

Monday, Aug 12

**All passages taken from Holy Bible, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996.
Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, Illinois 60189.
All rights reserved.**

Nehemiah 3:15 - 5:13

3 15 The Fountain Gate was repaired by Shallum son of Col-hozeh, the leader of the Mizpah district. He rebuilt it, roofed it, set up its doors, and installed its bolts and bars. Then he repaired the wall of the pool of Siloam near the king's garden, and he rebuilt the wall as far as the stairs that descend from the City of David. **16** Next to him was Nehemiah son of Azbuk, the leader of half the district of Beth-zur. He rebuilt the wall from a place across from the tombs of David's family as far as the water reservoir and the House of the Warriors. **17** Next to him, repairs were made by a group of Levites working under the supervision of Rehum son of Bani. Then came Hashabiah, the leader of half the district of Keilah, who supervised the building of the wall on behalf of his own district. **18** Next down the line were his countrymen led by Binnui son of Henadad, the leader of the other half of the district of Keilah. **19** Next to them, Ezer son of Jeshua, the leader of Mizpah, repaired another section of wall across from the ascent to the armory near the angle in the wall. **20** Next to him was Baruch son of Zabbai, who zealously repaired an additional section from the angle to the door of the house of Eliashib the high priest. **21** Meremoth son of Uriah and grandson of Hakkoz rebuilt another section of the wall extending from the door of Eliashib's house to the end of the house. **22** The next repairs were made by the priests from the surrounding region. **23** After them, Benjamin and Hasshub repaired the section across from their house, and Azariah son of Maaseiah and grandson of Ananiah repaired the section across from his house. **24** Next was Binnui son of Henadad, who rebuilt another section of the wall from Azariah's house to the angle and the corner. **25** Palal son of Uzai carried on the work from a point opposite the angle and the tower that projects up from the king's upper house beside the court of the guard. Next to him were Pedaiah son of Parosh, **26** with the Temple servants living on the hill of Ophel, who repaired the wall as far as a point across from the Water Gate to the east and the projecting tower. **27** Then came the people of Tekoa, who repaired another section across from the great projecting tower and over to the wall of Ophel. **28** Above the Horse Gate, the priests repaired the wall. Each one repaired the section immediately across from his own house. **29** Next Zadok son of Immer also rebuilt the wall across from his own house, and beyond him was Shemaiah son of Shecaniah, the gatekeeper of the East Gate. **30** Next Hananiah son of Shelemiah and Hanun, the sixth son of Zalaph, repaired another section, while Meshullam son of Berekiah rebuilt the wall across from where he lived. **31** Malkijah, one of the goldsmiths, repaired the wall as far as the housing for the

Temple servants and merchants, across from the Inspection Gate. Then he continued as far as the upper room at the corner. **32** The other goldsmiths and merchants repaired the wall from that corner to the Sheep Gate.

4 1 Sanballat was very angry when he learned that we were rebuilding the wall. He flew into a rage and mocked the Jews, **2** saying in front of his friends and the Samaritan army officers, “What does this bunch of poor, feeble Jews think they’re doing? Do they think they can build the wall in a single day by just offering a few sacrifices? Do they actually think they can make something of stones from a rubbish heap—and charred ones at that?” **3** Tobiah the Ammonite, who was standing beside him, remarked, “That stone wall would collapse if even a fox walked along the top of it!” **4** Then I prayed, “Hear us, our God, for we are being mocked. May their scoffing fall back on their own heads, and may they themselves become captives in a foreign land!” **5** Do not ignore their guilt. Do not blot out their sins, for they have provoked you to anger here in front of the builders.” **6** At last the wall was completed to half its height around the entire city, for the people had worked with enthusiasm. **7** But when Sanballat and Tobiah and the Arabs, Ammonites, and Ashdodites heard that the work was going ahead and that the gaps in the wall of Jerusalem were being repaired, they were furious. **8** They all made plans to come and fight against Jerusalem and throw us into confusion. **9** But we prayed to our God and guarded the city day and night to protect ourselves. **10** Then the people of Judah began to complain, “The workers are getting tired, and there is so much rubble to be moved. We will never be able to build the wall by ourselves.” **11** Meanwhile, our enemies were saying, “Before they know what’s happening, we will swoop down on them and kill them and end their work.” **12** The Jews who lived near the enemy came and told us again and again, “They will come from all directions and attack us!” **13** So I placed armed guards behind the lowest parts of the wall in the exposed areas. I stationed the people to stand guard by families, armed with swords, spears, and bows. **14** Then as I looked over the situation, I called together the nobles and the rest of the people and said to them, “Don’t be afraid of the enemy! Remember the Lord, who is great and glorious, and fight for your brothers, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your homes!” **15** When our enemies heard that we knew of their plans and that God had frustrated them, we all returned to our work on the wall. **16** But from then on, only half my men worked while the other half stood guard with spears, shields, bows, and coats of mail. The leaders stationed themselves behind the people of Judah **17** who were building the wall. The laborers carried on their work with one hand supporting their load and one hand holding a weapon. **18** All the builders had a sword belted to their side. The trumpeter stayed with me to sound the alarm. **19** Then I explained to the nobles and officials and all the people, “The work is very spread out, and we are widely separated from each other along the wall.” **20** When you hear the

blast of the trumpet, rush to wherever it is sounding. Then our God will fight for us!” **21** We worked early and late, from sunrise to sunset. And half the men were always on guard. **22** I also told everyone living outside the walls to stay in Jerusalem. That way they and their servants could help with guard duty at night and work during the day. **23** During this time, none of us—not I, nor my relatives, nor my servants, nor the guards who were with me—ever took off our clothes. We carried our weapons with us at all times, even when we went for water.

5 1 About this time some of the men and their wives raised a cry of protest against their fellow Jews. **2** They were saying, “We have such large families. We need more food to survive.” **3** Others said, “We have mortgaged our fields, vineyards, and homes to get food during the famine.” **4** And others said, “We have had to borrow money on our fields and vineyards to pay our taxes. **5** We belong to the same family as those who are wealthy, and our children are just like theirs. Yet we must sell our children into slavery just to get enough money to live. We have already sold some of our daughters, and we are helpless to do anything about it, for our fields and vineyards are already mortgaged to others.” **6** When I heard their complaints, I was very angry. **7** After thinking it over, I spoke out against these nobles and officials. I told them, “You are hurting your own relatives by charging interest when they borrow money!” Then I called a public meeting to deal with the problem. **8** At the meeting I said to them, “We are doing all we can to redeem our Jewish relatives who have had to sell themselves to pagan foreigners, but you are selling them back into slavery again. How often must we redeem them?” And they had nothing to say in their defense. **9** Then I pressed further, “What you are doing is not right! Should you not walk in the fear of our God in order to avoid being mocked by enemy nations?” **10** I myself, as well as my brothers and my workers, have been lending the people money and grain, but now let us stop this business of charging interest. **11** You must restore their fields, vineyards, olive groves, and homes to them this very day. And repay the interest you charged when you lent them money, grain, new wine, and olive oil.” **12** They replied, “We will give back everything and demand nothing more from the people. We will do as you say.” Then I called the priests and made the nobles and officials swear to do what they had promised. **13** I shook out the folds of my robe and said, “If you fail to keep your promise, may God shake you like this from your homes and from your property!” The whole assembly responded, “Amen,” and they praised the LORD. And the people did as they had promised.

7 25 Now regarding your question about the young women who are not yet married. I do not have a command from the Lord for them. But the Lord in his mercy has given me wisdom that can be trusted, and I will share it with you. **26** Because of the present crisis, I think it is best to remain as you are. **27** If you have a wife, do not seek to end the marriage. If you do not have a wife, do not seek to get married. **28** But if you do get married, it is not a sin. And if a young woman gets married, it is not a sin. However, those who get married at this time will have troubles, and I am trying to spare you those problems. **29** But let me say this, dear brothers and sisters: The time that remains is very short. So from now on, those with wives should not focus only on their marriage. **30** Those who weep or who rejoice or who buy things should not be absorbed by their weeping or their joy or their possessions. **31** Those who use the things of the world should not become attached to them. For this world as we know it will soon pass away. **32** I want you to be free from the concerns of this life. An unmarried man can spend his time doing the Lord's work and thinking how to please him. **33** But a married man has to think about his earthly responsibilities and how to please his wife. **34** His interests are divided. In the same way, a woman who is no longer married or has never been married can be devoted to the Lord and holy in body and in spirit. But a married woman has to think about her earthly responsibilities and how to please her husband. **35** I am saying this for your benefit, not to place restrictions on you. I want you to do whatever will help you serve the Lord best, with as few distractions as possible. **36** But if a man thinks that he's treating his fiancée improperly and will inevitably give in to his passion, let him marry her as he wishes. It is not a sin. **37** But if he has decided firmly not to marry and there is no urgency and he can control his passion, he does well not to marry. **38** So the person who marries his fiancée does well, and the person who doesn't marry does even better. **39** A wife is bound to her husband as long as he lives. If her husband dies, she is free to marry anyone she wishes, but only if he loves the Lord. **40** But in my opinion it would be better for her to stay single, and I think I am giving you counsel from God's Spirit when I say this.

Psalms 32:1 - 11

32 1 Oh, what joy for those whose disobedience is forgiven, whose sin is put out of sight! **2** Yes, what joy for those whose record the LORD has cleared of guilt, whose lives are lived in complete honesty! **3** When I refused to confess my sin, my body wasted away, and I groaned all day long. **4** Day and night your hand of discipline was heavy on me. My strength evaporated like water in the summer heat. Interlude **5** Finally, I confessed all my sins to you and stopped trying to hide my guilt. I said to myself, "I will confess my rebellion to the LORD ." And

you forgave me! All my guilt is gone. Interlude **6** Therefore, let all the godly pray to you while there is still time, that they may not drown in the floodwaters of judgment. **7** For you are my hiding place; you protect me from trouble. You surround me with songs of victory.

Interlude **8** The LORD says, "I will guide you along the best pathway for your life. I will advise you and watch over you. **9** Do not be like a senseless horse or mule that needs a bit and bridle to keep it under control." **10** Many sorrows come to the wicked, but unfailing love surrounds those who trust the LORD. **11** So rejoice in the LORD and be glad, all you who obey him! Shout for joy, all you whose hearts are pure!

Proverbs 21:5 - 7

21 5 Good planning and hard work lead to prosperity, but hasty shortcuts lead to poverty. **6** Wealth created by a lying tongue is a vanishing mist and a deadly trap. **7** The violence of the wicked sweeps them away, because they refuse to do what is just.