

Types and Shadows

6

The Gates of Jerusalem

As we have seen, the restoration of the natural Temple pre-pictures the present-day restoration of God's spiritual Temple. But this wasn't the end of the restoration process. After the rebuilding of the Temple under the leadership of Zerubbabel, Joshua and Ezra, God called Nehemiah to return to Jerusalem to restore something totally different. Like the book of Ezra, the book of Nehemiah is a book of restoration, but this time it is a record of the rebuilding of the walls and gates of the *city* of Jerusalem.

Read Nehemiah 1:1-4
Read Nehemiah 2:5

The edict for the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem was issued by the Persian king Artaxerxes in 445 BC. The Temple had been successfully rebuilt under Ezra, but the walls of the city itself lay in ruin (**Nehemiah 2:17**). Two centuries earlier, Isaiah had prophesied of the day of Nehemiah. **Isaiah 26:1-2** declares:

“In that day this song will be sung in the land of Judah: We have a strong city; God makes salvation its walls and ramparts. Open the gates that the righteous nation may enter...”

This is in strong contrast to the earlier prophetic vision found in **Isaiah 24:12** of a desolate Jerusalem:

“The city is left in ruins, with its gates battered down.”

The restoration process, carried out under Nehemiah's leadership, took Jerusalem from a city “left in ruins, with its gates battered down” of **Isaiah 24:12** to the “strong city” of **Isaiah 26:1**. The restoration of the city walls is, as we shall see, a type – a vivid picture of the work God is doing today in the restoration of his Church, the spiritual City of God.

A Tapestry of Types

The Tabernacle of Moses

The Tabernacle of David

The Sacrificial System

The Restoration of the Temple

▶ **The Gates of Jerusalem** ◀

The Feasts of Israel

Two Mountains

The High Priest

The Torn Veil

The Spiritual City

Read Revelation 21:2

At the close of this age, we see the new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven, described as a bride prepared for her wedding day. The physical City itself is not the bride of the Lamb, but rather the *people* of that City. The City of God is not just a matter of physical structures, but is characterized by its citizens.

The “City of God” is described in the Bible on three levels:

- **Natural Jerusalem** – this earthly city was just “a shadow of the things that were to come” (**Colossians 2:17; Hebrews 8:5; 10:1**). This city’s spiritual condition was likened often to Sodom, Egypt and Sinai (**Revelation 11:8; Galatians 4:24-26**). In other words, all too often it mirrored the worst in the world rather than the best in heaven.
- **The Heavenly Jerusalem** – this is the City to which we now belong. It is the original, of which the natural city is just a copy (**Revelation 21:10**).
- **The New Jerusalem** – this is the heavenly Jerusalem come down to the earth. What is in heaven has now been established on the earth (note Jesus’ prayer in **Matthew 6:10**).

This City is the culmination of all of God’s purposes for mankind from the beginning of time till the return of Christ. Now, moving backwards through the book of **Hebrews**, we will see the outworking of this plan through history.

Read Hebrews 13:12-14

The constant motivation of Christians down through the ages has been the vision of this “city that is to come.” Christians have endured suffering, persecution and rejection, all because of the assurance of that City.

Read Hebrews 12:22-23

When you stepped into Christ, you became a naturalized citizen of that City (**Ephesians 2:19**). Even now, as a citizen of this City, your heart has been stamped with its vision and its name (**Revelation 3:12**). This dramatically changes the way you live down here on earth. In **Philippians 3:20**, Paul writes:

“But *our* citizenship is in heaven...”

Read Hebrews 11:16

Right down through history, the heroes of faith have had their eyes set upon the City of God, a City prepared for them ahead of time (note **John 14:1-3**).

Read Hebrews 11:9-10

Abraham’s eyes were fixed on that eternal City and this was the basis of his faith (**Hebrews 11:1**). This vision caused him to live “like a stranger in a foreign country,” and a similar hope also has the same effect on us.

The City with Foundations

Did you notice the focus of Abraham's faith? It was a "city *with foundations*, whose architect and builder is God." The New Jerusalem is set apart from other cities by its foundations, which represent its permanence, compared with the impermanence of the things of this world (**1 Peter 1:24-25; Hebrews 12:26-27**).

In **Revelation 21:9-11,14**, we find this description:

"One of the seven angels...said to me, 'Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.' And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal...The wall of the city had *twelve foundations*, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb."

Note that it was the city *wall* that had foundations, set deep into bedrock. These foundations are described in terms of twelve precious stones, each a layer of the foundation. But the overall description is one of a purity of reflective light:

"It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal."

Jasper is believed to be the same as the diamond. If you hold a diamond up to the sun, it catches the sunlight, splintering it in all directions, breaking it up into its component colors. This is what the glory of God, shining through the City, is like. Each of us is different, like a facet cut into a diamond. The glory of God shines through each Christian's life in a completely unique way.

Adorned with Gems

Read **Isaiah 54:11-12**

Revelation 21:19 gives a description of the foundations of the New Jerusalem:

"The foundations of the city walls were decorated with every kind of precious stone..."

The foundations of the walls were adorned with precious stones, again representing the tremendous variety of human lives that make up the city. In **Ezekiel 8:7-17**, God shows Ezekiel the spiritual condition of the people of his day. In this passage, we see a horrific progression in their godlessness and rebellion against the Lord at the time just prior to the destruction of the city of Jerusalem.

- They adorned the foundations of their city with idolatrous and unclean symbols (**verses 7-12**).
- They longed for foreign gods at the very entrance to God's Temple (**verses 13-14**).
- They worshipped Tammuz, the Babylonian god of nature, within the court of God's Temple (**verses 15-16**).

Today, too, the Church has adorned the foundations of its walls with the things of this world. Part of the restoration work of the Holy Spirit is to purify the Church, so that what adorns the foundations will truly be “gold, silver, precious stones” (see **1 Corinthians 3:12; Isaiah 54:11-14**).

Read 2 Corinthians 6:16-18

The Walls of the City

The walls of a city are designed to protect it against the assault of its enemies. Time and time again, God uses the natural walls of Jerusalem to illustrate the spiritual condition of his people (**Isaiah 30:12-13**).

Read Ezekiel 13:5

The “breaks in the wall” that God speaks of were not breaks in the natural city wall, but breaks in the spiritual wall of Jerusalem.

Read Ezekiel 13:10-14

When **Ezekiel 13** was written, the natural walls of Jerusalem were still intact, but its spiritual walls were broken down with numerous breaches and gaps (**Ezekiel 22:30**). But the leaders of that day built “flimsy walls” to cover the gaps and covered them in whitewash (note **Acts 23:2-3**). Likewise in our day, God is destroying the false walls and restoring the true walls of his City.

The Gates of the City

In **Isaiah 60:18**, God utters the promise of the coming City – a reiteration of the promise that inspired Abraham and countless other heroes of faith down through the ages. He declares:

“No longer will violence be heard in your land, nor ruin or destruction within your borders, but you will call your walls Salvation and your gates Praise.”

As you look at the following verses, you see that the description of this City is nothing less than the New Jerusalem coming down out of heaven. For in **verses 19-20**, the Lord says:

“The sun will no more be your light by day, nor will the brightness of the moon shine on you, for the Lord will be your everlasting light, and your God will be your glory. Your sun will never set again, and your moon will wane no more; the Lord will be your everlasting light, and your days of sorrow will end.”

We see the ultimate fulfillment of this promise in the coming City of God.

Read Revelation 21:2-4

Read Revelation 22:5

The promise of a city exempt from ruin and destruction, whose walls are called Salvation and whose gates are called Praise, is answered in nothing less than the

New Jerusalem itself! Let's take a closer look at the New Jerusalem then, noting particularly the description of its walls and its gates.

The New Jerusalem is described as having twelve gates, each made of a single, massive pearl (**Revelation 21:12-13,21**). A pearl is formed out of suffering, and represents the Lord himself – the “pearl of great price” (**Matthew 13:45-46**). He is the only entrance into the city (**Revelation 21:22-27; 22:14-15**).

Read Psalm 87:1-5

What a marvelous description of the City of God – not only of the City as a whole, but *your* part in that City! You are part of the “this one and that one” who were “born in her”! As you can see, our study of the gates of Jerusalem is not just an intellectual exercise. This is a survey of the City to which you belong!

Read Psalm 48:1-3,12-14

We are not just called to admire the City of God from a distance (**verses 1-3**). We are also called to “[w]alk about Zion, go around her, count her towers, consider well her ramparts, view her citadels” so that we may “tell of them to the next generation” (**verses 12-13**).

The Twelve Gates of Jerusalem

The city of Jerusalem had twelve gates, each with a significance in the daily life and historical experience of natural Jerusalem. Each gate also has a spiritual counterpart, for they are a “shadow” of the reality that was to come. Each gate therefore depicts aspects of the finished work of the Cross of Christ, outworked in our experience through the Holy Spirit.

The Sheep Gate

Read Nehemiah 3:1

The Sheep Gate was the first gate to be restored, and was rebuilt by the High Priest and his fellow priests (see **Hebrews 4:14-15; 7:24-8:2**). It was called the Sheep Gate because it led out to the sheep markets, where lambs were sold for sacrifice in the Temple (note **John 1:29; 1 Corinthians 5:7**). This gate also led to Golgotha, the path Jesus took to the crucifixion.

The Sheep Gate represents the experience of salvation made available by the Cross. This spiritual gate is the first to be built in our lives and was the first restored truth in the Reformation.

The Fish Gate

Read Nehemiah 3:3

This gate had been one of the main entrances into Jerusalem (**2 Chronicles 33:14; Zephaniah 1:10**). Merchants brought fish to the fish market through this entrance. The Fish Gate represents our witness, the Church reaching out to the world (**Matthew 4:19**).

The Jeshanah Gate

Read Nehemiah 3:6

The Hebrew word *jeshanah* means “old”. The elders of the city would meet at the gate to discuss matters of community importance and issue judgment on disputes (**Joshua 20:4; Ruth 4:11; Proverbs 31:23**). This gate represents both the eldership of the city (the leaders of the Body) and their guidance in the “ancient paths” of God (**Jeremiah 6:16**). Of interest, two men are picked out as rebuilders of the Jeshanah Gate: Uzziel, the goldsmith, and Hananiah, the perfume-maker (note the significance of gold in **1 Peter 1:6-7** and fragrance in **2 Corinthians 2:14-15**). Pastoral elders are the goldsmiths and perfume-makers of the Body!

The Valley Gate

Read Nehemiah 3:13

This gate led to two main valleys that defined Jerusalem both geographically and historically:

- **The Hinnom Valley** – Solomon erected high places for the vile god Molech in this valley (**1 Kings 11:7**), to whom children were sacrificed by fire (**2 Kings 16:3; 23:10; 2 Chronicles 28:3; 33:6; Jeremiah 7:31**). Josiah rendered the valley ceremonially unclean by spreading human bones over it (**2 Kings 23:10,13-14**). From then on it became the garbage tip of the city. Because of its ceremonial defilement and its history of human sacrifice by fire, this valley came to be called “Gehenna” (*ge hinnom* in Hebrew) – the name used for hell itself, the Lake of Fire (**Matthew 5:22; 10:28; 23:15,33**).
- **The Kidron Valley** – Kidron means “turbid, dusky, gloomy.” It was in this valley that the pagan altars and images were burned during the cleansing of Jerusalem (**1 Kings 15:13; 2 Kings 23:4-12; 2 Chron.15:16; 29:16; 30:14**). And it was across this valley that Jesus crossed to go to the Garden of Gethsemane (**John 18:1**).

The Valley Gate represents firstly what we have been taken out from, snatched from the fires of hell by the grace of God; and secondly, a valley we enter by choice, the valley of suffering and cleansing (**Psalms 23:4; 84:6-7**).

The Dung Gate

Read Nehemiah 3:14

The Dung Gate was the exit for city refuse and rubbish. Spiritual “dung” represents two things:

- The shame of the old life (**Romans 7:24; Revelation 21:27; 22:14-15**).
- The glory of the old life (**Philippians 3:7-10**).

As God’s new creation, we count both the shame and the glory of the old life as “dung” compared to knowing and experiencing the glory of Christ. We dump all this refuse out the spiritual Dung Gate.

The Fountain Gate

Read Nehemiah 2:14

The Fountain Gate appeared to be the gate in most ruin, so much so that it blocked Nehemiah's midnight inspection. This meant that, in the natural, the Fountain Gate must have been a center of concentrated attack during the siege of Jerusalem by the Babylonian army (**2 Kings 25:4**). Likewise, this gate's spiritual counterpart is a target of concentrated Satanic attack.

Read Nehemiah 3:15-19

A number of places are associated with and accessed by the Fountain Gate:

- The King's Pool – Pool of Shiloah/Siloam (**Isaiah 8:6; John 9:7**)
- The King's Garden (**Songs 4:12-16; Isaiah 58:11-12; John 15:1-8**)
- The Steps to Zion (**Nehemiah 12:37; Psalm 87:2; Hebrews 12:22**)
- The Tombs of David (**2 Chronicles 32:33; Acts 2:25-32**)
- The House of Heroes (**2 Samuel 23:8-39; 22:32-51**)
- The Armory (**Romans 13:12; Ephesians 6:11-17**).

The Fountain Gate derived its name from the fact that it was the primary access to the Gihon Spring, Jerusalem's sole perennial source of water. This fountain represented the life source of God himself (**Psalm 36:9; Isaiah 8:6**). Prior to the captivity, Jeremiah declared in **Jeremiah 2:13**:

“My people have committed two sins: They have forsaken me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water.”

Of all the sins of Jerusalem, these two were singled out by God as the most serious. And these twin sins remain the most serious in the Church too.

Read Psalm 23:2-3

Read John 7:37-39

Read Revelation 7:17

This is the spiritual experience accessed by the Fountain Gate – the living water, and its resulting fruitfulness (**Genesis 49:22**). Further, it is at the spring of living water that the Holy Spirit is looking for the Bride (as pictured in **Genesis 24:16,42-45**; see also **Revelation 22:17**).

The Water Gate

Read Nehemiah 3:26

In Scripture, water often represents the Word of God (**John 15:3; Ephesians 5:26; Hebrews 10:22**). And in the history of Jerusalem, the declaration of God's Word was closely associated with the Water Gate.

Read Nehemiah 8:1-13

Three things happened during this time:

- The Book was opened (**verse 5**)
- The people were instructed (**verse 7**)
- The Word was made clear (**verse 8**).

Most of the people had not heard the Scriptures before (**Amos 8:11**), and so there were four principal reactions to the Word:

- Worship (**verses 5-6**)
- Weeping (**verse 9**)
- Rejoicing (**verses 10-12**)
- Obedience (**verse 13**)

The spiritual reality of this gate is also being restored in our day, as God's Word is opened and we act in obedience to that Word.

The Horse Gate

Read Nehemiah 3:28

Even before its destruction, God promised to restore the Horse Gate (**Jeremiah 31:30-40**). This was the gate where the king's chariot passed through.

Read Job 39:19-25

In the Bible, the horse represents two attributes in the Christian life:

- Discipline (**James 3:3**)
- Warfare (**Zechariah 10:3; Songs 1:9**)

The Lord is restoring to his Church a military discipline, so that we may be harnessed for battle (**Revelation 6:2; 19:11; 17:14**).

The Miphkad Gate

Read Nehemiah 3:31

The Hebrew word used for this gate's name is *miphkad*, which can be translated in many ways – “appointment, mandate, designated spot, mustering, the numbering in a census.” For this reason, different Bible versions render this gate's name in with different English words – “the Inspection Gate,” “the Muster Gate” and “the Gate Miphkad”. But why was this gate called *miphkad* ?

The word *miphkad* is used in only three passages (one of them a repeated story).

Read 1 Chronicles 21:1-22:2

The *miphkad* here was the “number” of the soldiers taken in the census. It appears that God had specifically told David not number his army (note **verses 1-3,6-7**), for Moses had taken two censuses at God's own command (**Numbers 1:1-2; 26:1-2; Exodus 20:12-16**).* The result of David's transgression was sweeping judgment from God. But the angel of judgment was stopped by God at the threshing floor of Araunah. There David was commanded to build an altar before God, and it was there that the Temple was later built (**2 Chronicles 3:1**).

* It is also worth noting that the Law of Moses required that any census be accompanied by a “redeeming” of those counted (see **Exodus 30:12**). It is possible that this was the area in which David transgressed God's commandments.

So what did *miphkad* mean to the people of Jerusalem? Firstly, it meant the actual census held by David; secondly, and most importantly, it meant the temple site itself – the “appointed place” where the Ark of the Covenant eventually came to reside (**1 Chronicles 22:1,6-10**). The only other use of *miphkad* is in **Ezekiel 43:21**, where it means “appointed place”. The Miphkad Gate led into the Temple courtyard, the “appointed place” of God’s presence.

Today, God is restoring the Miphkad Gate in his Church – the appointed place of meeting together in the manifested presence of the Lord (**Hebrews 10:25; Matthew 18:20; Psalm 133**).

The Ephraim Gate

The Ephraim Gate did not need restoration, for it was already intact. *Ephraim* means “double fruitfulness.” Anything that is “double” requires a previous measure as a reference point for the doubling. The double fruitfulness of today’s Church is measured against the original fruitfulness of the early Church. This “gate” in the Church is not restored, but rather fulfilled. The Ephraim Gate was also associated with the Feast of Tabernacles (**Nehemiah 8:16-18**), which is God’s pattern for the last day harvest, something that we will explore in the next lesson. We are called not only to be fruitful, but doubly fruitful (**John 15:1-8; 14:12**).

The Gate of the Guard

This gate (also called the King’s Gate because it led to the palace) also needed no repairs (see **Nehemiah 3:29; 12:39**). There were two kinds of guards: the guards at all the gates (**7:1-3**) and the keepers at the Guard Gate (**7:45,73**). This last kind were not simply recruited, but appointed as a lineage, just like the priests, singers and temple servants (**Nehemiah 10:28-29,39; 12:45-47; 13:4-5**).

Read 1 Chronicles 9:17-26

The responsibilities of the gate-keepers (as an order within the temple) were to:

- Guard the thresholds of “the Tent” – the Temple (**verses 19-25**)
- Responsible for the rooms and treasures in the house of God (**verse 26**)
- Had charge of the key for opening each morning (**verse 27; Luke 11:52; Matthew 16:19**)
- Had charge of the articles used in temple service (**verse 28**)
- Were assigned to take care of the furnishings and consumables (**verse 29**)

One particular man set apart as a gatekeeper was Obed-Edom. Do you remember his story, from the lesson on the Tabernacle of David? The Ark of the Covenant had been left at his house for three months, and so captivated was he by the presence of God, he followed the Ark back to Jerusalem and became a doorkeeper in David’s Tabernacle (**2 Samuel 6:12; 1 Chronicles 13:13; 15:18,19,24; 16:4-5,37-38**). The gatekeepers were those who had such an experience of the riches of God’s presence that they devoted their whole lives to ushering others into the presence of God.

Read Psalm 84:10

The East Gate

Read Nehemiah 3:29

The East Gate was another gate that needed no repair. It was the middle of the three gates that led into the Temple compound – the other two being the Water Gate and the Gate of the Guard. The East Gate had special prophetic significance for the people of Israel (**Ezekiel 47:1; 10:1-5,15-19**), and represented two things:

- The coming of the glory of the Lord (**Ezekiel 43:1-5; Isaiah 6:1-4**)
- The coming of the Lord of glory* (**Zechariah 9:9-10; Luke 19:29-49**)

The week before his crucifixion, Jesus spent each night on the Mount of Olives. Each morning he would enter through the East Gate (**Matthew 24:1-3; Mark 13:1-4**). He later ascended to heaven from the Mount of Olives (**Acts 1:12**) and will return the same way he left (**Acts 1:10-11; Zechariah 14:4-9**). At that time He will again pass through the East Gate into the city of Jerusalem (**Psalms 24**).

The Repairer of Walls

Isaiah 61:1-3 is a prophecy fulfilled in Christ. This we know from **Luke 4:16-21**. But in the middle of **Isaiah 61:3**, the focus of the prophecy changes from the Lord Jesus to the results of his ministry – you! You (together with other believers in Christ) are described in two ways:

- **Verse 3** – As an oak of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, for the display of his splendor
- **Verse 4** – As one of those who rebuilds the ancient ruins and restores the places long devastated

This is a description of your ministry! The Lord is *the* Repairer of Walls, but he has also included you in this ministry of restoration! As **Isaiah 58:12** declares:

“Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins and will raise up the age-old foundations; you will be called Repairer of Broken Walls, Restorer of Streets with Dwellings.”

* The East Gate was also the point of the departure of God's glory from the temple prior to its destruction (**Ezekiel 11:1-3,23**).