



## Life Group Study – Completing the Book of Nehemiah

Title: Chapter 12

Scriptures: Nehemiah 12:27-47

Introduction...in Nehemiah chapter 12, we find the people of Israel dedicating the wall of Jerusalem, rejoicing and praising the Lord our God. The first 26 verses are a roll call of the priests and Levites, their lineage, and their associates who were in charge of giving praise and thanksgiving, singing together as choirs and playing music with cymbals, harps, and lyres as prescribed by, “David the man of God.” The entire chapter is about the people giving thanks and rejoicing, because they were so joyful over what God had done.

### Read Nehemiah 12:27-47 and supporting scriptures

1. The Worshippers are Gathered Together – Nehemiah 12:27-29
  - a. The Levites and musicians were gathered from the areas surrounding Jerusalem to celebrate the dedication of the wall. This was to be a time of joy and gladness, thanksgiving, and worshipping God with singing and music.
  - b. Nehemiah 12:27 echoes what God promised in Jeremiah 33:11 – the sounds of joy and gladness, the voices of bride and bridegroom, and the voices of those who bring thank offerings to the house of the LORD, saying, “Give thanks to the LORD Almighty for the LORD is good; his love endures forever.” ‘For I will restore the fortunes of the land as they were before,’ says the LORD.
  
2. Purification First – Nehemiah 12:30
  - a. The priests and Levites purified themselves, because they could not effectively lead the people in worshipping God unless they walked in purity before the Lord themselves. They then purified the people because only a purified people could really worship and praise God.
  - b. Purifying the gates and walls was an act of reverence to God; not just to thank him for a successful building project, but to consecrate the city anew to him, because Jerusalem was the place God had chosen for his name to dwell forever. The temple was made holy by his presence and the temple and city were newly set apart again to his service.
  
3. The Procession on The Wall – Nehemiah 12:31-39
  - a. Nehemiah had two great companies of people go up onto the wall. They were comprised of two large thanksgiving choirs, musicians, Chief Musicians and a Choir



Director, Levites and priests (some prominent enough to be named), aristocrats, clan leaders, and the people of Jerusalem.

- b. Half of the group went to the right led by Ezra and half to the left accompanied by Nehemiah, and they walked along the walls in opposite directions until they met up in the courts of the temple.

#### 4. The Joy of the Lord – Nehemiah 12:40-43

- a. The choirs sang and the people worshipped God. The words joy, rejoicing, or joyfully appear five times between verses 27 and 43. In verse 43 Nehemiah acknowledges the source of their joy – ‘And on that day they offered great sacrifices, rejoicing because God had given them great joy...’
- b. God is the source, the giver, and the reason for our joy. Galatians 5:22-23 – But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.
- c. Joy doesn’t depend on outward circumstances. The Israelites were rejoicing while they were still living under Persian rule, in a city full of rubble, and surrounded by enemies who sought to destroy them.
- d. Joy depends on focusing on the right things; the graciousness and faithfulness of God, gratitude for who God is, all he has done and promises to do, and that he has chosen us and set his affection on us. Philippians 4:4 – Rejoice in the Lord always. Again, I will say, rejoice!
- e. Verse 43 concludes with, ‘The sound of rejoicing in Jerusalem could be heard far away.’ The rebuilding of the temple and the walls of Jerusalem and the joy the Israelites demonstrated that day, became a testimony to the people surrounding their nation of the power of God, even to their enemies.

#### 5. Service and Generosity – Nehemiah 12:44-47

- a. The people in the towns around Jerusalem were so happy with the work and ministry of the priests and Levites, that they took joy in giving the portions to them as prescribed in God’s Law. They gave so generously that men had to be appointed to administer the contributions.
- b. During this time everyone diligently carried out their service to God. They made sure everyone was purified before entering the house of God. And all of Israel regularly contributed what was required of them to the Levites and the Levites shared the required portion with the priests.