EDIFIED EDITION

Nehemiah

A modern rendering of the Holy Scriptures

13	406	Old	16
chapters	verses	Testament	book of 66

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Numbered notes follow each chapter.

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Chapter 1

Nehemiah 1 tells how, in the month of Kislev in the twentieth year, Nehemiah is at the citadel of Susa when his brother Hanani and some men arrive from Judah. They report that the survivors there are in great trouble and disgrace, that the wall of Jerusalem is broken down and its gates burned. Nehemiah sits down and weeps, mourns for days, and fasts and prays. He calls on the great and awesome God who keeps covenant, confesses the sins of Israel, his family and himself, and reminds God of His word to Moses: if they are unfaithful He will scatter them, but if they return He will gather them to the place He has chosen. He asks God to give him success and to grant him mercy before the king, for he is the king's cupbearer.

1 The words of Nehemiah son of Hacaliah. In the month of Kislev,[1] in the twentieth year, I was in the citadel of Susa.

2 Hanani, one of my brothers, came with some men from Judah, and I asked them about the Jews who had escaped and survived the captivity, and about Jerusalem.

3 They told me, "Those who survived the captivity and are back in the province are in great trouble and disgrace. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates have been burned."

4 When I heard this, I sat down and wept. For days I mourned, fasting and praying before the God of heaven.

5 I said, "LORD, God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and loyal kindness with those who love Him and keep His commandments,

6 let Your ear be attentive and Your eyes open to
hear the prayer Your servant is praying before You
now, day and night, for the people of Israel Your
servants. I confess the sins we Israelites have
committed against You. Both I and my father's
house have sinned.

7 We have acted very corruptly towards You. We
have not kept the commandments, the statutes
and the rules You gave Your servant Moses.

8 Remember the word You commanded Your
servant Moses: 'If you are unfaithful, I will scatter
you among the peoples.

9 But if you return to Me and keep My
commandments and carry them out, even if your
exiles are at the ends of the heavens, I will gather
them from there and bring them to the place I
have chosen as a dwelling for My name.'[2]

10 They are Your servants and Your people, whom
You redeemed by Your great power and Your
mighty hand.

11 Lord, let Your ear be attentive to the prayer of
Your servant and of Your servants who delight to
fear Your name. Give Your servant success today,
and grant him mercy before this man." I was then
the king's cupbearer.

1 November–December. The twentieth year is that of Artaxerxes I (2:1), that is, 445 BC.

2 Compare Leviticus 26:33 and Deuteronomy 30:1–5.

Chapter 2

Nehemiah 2 tells how, in the month of Nisan, the king notices Nehemiah's sadness. Afraid, Nehemiah explains that the city of his ancestors' tombs lies in ruins. When the king asks what he wants, he prays to the God of heaven and asks to be sent to rebuild it. The king agrees, sets a time for his return, and gives him letters for the governors and for Asaph, keeper of the royal forest, for the good hand of God is on him. Sanballat and Tobiah are displeased that someone has come to seek Israel's good. In Jerusalem Nehemiah rides out by night with a few men to inspect the broken walls, telling no one what God has put in his heart. Then he calls the leaders to rebuild the wall, tells them how God has helped him, and they say, "Let us get up and build." Sanballat, Tobiah and Geshem mock them, but Nehemiah answers that the God of heaven will give them success.

1 In the month of Nisan,[1] in the twentieth year of
King Artaxerxes, when wine was set before him, I
took the wine and gave it to the king. I had never
been sad in his presence.

2 So the king asked me, "Why do you look so sad,
when you are not ill? This can only be sadness of
heart." I was very much afraid,

3 but I said to the king, "May the king live for ever!
How can I not look sad, when the city where my
ancestors are buried lies in ruins and its gates
have been consumed by fire?"

4 The king said to me, "What is it you want?" So I
prayed to the God of heaven,

5 and answered the king, "If it pleases the king,
and if your servant has found favour with you,
send me to Judah, to the city where my ancestors
are buried, so that I may rebuild it."

6 The king, with the queen sitting beside him,
asked me, "How long will your journey take, and
when will you return?" It pleased the king to send
me, and I gave him a set time.

7 I also said to the king, "If it pleases the king, let
me have letters to the governors of the province
Beyond the River, so that they will grant me safe
passage until I reach Judah,

8 and a letter to Asaph, who looks after the king's
forest, telling him to supply me with timber for
beams for the gates of the temple citadel, for the
city wall and for the house I will occupy." The king
granted me this, for the good hand of my God was
on me.

9 So I came to the governors of the province
Beyond the River and gave them the king's letters.
The king had also sent army officers and
horsemen with me.

10 When Sanballat the Horonite[2] and Tobiah the
Ammonite official heard of this, they were greatly
displeased that someone had come to seek the
welfare of the people of Israel.

11 I came to Jerusalem, and after three days there

12 I got up during the night with a few men. I had
told no one what my God was putting in my heart
to do for Jerusalem. The only animal with me was
the one I was riding.

13 I went out by night through the Valley Gate
towards the Dragon Spring[3] and the Dung Gate,
inspecting the walls of Jerusalem, which were
broken down, and its gates, which had been
consumed by fire.
14 I went on to the Fountain Gate and the King's
Pool, but there was no room for the animal under
me to pass.
15 So I went up the valley by night, inspecting the
wall. Then I turned back and came in through the
Valley Gate, and so returned.
16 The officials did not know where I had gone or
what I was doing, for I had not yet told the Jews,
the priests, the nobles, the officials or any others
who would do the work.
17 Then I said to them, "You see the trouble we are
in: Jerusalem lies in ruins, and its gates have been
burned. Come, let us rebuild the wall of
Jerusalem, so that we may no longer be a
disgrace."
18 I told them how the good hand of my God had
been on me, and what the king had said to me.
They said, "Let us get up and build." So they set
their hands to the good work.
19 But when Sanballat the Horonite, Tobiah the
Ammonite official and Geshem the Arab heard of
it, they mocked us and despised us. "What is this
you are doing?" they said. "Are you rebelling
against the king?"
20 I answered them, "The God of heaven will give
us success. We His servants will get up and build,
but you have no share, no right and no memorial
in Jerusalem."

1 March–April.

2 Governor of Samaria, according to letters found at Elephantine in Egypt.

3 Or 'Jackal Well'.

Chapter 3

Nehemiah 3 records who rebuilt each stretch of the wall of Jerusalem, going round the city from the Sheep Gate. Eliashib the high priest and his fellow priests start the work and consecrate it. Men from Jericho, Tekoa, Gibeon, Mizpah, Zanoah, Beth-zur and Keilah take their sections, with goldsmiths, perfumers, merchants, district rulers, priests and Levites; the nobles of Tekoa alone refuse to bend their necks to the work, and Shallum works with his daughters. They repair the Fish Gate, the Old Gate, the Valley Gate, the Dung Gate, the Fountain Gate, the wall of the Pool of Shelah, the Water Gate, the Horse Gate and the Muster Gate, many of them working opposite their own houses, until the circuit returns to the Sheep Gate.

1 Eliashib the high priest[1] and his fellow priests set
to work and rebuilt the Sheep Gate. They
consecrated it and set up its doors, and went on to
consecrate the wall as far as the Tower of the
Hundred and the Tower of Hananel.
2 The men of Jericho took the next section, and
Zaccur son of Imri the one beyond it.
3 The Fish Gate was the work of the sons of
Hassenaah. They fitted its beams and hung its
doors with their bolts and bars.
4 The next section was repaired by Meremoth son
of Uriah, son of Hakkoz, the next by Meshullam
son of Berechiah, son of Meshezabel, and the next
by Zadok son of Baana.
5 Next to them the men of Tekoa made repairs, but
their nobles would not bend their necks to the
work of their lords.[2]
6 The Old Gate[3] was repaired by Joiada son of
Paseah and Meshullam son of Besodeiah, who
fitted its beams and hung its doors with their bolts
and bars.
7 Next to them repairs were made by Melatiah the
Gibeonite and Jadon the Meronothite, men of
Gibeon and Mizpah, who were under the authority
of the governor of the province Beyond the River.
8 Next to him Uzziel son of Harhaiah, one of the
goldsmiths, made repairs. Next to him Hananiah,
one of the perfumers, made repairs. They
restored[4] Jerusalem as far as the Broad Wall.
9 Rephaiah son of Hur, who ruled half the
Jerusalem district, repaired the next section.
10 Jedaiah son of Harumaph took the next section,
opposite his own house, and Hattush son of
Hashabneiah the one after that.
11 Another stretch, and the Tower of the Ovens, fell
to Malchijah son of Harim and Hasshub son of
Pahath-moab.

12 The next section was repaired by Shallum son of Hallohesh, who ruled the other half of the Jerusalem district, with his daughters.

13 Hanun and the people of Zanoah repaired the Valley Gate. They rebuilt it and set up its doors, bolts and bars, and they repaired a thousand cubits[5] of the wall as far as the Dung Gate.

14 The Dung Gate was repaired by Malchijah son of Rechab, who ruled the Beth-haccherem district. He rebuilt it and hung its doors with their bolts and bars.

15 Shallun son of Col-hozeh, ruler of the district of Mizpah, repaired the Fountain Gate. He rebuilt it, roofed it over and set up its doors, bolts and bars. He also rebuilt the wall of the Pool of Shelah[6] by the King's Garden, as far as the steps going down from the City of David.

16 After him Nehemiah son of Azbuk, ruler of half the district of Beth-zur, made repairs as far as a point opposite the tombs of David, the artificial pool and the House of the Warriors.

17 The Levites came next, under Rehum son of Bani, and beyond them Hashabiah, who ruled half the Keilah district, repaired the section for his own district.

18 After him their kinsmen made repairs under Binnui[7] son of Henadad, ruler of the other half of the district of Keilah.

19 Next to him Ezer son of Jeshua, ruler of Mizpah, repaired another section, opposite the ascent to the armoury at the Angle.

20 After him Baruch son of Zabbai eagerly repaired another section, from the Angle to the door of the house of Eliashib the high priest.

21 After him Meremoth son of Uriah, son of Hakkoz, repaired another section, from the door of Eliashib's house to the end of the house.

22 After him the priests from the surrounding region made repairs.

23 Benjamin and Hasshub came next, working opposite their house, and beyond them Azariah son of Maaseiah, son of Ananiah, working beside his.

24 After him Binnui son of Henadad repaired another section, from the house of Azariah to the Angle and the corner.

25 Palal son of Uzai worked opposite the Angle and the tower projecting from the upper palace, by the Court of the Guard. After him Pedaiah son of Parosh

26 and the temple servants living on Ophel made repairs as far as a point opposite the Water Gate on the east and the projecting tower.

27 After them the men of Tekoa repaired another section, from opposite the great projecting tower to the wall of Ophel.

28 Above the Horse Gate the priests made repairs, each opposite his own house.

29 Zadok son of Immer was next, working opposite his house, and beyond him Shemaiah son of Shecaniah, who kept the East Gate.

30 After him Hananiah son of Shelemiah and Hanun the sixth son of Zalaph repaired another section. After them Meshullam son of Berechiah made repairs opposite his room.

31 After him Malchijah, one of the goldsmiths, made repairs as far as the house of the temple servants and the merchants, opposite the Muster Gate, and as far as the upper room at the corner.

32 The last stretch, from the corner room to the Sheep Gate, was repaired by the goldsmiths and the merchants.

1 Grandson of Jeshua (12:10).

2 Or 'of their Lord'.

3 Or 'Jeshanah Gate'.

4 Or 'left'; the meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

5 About 450 metres (1,500 feet).

6 Probably the Pool of Siloam (John 9:7).

7 So some Hebrew manuscripts, the Greek and the Syriac (compare verse 24); most manuscripts have 'Bavvai'.

Chapter 4

Nehemiah 4 tells how Sanballat, furious at the building, mocks the feeble Jews before his allies, and Tobiah jokes that a fox could break their wall. Nehemiah prays that God will turn their scorn back on them. The people have their hearts in the work, and the wall rises to half its height. When Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabs, the Ammonites and the Ashdodites plot to attack, the builders pray and post a guard. Judah grows weary, the enemies threaten a surprise attack, and Jews living near them warn of it again and again. Nehemiah stations families with swords, spears and bows and tells them not to be afraid but to remember the great and awesome Lord and fight for their homes. God frustrates the plot, and all return to the wall. From then on half the men work and half stand guard, the builders each wear a sword, and a trumpeter stays beside Nehemiah to rally them, for "our God will fight for us." They work from dawn until the stars come out, and no one takes off his clothes.

1 When Sanballat heard that we were rebuilding
the wall, he flew into a rage. He was furious and
mocked the Jews.[1]

2 In the presence of his allies and the army of
Samaria he said, "What are these feeble Jews
doing? Will they restore it by themselves? Will
they offer sacrifices? Will they finish in a day? Will
they bring the stones back to life from those heaps
of rubble, burned as they are?"

3 Tobiah the Ammonite, who was beside him, said,
"Whatever they build, a fox climbing on it would
break down their stone wall."

4 Hear us, our God, for we are despised. Turn their
scorn back on their own heads, and give them up
as plunder in a land of captivity.

5 Do not cover their guilt or blot out their sin from
Your sight, for they have insulted the builders to
their faces.

6 So we went on building, and soon the whole wall
stood joined up to half its height, for the people
had their hearts in the work.

7 But when Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabs, the
Ammonites and the men of Ashdod heard that the
repair of Jerusalem's walls was going ahead and
that the gaps were being closed, they were very
angry.

8 They all plotted together to come and fight
against Jerusalem and throw it into confusion.

9 So we prayed to our God and posted a guard
against them day and night.

10 Meanwhile the people of Judah said, "The
strength of the labourers is failing, and there is so
much rubble that we cannot go on building the
wall."

11 And our enemies said, "They will not know or
see anything until we are right among them and
kill them, and put a stop to the work."

12 Then the Jews who lived near them came and
told us ten times over, "From every direction they
will come at us."[2]

13 So I stationed men in the lowest parts of the
space behind the wall, in the exposed places, and I
stationed the people by families, with their
swords, spears and bows.

14 I looked things over, then rose and spoke to the
nobles, the officials and all the others. "Do not
fear them," I said. "Remember the great and
awesome Lord, and fight for your brothers, for
your sons and daughters, for your wives and your
homes."

15 When our enemies heard that we knew of their
plot, and that God had frustrated it, we all
returned to the wall, each to his own work.

16 From that day on, half of my men did the work
while the other half held the spears, shields, bows
and body armour. The officers stood behind all the
people of Judah

17 who were building the wall. Those who carried
loads did so with one hand on the work and the
other holding a weapon.

18 Each of the builders had his sword strapped to
his side as he built, and the man who sounded the
trumpet stayed beside me.

19 I said to the nobles, the officials and the rest of
the people, "The work is great and spread out,
and we are separated along the wall, far from one
another.

20 When you hear the trumpet, gather to us at that
place. Our God will fight for us."

21 So we kept at the work, with half the men
holding spears, from the break of dawn until the
stars came out.

22 At that time I also said to the people, "Let every
man and his servant spend the night inside

Jerusalem, so that they can guard us by night and work by day."

23 So neither I nor my kinsmen nor my men nor the guards with me took off our clothes; each kept his weapon, even at the water.[3]

1 In Hebrew 4:1–6 are numbered 3:33–38, and 4:7–23 are numbered 4:1–17.

2 The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

3 The meaning of the last words of the Hebrew is uncertain.

Chapter 5

Nehemiah 5 tells how the people and their wives raise a great outcry against their fellow Jews. Some need grain for their large families, some have mortgaged fields and houses in the famine, and some have borrowed to pay the king's tax and have had to sell their children into slavery. Nehemiah is very angry. He accuses the nobles and officials of charging interest, calls a great assembly, and shames them: he has been buying back Jews from foreigners while they sell their own brothers. He urges them to walk in the fear of God, to stop lending at interest, and to give back the fields, vineyards, olive groves and houses. They promise, the priests put them under oath, and he shakes out his robe as a warning. The assembly says, "Amen." In his twelve years as governor Nehemiah takes no governor's allowance, unlike those before him, for he fears God. He works on the wall, feeds a hundred and fifty at his table, and asks God to remember him for good.

1 Now there was a great outcry from the people and their wives against their fellow Jews.

2 Some were saying, "We have many sons and daughters. We must get grain, so that we can eat and stay alive."

3 Others said, "We are mortgaging our fields, our vineyards and our houses to get grain during the famine."

4 Still others said, "We have had to borrow money for the king's tax on our fields and vineyards.

5 Yet our flesh is the same as our brothers' flesh, and our children are as good as theirs. But here we are forcing our sons and daughters into slavery. Some of our daughters are already enslaved, and we are powerless, for our fields and vineyards belong to others."

6 I was very angry when I heard their outcry and these complaints.

7 After thinking it over, I took the nobles and officials to task. "You are charging your own brothers interest!" I told them.[1] I called a great assembly against them

8 and said, "As far as we were able, we have bought back our Jewish brothers who had been sold to foreigners. Now you are selling your own brothers, only for them to be sold back to us!" They were silent and could find nothing to say.

9 I went on, "What you are doing is not right. Should you not walk in the fear of our God, to avoid the scorn of the nations, our enemies?

10 I too, and my brothers and my men, are lending them money and grain. Let us stop this charging of interest.

11 Give back to them this very day their fields, vineyards, olive groves and houses, and the interest[2] you have been charging them on money, grain, new wine and oil."

12 "We will give it back," they said, "and we will ask nothing more from them. We will do as you say." Then I summoned the priests and made the nobles and officials swear to do what they had promised.

13 I also shook out the fold of my robe and said, "So may God shake out from his house and his possessions anyone who does not keep this promise. So may he be shaken out and emptied!" The whole assembly said, "Amen," and praised the LORD. And the people did as they had promised.

14 Moreover, from the day I was appointed governor in the land of Judah, from the twentieth to the thirty-second year of King Artaxerxes,[3] twelve years, neither I nor my brothers ate the governor's food allowance.

15 The former governors who came before me laid heavy burdens on the people, taking from them food and wine besides forty shekels of silver.[4] Even their servants lorded it over the people. But I did not do so, because of the fear of God.

16 I also devoted myself to the work on this wall. We acquired no land, and all my men were gathered there for the work.

17 A hundred and fifty Jews and officials ate at my table, besides those who came to us from the surrounding nations.

18 Each day one ox, six choice sheep and some birds were prepared for me, and every ten days a large supply of wine of all kinds. Yet with all this I did not demand the governor's food allowance, because the burden on this people was so heavy.

19 Remember me for good, my God, for all that I have done on this people's behalf.

1 Forbidden among Israelites in Exodus 22:25 and Deuteronomy 23:19–20.
2 Hebrew 'the hundredth', probably one per cent a month.
3 445–433 BC.
4 About 460 grams (1 pound).

Chapter 6

Nehemiah 6 tells how, when the wall is finished except for the doors, Sanballat and Geshem try four times to lure Nehemiah to a meeting on the plain of Ono, but he answers that he is doing a great work and cannot come down. A fifth message, an open letter, accuses him of planning a revolt and of having prophets proclaim him king; he replies that it is all invented, and prays for strength. Shemaiah, hired by Tobiah and Sanballat, urges him to hide in the temple, but Nehemiah refuses, seeing that God has not sent him and that they mean to make him sin and discredit him. He prays that God will remember them and Noadiah the prophetess. The wall is finished on the twenty-fifth of Elul, in fifty-two days, and the nations lose heart, knowing that this work was done with the help of God. Yet nobles of Judah keep writing to Tobiah, who is tied to them by marriage, and he goes on sending letters to frighten Nehemiah.

1 When word came to Sanballat, Tobiah, Geshem the Arab and the rest of our enemies that I had rebuilt the wall and that not one gap was left in it, though by that time I had not hung the doors in the gates,

2 Sanballat and Geshem sent me this message: "Come, let us meet at one of the villages[1] on the plain of Ono." But they were planning to harm me.

3 So I sent messengers to them with this reply: "I am doing a great work and cannot come down. Why should the work stop while I leave it to come down to you?"

4 Four times they sent me the same message, and each time I gave them the same answer.

5 Then, the fifth time, Sanballat sent his servant to me with the same message, carrying an open letter.

6 In it was written: "It is reported among the nations, and Gashmu[2] confirms it, that you and the Jews are planning to rebel, and that this is why you are building the wall. According to these reports you are about to become their king.

7 You have even appointed prophets to proclaim about you in Jerusalem, 'There is a king in Judah!' Now these reports will reach the king. So come, let us talk this over together."

8 I sent him this reply: "Nothing like what you are saying has happened. You are inventing it in your own mind."

9 They were all trying to frighten us, thinking, "Their hands will drop from the work, and it will not be done." But now, strengthen my hands.

10 One day I went to the house of Shemaiah son of Delaiah, son of Mehetabel, who was shut in at home. He said, "Let us meet in the house of God, inside the temple, and let us shut the temple doors, for they are coming to kill you. They are coming to kill you by night."

11 But I said, "Should a man like me run away? And could a man like me go into the temple to save his life?[3] I will not go in."

12 I saw then that God had not sent him. He had spoken this prophecy against me because Tobiah and Sanballat had paid him.

13 He had been hired to frighten me into acting in this way and sinning, so that they could give me a bad name and discredit me.

14 Remember Tobiah and Sanballat, my God, for what they have done, and also Noadiah the prophetess and the rest of the prophets who were trying to frighten me.

15 The wall was completed in fifty-two days, on the twenty-fifth of Elul.[4]

16 When all our enemies heard of it and all the surrounding nations saw it, they greatly lost their

confidence, for they realised that this work had been done with the help of our God.

17 In those days too the nobles of Judah kept sending many letters to Tobiah, and Tobiah's letters kept coming to them.

18 For many in Judah were bound to him by oath, because he was the son-in-law of Shecaniah son of Arah, and his son Jehohanan had married the daughter of Meshullam son of Berechiah.

19 They even kept telling me about his good deeds and reporting my words to him. And Tobiah sent letters to frighten me.

1 Or 'at Hakkephirim'.

2 Another form of the name Geshem.

3 Only priests could enter (Numbers 18:7; compare 2 Chronicles 26:16–20).

4 August–September 445 BC.

Chapter 7

Nehemiah 7 tells how, once the wall is built and the doors hung, gatekeepers, singers and Levites are appointed. Nehemiah puts his brother Hanani and Hananiah the commander of the citadel in charge of Jerusalem, for Hananiah is faithful and fears God. The gates are not to be opened until the sun is hot, and the people are to keep watch by their houses. The city is large, but few people live there. God moves Nehemiah to enrol the people, and he finds the genealogical record of those who first returned, which repeats with small differences the list in Ezra 2: the families and towns, the priests, Levites, singers, gatekeepers and temple servants, those who could not prove their ancestry, and the total of forty-two thousand three hundred and sixty, with their animals and their gifts for the work. So all Israel settles in their towns.

1 When the wall had been rebuilt and I had hung the doors, and the gatekeepers, the singers and the Levites had been appointed,

2 I put my brother Hanani in charge of Jerusalem, together with Hananiah the commander of the citadel, for he was a trustworthy man who feared God more than most.

3 I told them, "The gates of Jerusalem must not be opened until the sun is hot, and while the guards are still on duty, have them shut and bar the doors. Appoint guards from among the people of Jerusalem, some at their posts and some opposite their own houses."

4 The city was wide and large, but there were few people in it, and the houses had not been rebuilt.

5 Then my God put it into my heart to gather the nobles, the officials and the people to be enrolled by families. I found the genealogical record of those who had come back first, and this is what I found written in it:

6 These are the people of the province who came up from the captivity of the exiles, whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had carried away. They returned to Jerusalem and Judah, each to his own town.[1]

7 Their leaders were Zerubbabel, Jeshua, Nehemiah, Azariah, Raamiah, Nahamani, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispereth, Bigvai, Nehum and Baanah. The men of Israel numbered as follows:

8 descendants of Parosh: two thousand one hundred and seventy-two;

9 descendants of Shephatiah: three hundred and seventy-two;

10 descendants of Arah: six hundred and fifty-two;

11 descendants of Pahath-moab, through the line of Jeshua and Joab: two thousand eight hundred and eighteen;

12 descendants of Elam: one thousand two hundred and fifty-four;

13 descendants of Zattu: eight hundred and forty-five;

14 descendants of Zaccai: seven hundred and sixty;

15 descendants of Binnui: six hundred and forty-eight;

16 descendants of Bebai: six hundred and twenty-eight;

17 descendants of Azgad: two thousand three hundred and twenty-two;

18 descendants of Adonikam: six hundred and sixty-seven;

19 descendants of Bigvai: two thousand and sixty-seven;

20 descendants of Adin: six hundred and fifty-five;

21 descendants of Ater, through Hezekiah: ninety-eight;
22 descendants of Hashum: three hundred and twenty-eight;
23 descendants of Bezai: three hundred and twenty-four;
24 descendants of Hariph: a hundred and twelve;
25 descendants of Gibeon: ninety-five;
26 men of Bethlehem and Netophah: a hundred and eighty-eight;
27 men of Anathoth: a hundred and twenty-eight;
28 men of Beth-azmaveth: forty-two;
29 men of Kiriath-jearim, Chephirah and Beeroth: seven hundred and forty-three;
30 men of Ramah and Geba: six hundred and twenty-one;
31 men of Michmas: a hundred and twenty-two;
32 men of Bethel and Ai: a hundred and twenty-three;
33 men of the other Nebo: fifty-two;
34 people of the other Elam: one thousand two hundred and fifty-four;
35 people of Harim: three hundred and twenty;
36 people of Jericho: three hundred and forty-five;
37 people of Lod, Hadid and Ono: seven hundred and twenty-one;
38 people of Senaah: three thousand nine hundred and thirty.
39 The priests: the line of Jedaiah, from Jeshua's house: nine hundred and seventy-three;
40 descendants of Immer: one thousand and fifty-two;
41 descendants of Pashhur: one thousand two hundred and forty-seven;
42 descendants of Harim: one thousand and seventeen.
43 The Levites: descendants of Jeshua, through Kadmiel, of the line of Hodevah: seventy-four.
44 The singers: descendants of Asaph: a hundred and forty-eight.
45 The gatekeepers: descendants of Shallum, Ater, Talmon, Akkub, Hatita and Shobai: a hundred and thirty-eight.
46 The temple servants: descendants of Ziha, Hasupha, Tabbaoth,
47 Keros, Sia, Padon,
48 Lebana, Hagaba, Shalmai,
49 Hanan, Giddel, Gahar,
50 Reaiah, Rezin, Nekoda,
51 Gazzam, Uzza, Paseah,
52 Besai, Meunim, Nephushesim,
53 Bakbuk, Hakupha, Harhur,
54 Bazlith, Mehida, Harsha,
55 Barkos, Sisera, Temah,
56 Neziah and Hatipha.
57 The descendants of Solomon's servants: descendants of Sotai, Sophereth, Perida,
58 Jaala, Darkon, Giddel,
59 Shephatiah, Hattil, Pochereth-hazzebaim and Amon.
60 All the temple servants and the descendants of Solomon's servants came to three hundred and ninety-two.
61 The following came up from Tel-melah, Tel-harsha, Cherub, Addon and Immer, but they could not prove that their families and their ancestry were Israelite:
62 descendants of Delaiah, Tobiah and Nekoda: six hundred and forty-two.
63 And from among the priests: descendants of Hobaiah, Hakkoz and Barzillai, who had married a daughter of Barzillai the Gileadite and taken that family name.
64 These men searched for their entries in the genealogical records but could not find them, so they were barred from the priesthood as unclean.
65 The governor told them not to eat any of the most holy food until a priest arose who could consult the Urim and Thummim.
66 The whole assembly together came to forty-two thousand three hundred and sixty,
67 besides their male and female servants, who numbered seven thousand three hundred and thirty-seven. They also had two hundred and forty-five male and female singers.
68 They had seven hundred and thirty-six horses, two hundred and forty-five mules,[2]
69 four hundred and thirty-five camels and six thousand seven hundred and twenty donkeys.
70 Some of the family heads gave to the work. The governor gave to the treasury a thousand gold darics,[3] fifty basins and five hundred and thirty priestly robes.

71 Some of the family heads gave to the treasury for the work twenty thousand gold darics[4] and two thousand two hundred minas[5] of silver.

72 What the rest of the people gave was twenty thousand gold darics, two thousand minas of silver and sixty-seven priestly robes.

73 So the priests and Levites, the gatekeepers and singers, some of the people, the temple servants and all the rest of Israel made their homes in their towns. By the seventh month the Israelites were settled there.

1 Verses 6–73 repeat Ezra 2:1–70, with differences in some names and numbers.

2 This verse is missing from most Hebrew manuscripts and is supplied from Ezra 2:66. Verses 69–73 are numbered 68–72 in Hebrew.

3 About 8.4 kilograms (18 pounds).

4 About 170 kilograms (370 pounds); so also in verse 72.

5 About 1.25 tonnes.

Chapter 8

Nehemiah 8 tells how all the people gather as one man in the square before the Water Gate and ask Ezra the scribe to bring the Book of the Law of Moses. On the first day of the seventh month he reads it from early morning until midday from a wooden platform, with leaders beside him. When he opens the book the people stand; he blesses the LORD and they answer, "Amen, Amen," lifting their hands and bowing to the ground. The Levites help the people to understand, giving the sense of what is read. The people weep at the words of the Law, but Nehemiah, Ezra and the Levites tell them not to grieve, for the day is holy: they are to eat, drink, send portions to those who have nothing, and rejoice, for the joy of the LORD is their stronghold. On the second day the leaders study the Law and find the command to live in booths in the seventh month. The people gather branches and make booths, as they have not done since the days of Joshua, and there is great joy. Ezra reads from the Law each day of the festival, and on the eighth day there is a closing assembly.

1 Then the people came together as one man in the square in front of the Water Gate, and they asked Ezra the scribe to bring out the Book of the Law of Moses, which the LORD had laid down for Israel.

2 So on the first day of the seventh month Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly, men and women and all who could listen with understanding.

3 He read from it, facing the square before the Water Gate, from early morning until midday, in the presence of the men, the women and those who could understand, and all the people listened closely to the Book of the Law.

4 Ezra the scribe stood on a wooden platform they had made for the purpose. Beside him on his right stood Mattithiah, Shema, Anaiah, Uriah, Hilkiah and Maaseiah, and on his left Pedaiah, Mishael, Malchijah, Hashum, Hashbaddanah, Zechariah and Meshullam.

5 Ezra opened the book where everyone could see it, for he stood high above them, and at the opening of it the whole crowd rose to their feet.

6 Then Ezra praised the LORD, the great God, and all the people lifted their hands and answered, "Amen, Amen." They bowed low and worshipped the LORD, their faces to the ground.

7 The Levites Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodiah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan and Pelaiah[1] helped the people to understand the Law, while the people stayed in their places.

8 They read from the book, from the Law of God, clearly,[2] and gave the sense, so that the people understood what was read.

9 Then Nehemiah the governor, Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who were teaching the people said to them all, "This day is holy to the LORD your God. Do not mourn or weep." For all the people were weeping as they heard the words of the Law.

10 He said to them, "Go and enjoy rich food and sweet drinks, and send portions to anyone who has nothing ready, for this day is holy to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the LORD is your stronghold."

11 The Levites calmed all the people, saying, "Be still, for this day is holy. Do not grieve."

12 So all the people went away to eat and drink, to send portions and to celebrate with great joy, for

they had understood the words that had been explained to them.

13 On the next day the heads of all the families, with the priests and Levites, came together to Ezra the scribe to go deeper into the words of the Law.

14 They found written in the Law, which the LORD had commanded through Moses, that the Israelites were to live in booths during the festival of the seventh month,[3]

15 and that they should make this proclamation in all their towns and in Jerusalem: “Go out to the hills and bring branches of olive, wild olive, myrtle, palm and other leafy trees, to make booths, as it is written.”

16 So the people went out and brought them, and made themselves booths, each on his own roof, in their courtyards, in the courts of the house of God, in the square of the Water Gate and in the square of the Ephraim Gate.

17 The whole assembly of those who had returned from captivity made booths and lived in them. The Israelites had not done this since the days of Joshua son of Nun until that day, and there was very great joy.

18 Day by day, from the first day to the last, Ezra read from the Book of the Law of God. They kept the festival for seven days, and on the eighth day there was a closing assembly, as prescribed.

1 So the Greek and Latin; the Hebrew has ‘and the Levites’.

2 Or ‘translating it’.

3 Leviticus 23:39–43.

Chapter 9

Nehemiah 9 tells how, on the twenty-fourth of the month, the Israelites gather in fasting and sackcloth, separate themselves from foreigners, and spend the day reading the Law and confessing. The Levites lead a great prayer: the LORD alone made heaven and earth and gives life to all. He chose Abram and kept His promise. He saw His people’s suffering in Egypt, divided the sea, led them by cloud and fire, gave the Law at Sinai, and fed them with bread from heaven. Though they grew stubborn and made a calf, He is a God of forgiveness, gracious and compassionate, and He did not abandon them. He gave them the land, yet they rebelled and killed the prophets; again and again He handed them to their enemies and, when they cried out, saved them in His great mercy. He has been righteous in all that has come on them. Now they are slaves in their own land, and its produce goes to foreign kings. Because of all this they make a binding agreement in writing, sealed by their leaders.

1 On the twenty-fourth day of this month the Israelites assembled, fasting and wearing sackcloth, with dust on their heads.

2 Those of Israelite descent separated themselves from all foreigners, and they stood and confessed their sins and the guilt of their ancestors.

3 They stood in their places and read from the Book of the Law of the LORD their God for a quarter of the day, and for another quarter they confessed and worshipped the LORD their God.

4 On the Levites’ platform stood Jeshua, Bani, Kadmiel, Shebaniah, Bunni, Sherebiah, Bani and Chenani, and they cried out in a loud voice to the LORD their God.

5 Then the Levites, Jeshua, Kadmiel, Bani, Hashabneiah, Sherebiah, Hodiah, Shebaniah and Pethahiah, called out, “Rise up and bless the LORD your God for ever and ever! May Your glorious name be blessed, high above every blessing and all praise.

6 You alone are the LORD.[1] You made the heavens, the highest heavens with all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. You give life to all of them, and the host of heaven worships You.

7 You are the LORD, the God who chose Abram, brought him out of Ur of the Chaldeans and named him Abraham.

8 You found his heart faithful before You, and You made a covenant with him to give to his descendants the land of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Jebusites and Girgashites. You have kept Your word, for You are righteous.

9 You saw the suffering of our ancestors in Egypt and heard their cry at the Red Sea.

10 You worked signs and wonders against Pharaoh,
all his servants and all the people of his land, for
You knew how arrogantly they treated our
ancestors. You made a name for Yourself that
stands to this day.
11 You split the sea before them, so that they
crossed through it on dry ground, and You hurled
their pursuers into the depths, like a stone into
mighty waters.
12 You led them by a pillar of cloud in the daytime
and by a pillar of fire at night, to light the way
they were to go.
13 You descended on Mount Sinai and spoke to
them from heaven. You gave them just rules and
true laws, and statutes and commandments that
were good.
14 You made known to them Your holy Sabbath, and
You gave them commandments, statutes and a law
through Your servant Moses.
15 You gave them bread from heaven[2] for their
hunger and brought out water from the rock for
their thirst. You told them to go in and take
possession of the land You had sworn with uplifted
hand to give them.
16 But they, our ancestors, acted arrogantly,
stiffened their necks and did not listen to Your
commandments.
17 They refused to listen and forgot the wonders
You had done among them. They stiffened their
necks and in their rebellion[3] appointed a leader to
go back to their slavery. But You are a God of
forgiveness, gracious and compassionate, slow to
anger and rich in loyal kindness, and You did not
abandon them.[4]
18 Even when they made themselves a cast image
of a calf and said, 'This is your God, who brought
you up out of Egypt,' and committed terrible
blasphemies,
19 You in Your great mercy did not abandon them
in the wilderness. The pillar of cloud did not leave
them by day to lead them on their way, nor the
pillar of fire by night to light the way they were to
go.
20 You gave Your good Spirit to instruct them. You
did not withhold Your manna from their mouths,
and You gave them water for their thirst.
21 For forty years You sustained them in the
wilderness, and they lacked nothing. Their clothes
did not wear out, and their feet did not swell.
22 You gave them kingdoms and peoples, parcelling
out to them every corner. They occupied Sihon's
land, the land of Heshbon's king,[5] and the land of
Og king of Bashan.
23 You made their children as numerous as the
stars of heaven, and You brought them into the
land You had told their ancestors to enter and
possess.
24 Their children went in and took possession of
the land. You subdued before them the Canaanites
who lived in the land, and You gave them into
their hands, with their kings and the peoples of
the land, to do with them as they pleased.
25 They captured fortified cities and a fertile land.
They took over houses full of good things, cisterns
already dug, vineyards, olive groves and fruit
trees in abundance. So they ate and were full and
grew fat, and they delighted in Your great
goodness.
26 But they were disobedient and rebelled against
You. They threw Your Law behind their backs and
killed Your prophets, who had warned them to
turn back to You, and they committed terrible
blasphemies.
27 So You handed them over to their enemies, who
oppressed them. In the time of their distress they
cried out to You, and You heard from heaven. In
Your great mercy You gave them saviours, who
saved them from the hand of their enemies.
28 But as soon as they had rest, they went back to
doing evil before You, and You abandoned them to
the hand of their enemies, who ruled over them.
When they cried out to You again, You heard from
heaven and rescued them many times in Your
mercy.
29 You warned them, to turn them back to Your
Law, but they acted arrogantly and did not listen
to Your commandments. They sinned against Your
rules, by which a person who does them will live.[6]
They turned a stubborn shoulder, stiffened their
necks and would not listen.
30 Many years You bore with them, and You warned
them by Your Spirit through Your prophets, yet
they would not give ear. So You handed them over
to the peoples of the lands.
31 But in Your great mercy You did not make an
end of them or abandon them, for You are a
gracious and compassionate God.
32 Now therefore, our God, the great, mighty and
awesome God, who keeps covenant and loyal

kindness, do not treat as a small thing all the hardship that has come on us, on our kings, our officials, our priests, our prophets, our ancestors and all Your people, from the days of the kings of Assyria until today.

33 You have been righteous in all that has come on us, for You have acted faithfully, while we have done wrong.

34 Our kings, our officials, our priests and our ancestors have not kept Your Law or paid attention to Your commandments and the warnings You gave them.

35 Even in their own kingdom, with the great goodness You gave them, in the broad and fertile land You set before them, they did not serve You or turn from their evil deeds.

36 Look at us today, slaves! In the very land You gave our ancestors to enjoy its fruit and its good things, here we are, slaves.

37 Its rich harvest goes to the kings You have set over us because of our sins. They rule over our bodies and our livestock as they please, and we are in great distress.

38 Because of all this we are making a binding agreement in writing, and on the sealed document are the names of our officials, our Levites and our priests."[7]

1 The Greek begins this verse 'And Ezra said'.
2 See Exodus 16:4; compare John 6:31.
3 Some Hebrew manuscripts and the Greek have 'in Egypt'.
4 Compare Exodus 34:6 and Numbers 14:4.
5 Or 'of Sihon king of Heshbon', as in one Hebrew manuscript and the Greek.
6 Leviticus 18:5, quoted in Romans 10:5 and Galatians 3:12.
7 In Hebrew this verse is 10:1, and 10:1–39 are numbered 10:2–40.

Chapter 10

Nehemiah 10 lists those who put their seal to the agreement

Nehemiah the governor, Zedekiah, the priests, the Levites and the leaders of the people. The rest of the people, with all who have separated themselves to the Law of God, join them and bind themselves with a curse and an oath to walk in God's Law. They promise not to give their children in marriage to the peoples of the land, not to buy from them on the Sabbath or on a holy day, and to let the land lie fallow and cancel debts in the seventh year. They undertake to give a third of a shekel each year for the service of the house of God, to cast lots for the wood offering, and to bring firstfruits, firstborn, the first of their dough and offerings, and their tithes to the Levites, who are to bring a tenth of the tithes to the storerooms. They will not neglect the house of their God.

1 Those who put their seal to it were Nehemiah the governor, son of Hacaliah, and Zedekiah.

2 Seraiah, Azariah, Jeremiah,

3 Pashhur, Amariah, Malchijah,

4 Hattush, Shebaniah, Malluch,

5 Harim, Meremoth, Obadiah,

6 Daniel, Ginnethon, Baruch,

7 Meshullam, Abijah, Mijamin,

8 Maaziah, Bilgai and Shemaiah. These were the priests.

9 The Levites: Jeshua son of Azaniah, Binnui from the family of Henadad, and Kadmiel,

10 and their kinsmen Shebaniah, Hodiah, Kelita, Pelaiah, Hanan,

11 Mica, Rehob, Hashabiah,

12 Zaccur, Sherebiah, Shebaniah,

13 Hodiah, Bani and Beninu.

14 The leaders of the people: Parosh, Pahath-moab, Elam, Zattu, Bani,

15 Bunni, Azgad, Bebai,

16 Adonijah, Bigvai, Adin,

17 Ater, Hezekiah, Azzur,

18 Hodiah, Hashum, Bezai,

19 Hariph, Anathoth, Nebai,

20 Magpiash, Meshullam, Hezir,

21 Meshezabel, Zadok, Jaddua,

22 Pelatiah, Hanan, Anaiah,

23 Hoshea, Hananiah, Hasshub,

24 Hallohesh, Pilha, Shobek,

25 Rehum, Hashabnah, Maaseiah,

26 Ahiah, Hanan, Anan,

27 Malluch, Harim and Baanah.

28 The rest of the people, priests and Levites, gatekeepers and singers, temple servants and all who had separated from the peoples of the lands to follow God's Law, with their wives and their sons and daughters, everyone old enough to understand,

29 joined their noble kinsmen and bound themselves with a curse and an oath to walk in the Law of God given through Moses the servant of God, and to keep and carry out all the commandments of the LORD our Lord, with His rules and statutes.

30 We will not marry our daughters to the peoples of the land, or take their daughters as wives for our sons.

31 If the peoples of the land bring goods or any grain to sell on the Sabbath, we will not buy from them on the Sabbath or on any holy day. Every seventh year we will let the land lie fallow and cancel all debts.[1]

32 We also take on ourselves the duty of giving a third of a shekel[2] each year for the service of the house of our God:

33 for the rows of bread, the regular grain offering and burnt offering, the Sabbaths, the New Moons, the appointed feasts, the holy things, the sin offerings to make atonement for Israel, and all the work of the house of our God.

34 We, the priests, the Levites and the people, have cast lots for the wood offering, to bring it to the house of our God by families at appointed times each year, to burn on the altar of the LORD our God, as written in the Law.

35 We will also bring the firstfruits of our soil and of every tree to the house of the LORD each year.

36 We will bring our firstborn sons and animals, as the Law prescribes, the firstborn of our cattle and flocks, to our God's house, for the priests who serve there.

37 We will bring to the priests, to the storerooms of the house of our God, the first of our dough, our contributions, the fruit of every tree, the new wine and the oil. And we will bring the tithes of our soil to the Levites, for it is the Levites who collect the tithes in all our farming towns.

38 A priest, a descendant of Aaron, is to be with the Levites when they collect the tithes, and the Levites are to bring a tenth of the tithes up to the house of our God, to the storerooms of the treasury.

39 For the Israelites and the Levites are to bring the contributions of grain, new wine and oil to the storerooms, where the vessels of the sanctuary are kept and where the ministering priests, the gatekeepers and the singers are. We will not neglect the house of our God.

1 See Exodus 23:10–11 and Deuteronomy 15:1–2.

2 About 4 grams (⅛ ounce). Compare Exodus 30:13, where the amount is half a shekel.

Chapter 11

Nehemiah 11 tells how the leaders of the people settle in Jerusalem, and the rest cast lots to bring one in every ten to live in the holy city, while the other nine stay in the towns; and the people bless all who volunteer. The chapter lists the heads of the province who live in Jerusalem: the descendants of Judah and Benjamin, the priests, the Levites and the gatekeepers, with the numbers of each, and the officers set over them. The temple servants live on Ophel. Uzzi oversees the Levites, the singers receive a daily portion by the king's order, and Pethahiah acts for the king in all matters concerning the people. The chapter ends by naming the towns and villages where the rest of Judah and Benjamin live, from Beersheba to the Valley of Hinnom.

1 The leaders of the people settled in Jerusalem, and the rest of the people cast lots to bring one in every ten to live in Jerusalem, the holy city, while the other nine stayed in the towns.

2 And the people blessed all the men who volunteered to live in Jerusalem.

3 These are the heads of the province who lived in Jerusalem, while in the towns of Judah everyone lived on his own property in their towns: Israelites, priests, Levites, temple servants and the descendants of Solomon's servants.[1]

4 In Jerusalem there lived some of the descendants of Judah and of Benjamin. Of the descendants of

Judah: Athaiah son of Uzziah, son of Zechariah, son of Amariah, son of Shephatiah, son of Mahalalel, of the descendants of Perez;

5 and Maaseiah son of Baruch, son of Col-hozeh, son of Hazaiah, son of Adaiah, son of Joiarib, son of Zechariah, son of the Shilonite.

6 The descendants of Perez who lived in Jerusalem came to four hundred and sixty-eight able men.

7 These are the descendants of Benjamin: Sallu son of Meshullam, son of Joed, son of Pedaiah, son of Kolaiah, son of Maaseiah, son of Ithiel, son of Jeshaiah;

8 and after him Gabbai and Sallai, nine hundred and twenty-eight in all.

9 Their overseer was Joel son of Zichri, and the second in charge of the city was Judah son of Hassenuah.

10 Of the priests: Jedaiah son of Joiarib, Jachin,

11 Seraiah son of Hilkiah, son of Meshullam, son of Zadok, son of Meraioth, son of Ahitub, the chief officer of the house of God,

12 with eight hundred and twenty-two of their kinsmen who worked in the house; then Adaiah, whose line ran through Jeroham, Pelaliah, Amzi, Zechariah and Pashhur to Malchijah,

13 and his kinsmen, heads of families, two hundred and forty-two; Amashsai son of Azarel, son of Ahzai, son of Meshillemoth, son of Immer,

14 and their kinsmen, able men, a hundred and twenty-eight. Their overseer was Zabdiel son of Haggedolim.

15 Of the Levites: Shemaiah son of Hasshub, son of Azrikam, son of Hashabiah, son of Bunni;

16 Shabbethai and Jozabad, heads of the Levites, who had charge of the outside work of the house of God;

17 Mattaniah son of Mica, son of Zabdi, son of Asaph, who led in the thanksgiving at prayer; Bakbukiah, the second among his kinsmen; and Abda son of Shammua, son of Galal, son of Jeduthun.

18 All the Levites in the holy city came to two hundred and eighty-four.

19 The gatekeepers: Akkub, Talmon and their kinsmen, who kept watch at the gates, a hundred and seventy-two.

20 The rest of Israel, with the priests and the Levites, lived in all the towns of Judah, each on his own inherited land.

21 The temple servants lived on Ophel, with Ziha and Gishpa in charge of them.

22 The overseer of the Levites in Jerusalem was Uzzi son of Bani, son of Hashabiah, son of Mattaniah, son of Mica, one of the descendants of Asaph, the singers, who was in charge of the work of the house of God.

23 For there was a royal order concerning them, and a fixed provision for the singers, day by day.

24 Pethahiah son of Meshezabel, of the descendants of Zerah son of Judah, was the king's agent in every matter concerning the people.

25 In the villages and their fields, some of Judah's people settled in Kiriath-arba, Dibon and Jekabzeel, each with its outlying settlements,

26 in Jeshua, Moladah, Beth-pelet,

27 Hazar-shual, Beersheba and its settlements,

28 Ziklag, Meconah and its settlements,

29 En-rimmon, Zorah, Jarmuth,

30 Zanoah, Adullam and their villages, Lachish and its fields, and Azekah with its settlements. So their camps stretched from Beersheba to the Valley of Hinnom.

31 The people of Benjamin lived from Geba onwards, in Michmash, Aija, Bethel and its settlements,

32 Anathoth, Nob, Ananiah,

33 Hazor, Ramah, Gittaim,

34 Hadid, Zeboim, Neballat,

35 Lod, Ono and the Valley of the Craftsmen.

36 Some divisions of the Levites of Judah were assigned to Benjamin.

1 Compare the similar list in 1 Chronicles 9:2–22.

Chapter 12

Nehemiah 12 lists the priests and Levites who came up with Zerubbabel and Jeshua, the line of high priests from Jeshua to Jaddua, the family heads of the priests in the days of Joiakim, and the Levites who led the praise, division by division, as David commanded. At the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem the Levites are brought in from all their homes to celebrate with thanksgiving, cymbals, harps and lyres, and the priests and Levites purify the people, the gates and the wall. Nehemiah sets two great thanksgiving choirs on the wall, which walk in opposite directions, one led by Ezra and the other followed by Nehemiah, and they meet at the house of God. That day they offer great sacrifices and rejoice, for God has given them great joy, and the joy of Jerusalem is heard far away. Men are appointed over the storerooms, and all Israel gives the daily portions for the singers and gatekeepers.

1 These are the priests and Levites who came back
with Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel and Jeshua:
Seraiah, Jeremiah, Ezra,
2 Amariah, Malluch, Hattush,
3 Shecaniah, Rehum, Meremoth,
4 Iddo, Ginnethoi, Abijah,
5 Mijamin, Maadiah, Bilgah,
6 Shemaiah, Joiarib, Jedaiah,
7 Sallu, Amok, Hilkiah and Jedaiah. These led the
priests and their kinsmen in Jeshua's time.
8 The Levites: Jeshua, Binnui, Kadmiel, Sherebiah,
Judah and Mattaniah, who with his kinsmen was
in charge of the songs of thanksgiving.
9 Bakbukiah and Unni their kinsmen stood
opposite them in the service.
10 Jeshua was the father of Joiakim, Joiakim the
father of Eliashib, Eliashib the father of Joiada,
11 Joiada the father of Jonathan,[1] and Jonathan the
father of Jaddua.
12 In the days of Joiakim the priests who were
heads of families were: of Seraiah, Meraiah; of
Jeremiah, Hananiah;
13 of Ezra, Meshullam; of Amariah, Jehohanan;
14 of Malluchi,[2] Jonathan; of Shebaniah, Joseph;
15 of Harim, Adna; of Meraioth, Helkai;
16 of Iddo, Zechariah; of Ginnethon, Meshullam;
17 of Abijah, Zichri; of Miniamin, of Moadiah,[3]
Piltai;
18 of Bilgah, Shammua; of Shemaiah, Jehonathan;
19 of Joiarib, Mattenai; of Jedaiah, Uzzi;
20 of Sallai, Kallai; of Amok, Eber;
21 of Hilkiah, Hashabiah; of Jedaiah, Nethanel.
22 In the days of Eliashib, Joiada, Johanan and
Jaddua, the heads of the Levite families were
recorded, and the priests too, down to the reign of
Darius the Persian.[4]
23 The heads of the Levite families were recorded
in the Book of the Chronicles, down to the days of
Johanan son of Eliashib.[5]
24 The leaders of the Levites were Hashabiah,
Sherebiah and Jeshua son of Kadmiel, with their
kinsmen opposite them, to praise and give thanks,
one section answering another, as David the man
of God had commanded.
25 Mattaniah, Bakbukiah, Obadiah, Meshullam,
Talmon and Akkub were gatekeepers keeping
guard at the storerooms by the gates.
26 All these served when Joiakim son of Jeshua, son
of Jozadak, was high priest, and when Nehemiah
was governor and Ezra was priest and scribe.
27 At the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem they
sought out the Levites from all their homes and
brought them to Jerusalem to celebrate the
dedication with joy, with songs of thanksgiving
and with the music of cymbals, harps and lyres.
28 The families of the singers gathered from the
region around Jerusalem and from the villages of
the Netophathites,
29 from Beth-gilgal and from the fields of Geba and
Azmaveth, for the singers had built villages for
themselves around Jerusalem.
30 First the priests and Levites purified themselves,
and then the people, the gates and the wall.
31 I brought the leaders of Judah up on to the wall
and appointed two great thanksgiving choirs. One
went to the right along the wall towards the Dung
Gate.
32 Behind it went Hoshaiah and half the leaders of
Judah,
33 with Azariah, Ezra, Meshullam,
34 Judah, Benjamin, Shemaiah and Jeremiah,
35 and some of the priests' sons with trumpets:
Zechariah son of Jonathan, son of Shemaiah, son

of Mattaniah, son of Micaiah, son of Zaccur, son of Asaph,

36 and his kinsmen Shemaiah, Azarel, Milalai, Gilalai, Maai, Nethanel, Judah and Hanani, playing the instruments of David the man of God, with Ezra the scribe at their head.

37 At the Fountain Gate they went straight up the steps of the City of David, by the ascent of the wall above the house of David, to the Water Gate on the east.

38 The second thanksgiving choir went the other way,[6] and I followed it with half the people along the wall, above the Tower of the Ovens to the Broad Wall,

39 and over the Ephraim Gate, the Old Gate, the Fish Gate, the Tower of Hananel and the Tower of the Hundred, as far as the Sheep Gate. They stopped at the Gate of the Guard.

40 So both thanksgiving choirs took their places in the house of God, and so did I, with half the officials.

41 The priests Eliakim, Maaseiah, Miniamin, Micaiah, Elioenai, Zechariah and Hananiah stood with their trumpets,

42 together with Maaseiah, Shemaiah, Eleazar, Uzzi, Jehohanan, Malchijah, Elam and Ezer. The singers, led by Jezrahiah, made their voices heard.

43 That day they offered great sacrifices and rejoiced, for God had given them great joy. The women and children rejoiced too, and the joy of Jerusalem could be heard far away.

44 On that day men were appointed over the storerooms for the contributions, the firstfruits and the tithes, to gather into them from the fields of the towns the portions the Law required for the priests and the Levites; for Judah rejoiced over the priests and Levites who served.

45 They carried out the service of their God and the service of purification, as did the singers and the gatekeepers, as David and his son Solomon had commanded.

46 For long ago, in the days of David and Asaph, there were leaders of the singers, and songs of praise and thanksgiving to God.

47 In the days of Zerubbabel and of Nehemiah all Israel gave the daily portions for the singers and the gatekeepers. They set apart what was holy for the Levites, and the Levites set apart what was holy for the descendants of Aaron.

1 Called Johanan in verses 22–23.

2 So the written Hebrew; the spoken text has ‘Melicu’. Compare verse 2.

3 A name is missing after ‘Miniamin’ in the Hebrew.

4 Probably Darius II, 423–404 BC.

5 That is, his grandson; compare verses 10–11.

6 The Hebrew word is uncertain; perhaps ‘to the left’.

Chapter 13

Nehemiah 13 tells how, when the Book of Moses is read, the people find that no Ammonite or Moabite may enter the assembly of God, and they separate from Israel all of foreign descent. While Nehemiah is away at the king’s court, Eliashib gives Tobiah a storeroom in the temple courts. On his return Nehemiah throws out Tobiah’s belongings and has the rooms purified. He finds that the Levites have gone back to their fields because their portions were not paid, so he rebukes the officials, restores the tithes and appoints faithful treasurers. He stops the people treading winepresses and trading on the Sabbath, has the gates shut, and warns the merchants waiting outside. He finds Jews who have married women of Ashdod, Ammon and Moab, whose children cannot speak the language of Judah; he rebukes them, reminding them how foreign wives led Solomon into sin. He drives away a grandson of Eliashib who has married Sanballat’s daughter. He purifies the priests and Levites and sets their duties. Again and again he asks God to remember, and the book ends with his prayer: “Remember me for good, my God.”

1 On that day the Book of Moses was read aloud to the people, and it was found written in it that no Ammonite or Moabite should ever enter the assembly of God,

2 because they had not met the Israelites with bread and water, but had hired Balaam against them to curse them. But our God turned the curse into a blessing.[1]

3 When the people heard the Law, they separated
from Israel all who were of mixed descent.

4 Before this, Eliashib the priest, who had been put
in charge of the storerooms of the house of our
God and was related to Tobiah,

5 had prepared for him a large room where they
had previously kept the grain offerings, the
frankincense, the vessels, and the tithes of grain,
new wine and oil prescribed for the Levites, the
singers and the gatekeepers, as well as the
contributions for the priests.

6 During all this I was not in Jerusalem, for in the
thirty-second year of Artaxerxes king of Babylon[2] I
had gone to the king. Some time later I asked the
king for leave,

7 and I came to Jerusalem. Then I learned of the
evil Eliashib had done for Tobiah in preparing a
room for him in the courts of the house of God.

8 I was very displeased, and I threw all Tobiah's
household goods out of the room.

9 I ordered the rooms to be purified, and I brought
back the vessels of the house of God, with the
grain offerings and the frankincense.

10 I also found out that the portions due to the
Levites had not been given them, and that the
Levites and singers who did the work had gone
off, each to his own field.

11 So I took the officials to task and said, "Why has
the house of God been neglected?" I gathered the
Levites and singers and put them back at their
posts.

12 Then all Judah brought the tithes of grain, new
wine and oil to the storehouses.

13 I put Shelemiah the priest, Zadok the scribe and
Pedaiah of the Levites in charge of the
storehouses, with Hanan son of Zaccur, son of
Mattaniah, as their assistant, for they were
considered trustworthy, and it was their duty to
distribute to their kinsmen.

14 Remember me for this, my God, and do not wipe
out the loyal deeds I have done for the house of
my God and its services.

15 In those days I saw people in Judah treading
winepresses on the Sabbath, and bringing in
heaps of grain and loading them on donkeys,
along with wine, grapes, figs and every kind of
load, and bringing them into Jerusalem on the
Sabbath day. I warned them against selling food
on that day.

16 Men of Tyre living in the city brought in fish and
all kinds of goods and sold them on the Sabbath to
the people of Judah, in Jerusalem itself.

17 So I took the nobles of Judah to task and said to
them, "What is this evil you are doing, profaning
the Sabbath day?

18 Did your fathers not do the same, so that our
God brought all this disaster on us and on this
city? Now you are bringing more wrath on Israel
by profaning the Sabbath."

19 When the shadows fell on the gates of Jerusalem
before the Sabbath, I ordered the doors to be shut
and not opened until after the Sabbath. I stationed
some of my men at the gates, so that no load could
be brought in on the Sabbath day.

20 Once or twice the merchants and sellers of all
kinds of goods spent the night outside Jerusalem.

21 But I warned them, "Why are you spending the
night by the wall? If you do it again, I will use
force against you." From then on they did not
come on the Sabbath.

22 Then I ordered the Levites to purify themselves
and come and guard the gates, to keep the
Sabbath day holy. Remember this also to my
credit, my God, and spare me in Your great loyal
kindness.

23 In those days too I came across Jews who had
taken wives from Ashdod, Ammon and Moab.

24 Half their children spoke the language of
Ashdod or of one of the other peoples, and could
not speak the language of Judah.

25 I took them to task and called down curses on
them. I struck some of them and pulled out their
hair, and I made them swear by God: "You must
not give your daughters to their sons, or take their
daughters for your sons or for yourselves.

26 Was it not because of such women that Solomon
king of Israel sinned? Among the many nations
there was no king like him. He was loved by his
God, and God made him king over all Israel, yet
foreign women led even him into sin.[3]

27 Must we then hear of you doing all this great
evil, being unfaithful to our God by marrying
foreign women?"

28 One of the sons of Joiada son of Eliashib the
high priest was a son-in-law of Sanballat the
Horonite, and I drove him away from me.

29 Remember them, my God, for they have stained
the priesthood and broken the covenant of the

priests and Levites.

30 So I purified them of everything foreign, and I laid down the duties of the priests and Levites, each in his own work.

31 I also provided for the wood offering at appointed times, and for the firstfruits. Remember me for good, my God.

1 See Deuteronomy 23:3–5 and Numbers 22–24.

2 433 BC. Artaxerxes of Persia ruled Babylon too; compare Ezra 5:13.

3 See 1 Kings 11:1–8; compare 2 Samuel 12:24–25.