

## LESSON 30

### Ezra; Nehemiah

#### OVERVIEW:

Ezra is a historical work that continues the narrative of 2 Chronicles. This is apparent when one notices that the last two verses of 2 Chronicles are repeated almost word for word in the first two and half verses of Ezra. The books of Ezra and Nehemiah are the last two historical books of the Old Testament.

Malachi is the only prophet known to have served in Israel between the time of Ezra and Nehemiah and the beginning of the New Testament. Ezra and Nehemiah cover the period 538 BC to around 400 BC.

Ezra and Nehemiah used to be one book.

Some scholars say that Ezra edited the first five books of Moses.

(The books of the Bible do not fall into chronological order. Their position is determined usually by whether they are historical or prophetic books. The books of Ezra and Nehemiah were originally part of a compilation that included 1 and 2 Chronicles. Ezra 1:1–3 and 2 Chronicles 36:22–23 and are almost identical. The books of Ezra and Nehemiah are actually the last two historical books of the Old Testament. Zechariah and Haggai were prophets during this same period. Malachi is the only prophet known to have served in Israel between the time of Ezra and Nehemiah and the beginning of the New Testament. The books of Ezra and Nehemiah tell the story of Israel's history from the first return to Jerusalem until the end of Nehemiah's second term as governor of Judah (538 B.C. to shortly before 400 B.C. Esther's sojourn in Persia belongs to the time between the rebuilding of the temple at Jerusalem and Ezra's return (beginning in Ezra 7:1). Institute Manual, 319)

#### SCRIPTURES:

##### EZRA CHAPTER 1

*King Cyrus of Persia lets the Jews go back to Jerusalem to build the temple—Cyrus returns vessels of house of the Lord taken by Nebuchadnezzar.*

1 NOW in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of <sup>a</sup>Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of <sup>b</sup>Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation (known as the Edict of Liberation – there are two versions: Ezra 1:2-4 is in Hebrew, the other Ezra 6:3-5 written in Aramaic.) throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, (Isaiah 44:28 and chapter 45 -That saith of <sup>a</sup>Cyrus, *He is my <sup>b</sup>shepherd, and shall perform all my <sup>c</sup>pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be <sup>d</sup>built; and to the <sup>e</sup>temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.)*

2 Thus saith <sup>a</sup>Cyrus king of Persia, The LORD God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an <sup>b</sup>house at Jerusalem, which *is* in Judah.

3 Who *is there* among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which *is* in Judah, and build the house of the LORD God of Israel, (he *is* the God,) which *is* in Jerusalem.

4 And whosoever remaineth in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, beside the freewill offering for the house of God that *is* in Jerusalem.

5 ¶ Then rose up the chief of the fathers of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests, and the Levites, with all *them* whose spirit God had raised, to go up to build the house of the LORD which *is* in Jerusalem.

6 And all they that *were* about them <sup>a</sup>strengthened their hands (assisted them) with vessels of silver, with gold, with goods, and with beasts, and with precious things, beside all *that* was willingly offered.

7 ¶ Also Cyrus the king brought forth the vessels of the house of the LORD, which Nebuchadnezzar had <sup>a</sup>brought forth out of Jerusalem, and had put them in the house of his gods;

8 Even those did Cyrus king of Persia bring forth by the hand of Mithredath the treasurer, and numbered them unto Sheshbazzar, the prince of Judah. (Ezra 5:14 indicates that Cyrus made Sheshbazzar the governor, but his name is not mentioned in the list of the returning Jews. Haggai 2:2 identifies Zerubbabel as the governor of Judah. Many scholars have therefore identified Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel as the same person. The book of I Esdras 6:18 in the Apocrypha and other authorities say they are two people. The evidence seems to favor the idea of two separate persons. Both were of the royal line of Judah, and both were probably appointed by Cyrus. Zerubbabel has become the more famous in history because he outlived the older Sheshbazzar. Institute Manual, 319)

9 And this *is* the number of them: thirty <sup>a</sup>chargers (or basins) of gold, a thousand chargers of silver, nine and twenty knives,

10 Thirty basons of gold, silver basons of a second *sort* four hundred and ten, *and* other vessels a thousand.

11 All the vessels of gold and of silver *were* five thousand and four hundred. All *these* did Sheshbazzar bring up with *them* of the <sup>a</sup>captivity (or exiles) that were brought up from Babylon unto Jerusalem.

## CHAPTER 2

*Children of the captivity who returned to Jerusalem and to Judah are listed—Children of priests whose genealogy is lost are denied the priesthood—Faithful people contribute to building of the temple.*

1 NOW these *are* the <sup>a</sup>children of the province that went up out of the captivity, of those which had been carried away, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away unto <sup>b</sup>Babylon, and came again unto Jerusalem and Judah, every one unto his city;

2 <sup>a</sup>Which came with <sup>b</sup>Zerubbabel: (He was of the royal David line and an ancestor of Jesus Christ. The second temple in Jerusalem is often called the temple of Zerubbabel.) Jeshua, (also Joshua, was the Levitical high priest.) Nehemiah, Seraiah, Reelaiah, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispar, Bigvai, Rehum, Baanah. The number of the men of the people of Israel:

3-20 Laymen, according to family and city 21-35

3 The children of Parosh, two thousand an hundred seventy and two.

4 The children of Shephatiah, three hundred seventy and two.

5 The children of Arah, seven hundred seventy and five.

6 The children of Pahath-moab, of the children of Jeshua *and* Joab, two thousand eight hundred and twelve.

7 The children of Elam, a thousand two hundred fifty and four.

8 The children of Zattu, nine hundred forty and five.

9 The children of Zaccai, seven hundred and threescore.

10 The children of <sup>a</sup>Bani, six hundred forty and two.

11 The children of Bebai, six hundred twenty and three.

12 The children of Azgad, a thousand two hundred twenty and two.

13 The children of Adonikam, six hundred sixty and six.

14 The children of Bigvai, two thousand fifty and six.

15 The children of Adin, four hundred fifty and four.

16 The children of Ater of Hezekiah, ninety and eight.

17 The children of Bezai, three hundred twenty and three.

18 The children of Jorah, an hundred and twelve.

- 19 The children of Hashum, two hundred twenty and three.  
 20 The children of Gibbar, ninety and five.  
 21 The children of Beth-lehem, an hundred twenty and three.  
 22 The men of Netophah, fifty and six.  
 23 The men of Anathoth, an hundred twenty and eight.  
 24 The children of Azmaveth, forty and two.  
 25 The children of Kirjath-arim, Chephirah, and Beeroth, seven hundred and forty and three.  
 26 The children of Ramah and Gaba, six hundred twenty and one.  
 27 The men of Michmas, an hundred twenty and two.  
 28 The men of Beth-el and Ai, two hundred twenty and three.  
 29 The children of Nebo, fifty and two.  
 30 The children of Magbish, an hundred fifty and six.  
 31 The children of the other Elam, a thousand two hundred fifty and four.  
 32 The children of Harim, three hundred and twenty.  
 33 The children of Lod, Hadid, and Ono, seven hundred twenty and five.  
 34 The children of Jericho, three hundred forty and five.  
 35 The children of Senaah, three thousand and six hundred and thirty.

#### Priests 36-39

- 36 ¶ The priests: the children of Jedaiah, of the house of Jeshua, nine hundred seventy and three.  
 37 The children of Immer, a thousand fifty and two.  
 38 The children of Pashur, a thousand two hundred forty and seven.  
 39 The children of Harim, a thousand and seventeen.

#### Levites 40

- 40 ¶ The Levites: the children of Jeshua and Kadmiel, of the children of Hodaviah, seventy and four.

#### Singers 41

- 41 ¶ The singers: the children of Asaph, an hundred twenty and eight.

#### Porters 42

- 42 ¶ The children of the porters: the children of Shallum, the children of Ater, the children of Talmon, the children of Akkub, the children of Hatita, the children of Shobai, *in* all an hundred thirty and nine.

#### Nethinims – given ones to the temple – 43-54

- 43 ¶ The <sup>a</sup>Nethinims: (Heb servants of the temple (who attended the Levites in their sacred service) the children of Ziha, the children of Hasupha, the children of Tabbaoth,  
 44 The children of Keros, the children of Siaha, the children of Padon,  
 45 The children of Lebanah, the children of Hagabah, the children of Akkub,  
 46 The children of Hagab, the children of Shalmal, the children of Hanan,  
 47 The children of Giddel, the children of Gahar, the children of Reaiah,  
 48 The children of Rezin, the children of Nekoda, the children of Gazzam,  
 49 The children of Uzza, the children of Paseah, the children of Besai,  
 50 The children of Asnah, the children of Mehunim, the children of Nephusim,  
 51 The children of Bakbuk, the children of Hakupha, the children of Harhur,  
 52 The children of Bazluth, the children of Mehida, the children of Harsha,  
 53 The children of Barkos, the children of Sisera, the children of Thamah,  
 54 The children of Neziah, the children of Hatipha.

#### Son's of Solomon's servants 55-58

- 55 ¶ The children of Solomon's servants: the children of Sotai, the children of Sophereth, the children of Peruda,  
 56 The children of Jaalah, the children of Darkon, the children of Giddel,  
 57 The children of Shephatiah, the children of Hattil, the children of Pochereth of Zebaim, the children

of Ami.

58 All the Nethinims, and the children of Solomon's servants, *were* three hundred ninety and two.

Those who claimed to be priesthood holders but who could not prove their genealogy 59-63

59 And these *were* they which went up from Tel-melah, Tel-harsa, Cherub, Addan, *and* Immer: but they could not <sup>a</sup>shew (Heb tell, declare (their lineage)) their father's house, and their seed, whether they *were* of Israel:

60 The children of Delaiah, the children of Tobiah, the children of Nekoda, six hundred fifty and two.

61 ¶ And of the <sup>a</sup>children of the priests: the children of Habaiah, the children of Koz, the children of Barzillai; which took a wife of the daughters of Barzillai the Gileadite, and was called after their name:

62 These sought their <sup>a</sup>register (or record) *among* those that were <sup>b</sup>reckoned by <sup>c</sup>genealogy, (Heb they that traced their genealogy) but they were not found: therefore were they, as <sup>d</sup>polluted, <sup>e</sup>put from (excluded) the <sup>f</sup>priesthood. (these were those who married outside the covenant who were disqualified from holding the priesthood.)

63 And the Tirshatha (governor of Judea under the Persians) said unto them, that they should not eat of the most <sup>a</sup>holy things, till there stood up a priest with <sup>b</sup>Urim and with Thummim.

64 ¶ The whole congregation together *was* forty and two thousand three hundred *and* threescore,

65 Beside their servants and their maids, of whom *there were* seven thousand three hundred thirty and seven: and *there were* among them two hundred singing men and singing women. (42,360 + 7,337 + 200 = 49,897)

66 Their horses *were* seven hundred thirty and six; their mules, two hundred forty and five;

67 Their camels, four hundred thirty and five; *their* asses, six thousand seven hundred and twenty.

68 ¶ And *some* of the chief of the fathers, when they came to the <sup>a</sup>house of the LORD which *is* at Jerusalem, offered freely for the house of God to set it up in his place:

69 They gave after their ability unto the treasure of the work threescore and one thousand drams of gold, and five thousand pound of silver, and one hundred priests' garments.

70 So the priests, and the Levites, and *some* of the people, and the singers, and the porters, and the Nethinims, dwelt in their cities, and all Israel in their cities.

### CHAPTER 3

*Altar rebuilt—Regular sacrifices reinstated—Foundations of temple laid amid great rejoicing.*

1 AND when the seventh month was come, and the children of Israel *were* in the cities, the people gathered themselves together as one man to Jerusalem.

2 Then stood up Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and his brethren the priests, and Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and his brethren, and builded the altar of the God of Israel, to offer burnt <sup>a</sup>offerings thereon, as *it is* written in the law of Moses the <sup>b</sup>man of God.

3 And they set the altar upon his bases; for fear *was* upon them because of the people of those countries: and they offered burnt offerings thereon unto the LORD, *even* burnt offerings morning and evening.

4 They kept also the <sup>a</sup>feast of tabernacles, as *it is* written, and *offered* the daily burnt offerings by number, according to the custom, as the duty of every day required;

5 And afterward *offered* the continual burnt offering, both of the new moons, and of all the set <sup>a</sup>feasts of the LORD that were consecrated, and of every one that <sup>b</sup>willingly offered a freewill offering unto the LORD.

6 From the first day of the seventh month began they to offer burnt offerings unto the LORD. But the foundation of the temple of the LORD was not *yet* laid.

7 They gave money also unto the masons, and to the carpenters; and meat, and drink, and oil, unto them of Zidon, and to them of Tyre, to bring <sup>a</sup>cedar trees from Lebanon to the sea of Joppa, according to the grant that they had of <sup>b</sup>Cyrus king of Persia.

8 ¶ Now in the second year of their coming unto the house of God at Jerusalem, in the second month, began Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and the remnant of their brethren the priests and the Levites, and all they that were come out of the captivity unto Jerusalem; and appointed the Levites, from twenty years old and upward, to set forward the work of the house of the LORD.

9 Then stood Jeshua *with* his sons and his brethren, Kadmiel and his sons, the sons of Judah, together, to set forward the workmen in the house of God: the sons of Henadad, *with* their sons and their brethren the Levites.

10 And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD, they set the priests in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites the sons of Asaph with cymbals, to praise the LORD, after the ordinance of David king of Israel.

11 And they sang together by course in praising and giving <sup>a</sup>thanks unto the LORD; because *he is* <sup>b</sup>good, for his mercy *endureth* for ever toward Israel. And all the people shouted with a great shout, (probably the Hosanna Shout done today in the temple.) when they <sup>c</sup>praised the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid.

12 But many of the priests and Levites and chief of the fathers, *who were* <sup>a</sup>ancient men (old), that had seen the first house, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, <sup>b</sup>wept with a loud voice; and many shouted aloud for joy: (Solomon's temple had been beautiful, but in their poverty they could only build without much adornment.)

13 So that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people: for the people shouted with a loud shout, and the noise was heard afar off.

#### CHAPTER 4

*Samaritans offer help, then hinder the work—Building of temple and of walls of Jerusalem ceases.*

1 NOW when the <sup>a</sup>adversaries of Judah and Benjamin heard that the children of the captivity builded the temple unto the LORD God of Israel; (These Samaritans were Assyrians by birth or subjugation. They were not a mixture of Assyrian and Jew. The Samaritans of the New Testament were a mix of Jews and Assyrians.)

2 Then they came to Zerubbabel, and to the chief of the fathers, and said unto them, Let us build with you: for we seek your God, as ye *do*; and we do sacrifice unto him since the days of Esar-haddon king of Assur, which <sup>a</sup>brought us up hither.

3 But Zerubbabel, and Jeshua, and the rest of the chief of the fathers of Israel, said unto them, Ye have nothing to do with us to build an house unto our God; but we ourselves together will build unto the LORD God of Israel, as <sup>a</sup>king Cyrus the king of Persia hath commanded us.

4 Then the people of the land <sup>a</sup>weakened (ie discouraged the people) the hands (an idiom meaning to cause someone to lose heart and be discouraged) of the people of Judah, and troubled them in building, (the Samaritans prevented them from building the temple.)

5 And hired counsellors against them, to frustrate their purpose, all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even until the reign of <sup>a</sup>Darius king of Persia.

Verses 6-23 are out of place in its present location in the book. It refers to a later attempt to rebuild the city and its walls. The prohibition to build the walls was not lifted until Nehemiah's mission in 445 BC.)

6 And in the reign of <sup>a</sup>Ahasuerus, in the beginning of his reign, wrote they *unto him* an accusation against the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem.

7 ¶ And in the days of Artaxerxes wrote Bishlam, Mithredath, Tabeel, and the rest of their companions, unto Artaxerxes king of Persia; and the writing of the letter *was* written in the <sup>a</sup>Syrian (Heb Aramaic) tongue, and interpreted in the Syrian tongue. (This was the international language of the Persian empire.)

8 Rehum the chancellor and Shimshai the scribe wrote a letter against Jerusalem to Artaxerxes the king



in this sort:

9 Then *wrote* Rehum the chancellor, and Shimshai the scribe, and the rest of their companions; the Dinaites, the Apharsathchites, the Tarpelites, the Apharsites, the Archevites, the Babylonians, the Susanchites, the Dehavites, *and* the Elamites,

10 And the rest of the nations whom the great and noble Asnappar (The Aramaic version of Ashurbanipal, the name of the province or satrapy that included all of Palestine and Syria.) brought over, and set in the cities of Samaria, and the rest *that are* <sup>a</sup>on this side the river (west of the Euphrates), and at such a time.

11 ¶ This *is* the copy of the letter that they sent unto him, *even* unto Artaxerxes the king; Thy servants the men on this side the river, and at such a time.

12 Be it known unto the king, that the Jews which came up from thee to us are come unto Jerusalem, building the rebellious and the bad city, and have set up the walls *thereof*, and joined the foundations.

13 Be it known now unto the king, that, if this city be builded, and the walls set up *again*, *then* will they not pay toll, tribute, and custom, and *so* thou shalt endamage the revenue of the kings.

14 Now because <sup>a</sup>we have maintenance from (we are dependent on) *the king's* palace, and it was not meet for us to see the king's dishonour, therefore have we sent and certified the king;

15 That search may be made in the <sup>a</sup>book of the records of thy fathers: so shalt thou find in the <sup>b</sup>book of the records, and know that this city *is* a rebellious city, and hurtful unto kings and provinces, and that they have moved sedition within the same of old time: for which cause was this city destroyed.

16 We certify the king that, if this city be builded *again*, and the walls thereof set up, by this means thou shalt have no portion on this side the river.

17 ¶ *Then* sent the king an answer unto Rehum the chancellor, and *to* Shimshai the scribe, and *to* the rest of their companions that dwell in Samaria, and *unto* the rest beyond the river, Peace, and at such a time.

18 The letter which ye sent unto us hath been plainly read before me.

19 And I commanded, and search hath been made, and it is found that this city of old time hath made insurrection against kings, and *that* rebellion and sedition have been made therein.

20 There have been mighty kings also over Jerusalem, which have <sup>a</sup>ruled over all *countries* beyond the river; and toll, tribute, and custom, was paid unto them.

21 Give ye now commandment to cause these men to <sup>a</sup>cease, and that this city be not builded, until *another* commandment shall be given from me.

22 Take heed now that ye fail not to do this: why should damage grow to the hurt of the kings?

23 ¶ Now when the copy of king Artaxerxes' letter *was* read before Rehum, and Shimshai the scribe, and their companions, they went up in haste to Jerusalem unto the Jews, and made them to cease by force and power.

24 *Then* ceased the work of the house of God which *is* at Jerusalem. So it ceased unto the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia. (A period of 15 – 17 years.)

## CHAPTER 5

*Haggai and Zechariah prophesy—Zerubbabel renews building of temple—Samaritans challenge the Jews' right to continue their building work.*

1 THEN the <sup>a</sup>prophets, <sup>b</sup>Haggai the prophet, and <sup>c</sup>Zechariah the son of Iddo, prophesied unto the Jews that *were* in Judah and Jerusalem in the name of the God of Israel, *even* unto them. (Two prophets inspired the people to sacrifice to build the temple.)

2 Then rose up Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and began to build the house of God which *is* at Jerusalem: and with them *were* the prophets of God helping them.

3 ¶ At the same time came to them Tatnai, governor <sup>a</sup>on this side the river, (on the west side of the Euphrates River, including Syria and Cilicia) and Shethar-boznai, and their companions, and said thus

unto them, Who hath commanded you to build this house, and to make up this wall?

4 Then said we unto them after this manner, What are the names of the men that make this building?

5 But the eye of their God was upon the elders of the Jews, that they could not cause them to cease, till the matter came to Darius: and then they returned answer by letter concerning this matter.

6 ¶ The copy of the letter that Tatnai, governor on this side the river, and Shethar-boznai, and his companions the Apharsachites, which were on this side the river, sent unto Darius the king:

7 They sent a letter unto him, wherein was written thus; Unto Darius the king, all peace.

8 Be it known unto the king, that we went into the province of Judea, to the house of the great God, which is builded with great stones, and timber is laid in the walls, and this work goeth fast on, and prospereth in their hands.

9 Then asked we those elders, and said unto them thus, Who commanded you to build this house, and to make up these walls?

10 We asked their names also, to certify thee, that we might write the names of the men that were the chief of them.

11 And thus they returned us answer, saying, We are the servants of the God of heaven and earth, and build the house that was builded these many years ago, which a great king of Israel builded and set up.

12 But after that our fathers had provoked the God of heaven unto wrath, he gave them into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, the Chaldean, who destroyed this house, and carried the people away into Babylon.

13 But in the first year of Cyrus the king of Babylon the same king Cyrus made a decree to build this house of God.

14 And the vessels also of gold and silver of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took out of the temple that was in Jerusalem, and brought them into the temple of Babylon, those did Cyrus the king take out of the temple of Babylon, and they were delivered unto one, whose name was Sheshbazzar, whom he had made governor;

15 And said unto him, Take these vessels, go, carry them into the temple that is in Jerusalem, and let the house of God be builded in his place.

16 Then came the same Sheshbazzar, and laid the foundation of the house of God which is in Jerusalem: and since that time even until now hath it been in building, and yet it is not finished.

17 Now therefore, if it seem good to the king, let there be search made in the king's treasure house, which is there at Babylon, whether it be so, that a decree was made of Cyrus the king to build this house of God at Jerusalem, and let the king send his pleasure to us concerning this matter. (The decrees of one king were often honored by his successors.)

## CHAPTER 6

*Darius renews decree of Cyrus to build the temple—It is finished and dedicated, and sacrifices and feasts commence again.*

1 THEN Darius the king made a decree, and search was made in the house of the rolls, (or books, archives) where the treasures were laid up in Babylon.

2 And there was found at Achmetha, in the palace that is in the province of the Medes, a roll, and therein was a record thus written:

3 In the first year of Cyrus the king the same Cyrus the king made a decree concerning the house of God at Jerusalem, Let the house be builded, the place where they offered sacrifices, and let the foundations thereof be strongly laid; the height thereof threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof threescore cubits;

4 With three rows of great stones, and a row of new timber: and let the expenses be given out of the king's house:

5 And also let the golden and silver vessels of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took forth out

of the temple which *is* at Jerusalem, and brought unto Babylon, be restored, and brought again unto the temple which *is* at Jerusalem, *every one* to his place, and place *them* in the house of God.

6 Now *therefore*, Tatnai, governor <sup>a</sup>beyond the river (on the west side of the Euphrates River), Shethar-boznai, and your companions the Apharsachites, which *are* beyond the river, be ye far from thence:

7 Let the work of this house of God alone; let the governor of the Jews and the elders of the Jews build this house of God in his place.

8 Moreover I make a decree what ye shall do to the elders of these Jews for the building of this house of God: that of the king's goods, *even* of the tribute beyond the river, forthwith expenses be given unto these men, that they be not hindered.

9 And that which they have need of, both young bullocks, and rams, and lambs, for the burnt offerings of the God of heaven, wheat, salt, wine, and oil, according to the appointment of the priests which *are* at Jerusalem, let it be given them day by day without fail:

10 That they may offer <sup>a</sup>sacrifices of sweet savours unto the God of heaven, and <sup>b</sup>pray for the life of the king, and of his sons.

11 Also I have made a decree, that whosoever shall alter this word, let timber be pulled down from his house, and being set up, let him be hanged thereon; and let his house be made a dunghill for this.

12 And the God that hath caused his name to dwell there destroy all kings and people, that shall put to their hand to alter *and* to destroy this house of God which *is* at Jerusalem. I Darius have made a decree; let it be done with speed.

13 ¶ Then Tatnai, governor <sup>a</sup>on this side the river (on the west side of the Euphrates River), Shethar-boznai, and their companions, according to that which Darius the king had sent, so they did speedily.

14 And the elders of the Jews builded, and they prospered through the prophesying of <sup>a</sup>Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo. And they builded, and finished *it*, according to the commandment of the God of Israel, and according to the commandment of <sup>b</sup>Cyrus, and Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia.

15 And this house was finished on the third day of the month <sup>a</sup>Adar, which was in the sixth year of the reign of Darius the king. (The second temple was completed in 516 BC, exactly 75 years after the temple was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 BC, fulfilling Jeremiah's prophecy. The temple may have been a little larger than Solomon's except not as lavishly appointed. Also, the Holy of Holies was empty because they did not have the Ark of the Covenant. Elder Talmage said "Notwithstanding these differences the Temple of Zerubbabel was recognized of God and was undoubtedly the site or seat of Divine revelation to duly constituted prophets." House of the Lord, p. 42-43 It was this temple that King Herod refurbished and made very beautiful during the Savior's ministry.)

16 ¶ And the children of Israel, the priests, and the Levites, and the rest of the children of the captivity, kept the <sup>a</sup>dedication of this house of God with joy, (The second temple in Jerusalem was completed in 516 B.C., exactly seventy years after the temple was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C. Thus, Jeremiah's prophecy was fulfilled (see Jeremiah 29:10–14). "It is known in history as the Temple of Zerubbabel. In general plan it was patterned after the Temple of Solomon, though in many of its dimensions it exceeded its prototype. The court was divided into a section for priests only and another for the public; according to Josephus the division was effected by a wooden railing. An altar of unhewn stone was erected in place of the great brazen altar of old. The Holy Place was graced by but one candlestick instead of ten; and by a single table for the shew-bread instead of the ten tables overlaid with gold which stood in the first Temple. We read also of a golden altar of incense, and of some minor appurtenances. The Most Holy Place was empty, for the Ark of the Covenant had not been known after the people had gone into captivity. "In many respects the Temple of Zerubbabel appeared poor in comparison with its splendid predecessor and in certain particulars, indeed, it ranked lower than the ancient Tabernacle of the Congregation—the sanctuary of the nomadic tribes. Critical scholars specify the following features characteristic of the Temple of Solomon and lacking in the Temple of Zerubbabel: (1) the Ark of the Covenant; (2) the sacred fire; (3) the Shekinah, or glory of the Lord,



manifested of old as the Divine Presence; (4) the Urim and Thummim, by which Jehovah made plain His will to the priests of the Aaronic order; (5) the genius or spirit of prophecy, indicative of the closest communion between mortals and their God. Notwithstanding these differences the Temple of Zerubbabel was recognized of God and was undoubtedly the site or seat of Divine revelation to duly constituted prophets.” (Talmage, *House of the Lord*, pp. 42–43.) It was the temple of Zerubbabel that King Herod refurbished and made very beautiful. He added many courtyards and surrounding buildings that made it one of the wonders of the world at the time of Jesus. (See Notes and Commentary on Haggai 2:3–9.) Institute Manual, 321)

17 And offered at the dedication of this house of God an hundred bullocks, two hundred rams, four hundred lambs; and for a sin offering for all Israel, twelve he goats, according to the number of the tribes of Israel.

18 And they set the <sup>a</sup>priests in their divisions, and the Levites in their <sup>b</sup>courses, for the <sup>c</sup>service of God, which *is* at Jerusalem; as it is written in the book of Moses. (The priesthood holders were seated in their proper divisions and courses much like the arrangement followed in solemn assemblies today, as one supposes.)

19 And the children of the captivity kept the <sup>a</sup>passover upon the <sup>b</sup>fourteenth *day* of the first month.

20 For the priests and the Levites were purified together, all of them *were* pure, and killed the passover for all the children of the captivity, and for their brethren the priests, and for themselves.

21 And the children of Israel, which were come again out of captivity, and all such as had <sup>a</sup>separated themselves unto them from the <sup>b</sup>filthiness of the <sup>c</sup>heathen of the land, to seek the LORD God of Israel, did eat,

22 And kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days with joy: for the LORD had made them joyful, and turned the heart of the king of Assyria unto them, <sup>a</sup>to strengthen their hands (to assist them) in the work of the house of God, the God of Israel.

The lesson to learn is that Satan will use every weapon he has to keep temples from being built. We must be ever vigilant in making sure they do get built.

Nearly 60 years separate Ezra 6:22 from Ezra 7:1. During that time, Esther is able to avert a threat of destroying the Jews, including Ezra and Nehemiah.

## BIBLE DICTIONARY

### EZRA

A famous priest and scribe who brought back part of the exiles from captivity (Ezra 7 - 10; Neh. 8; Neh. 12). The object of his mission was “to teach in Israel statutes and judgments.” In 458 B.C. he obtained from Artaxerxes an important edict (Ezra 7: 12-26) allowing him to take to Jerusalem any Jewish exiles who cared to go, along with offerings for the temple with which he was entrusted, and giving to the Jews various rights and privileges. He was also directed to appoint magistrates and judges. On arriving in Jerusalem his first reform was to cause the Jews to separate from their foreign wives, and a list is given of those who had offended in this way (Ezra 10). The later history of Ezra is found in the book of Nehemiah, which is a sequel to the book of Ezra. Along with Nehemiah he took steps to instruct the people in the Mosaic law (Neh. 8). Hitherto “the law” had been to a great extent the exclusive possession of the priests. It was now brought within the reach of every Jew. The open reading of “the book of the law” was a new departure, and marked the law as the center of Jewish national life.

A good many traditions have gathered round the name of Ezra. He is said to have formed the canon of Hebrew scripture and to have established an important national council, called the Great Synagogue, over which he presided. But for none of these traditions is there trustworthy evidence. The Jews of later days were inclined to attribute to the influence of Ezra every religious development between the days of

## Nehemiah and the Maccabees.

The book of Ezra contains also an introductory section (chs. 1 - 6) describing events that happened from 60 to 80 years before the arrival of Ezra in Jerusalem, that is, the decree of Cyrus, 537 B.C., and the return of Jews under Zerubbabel; the attempt to build the temple and the hindrances due to the Samaritans; the preaching of Haggai and Zechariah, and the completion of the temple, 516 B.C. There is no record in the book of any events between this date and the mission of Ezra.

Religious values in the book of Ezra are found in the teaching that (1) the promises of the Lord through his prophets shall all be fulfilled (Ezra 1: 1; cf. Jer. 25: 13; Jer. 29: 10; D&C 1: 37-38; D&C 5: 20); (2) discipline and patience are borne of disappointment, as one expectation after another was frustrated; (3) there is eternal significance in everyday life; (4) preparation is needed for the rule of Messiah, the law being the schoolmaster to bring men to Christ.

(Josephus spoke of the circumstances in Jerusalem at the time of Ezra and how he was assigned to correct the situation (Ezra is known as Esdras in the Josephus account). Ezra was a man of great faith, and one moved by the Spirit of the Lord. He petitioned King Xerxes for permission to return with more Jews. Xerxes agreed and wrote a letter to the governors of Judah. Josephus wrote: "When Esdras had received this epistle, he was very joyful, and began to worship God, and confessed that he had been the cause of the king's great favour to him, and that for the same reason he gave all the thanks to God. . . . So he gathered those that were in the captivity together beyond Euphrates, and staid there three days, and ordained a fast for them, that they might make their prayers to God for their preservation, that they might suffer no misfortunes by the way, either from their enemies, or from any other ill accident; for Esdras had said beforehand, that he had told the king how God would preserve them. . . . "Now these things were truly done under the conduct of Esdras; and he succeeded in them, because God esteemed him worthy of the success of his conduct, on account of his goodness and righteousness." (*Antiquities*, bk. 11, chap. 5, par. 3.) Institute Manual, 322)

## SCRIPTURES:

### EZRA CHAPTER 7

Nearly 60 years separate Ezra 6:22 from Ezra 7:1. During that time, Esther is able to avert a threat of destroying the Jews, including Ezra and Nehemiah.

*Ezra goes up to Jerusalem—Artaxerxes provides for beautifying the temple and sustains the Jews in their worship.*

- 1 NOW after these things, in the reign of Artaxerxes king of Persia, Ezra the son of Seraiah, the son of Azariah, the son of <sup>a</sup>Hilkiah,
- 2 The son of Shallum, the son of Zadok, the son of Ahitub,
- 3 The son of Amariah, the son of Azariah, the son of Meraioth,
- 4 The son of Zerariah, the son of Uzzi, the son of Bukki,
- 5 The son of Abishua, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the chief priest:
- 6 This Ezra went up from Babylon; and he *was* a ready <sup>a</sup>scribe in the law of Moses, which the LORD God of Israel had given: and the king granted him all his request, according to the <sup>b</sup>hand of the LORD his God upon him. (In addition to being a priest, Ezra was "a scribe of the words of the commandments of the Lord, and of his statutes to Israel" (Ezra 7:11). Ezra, the scribe of the law, was charged by the Persian king to teach the people in Jerusalem of the law and then set up a judgment system for the

lawbreakers (see Ezra 7:25–26). Elder James E. Talmage explained the system of scribes set up by Ezra and the consequences of that system in future generations: “As early as four score years after the return from the Babylonian exile, and we know not with accuracy how much earlier, there had come to be recognized, as men having authority, certain scholars afterward known as scribes, and honored as rabbis or teachers. In the days of Ezra and Nehemiah these specialists in the law constituted a titled class, to whom deference and honor were paid. Ezra is designated ‘the priest, the scribe, even a scribe of the words of the commandments of the Lord, and of his statutes to Israel.’ The scribes of those days did valuable service under Ezra, and later under Nehemiah, in compiling the sacred writings then extant; and in Jewish usage those appointed as guardians and expounders of the law came to be known as members of the Great Synagog, or Great Assembly, concerning which we have little information through canonical channels. According to Talmudic record, the organization consisted of one hundred and twenty eminent scholars. The scope of their labors, according to the admonition traditionally perpetuated by themselves, is thus expressed: *Be careful in judgment; set up many scholars, and make a hedge about the law.* They followed this behest by much study and careful consideration of all traditional details in administration; by multiplying scribes and rabbis unto themselves; and, as some of them interpreted the requirement of setting up many scholars, by writing many books and tractates; moreover, they made a fence or hedge about the law by adding numerous rules, which prescribed with great exactness the officially established proprieties for every occasion.” (*Jesus the Christ*, pp. 63–64.) Institute Manual, 322)

7 And there went up *some* of the children of Israel, and of the priests, and the Levites, and the singers, and the porters, and the Nethinims, unto Jerusalem, in the seventh year of Artaxerxes the king.

8 And he came to Jerusalem in the fifth month, which *was* in the seventh year of the king.

9 For upon the first *day* of the first month began he to go up from Babylon, and on the first *day* of the fifth month came he to Jerusalem, according to the good <sup>a</sup>hand of his God upon him.

10 For Ezra had <sup>a</sup>prepared his <sup>b</sup>heart to seek the law of the LORD, and to do *it*, and to teach in Israel <sup>c</sup>statutes and judgments.

11 ¶ Now this *is* the copy of the letter that the king Artaxerxes gave unto Ezra the priest, the scribe, *even* a <sup>a</sup>scribe of the words of the commandments of the LORD, and of his statutes to Israel.

12 Artaxerxes, king of kings, unto Ezra the priest, a scribe of the law of the God of heaven, perfect *peace*, and at such a time.

13 I make a decree, that all they of the people of Israel, and *of* his priests and Levites, in my realm, which are minded of their own freewill to go up to Jerusalem, go with thee.

14 Forasmuch as thou art sent of the king, and of his seven counsellors, to enquire concerning Judah and Jerusalem, according to the law of thy God which *is* in thine hand;

15 And to carry the silver and gold, which the king and his counsellors have freely offered unto the God of Israel, whose habitation *is* in Jerusalem,

16 And all the silver and gold that thou canst find in all the province of Babylon, with the freewill offering of the people, and of the priests, offering willingly for the house of their God which *is* in Jerusalem:

17 That thou mayest buy speedily with this money bullocks, rams, lambs, with their meat offerings and their drink offerings, and offer them upon the altar of the house of your God which *is* in Jerusalem.

18 And whatsoever shall seem good to thee, and to thy brethren, to do with the rest of the <sup>a</sup>silver and the gold, that do after the will of your God.

19 The vessels also that are given thee for the service of the house of thy God, *those* deliver thou before the God of Jerusalem.

20 And whatsoever more shall be needful for the house of thy God, which thou shalt have occasion to bestow, bestow *it* out of the king’s treasure house.

21 And I, *even* I Artaxerxes the king, do make a decree to all the treasurers which *are* beyond the river, that whatsoever Ezra the priest, the scribe of the law of the God of heaven, shall require of you, it be

done speedily,

22 Unto an hundred talents of silver, and to an hundred measures of wheat, and to an hundred baths of wine, and to an hundred baths of oil, and salt without prescribing *how much*.

23 Whatsoever is commanded by the God of heaven, let it be diligently done for the house of the God of heaven: for why should there be wrath against the realm of the king and his sons?

24 Also we <sup>a</sup>certify you (inform), that touching any of the priests and Levites, singers, porters, <sup>b</sup>Nethinims, or ministers of this house of God, it shall not be lawful to impose toll, tribute, or custom, upon them.

25 And thou, Ezra, after the wisdom of thy God, that *is* in thine hand, set magistrates and <sup>a</sup>judges, which may judge all the people that *are* <sup>b</sup>beyond the river (on the west side of the Euphrates River), all such as know the <sup>c</sup>laws of thy God; and <sup>d</sup>teach ye them that know *them* not.

26 And whosoever will not do the law of thy God, and the law of the king, let judgment be executed speedily upon him, whether *it be* unto <sup>a</sup>death, or to banishment, or to confiscation of goods, or to imprisonment.

27 ¶ Blessed *be* the LORD God of our fathers, which hath put *such a thing* as this in the king's heart, to <sup>a</sup>beautify the house of the LORD which *is* in Jerusalem:

28 And hath extended mercy unto me before the king, and his counsellors, and before all the king's mighty princes. And I was strengthened as the hand of the LORD my God *was* upon me, and I gathered together out of Israel chief men to go up with me.

## CHAPTER 8

*Those who went up from Babylon to Jerusalem are listed—Levites are called to accompany them—Ezra and the people fast and pray for and gain guidance and protection in going to Jerusalem.*

(“Ezra’s party of over 1700 includes priests, people and, somewhat reluctantly, Levites. With them they take gifts valuing more than £1,000,000 [about \$2,225,000]. Ezra is faced with a long and dangerous journey at a time of great unrest. And having boasted his confidence in God, he can hardly now apply to the king for an escort! His prayer is heartfelt, and his faith rewarded by God’s own safe-conduct.” (Alexander and Alexander, *Eerdmans’ Handbook*, p. 308.))

1 THESE *are* now the <sup>a</sup>chief of their fathers (Heb heads of their fathers; ie patriarchal leaders), and *this is* the genealogy of them that went up with me from Babylon, in the reign of Artaxerxes the king.

2 Of the sons of Phinehas; Gershom: of the sons of Ithamar; Daniel: of the sons of David; Hattush.

3 Of the sons of Shechaniah, of the sons of Pharosh; Zechariah: and with him were reckoned by genealogy of the males an hundred and fifty.

4 Of the sons of Pahath-moab; Elihoenai the son of Zeremiah, and with him two hundred males.

5 Of the sons of Shechaniah; the son of Jahaziel, and with him three hundred males.

6 Of the sons also of Adin; Ebed the son of Jonathan, and with him fifty males.

7 And of the sons of Elam; Jeshaiiah the son of Athaliah, and with him seventy males.

8 And of the sons of Shephatiah; Zebadiah the son of Michael, and with him fourscore males.

9 Of the sons of Joab; Obadiah the son of Jehiel, and with him two hundred and eighteen males.

10 And of the sons of Shelomith; the son of Josiphiah, and with him an hundred and threescore males.

11 And of the sons of Bebai; Zechariah the son of Bebai, and with him twenty and eight males.

12 And of the sons of Azgad; Johanan the son of Hakkatan, and with him an hundred and ten males.

13 And of the last sons of Adonikam, whose names *are* these, Eliphelet, Jeiel, and Shemaiah, and with them threescore males.

14 Of the sons also of Bigvai; Uthai, and Zabbud, and with them seventy males.

15 ¶ And I gathered them together to the river that runneth to Ahava; and there abode we in tents three

days: and I viewed the people, and the priests, and found there none of the sons of Levi. (Those of the Levites who were not priests, or descendants of Aaron.)

16 Then sent I for Eliezer, for Ariel, for Shemaiah, and for Elnathan, and for Jarib, and for Elnathan, and for Nathan, and for Zechariah, and for <sup>a</sup>Meshullam, chief men; also for Joiarib, and for Elnathan, men of understanding.

17 And I sent them with commandment unto Iddo the chief at the place Casiphia, and I told them what they should say unto Iddo, *and* to his brethren the Nethinims, at the place Casiphia, that they should bring unto us ministers for the house of our God.

18 And by the good <sup>a</sup>hand of our God upon us they brought us a man of understanding, of the sons of Mahli, the son of Levi, the son of Israel; and Sherebiah, with his sons and his brethren, eighteen;

19 And Hashabiah, and with him Jeshaiiah of the sons of Merari, his brethren and their sons, twenty;

20 Also of the <sup>a</sup>Nethinims, whom David and the princes had appointed for the service of the Levites, two hundred and twenty Nethinims: all of them were expressed by name.

21 ¶ Then I proclaimed a <sup>a</sup>fast there, at the river of Ahava, that we might <sup>b</sup>afflict (humble) ourselves before our God, to seek of him a right way for us, and for our little ones, and for all our substance.

22 For I was ashamed to require of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy in the way: because we had spoken unto the king, saying, The hand of our God *is* upon all them for <sup>a</sup>good that <sup>b</sup>seek him; but his power and his wrath *is* against all them that forsake him.

23 So we <sup>a</sup>fasted and besought our God for this: and he was <sup>b</sup>intreated of us.

24 ¶ Then I <sup>a</sup>separated twelve of the chief of the priests, Sherebiah, Hashabiah, and ten of their brethren with them,

25 And weighed unto them the silver, and the gold, and the vessels, *even* the offering of the house of our God, which the king, and his counsellors, and his lords, and all Israel *there* present, had offered:

26 I even weighed unto their hand six hundred and fifty talents of silver, and silver vessels an hundred talents, *and* of gold an hundred talents;

27 Also twenty basons of gold, of a thousand drams; and two vessels of <sup>a</sup>fine copper (shining brass), precious as gold.

28 And I said unto them, Ye *are* holy unto the LORD; the vessels *are* holy also; and the silver and the gold *are* a freewill offering unto the LORD God of your fathers.

29 Watch ye, and keep *them*, until ye weigh *them* before the chief of the priests and the Levites, and chief of the fathers of Israel, at Jerusalem, in the chambers of the house of the LORD.

30 So took the priests and the Levites the weight of the silver, and the gold, and the vessels, to bring *them* to Jerusalem unto the house of our God.

31 ¶ Then we departed from the river of Ahava on the twelfth *day* of the first month, to go unto Jerusalem: and the hand of our God was upon us, and he delivered us from the hand of the enemy, and of such as lay in wait by the way.

32 And we came to Jerusalem, and abode there three days.

33 ¶ Now on the fourth day was the silver and the gold and the vessels weighed in the house of our God by the hand of Meremoth the son of Uriah the priest; and with him *was* Eleazar the son of Phinehas; and with them *was* Jozabad the son of Jeshua, and Noadiah the son of Binnui, Levites;

34 By number *and* by weight of every one: and all the weight was written at that time.

35 *Also* the children of those that had been carried away, which were come out of the captivity, offered burnt offerings unto the God of Israel, twelve bullocks for all Israel, ninety and six rams, seventy and seven lambs, twelve he goats *for* a sin offering: all *this was* a burnt offering unto the LORD.

36 ¶ And they delivered the king's commissions unto the king's lieutenants, and to the governors <sup>a</sup>on this side the river (on the west side of the Euphrates River): and they <sup>b</sup>furthered (raised, promoted) the people, and the house of God.



## CHAPTER 9

*Many Jews intermarry with, and follow the abominations of, the Canaanites and others—Ezra prays, and confesses the sins of all the people.*

(Shortly after Ezra arrived in Jerusalem, he commenced his priestly duties of putting affairs in order. The priests and Levites in Jerusalem had allowed the temple service to seriously deteriorate. Many of them had gone out to make a living because the temple was not supported sufficiently to allow them to serve full time. Some of them had even taken wives of the pagan nations, as had many other Jewish citizens. All of this horrified Ezra and many of the faithful who had told him of the problem (see Ezra 9:1–4). Intermarriage with people from some of the surrounding nations was expressly forbidden by the Lord because it led to idolatry (see Deuteronomy 7:1–5). Idolatry had led to the downfall of the Israelite nation, but even the horrors of defeat and exile had not taught the people their lesson. Ezra 10:3, 7, 10–12 shows how Ezra successfully called the people to Jerusalem to confess their transgressions and to covenant to put away their heathen wives. It was an important step for the people of Judah in preparing themselves to be worthy of the temple and the sacred land to which the Lord had prophesied they would return. It appears that the covenant renewal led by Ezra and described in Nehemiah 8–10 occurred at about this same time (see Notes and Commentary on Nehemiah 8–10). Compare Ezra’s concern for the Jews’ unrighteous intermarrying recorded in Ezra 9:1–15 with that of Nehemiah, the governor, recorded in Nehemiah 13:23–27. Institute Manual, 322)

1 NOW when these things were done, the <sup>a</sup>princes (ie officials) came to me, saying, The people of Israel, and the priests, and the Levites, have not <sup>b</sup>separated themselves from the people of the lands, *doing* according to their <sup>c</sup>abominations, *even* of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites.

2 For they have taken of their <sup>a</sup>daughters for themselves, and for their sons: so that the <sup>b</sup>holy seed have mingled themselves with the people of *those* lands: yea, the hand of the princes and rulers hath been chief in this trespass.

3 And when I heard this thing, I <sup>a</sup>rent my garment and my mantle, and plucked off the hair of my head and of my beard, and sat down astonished.

4 Then were assembled unto me every one that <sup>a</sup>trembled at the words of the God of Israel, because of the transgression of those that had been carried away; and I sat astonished until the evening sacrifice.

5 ¶ And at the evening sacrifice I arose up from my heaviness; and having rent my garment and my mantle, I fell upon my knees, and spread out my hands unto the LORD my God,

6 And said, O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God: for our iniquities are increased over *our* head, and our trespass is grown up unto the heavens.

7 Since the days of our fathers *have we been* in a great trespass unto this day; and for our iniquities have we, our kings, *and* our priests, been delivered into the hand of the kings of the lands, to the sword, to captivity, and to a spoil, and to <sup>a</sup>confusion (Heb shame) of face, as *it is* this day.

8 And now for a little space <sup>a</sup>grace hath been *shewed* from the LORD our God, to leave us a remnant to escape, and to give us a <sup>b</sup>nail in his holy place, that our God may <sup>c</sup>lighten our eyes, and give us a little reviving in our bondage.

9 For we *were* bondmen; yet our God hath not forsaken us in our <sup>a</sup>bondage, but hath extended mercy unto us in the sight of the kings of Persia, to give us a reviving, to set up the house of our God, and to repair the desolations thereof, and to give us a wall in Judah and in Jerusalem.

10 And now, O our God, what shall we say after this? for we have forsaken thy commandments,

11 Which thou hast commanded by thy servants the prophets, saying, The land, unto which ye go to possess it, is an unclean land with the <sup>a</sup>filthiness of the people of the lands, with their abominations, which have filled it from one end to another with their uncleanness.

12 Now therefore give not your daughters unto their sons, neither take their daughters unto your sons, nor seek their peace or their wealth for ever: that ye may be strong, and eat the good of the land, and leave *it* for an inheritance to your children for ever.

13 And after all that is come upon us for our <sup>a</sup>evil deeds, and for our great trespass, seeing that thou our God hast punished us less than our <sup>b</sup>iniquities *deserve*, and hast given us *such* deliverance as this;

14 Should we again break thy commandments, and join in affinity with the people of these abominations? wouldst not thou be angry with us till thou hadst consumed *us*, so that *there should be* no remnant nor escaping?

15 O LORD God of Israel, thou *art* <sup>a</sup>righteous: for we remain yet escaped, as *it is* this day: behold, we *are* before thee in our trespasses: for we cannot stand before thee because of this.

## CHAPTER 10

*Jews covenant to put away wives taken from Canaanites and others—Ezra assembles the people at Jerusalem—Levites who married strange wives are listed.*

1 NOW when Ezra had prayed, and when he had <sup>a</sup>confessed, weeping and casting himself down before the house of God, there assembled unto him out of Israel a very great congregation of men and women and children: for the people wept very sore.

2 And Shechaniah the son of Jehiel, *one* of the sons of Elam, answered and said unto Ezra, We have trespassed against our God, and have taken <sup>a</sup>strange wives (or foreign wives) of the people of the land: yet now there is hope in Israel concerning this thing.

3 Now therefore let us make a covenant with our God to put away all the wives, and such as are born of them, according to the counsel of my lord, and of those that tremble at the commandment of our God; and let it be done according to the law.

4 Arise; for *this* matter *belongeth* unto thee: we also *will be* with thee: be of good <sup>a</sup>courage, and do *it*.

5 Then arose Ezra, and made the chief priests, the Levites, and all Israel, to swear that they should do according to this word. And they sware.

6 ¶ Then Ezra rose up from before the house of God, and went into the chamber of Johanan the son of Eliashib: and *when* he came thither, he did eat no bread, nor drink water: for he mourned because of the transgression of them that had been carried away.

7 And they made proclamation throughout Judah and Jerusalem unto all the children of the captivity, that they should gather themselves together unto Jerusalem;

8 And that whosoever would not come within three days, according to the counsel of the princes and the elders, all his substance should be forfeited, and himself separated from the congregation of those that had been carried away.

9 ¶ Then all the men of Judah and Benjamin gathered themselves together unto Jerusalem within three days. It *was* the ninth month, (December) on the twentieth *day* of the month; and all the people sat in the street of the house of God, trembling because of *this* matter, and for the great rain.

10 And Ezra the priest stood up, and said unto them, Ye have transgressed, and have taken strange <sup>a</sup>wives, to increase the trespass of Israel.

11 Now therefore make <sup>a</sup>confession unto the LORD God of your fathers, and do his pleasure: and <sup>b</sup>separate yourselves from the people of the land, and from the strange wives.

12 Then all the congregation answered and said with a loud voice, As thou hast said, so must we <sup>a</sup>do.

13 But the people *are* many, and *it is* a time of much rain, and we are not able to stand without, neither *is this* a work of one day or two: for we are many that have transgressed in this thing.

14 Let now our rulers of all the congregation stand, and let all them which have taken strange wives in our cities come at appointed times, and with them the elders of every city, and the judges thereof, until the fierce wrath of our God for this matter be turned from us.

15 ¶ Only Jonathan the son of Asahel and Jahaziah the son of Tikvah <sup>a</sup>were employed about this *matter*: (Heb (probably) stood up against this) and Meshullam and Shabbethai the Levite helped them.

16 And the children of the captivity did so. And Ezra the priest, *with* certain chief of the fathers, after the house of their fathers, and all of them by *their* names, were separated, and sat down in the first day of the tenth month to examine the matter.

17 And they made an end with all the men that had taken strange wives by the first day of the first month.

18 ¶ And among the sons of the priests there were found that had taken strange wives: *namely*, of the sons of Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and his brethren; Maaseiah, and Eliezer, and Jarib, and Gedaliah.

19 And they gave their hands that they would put away their wives; and *being* <sup>a</sup>guilty, *they offered* a ram of the flock for their trespass. (“According to a passage in *Justin Martyr’s* dialogue with *Trypho*, a Jew, Ezra offered a paschal lamb on this occasion, and addressed the people thus: ‘And Ezra said to the people, This passover is our Saviour and our Refuge; and if ye will be persuaded of it, and let it enter into your hearts, that we are to humble ourselves to him in a sign, and afterwards shall believe in him, this place shall not be destroyed for ever, saith the Lord of Hosts: but if ye will not believe in him, nor hearken to his preaching, ye shall be a laughing-stock to the Gentiles.’—*Dial. cum Tryphone*, sec. 72. “This passage, *Justin* says, the Jews, through their enmity to Christ, blotted out of the book of Ezra. He charges them with cancelling several other places through the same spirit of enmity and opposition.” (Adam Clarke, *The Holy Bible . . . with a Commentary and Critical Notes*, 2:752.) Institute Manual, 323)

20 And of the sons of Immer; Hanani, and Zebadiah.

21 And of the sons of Harim; Maaseiah, and Elijah, and Shemaiah, and Jehiel, and Uziah.

22 And of the sons of Pashur; Elioenai, Maaseiah, Ishmael, Nethaneel, Jozabad, and Elasah.

23 Also of the Levites; Jozabad, and Shimei, and Kelaiah, (the same *is* Kelita,) Pethahiah, Judah, and Eliezer.

24 Of the singers also; Eliashib: and of the porters; Shallum, and Telem, and Uri.

25 Moreover of Israel: of the sons of Parosh; Ramiah, and Jeziah, and Malchiah, and Miamin, and Eleazar, and Malchijah, and Benaiah.

26 And of the sons of Elam; Mattaniah, Zechariah, and Jehiel, and Abdi, and Jeremoth, and Eliah.

27 And of the sons of Zattu; Elioenai, Eliashib, Mattaniah, and Jeremoth, and Zabad, and Aziza.

28 Of the sons also of Bebai; Jehohanan, Hananiah, Zabbai, *and* Athlai.

29 And of the sons of Bani; Meshullam, Malluch, and Adaiah, Jashub, and Sheal, and Ramoth.

30 And of the sons of Pahath-moab; Adna, and Chelal, Benaiah, Maaseiah, Mattaniah, Bezaleel, and Binnui, and Manasseh.

31 And *of* the sons of Harim; Eliezer, Ishijah, Malchiah, Shemaiah, Shimeon,

32 Benjamin, Malluch, *and* Shemariah.

33 Of the sons of Hashum; Mattenai, Mattathah, Zabad, Eliphelet, Jeremai, Manasseh, *and* Shimei.

34 Of the sons of Bani; Maadai, Amram, and Uel,

35 Benaiah, Bedeiah, Chelluh,

36 Vaniah, Meremoth, Eliashib,

37 Mattaniah, Mattenai, and Jaasau,

38 And Bani, and Binnui, Shimei,

39 And Shelemiah, and Nathan, and Adaiah,

40 Machnadebai, Shashai, Sharai,

41 Azareel, and Shelemiah, Shemariah,

42 Shallum, Amariah, *and* Joseph.

43 Of the sons of Nebo; Jeiel, Mattithiah, Zabad, Zebina, Jadau, and Joel, Benaiah.

44 All these had taken strange wives: and *some* of them had wives by whom they had children.

THE BOOK OF  
NEHEMIAH  
CHAPTER 1

*Nehemiah mourns and fasts and prays for the Jews in Jerusalem.*

1 THE words of Nehemiah the son of Hachaliah. And it came to pass in the month <sup>a</sup>Chisleu, (the ninth of the Hebrew months, beginning at the new moon of December) in the twentieth year, as I was in <sup>b</sup>Shushan (or Susa (the chief city of all Persia)) the palace,  
2 That <sup>a</sup>Hanani, one of my brethren, came, he and *certain* men of Judah; and I asked them concerning the Jews that had escaped, which were left of the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem.  
3 And they said unto me, The <sup>a</sup>remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province *are* in great affliction and reproach: the wall of Jerusalem also *is* broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire.  
4 ¶ And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned *certain* days, and <sup>a</sup>fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven,  
5 And said, I beseech thee, O LORD God of heaven, <sup>a</sup>the great and terrible God (Heb the God, the great, and the revered), that <sup>b</sup>keepeth covenant and mercy for them that love him and observe his commandments:  
6 Let thine ear now be attentive, and thine eyes open, that thou mayest hear the prayer of thy servant, which I pray before thee now, day and night, for the children of Israel thy servants, and <sup>a</sup>confess the sins of the children of Israel, which we have sinned against thee: both I and my father's house have sinned.  
7 We have dealt very corruptly against thee, and have not kept the commandments, nor the statutes, nor the judgments, which thou commandedst thy servant Moses.  
8 Remember, I beseech thee, the word that thou commandedst thy servant Moses, saying, *If ye* transgress, I will <sup>a</sup>scatter you abroad among the nations:  
9 But *if ye* turn unto me, and keep my commandments, and do them; though there were of you cast out unto the uttermost part of the heaven, *yet* will I <sup>a</sup>gather them from thence, and will bring them unto the place that I have chosen to set my name there.  
10 Now these *are* thy servants and thy <sup>a</sup>people, whom thou hast redeemed by thy great power, and by thy strong hand.  
11 O Lord, I beseech thee, let now thine ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servant, and to the prayer of thy servants, who desire to <sup>a</sup>fear thy name (reverence thy name): and <sup>b</sup>prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this day, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man. For I was the king's cupbearer.

CHAPTER 2

*Artaxerxes sends Nehemiah to Jerusalem—Sanballat and others oppose Nehemiah in rebuilding walls and gates of Jerusalem.*

1 AND it came to pass in the month Nisan, (the month of the Passover, spring) in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the king, *that wine was* before him: and I took up the wine, (the cupbearer tasted the king's drinks to make sure they were not poisoned) and gave *it* unto the king. Now I had not been *beforetime* sad in his presence.  
2 Wherefore the king said unto me, Why *is* thy countenance sad, seeing thou *art* not sick? this *is* nothing *else* but sorrow of heart. Then I was very sore afraid,  
3 And said unto the king, Let the king live for ever: why should not my countenance be <sup>a</sup>sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' sepulchres, *lieth* waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire?  
4 Then the king said unto me, For what dost thou make request? So I prayed to the God of heaven.

5 And I said unto the king, If it please the king, and if thy servant have found favour in thy sight, that thou wouldest send me unto Judah, unto the city of my fathers' sepulchres, that I may build it.

6 And the king said unto me, (the queen also sitting by him,) For how long shall thy journey be? and when wilt thou return? So it pleased the king to send me; and I set him a time.

7 Moreover I said unto the king, If it please the king, let letters be given me to the governors <sup>a</sup>beyond the river (on the west side of the Euphrates River), that they may convey me over till I come into Judah;

8 And a letter unto Asaph the keeper of the king's forest, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the palace which *appertained* to the house, and for the wall of the city, and for the house that I shall enter into. And the king granted me, according to the good hand of my God upon me.

9 ¶ Then I came to the governors beyond the river, and gave them the king's letters. Now the king had sent captains of the army and horsemen with me.

10 When <sup>a</sup>Sanballat (The governor of Samaria) the Horonite, and <sup>b</sup>Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, heard *of it*, it grieved them exceedingly that there was come a man to seek the welfare of the children of Israel.

11 So I came to Jerusalem, and was there three days.

12 ¶ And I arose in the night, I and some few men with me; neither told I *any* man what my God had put in my heart to do at Jerusalem: neither *was there any* beast with me, save the beast that I rode upon.

13 And I went out by night by the <sup>a</sup>gate of the <sup>b</sup>valley, (the name of a gate in the wall of Jerusalem, approx modern Jaffa gate) even before the <sup>c</sup>dragon (or fountain of the jackals – a well located near Jerusalem) well, and to the <sup>d</sup>dung port, (another gate in the wall of Jerusalem at approx junction of Hinnom and Tyropoeon valleys) and viewed the walls of Jerusalem, which were broken down, and the gates thereof were consumed with fire.

14 Then I went on to the <sup>a</sup>gate of the fountain (Perhaps a gate near En-rogel. The king's pool could be Siloam), and to the king's pool: but *there was* no place for the beast *that was* under me to pass.

15 Then went I up in the night by the brook, and viewed the wall, and turned back, and entered by the gate of the valley, and *so* returned.

16 And the rulers knew not whither I went, or what I did; neither had I as yet told *it* to the Jews, nor to the priests, nor to the nobles, nor to the rulers, nor to the rest that did the work. (Nehemiah wrote in such detail about his night reconnaissance and the later reconstruction of the walls of Jerusalem that we have a good idea of the actual sites of much that he reported. The accompanying map shows the estimated locations. Institute Manual, 335)

17 ¶ Then said I unto them, Ye see the distress that we *are* in, how Jerusalem *lieth* <sup>a</sup>waste, and the gates thereof are burned with fire: come, and let us build up the wall of Jerusalem, that we be no more a reproach.

18 Then I told them of the hand of my God which was good upon me; as also the king's words that he had spoken unto me. And they said, Let us rise up and build. So they strengthened their hands for *this* good work.

19 But when Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arabian, heard *it*, they <sup>a</sup>laughed us to <sup>b</sup>scorn, and despised us, and said, What *is* this thing that ye do? will ye rebel against the king?

20 Then answered I them, and said unto them, The God of heaven, he will prosper us; therefore we his servants will arise and build: but ye have no portion, nor right, nor memorial, in Jerusalem.

### CHAPTER 3

*Names and order of those who built the walls and gates of Jerusalem are set forth.*

1 THEN Eliashib the <sup>a</sup>high priest rose up with his brethren the priests, and they builded the <sup>b</sup>sheep gate; (A gate probably in the north-east wall of Jerusalem near the temple, for access of sacrificial animals)



they sanctified it, and set up the doors of it; even unto the tower of Meah they sanctified it, unto the tower of Hananeel.

2 And next unto him builded the men of Jericho. And next to them builded Zaccur the son of Imri.

3 But the <sup>a</sup>fish gate (Probably a north-western gate, with access to the merchants quarter; perhaps where Damascus gate now is) did the sons of Hassenaah build, who *also* laid the beams thereof, and set up the doors thereof, the locks thereof, and the bars thereof.

4 And next unto them repaired Meremoth the son of Urijah, the son of Koz. And next unto them repaired Meshullam the son of Berechiah, the son of Meshezabeel. And next unto them repaired Zadok the son of Baana.

5 And next unto them the Tekoites repaired; but their nobles put not their necks to the work of their Lord.

6 Moreover the old gate repaired Jehoiada the son of Paseah, and Meshullam the son of Besodeiah; they laid the beams thereof, and set up the doors thereof, and the locks thereof, and the bars thereof.

7 And next unto them repaired Melatiah the Gibeonite, and Jadon the Meronothite, the men of Gibeon, and of Mizpah, unto the throne of the governor <sup>a</sup>on this side the river. (ie on the west side of the Euphrates)

8 Next unto him repaired Uzziel the son of Harhaiah, of the goldsmiths. Next unto him also repaired Hananiah the son of *one of the* <sup>a</sup>apothecaries, (or perfumers, ointment-makers) and they fortified Jerusalem unto the broad wall.

9 And next unto them repaired Rephaiah the son of Hur, the ruler of the half part of Jerusalem.

10 And next unto them repaired Jedaiah the son of Harumaph, even over against his house. And next unto him repaired Hattush the son of Hashabniah.

11 Malchijah the son of Harim, and Hashub the son of Pahath-moab, repaired the other piece, and the tower of the furnaces.

12 And next unto him repaired Shallum the son of Haloheh, the ruler of the half part of Jerusalem, he and his daughters.

13 The <sup>a</sup>valley gate repaired Hanun, and the inhabitants of Zanoah; they built it, and set up the doors thereof, the locks thereof, and the bars thereof, and a thousand cubits on the wall unto the dung gate.

14 But the dung gate repaired Malchiah the son of Rechab, the ruler of part of Beth-haccerem; he built it, and set up the doors thereof, the locks thereof, and the bars thereof.

15 But the <sup>a</sup>gate of the fountain repaired Shallun the son of Col-hozeh, the ruler of part of Mizpah; he built it, and covered it, and set up the doors thereof, the locks thereof, and the bars thereof, and the wall of the pool of <sup>b</sup>Siloah by the king's garden, and unto the stairs that go down from the city of David.

16 After him repaired Nehemiah the son of Azbuk, the ruler of the half part of Beth-zur, unto *the place* over against the sepulchres of David, and to the pool that was made, and unto the house of the mighty.

17 After him repaired the Levites, Rehum the son of Bani. Next unto him repaired Hashabiah, the ruler of the half part of Keilah, in his part.

18 After him repaired their brethren, Bavai the son of Henadad, the ruler of the half part of Keilah.

19 And next to him repaired Ezer the son of Jeshua, the ruler of Mizpah, another piece over against the going up to the armoury at the turning *of the wall*.

20 After him Baruch the son of Zabbai earnestly repaired the other piece, from the turning *of the wall* unto the door of the house of Eliashib the high priest.

21 After him repaired Meremoth the son of Urijah the son of Koz another piece, from the door of the house of Eliashib even to the end of the house of Eliashib.

22 And after him repaired the priests, the men of the plain.

23 After him repaired Benjamin and Hashub over against their house. After him repaired Azariah the son of Maaseiah the son of Ananiah by his house.

24 After him repaired Binnui the son of Henadad another piece, from the house of Azariah unto the turning *of the wall*, even unto the corner.

25 Palal the son of Uzai, over against the turning *of the wall*, and <sup>a</sup>the tower which lieth out from the king's high house, (or the upper tower that stands out from the king's house) that *was* by the court of the prison. After him Pedaiah the son of Parosh.

26 Moreover the <sup>a</sup>Nethinims (ie temple servants) dwelt in Ophel, unto *the place* over against the <sup>b</sup>water gate toward the east, and the tower that lieth out.

27 After them the Tekoites repaired another piece, over against the great tower that lieth out, even unto the wall of Ophel.

28 From above the <sup>a</sup>horse gate (Probably at south-east corner of temple area) repaired the priests, every one over against his house.

29 After them repaired Zadok the son of Immer over against his house. After him repaired also Shemaiah the son of Shechaniah, the keeper of the <sup>a</sup>east gate. (Probably the area of the 'Golden Gate.')

30 After him repaired Hananiah the son of Shelemiah, and Hanun the sixth son of Zalaph, another piece. After him repaired Meshullam the son of Berechiah over against his chamber.

31 After him repaired Malchiah the goldsmith's son unto the place of the Nethinims, and of the merchants, over against the gate Miphkad, and <sup>a</sup>to the going up of the corner. (or to the upper chamber of the corner)

32 And between the going up of the corner unto the sheep gate repaired the goldsmiths and the merchants.

#### CHAPTER 4

*Their enemies seek to prevent Jews from rebuilding walls of Jerusalem—Nehemiah arms the laborers and keeps the work going forward.*

1 BUT it came to pass, that when <sup>a</sup>Sanballat heard that we builded the wall, he was wroth, and took great indignation, and mocked the Jews.

2 And he spake before his brethren and the army of Samaria, and said, What do these feeble Jews? will they fortify themselves? will they sacrifice? will they make an end in a day? will they revive the stones out of the heaps of the rubbish which are burned?

3 Now Tobiah the Ammonite *was* by him, and he said, Even that which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall.

4 Hear, O our God; for we are despised: and turn their reproach upon their own head, and give them for a prey in the land of captivity:

5 And cover not their iniquity, and let not their sin be blotted out from before thee: for they have provoked *thee* to anger before the builders.

6 So built we the wall; and all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof: for the <sup>a</sup>people had a mind to <sup>b</sup>work.

7 ¶ But it came to pass, *that* when <sup>a</sup>Sanballat, and Tobiah, and the Arabians, and the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites, heard that the walls of Jerusalem were made up, *and* that the breaches began to be stopped, then they were very wroth,

8 And conspired all of them together to come *and* to fight against Jerusalem, and to hinder it.

9 Nevertheless we made our prayer unto our God, and set a watch against them day and night, because of them.

10 And Judah said, The strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed, and *there is* much rubbish; so that we are not able to build the wall.

11 And our adversaries said, They shall not know, neither see, till we come in the midst among them, and slay them, and cause the work to cease.

12 And it came to pass, that when the Jews which dwelt by them came, they said unto us ten times, From all places whence ye shall return unto us *they will be upon you*.

13 ¶ Therefore set I in the lower places behind the wall, *and* on the higher places, I even set the people after their families with their swords, their spears, and their bows.

14 And I looked, and rose up, and said unto the nobles, and to the rulers, and to the rest of the people, Be not ye <sup>a</sup>afraid of them: remember the Lord, *which is* great and <sup>b</sup>terrible, (or feared, revered) and <sup>c</sup>fight for your brethren, your sons, and your daughters, your <sup>d</sup>wives, and your houses.

15 And it came to pass, when our enemies heard that it was known unto us, and God had brought their <sup>a</sup>counsel to nought, that we returned all of us to the wall, every one unto his work.

16 And it came to pass from that time forth, *that* the half of my servants wrought in the work, and the other half of them held both the spears, the shields, and the bows, and the <sup>a</sup>habergeons; (Probably armor of tough leather) and the rulers *were* behind all the house of Judah.

17 They which builded on the wall, and they that bare burdens, with those that laded, *every one* with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other *hand* held a weapon. (This is similar to the building of the Nauvoo temple.)

18 For the builders, every one had his sword girded by his side, and *so* builded. And he that sounded the trumpet *was* by me.

19 ¶ And I said unto the nobles, and to the rulers, and to the rest of the people, The work *is* great and large, and we are separated upon the wall, one far from another.

20 In what place *therefore* ye hear the sound of the trumpet, resort ye thither unto us: our God shall fight for us.

21 So we laboured in the work: and half of them held the spears from the rising of the morning till the stars appeared.

22 Likewise at the same time said I unto the people, Let every one with his servant lodge within Jerusalem, that in the night they may be a guard to us, and labour on the day.

23 So neither I, nor my brethren, nor my servants, nor the men of the guard which followed me, none of us put off our clothes, *saving that* every one put them off for washing.

## CHAPTER 5

*Many Jews are in bondage to their brethren—At Nehemiah's direction they are freed, their lands are restored, and taking of usury is discontinued.*

1 AND there was a great cry of the people and of their wives against their brethren the Jews.

2 For there were that said, We, our sons, and our daughters, *are* many: therefore we take up corn *for them*, that we may eat, and live.

3 *Some* also there were that said, We have mortgaged our lands, vineyards, and houses, that we might buy corn, because of the <sup>a</sup>dearth. (or famine)

4 There were also that said, We have <sup>a</sup>borrowed money for the king's tribute, *and that upon* our lands and vineyards.

5 Yet now our flesh *is* as the flesh of our brethren, our children as their children: and, lo, we bring into bondage our sons and our daughters to be servants, and *some* of our daughters are brought unto bondage *already*: neither *is it* in our power *to redeem them*; for other men have our lands and vineyards.

6 ¶ And I was very angry when I heard their cry and these words.

7 Then I consulted with myself, and I rebuked the nobles, and the rulers, and said unto them, Ye exact <sup>a</sup>usury, every one of his brother. And I set a great assembly against them.

8 And I said unto them, We after our ability have redeemed our brethren the Jews, which were sold unto the heathen; and will ye even sell your brethren? or shall they be sold unto us? Then held they their peace, and found nothing *to answer*.

9 Also I said, It *is* not good that ye do: ought ye not to <sup>a</sup>walk in the fear of our God because of the reproach of the <sup>b</sup>heathen our enemies?

10 I likewise, *and* my brethren, and my servants, might exact of them money and corn: I pray you, let us leave off this usury.

11 Restore, I pray you, to them, even this day, their lands, their vineyards, their oliveyards, and their houses, also <sup>a</sup>the hundredth *part* of the money, (or the hundred pieces of silver) and of the corn, the wine, and the oil, that ye exact of them.

12 Then said they, We will restore *them*, and will require nothing of them; so will we do as thou sayest. Then I called the priests, and took an oath of them, that they should do according to this promise.

13 Also I shook my lap, and said, So God shake out every man from his house, and from his labour, that performeth not this promise, even thus be he shaken out, and emptied. And all the congregation said, Amen, and praised the LORD. And the people did according to this promise.

14 ¶ Moreover from the time that I was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah, from the twentieth year even unto the two and thirtieth year of Artaxerxes the king, *that is*, twelve years, I and my brethren <sup>a</sup>have not eaten the <sup>b</sup>bread of the governor.

15 But the former governors that *had been* before me <sup>a</sup>were chargeable unto the people (Heb laid a heavy burden upon the people), and had taken of them bread and wine, beside forty shekels of silver; yea, even their servants bare <sup>b</sup>rule over the people: but so did not I, because of the <sup>c</sup>fear of God.

16 Yea, also I continued in the work of this wall, neither bought we any land: and all my servants *were* gathered thither unto the work.

17 Moreover *there were* at my table an hundred and fifty of the Jews and rulers, beside those that came unto us from among the heathen that *are* about us.

18 Now *that* which was prepared *for me* daily *was* one ox *and* six choice sheep; also fowls were prepared for me, and once in ten days store of all sorts of wine: yet for all this required not I the bread of the governor, because the bondage was heavy upon this people.

19 Think upon me, my God, for good, *according* to all that I have done for this people.

## CHAPTER 6

*Sanballat engages in intrigue against Nehemiah and the building of the wall—Jews finish construction of the wall.*

(Sanballat tried to lure Nehemiah into some “mischief” (Nehemiah 6:2) through an invitation for negotiations, but Nehemiah was not deceived. In fact, he was not even intimidated by Sanballat’s threat to report a Jewish rebellion to King Artaxerxes. The wall was finished in fifty-two days (see v. 15), and watches were set to protect those who lived in the city. The walls were a protection, but they were also an important physical symbol of the establishment of the Jews as a people. The holy city became a unifying force as families were chosen by lot to come live in it (see Nehemiah 11:1–2). Sanballat and the other enemies of Judah fully understood the significance of the walls and of Nehemiah’s unifying leadership. That is why their opposition was so persistent. Institute Manual, 336)

1 NOW it came to pass, when <sup>a</sup>Sanballat, and Tobiah, and Geshem the Arabian, and the rest of our enemies, heard that I had builded the wall, and *that* there was no breach left therein; (though at that time I had not set up the doors upon the gates;)

2 That Sanballat and Geshem sent unto me, saying, Come, let us meet together in *some one of* the villages in the plain of Ono. But they thought to do me <sup>a</sup>mischief.

3 And I sent messengers unto them, saying, **I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down: why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you? (We should remember that we are about the Lord’s business and do not have time to come down to them.)**

4 Yet they sent unto me four times after this sort; and I answered them after the same manner.

5 Then sent Sanballat his servant unto me in like manner the fifth time with an open letter in his hand;

6 Wherein *was* written, It is reported among the heathen, and <sup>a</sup>Gashmu (Geshem) saith *it, that* thou and the Jews think to rebel: for which cause thou buildest the wall, that thou mayest be their king, according to these words.

7 And thou hast also appointed prophets to preach of thee at Jerusalem, saying, *There is* a king in Judah: and now shall it be reported to the king according to these words. Come now therefore, and let us take counsel together.

8 Then I sent unto him, saying, There are no such things done as thou sayest, but thou <sup>a</sup>feignest them out of thine own heart.

9 For they all made us afraid, saying, Their hands shall be weakened from the work, that it be not done. Now therefore, *O God*, strengthen my hands.

10 Afterward I came unto the house of Shemaiah the son of Delaiah the son of Mehetabeel, who *was* shut up; and he said, Let us meet together in the house of God, within the temple, and let us shut the doors of the temple: for they will come to slay thee; yea, in the night will they come to slay thee.

11 And I said, Should such a man as I flee? and who *is there* (mine enemy), that, *being* (such as man) as I ~~am~~, would go into the temple to save his life? I will not go in.

12 And, lo, I perceived that God had not sent him; but that he pronounced this prophecy against me: for Tobiah and Sanballat had hired him.

13 Therefore ~~was he hired, that I~~ should (I) be <sup>a</sup>afraid (of him he hired), and do ~~so~~ (as he said), and sin, and *that* they might have ~~matter~~ (me) for an <sup>b</sup>evil report, that they might reproach me.

14 My God, think thou upon Tobiah and Sanballat according to these their works, and on the prophetess Noadiah, and the rest of the prophets, that would have put me in fear.

15 ¶ So the wall was finished in the twenty and fifth *day of the month* <sup>a</sup>Elul, (the sixth Hebrew month, from the new moon of September to that of October) in fifty and two days. (Josephus said it took two years and four months to rebuild the walls. This may be a more realistic time frame.)

16 And it came to pass, that when all our <sup>a</sup>enemies heard *thereof*, and all the heathen that *were* about us saw *these things*, they were much cast down in their own eyes: for they perceived that this work was wrought of our God.

17 ¶ Moreover in those days the nobles of Judah sent many letters unto Tobiah, and *the letters* of Tobiah came unto them.

18 For *there were* many in Judah sworn unto him, because he *was* the son in law of Shechaniah the son of Arah; and his son Johanan had taken the daughter of <sup>a</sup>Meshullam the son of Berechiah.

19 Also they reported his good deeds before me, and uttered my words to him. *And* Tobiah sent letters to put me in fear.

## CHAPTER 7

*Provision made to protect Jerusalem—Genealogy given of the Jews who returned from Babylon—Priests without genealogical records are denied the priesthood.*

1 NOW it came to pass, when the wall was built, and I had set up the doors, and the porters and the singers and the Levites were appointed,

2 That I gave my brother <sup>a</sup>Hanani, and Hananiah the ruler of the palace, charge over Jerusalem: for he *was* a <sup>b</sup>faithful man, and <sup>c</sup>feared God above many.

3 And I said unto them, Let not the gates of Jerusalem be opened until the sun be hot; and while they stand by, let them shut the doors, and bar *them*: and appoint watches of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, every one in his watch, and every one *to be* over against his house.

4 Now the city *was* large and great: but the people *were* few therein, and the houses *were* not builded.



5 ¶ And my God put into mine heart to gather together the nobles, and the rulers, and the people, that they might be reckoned by genealogy. And I found a <sup>a</sup>register of the <sup>b</sup>genealogy of them which came up at the first, and found written therein,

6 These *are* the <sup>a</sup>children of the province, that went up out of the <sup>b</sup>captivity, (or exile) of those that had been carried away, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away, and came again to Jerusalem and to Judah, every one unto his city;

7 <sup>a</sup>Who came with Zerubbabel, Jeshua, Nehemiah, Azariah, Raamiah, Nahamani, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispereth, Bigvai, Nehum, Baanah. The number, *I say*, of the men of the people of Israel *was this*;

8 The children of Parosh, two thousand an hundred seventy and two.

9 The children of Shephatiah, three hundred seventy and two.

10 The children of Arah, ~~six~~ (seven) hundred ~~fifty and two~~ (seventy and five).

11 The children of Pahath-moab, of the children of Jeshua and Joab, two thousand and eight hundred ~~and eighteen~~ (twelve).

12 The children of Elam, a thousand two hundred fifty and four.

13 The children of Zattu, ~~eight~~ (nine) hundred forty and five.

14 The children of Zaccai, seven hundred and threescore.

15 The children of <sup>a</sup>Binnui (Bani), six hundred forty and ~~eight~~ (two).

16 The children of Bebai, six hundred twenty and ~~eight~~ (three).

17 The children of Azgad, two thousand three hundred twenty and two.

18 The children of Adonikam, six hundred ~~threescore and seven~~ (sixty and six).

19 The children of Bigvai, two thousand ~~threescore and seven~~ (fifty and six).

20 The children of Adin, ~~six~~ (four) hundred fifty and ~~five~~ (four).

21 The children of Ater of Hezekiah, ninety and eight.

22 The children of Hashum, ~~three~~ (two) hundred twenty and ~~eight~~ (three).

23 The children of Bezai, three hundred twenty and ~~four~~ (three).

24 The children of Hariph (Jorah), ~~an~~ hundred and twelve.

25 The children of Gibeon, ninety and five.

26 The men of Beth-lehem and Netophah, an hundred fourscore and eight.

27 The men of Anathoth, an hundred twenty and eight.

28 The men of Beth-azmaveth, forty and two.

29 The men of Kirjath-jearim, Chephirah, and Beeroth, seven hundred forty and three.

30 The men of Ramah and Geba, six hundred twenty and one.

31 The men of Michmas, an hundred and twenty and two.

32 The men of Beth-el and Ai, ~~an~~ (two) hundred twenty and three.

33 The men of the other Nebo, fifty and two.

34 The children of the other Elam, a thousand two hundred fifty and four.

35 The children of Harim, three hundred and twenty.

36 The children of Jericho, three hundred forty and five.

37 The children of Lod, Hadid, and Ono, seven hundred twenty and ~~one~~ (five).

38 The children of Senaah, three thousand ~~nine~~ (six) hundred and thirty.

39 ¶ The priests: the children of Jedaiah, of the house of Jeshua, nine hundred seventy and three.

40 The children of Immer, a thousand fifty and two.

41 The children of Pashur, a thousand two hundred forty and seven.

42 The children of Harim, a thousand and seventeen.

43 ¶ The Levites: the children of Jeshua, of Kadmiel, *and* of the children of Hodevah, seventy and four.

44 ¶ The singers: (of) the children of Asaph, ~~an~~ hundred forty and eight.

45 ¶ The porters: the children of Shallum, the children of Ater, the children of Talmon, the children of Akkub, the children of Hatita, the children of Shobai, ~~an~~ hundred thirty and ~~eight~~ (nine).

46 ¶ The <sup>a</sup>Nethinims (or temple servants): the children of Ziha, the children of Hashupha, the children of Tabbaath,

47 The children of Keros, the children of Sia, the children of Padon,

48 The children of Lebana, the children of Hagaba, the children of Shalmal,

49 The children of Hanan, the children of Giddel, the children of Gahar,

50 The children of Reaiah, the children of Rezin, the children of Nekoda,

51 The children of Gazzam, the children of Uzza, the children of Phaseah,

52 The children of Besai, the children of Meunim, the children of Nephishesim,

53 The children of Bakbuk, the children of Hakupha, the children of Harhur,

54 The children of Bazlith, the children of Mehida, the children of Harsha,

55 The children of Barkos, the children of Sisera, the children of Tamah,

56 The children of Neziah, the children of Hatipha.

57 ¶ The children of Solomon's servants: the children of Sotai, the children of Sophereth, the children of Perida,

58 The children of Jaala, the children of Darkon, the children of Giddel,

59 The children of Shephatiah, the children of Hattil, the children of Pochereth of Zebaim, the children of Amon.

60 All the Nethinims, and the children of Solomon's servants, *were* three hundred ninety and two.

61 And these *were* they which went up *also* from Tel-melah, Tel-haresha, Cherub, Addon, and Immer: but they could not shew their father's house, nor their seed, whether they *were* of Israel.

62 The children of Delaiah, the children of Tobiah, the children of Nekoda, six hundred ~~forty~~ (fifty) and two.

63 ¶ And of the priests: the <sup>a</sup>children of Habaiah, the children of Koz, the children of Barzillai, which took *one* of the daughters of Barzillai the Gileadite to wife, and was called after their name.

64 These sought their register *among* those that were reckoned by <sup>a</sup>genealogy, but it was not found: therefore were they, as <sup>b</sup>polluted, put from the <sup>c</sup>priesthood. (Those who could not trace their genealogy, or who tried to hide it, were denied the priesthood. The same situation was reported in Ezra 2:62. "The Tirshatha" is a title for the governor (see Nehemiah 7:65, 70). Institute Manual, 336)

65 And the <sup>a</sup>Tirshatha (or governor) said unto them, that they should not eat of the most holy things, till there stood *up* a priest with <sup>b</sup>Urim and Thummim.

66 ¶ The whole congregation together *was* forty and two thousand three hundred and threescore,

67 Beside their manservants and their maidservants, of whom *there were* seven thousand three hundred thirty and seven: and they had two hundred forty and five singing men and singing women.

68 Their horses, seven hundred thirty and six: their mules, two hundred forty and five:

69 *Their* camels, four hundred thirty and five: six thousand seven hundred and twenty asses.

70 ¶ And some of the chief of the fathers <sup>a</sup>gave unto the work. The Tirshatha gave to the treasure a thousand drams of gold, fifty basons, five hundred and thirty priests' garments.

71 And *some* of the chief of the fathers gave to the treasure of the work twenty thousand drams of gold, and two thousand and two hundred pound of silver.

72 And *that* which the rest of the people gave *was* twenty thousand drams of gold, and two thousand pound of silver, and threescore and seven priests' garments.

73 So the priests, and the Levites, and the porters, and the singers, and *some* of the people, and the Nethinims, and all Israel, dwelt in their cities; and when the seventh month came, the children of Israel *were* in their cities.

## CHAPTER 8

*Ezra reads and interprets the law of Moses to the people—They keep the feast of tabernacles.*

1 AND all the people gathered themselves together as one man into the street that *was* before the <sup>a</sup>water gate; and they spake unto <sup>b</sup>Ezra the <sup>c</sup>scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the LORD had commanded to Israel.

2 And Ezra the priest brought the <sup>a</sup>law before the congregation both of men and women, and all that could hear with understanding, upon the first day of the seventh month.

3 And he read therein before the street that *was* before the water gate from the morning until midday, before the men and the women, and those that could understand; and the ears of all the people *were attentive* unto the <sup>a</sup>book of the law.

4 And Ezra the scribe stood upon a <sup>a</sup>pulpit of wood, which they had made for the purpose; and beside him stood Mattithiah, and Shema, and Anaiah, and Urijah, and Hilkiah, and Maaseiah, on his right hand; and on his left hand, Pedaiah, and Mishael, and Malchiah, and Hashum, and Hashbadana, Zechariah, and Meshullam.

5 And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people; (for he was above all the people;) and when he opened it, all the people stood up:

6 And Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God. And all the people answered, Amen, Amen, with lifting up their hands: and they bowed their heads, and worshipped the LORD with *their* faces to the ground.

7 Also Jeshua, and Bani, and Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodijah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, and the Levites, caused the people to understand the law: and the people *stood* in their place.

8 So they read in the book in the <sup>a</sup>law of God <sup>b</sup>distinctly, and <sup>c</sup>gave the sense, (expanded the meaning. It is held by some that the explanation was in Aramaic; thus the first translating (Targum) of the scriptures occurred) and caused *them* to understand the reading. (This appears to be the first time a synagogue, or place to read the scriptures, was set up after their exile in Babylon. Some of the Jews did not understand the words that were read because their language had been changed. Only those that retained their understanding of Hebrew could understand it and explain it to others.)

9 ¶ And Nehemiah, which *is* the <sup>a</sup>Tirshatha, and Ezra the priest the scribe, and the Levites that <sup>b</sup>taught the people, said unto all the people, This day *is* holy unto the LORD your God; <sup>c</sup>mourn not, nor weep. For all the people <sup>d</sup>wept, when they heard the words of the law.

10 Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send <sup>a</sup>portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared (give to the poor): for *this* <sup>b</sup>day *is* holy unto our Lord: neither be ye <sup>c</sup>sorry; for the joy of the LORD is your <sup>d</sup>strength.

11 So the Levites stilled all the people, saying, Hold your peace, for the day *is* holy; neither be ye grieved.

12 And all the people went their way to eat, and to drink, and to send portions, and to make great <sup>a</sup>mirth, (rejoicing) because they had <sup>b</sup>understood the words that were declared unto them.

13 ¶ And on the second day were gathered together the chief of the fathers of all the people, the priests, and the Levites, unto Ezra the scribe, even to <sup>a</sup>understand the words of the law.

14 And they found written in the law which the LORD had commanded by Moses, that the children of Israel should dwell in <sup>a</sup>booths (this is the characteristic tradition of the feast of tabernacles) in the <sup>b</sup>feast of the seventh month: (The Feast of Tabernacles or Feast of Booths and as the Feast of Ingathering.)

15 And that they should publish and proclaim in all their cities, and in Jerusalem, saying, Go forth unto the mount, and fetch olive branches, and pine branches, and myrtle branches, and palm branches, and branches of thick trees, to make booths, as *it is* written.

16 ¶ So the people went forth, and brought *them*, and made themselves booths, every one upon the roof of his house, and in their courts, and in the courts of the house of God, and in the street of the water gate, and in the street of the gate of <sup>a</sup>Ephraim.

17 And all the congregation of them that were come again out of the captivity made <sup>a</sup>booths, and sat under the booths: for since the days of <sup>b</sup>Jeshua (Joshua) the son of <sup>c</sup>Nun unto that day had not the children of Israel done so. And there was very great gladness.

18 Also day by day, from the first day unto the last day, he <sup>a</sup>read in the book of the law of God. And they kept the feast seven days; and on the eighth day *was* a <sup>b</sup>solemn assembly, according unto the manner. Elder Bruce R. McConkie said: “One of the three great feasts at which the attendance of all male Israelites was compulsory, the Feast of Tabernacles, was by all odds Israel’s greatest feast. Coming only five days after the Day of Atonement, it was thus celebrated when the sins of the chosen people had been removed and when their special covenant relation to Jehovah had been renewed and restored. Above all other occasions it was one for rejoicing, bearing testimony, and praising the Lord. In the full sense, it is the Feast of Jehovah, the one Mosaic celebration which, as part of the restitution of all things, shall be restored when Jehovah comes to reign personally upon the earth for a thousand years. Even now we perform one of its chief rituals in our solemn assemblies, the giving of the Hosanna Shout, and the worshippers of Jehovah shall yet be privileged to exult in other of its sacred rituals. Zechariah 14:16 ¶ And it shall come to pass, *that* every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to <sup>a</sup>worship the <sup>b</sup>King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the <sup>c</sup>feast of <sup>d</sup>tabernacles. That will be the day when the law shall go forth from Zion and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. Manifestly, when the Feast of Tabernacles is kept in that day, its ritualistic performances will conform to the new gospel order and not include the Mosaic order of the past. (Promised Messiah, p. 432-433. It is possible that the Second Coming will occur during that time of the year when the Feast of Tabernacles occurs. Celebrating the harvest.)

## CHAPTER 9

*Jews fast and confess their sins—Levites bless and praise the Lord, and recite his goodness toward Israel.*

- 1 NOW in the twenty and fourth day of this month the children of Israel were assembled with <sup>a</sup>fasting, and with sackclothes, and earth upon them.
- 2 And the seed of Israel <sup>a</sup>separated themselves from all <sup>b</sup>strangers, (or foreigners) and stood and <sup>c</sup>confessed their sins, and the iniquities of their fathers.
- 3 And they stood up in their place, and read in the book of the law of the LORD their God *one* fourth part of the day; and *another* fourth part they confessed, and worshipped the LORD their God.
- 4 ¶ Then stood up upon the stairs, of the Levites, Jeshua, and Bani, Kadmiel, Shebaniah, Bunni, Sherebiah, Bani, *and* Chenani, and cried with a loud voice unto the LORD their God.
- 5 Then the Levites, Jeshua, and Kadmiel, Bani, Hashabniah, Sherebiah, Hodijah, Shebaniah, *and* Pethahiah, said, Stand up *and* bless the LORD your God for ever and ever: and blessed be thy glorious name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise.
- 6 Thou, *even* thou, *art* <sup>a</sup>LORD alone; thou hast made <sup>b</sup>heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all *things* that *are* therein, the seas, and all that *is* therein, and thou <sup>c</sup>preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee.
- 7 Thou *art* the LORD the God, who didst choose <sup>a</sup>Abram, and broughtest him forth out of <sup>b</sup>Ur of the Chaldees, and gavest him the name of Abraham;
- 8 And foundest his heart faithful before thee, and madest a <sup>a</sup>covenant with him to give the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Jebusites, and the Girgashites, to give *it, I say*, to his seed, and hast performed thy words; for thou *art* <sup>b</sup>righteous:
- 9 And didst see the <sup>a</sup>affliction of our fathers in Egypt, and heardest their cry by the <sup>b</sup>Red sea;
- 10 And shewedst signs and wonders upon Pharaoh, and on all his servants, and on all the people of his land: for thou knewest that they dealt proudly against them. So didst thou get thee a <sup>a</sup>name, as *it is* this day.
- 11 And thou didst <sup>a</sup>divide the sea before them, so that they went through the midst of the sea on the dry land; and their persecutors thou threwest into the deeps, as a <sup>b</sup>stone into the mighty waters.

12 Moreover thou leddest them in the day by a cloudy <sup>a</sup>pillar; and in the night by a pillar of fire, to give them light in the way wherein they should go.

13 Thou camest down also upon mount Sinai, and spakest with them from heaven, and gavest them right judgments, and true laws, good <sup>a</sup>statutes and commandments:

14 And madest known unto them thy holy <sup>a</sup>sabbath, and commandedst them precepts, statutes, and laws, by the hand of Moses thy servant:

15 And gavest them <sup>a</sup>bread from heaven for their hunger, and broughtest forth <sup>b</sup>water for them out of the rock for their thirst, and promisedst them that they should go in to <sup>c</sup>possess the land which thou hadst sworn to give them.

16 But they and our fathers dealt proudly, and <sup>a</sup>hardened their necks, and hearkened not to thy commandments,

17 And refused to obey, neither were mindful of thy wonders that thou didst among them; but hardened their necks, and in their rebellion appointed a captain to <sup>a</sup>return to their bondage: but thou *art* a God ready to <sup>b</sup>pardon, gracious and <sup>c</sup>merciful, slow to <sup>d</sup>anger, and of great <sup>e</sup>kindness, and forsookest them not.

18 Yea, when they had made them a <sup>a</sup>molten <sup>b</sup>calf, and said, This *is* thy God that brought thee up out of Egypt, and had wrought great provocations;

19 Yet thou in thy manifold mercies <sup>a</sup>forsookest them not in the wilderness: the pillar of the cloud departed not from them by day, to lead them in the way; neither the pillar of fire by night, to shew them light, and the way wherein they should go.

20 Thou gavest also thy good <sup>a</sup>spirit to <sup>b</sup>instruct them, and withheldest not thy <sup>c</sup>manna from their mouth, and gavest them water for their thirst.

21 Yea, forty years didst thou sustain them in the wilderness, *so that* they lacked nothing; their clothes waxed not old, and their feet swelled not.

22 Moreover thou gavest them kingdoms and nations, and didst divide them into corners: so they possessed the land of Sihon, and the land of the king of Heshbon, and the land of Og king of Bashan.

23 Their children also <sup>a</sup>multipliedst thou as the stars of heaven, and broughtest them into the land, concerning which thou hadst promised to their fathers, that they should go in to possess *it*.

24 So the children went in and possessed the land, and thou subduedst before them the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, and gavest them into their hands, with their kings, and the people of the land, that they might do with them as they would.

25 And they took strong cities, and a <sup>a</sup>fat land, and possessed houses full of all goods, wells digged, vineyards, and oliveyards, and fruit trees in abundance: so they did eat, and were filled, and became fat, and delighted themselves in thy great goodness.

26 Nevertheless they were <sup>a</sup>disobedient, and <sup>b</sup>rebelled against thee, and cast thy law behind their backs, and <sup>c</sup>slew thy prophets which testified against them to turn them to thee, and they wrought great provocations.

27 Therefore thou deliveredst them into the hand of their <sup>a</sup>enemies, who <sup>b</sup>vexed them: and in the time of their <sup>c</sup>trouble, when they cried unto thee, thou heardest *them* from heaven; and according to thy manifold mercies thou gavest them <sup>d</sup>saviours, who saved them out of the hand of their enemies.

28 But after they had rest, they did evil again before thee: therefore leftest thou them in the hand of their enemies, so that they had the dominion over them: yet when they returned, and cried unto thee, thou heardest *them* from heaven; and many times didst thou deliver them according to thy mercies;

29 And testifiedst against them, that thou mightest bring them again unto thy law: yet they dealt proudly, and hearkened not unto thy commandments, but sinned against thy judgments, (which if a man do, he shall live in them;) and withdrew the shoulder, and hardened their neck, and would not hear.

30 Yet many years didst thou <sup>a</sup>forbear them, and <sup>b</sup>testifiedst against them by thy <sup>c</sup>spirit in thy <sup>d</sup>prophets: yet would they not give ear: therefore gavest thou them into the hand of the people of the lands.



31 Nevertheless for thy great mercies' sake thou didst not utterly consume them, nor forsake them; for thou *art* a gracious and <sup>a</sup>merciful God.

32 Now therefore, our God, the great, the mighty, and the <sup>a</sup>terrible God (or feared (revered) God), who <sup>b</sup>keepest covenant and mercy, let not all the trouble seem little before thee, that hath come upon us, on our kings, on our princes, and on our priests, and on our prophets, and on our fathers, and on all thy people, since the time of the kings of Assyria unto this day.

33 Howbeit thou *art* <sup>a</sup>just in all that is brought upon us; for thou hast done right, but we have done <sup>b</sup>wickedly:

34 Neither have our kings, our princes, our priests, nor our fathers, kept thy law, nor hearkened unto thy commandments and thy testimonies, wherewith thou didst testify against them.

35 For they have not served thee in their kingdom, and in thy great goodness that thou gavest them, and in the large and fat land which thou gavest before them, neither turned they from their wicked works.

36 Behold, we *are* servants this day, and *for* the land that thou gavest unto our fathers to eat the fruit thereof and the good thereof, behold, we *are* servants in it:

37 And it yieldeth much increase unto the kings whom thou hast set over us because of our sins: also they have dominion over our bodies, and over our cattle, at their pleasure, and we *are* in great distress.

38 And because of all this we make a sure *covenant*, and write *it*; and our princes, Levites, *and* priests, seal *unto it*.

## CHAPTER 10

*People covenant to marry in Israel, to honor the Sabbath, to pay tithes, and to keep the commandments.*

1 NOW those that sealed *were*, Nehemiah, the <sup>a</sup>Tirshatha (or governor), the son of Hachaliah, and Zidkijah,

2 Seraiah, Azariah, Jeremiah,

3 Pashur, Amariah, Malchijah,

4 Hattush, Shebaniah, Malluch,

5 Harim, Meremoth, Obadiah,

6 Daniel, Ginnethon, Baruch,

7 Meshullam, Abijah, Mijamin,

8 Maaziah, Bilgai, Shemaiah: these *were* the priests.

9 And the Levites: both Jeshua the son of Azaniah, Binnui of the sons of Henadad, Kadmiel;

10 And their brethren, Shebaniah, Hodijah, Kelita, Pelaiah, Hanan,

11 Micha, Rehob, Hashabiah,

12 Zaccur, Sherebiah, Shebaniah,

13 Hodijah, Bani, Beninu.

14 The chief of the people; Parosh, Pahath-moab, Elam, Zatthu, Bani,

15 Bunni, Azgad, Bebai,

16 Adonijah, Bigvai, Adin,

17 Ater, Hizkijah, Azzur,

18 Hodijah, Hashum, Bezai,

19 Hariph, Anathoth, Nebai,

20 Magpiash, Meshullam, Hezir,

21 Meshezabeel, Zadok, Jaddua,

22 Pelatiah, Hanan, Anaiah,

23 Hoshea, Hananiah, Hashub,

24 Hallohesh, Pileha, Shobek,

25 Rehum, Hashabnah, Maaseiah,

26 And Ahijah, Hanan, Anan,

27 Malluch, Harim, Baanah.

28 ¶ And the rest of the people, the priests, the Levites, the porters, the singers, the <sup>a</sup>Nethinims, (or temple servants) and all they that had <sup>b</sup>separated themselves from the people of the lands unto the law of God, their wives, their sons, and their daughters, every one having <sup>c</sup>knowledge, and having understanding;

29 They clave to their brethren, their nobles, and entered into (an oath that) <sup>a</sup>a <sup>b</sup>curse, and into an <sup>c</sup>oath, ~~to~~ (should come upon them if they did not) walk in God's <sup>d</sup>law, which was given by Moses the servant of God, and to observe and do all the commandments of the LORD <sup>e</sup>our Lord (their God), and his judgments and his statutes; (In their new spirit of unity and national pride, the Jews made covenants to marry within Israel (see Nehemiah 10:30); keep the Sabbath (see v. 31); pay the "temple tax" instituted by Moses (see v. 32); make offerings (see vv. 33–35); dedicate the firstborn to the Lord (see v. 36); support the Levites and priests with their tithes (see vv. 37–38); and do all things necessary to sustain the temple (see v. 39). In other words, they covenanted to reestablish obedience to the law of Moses. Nehemiah 10:38 mentions "the tithes of the tithes." The Levites were to tithe their own support money for the priests. Originally the temple tax was half a shekel for everyone over twenty years of age (see Exodus 30:13). This amount was reduced to a "third part," or one third of a shekel. Such offerings were still a practice in the days of Jesus (see Luke 21:1–4) Institute Manual, 338)

30 And that ~~we~~ (they) would not give ~~our~~ (their) <sup>a</sup>daughters unto the people of the land, nor take their daughters (of the people) for ~~our~~ (their) sons:

31 And *if* the people of the land bring <sup>a</sup>ware (or merchandise) or any <sup>b</sup>victuals (or grain) on the <sup>c</sup>sabbath day to sell, *that* we would not buy it of them on the sabbath, or on the holy day: and *that* we would leave the <sup>d</sup>seventh year, and the exaction of every debt.

32 Also we made ordinances for us, to <sup>a</sup>charge ourselves yearly with the third part of a shekel for the <sup>b</sup>service of the house of our God;

33 For the <sup>a</sup>shewbread, and for the continual <sup>b</sup>meat offering, and for the continual burnt offering, of the sabbaths, of the new moons, for the set feasts, and for the holy *things*, and for the sin offerings to make an <sup>c</sup>atonement for Israel, and *for* all the work of the house of our God.

34 And we <sup>a</sup>cast the lots among the priests, the Levites, and the people, for the <sup>b</sup>wood offering, to bring *it* into the house of our God, after the houses of our fathers, at times appointed year by year, to burn upon the altar of the LORD our God, as *it is* written in the law:

35 And to bring the <sup>a</sup>firstfruits of our ground, and the firstfruits of all fruit of all trees, year by year, unto the house of the LORD:

36 Also the <sup>a</sup>firstborn of our sons, and of our cattle, as *it is* written in the law, and the firstlings of our herds and of our flocks, to bring to the house of our God, unto the priests that minister in the house of our God:

37 And *that* we should bring the firstfruits of our <sup>a</sup>dough, and our offerings, and the fruit of all manner of trees, of wine and of oil, unto the priests, to the chambers of the house of our God; and the tithes of our ground unto the Levites, that the same Levites might have the tithes in all the cities of our tillage.

38 And the priest the son of Aaron shall be with the Levites, when the Levites take tithes: and the Levites shall bring up the <sup>a</sup>tithe of the tithes unto the house of our God, to the chambers, into the treasure house.

39 For the children of Israel and the children of Levi shall bring the offering of the corn, of the new wine, and the oil, unto the chambers, where *are* the vessels of the sanctuary, and the priests that minister, and the porters, and the singers: and we will not forsake the house of our God.

## CHAPTER 11

*People and their overseers elected by lot to dwell in Jerusalem and the other cities.*

1 AND the rulers of the people dwelt at Jerusalem: the rest of the people also cast lots, to bring one of ten to dwell in Jerusalem the <sup>a</sup>holy <sup>b</sup>city, and nine parts *to dwell* in *other* cities.

2 And the people blessed all the men, that willingly offered themselves to dwell at Jerusalem.

3 ¶ Now these *are* the chief of the province that dwelt in Jerusalem: but in the cities of Judah dwelt every one in his possession in their cities, *to wit*, Israel, the priests, and the Levites, and the <sup>a</sup>Nethinims, (or temple servants) and the children of Solomon's servants.

4 And at Jerusalem dwelt *certain* of the children of Judah, and of the children of Benjamin. Of the children of Judah; Athaiah the son of Uzziah, the son of Zechariah, the son of Amariah, the son of Shephatiah, the son of Mahalaleel, of the children of Perez;

5 And Maaseiah the son of Baruch, the son of Col-hozeh, the son of Hazaiah, the son of Adaiiah, the son of Joiarib, the son of Zechariah, the son of Shiloni.

6 All the sons of Perez that dwelt at Jerusalem *were* four hundred threescore and eight valiant men.

7 And these *are* the sons of Benjamin; Sallu the son of Meshullam, the son of Joed, the son of Pedaiiah, the son of Kolaiah, the son of Maaseiah, the son of Ithiel, the son of Jesaiah.

8 And after him Gabbai, Sallai, nine hundred twenty and eight.

9 And Joel the son of Zichri *was* their overseer: and Judah the son of Senuah *was* second over the city.

10 Of the <sup>a</sup>priests: Jedaiah the son of Joiarib, Jachin.

11 Seraiah the son of Hilkiyah, the son of Meshullam, the son of Zadok, the son of Meraioth, the son of Ahitub, *was* the ruler of the house of God.

12 And their brethren that did the work of the house *were* eight hundred twenty and two: and Adaiiah the son of Jeroham, the son of Pelaliah, the son of Amzi, the son of Zechariah, the son of Pashur, the son of Malchiah,

13 And his brethren, chief of the fathers, two hundred forty and two: and Amashai the son of Azareel, the son of Ahasai, the son of Meshillemoth, the son of Immer,

14 And their brethren, mighty men of valour, an hundred twenty and eight: and their overseer *was* Zabdiel, the son of *one of* the great men.

15 Also of the Levites: Shemaiah the son of Hashub, the son of Azrikam, the son of Hashabiah, the son of Bunni;

16 And Shabbethai and Jozabad, of the <sup>a</sup>chief of the <sup>b</sup>Levites, *had* the <sup>c</sup>oversight of <sup>d</sup>the outward (or outside work connected with the temple) <sup>e</sup>business of the house of God.

17 And Mattaniah the son of Micha, the son of Zabdi, the son of Asaph, *was* the principal to begin the thanksgiving in prayer: and Bakbukiah the second among his brethren, and Abda the son of Shammua, the son of Galal, the son of Jeduthun.

18 All the Levites in the holy city *were* two hundred fourscore and four.

19 Moreover the porters, Akkub, Talmon, and their brethren that kept the gates, *were* an hundred seventy and two.

20 ¶ And the residue of Israel, of the priests, *and* the Levites, *were* in all the cities of Judah, every one in his inheritance.

21 But the Nethinims dwelt in Ophel: and Ziha and Gispa *were* over the Nethinims.

22 The <sup>a</sup>overseer also of the Levites at Jerusalem *was* Uzzi the son of Bani, the son of Hashabiah, the son of Mattaniah, the son of Micha. Of the sons of Asaph, the singers *were* over the business of the house of God.

23 For *it was* the king's commandment concerning them, that a certain portion should be for the singers, due for every day.

24 And Pethahiah the son of Meshezabeel, of the children of <sup>a</sup>Zerah the son of Judah, *was* at the king's hand in all matters concerning the people.

25 And for the villages, with their fields, *some* of the children of Judah dwelt at Kirjath-arba, and *in* the villages thereof, and at Dibon, and *in* the villages thereof, and at Jekabzeel, and *in* the villages thereof,

26 And at Jeshua, and at Moladah, and at Beth-phelet,  
 27 And at Hazar-shual, and at Beer-sheba, and *in* the villages thereof,  
 28 And at Ziklag, and at Mekonah, and in the villages thereof,  
 29 And at En-rimmon, and at Zareah, and at Jarmuth,  
 30 Zanoah, Adullam, and *in* their villages, at Lachish, and the fields thereof, at Azekah, and *in* the villages thereof. And they dwelt from Beer-sheba unto the valley of Hinnom.  
 31 The children also of Benjamin from Geba *dwelt* at Michmash, and Aija, and Beth-el, and *in* their villages,  
 32 *And* at Anathoth, Nob, Ananiah,  
 33 Hazor, Ramah, Gittaim,  
 34 Hadid, Zeboim, Neballat,  
 35 Lod, and Ono, the valley of craftsmen.  
 36 And of the Levites *were* divisions *in* Judah, *and* in Benjamin.

## CHAPTER 12

*Priests and Levites named who came up from Babylon—Walls of Jerusalem are dedicated—Offices of priests and Levites appointed in the temple.*

1 NOW these *are* the <sup>a</sup>priests and the Levites that went up with Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua: Seraiah, Jeremiah, Ezra,  
 2 Amariah, Malluch, Hattush,  
 3 Shechaniah, Rehum, Meremoth,  
 4 Iddo, Ginnetho, <sup>a</sup>Abijah,  
 5 Miamin, Maadiah, Bilgah,  
 6 Shemaiah, and Joiarib, Jedaiah,  
 7 Sallu, Amok, Hilkiyah, Jedaiah. These *were* the chief of the priests and of their brethren in the days of Jeshua.  
 8 Moreover the Levites: Jeshua, Binnui, Kadmiel, Sherebiah, Judah, *and* Mattaniah, *which was* over the thanksgiving, he and his brethren.  
 9 Also Bakbukiah and Unni, their brethren, *were* over against them in the watches.  
 10 ¶ And Jeshua begat Joiakim, Joiakim also begat Eliashib, and Eliashib begat Joiada,  
 11 And Joiada begat Jonathan, and Jonathan begat Jaddua.  
 12 And in the days of Joiakim were priests, the chief of the fathers: of Seraiah, Meraiah; of Jeremiah, Hananiah;  
 13 Of Ezra, Meshullam; of Amariah, Jehohanan;  
 14 Of Melicu, 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, Piltai;  
 18 Of Bilgah, Shammua; of Shemaiah, Jehonathan;  
 19 And of Joiarib, Mattenai; of Jedaiah, Uzzi;  
 20 Of Sallai, Kallai; of Amok, Eber;  
 21 Of Hilkiyah, Hashabiah; of Jedaiah, Nethaneel.  
 22 ¶ The Levites in the days of Eliashib, Joiada, and Johanan, and Jaddua, *were* recorded chief of the fathers: also the priests, to the reign of Darius the Persian.  
 23 The sons of Levi, the chief of the fathers, *were* written in the book of the chronicles, even until the days of Johanan the son of Eliashib.

24 And the chief of the Levites: Hashabiah, Sherebiah, and Jeshua the son of Kadmiel, with their brethren over against them, to praise *and* to give <sup>a</sup>thanks, according to the commandment of David the man of God, ward over against ward.

25 Mattaniah, and Bakbukiah, Obadiah, Meshullam, Talmon, Akkub, *were* porters keeping the ward at the <sup>a</sup>thresholds (or storehouses) of the gates.

26 These *were* in the days of Joiakim the son of Jeshua, the son of Jozadak, and in the days of Nehemiah the governor, and of Ezra the priest, the scribe.

27 ¶ And at the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem they sought the Levites out of all their places, to bring them to Jerusalem, to keep the dedication with gladness, both with thanksgivings, and with singing, *with* cymbals, psalteries, and with harps.

28 And the sons of the singers gathered themselves together, both out of the plain country round about Jerusalem, and from the villages of Netophathi;

29 Also from the house of Gilgal, and out of the fields of Geba and Azmaveth: for the singers had builded them villages round about Jerusalem.

30 And the priests and the Levites <sup>a</sup>purified themselves, and purified the people, and the gates, and the wall.

31 Then I brought up the princes of Judah upon the wall, and appointed two great *companies of them that gave thanks, whereof one* went on the right hand upon the wall toward the <sup>a</sup>dung gate:

32 And after them went Hoshaiah, and half of the princes of Judah,

33 And Azariah, Ezra, and Meshullam,

34 Judah, and Benjamin, and Shemaiah, and Jeremiah,

35 And *certain* of the priests' sons with trumpets; *namely*, Zechariah the son of Jonathan, the son of Shemaiah, the son of Mattaniah, the son of Michaiah, the son of Zaccur, the son of Asaph:

36 And his brethren, Shemaiah, and Azarael, Milalai, Gilalai, Maai, Nethaneel, and Judah, Hanani, with the <sup>a</sup>musical instruments of David the man of God, and Ezra the scribe before them.

37 And at the <sup>a</sup>fountain gate, which was over against them, they went up by the stairs of the city of David, at the going up of the wall, above the house of David, even unto the water gate eastward.

38 And the other *company of them that gave thanks* went over against *them*, and I after them, and the half of the people upon the wall, from beyond the tower of the furnaces even unto the broad wall;

39 And from above the gate of <sup>a</sup>Ephraim, and above the old gate, and above the <sup>b</sup>fish gate, and the tower of Hananeel, and the tower of Meah, even unto the sheep gate: and they stood still in the prison gate.

40 So stood the two *companies of them that gave thanks* in the house of God, and I, and the half of the rulers with me:

41 And the priests; Eliakim, Maaseiah, Miniamin, Michaiah, Elioenai, Zechariah, *and* Hananiah, with trumpets;

42 And Maaseiah, and Shemaiah, and Eleazar, and Uzzi, and Jehohanan, and Malchijah, and Elam, and Ezer. And the singers sang loud, with Jezrahiah *their* overseer.

43 Also that day they offered great sacrifices, and rejoiced: for God had made them <sup>a</sup>rejoice with great joy: the wives also and the children rejoiced: so that the joy of Jerusalem was heard even afar off.

44 ¶ And at that time were some appointed over the chambers for the treasures, for the offerings, for the firstfruits, and for the <sup>a</sup>tithes, to gather into them out of the fields of the cities the portions of the law for the priests and Levites: for Judah rejoiced for the priests *and* for the Levites that waited.

45 And both the singers and the porters kept the <sup>a</sup>ward (or guard, watch) of their God, and the ward of the purification, according to the commandment of David, *and* of Solomon his son.

46 For in the days of David and Asaph of old *there were* chief of the singers, and songs of praise and thanksgiving unto God.

47 And all Israel in the days of Zerubbabel, and in the days of Nehemiah, gave the portions of the singers and the porters, every day his portion: and they sanctified *holy things* unto the Levites; and the Levites sanctified *them* unto the children of Aaron.



## CHAPTER 13

*Ammonites and Moabites denied a place in the congregation of God—Tobiah ejected from his dwelling place in the temple—Nehemiah corrects abuses and reinstates sabbath observance—Some Jews rebuked for marrying strange wives and defiling the priesthood.*

- 1 ON that day they read in the <sup>a</sup>book of Moses in the audience of the people; and therein was found written, that the <sup>b</sup>Ammonite and the Moabite should not come into the congregation of God for ever;
- 2 Because they met not the children of Israel with bread and with water, but hired <sup>a</sup>Balaam against them, that he should curse them: howbeit our God turned the curse into a blessing.
- 3 Now it came to pass, when they had heard the law, that they separated from Israel all the <sup>a</sup>mixed multitude.
- 4 ¶ And before this, Eliashib the priest, having the oversight of the chamber of the house of our God, *was* allied unto Tobiah:
- 5 And he had prepared for him a great chamber, where aforetime they laid the meat offerings, the frankincense, and the vessels, and the tithes of the corn, the new wine, and the oil, which was commanded *to be given* to the Levites, and the singers, and the porters; and the offerings of the priests.
- 6 But in all this *time* was not I at Jerusalem: for in the two and thirtieth year of Artaxerxes king of Babylon came I unto the king, and after certain days obtained I leave of the king:
- 7 And I came to Jerusalem, and understood of the evil that Eliashib did for Tobiah, in preparing him a chamber in the courts of the house of God.
- 8 And it grieved me sore: therefore I cast forth all the household stuff of Tobiah out of the chamber.
- 9 Then I commanded, and they cleansed the chambers: and thither brought I again the vessels of the house of God, with the meat offering and the frankincense.
- 10 ¶ And I perceived that the portions of the Levites had not been given *them*: for the Levites and the singers, that did the work, were fled every one to his field.
- 11 Then contended I with the rulers, and said, Why is the house of God forsaken? And I gathered them together, and set them in their place.
- 12 Then brought all Judah the <sup>a</sup>tithe of the corn and the new wine and the oil unto the <sup>b</sup>treasuries. (or storage houses)
- 13 And I made treasurers over the treasuries, Shelemiah the priest, and Zadok the scribe, and of the Levites, Pedaiah: and next to them *was* Hanan the son of Zaccur, the son of Mattaniah: for they were counted faithful, and their office *was* to distribute unto their brethren.
- 14 Remember me, O my God, concerning this, and wipe not out my good deeds that I have done for the house of my God, and for the offices thereof.
- 15 ¶ In those days saw I in Judah *some* treading wine presses on the <sup>a</sup>sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and lading asses; as also wine, grapes, and figs, and all *manner of* burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the sabbath day: and I testified *against them* in the day wherein they sold <sup>b</sup>victuals. (or supplies)
- 16 There dwelt men of Tyre also therein, which brought fish, and all manner of ware, and sold on the sabbath unto the children of Judah, and in Jerusalem.
- 17 Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said unto them, What evil thing *is* this that ye do, and profane the sabbath day?
- 18 Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city? yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the sabbath.
- 19 And it came to pass, that when the gates of Jerusalem began to be dark before the sabbath, I commanded that the gates should be shut, and charged that they should not be opened till after the

sabbath: and *some* of my servants set I at the gates, *that* there should no burden be brought in on the sabbath day.

20 So the merchants and sellers of all kind of ware lodged <sup>a</sup>without (or outside of Jerusalem) Jerusalem once or twice.

21 Then I testified against them, and said unto them, Why lodge ye about the wall? if ye do *so* again, I will lay hands on you. From that time forth came they no *more* on the sabbath.

22 And I commanded the Levites that they should cleanse themselves, and *that* they should come *and* keep the gates, to sanctify the sabbath day. Remember me, O my God, *concerning* this also, and spare me according to the greatness of thy mercy.

23 ¶ In those days also saw I Jews *that* had married wives of Ashdod, of Ammon, *and* of Moab:

24 And their children spake half in the speech of Ashdod, and could not speak in the Jews' <sup>a</sup>language, but according to the language of each people.

25 And I contended with them, and cursed them, and smote certain of them, and plucked off their hair, and made them swear by God, *saying*, Ye shall not <sup>a</sup>give your daughters unto <sup>b</sup>their sons, nor take their daughters unto your sons, or for yourselves.

26 Did not <sup>a</sup>Solomon king of Israel sin by these things? yet among many nations was there no king like him, who was beloved of his God, and God made him king over all Israel: nevertheless even him did outlandish women cause to sin.

27 Shall we then hearken unto you to do all this great evil, to transgress against our God in marrying <sup>a</sup>strange wives (or foreign wives)?

28 And *one* of the sons of Joiada, the son of Eliashib the high priest, *was* son in law to Sanballat the Horonite: therefore I chased him from me.

29 Remember them, O my God, because they have defiled the <sup>a</sup>priesthood, and the <sup>b</sup>covenant of the priesthood, and of the Levites.

30 Thus cleansed I them from all <sup>a</sup>strangers (or foreigners), and appointed the wards of the priests and the Levites, every one in his business;

31 And for the <sup>a</sup>wood offering, at times appointed, and for the firstfruits. Remember me, O my God, for good.

Ezra and Nehemiah saved Judah from being religiously and culturally assimilated into other ways of life and from a wholesale defection from the Law of Moses.

## BIBLE DICTIONARY NEHEMIAH

### *Comfort of the Lord.*

(1) A Jew (either a Levite or of tribe of Judah) who held the important office of “cupbearer” at court of Artaxerxes, from whom he obtained a royal commission authorizing him to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. The book of Nehemiah (which is a continuation of Ezra, the two being regarded by the Jews as forming one book) contains an account of the progress and difficulties of the work and its final completion. The book divides into four parts: (a) Neh. 1: 1 - 7: 73, Nehemiah's first visit to Jerusalem, and the rebuilding of the walls in spite of much opposition; (b) Neh. 7: 73 - 10: 39, religious and social reforms; (c) Neh. 11: 1 - 13: 3, lists of names, and account of the dedication of the wall; (d) Neh. 13: 4-31, Nehemiah's second visit after 12 years' absence, and his further reforms.

(2) Ezra 2: 2 = Neh. 7: 7.

(3) Neh. 3: 16.

