane Leader

The prophet Ahijah met Jeroboam outside Jerusalem.

Ahijah tore his new robe into 12 pieces & said to Jeroboam, 'take 10 of these pieces, for God is going to tear the kingdom from Solomon & give 10 of the tribes to you!

Solomon has disobeyed God's laws and worshipped other gods. His son will rule in Jerusalem but you will have power over the rest of Israel. If you obey God He will bless you.'

God's Promise to Jeroboam: I Kings 11:37-38

I will take you, and you shall reign over all your heart desires, and you shall be king over Israel. Then it shall be, IF you heed all that I command you, walk in My ways, and do what is right in My sight, to keep My statutes and My commandments, as My servant David did, THEN I will be with you and build for you an enduring house, as I built for David, and will give Israel to you. [Read Jer. 6:16]

God is the source of Jeroboam's security.

I. Walk as David my servant: Repented before God; Acknowledged his sin; Sought forgiveness

I Kings 11:40 Solomon saw Jeroboam as a threat and tried to assassinate him.

But Jeroboam escaped and fled to Egypt where King Shishak protected him.

After a reign of 40 years, Solomon died and his son Rehoboam became king.

Friends of Jeroboam got a message to him in Egypt to let him know that Solomon was dead.

He returned in time for the coronation of King Rehoboam.

All Israel gathers at Shechem to make Rehoboam the new king. They ask Jeroboam to plead their case before Rehoboam who is wanting to lay heavier taxes and servitude on the 10 northern tribes. When they asked for grace and some relief, Rehoboam just laid the law down to impress them with his power and brutality. "My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to your yoke; My father disciplined you with whips, I will discipline you with scorpions."

The prophecy of Ahijah from God came to pass and Jeroboam became the 1st king of Israel.

Recall: God's IF & THEN promise to Jeroboam.

Jeroboam knows:

- Jewish law required sacrifices be offered at the Jerusalem Temple.
- Men must travel there to keep several feasts each year. Fear Rises Up!

Jerusalem is now the capital of a foreign enemy. I am in political danger.

- Jerusalem will come to hold a special place in their heart again.

Question: How did Jeroboam become king? God's will and grace - Continue by God's will and grace; Stand on the promises God made you. IF > THEN

Jeremiah 6:16 Thus says the Lord, Stand by the ways and see and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is and walk in it; And you will find rest for your souls.

But they said, We will not walk therein.

Prov. 29:25 The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso puts his trust in the LORD shall be safe.

Prov. 14:12 There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.

Religion of Jeroboam: I Kings 12:26-33

Source: Human Wisdom

I Kings 12:26a; 33b Jeroboam said in his heart... which he had devised in his own heart.

I Kings 12:28 Therefore the king asked advice, made two calves of gold, and said to the people, "It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Here are your gods, O Israel, which brought you up from the land of Egypt!"

Jeroboam's Religion Motive: Personal Followers

Jeroboam's Fear: I Kings 12:26-27 And Jeroboam said in his heart, "Now the kingdom may return to the house of David: If this people go up to offer sacrifices in the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, then the heart of the people will return to their lord, Rehoboam, King of Judah. They will kill me & return to Rehoboam."

Jeroboam: Please the people to attract followers

Acts 20:26-27 Wherefore I [Paul] take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.

Warning: Acts 20:29-30 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.

Jude 1:3-4 Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Jeroboam's Religion Motive: Convenience

- Too much for you

I Kings 12:28 Therefore the king asked advice, made two calves of gold, and said to the people, "It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Here are your gods, O Israel, which brought you up from the land of Egypt!"

I Kings 12:29 And he set the one in Bethel, and the other put he in Dan.

Jeroboam's Religion Motive: Appearance Is Similar To The Truth

- The men he appointed as priests.

I Kings 12:31 He made shrines on the high places, and made priests from every class of people, who were not of the sons of Levi.

- The feasts he created.

I Kings 12:32 Jeroboam ordained a feast on the 15th day of the 8th month, like the feast that was in Judah, and offered sacrifices on the altar

Lev. 23:33-36 Feast of Tabernacles was the Jewish holy day celebrated on the 15th day of the 7th month.

- Jeroboam's Offerings

I Kings 12:33a So he made offerings on the altar which he had made at Bethel on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, in the month which he had devised in his own heart.

I Kings 11:26 tells us Jeroboam was the son of Nebat, an Ephraimite.

In I Kings 13, The man of God cries out against Jeroboam for offering incense on the altar.

Note: Similarities: Had a Place to Worship

Made Priests

Had Sacrifices

Burned Incense

Effect of Jeroboam's Religion: Progressive Degeneracy

I Kings 12:30 Now this thing became a sin, for the people went to *worship* before the one as far as Dan.

- The gods Jeroboam made turned the people to idolatry.
- Problems: False Worship; Direct Rebellion; Polluted Priests

Apostasy: He turned the people from following God and His Ways

He destroyed the kingdom which will be filled with sorrow, pain, rebellion and captivity.

Note How They Are Described Later

II Kings 17:16-17 And they left all the commandments of the LORD their God, and made them molten images, even two calves, and made a grove, and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served Baal. And they caused their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire, and used divination and enchantments, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger.

Consider: Jeroboam is not remembered for the legacy of his talents or accomplishments, but for the legacy of his sin - Set a terrible precedent for the kings of Israel. After Jeroboam, there are 19 kings of Israel > ALL EVIL > "He (the 19) walked in all the ways of Jeroboam and in his sin, which he had caused Israel to commit."

In Paul's Day: Acts 17:18-23 Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks, encountered him. And some said, What will this babbler say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection. ¹⁹ And they took him, and brought him unto Areopagus, saying, May we know what this new doctrine, whereof thou speakest, is? ²⁰ For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears: we would know therefore what these things mean. For all the Athenians and the foreigners who were there spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing. ²² Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. ²³ For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, Him declare I unto you.

Warning! Beware: II Tim. 3:1-5 But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come. ² For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, ³ unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, ⁴ traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, ⁵ having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!

I Tim. 4:1-2 Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, ² speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron...

II Peter 3:3 knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts,

Admonition: Paul and Peter regularly use such words as "hold fast" or "stand firm."

I Thess. 3: 8 For now we live, if you stand fast in the Lord.

Phil. 4:1 Therefore, my beloved and longed-for brethren, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord,

1 Cor. 16:13 Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong.

I Peter 5:12 I have written to you briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it.

Ps. 25:4-5 Shew me thy ways, O LORD; teach me thy paths. ⁵ Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day.

Psalm 1 teaches us that the man who walks in the way of the Lord is blessed.

In Psalm 25, David is praying for just that.

David knows what's right, but his sinful nature keeps him from walking in it.

This is the same struggle Paul wrestled with.

Rom. 7:15 "For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do."

It is our struggle as well.

Prayer: Let your Holy Spirit guide me and correct me.

Teach me your ways and teach me to walk in them.

A Warning From God Is Sounded: Surrender To The King

Ps. 2 is divided into 4 sections with 4 different voices.

1. Plotting of the Nations and their leaders to break free from the authority of the Lord.

Ps. 2:1-3 Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?

² The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying,

³ Let us break their bands asunder and cast away their cords from us.

2. God's Response: He laughs & declares He has set His King.

Ps. 2:4-6 He that sits in the heavens shall laugh: the LORD shall have them in derision.

⁵ Then shall He speak unto them in His wrath and vex them in His sore displeasure.

⁶ Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.

3. The Anointed speaks and declares the LORD's decree that, as the Son, He will rule with a rod of iron over all the earth. [Matt. 28:18-20; Eph. 1:20-22; Rev. 1:5; 2:26-27]

Ps. 2:7-9 I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. ⁸ Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.

⁹ Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

4. Wise Rulers Should Fear The LORD & Love His Son if they wish to avoid His wrath.

Ps. 2:10-12 Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth.

¹¹ Serve the LORD with fear and rejoice with trembling.

¹² Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.

Jer. 6:16a Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.