



February 28, 2016

Nehemiah 3:22-27

Ever Changing, Never Changing Part 12

*“Examining Our Gates: the Bible”*

Pastor Gary Hamrick

The Bible is foundational to all that we believe and practice at Cornerstone Chapel. Sadly, many Christian colleges, seminaries, and denominations no longer hold to the inerrancy of the Bible. In today’s study from Nehemiah 3, the fifth in Pastor Gary’s series, we come to the Water Gate, which reminds us of the cleansing work of God’s Word, as well as the importance of God’s Word.

### The Water Gate

1. The Water Gate was the only gate that did not need to be repaired or rebuilt!
2. This gate was built for the purpose of allowing access to the Gihon Spring.
3. The Gibeonites were the people responsible for carrying water from the Gihon Spring to the inhabitants of the city of Jerusalem.
  - a. The details of the Gibeonite deception, which took place about 1300BC, and the reasons behind their servitude, are found in [Joshua 9](#).<sup>1</sup>
4. Pastor Gary said the modern application for the church today is that water is both life sustaining and cleansing.
5. [Ephesians 5:25-27](#) - *“... Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and*

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<sup>1</sup> If you would like to learn more about this story, please use this link - [http://cornerstonechapel.net/?page\\_id=21](http://cornerstonechapel.net/?page_id=21) - to watch Pastor Gary’s message in the Teaching Library (Time 7:58 to 12:50).

*to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.”*

6. The Lord desires to purify and cleanse us, and he accomplishes this through the effectual work of the Scriptures in our lives.
7. We must continue to keep the Bible central to all that we do, and to teach it as the inspired, inerrant, infallible Word of God, which changes hearts and lives.

### The Water Gate Points To God's Word

8. **Nehemiah 8:1-3** - *“When the seventh month came and the Israelites had settled in their towns, all the people assembled as one man in the square before the Water Gate. They told Ezra the scribe to bring out the Book of the Law of Moses, which the Lord had commanded for Israel. So on the first day of the seventh month Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly, which was made up of men and women and all who were able to understand. He read it aloud from daybreak till noon as he faced the square before the Water Gate in the presence of men, women and others who could understand. And all the people listened attentively to the Book of the Law.”*
  - a. The first five books of the Bible make up the Book of the Law of Moses: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.
  - b. The Book of the Law is also known as the Pentateuch.
9. It's noteworthy that two times we are told that the audience was made up of *“men, women, and all who were able to understand.”*
10. Pastor Gary said this Scripture has a major influence on the philosophy of ministry at Cornerstone Chapel, in that the church provides ministry for children so they can learn at their age-level.
11. The Bible is full of many accounts that are not appropriate for children, including adult themes like adultery, murder, sexual sin, etc.
  - a. Pastor Gary said the book of the Song of Solomon was not to be read by any Jew under the age of 30 who wasn't married, and today, there is a prohibition for any boy or girl who is younger than 13!
12. It's also true that infants and most children aren't able to sit and listen to a teaching for 35-40 minutes without becoming restless, which leads to children being a distraction, not only for their parents, but for others seated nearby.

13. Following this Scripture as a guideline for church services at Cornerstone Chapel helps people to be sensitive to the needs of others.
14. Pastor Gary said it is a major emphasis of Cornerstone Chapel's ministry that the Bible is taught in a way that allows everyone to hear, understand, and receive from the Lord, because the Bible is important.
15. Age-appropriate ministry for the entire family is of paramount importance at Cornerstone Chapel.

#### God's Word Is Inspired

16. God's Word is his revelation expressed through men, who were vessels of his thoughts and intentions.
17. **2 Peter 1:21** - *"For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along [as they were spoken to] by the Holy Spirit."*
18. **2 Timothy 3:16** - *"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."*
19. Pastor Gary said, "Inspiration means that God so directed the human writers of Scripture, using their unique personalities and their unique literary styles, his complete revelation for mankind was recorded."
  - a. The writers did not superimpose their own views or ideas.
  - b. The Bible is a compilation of 66 books (Genesis to Revelation), written by approximately 40 authors, over a period of about 1,600 years, and yet, all of it wonderfully and miraculously compliments itself, is non-contradictory, thoroughly consistent, and gives one central theme, which is found in **John 3:16!**
  - c. **John 3:16** - *"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, what whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."*

#### God's Word is Inerrant

20. The Word of God is true and without contradiction or error in the original manuscripts.

## God's Word is Infallible

21. God's Word is accurate, reliable, and trustworthy for all matters of faith and practice.

## 200 Christian Colleges

22. In 2011, a research group surveyed leaders at 200 Christian colleges, and found that they have varying views on the Scripture, which demonstrates the growing erosion of belief in the inspiration, inerrancy, and infallibility of the Bible.<sup>2 3</sup>

a. The Bible

i. 98% believe in the inspiration of Scripture

ii. 81% believe in the infallibility of Scripture

iii. 74% believe in the inerrancy of Scripture

b. Old Testament History

i. 60% believe God created the Earth in six literal 24-hour days

ii. 58% believe the Flood was worldwide

23. It is a remarkably sad state of affairs when people in Christian communities no longer hold the Bible in high regard.

24. As a point of reference, most of the institutions of higher learning started in America 300 years ago were founded as Christian universities, which trained people to minister the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

25. Pastor Gary shared several quotes from a June 2007 article written by Bodie Hodge, for Answers in Genesis.<sup>4</sup>

a. "Most of the colleges in the United States that started over 300 years ago were Bible-proclaiming schools originally. Harvard and Yale (originally Puritan) and Princeton (originally Presbyterian) once had rich Christian histories."

b. "Accepting a naturalistic worldview and compromising Scripture were the first cracks in these universities Christian foundation. These cracks led to the collapse of their Christian heritage, as [Psalm 11:3](#) states, '*When the foundation is destroyed, what can the righteous do?*' Cracks in the foundation led to a collapse of the Christian worldview at these schools."

26. It's shocking to consider that Ivy League schools have become, when you find out that these schools started as seminaries!

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<sup>2</sup> <https://answersingenesis.org/college/many-christian-colleges-receive-a-failing-grade/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.christianpost.com/news/ken-ham-blasts-christian-colleges-for-compromised-stances-on-creationism-bibles-authority-50100/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://answersingenesis.org/christianity/harvard-yale-princeton-oxford-once-christian/>

- a. Brown University was founded in 1764
  - i. Latin motto – In Deo Speramus
  - ii. English translation – In God We Hope
- b. Columbia University was founded in 1754
  - i. Latin motto – In lumine Tuo videbimus lumen
  - ii. English translation – In Thy light we shall see light
- c. Dartmouth was founded in 1769
  - i. Latin motto – Vox clamantis in deserto
  - ii. English translation – A voice crying out in the wilderness
- d. University of Pennsylvania was founded in 1740
  - i. Laws Without Morals Are Useless
- e. Harvard was founded in 1636
  - i. Latin – Veritas
  - ii. English translation – Truth
- f. Yale was founded in 1701
  - i. Latin – Lux et veritas
  - ii. English translation – Light and truth
- g. Princeton was founded in 1746
  - i. Latin – Dei Sub Numine Viget
  - ii. English translation – Under God's Power She Flourishes

27. In 2001, the Barna Research Group conducted a survey of American denominations, and one of the questions was about the accuracy of the Bible.<sup>5</sup>

- a. The Bible is totally accurate
  - i. 77% - Assembly of God
  - ii. 70% - Non-denomination
  - iii. 66% - Baptist
  - iv. 38% - Methodist
  - v. 34% - Lutheran
  - vi. 22% - Episcopal
- b. Average
  - i. 34% - Mainline Protestant
  - ii. 26% - Catholic

28. Pastor Gary said that at Cornerstone Chapel, the Bible would always be what we teach, what we listen to, what we believe, and what we base our lives on!

29. Pastor Gary said, “The Water Gate was the only gate that did not need to be fixed. [People] need to stop trying to improve upon the Bible. It doesn’t need to be fixed. It needs to be embraced. [People] need to embrace the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible!”

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.barna.org/component/content/article/5-barna-update/45-barna-update-sp-657/53-religious-beliefs-vary-widely-by-denomination#.Vtdb2MfZeJU>

## Discussion Questions

1. Review the introduction to the study guide with your group to provide the appropriate background.
2. Read [Nehemiah 3:22-27](#) to provide the foundation for this study.
3. How has the Bible been life sustaining to you?
4. How has the Lord used the Bible to purify and cleanse you?
5. Is the Bible your “go to” when it comes to matters of practice and faith?
6. Read and discuss [Nehemiah 8:1-3](#).
7. Would you say Cornerstone Chapel is a “kid friendly” church?
8. How has the emphasis on age-appropriate children’s ministry been a blessing to your family?
9. Read and discuss [2 Peter 1:21](#) and [2 Timothy 3:16](#). (See #16 through #19 above)
10. Read and discuss Pastor Gary’s definitions of the inerrancy and infallibility of Scripture. (See #20 and #21 above).
11. Spend time talking about the 2011 survey Pastor Gary mentioned regarding Christian institutions of higher learning, the article about the history and founding purposes of Ivy League schools, and the survey about American denominations and the accuracy of the Bible. (See #22 through #27 above)
12. Read and discuss Pastor Gary’s concluding statement about the need to “embrace the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible.” (See #29 above)
13. Close your time in prayer as the Holy Spirit leads.

\* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New International Version (NIV 1984).