

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*
- *Rebuilding the Wall (part 1)*



Rebuilding the Wall



Funky little teaching moment...

- I've got to comment on something from last week
 - We noted in Nehemiah 2:11 that—much like Ezra had done in Ezra 8:32—Nehemiah rested for three days before jumping into things
 - There's a bit of a precedent for that in Scripture...
 - Genesis 34 Simeon and Levi circumcised Shechem and all the men of his city, then waited for three days before slaughtering them all.
 - Genesis 40 Joseph interpreted the dreams of fellow prisoners, then waited for three days for them to come true.
 - Genesis 42 Joseph kept his brothers waiting in custody for three days.
 - Exodus 19 God had the people wait (and prepare themselves) for three days for His appearing.
 - Joshua 1 Joshua waited for three days before crossing the Jordan River.
 - Judges 14 Samson made his guests wait for three days for the answer to his riddle.



Rebuilding the Wall



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 - 1 Kings 12 Rehoboam made Jeroboam and the people to wait for three days for his answer to their request.
 - Ezra 8 Ezra camped and waited at the canal near Ahava for three days.
 - Ezra rested for three days after his arrival in Jerusalem.
 - Ezra 10 Ezra waited for three days for the exiles to assemble in Jerusalem.
 - Esther 4 Esther called for a fast for three days and waited before approaching Xerxes.
 - Jonah 1 Jonah waited in the belly of a great fish for three days.
 - Matthew 12 In the same way, Jesus was in the grave for three days.
 - Acts 9 Saul was blinded for three days while he waited for Ananias.



Rebuilding the Wall



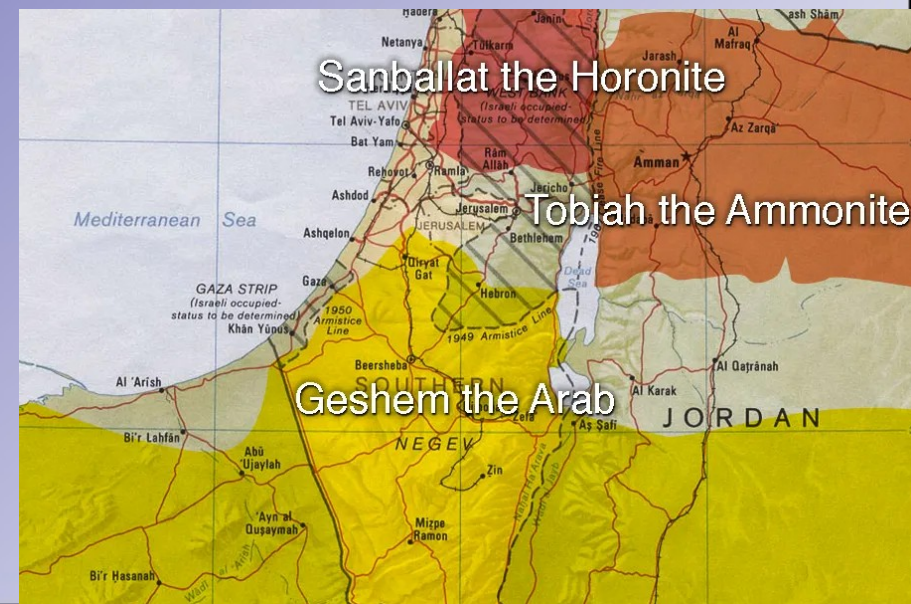
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 - There's a bit of a precedent for that in Scripture...
 - Acts 25 Festus rested for three days when arriving in Caesarea before moving on to Jerusalem.
 - Acts 28 Paul waited in the home of Publius in Malta for three days before moving on.
 - Paul rested in Syracuse for three days before moving on to Rhegium.
 - Paul rested in Rome for three days before calling together the local Jewish leaders.
 - This whole “waiting for three days (especially before something momentous happens)” motif is *totally a thing* in the Bible, is my point...



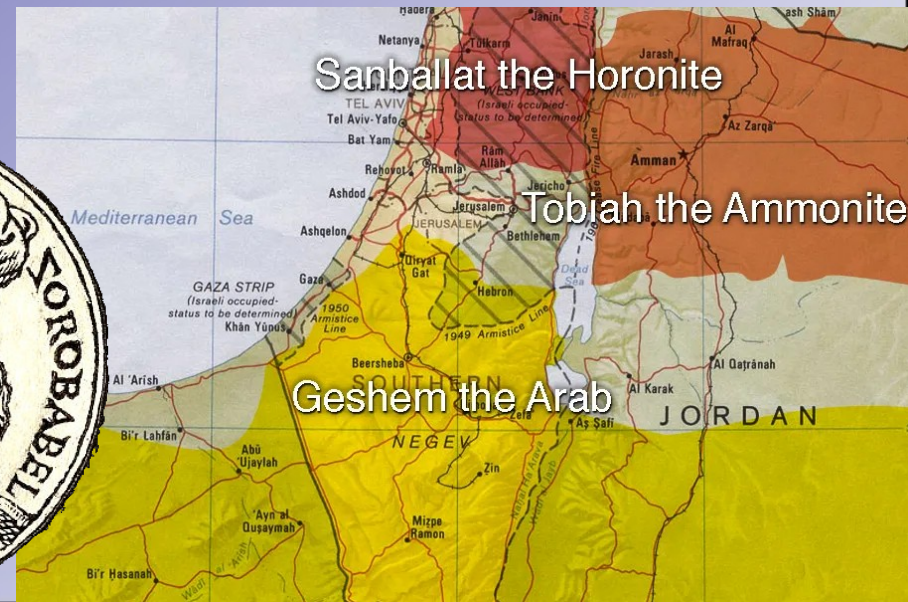
Rebuilding the Wall

- After a century, Nehemiah's going to rebuild
 - So what do we know about Nehemiah so far?
 - What do we know from Nehemiah 1?
 - What do we know from Nehemiah 2:1-8?
 - What do we know from Nehemiah 2:9-18?
 - Please read Nehemiah 2:19
 - These are the same two bad guys from back in vs. 10 but now they've added a third guy from down south (NOTE: These aren't just a couple of neighborhood ruffians, but the leaders of hostile local tribes) (how scary and potentially huge is this seemingly simple accusation?)



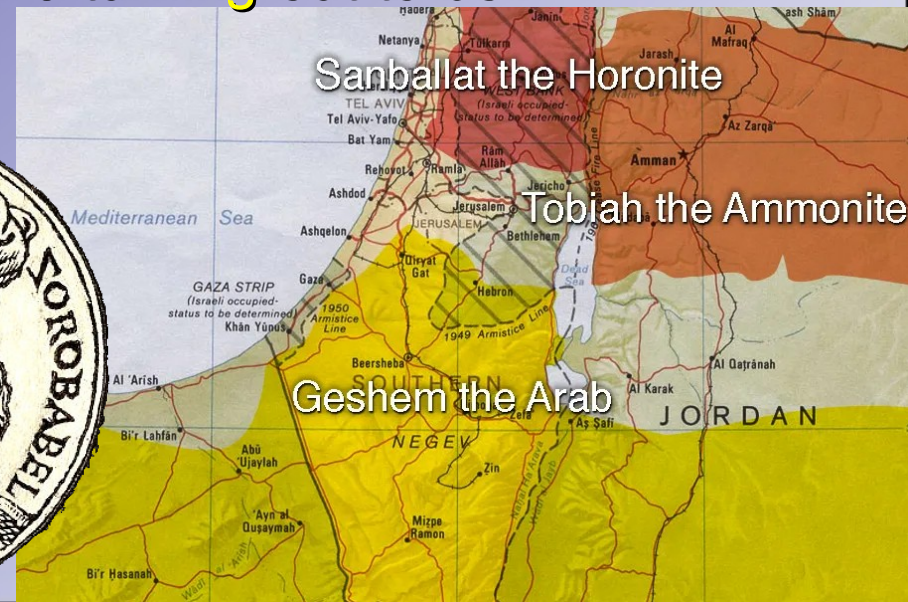
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 - These are the same two bad guys from back in vs. 10 but now they've added a third guy from down south
 - This is precisely the sort of thing that stopped the work on the walls years earlier in Ezra 4, right?
 - But how was Nehemiah's situation different from Zerubbabel and Jeshua and Ezra's situations?



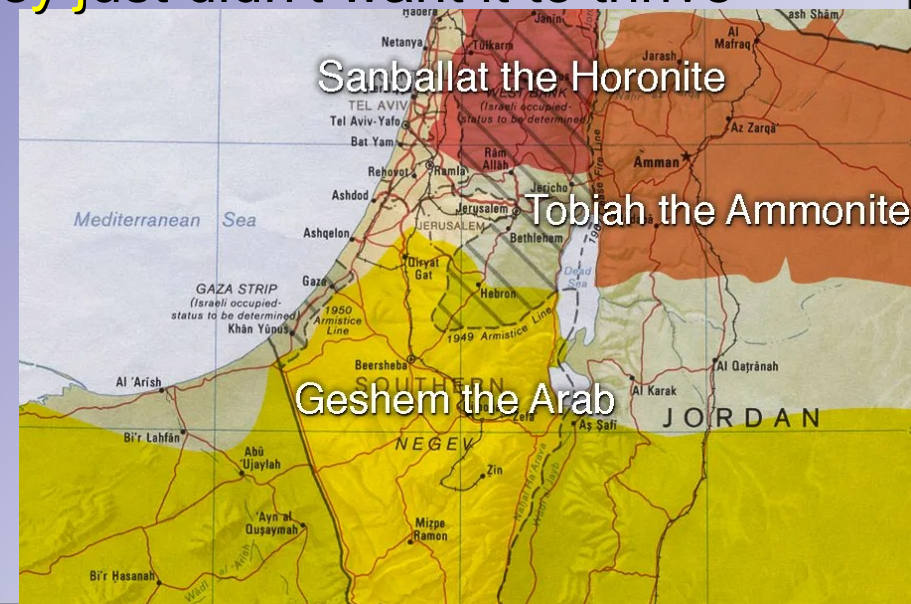
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 - Please read Nehemiah 2:19
 - Please read Nehemiah 2:20
 - Nehemiah spoke with authority—with Persian troops and letters to Persian governors to back him up
 - How similar are Nehemiah 2:20 and Ezra 4:3?
 - So how important is all of Nehemiah's planning way back in vs. 4-9 turning out to be?



Rebuilding the Wall

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 - Please read Nehemiah 2:19
 - Please read Nehemiah 2:20
 - Nehemiah spoke with authority—with Persian troops and letters to Persian governors to back him up
 - Besides, he was totally right
 - None of these bordering tribes had any legal claim to Jerusalem here—
—they just didn't want it to thrive



Rebuilding the Wall

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 - Please read **Nehemiah 3:1**



Rebuilding the Wall



Funky little teaching moment...

- Okay, remember that these descriptions *meant* something to the people that they were intended for
 - So let's look at the map while we read these verses

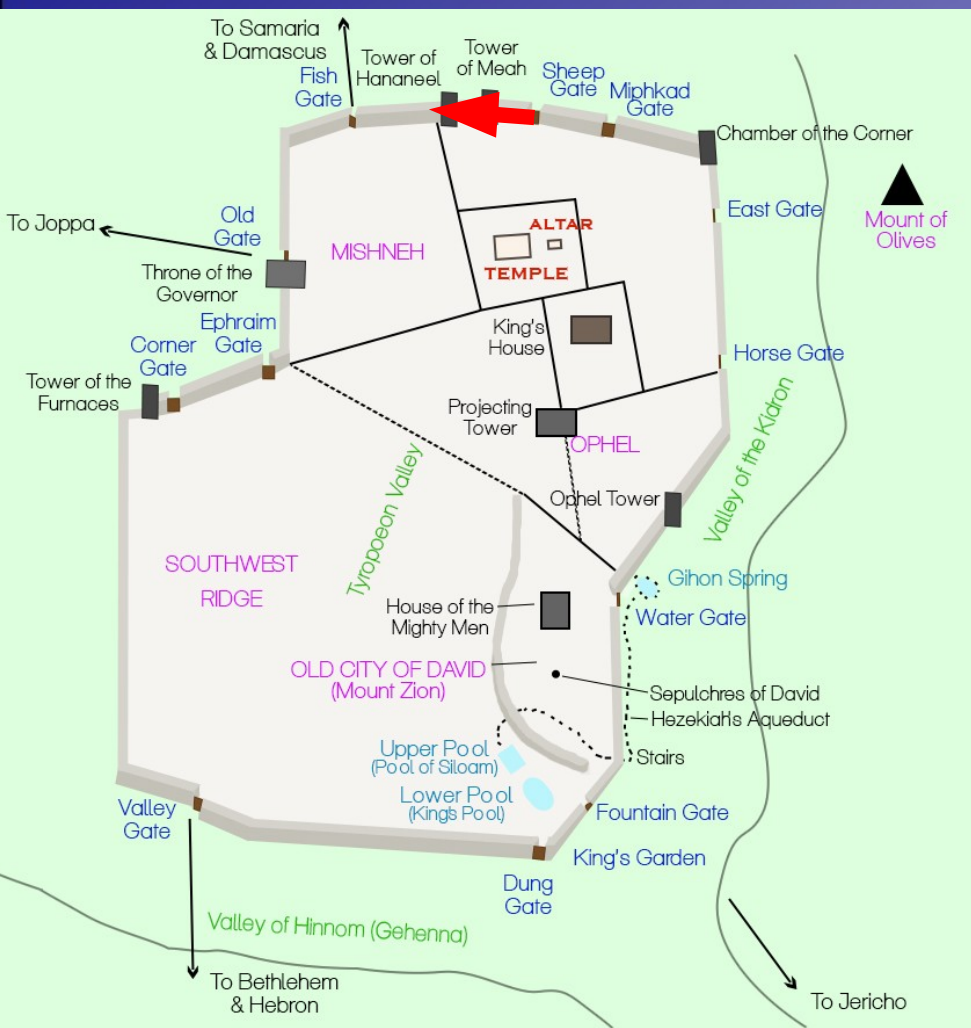
- Please read Nehemiah 3:1 (*again*)

- Why do you think it's significant that Nehemiah had the priests start the whole project off?

- Why not use professional masons and carpenters?

- Shouldn't they have done the rebuilding of the wall *right*...?

- But is doing it "right" about producing a clearly polished, professional, good-looking final product or is it more about doing it well, but with a sense of ownership and the right heart?



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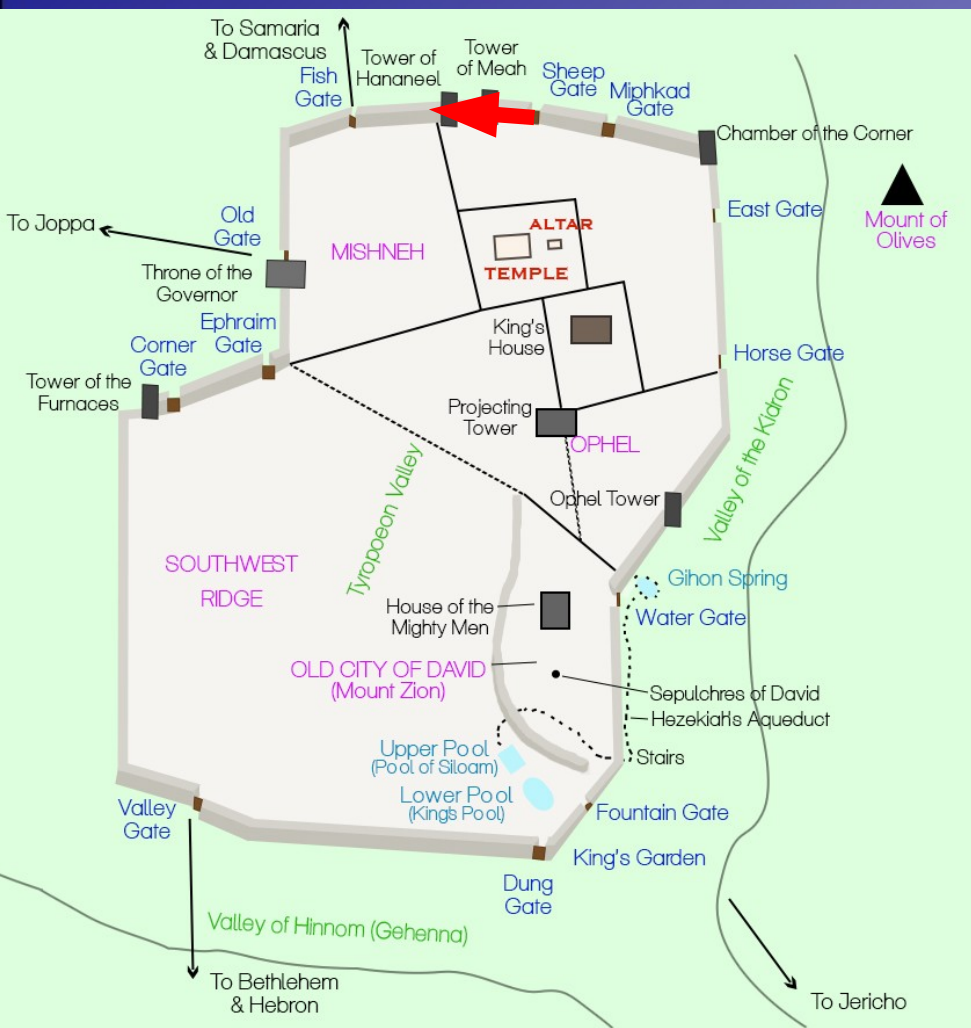
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- Shouldn't they have done the rebuilding of the wall *right*...?

- It needed to be built by the *right* people, the *right* way

- That means built by *everyone*—everyone in the community, and everyone who had left it so broken-down for a century



Rebuilding the Wall



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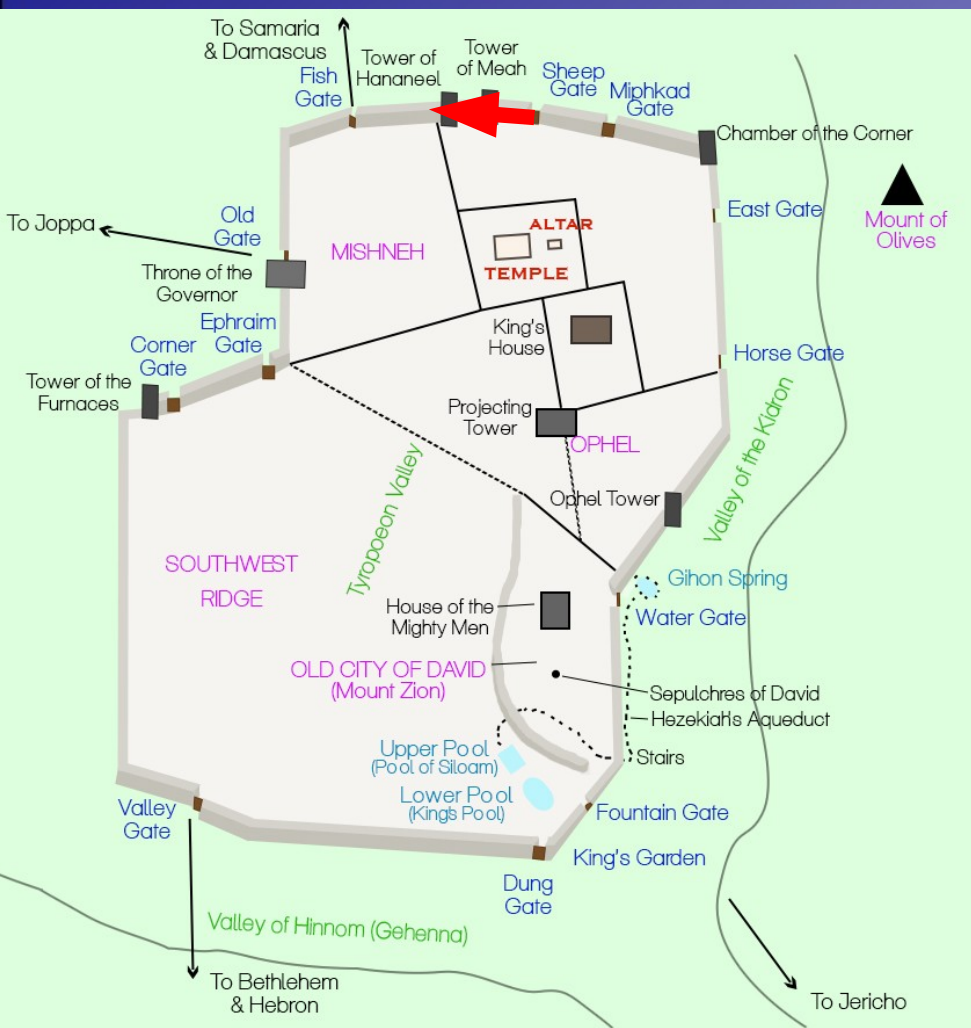
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- How can we apply all of that sort of thinking in our own church today?



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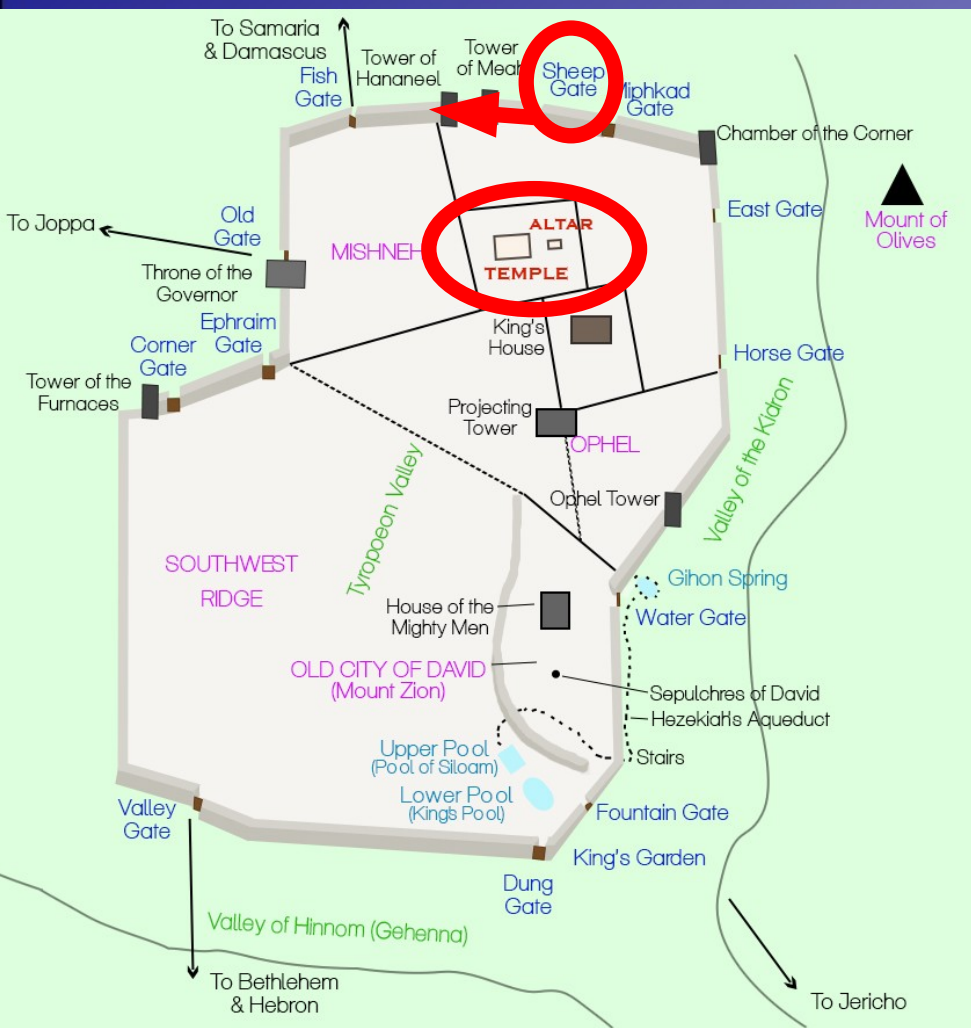
- Please read Nehemiah 3:1 (*again*)

- Why do you think it's significant that Nehemiah had the priests start the whole project off?

- Why not use professional masons and carpenters?

- And why have the priests start at the Sheep Gate?

- That's where the sheep were brought in to be sacrificed at the altar —so this is *their* place, *their* responsibility, and it puts the focus on continuing the Temple reconstruction and honoring *God*



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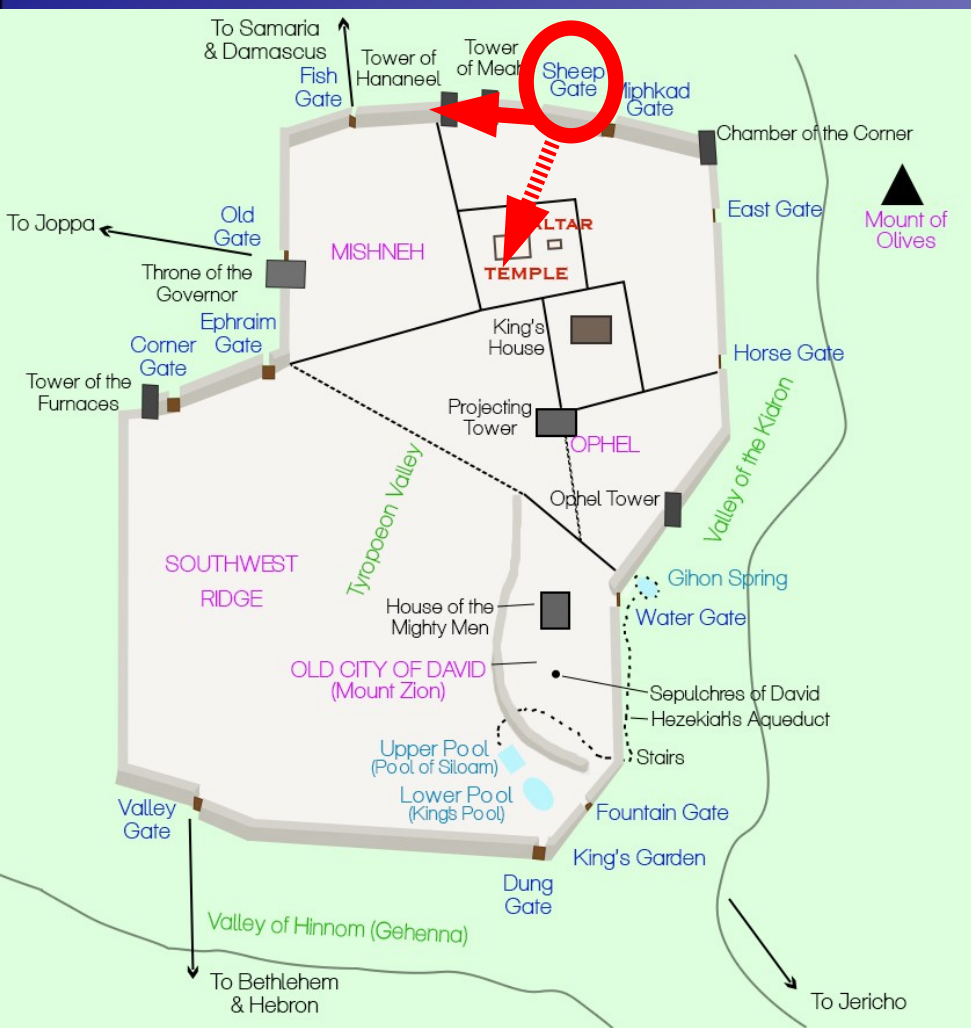
- Why not use professional masons and carpenters?

- And why have the priests start at the Sheep Gate?

- But note that the priests didn't *repair* the Sheep Gate

- The gate used to bring in offerings to the Lord was apparently totally irreparable, so they had to completely *rebuild* it

- What does *that* say about the worship of God over the past decades?

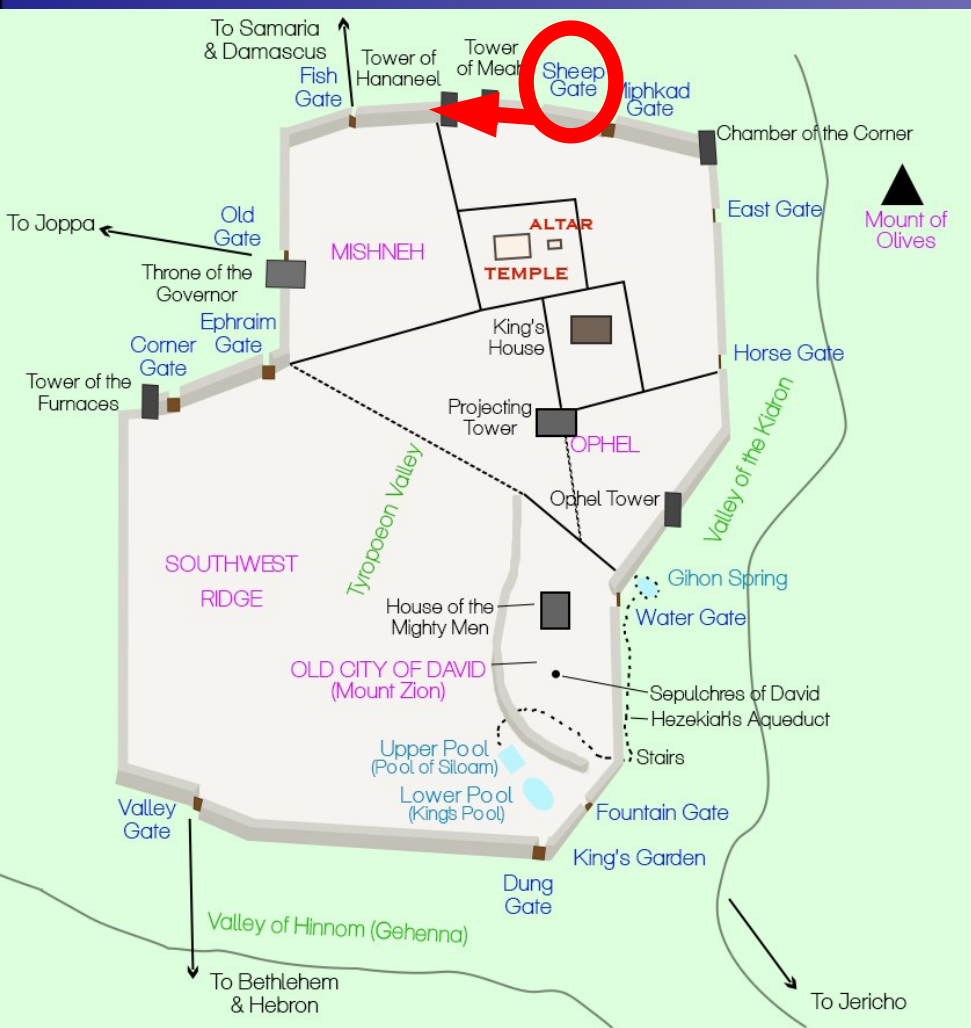


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 - Why not use professional masons and carpenters?
 - And why have the priests start at the Sheep Gate?
 - But note that the priests didn't *repair* the Sheep Gate
 - There's good reason why this particular section of the wall reconstruction ended with a rededication to God...



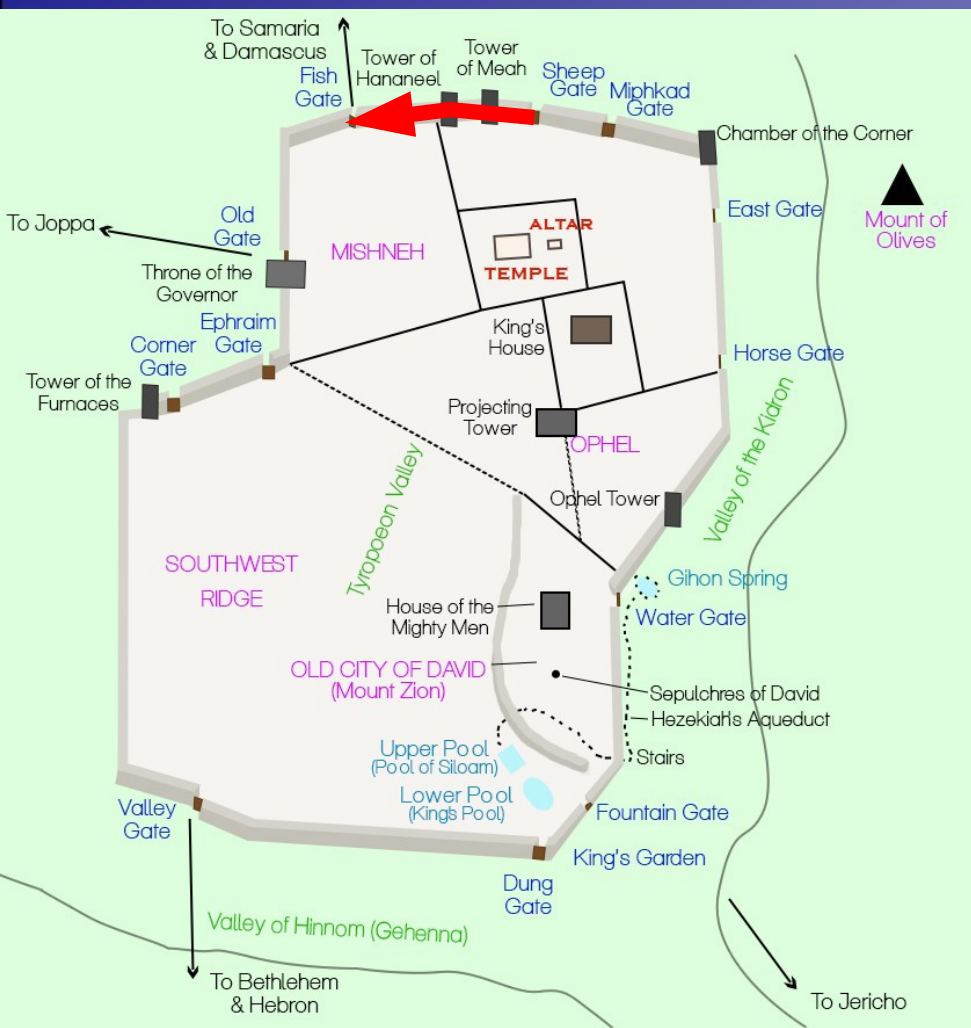
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- Please read Nehemiah 3:1
- Please read Nehemiah 3:2-3
 - So were *these* guys masons or carpenters or wall-builders?
 - Waitamminute—why are men from the city of *Jericho* rebuilding the wall of the city of *Jerusalem* here?
 - Because Jerusalem is God's city and reflects on the entirety of God's whole kingdom of Israel—it's got to be a *shared* responsibility



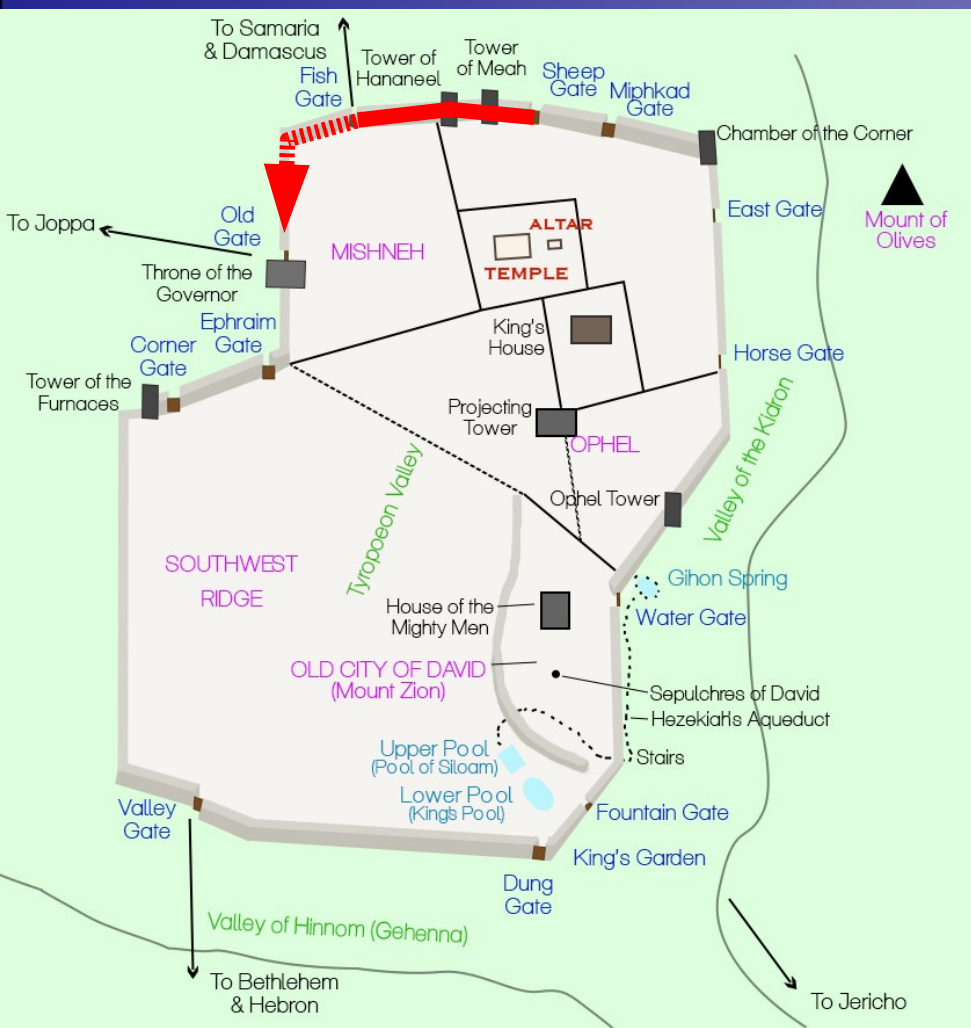
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- Please read Nehemiah 3:1
- Please read Nehemiah 3:2-3
- Please read Nehemiah 3:4-5
 - Lit. “their nobles [the fancy, majestic guys] wouldn't bow their necks to their authorities”
 - Why not?
 - How can people—*any* of us—fall into that today?
 - So is Nehemiah saying that they wouldn't follow the orders of the work foremen? Or his own orders as governor? Or the authority of God?



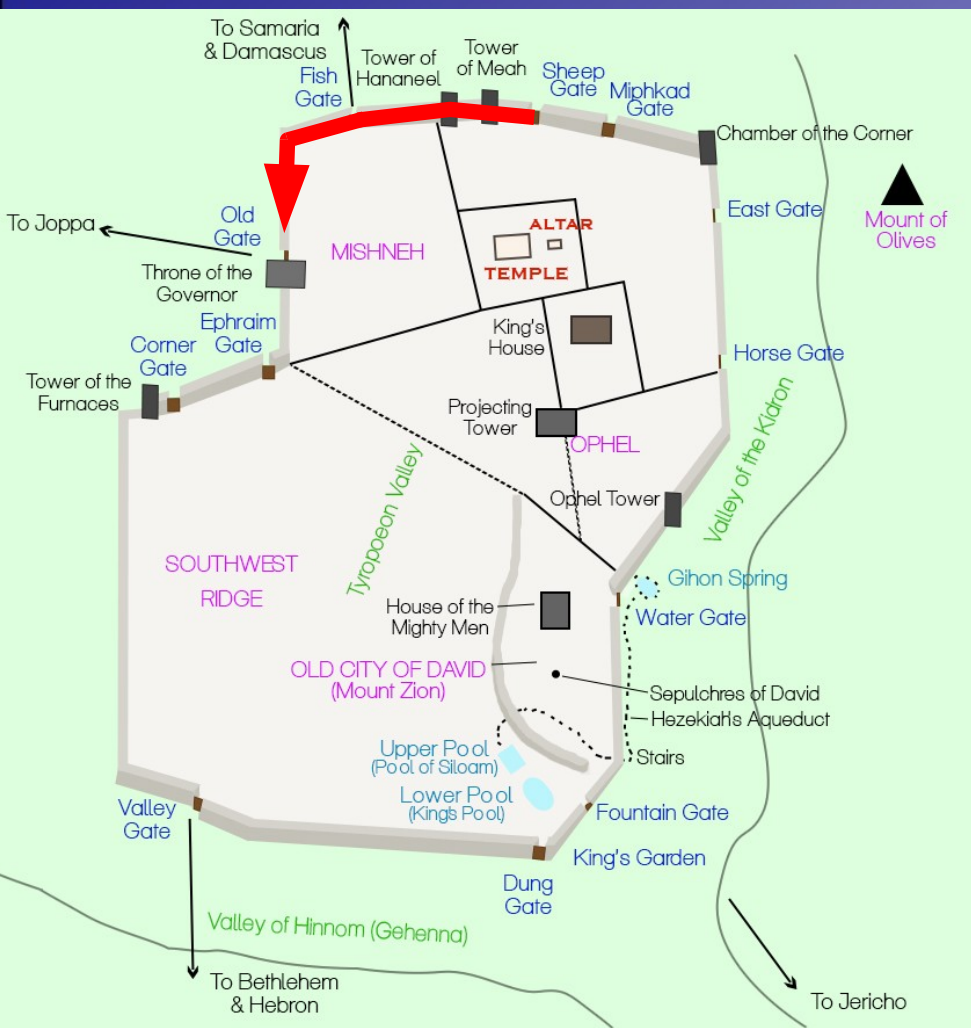
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- Please read Nehemiah 3:2-3
- Please read Nehemiah 3:4-5
- Please read Nehemiah 3:6
 - The “Jeshanah” Gate or “Old” Gate—the word is odd here (it literally means, “the shabby gate”)
 - So is this a proper noun or just an apt description here?

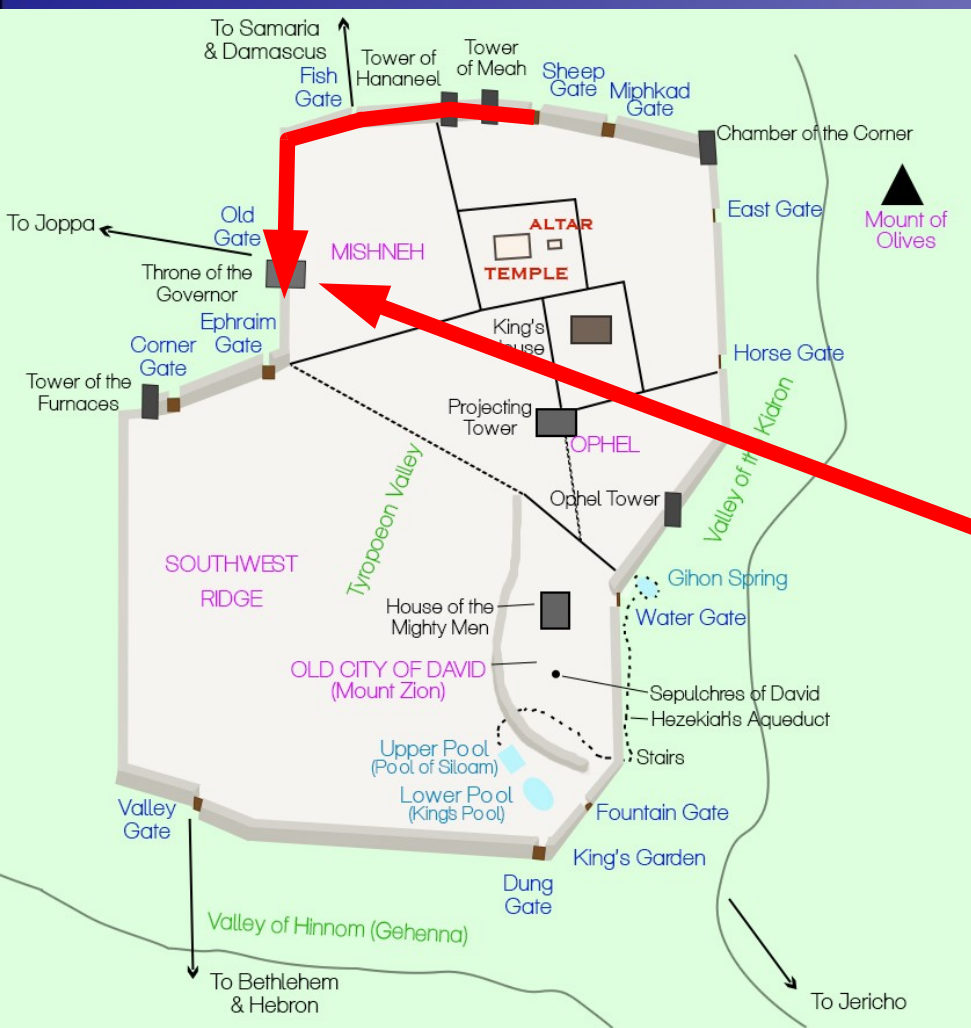


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- Please read Nehemiah 3:6
- Please read Nehemiah 3:7
 - Why did Nehemiah have *these* people repair *this* section?
 - Why did the new governor have people who were representatives of the local areas under the authority of the governor of the region repair the section including the official throne of the Persian governor of the region?
 - How smart is this Nehemiah guy?

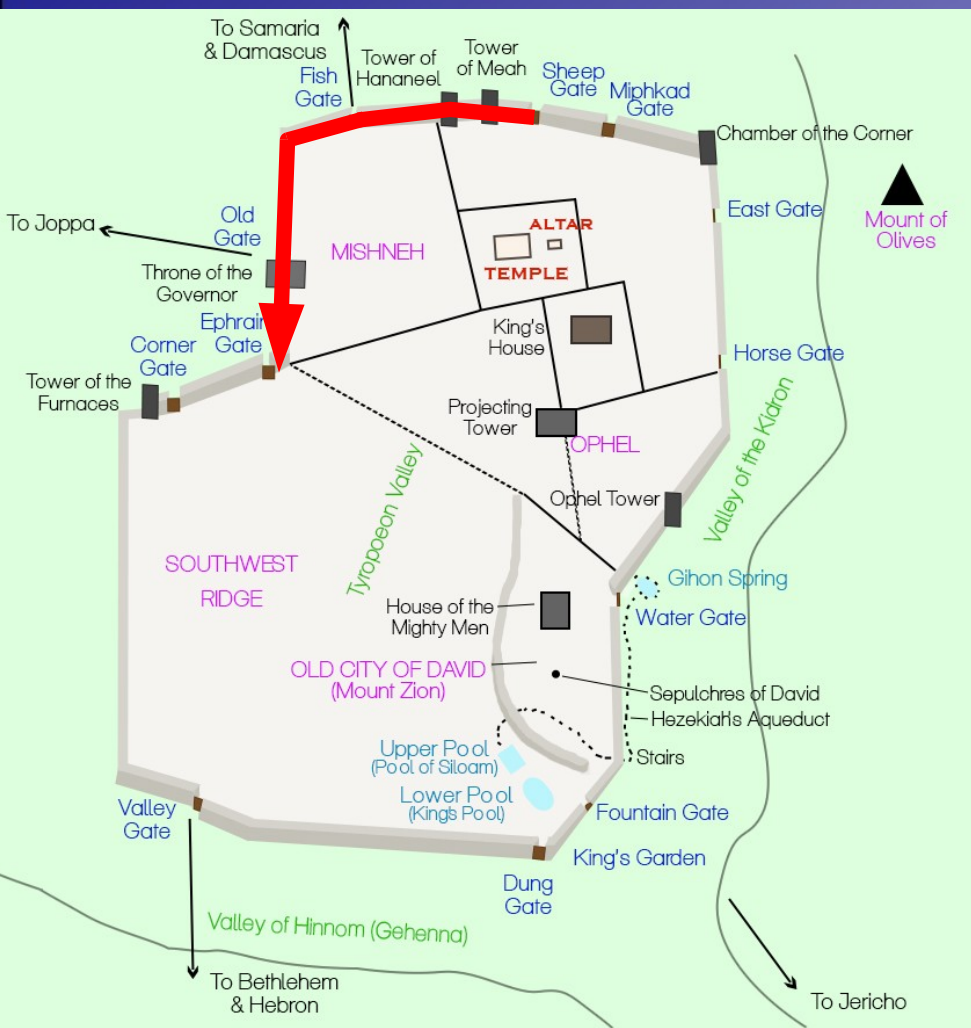


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- Please read Nehemiah 3:6
- Please read Nehemiah 3:7
- Please read Nehemiah 3:8
 - Do goldsmiths and perfume-makers make good masons?
 - Viggo Olsen, who helped rebuild thousands of houses in Bangladesh in 1972, was inspired by this verse—

“No expert builders were listed in the *Holy Land brigade*. There were priests, priests' helpers, goldsmiths, perfume makers, and women, but no expert builders or carpenters...”

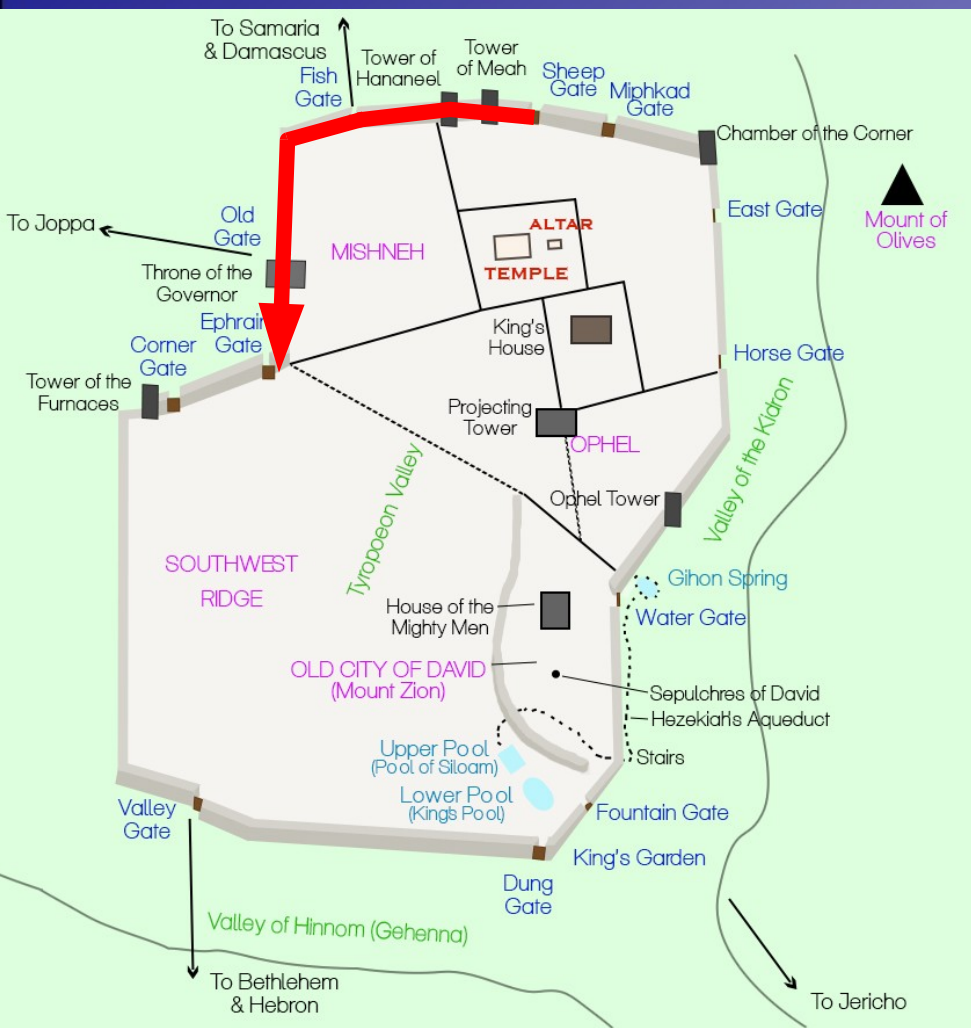


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- **Please read Nehemiah 3:8**
 - Do goldsmiths and perfume-makers make good masons?
 - Viggo Olsen, who helped rebuild thousands of houses in Bangladesh in 1972, was inspired by this verse
 - **In our church, we really do like to see competence in ministry —but we're *more* interested in**
 - Faithfulness**
 - Availability**
 - Teachability**

