

Rebuilding What Was Lost
The Book of Ezra-Nehemiah



Rebuilding What Was Lost

- *A Little Bit of Background*
- *The Return*
- *Laying the Foundation*
- *Letters to Kings*
- *The Return of the Heroes*
- *After “The End”*
- *The Cupbearer to the King*
- ***Nehemiah Comes to Jerusalem***



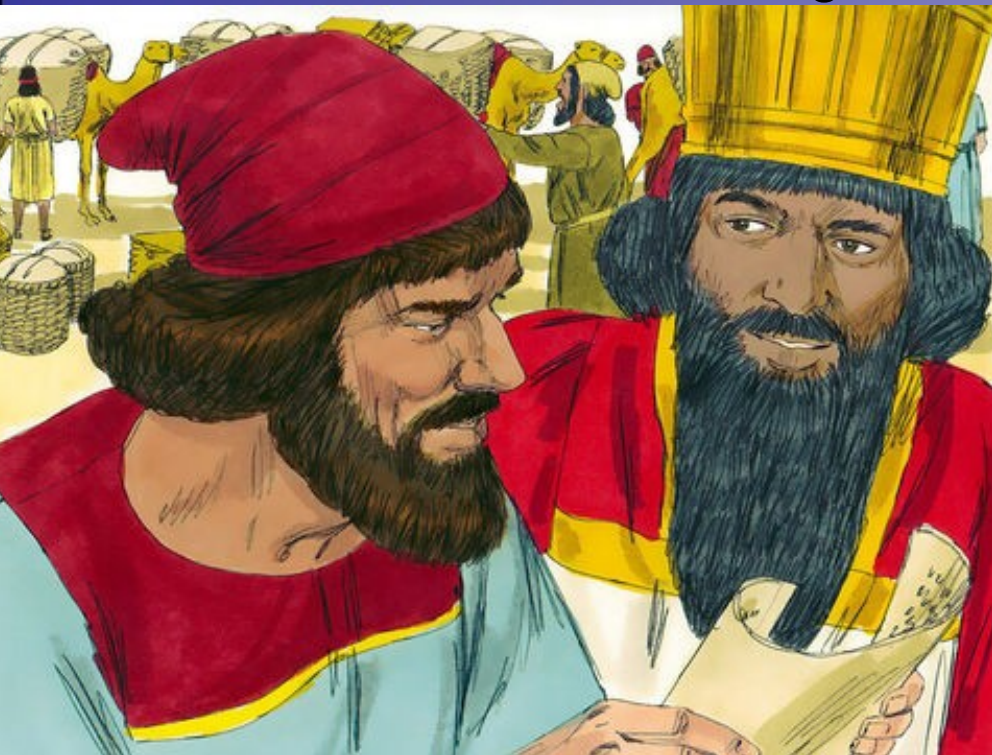
Nehemiah Comes to Jerusalem

- **Nehemiah is actually coming to Jerusalem**
 - So what do we know about Nehemiah so far?
 - Please read Nehemiah 2:4-6
 - So what do we know about Nehemiah, his plan, and his relationship with Artaxerxes from these verses?

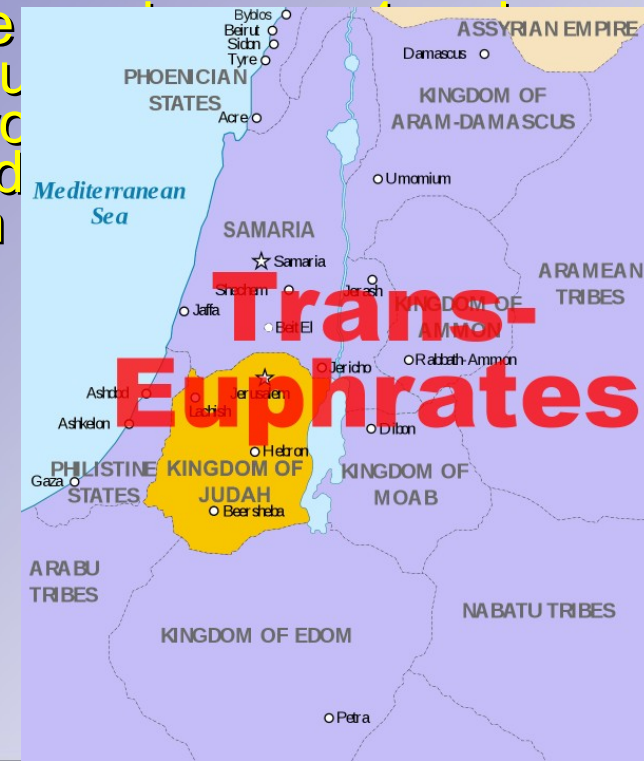


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 - So what do we know about Nehemiah so far?
 - Please read Nehemiah 2:4-6
 - Please read Nehemiah 2:7-8
 - How is all of this similar to what Ezra had asked for 13 years earlier, and how is this different?
 - How is the *project* that Nehemiah is asking to do different than the one that Ezra had asked to do?
 - Why would Nehemiah specifically ask for letters to the governors of Trans-Euphrates?

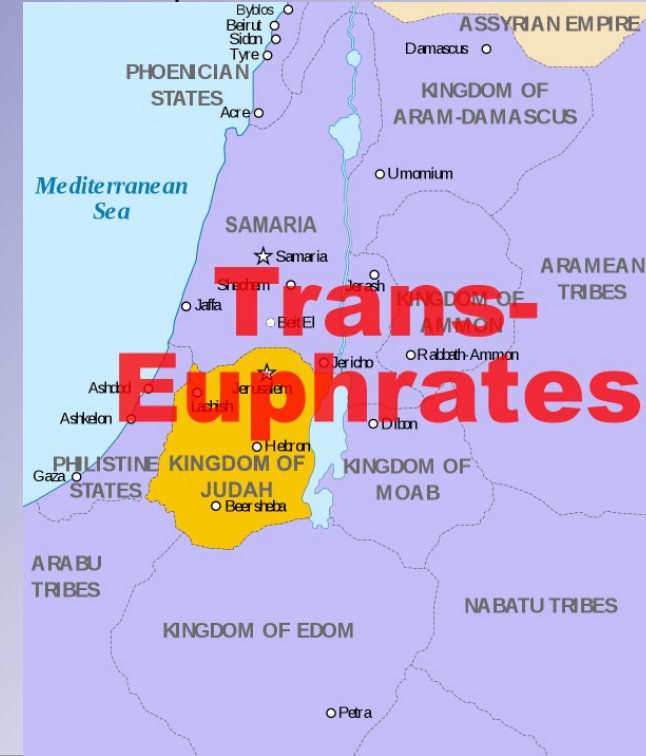


Given what we see in verse 8, do you think Nehemiah perceived any less God-protected than he had been?



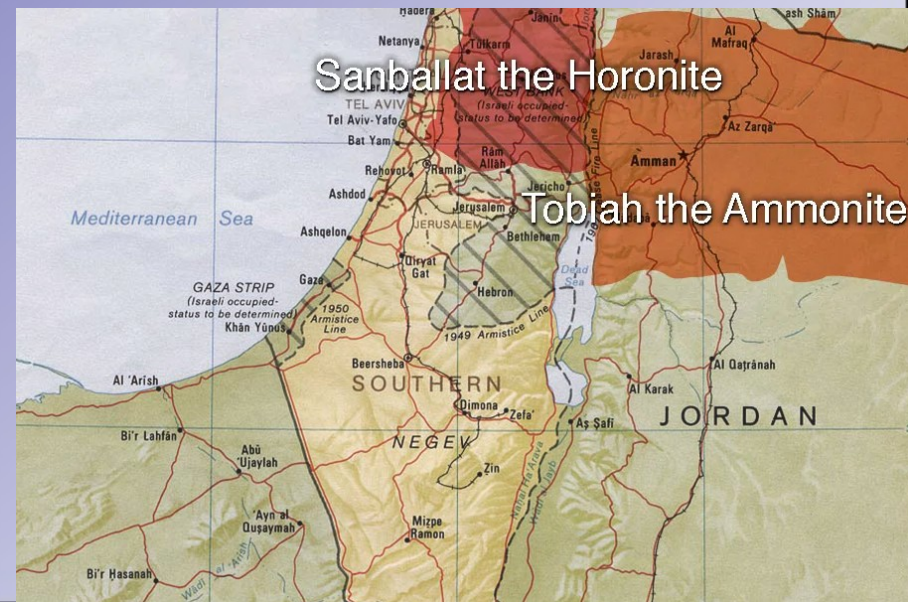
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 - Please read Nehemiah 2:9
 - Ezra appeared to have gone straight to Jerusalem so why did Nehemiah take a detour to meet with the neighboring governors first?
 - And why did Nehemiah bring cavalry with him, when Ezra hadn't wanted *any* guards for the \$500 million?



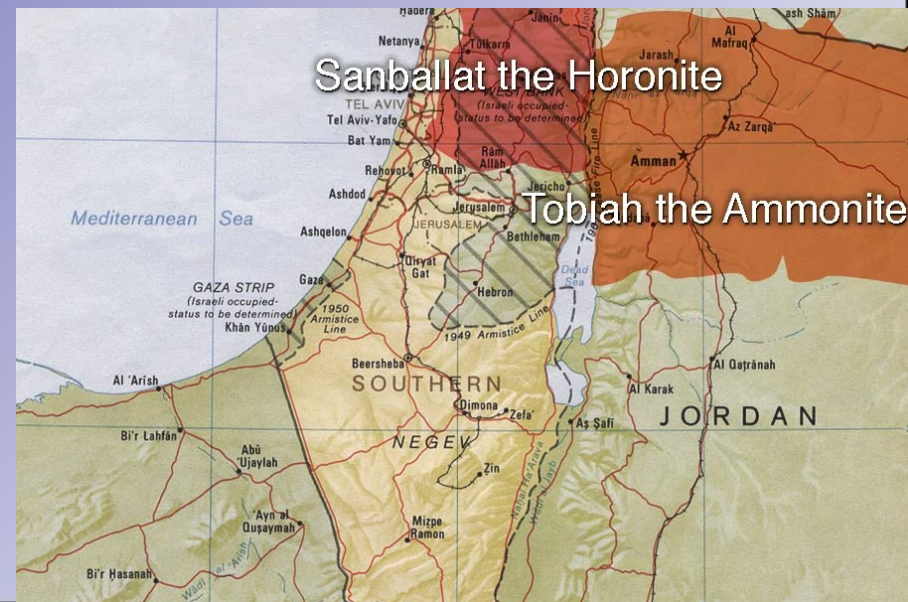
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 - Please read Nehemiah 2:10
 - Why would the local neighbors have problems with someone promoting “the welfare of the Israelites”?
 - How is this an extension of the same concerns that we saw back in Ezra 4, etc.?
- But why didn't they respond the way that they did back in Ezra 4 and write letters to Artaxerxes?



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 - **Please read Nehemiah 2:10**
 - Why would the local neighbors have problems with someone promoting “the welfare of the Israelites”?
 - **So how is Nehemiah's starting position similar to and yet different from what Ezra's had been?**



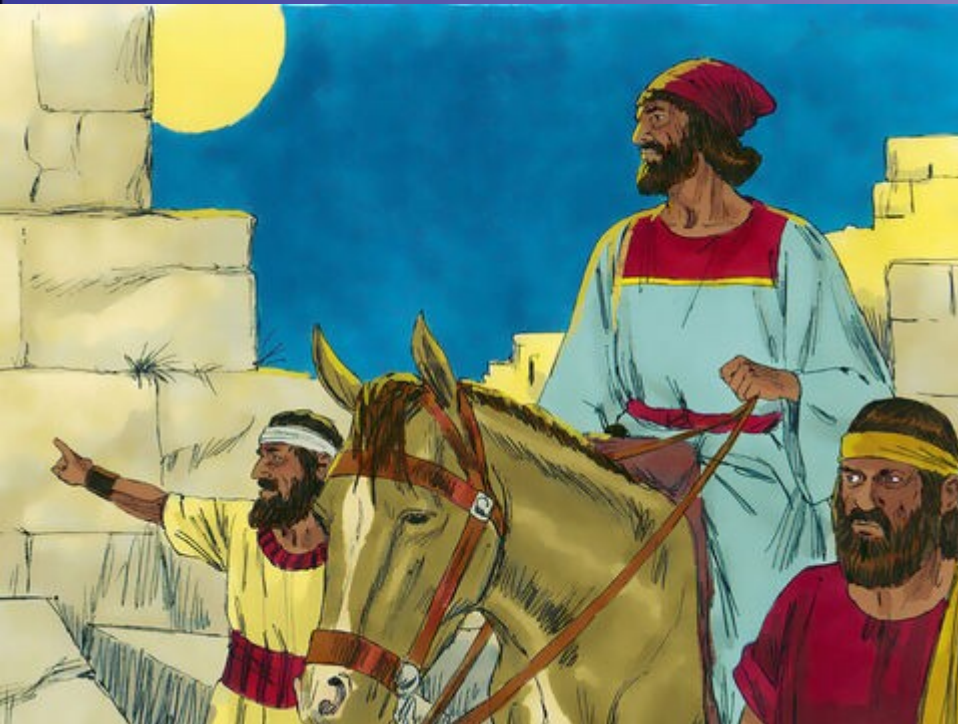
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 - **Please read Nehemiah 2:11**
 - **STOP.** Why did Nehemiah do *nothing* for 3 days?
(HINT: Why had *Ezra* done nothing for 3 days when he had arrived 13 years earlier?)
(see Ezra 8:32)



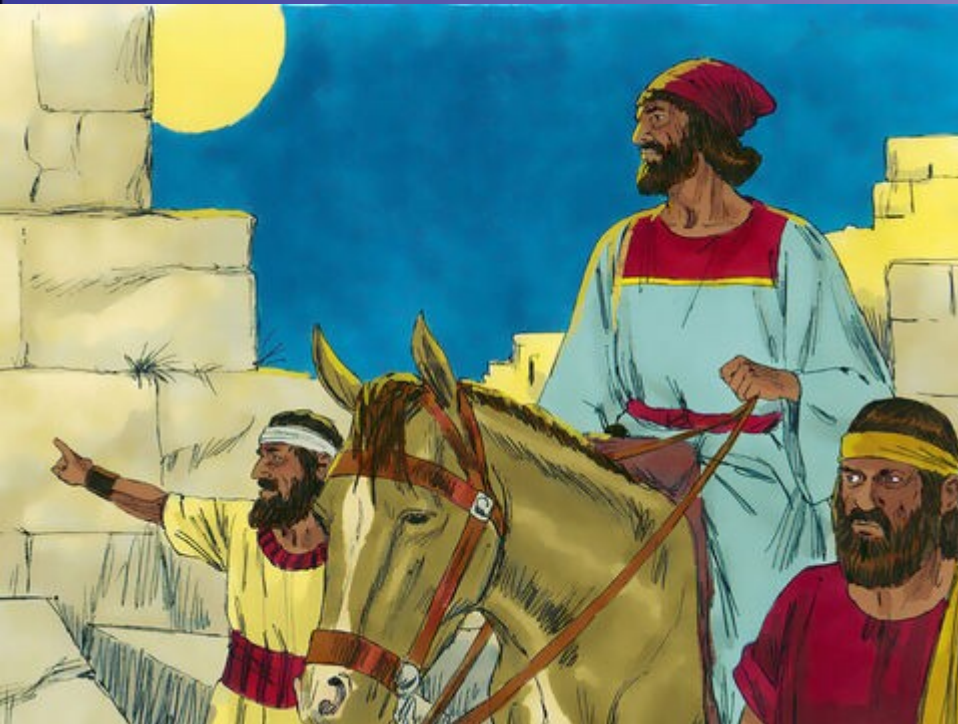
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 - Please read Nehemiah 2:11-12
 - Why do it this way?
 - He'd directly engaged with the Persian and local officials, so why not with the Jewish ones?
 - Have you ever not done what you knew that you should do?
 - If that went on long enough—say, like a *century*—how many excuses might you come up with for why the unchanged status quo really isn't that bad?
 - Or for why we should really start small... or with a series of committee meetings... or by explaining to “the new guy” how things work around here...?



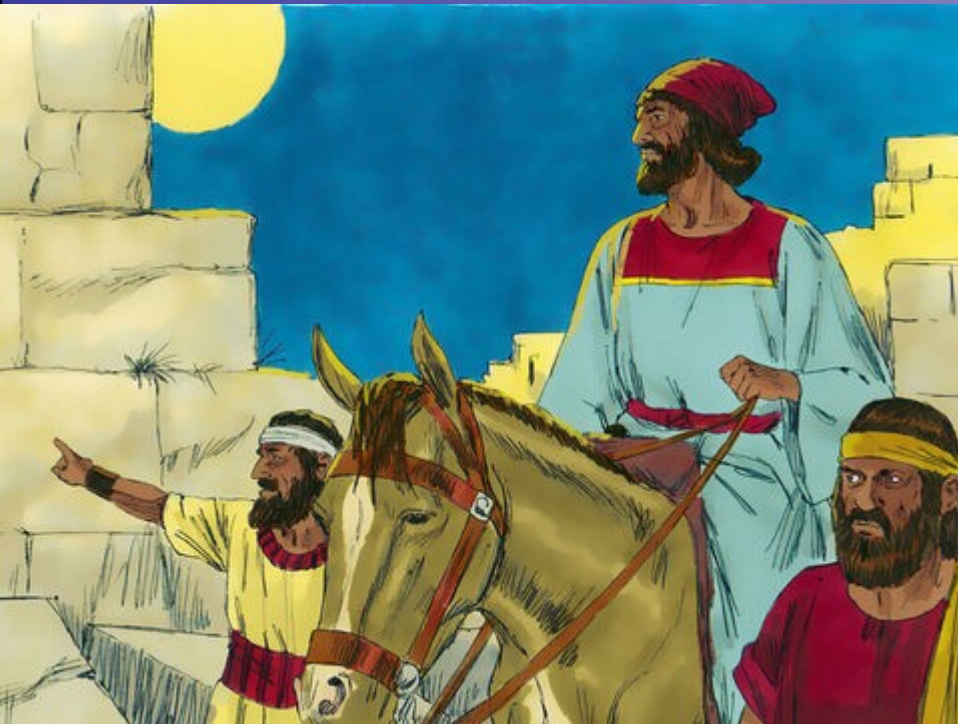
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 - **Please read Nehemiah 2:11-12**
 - Why do it this way?
 - **So Nehemiah started his quiet, covert inspection with nothing but a single mount and a personal bodyguard**
 - Is that good leadership practice or bad leadership practice?
 - How so?



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 - **Please read Nehemiah 2:13-15**



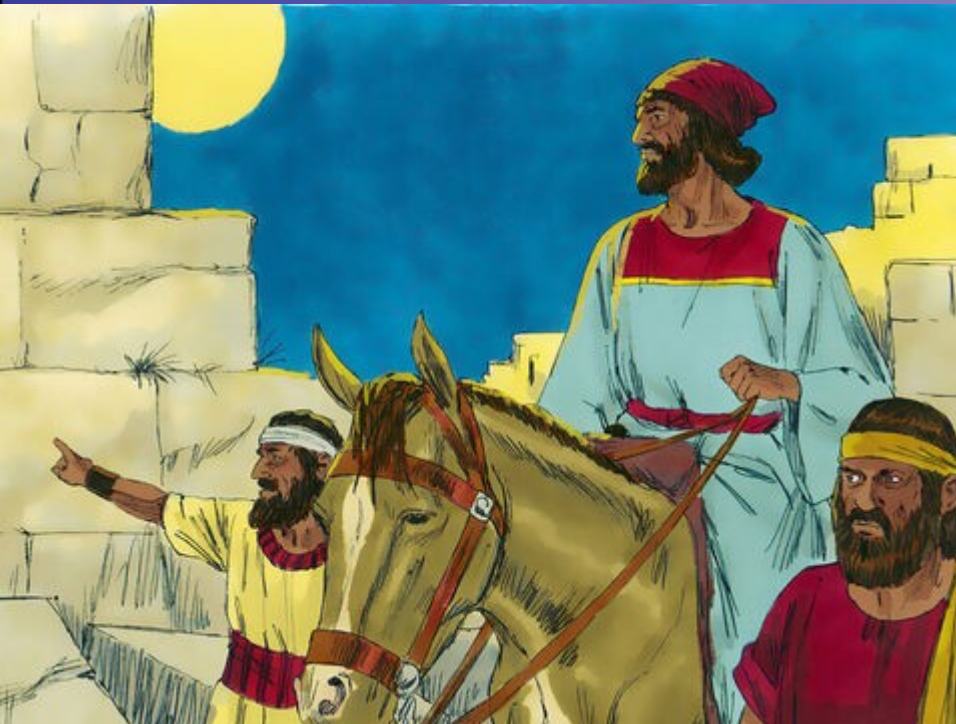
Nehemiah Comes to Jerusalem



Funky little teaching moment...

- Okay, I know that these landmarks may not mean a lot to you and me at first glance
 - But they would've been very familiar to everyone in its original audience who'd be reading this
(Think of it like if I explained to you, "I drove East on War Memorial until I came to Knoxville, then turned to work my way South toward the hospitals. Then I took the exit onto eastbound 74 and drove toward East Peoria...")

(those listening to all of this in Scotland may scratch their heads and shrug, but it means specific, mentally-picturable stuff to you)



Nehemiah Comes to Jerusalem

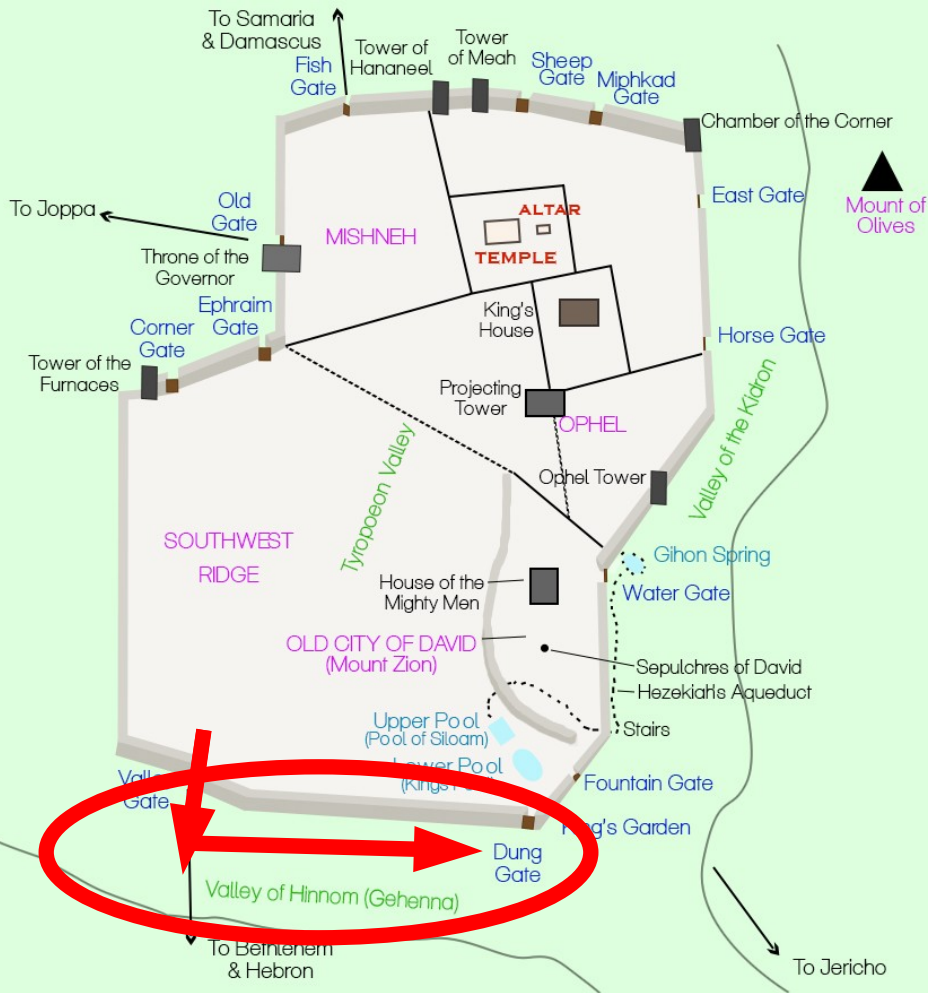


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- So Nehemiah exited the city down at southern tip, at the Valley Gate then moved toward the Dung Gate (where all of the garbage was thrown out into the valley of Hinnom—AKA “Gehenna”)

(i.e.; where the garbage and waste was set ablaze and it was such a constant and continual place of unclean horror that most people avoided it like the plague) (i.e.; the analogy that Jesus used to try to give His listeners the slightest idea of what Hell was going to be like)

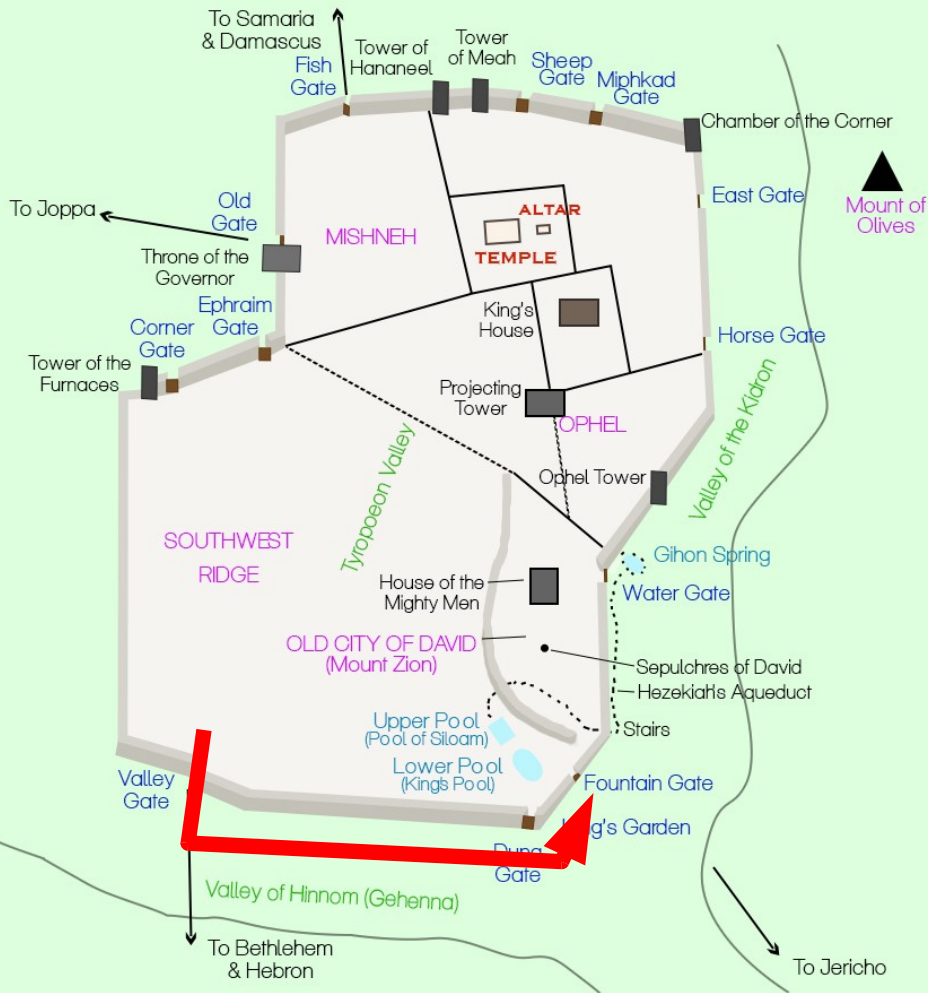


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- So Nehemiah exited the city down at southern tip, at the Valley Gate then moved toward the Dung Gate and then turned to the Fountain Gate and the King's Pool
 - Why is it significant that there wasn't enough room for his mount to get through the rubble at the Fountain Gate?
 - So the walls were too ruined to keep an army out, but the gates were too ruined to allow a single donkey in
 - Just how messed up was Jerusalem that its walls literally accomplished *nothing* they were designed to do?

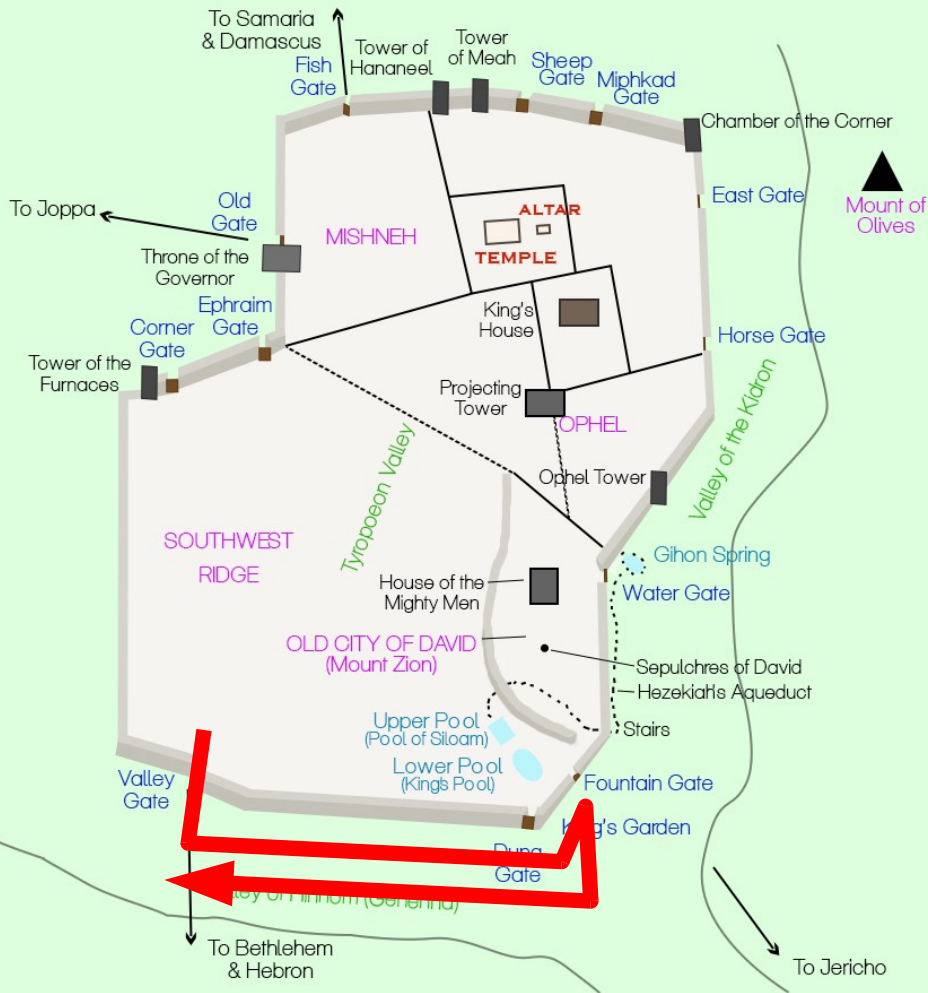


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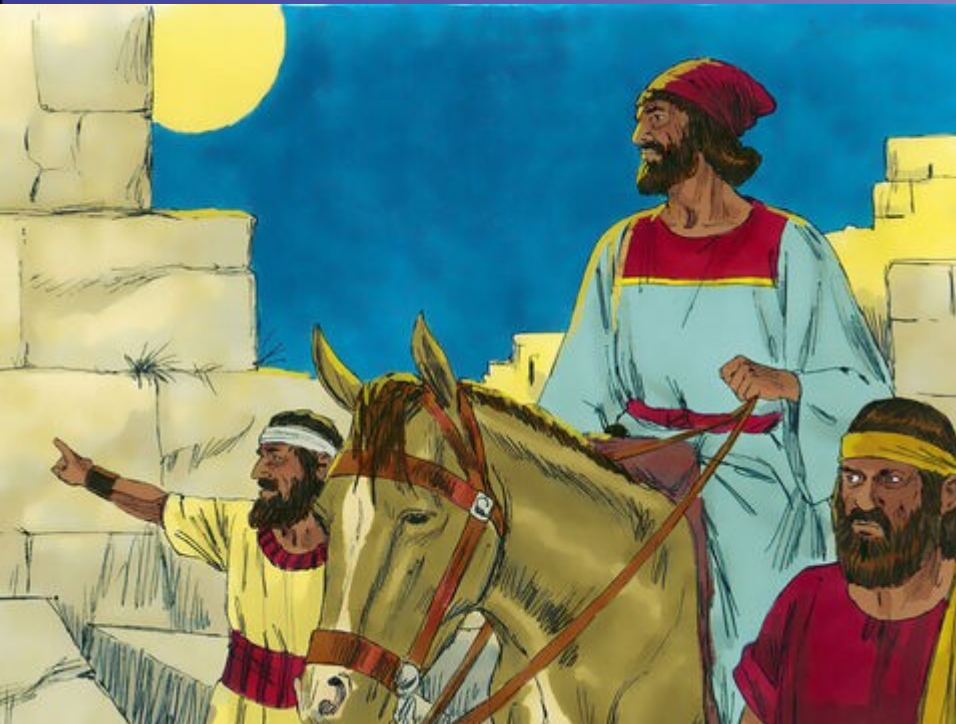


- So Nehemiah exited the city down at southern tip, at the Valley Gate then moved toward the Dung Gate and then turned to the Fountain Gate and the King's Pool
 - Whether or not Nehemiah intended to go *all* the way around the city, we're given the impression that he just turned around and went back in where he came out of, right?
 - How far had he gotten before he felt like he'd obtained a clear picture of the situation?
 - Is that a *good* sign?



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- **Nehemiah is actually coming to Jerusalem**
 - So what do we know about Nehemiah so far?
 - Please read Nehemiah 2:16
 - Again, why wouldn't Nehemiah had wanted them to know that he was checking on the wall?
 - Did the Jewish officials even know who he was or why he'd come to Jerusalem from Persia in the first place?
 - Does it matter either way?



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 - **So what do we know about Nehemiah so far?**
 - Please read Nehemiah 2:16
 - I'll read Nehemiah 2:17, when he explains himself
 - “You see the trouble you are in: Jerusalem lies in ruins, and its gates have been burned with fire. Come, you must rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, and you will no longer be in disgrace.”
 - Right?
 - Wouldn't that have made total sense to say?



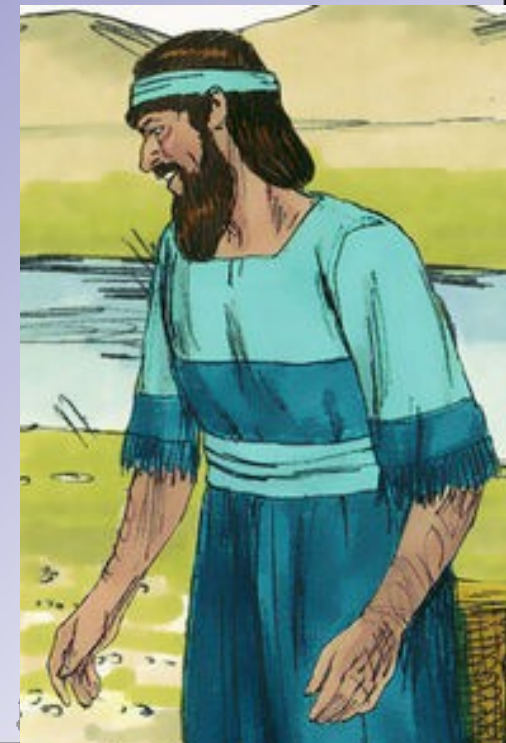
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 - How is this the same sort of attitude that he had shown in his prayer back in Nehemiah 1:6-7?
 - So how can we choose to “rebuild what was lost” (i.e.; to work to make what’s always been important to God more important to us again)
 - in our own homes?
 - in our own church today?
 - It can't just be someone *else's* responsibility, someone *else's* burden to shoulder, can it?
 - How is this sort of thing *supposed* to work?



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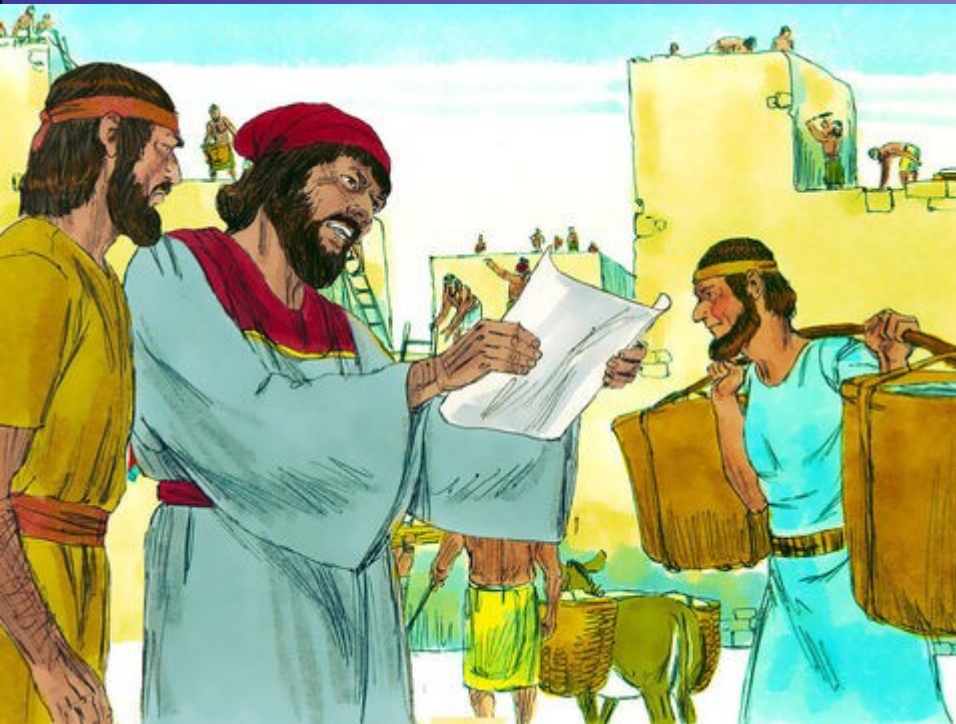
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 - How is this the same sort of attitude that he had shown in his prayer back in Nehemiah 1:6-7?
 - **How is this the same sort of attitude that *Ezra* had shown in *his* prayer back in Ezra 9:6-13?**
 - If you were Ezra and you heard all of this from an visitor from Susa, how might it have struck you?



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 - Please read Nehemiah 2:18
 - So why did they respond so well and so quickly, when they'd let all of this go to pot for so long?
 - But this is a good sign, right?
 - And they all worked together to rebuild the wall...

The End.



- Man, this would've been a *great* place to end, wouldn't it have?
 - But we've got 11 more chapters to go with this story
 - What's the first word that we read in vs. 19...?

