# Nehemiah

Nehemiah is a short history book covering the period of about 12 years sometime in the mid 5th Century BCE, when many Jews returned to JeruSalem and pure worship was reestablished at the Temple of Jehovah.

It was witten by NehemiAh, the Jewish cup-bearer to King ArthaSastha whom the account also describes as the ruler of Babylon.

**Not exactly the 1st century text**

The Greek manuscripts of Nehemiah have some words and phrases ‘missing,’ at least, when compared to the Hebrew Masoretic text. These are ‘missing’ from:

 • Nehemiah 4:5-6,
 • Nehemiah 11:12-35,
 • Nehemiah 12:2-9,
 • Nehemiah 12:25, and
 • Nehemiah 12:29.

Now, the ‘critical edition’ of the Greek source text that we used to translate this book into English had generously ‘filled in’ these missing words for us. How? They seem to have made Greek translations of the Hebrew Masoretic text.

So these ‘gaps’ were filled with text from a different Bible.

Therefore, we will eventually remove these ‘filled-in’ bits, allowing you to see exactly the first century Christians saw. There are only a small number of ‘missing bits,’ and we don’t know why they’re missing. Could it just have been shoddy translation work back in the day that they created the Septuagint?

Maybe, but it doesn’t seem very likely. You see, the Greek Septuagint version of Nehemiah is a remarkably literal translation from the Hebrew. Indeed, it’s the most literal translation in the entire Septuagint! The translator working for the NETS project called the text ‘pedantic’ and an ‘interlinear’! To go to such great lengths to produce an exact translation, and then to leave out some random pieces, seems very puzzling.

So, could the additional words found in the Hebrew text be later fake additions? Again, maybe. After all, we’ve learned that it’s wise to trust the Septuagint. But we don’t know.

### Nehemiah

## Chapter 1

1These are the words of NehemiAh, son of HachaliJah.

It was in the 20th year, during the month of Chislev, while I was in the city of Susa in AbiRa, 2that HanaNi (one of my brothers) arrived with some men from Judah.

So I asked him about those who’d survived and escaped the captivity, and about JeruSalem. 3And he said to me:

 ‘Those who survived the captivity and are still in [Judah] are a joke and they’re extremely wicked.

 ‘As for the walls of JeruSalem; they’ve been knocked down and its gates have been burned.’

4Well when I heard this, I sat down and cried... Then I mourned for days, and I fasted and prayed to the God of heaven.

5I said:

 ‘No, O Lord God of the heavens, the mighty, great, and fearful One who’s guarded our Sacred Agreement and who shows mercy to those who love Him and keep His Commandments...

 6‘May Your ears hear [what my brother is saying], and may Your eyes be open so that You pay attention to Your servant today – throughout this day and night – who is praying on behalf of Your servants, the sons of IsraEl!

 ‘I openly admit to the sins that the sons of IsraEl have committed against You... For even the house of my father and I have sinned, 7because we left You and we haven’t obeyed the Commandments, decisions, and instructions that You gave to Your servant Moses.

 8‘However, please remember what You told Your servant Moses when You said:

 *‘If you break our contract with Me I’ll spread you among the peoples.*

 9*‘But if you return to Me and start observing and obeying My Commandments… Even if you’re scattered to the wings of the skies, I’ll gather you back and return you to the place where I’ve chosen to camp and where I’ve put My Name*.’

 10‘Now, they are Your children and Your people whom You ransomed by Your great power and with the ‘fortress’ of Your hand.

 11‘No, O Jehovah... Allow Your ears to pay attention to the prayer of Your servant and to the prayers of Your children who fear Your Name!

 ‘Bless the way of Your servant today, and make the [king] compassionate before this man; for I’m [just] a wine server to the king.’

### Nehemiah

## Chapter 2

1Well, it was in the month of Nisan in the 20th year [of the reign] of King ArthaSastha that I was bringing him some wine… I took it up and handed it to the king in private, 2and then the king asked me:

 ‘Why’s your face so downcast and why are you so unhappy? This appears to be nothing other than a [broken] heart!’

Well, I was frightened, 3but I said to the king:

 ‘O king, may you live throughout the ages!

 ‘Why shouldn’t my face be sad? For the city where the houses and tombs of my ancestors are, has been destroyed – and its gates have been burned with fire!’

4Then the king asked me:

 ‘So, what is it that you’re looking for?’

Well, I then prayed [silently] to Jehovah the God of heaven, 5and thereafter I said to the king:

 ‘If the king is moved to do such a good thing, and if he’s pleased enough with his servant that stands before him... Please send me to Judah and to the city of the tombs of my ancestors, so that I can rebuild it!’

6Then the king (who was sitting next to his concubine) asked me:

 ‘How long will this take and when will you return?’

Well, the king [found my proposal] to be good and he sent me off. Then I [wrote a letter of] confirmation to him, which said:

 7*‘To the king:*

 *‘If it pleases the king, please give me letters to the vassal kings on the other side of the river, so as to allow me safe passage to Judah.*

 8*‘Also provide me a letter to Asaph, the king’s groundskeeper, and ask him to provide me with enough wood to make roofs for the gates along the city’s walls and for the house where I’ll be staying.’*

Then, by the hand of God, the king provided this to me.

9And when I reached the vassal kings on the other side of the river, I gave them the letters from the king. The king had also sent his top general along with me, as well as a contingent of cavalry.

10But when SanBalLat the Horonite and TobiJah (his AmMonite servant) heard of it, all of this appeared wrong to them, since they were very unhappy that anyone would be coming to do good things for the sons of IsraEl.

11Well, when I got to JeruSalem, I [rested] for three days.

12Then I got up during the night and I took a few men with me. I didn’t have to report to anyone, because it was God who’d put it into my heart to do this for JeruSalem. And I didn’t bring along any animals, except the one that I rode.

13I traveled through the City Gate out to the mouth of the Well of Dragons, and past the Manure Gate...

Then I examined the walls of JeruSalem that had been torn down and the gates that had been burned with fire.

14I passed by the Fountain Gate, then I went up to the Pool of the King to a place where I could get through [on horseback], 15then I rode down into the Cedar (Kidron) Valley that night, studying the walls, until I had reached the Valley Gate.

That’s when I turned around and went back.

16Well, the guards didn’t know why I went there or what I was doing, nor did I report what I was doing to any of the Judeans, the Priests, the important ones, the generals, or to any of the rest that had been doing the work until then.

17But later, I said this to them:

 ‘Do you see this wicked condition that we’re in?
 JeruSalem is a waste and its gates have been burned.
 Come on, let’s build a wall around JeruSalem so we’re no longer a joke!’

18Then I explained how the hand of God had blest me with the things that the king had said to me, and I told them:

 ‘Now, let’s get up and build!’

Well, this emboldened their hands to do what was good!

19But when SanBalLat the Horonite, his servant TobiJah the AmMonite, and the Arab Gesham heard about this, they laughed out loud... For were disgusted with us, and they asked:

 ‘Just what do you think you’re doing?
 Have you chosen to revolt against the king?’

20But I spoke right back to them and said:

 ‘The God of the heavens will bless us, because we (His servants) are pure; therefore, we’ll arise and build!

 ‘However, you may have no part in doing this or in giving us the legal right to do so, nor will your [names] be remembered in JeruSalem.’

### Nehemiah

## Chapter 3

1Well thereafter, the High Priest EliAshib and his fellow Priests rebuilt the Sheep Gate and made it holy. They set its doors in place and completed [the walls] from the Tower of the Hundred to the Tower of HanaNeEl.

2Then, next to him, ZacCur (son of ImRi) and men from JeriCho rebuilt [the adjoining portion of the wall].

3The sons of HasSenaAh rebuilt the Fish Gate… They roofed it and set its doors, bolts, and bars in place.

4And from that point, MaremOth (son of UriAh and grandson of Kos) took control [of rebuilding the adjoining wall].

Then MeshulLam (son of BarAchiJah and grandson of MeShezaBeel) did more repairs, and ZaDok (son of BaAna) also handled a section [of the wall].

5From there, the Tekoites repaired the next section… Although their mightiest men refused to lift their necks in the service of their Lord.

6Then JehoiAda (son of PaseJah) and MeshulLam (son of BoSodeiJah) repaired the Gate of JasanAh… They roofed it and set its doors, bolts, and bars in place.

7Next to them, MeLatiJah the GibeOnite, JaDon the Meronothite, and the men of GibeOn and MizPah (who were being ruled by those on the throne on the other side of the river) made the repairs.

8And next to them, UzZiEl (son of HarHaiJah the refiner) made the repairs, and HanaNiAh (son of the perfumers) made the repairs and rebuilt JeruSalem all the way to the Broad Wall.

9From there, RephaiJah (son of Sur, the ruler of part of the area around JeruSalem) made the repairs.

10And next to him, JedaiJah (son of HaruMaph) made the repairs all the way to his house.

Then next to him, HatTush (son of HashaBaniJah) made the repairs.

11The second section [of the wall] was repaired by MelchiJah (son of Harim) and Hashub (son of PahathMoab) all the way to the Tower of Furnaces.

12And next to them, ShalLum (son of HaloHesh, the ruler of the other half of the area around JeruSalem) made the repairs with the help of his daughters.

13Then Hanun repaired the Valley Gate with the help of the people of Zanoa… They built it and set its doors, bolts, and bars in place, and they also rebuilt 1,700 feet (520m) of the wall to the Manure Gate.

14The Manure Gate was repaired by MelchiJah (son of RechAb, the ruler of the area around BethHakKarim) and his sons. They covered it and set its doors, bolts, and bars in place.

15ShalLum (son of ColHozeh, the ruler of part of MizPah) was in charge of the Spring Gate... He rebuilt it, roofed it, and set its doors and bars in place, then he rebuilt the wall around the Pool of SiloAm, the King’s Garden, and the stairway that leads down from the [Citadel] of David.

16And next to him, NehemiAh (son of AzaBuk, the ruler of half of the area around BethSur) made repairs from the garden of the Tomb of David to the man-made pool and the House of the Mighty.

17Next to him, the Levites under Rehum (son of Bani) did the repairs, and then AsabiJah (the ruler of half of the area around KeiLa) made the repairs around his [house] by himself.

18And after him, his friend Benei (son of HenAdad, the ruler of the other half of the area around KeiLa) made the repairs.

19Then Ezer (son of JoShua, the ruler of MizPah) made the repairs to the corner of a second wall opposite the armory, all by himself.

20After him, BarUch (son of Zabai) made the repairs from the corner of the second wall up to the door of the house of EliAshib the High Priest.

21And after him, MeramOth (son of UriAh and grandson of HaKoz) rebuilt a measured section from the door of the house of EliAshib and all along the area behind that house (which was also being rebuilt).

22And next to him, the Priests who were descendants of EkChechar repaired the wall.

After him, BenJamin and Hashub did the repairs by their houses.

23Then AzariAh (son of MaAseJah and grandson of HananiAh) did the repairs next to his house.

24And BinNui (son of HenAdad) repaired another measured section from the house of AzariAh to the corner, and then around the bend.

25Thereafter, PaLal (son of UzAi) did the repairs to the opposite corner and to the tower that protrudes from the king’s palace and overlooks the prison courtyard.

Then PedaiJah (son of ParOsh) 26and the Nethinim that lived in Ophel rebuilt the eastern Garden-Watering Gate and the tower that protrudes from it.

27Next, the Tekoites repaired a measured section that was across from the Great Tower, up to the wall of Ophel.

28And from there, the Priests repaired the portion of the Horse Gate that was across from their own houses.

29Then ZaDok (son of ImMer) did the repairs across from his own house. And ShemaiAh (son of ShechaniJah, who was in charge of the Eastern Gate) did the repairs there.

30Also, HanaNiAh (son of ShelemiJah) and Hanun (the sixth son of ZalAph) repaired another measured section.

MeshulLam (son of BarAchiJah) made the repairs across from his treasury.

31And from there, MelchiJah (son of SarEfi) did the repairs up to the House of the Nethinim and the market that’s in front of the Gate of MiphKad, and then around the corner.

32And [finally], the goldsmiths and venders repaired the section of wall that ascends back up to the Sheep Gate.

### Nehemiah

## Chapter 4

1Well, when SanBalLat heard that we were rebuilding the wall, he thought this was a bad thing and he was extremely angry. He also laughed out loud about the Judeans 2when he spoke before his people and the army of the Samaritans.

For he said:

 ‘What do these men of Judah – these Jews – think they’re doing? Do they think we’ll just leave them alone?

 ‘Do they think that they’ll be able to offer sacrifices there, and do they think that they’ll be able to finish the job?

 ‘For today they’re making their repairs with stones that they find in heaps of rubbish that should have been burned!’

3Then TobiJah the AmMonite (who was standing next to him) said:

 ‘Even if they do build, won’t a fox go there and demolish their wall of rocks?’

4[So I prayed:]

 ‘Listen, O our God, to the people who are sneering at us, and bring their scorn down upon their own heads! Make them do their sneering as captives in [faraway] lands.

 5‘Don’t cover over their lawlessness, and may their sins never be wiped away from before Your face, because they’re taunting You in front of those who are doing the rebuilding!’

6[not present in LXX source]

7So, when SanBalLat, TobiJah, the Arabians, the AmMonites, and the AshDodites heard that the gaps in the walls of JeruSalem were being repaired, this appeared wrong to them, 8and they all gathered to distract us and to undo our work on JeruSalem.

9So, we prayed to our God and we posted guards [outside the walls] both day and night.

10But then the Judeans said:

 ‘Our enemies have broken our resolve, and now there’s so much dust that we just can’t finish building the wall!’

11And thereafter, those who were oppressing us said:

 ‘They won’t know and they won’t see us when we come among them to murder them and make them stop the work!’

12But the Judeans who lived in their midst came to us and told us what they were saying, and they warned us that our enemies were all around us!

13So I posted men in fortified trenches behind the walls whom I armed with broadswords, wooden spears, and bows. 14And after looking the situation over, I got up and spoke to the leaders, generals, and the rest of the people, and said:

 ‘When you face them, don’t be afraid… You must remember that our God is great and someone to be feared!

 ‘So, prepare yourselves to fight in order to protect your relatives, sons, daughters, wives, and your homes!’

15Well, when our enemies found out that we’d learned about their plans and that God had blocked their schemes, we were all able to start rebuilding the walls once again... Therefore, everyone went back to doing their jobs!

16But from that day on, half of us did the work while the other half stood armed and ready for battle with their lances, shields, bows, and armor.
So, the rulers and the whole house of Judah 17protected those who were building the wall... And those who carried things on their shoulders did their work with one hand, while they held arrows in the other. 18Also, all the workers – every man – had his broadsword tied to his waist as he built.

Meanwhile, I kept the trumpeters next to me, 19and I told the rulers, generals, and the rest of the people (since the work covers a vast area and we were spread all along the walls with each man working some distance from his brother) that 20whenever they heard the trumpets being blown, everyone was to gather here with me, and we would allow our God to fight the war for us.

21Well, that’s how we did it… With half of us [ready for battle] as we worked from sunrise until we could see the stars.

22Then I told the people:

 ‘All those with children should sleep in the middle of JeruSalem, and we’ll keep guards posted all night long.

 ‘However, during the day, everyone must work!’

So I stood there with my brothers and the younger men flanked by guards, and nobody took off their clothes or removed their swords, even when they went to draw water.

### Nehemiah

## Chapter 5

1Then, many of the people (especially their wives) started complaining loudly about their brothers, the Judeans.

2Some were saying:

 ‘Even though we have many sons and daughters, we still have enough grain to eat and to get by.’

3But others were saying:

 ‘We had to mortgage our fields, vineyards, and houses to buy enough grain to eat.’

4And others were saying:

 ‘Because we had to borrow money to pay the king’s taxes on our fields, vineyards, and houses, our flesh now belongs to our brothers… Our sons have become their sons, and our daughters have become their daughters!

 5‘And look! They’re tyrannizing our sons and they’re using our daughters as though they were slaves… Many of them are being tyrannized, and there’s nothing we can do [to help them], because our fields and vineyards now belong to the important ones!’

6Well when I heard the things they were saying in their outcries, I was deeply disturbed, 7and my heart moved me to do something... So I confronted the important ones and the rulers, and said to them:

 ‘Should any man ask the things of you that you’re asking of your brothers?’

Then I called for a great assembly against them, 8at which I said to them:

 ‘We once had to ask you for contributions in order to buy back many of our Judean brothers who had been sold to the gentiles... So are you now going to sell your brothers back, or do you think that they should all be returned to us?’

Well... No one said a word!

9Then I said:

 ‘What you’re doing here isn’t good, because it doesn’t reflect a fear of our God!

 ‘Should we be giving our enemies from the nations even more reason to treat us with contempt?

 10‘Why, my own friends, brothers, and acquaintances have [had to lend these people enough] of their own money and grain money to repay you!

 ‘However, I’m now bringing an end to these exacting accounting practices, 11and you must return these people today… Along with their fields, vineyards, olive groves, and houses.

 ‘Also, you must provide them with some money, some grain, some wine, and some olive oil.’

12And they replied:

 ‘We’ll give it all back and we won’t ask any more of them…

 ‘We’ll do just as you’ve said.’

Then I called the Priests up and I made them swear with an oath that they’d be sure that these people did what they said.

13And I shook off my cape and added:

 ‘This is how God will shake off any man who doesn’t stand by his word on this matter… His house and everything he’s worked for will be shaken off like this!’

Well at that, the entire assembly said:

 ‘May it be so!’

Then they praised Jehovah, and the people did just as they’d agreed to do.

14Also, on that day, they appointed me to be their ruler in the land of Judah… From the 20th year to the 32nd year of the reign of King ArthaSastha (for the next 12 years). And during that entire period, my brothers and I who governed didn’t accept any [compensation].

15But before that, those who’d been the rulers actually oppressed the people by taking the last of their bread and wine, and by applying a tax of 40 silver coins!

So, although they and their servants had once dominated over the people, I didn’t do that, because of my fear before the Face of Jehovah.

16I also worked on repairing the walls myself, and I didn’t acquire any land… I sent my [household] servants and field workers there to do the work! 17In addition, I allowed many of the Judeans and the rulers (about 150 men) who had returned to us from the nations roundabout, to eat at my table.

Each day, they consumed:

 • 1 calf,
 • 6 choice sheep, and
 • 1 winter-yearling goat.

18I also needed huge quantities of wine to be delivered every 10 days.

Yet I didn’t seek any compensation for my work, because everyone else was slaving so hard. 19Please remember me, O my God, for all the good that I’ve done for these people!

### Nehemiah

## Chapter 6

1Well when SanBalLat, TobiJah, Gesham the Arabian, and the rest of our enemies heard that I was finishing the wall, they became quite dispirited.

However, the doors hadn’t been set in the gates yet.

2Then SanBalLat and Gesham sent me [a letter] that said:

 *‘Come and meet with us in one of the towns in the plains of Ono!’*

But because they were just planning to [kill] me, 3I sent messengers to them that said:

 *‘I still have a tremendous amount of work to do, and I can’t stop right now, because that would bring the work to a halt.*

 *‘I’ll come and see you after it’s finished.’*

4Well they sent me 4 more messages after that, but I just kept giving them the same reply. 5Then SanBalLat sent his servant a 5th time, who opened the letter and read it to me.

6It said:

 *‘Geshem told me (and it’s being rumored among the nations) that you’re planning to rebel, and that’s why you and the Judeans are building the wall… So you can become their king.*

 7*‘For you’ve appointed your own prophets to proclaim throughout JeruSalem that you’re now the king of Judah! So, tell the king that these words aren’t true… Come here and let’s discuss the matter!’*

8Well, I sent a reply that said:

 *‘None of these things have happened, and you’re lying from your heart about this… 9All you’re really trying to do is frighten us.*

 *‘You’re saying:*

 *‘If we worry them enough, we can stop the work so it won’t be completed!’*

 *‘However, now I’m more determined than ever to get it done!’*

10Then later, when I went to the house of ShemaiAh (son of DalaiJah and grandson of MeHetaBeel), he acted like he was very worried, and he said to me:

 ‘We must all gather in the middle of the Temple of God [for safety] and lock its doors, for they’re coming to murder you tonight!’

11But I asked him:

 ‘Which man must I run from?

 ‘And who could possibly make me run for my life into *the Temple?*

 12‘I’m not going to do that!’

And it was then that I realized that {Look!} God really hadn’t sent him.

Rather, his ‘prophecy’ was just part of a plot against me, for he’d been hired by TobiJah and SanBalLat 13to scare me into doing something that would cause me to sin and give me a bad reputation, so they could thereafter have something bad to say about me.

14O my God,

Remember these things that TobiJah, SanBalLat, the prophetess NoAdiJah, and the rest of the prophets have done to frighten me!

15Well, we finished the wall on the 25th day of the month of Elul, after 52 days!

16And when our enemies heard about it, they and all the nations roundabout became extremely fearful, because they realized that it was our God who had brought the work to a completion.

17Then I found out that during the entire time, several important men of Judah had been sending messages to TobiJah, and that he’d been sending messages back to them, 18because many in Judah had sworn allegiance to him, since he was the son-in-law of ShechaniJah (son of Arah), and his son JoHanan had married the daughter of MeshulLam (son of BarAchiJah).

19So he’d been using these connections to his advantage when he was writing to me... For, everything that I said was being reported back to him, and the letters from TobiJah were just sent to frighten me.

### Nehemiah

## Chapter 7

1Well after the walls were finished and the gate doors were set in place, we took a census of the gatekeepers, singers, and Levites.

2Then we assigned a job to my brother HanaNi and to HanaNiJah (the man in charge of the palace in JeruSalem), because they feared God and were more righteous than most of the rest.

3I told them:

 ‘Don’t let the city gates be opened before sunrise each morning, and as a safety precaution, make sure that they’re locked [each night].

 ‘Also, select guards from among the people of JeruSalem and assign them to posts near their homes.’

4I did this because the city was wide and spread out, not many people lived there yet, and none of their homes had been completed.

5Then God inspired my heart and I gathered all of the important people, the rulers, and the common people into groups and I had them registered. That’s when I found a scroll that listed all the people who had first returned [to JeruSalem] and the 6cities that they’d returned to in Judah after the captivity and the resettlement by King NebuChadnezzar of Babylon.

7The men of IsraEl that had returned with ZerubBabel, JoShua, NehemiJah, AzariAh, RaAmiJah, NaHamani, MordecAi, Balsan, MisPereth, BigVai, Nehum, BaAna, and Masphar were:

 8The descendants of ParOsh – 2,172

 9The descendants of ShephatiJah – 372

 10The descendants of Arah – 652

 11The descendants of PahathMoab (including the sons of JeShua and JoAb) – 2,818

 12The descendants of ElAm – 1,254

 13The descendants of ZatTu – 845

 14The descendants of ZacCai – 760

 15The descendants of BinNui – 648

 16The descendants of BebAi – 628

 17The descendants of AzGad – 2,322

 18The descendants of AdoniKam – 667

 19The descendants of BigVai – 2,067

 20The descendants of Adin – 655

 21The descendants of Ater (from the line of HezekiAh) – 98

 22The descendants of Hashum – 328

 23The descendants of BezAi – 324

 24The descendants of Hariph – 112

 The descendants of Asen – 223

 25The men of GibeOn – 95

 26The men of BethLehem and NetoPhah – 123

 27The men of AnathOth – 128

 28The men of BethAzmaVeth – 42

 29The men of KiriAth JaiRim, ChephiRah, and BeerOth – 743

 30The men of RamAh and GabaA – 621

 31The men of MichMash – 122

 32The men of BethEl and Ai – 123

 33The men of Nebo – 152

 34The men of ElAm – 1252

 35The men of Harim – 320

 36The men of JeriCho – 345

 37The men of LodHadid and Ono – 721

 38The men of SenaAh – 3,930

 39The priests from the sons of JedaiJah and the house of JeShua – 973

 40The descendants of ImMer – 1,052

 41The descendants of PashUr – 1,247

 42The descendants of Harim – 1,017

 43The Levites from the sons of JeShua (son of KadmiEl) and the sons of HodeVah – 74

 44The singers that were the descendants of Asaph – 148

 45The gatekeepers that were the descendants of ShalLum, Ater, TalMon, AkKub, HatiTa, and ShobAi – 138

 46The Nethinim that were the sons of HashUpha, TabBaOth, 47Keros, Sia, Padon, 48Lebana, HagaBa, ShalmAi, 49Hanan, GidDel, Gahar, 50ReaJah, Rezin, NekoDa, 51GazZam, UzZa, and PhaseAh – 54.

 52From BesAi, there were the sons of:

 • MeUnim,
 • NephiShesim,
 • 53BakBuk,
 • HakuPha,
 • HarHur,
 • 54Bazlith,
 • MehiDa,
 • HarSha,
 • 55Barkow,
 • SiSera,
 • Tamah,
 • 56NeziJah, and
 • Hatiph.

 57Among the servants of Solomon, there were the descendants of:

 • SotAi,
 • SopherEth,
 • Perida,
 • 58JaAla,
 • DarKon,
 • GidDel,
 • 59ShephatiJah,
 • HatTil,
 • PochEreth, and
 • Zebaim (who were all AmMonites).

 60Altogether, the Nethinim and the servants of Solomon numbered 392.

 61Those who had come from TelMelah, TelHaresha, Cherub, AdDon, and ImMer weren’t able to say which houses and families they were from, or even if they were the offspring of IsraEl!

 62From the descendants of DalaiJah, TobiJah, and NekoDa, there were 642.

 63Priests who were descended from HabaiJah, Koz, and BarzilLai (those who married the daughters of BarzilLai the GileAdite and took their family name) 64searched for their family lines but couldn’t find them, so they were expelled from the Priesthood 65([King] ArthaSastha told them that they couldn’t eat from the Holy things until a Priest could stand and provide some light on this).

 66Altogether, the entire group consisted of 42,360, 67plus their male and female servants, who numbered 7,337, and 245 male and female singers.

 68There were 736 horses, 245 mules, 435 camels, 69and 6,720 burros.

 70Then [King] ArthaSastha sent 1,000 large gold coins to the family heads for the reconstruction (which was all put into the treasury), plus 50 [gold] bowls and 530 robes for the Priests.

 71Thereafter, the family heads contributed 2,000 more large gold coins for the work, plus 2,300 large silver coins, which was all put into the treasury.

 72And then the rest of the people contributed 20,000 large gold coins, 2,000 silver coins, and 77 outfits for the Priests.

 73Well after that, the Priests, Levites, gatekeepers, and singers each returned to the cities that their families were from, as did the Nethinim and all IsraEl.

### Nehemiah

## Chapter 8

1By the 7th month, all the sons of IsraEl had had returned to their cities.

Then all the people came and gathered as a single man in the wide area in front of the Water Gate, and they asked the Scribe Ezra to bring out the scroll of the Law of Moses that gave Jehovah’s instructions to IsraEl.

2So on the 1st day of the 7th month, the Priest Ezra carried the Law before the gathering, because everyone (both the men and the women) wanted to hear what it said.

3Then from sunrise until about noon, Ezra read it to them there in the square in front of the Water Gate, and everyone paid very close attention to what was written in the scroll of the Law.

4Ezra did this as he was standing on a wooden podium that he’d made for such public speaking, while to his right were standing:

 • MatTithiJah,
 • ShemaiAh,
 • AnaiJah,
 • UriAh,
 • HilkiAh, and
 • MaAseJah.

And on his left were standing:

 • PedaiJah,
 • MishaEl,
 • MelchiJah,
 • Hashum,
 • HashBadana,
 • ZechariAh, and
 • MeshulLam.

5So Ezra opened the scroll before all the people as he stood above everyone who was gathered there, 6and he praised their great God Jehovah.

And the people said:

 ‘May it be so, may it be so,’

As they were raising their arms and bowing low before Jehovah with their faces to the ground.

7Well, after that, the Levites along with...

 • JeShua,
 • Bani,
 • SherebiJah,
 • JaMin,
 • AkKub,
 • ShabbethAi,
 • HodiJah,
 • MaAseJah,
 • Kelita,
 • AzariAh,
 • JoZabad,
 • Hanan, and
 • PelaiJah

...explained the Law to the people, as they were all standing in their places.

8And as he read from the scroll of the Law of God, Ezra taught and instructed them in order to give them a deeper knowledge of Jehovah… And the people understood!

9Then NehemiAh (who was also known as AtarSatha) stood up next to the Scribe and Priest Ezra and the Levites (who’d been explaining things to the people) and said:

 ‘Because this is a holy day to our God Jehovah, you must stop being sad and crying’ (because all the people had been crying as they were listening to the words of the Law).

10He continued:

 ‘Rather, you should each [sit down] and eat the fatness and drink the sweetness, then share what you have with those who have nothing, because, this is a holy day to our God Jehovah!

 ‘Don’t be shy before our God, because the joy of Jehovah is what will make us strong!’

11Well thereafter, the Levites had to settle the people down.

They shouted:

 ‘You have to be quiet, because this is a holy day… You must stop falling to the ground!’

12So at that, all the people started eating, drinking, and sharing whatever they had... For they were all very joyful after learning of the things that they’d just been told.

13Then on the 2nd day, the governor gathered all the family heads, along with all the people, the Priests, and the Levites, before the Scribe Ezra, so that they could listen to the [reading of] more of the words of the Law.

14That’s when they found that it was written in the Law that God gave to Moses, that the sons of IsraEl were to live in temporary dwellings during the holiday of the 7th month, and that this was to be announced by the blowing of trumpets throughout all their cities and in JeruSalem.

15So Ezra said:

 ‘Everyone should go into the mountains and gather olive branches, along with the branches of cypress trees, myrtle trees, palms, and branches from bushes (as we were told to do in the writing) to make temporary dwellings for ourselves.’

16So all the people went out and gathered whatever they needed to make the temporary dwellings, and they erected them on their roofs, in their courtyards, in the courtyards of the Temple of God, in the square by the Water Gate, and in the square by the Gate of Ephraim.

17Then everyone who had returned from captivity spent time living in the temporary dwellings, which is something that the sons of IsraEl hadn’t done from the time of JoShua (son of NaWeh) until that day, and everyone was extremely happy!

18Thereafter, [Ezra] continued to read from the scroll of the Law of God from the 1st day to the last of the 7 days of the holiday.

Then they ended it on the 8th day, just as they were told.

### Nehemiah

## Chapter 9

1Well, it was on the 24th day of the month that the sons of IsraEl had gathered to fast wearing sackcloth and with ashes on their heads.

2Then, after separating the foreigners from among themselves, they all stood and openly confessed their sins and the lawbreaking of their ancestors.

3They each took their positions, as the scroll of the Law of their God Jehovah was being read over the next 4 days, and they were each speaking openly to Jehovah and bowing before the Lord, their God.

4All the while, the Levites (JeShua, son of KadmiEl; plus SecheniJah, son of SherebiJah and grandson of ChenAni) were standing on the ascent calling out loudly to their God Jehovah.

5Then the Levites (JeShua, KadmiEl, Bani, SherebiJah, HodiJah, SecheniJah, and PethahiJah) said to the people:

 ‘Stand up and praise Jehovah that’s been our God throughout the ages and into the ages of ages!

 ‘Praise His glorious Name and raise it high with blessings and praises!’

6Then Ezra said:

 ‘O our only Lord,

 ‘It was You who made the skies and the heavens above the skies!

 ‘You’re the One who put everything in its position… The land and all that’s on it, the seas and everything that’s in them, and You gave life to everything... So to You, all the armies of the heavens must bow.

 7‘O Jehovah our God,

 ‘It was You who chose Abram and led him out of the [land] of the Chaldeans; then You changed his name to ‘AbraHam,’ 8because You found his heart worthy before You.

 ‘And You concluded a Sacred Agreement with him, promising to give the land of the CanaAnites, Hittites, Amorites, Pherezites, Jebusites, and Gergesites to his offspring…

 ‘And then You did what You said You’d do, because You are righteous.

 9‘And when You saw how our ancestors were being humiliated in Egypt and You heard their cries at the Red Sea, 10You sent signs and miracles to the PharaOh of Egypt on their behalf and to all his servants and all the people of his land, because You saw how [the Egyptians] were dominating them.

 ‘Then You made a Name for Yourself that has lasted to this day!

 11‘For You ripped open the sea before them and threw those who were chasing them to the bottom of that sea – like stones in turbulent waters!

 12‘And after that, You guided them with a column of clouds by day and by a column of fire by night… To light their way as they followed behind it.

 13‘And on Mount SinAi, You went down and spoke to them from out of the sky and You gave them Your righteous Commandments, Laws of truth, orders, and good [instructions], 14as You explained to them about Your Holy Sabbath, [which had been written about] among the Commandments, orders, and Laws that You gave to them by the hands of Your servant Moses.

 15‘Then You sent them bread from heaven as their provisions, and You brought water out of a rock to quench their thirst.

 ‘Thereafter, You spoke to them and told them to enter and inherit the land that You stretched out Your hand to give them…

 16‘But our ancestors were too proud. They stiffened their necks and refused to listen to Your Commandments… 17They shook their heads and refused to listen, because they forgot the wonders that You had just performed among them!

 ‘And although You [could have] appointed a leader to return them to their slavery in Egypt, since they’d stiffened their necks... Because You, O God, are merciful, compassionate, lenient, and filled with patience when it comes to forgiving sins, You didn’t abandon them.

 18‘But then they molded a calf for themselves and said:

 *‘This is our God who led us out of Egypt!’*

 ‘...which made You very angry.

 19‘However, in Your great compassion, You didn’t abandon them in the desert or remove the column of clouds that guided them on their way during the day, or the column of fire that lit their way during the night! 20With Your beautiful Breath, You made them understand, and You didn’t withhold Your manna from their mouths or the water that You gave them to quench their thirst.

 21‘Thereafter, You fed them in the desert for 40 years, and they lacked nothing, because their clothes didn’t become old and their sandals didn’t wear out. 22And You gave them kingdoms… You divided the people from among them, and they inherited the land of SeOn the king of HeshBon, and the land of Og the king of BaShan.

 23‘And all the while, You multiplied their sons as the stars in the skies, and You brought them into the land that You told their ancestors they would enter and inherit.

 24‘Then, after their sons entered and inherited the land, You wiped out those who’d lived in the land before them. You gave the CanaAnites into their hands, both their kings and the people of the land, to do whatever they saw fit with them.

 25‘There, they conquered cities with high walls and entered a fertile land, where they inherited houses that were already furnished, as well as quarries, vineyards, olive groves, and plenty of things to eat.

 ‘So they ate until they were full and fat, as they indulged in Your goodness.

 26‘But then they changed and rebelled against You… They threw away Your Laws and killed the Prophets whom You sent as witnesses and to turn them back to You, which made You extremely angry.

 27‘So You handed them over to those who oppressed them... And as they were being oppressed, they called out to You in their time of need, and You again heard them from Your heavens.

 ‘Then in Your great compassion, You saved them and delivered them from those who were oppressing them, 28and You allowed them to rest.

 ‘But then they turned around and started acting wickedly before You once more; So You abandoned them into the hands of their enemies, who started ruling over them.

 ‘And they once again yelled out to You, and once again You listened from the heavens and rescued them, because of Your great compassion; 29and You advised them to return to Your Law.

 ‘However, they acted superior and they wouldn’t listen to Your Commandments and judgments that bring life to a man… And they kept on sinning! They turned their backs and refused to be persuaded… They stiffened their necks and just wouldn’t listen.

 30‘But You put up with them for many years, until Your patience finally ran out. Then, through Your Breath, You warned them by the hands of Your Prophets, before handing them over to the people of the land.

 31‘Yet, in Your great compassion, You didn’t destroy them or abandon them… You were strong and merciful, and You felt pity.

 32‘And now, O our strong, great, fearsome, and mighty God who is merciful and guards His Sacred Agreement; Don’t allow all the troubles that have found us, our kings, our rulers, our Priests, our Prophets, our fathers, and all Your people since the days of the kings of Assyria down to this day, to go unnoticed.

 33‘For You have been just when it comes to all the things that have happened to us. You have acted righteously while we were being led into sin.

 34‘For our kings, rulers, Priests, and our fathers didn’t obey Your Laws or pay attention to Your Commandments and the things that You testified to them! 35Yet, they continued to live in Your kingdom, enjoying the abundant goodness that You gave to them, and they [inherited] the wide and beautiful land that You had set before them.

 ‘However, they still wouldn’t serve You or turn from their wicked ways.

 36‘But look!

 ‘We are Your servants today in this land that You gave to our ancestors, so that we might eat its fruit and enjoy its good things. Look… We are Your servants here!

 37‘Yet, the abundant fruitage of this land now belongs to the kings who were put over us because of our sins – as were our bodies and our cattle – to do whatever they pleased.

 ‘So we are extremely oppressed, 38and we’re entrusting these things [to You].

 ‘We’ve written all of this down, and now our rulers, Levites, and Priests will put their seal upon it.’

### Nehemiah

## Chapter 10

1Well, those in charge of setting the seal were:

 • Governor NehemiAh (son of HachaliJah),
 • ZidKiJah,
 • 2AraiJah,
 • AzariAh,
 • JeremiAh,
 • 3PashUr,
 • AmariJah,
 • MelchiJah,
 • 4HatTush,
 • ShebaniJah,
 • Harim,
 • MalLuch,
 • 5MeremOth,
 • ObadiAh,
 • 6DaniEl,
 • GinNethou,
 • BarUch,
 • 7MeshulLam,
 • AbiJah,
 • MiJamin,
 • 8MaAziJah,
 • Bilgai, and
 • ShemaiAh (the Priests).

9The Levites were:

 • JeShua (son of AzaniJah),
 • BinNui (of the sons of HenAdad),
 • KadmiEl 10(and his brothers),
 • ShebaniJah,
 • HodiJah,
 • Kelita,
 • PelaiJah,
 • Hanan,
 • 11Micha,
 • ReHob,
 • HaShabiJah,
 • 12ZacCur,
 • SherebiJah,
 • ShebaniAh,
 • HodiJah, and
 • 13The sons of BeniNi.

14These rulers of the people [also agreed to the seal]:

 • ParOsh,
 • PahathMoab,
 • ElAm,
 • ZatThu,
 • The sons of Bani,
 • 15Agad,
 • BebAi,
 • 16AdoniJah,
 • BigVai,
 • Adin,
 • 17Ater,
 • HezekiAh,
 • AzZur,
 • 18HodiJah,
 • Hashum,
 • BezAi,
 • 19Hariph,
 • AnathOth,
 • NebAi,
 • 20MagPiAsh,
 • MeshuLam,
 • Hezir,
 • 21MeShezaBeel,
 • ZaDok,
 • JadDua,
 • 22PelatiJah,
 • Hanan,
 • AnaiJah,
 • 23HoSheA,
 • HanaNiJah,
 • Hashub,
 • 24HalLohesh,
 • PiLeha,
 • Shobek,
 • 25Rehum,
 • HashabNah,
 • MaAseJah,
 • 26AhiJah,
 • Hanan,
 • Anan,
 • 27MalLuch,
 • Harim, and
 • BaAnah.

28And thereafter, all the rest of the people also [agreed to the seal]... Yes, the Priests, Levites, gatekeepers, singers, Nethinim, and all the other people of the land who had dedicated themselves to the Law of God, plus their wives, sons, and daughters… All who were able to know and understand.

29They all supported their brothers and they swore bad things and curses upon themselves with an oath, that they’d follow the Law of God that had been given at the hand of Moses (the servant of God), and that they would guard and observe all the Commandments of our God Jehovah, as well as His judgments and orders.

30[They also swore] not to give their daughters to the peoples of the land, or to take their daughters for their sons.

31Then they agreed that they wouldn’t buy anything that the peoples of the land would bring in to sell on the Sabbath or on other holy days, and that every 7 years, they would each go up and forgive all debts.

32In addition, they all agreed to pay 1/3 of a large gold coin each year to support the services at the Temple of our God, 33and to provide the show bread, the daily sacrifice offerings, the whole burnt offerings, and the sacrifices for the Sabbaths, the New Moons, and the holidays, along with the holy things for sin offerings for ourselves and for all IsraEl, and to help with the repairs and upkeep of the Temple of our God.

34Then we [held] a lottery among the people (by houses and families) to determine who would carry wood to the Temple for the Priests and Levites during each season and by time of day each year, to be burned on the Altar of Jehovah our God – as it was written in the Law.

35[We also agreed to] bring the first produce of our lands and the first produce of the fruit from every tree to the Temple of Jehovah each year, 36as well as the firstborn of our sons and of our cattle (as it’s written in the Law)… The first-born of our oxen and our flocks.

We agreed to bring them to the Temple of our God for the Priests who serve there in the Temple of our God, 37as well as the first-fruits of our grain and other offerings (the fruit of every tree, and of our wine and olive oil), which was to be be delivered to the Priests and stored in the treasury in the Temple of our God.

In addition, we agreed to pay a 10% tithe for the Levites (they were to receive 1/10th in each city for their services), 38in which the descendants of Aaron (the Priests) were also to share. Then, even the Levites were to offer 1/10th from their 1/10th to the Temple of our God, which would be put into the Temple treasury.

39The treasuries were to be used to store all that the sons of IsraEl and the Levites would bring to the Temple – the first fruits of the grain, wine, and olive oil – where it would be stored in holy containers for the Priests, servants, gatekeepers, and singers.

Then we all agreed that we’d never abandon the Temple of our God!

### Nehemiah

## Chapter 11

1Well, after the rulers had all settled in JeruSalem, the rest of the people threw lots to choose 10% [from among] them who would then [live in] the Holy City. The other 90% could settle in other cities, 2and they praised all the people who were willing to settle in JeruSalem.

3So, the rest of the IsraElites, including the Priests, the Levites, the Nethinim [meaning, *Temple servants*], and the descendants of the servants of Solomon, brought their possessions to other cities.

These are the rulers of the land who settled in JeruSalem 4along with many Judeans and some from the tribe of BenJamin:

[The leader] of the sons of Judah was AthaliAh (the son UzziAh and grandson of ZechariAh, son of SamariAh, son of ShephatiJah, son of MaHalaleEl).

[Over] the sons of Perez 5was MaAseJah (son of BarUch, grandson of ColHozeh, son of HazaiJah, son of AdaiJah, son of JoiArib, son of ZechariAh, son of Seloni).

6Altogether, there were 428 mighty men who were descendants of Perez that settled in JeruSalem.

7[The leader from] the tribe of BenJamin was SalLu (son of MeshulLlam, grandson of JoEd, son of PedaiJah, son of KolaiJah, son of MasSeJah, son of IthiEl, son of JesaiJah).

8And under him were GabBai and SalLai, with 928 men.

9JoEl (son of Zichri) was their overseer, and Judah (son of Asam) was second in charge of the city.

10From the Priests, there was JedaiJah (son of JoiArib), JaChin, 11and SeraiJah (son of HilkiAh, grandson of MeshuLam, son of ZaDok, son of MaraiOth, son of AhiTub) that were in charge of the Temple of God.

12And under them were 822 of their brothers that did the work.

This included AdaiJah (son of JeroHam, grandson of PelaliJah, son of Amzi, son of ZechariAh, son of PashUr, 13and 242 of his brothers that were the rulers of families, including AmaShai (son of AzareEl, grandson of SikiAh, son of MeshilLemOth, son of ImMer) 14and his brothers, some 128 mighty men who were ready for battle.

Their overseer was ZabdiEl, who was a descendant of a great line of warriors.

15From the Levites, there was ShemaiJah (son of Hashub, grandson of AzriKam, son of HashabiJah, son of BunNi), 16and MatTaniJah, and JoZabad, who were in charge of the work outside the Temple of God, who were the rulers of the Levites.

17There was also MatTaniJah (son of Micha, grandson of ZechRi, son of Asaph) who was in charge of the praises, Judah was in charge of the prayers, his brother BakBukiJah was second under him, and then there was AbDa (son of ShamMua, grandson of Galal, son of JediThun).

18Altogether, there were 284 Levites in the Holy City.

19Over the gatekeepers were AkKub and TalMon. And under them there were 172 of their brothers that guarded the gates.

20All the rest of IsraEl and the Priests and Levites settled in the lands of their inheritance, in the other cities of IsraEl.

21The Nethinim [meaning, the *Temple servants*] settled in [the area of JeruSalem called] Ophel; and Ziha and Gispa were [in charge of] the Nethinim.

22The overseer of the Levites in JeruSalem was UzZi (son of Bani, grandson of SabiJah, son of MatTaniJah, son of Micha).

The singers (who were descendants of Asaph) had to do their work before the Temple of God, 23for this was commanded by the king, and each one had his own daily assignment.

24PethAhiJah (son of MeShezaBeel) from the line of Zerah of the Tribe of Judah, reported directly to the king on matters pertaining to the people, 25and regarding their properties and lands.

Some from the Tribe of Judah settled in KiriAth Arba and its suburbs, in Dibon and its suburbs, in and around KabSel, 26in JeShua, in MolAdah, in BethPhelet, 27in HazarShual, in BeerSheba and its suburbs, 28in ZikLag, in MabNe and its suburbs, 29in RimMon, in ZeriJah, in JariMoth, 30in ZaNoah, in and around AdulLam, in and around LachIsh, and in AzekAh and its suburbs.

They also camped near BeerSheba in the Valley of Hinnom.

31The Tribe of BenJamin settled in GebaA, in MichMash, in AiJa, in BethEl and its suburbs, 32in AnathOth, in Nob, in AnaniAh, 33in Hazor, in RamAh, in GitTaim, 34in Hadid, in Zeboim, in NebalLat, 35in Lod, and in OnoKareSeim.

36Also, some of the Levites settled throughout Judah and BenJamin.

### Nehemiah

## Chapter 12

1These are the Priests and Levites who came here with ZerubBabel (son of ShealtiEl) and JeShua:

 • SaraiJah,
 • JeremiAh,
 • Ezra,
 • 2AmariAh,
 • MalLuch,
 • HatTush,
 • 3ShechaniJah,
 • Rehum,
 • MeremOth,
 • 4AdiJah,
 • GinNetho,
 • AbiJah,
 • 5MiAmin,
 • MaAdiJah,
 • BilGah,
 • 6ShemaiAh,
 • JoiArib,
 • JedaiJah,
 • 7SalLu,
 • Amok,
 • HilkiAh, and
 • JedaiJah.

8These are rulers of the Priests and their brothers in the days of JeShua and the Levites:

 • JeShua,
 • BinNui,
 • KadmiEl,
 • SherebiJah,
 • JoiAda,
 • MatTaniJah (who, along with his brothers, was over [the gifts] of confession),
 • 9BakBukiJah,
 • UnNi...

...and their brothers, who handled the daily rotations.

 • 10JeShua fathered JoiAkim,
 • JoiAkim fathered EliAshib,
 • EliAshib fathered JoiAda,
 • 11JoiAda fathered JoNathan, and
 •JoNathan fathered JadDua.

12Now, during the days of JoiAkim, these were the Priests and the rulers of the families:

 The leader of the family of SeraiJah was MeraiJah;
 The leader of the family of JeremiAh was HanaNiJah;
 13The leader of the family of Ezra was MeshulLam;
 The leader of the family of AmariAh was JehoHanan;
 14The leader of the family of MeliKu was JoNathan;
 The leader of the family of SecheniJah was JoSeph;
 15The leader of the family of Ares was Adna;
 The leader of the family of MaraYoth was HelkAi;
 16The leader of the family of IdDo was ZechariAh;
 The leader of the family of GinNethon was MeshulLam;
 17The leader of the family of AbiJah was Zichri;
 The leader of the families of MinJamin and MoAdiJah was PiltAi;
 18The leader of the family of BilGah was ShamMua;
 The leader of the family of ShemaiAh was JehoNathan;
 19The leader of the family of JoiArib was MattenAi;
 The leader of the family of JedaiJah was UzZi;
 20The leader of the family of SalLai was KalLai;
 The leader of the family of Amok was Eber;
 21The leader of the family of HilkiAh was HashaiJah;
 The leader of the family of JedaiJah was NethaneEl.

22The Levites in the days of EliAshib were:

 • JoiAda,
 • Joa,
 • JoHanan, and
 • JadDua.

They were the recorded heads of their families and the Priests in the kingdom of Darius the Persian.

23The [names of] the sons of Levi that were the family heads had been written in the scrolls of the records of those days until the time of JoHanan (son of EliAshib). 24The rulers of the Levites were:

 • HashabiJah,
 • SherebiJah,
 • JeShua,
 • the sons ,
 • family of KadmiEl.

These were in charge of praising and acknowledging, [which was an office] that David (the man of God) had set up in daily rotations.

25[Those] in charge of assembling and assigning the watches of the gatekeepers were:

 • MatTaniJah,
 • BakBukiJah,
 • ObadiAh,
 • MeShulLam,
 • TalMon, and
 • AkKub.

26It was in the days of JoiAkim (son of JeShua and grandson of JoZadak), and in the time of NehemiAh (the ruler) and Ezra (the Priest and scribe) 27and during the festival of dedication of the wall of JeruSalem that they went searching for the Levites in the places where they lived, to bring them to JeruSalem so they could handle the holiday of rededication with happiness, praises, and with music played on their cymbals, reed instruments, and stringed instruments.

28Then they gathered singers from around JeruSalem (from NetoPhalthi, 29Beth GilGal, the fields of Geba, and from AzMaveth), because the singers had built homes for themselves close to JeruSalem. 30Then the Priests cleansed themselves, as well as the Levites, the people, and the [city] gates and walls.

31Thereafter, the [singers] marched in front of the leaders of Judah around the tops of the [city] walls.

I had stationed two large groups of [musicians and singers] along the walls that were to walk towards the Manure Gate, 32as HoshaiJah and half of the rulers of Judah walked behind them.

33AzariAh, Ezra, and MeshulLam 34represented Judah, and ShemaiAh and JeremiAh represented BenJamin.

35Under [the leadership of] ZechariAh (son of JoNathan, grandson of ShemaiAh, son of MathaniJah, son of MichaiAh, son of ZacCur, son of Asaph), some of the of the Priests were blowing trumpets, 36while the rest of his family (ShemaiJah, AzaraEl, GilalAi, MaAi, NathaniEl, Judah, and HanaNi) walked behind Ezra the scribe playing the songs of David (the man of God) on their instruments.

37Then when they reached the Gate of the Spring, they marched down the stairway of the City of David and back up along the wall over the house of David, heading eastward towards the Water Gate.

38And as they were marching along [playing and singing their] songs of praise, the 2nd group was marching to meet them, as I walked behind them. Half of the people walked along the wall near the Furnace Tower, then along the Broad Wall 39over the Gate of Ephraim, and over the Gate of EiSiana, the Fish Gate, the Tower of HaNaneEl and the Tower of MeAh, all the way to the Sheep Gate, and then on to the Prison Gate, 40where both groups stopped to offer their praises at the Temple of God, as half of the commanders and I stood there.

41Then the Priests (EliAkim, MaAsiJah, MiniAmin, MichaiAh, ElioEnai, ZechariAh, and HanaNiJah) blew their trumpets, 42as MaAseJah, ShemiAh, EliEzer, UzZi, JehoHanan, MelchiJah, AiLam, Ezer (and their overseer, JezRahJah) started singing!

43Well, they offered many sacrifices that day and everyone was extremely happy, for God had made them, their wives, and their children very happy!

And the sound of their joy could be heard a long distance from JeruSalem!

44It was on this day that they ordered those who were over the treasures in the treasuries (the first fruits and the tithes) to go out and gather the portions for the Priests and Levites from the cities and the fields.

And everyone in Judah was very happy for the Priests, Levites, and the guards 45that kept the watches for their God, and for those in charge of the cleansing, for the singers, and for the gatekeepers, all of whom were doing everything according to the commandments of David and of his son Solomon.

46Because, it was in the days of David and Asaph that singers were first assigned to sing praises to God. 47And it was during the days of ZerubBabel and NehemiAh that all the people started contributing a portion to the singers and gatekeepers each day.

It was handed over as something holy to the Levites, who handed it over as something holy to the sons of Aaron.

### Nehemiah

## Chapter 13

1Well on that day (when they were reading the scroll of Moses before the ears of the people), they came to understand that it was written that the AmMonites and MoAbites were not to enter the gathering of God throughout the ages, 2because they hadn’t greeted the sons of IsraEl with bread and water, but hired BalaAm to curse them (which our God turned into blessings).

3And when they heard this read in the Law, they separated such people who had been mixed among the IsraElites.

4Before that time, however, the Priest EliAshib had assigned TobiJah to be in charge of the treasury of the Temple of our God, 5[and he had moved into] the large room in the treasury where the sacrifice offerings, the frankincense, the sacred utensils, the tithe grain, the wine, and the olive oil was supposed to be stored (as it was commanded) for the Levites, singers, and gatekeepers, along with the first fruits for the Priests.

6I wasn’t in JeruSalem when he did this, for (because it was the 32nd year of the reign of ArthaSastha the ruler of Babylon) I had gone to see the king, and then (after some time) I asked the king for a few things 7before returning to JeruSalem.

But when I [got back and] saw the wicked thing that EliAshib had done for TobiJah by giving the treasury to him there in the courtyard of the Temple of God, 8this looked very wrong to me.

So, I took all of TobiJah’s things out of the treasury and threw them outside!

9Then I gave the order and they cleansed the treasury, and I had the Temple of God’s sacred utensils, sacrifice offerings, and frankincense all brought back.

10I also realized that the Levites weren’t being given their portions, so the Levites, singers, and workmen had all returned to their own fields! 11Therefore, I had a heated exchange with those who were in charge, and I asked:

 ‘Why has the Temple of God been abandoned?’

And afterward, I called everyone back and assigned them to their stations, 12as everyone in Judah once again started bringing their tithes of the wheat, wine, and olive oil to the treasury. 13I then put all of this into the hands of the Priest ShelemiJah, the scribe ZaDok, and PedaiAh and Hanan (the sons of ZacCur and grandsons of MatTaniJah) who represented the Levites, since I thought that they could be trusted. And I left it up to them to divide it all among their brothers.

14Remember me for this, O my God, and don’t forget my acts of mercy on behalf of the Temple of my God Jehovah and [the assignment of] His watches!

15Well, it was then that I noticed that the people of Judah were treading their wine vats and collecting sheaves of grain and loading them on their burros (along with wine, grapes, figs, and everything else) and carrying them into JeruSalem *on the Sabbath day!*

Yes, I can testify to the fact that they were *even selling these things on that day!*

16People from Tyre were also bringing in fish and all sorts of things, and they were sitting there offering them for sale to the sons of Judah in JeruSalem on the Sabbath!

17So I quarreled with the free men of Judah and asked:

 ‘Why are you doing this wicked thing… Why are you profaning the day of the Sabbath?

 18‘Isn’t this the same thing that your fathers did that caused God to bring all the evils down upon this city and upon us?

 ‘Now you’re adding to His anger upon IsraEl by profaning the Sabbath!’

19Well, after I said that, they started locking the gates of JeruSalem *before* the Sabbath, and I told them not to unlock them until *after* the Sabbath.

Then I had some of my young men stand at the gates to make sure that no one carried loads on the Sabbath day, 20and that all the traders were forced to find lodging.

Oh, some did business outside of JeruSalem’s walls once or twice, 21but I spoke to them and asked:

 ‘Why are you lodging so close to the city wall?

 ‘If you do this a second time, I’ll be forced to take action against you!’

Well from that time on, they no longer came on the Sabbath.

22Thereafter, I had a talk with the Levites who were being cleansed and with those who had come to guard the gates, about the need to keep the Sabbath day holy.

Remember me, O my God, and protect me by Your great mercy!

23Back then, I saw Judeans that had settled in with women who were AshDodites, AmMonites, and MoAbites… 24They were even speaking the AshDod language and they weren’t learning Judean, for they were speaking the languages of these people and those people!

25So I quarreled with them and I cursed them… I hit some of the men, pulled their hair, and made them swear before God not to take those people’s daughters for their sons or for themselves.

26[I said]:

 ‘Isn’t this how Solomon the king of IsraEl sinned?

 ‘Yet among all the nations, there wasn’t another king like him, because God loved him and God appointed him to be the king over all IsraEl.

 ‘But it was this thing that turned him aside… Foreign women!

 27‘So, should we allow you to do such wickedness and break your relationship with God by taking foreign women?’

28[I said this to] the sons of JoiAda and to EliAshib (who was the High Priest and a relative by marriage of SanBalLat)… Then I threw them all out!

29Remember them, O my God, because they opposed the rights of inheritance of the Priesthood [as was set forth in] Your Sacred Agreement for the Priests and the Levites!

30I cleansed them of all their connections with foreigners, then I established the daily rotations for the Priests and Levites, so that every man had an assignment among the Priests, 31whether it was just to provide gifts of wood for the offerings by seasons and times, or [to bring in] the first fruits.

Please remember me, O our God, for the goodness that [I’ve shown]!