

THE SPIRIT OF FOUNTAINGATE

Text: Nehemiah 2:11-20

Key Word: Fountaingate

Key Thought: Our Church Has Been Birthed for a Specific Purpose

The message that I am about to deliver today is one that has taken 25 years to mature. It has come about because of the unique calling that God has given to those who identify themselves with this church called Fountaingate Christian Assembly. **In order to understand God's purpose and direction for a church, we must understand how it was conceived. This will keep us from wandering through dangerous and unknown areas in search of a man-made feeling or idea. WHAT A CHURCH IS is just as important as WHAT IT DOES.**

I truly believe that we must keep on the pathway that God has set before us as a local church. **IF WE CHOOSE TO GO IN A MULTITUDE OF DIRECTIONS, WE WILL SUFFER GREAT TROUBLE AND EVENTUALLY DESTRUCTION AS A CONGREGATION.** I've seen this happen too many times to not warn the people I love so much.

There Is No Doubt That this Message must Be Understood, Accepted and Followed If We Are to Continue in God's Compassionate Leading of THIS Church.

I. THE SURVEILLANCE (Nehemiah 2:11-16)

II. THE SIGNIFICANCE (Isaiah 8:6)

Read Nehemiah 2:11-20.

"By night I went out through the Valley Gate toward the Jackal Well and the Dung Gate, examining the walls of Jerusalem, which had been broken down, and its gates, which had been destroyed by fire.

14. Then I moved on toward the Fountain Gate and the King's Pools, but there was not enough room for my mount to get through;

15. So I went up the Valley by night, examining the wall. Finally I turned back and reentered through the Valley Gate."

Nehemiah 2:13-15

I. THE SURVEILLANCE (Nehemiah 2:11-16)

Most writers suggest that this event took place in the year 445 BC. Nehemiah served as a cupbearer to King Artaxerxes. During the twentieth year of this king's reign there were a number of revolts taking place in what was called the Trans-Euphrates region.

After four months of prayer, Nehemiah went before this Persian king (the leader of the empire) to request a leave of absence for an undetermined period of time (with pay!!) in order to return to Jerusalem. The king graciously granted the request and gave him letters to ensure a safe journey as well as the authority he would need to use forest products etc. for the rebuilding project at Jerusalem.

A. The Gates and Walls

Three nights after arriving, Nehemiah made his inspection of the damaged walls and gates to this once majestic city. He went through the southwestern gate known as the Valley Gate. Here he was immediately shown the red-stained rocks in the **Valley of Ben Hinnom** where the evil practice of human sacrifice to the heathen god Molech took place.

The Hebrew word "**Hinnom**" is translated "**genna**" in the Greek language. It is pronounced "**Ghenna or Gehenna.**" Both the Latin and English word is "**hell.**" It was known as "**The Valley of the son of Hell.**"

Next on his surveillance he passed by the Jackal Well. The word "**jackal**" has been translated "**dragon, wolf, serpent, whale monster, wild beast.**" It is believed that the jackals would search this area for dead bodies that had been used in the heathen sacrifices. He could see the ruins of the Dung Gate as he traveled through the area that became the city dump. It was the place of refuse. It was clearly seen at the extreme southern end of the city.

At this point he had no other direction to go but up. He had reached the lowest of the low. It was time to head north. The very next gate he came to was known as **Fountain Gate.** It was at this gate that he could not enter while riding his horse/mule. He would have had to dismount and crawl into the small space in order to enter at this point which he didn't do that night.

There was more damage in this area because they constructed supporting terraces through the time of King David and his son Solomon (II Samuel 5:9; I Kings 9:15,24) which they needed to offer better support with the Kidron Valley located so closely to the East. Nehemiah continued riding along the eastern ridge making his final evaluation of the damage before returning through the Valley Gate.

I. THE SURVEILLANCE (Nehemiah 2:11-16) (Contd.)

B. The Pool of Siloam

As I studied the area near the Fountain Gate, I soon recognized a significant truth for our church. Just west of the gate was a pool that was fed by an underground stream. It was called the “*Pool of Siloam.*” (which meaning “*sent or conducted*”).

According to Bliss (an archaeologist), this was once a great pool cut out of solid rock. He discovered that it was 71 feet north and south and 75 feet East and West. There was a splendid set of steps on the west side. An arcade 12 feet wide and 22 ½ feet high surrounded the pool. It was divided in two (a pool for the ladies and one for the men).

C. The Gihon Stream

Archaeological excavations have concluded that this pool was fed by an underground stream (known as “*the Gihon Stream*”) that was also cut through solid stone. The word “*Gihon*” means “*to burst forth.*” At the source, the water came intermittently by bursting forth. It collected in a small pool (called “*the Virgin Fountain*” [*which was approached by descending a series of 30 steps*]) where it flowed as a constant stream eventually gently emptying into the Pool of Siloam. The citizens of Jerusalem practically monopolized these waters because of the constant need of water in their arid climate. Recent diggings have discovered many tributaries dividing off from the Gihon Stream.

D. The Aqueduct of Siloam

An inscription found in 1880 by Dr. Schick and later translated by Professor Sayce was found upon a smooth rock surface about 27 inches square, some 15 feet from the mouth of the aqueduct and about 3 feet from ground level. It described how the tunnelers came to within 3 feet of each other.

“ . . . while there were still three cubits to be cut through, the voice of one man calling to the other was heard, showing that he was deviating to the right. When the tunnel was driven through, the excavators met man to man, axe to axe, and the water flowed from 1,200 cubits from the spring to the reservoir. The height of the rock above the heads of the excavators was 100 cubits.”

D. J. Wiseman
IBA, pp. 61-64
Recorded in the New Bible Dictionary
p. 1114

I. THE SURVEILLANCE (Nehemiah 2:11-16) (Contd.)

During the time of King Hezekiah, they cut another aqueduct underground that covered more than eight miles (south-west of Bethlehem) up into the city of Jerusalem. It most likely made its way into the King's Pool (Nehemiah 2:14 - Some believe these two pools are the same) located in the city of Jerusalem (close to the Pool of Siloam). This became a valuable source of water supply when the Assyrian army under the leadership of Sennacherib besieged the city.

*“As for the other events of Hezekiah's reign, all his achievements **and how he made the pool and the tunnel by which he brought water into the city.** are they not written in the book of the annals of the kings of Judah?*

II Kings 20: 20

II. THE SIGNIFICANCE (Isaiah 8:6)

You are probably wondering by now why I have told you all this. I do believe there is a significance to what I have been telling you. This significance surrounds **the Name and Purpose of our church.** We must not lose sight on **Who it was that birthed Fountaingate into existence - and what His desire for it was.** God not only had a purpose, but He also had a timing for what He did and how He has led our past and is planning to lead us in our future.

“there is a proper time and procedure for every matter

Ecclesiastes 8:6a

*“You saw the City of David had many breaches in its defenses; **you stored up water in the Lower Pool (Pool of Siloam).***

*10. **You counted the buildings in Jerusalem and tore down houses to strengthen the wall.***

*11. You built a reservoir between the two walls for the water of the Old Pool, **but you did not look to the One who made it, or regard the One who planned it long ago.***

12. The Lord, the Lord Almighty, called you on that day to weep and to wail, to tear out your hair and put on sackcloth.

13. But see, there is joy and revelry, slaughtering of cattle and killing of sheep, eating of meat and drinking of wine! ‘Let us eat and drink,’ you say, ‘for tomorrow we die!’”

Isaiah 22:9-13

II. THE SIGNIFICANCE (Isaiah 8:6)(Contd.)

There is a time to dance and there is a time to mourn. There is a time to have plenty and there is a time to be in want. There are times when we go through DRY TIMES and we attempt to divert God's plan and protection for our lives. We also forget about His provision into our lives and we come to believe that through our own efforts we supply for our needs.

We often get so concerned with temporary satisfaction that we can actually disregard God's plan. WE FOOLISHLY TRY TO STRENGTHEN OUR WALLS OF PROTECTION BUT IN DOING SO WE DESTROY OUR HOMES.

The prophet Isaiah gave a stern warning to the people of His day not to place their trust into things that look more powerful or provisional than God.

The LORD spoke to me again:

*6. **'Because this people has rejected the gently flowing waters of Shiloah (Gihon Spring flowing into the Pool of Siloam)** and rejoices over Rezin and the son of Remaliah,
7. **Therefore the Lord is about to bring against them the mighty floodwaters of the River (the Euphrates) - the king of Assyria with all his pomp. It will overflow all its channels, run over all its banks**
8. **And sweep on into Judah, swirling over it, passing through it and reaching up to the neck. Its outspread wings will cover the breadth of your land, O Immanuel!**"*

Isaiah 8:5-8

The inhabitants of Judah had turned from God's sustaining **power, provision and protection** as depicted by the **"gently flowing waters of Shiloah."** They rejoiced that Rezin (king of Syria) and the son of Remaliah who were northern enemies were defeated in battle (see Isaiah 7:1; II Kings 16:9) when Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria killed Rezin.

Remember that Fountain Gate led right into the Pool of Siloam. It was fed by an underground stream. **It never came as an overwhelming waterfall.** No one could see the source of the water because it flowed through solid rock in an underground aqueduct. **Fountaingate is not for those who desire the spectacular. It doesn't give place to showmanship or entertainment.**

II. THE SIGNIFICANCE (Isaiah 8:6)(Contd.)

This pool became a source of life for many local farmers. When the land became dry and parched, different irrigation channels were opened to allow the water to gently flow to the areas of need. Once again there was no gushing forth. It just continued to be a steady stream of life-giving water.

The Jewish Talmud (Sukkot 4.9) tells us that water was drawn from the Pool of Siloam in a golden vessel and was carried in a ceremonial procession to the Temple during the Feast of Tabernacles/Booths in the month of Tishri (**Sept** [our water started to pour out on Sept 6/92] - Oct). The people would spend seven days **humbling themselves and living in temporary homes (booths)** in order to remember their 40-year trek through the Sinai wilderness. They were reminded God's past **provision, protection and guidance** during the dry times of their life.

“On the last and greatest day of the Feast (of Tabernacles), Jesus stood and said in loud voice, ‘If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. 38. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.”

John 7:37,38

These truths combine to speak to me of the significance of our church. We are not better than other churches. We simply have a special purpose that has been embedded into our name and has become the spiritual DNA of our life source.

We must never change the spirit/nature of this church unless God decides to do so. If we ever run after the spectacular, we will find God's presence being quenched. If we ever become aggressive, we can expect for God to deal firmly and immediately with us. We will never grow healthy when we get away from the Spirit of Fountaingate.

We can never lose the heart or spirit of this assembly and survive. God grant us wisdom, faith and comfort to see His will be done in this church.

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Date: Oct 1 & 22/17

Place: FCA

Time: 10:30 Am

Song: Come Holy Spirit - C, D

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B. The Pool of Siloam

C. The Gihon Stream

D. The Aqueduct of Siloam - *Nehemiah 2:14; II Kings 20: 20*

II. THE SIGNIFICANCE (Isaiah 8:6) - *Ecclesiastes 8:6a; Isaiah 22:9-13; Isaiah 8:5-8; Isaiah 7:1; II Kings 16:9; Sukkot 4.9; *John 7:37,38**