

## Ezra Nehemiah Lesson 9

### Nehemiah 11 – 13

- Nehemiah chapter 11 provides Nehemiah's solution for repopulating Jerusalem.
  - The leaders of the people had already agreed to live in the city. But others were hesitant to move there.
  - We know from Nehemiah 7:1-5 that few houses within the city had been rebuilt.
  - Additionally, the people had settled in their ancestral hometowns where they had already begun cultivating fields and tending olive groves.
  - Nehemiah's solution was to cast lots to bring 1/10 of the population into the city.
  - The Jews were well used to the idea of casting lots. This took the burden away from Nehemiah's having to forcibly name those who must move to Jerusalem.
  - By casting lots, those selected had been chosen by God's will.
  - Nehemiah 11:2 notes that everyone else commended those who had volunteered to live in Jerusalem. The use of the word volunteer here may refer to a group who truly had volunteered to live in the city or may refer also to those who accepted their selection by lot graciously.
  - A 1992 article in the Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research by M. Broshi and I. Finkelstein estimates the population of Jerusalem as 400-500 people at this time.
- The balance of Nehemiah 11 includes lists of those who lived in Jerusalem.
  - 1 Chronicles 9 has a similar list, but it does not match the list of Nehemiah 11. Fensham suggests that Nehemiah and the Chronicler both had access to archival lists of Jewish genealogies. Each selected which names to include in his lists, adding or omitting names as he saw fit.
  - Nehemiah's list includes several names of interest and an interesting note.
    - In the Judah line, Athaiah's lineage can be traced back to Perez, who was a son of Jacob's son Judah by Leah. Maaseiah's lineage can be traced back to Shelah, who was also a son of Jacob's son Judah by Leah.

- In the Benjaminite line, the ancient ancestor is not listed. This may be because almost the entire tribe of Benjamin was killed during a war with the rest of Israel, as recorded in Judges 19-21.
  - Benjamin was the last son of Jacob by Rachel.
- Nehemiah 11:23 says, “The musicians were under the king’s orders, which regulated their daily activity.” (NIV). The interpretation is that the musicians were performing in accordance with directions from the Persian king, who did not want any evil to befall him or his family due to a failure to follow prescribed Jewish ritual (Ezra 7:23).
- Nehemiah 11:24 says, “Pethahiah son of Meshezabel, one of the descendants of Zerah son of Judah, was the king’s agent in all affairs relating to the people.” Here we have a Jewish man appointed by the Persian king to provide him with information about and advice on Judah. Remember that Darius had created the position of secretary for each Persian province. This individual was separate from the satraps and the sub-governors. He reported directly to the king. Pethahiah likely served in this role.
- Nehemiah 12: 1-26 includes additional names of the priests, Levites, and gatekeepers.
  - Nehemiah 12:10 includes the names of the high priests. This list begins with Joshua and ends with Jaddua.
    - Joshua was Zerubbabel’s contemporary. He would have served when the 2<sup>nd</sup> Temple was built.
    - Eliashib was Nehemiah’s contemporary.
    - Jaddua may have served as late as 400 BC. Therefore, this list was compiled after the time of Nehemiah and added by an editor.
- Nehemiah 12: 27-47 records the great celebration accompanying the dedication of Jerusalem’s completed wall.
  - Nehemiah divided the celebrants (priests, Levites, musicians, and leaders) into 2 groups. Each group walked on top of the wall.

- Nehemiah does not record the dimensions of the city wall that he rebuilt. However, he rebuilt the walls on the existing foundations. Therefore, these were the walls built by King Solomon. Here is a photo of a portion of Solomon's walls which have been excavated. You can see that this wall was wide enough to have 1 to 2 people, perhaps more, walk abreast.
- We do not know the exact starting place of the celebration, but it is likely that it began on the western side of the city near the Valley Gate.
- The first group, led by Hoshaiiah, included Ezra. This group went south towards the Dung Gate, which scholars believe was on the south side of the city in the Kidron Valley. This group ended at the Water Gate on the east side of the city, just below the 2<sup>nd</sup> Temple complex.
- The second group, led by Nehemiah, went north, and stopped at the Gate of the Guard.
- Afterwards, the choirs, the priests, the Levites, and half the officials entered the Temple complex where great sacrifices were offered. The women and children, outside of the Temple, also rejoiced.
- Nehemiah then appointed men to oversee the storerooms at the Temple for contributions, first fruits, and tithes.
  - Leviticus 27:30 prescribed the following for the tithe:
    - A tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs to the LORD; it is holy to the LORD.
    - A tithe represented 10% of one's income or increase and it was given throughout the year.
  - Numbers 18: 25-26, 30-31 explains further what happened with this tithe:
    - The LORD said to Moses, <sup>26</sup> "Speak to the Levites and say to them: 'When you receive from the Israelites the tithe I give you as your inheritance, you must present a tenth of that tithe as the LORD's offering.'"

- Say to the Levites: ‘When you present the best part, it will be reckoned to you as the product of the threshing floor or the winepress. <sup>31</sup> You and your households may eat the rest of it anywhere, for it is your wages for your work at the tent of meeting.’
- So we see that the Levites lived off 90% of the tithe submitted by the Israelites.
  - 1 Chronicles 9 tells us in verses 17 and 33 that the gatekeepers and musicians also came from Levitical families. So, they too were fed from the tithes.
- The first fruits consisted of the best of the land in each harvest season: grain, new wine, olive oil, sheep wool, and fruit. (Fruit was added in Nehemiah 10.) These items were for the priests.
  - I give you all the finest olive oil and all the finest new wine and grain they give the LORD as the firstfruits of their harvest. <sup>13</sup> All the land’s firstfruits that they bring to the LORD will be yours. Numbers 18:12-13
- Contributions were part of fellowship offerings and were also designated for the priests.
  - From the fellowship offerings of the Israelites, I have taken the breast that is waved and the thigh that is presented and have given them to Aaron the priest and his sons as their perpetual share from the Israelites. Leviticus 7:34
- Nehemiah 13:1-3 records that the congregation heard the Book of Moses read aloud during the dedication of the wall ceremonies.
  - They learned that no Ammonite or Moabite should ever be admitted into the assembly of God. When the people heard this law, they excluded from Israel all who were of foreign descent.
  - This prohibition comes from Deuteronomy 23:3-6.

- No Ammonite or Moabite or any of their descendants may enter the assembly of the LORD, not even in the tenth generation. <sup>4</sup> For they did not come to meet you with bread and water on your way when you came out of Egypt, and they hired Balaam son of Beor from Pethor in Aram Naharaim to pronounce a curse on you. <sup>5</sup> However, the LORD your God would not listen to Balaam but turned the curse into a blessing for you, because the LORD your God loves you. <sup>6</sup> Do not seek a treaty of friendship with them as long as you live.
  - From Nehemiah 10:28, you will recall this covenantal statement made by the people of Judah:
    - The rest of the people—priests, Levites, gatekeepers, musicians, temple servants and all who separated themselves from the neighboring peoples for the sake of the Law of God, together with their wives and all their sons and daughters who are able to understand.
  - In the short interval between the covenantal statement and the dedication of the wall, the people had not fully separated themselves from their neighbors or had formed new alliances, such as marriages.
  - Think about Tobiah the Ammonite from Nehemiah 6. Jewish leaders were under oath to him, and he and his son had intermarried with Jews.
  - Once again, Nehemiah and Ezra, with explanations by the Levites, had to explain to the people exactly what God’s word intended. No Ammonite or Moabite could enter the Temple; ever. Intermarriages with Judah’s neighbors were forbidden.
- After the dedication of the wall, Nehemiah returned to the court of Artaxerxes in 433 BC. Some time later, he asked for permission to return to Jerusalem. Had he heard news about problems in Judah? It was good that he did return, for he found a number of problems to deal with upon his return.
  - The 1<sup>st</sup> problem involved Eliashib the high priest. He had allowed Tobiah, the sub-governor of Ammon, to take up residence inside one of the Temple storerooms.
    - The presence of a foreigner, and an Ammonite to boot, profaned the room and all its contents.
    - Nehemiah ordered that all of Tobiah’s possessions be thrown out of the room. The room was purified, and Nehemiah ordered that the appropriate items for the Temple and the Levites be placed back into the room.

- It is surprising that Nehemiah did not remove Eliashib from his position as high priest due to this sacrilege.
- The 2<sup>nd</sup> problem involved the tithes for the Levites, including the musicians and gatekeepers. Their 90% portion of the tithes had not been given to them.
  - Therefore, the Levites and the musicians had moved back to their fields to grow crops and raise animals for their food. Per Numbers 35:1-3, the Levites had towns to live in which were a part of the land given to the other 11 tribes. They were also granted pasturelands outside of these towns for their cattle and other animals.
  - Because the Levites and musicians were not at the Temple, their Temple duties had been neglected.
  - Nehemiah recalled the Levites and musicians to their duties. Nehemiah appointed more trustworthy officials to supervise the storerooms and to distribute the tithes and first fruits to their fellow Levites.
- The 3<sup>rd</sup> problem involved a violation of the 4<sup>th</sup> commandment:
  - “Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. <sup>9</sup> Six days you shall labor and do all your work, <sup>10</sup> but the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns. Exodus 20:8-10
  - Nehemiah observed the people making wine; gathering grain; loading donkeys with grain, wine, grapes, figs, and other items; bringing their loads into Jerusalem on the Sabbath; selling food on the Sabbath; trading with the people of Tyre on the Sabbath.
  - Nehemiah solved this problem by shutting the gates of Jerusalem as soon as dusk fell on the city on the Sabbath. The gates were not to be reopened until the Sabbath was over.
- The 4<sup>th</sup> problem was the repeat issue of intermarriage. Despite both Ezra and Nehemiah’s previous reforms, men of Judah had intermarried with women from Ashdod, Ammon, and Moab.
  - The problem had gotten so severe that the children of these marriages could no longer speak Aramaic or Hebrew.

- Nehemiah rebuked them, pronounced a religious curse upon the men, and even resorted to pulling out their hair.
  - He once again made the men take an oath before God not to take foreign wives. If they failed to keep their oath, the religious curse came into play.
  - The most severe situation involved a grandson of Eliashib the high priest. This grandson had married a daughter of that troublemaker Sanballat the Horonite, a Moabite.
  - Leviticus 21:14 prohibited the high priest from marrying a foreigner. Since anyone in his family could become a high priest, the situation with Eliashib's grandson was a significant problem and was a direct challenge to Nehemiah's authority. In this case, Nehemiah expelled the grandson from the community.
  - Again, it is a wonder that Nehemiah did not remove Eliashib from his position as high priest. Instead, he makes this invocation to God, who will judge Eliashib appropriately:
    - Remember them, my God, because they defiled the priestly office and the covenant of the priesthood and of the Levites. Nehemiah 13:29
  - Nehemiah purified the priests and Levites of everything foreign (this meant divorces again) and made sure each group understood his assigned duties.
- Nehemiah concludes his memoir with the words, "Remember me with favor, my God." Certainly he was a long-suffering spiritual leader who had tried his best to restore the people of Judah to a covenantal relationship with God.

## Ezra Nehemiah Lesson 9

### Nehemiah 11 - 13

**And now I bring the firstfruits of the soil that you, LORD, have given me. Place the basket before the LORD your God and bow down before him. Deuteronomy 26:10**

1. Read Nehemiah 11:1 – 12:26.
  - a. Reread Nehemiah 7:4-5 in conjunction with Nehemiah 11:1 – 12:26. How does Nehemiah 11:1-3 solve the issue noted in Nehemiah 7:4-5.
    - **Now the city was large and spacious, but there were few people in it, and the houses had not yet been rebuilt.** <sup>5</sup> So my God put it into my heart to assemble the nobles, the officials and the common people for registration by families. I found the genealogical record of those who had been the first to return. Nehemiah 7:4-5
    - **Now the leaders of the people settled in Jerusalem. The rest of the people cast lots to bring one out of every ten of them to live in Jerusalem, the holy city, while the remaining nine were to stay in their own towns.** <sup>2</sup> The people commended all who volunteered to live in Jerusalem. <sup>3</sup> These are the provincial leaders who settled in Jerusalem (now some Israelites, priests, Levites, temple servants and descendants of Solomon's servants lived in the towns of Judah, each on their own property in the various towns, <sup>4</sup> while other people from both Judah and Benjamin lived in Jerusalem) Nehemiah 11:1-4
  - b. What would the people who lived in Jerusalem need to do?  
They would need to build homes.
  - c. Throughout Nehemiah, we see multiple references to gatekeepers. Where were these gatekeepers posted and why was their job important?
    - At the gates of the Temple
    - At the gates of the Temple storerooms
    - At the gates of the city of Jerusalem
    - They provided security for the Temple, the Temple storerooms, and the city of Jerusalem.
    - They opened and closed the gates at specified times, per orders.



- d. According to 12: 24, what was one of the duties of the Levites? (See also 2 Chronicles 8:14.)
- To give praise and thanksgiving, one section (group of Levites) responding to the other
  - In keeping with the ordinance of his father David, he appointed the divisions of the priests for their duties, and the Levites to lead the praise and to assist the priests according to each day's requirement. 2 Chronicles 8:14

2. Read Nehemiah 12:27-39.

- a. What important event was recorded in this passage?
- The dedication of the wall around Jerusalem
- b. What did the Levites do?
- At the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem, the Levites were sought out from where they lived and were brought to Jerusalem to celebrate joyfully the dedication with songs of thanksgiving and with the music of cymbals, harps and lyres. Nehemiah 12:27
- c. What do you think was the point of the ritual purification noted in verse 30?
- When the priests and Levites had purified themselves ceremonially, they purified the people, the gates and the wall. Nehemiah 12:30
  - The dedication of the wall around Jerusalem marked a long-desired step towards the security of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Temple and the city of Jerusalem.
  - The dedication of the wall around Jerusalem was observed with as much solemnity as the dedication of the Tabernacle (Numbers 7), the dedication of Solomon's Temple (1 Kings 8), and the dedication of the 2<sup>nd</sup> (Zerubabel's) Temple (Ezra 6). Such dedications were marked with the celebrants being ritually purified beforehand.
- d. Describe the ceremony in these passages.
- Nehemiah and the leaders of Judah went up on the top of the wall. 2 large choirs, going in opposite directions, marched along the top of the wall along with priests, musicians, and the people of Judah. Nehemiah was in 1 group; Ezra was in the other group.

3. Read Nehemiah 12:40-43. What events followed?

**The two choirs that gave thanks then took their places in the house of God; so did I, together with half the officials,** <sup>41</sup> **as well as the priests—Eliakim, Maaseiah, Miniamin, Micaiah, Elioenai, Zechariah and Hananiah with their trumpets—** <sup>42</sup> **and also Maaseiah, Shemaiah, Eleazar, Uzzi, Jehohanan, Malkijah, Elam and Ezer. The choirs sang under the direction of Jezrahiah.** <sup>43</sup> **And on that day they offered great sacrifices,** rejoicing because God had given them great joy. **The women and children also rejoiced.** The sound of rejoicing in Jerusalem could be heard far away. Nehemiah 12:40-43

4. Read Nehemiah 12:44-47.

- a. What was kept in the storerooms?

Contributions, first fruits, and tithes.

- b. Read Deuteronomy 18:1-5. How does this passage explain the portions for the priests and Levites?

The Levitical priests—indeed, the whole tribe of Levi—are to have no allotment or inheritance with Israel. **They shall live on the food offerings presented to the LORD, for that is their inheritance.** <sup>2</sup> **They shall have no inheritance among their fellow Israelites;** the LORD is their inheritance, as he promised them.

<sup>3</sup> **This is the share due the priests from the people who sacrifice a bull or a sheep: the shoulder, the internal organs and the meat from the head.** <sup>4</sup> **You are to give them the firstfruits of your grain, new wine and olive oil, and the first wool from the shearing of your sheep,** <sup>5</sup> for the LORD your God has chosen them and their descendants out of all your tribes to stand and minister in the LORD's name always. Deuteronomy 18:1-5

- c. Nehemiah 12:45 states that the priests and Levites “performed the service of their God.” Using the chart of priestly duties, list some of these services.

- Teach the people
- Serve as judges
- Offer sacrifices
- Assess impurity
- Take care of the altar

- d. Who created the positions of musicians and gatekeepers and stated their specific duties? (See also 1 Chronicles 6:31 and 2 Chronicles 8:14.)

- David and his son Solomon
- These are the men David put in charge of the music in the house of the LORD after the ark came to rest there. 1 Chronicles 6:31

- In keeping with the ordinance of his father David, he appointed the divisions of the priests for their duties, and the Levites to lead the praise and to assist the priests according to each day's requirement. He also appointed the gatekeepers by divisions for the various gates, because this was what David the man of God had ordered. 2 Chronicles 8:14

- e. How were these musicians and gatekeepers supported according to Nehemiah 12:47?

So in the days of Zerubbabel and of Nehemiah, all Israel contributed the daily portions for the musicians and the gatekeepers. They also set aside the portion for the other Levites, and the Levites set aside the portion for the descendants of Aaron. Nehemiah 12:47

5. Read Nehemiah 13:1-3. What law did the people learn about and what did they do when they heard it?

On that day the Book of Moses was read aloud in the hearing of the people and there it was found written that no Ammonite or Moabite should ever be admitted into the assembly of God,<sup>2</sup> because they had not met the Israelites with food and water but had hired Balaam to call a curse down on them. (Our God, however, turned the curse into a blessing.)<sup>3</sup> When the people heard this law, they excluded from Israel all who were of foreign descent. Nehemiah 13:1-3

6. Read Nehemiah 13:4-14.

- a. What did Eliashib the priest do?

Before this, Eliashib the priest had been put in charge of the storerooms of the house of our God. He was closely associated with Tobiah,<sup>5</sup> and he had provided him with a large room formerly used to store the grain offerings and incense and temple articles, and also the tithes of grain, new wine and olive oil prescribed for the Levites, musicians and gatekeepers, as well as the contributions for the priests. Nehemiah 13:4-5

- b. Why was this a problem?

Tobiah was a non-Jew. He was using a Temple storeroom for a home (see verse 8); the storeroom should have been used to hold the offerings and Temple articles.

- c. Where was Nehemiah when this happened?

But while all this was going on, I was not in Jerusalem, for in the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes king of Babylon I had returned to the king. Some time later I asked his permission<sup>7</sup> and came back to Jerusalem. Nehemiah 13:6-7

- d. When Nehemiah learned about Eliashib's actions, what was his reaction?  
Here I learned about the evil thing Eliashib had done in providing Tobiah a room in the courts of the house of God. <sup>8</sup> I was greatly displeased Nehemiah 13:7-8
- e. What did Nehemiah do next?  
He threw all Tobiah's household goods out of the room. <sup>9</sup> I gave orders to purify the rooms, and then I put back into them the equipment of the house of God, with the grain offerings and the incense. Nehemiah 13:8-9
- f. What else did Nehemiah learn?  
I also learned that the portions assigned to the Levites had not been given to them, and that all the Levites and musicians responsible for the service had gone back to their own fields. Nehemiah 13:10
- g. Why did the Levites and musicians leave Jerusalem?  
The Levites and musicians had gone back to their fields to earn a living because the offerings were no longer available to them.
- h. What did Nehemiah do to rectify the situation with the Levites and musicians?  
So I rebuked the officials and asked them, "Why is the house of God neglected?" Then I called them together and stationed them at their posts.  
<sup>12</sup> All Judah brought the tithes of grain, new wine and olive oil into the storerooms. <sup>13</sup> I put Shelemiah the priest, Zadok the scribe, and a Levite named Pedaiah in charge of the storerooms and made Hanan son of Zakkur, the son of Mattaniah, their assistant, because they were considered trustworthy. They were made responsible for distributing the supplies to their fellow Levites. Nehemiah 13:11-13
- i. What do you think happened to the items in the storerooms in the Temple?  
The tithes, grain, wine and oil had been consumed by unscrupulous persons and perhaps sold to others.
- j. What prayer does Nehemiah make?  
Remember me for this, my God, and do not blot out what I have so faithfully done for the house of my God and its services. Nehemiah 13:14

7. Read Nehemiah 13:23-31.

- a. What other problem did Nehemiah uncover upon his return to Jerusalem?  
Moreover, in those days I saw men of Judah who had married women from Ashdod, Ammon and Moab. Nehemiah 13:23

- b. How bad was the problem?  
Half of their children spoke the language of Ashdod or the language of one of the other peoples, and did not know how to speak the language of Judah. Nehemiah 13:24
- c. What did Nehemiah do about the problem?  
I rebuked them and called curses down on them. I beat some of the men and pulled out their hair. I made them take an oath in God's name and said: "You are not to give your daughters in marriage to their sons, nor are you to take their daughters in marriage for your sons or for yourselves. Nehemiah 13:25
- d. Who did Nehemiah use as an example to show the results of the problem?  
Was it not because of marriages like these that **Solomon king of Israel** sinned? Among the many nations there was no king like him. He was loved by his God, and God made him king over all Israel, but even he was led into sin by foreign women. <sup>27</sup> Must we hear now that you too are doing all this terrible wickedness and are being unfaithful to our God by marrying foreign women?" Nehemiah 13:26-27
- e. Reviewing verse 28, how serious was the problem? In this case, what did Nehemiah do?  
One of the sons of Joiada son of Eliashib the high priest was son-in-law to Sanballat the Horonite. And I drove him away from me. Nehemiah 13:28
- f. What imprecatory prayer does Nehemiah make in verse 29 and why?  
Remember them, my God, because they defiled the priestly office and the covenant of the priesthood and of the Levites. Nehemiah 13:29
- g. What other things did Nehemiah have to do to set things back to where they were before he went back to Persia?  
So I purified the priests and the Levites of everything foreign, and assigned them duties, each to his own task. <sup>31</sup> I also made provision for contributions of wood at designated times, and for the firstfruits. Nehemiah 13:30-31
- h. What final prayer does Nehemiah make? Why do you think he made such prayers?
- Remember me with favor, my God. Nehemiah 13:31
  - Nehemiah was clearly frustrated that the leaders and people of Judah had fallen back into old ways which violated God's laws and commandments. He had to constantly set the people of Judah back on the path of righteousness. He wanted God to remember that he had done many things, sometimes harsh things, to promote God's laws and commandments.

8. Looking at all the things Nehemiah needed to correct, how well do you think the people were doing at keeping their oath and promises from Nehemiah 10?
- They were not doing very well. Here are some examples of their failures:
  - bind themselves with a curse and an oath to follow the Law of God given through Moses the servant of God and to obey carefully all the commands, regulations and decrees of the LORD our Lord. Nehemiah 10:29
    - **(Failed:** On that day the Book of Moses was read aloud in the hearing of the people and there it was found written that no Ammonite or Moabite should ever be admitted into the assembly of God, <sup>2</sup> because they had not met the Israelites with food and water but had hired Balaam to call a curse down on them. (Our God, however, turned the curse into a blessing.) When the people heard this law, they excluded from Israel all who were of foreign descent. Nehemiah 13:1-3)
  - We promise not to give our daughters in marriage to the peoples around us or take their daughters for our sons. Nehemiah 10:30
    - **(Failed:** Moreover, in those days I saw men of Judah who had married women from Ashdod, Ammon and Moab. Nehemiah 13:23)
  - When the neighboring peoples bring merchandise or grain to sell on the Sabbath, we will not buy from them on the Sabbath or on any holy day. Nehemiah 10:31
    - **(Failed:** In those days I saw people in Judah treading winepresses on the Sabbath and bringing in grain and loading it on donkeys, together with wine, grapes, figs and all other kinds of loads. And they were bringing all this into Jerusalem on the Sabbath. Therefore I warned them against selling food on that day. <sup>16</sup> People from Tyre who lived in Jerusalem were bringing in fish and all kinds of merchandise and selling them in Jerusalem on the Sabbath to the people of Judah. Nehemiah 13:15-16)

- “Moreover, we will bring to the storerooms of the house of our God, to the priests, the first of our ground meal, of our grain offerings, of the fruit of all our trees and of our new wine and olive oil. And we will bring a tithe of our crops to the Levites, for it is the Levites who collect the tithes in all the towns where we work. Nehemiah 10:37
  - **(Failed:** I also learned that the portions assigned to the Levites had not been given to them Nehemiah 13:10)

9. How successful do you think the people will be in keeping God’s laws going forward? Can you cite a later scripture which supports your opinion?

- They will not be successful. Just like us, the people of Judah were human. They sinned against God and his commandments, just as we do today.
- Judah has desecrated the sanctuary the LORD loves by marrying women who worship a foreign god. Malachi 2:11
- Will a mere mortal rob God? Yet you rob me. “But you ask, ‘How are we robbing you?’ “In tithes and offerings. <sup>9</sup> You are under a curse —your whole nation—because you are robbing me. <sup>10</sup> Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Malachi 3:8-10
- Jesus replied, “And why do you break the command of God for the sake of your tradition? <sup>4</sup> For God said, ‘Honor your father and mother’ and ‘Anyone who curses their father or mother is to be put to death.’ <sup>5</sup> But you say that if anyone declares that what might have been used to help their father or mother is ‘devoted to God,’ <sup>6</sup> they are not to ‘honor their father or mother’ with it. Thus you nullify the word of God for the sake of your tradition. <sup>7</sup> You hypocrites! Matthew 15:3-7
- Jesus entered the temple courts and drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves. <sup>13</sup> “It is written,” he said to them, “‘My house will be called a house of prayer,’ but you are making it ‘a den of robbers. Matthew 21:12-13

# **Nehemiah 11 - 13**



# Repopulating Jerusalem

- The Leaders Had Already Agreed to Live There
- Others Were Hesitant to Move There
- Few Houses Had Been Rebuilt (Nehemiah 7:1-5)
- People Had Already Settled in Their Ancestral Hometowns Where They Were Cultivating Fields and Tending Olive Groves
- Nehemiah's Solution: Cast Lots to Bring 1/10 of the Population Into the City

# Repopulating Jerusalem

- The Jews Were Well Used to the Idea of Casting Lots
- This Took the Burden Off Nehemiah to Forcibly Move People
- By Casting Lots, Those Selected Had Been Chosen by God's Will
- Everyone Commended Those Who Had "Volunteered" (Nehemiah 11:2); True Volunteers or Those Chosen by Lot
- An Article Estimates That 400-500 People Lived in Jerusalem at This Time

# Nehemiah 11 Lists

- The List in 1 Chronicles 9 Does Not Match Nehemiah 11
- Fensham: Nehemiah and the Chronicler Both Had Access to Archival Lists of Jewish Genealogies; Each Included/Omitted Names as He Saw Fit
- In the Judah Line, Athaiah's Lineage Can Be Traced Back to Perez, a Son of Jacob's Son Judah by Leah
- Maaseiah's Lineage Can Be Traced Back to Shelah, Also a Son of Judah

# Nehemiah 11 Lists

- In the Benjaminite Line, the Ancient Ancestor is Not Listed; Almost the Entire Tribe of Benjamin Was Killed During a War With the Rest of Israel (Judges 19-21)
  - Benjamin Was the Last Son of Jacob by Rachel
- Nehemiah 11:23 and Ezra 7:23; the Musicians Were Performing in Accordance with Directions From the Persian King
- Nehemiah 11:24; Pethahiah Likely Served as a Secretary Who Reported Directly to the Persian King

# Nehemiah 12 Lists

- Names of the Priests, Levites, and Gatekeepers
- Nehemiah 12:10 Includes the Names of the High Priests, Beginning With Joshua and Ending With Jaddua
  - Joshua Was Zerubabel's Contemporary and Would Have Served When the 2<sup>nd</sup> Temple Was Built
  - Eliashib Was Nehemiah's Contemporary
  - Jaddua May Have Served as Late as 400 BC; Therefore This List Was Compiled After the Time of Nehemiah and Added by an Editor

# The Dedication of the Wall

- Nehemiah Divided the Celebrants (Priests, Levites, Musicians, and Leaders into 2 Groups
- Each Group Walked on Top of the Wall
- Nehemiah Does Not Record the Dimensions of the City Wall That He Rebuilt; However, He Rebuilt on the Existing Foundations
- These Were Walls Built by King Solomon
- In This Photo of Solomon's Walls, You can See that 1 to 2 People, Maybe More, Could Walk Abreast



Excavation of  
Solomon's City Walls,  
Jerusalem, circa 950  
BC; copyright:  
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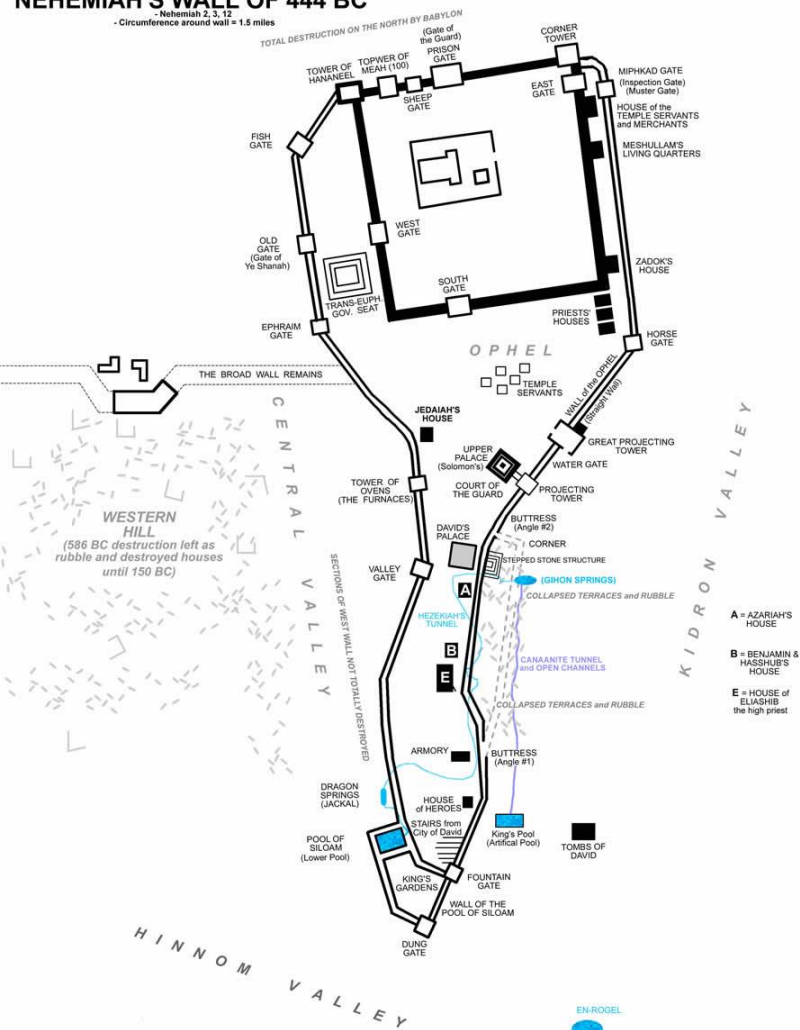
# The Dedication of the Wall

- We Do Not Know the Exact Starting Place; Likely the Valley Gate on the Western Side of the City
- The 1<sup>st</sup> Group, Including Ezra, Went South Towards the Dung Gate (On the South Side of the City in the Kidron Valley) and Ended at the Water Gate on the East Side
- The 2<sup>nd</sup> Group, Led by Nehemiah, Went North and Stopped at the Gate of the Guard
- Afterwards, the Choirs, the Priest, the Levites, and Half the Officials Celebrated with Great Sacrifices in the Temple



# NEHEMIAH'S WALL OF 444 BC

- Nehemiah 2, 3, 12  
- Circumference around wall = 1.5 miles



Nehemiah's Walls of 444 BC; copyright: [www.generationword.com](http://www.generationword.com)

# Contributions, First Fruits, Tithes

- Nehemiah Appointed Men to Oversee the Storerooms
- The Tithe: Leviticus 27:30
- The Purpose of the Tithe: Numbers 18: 25-26, 30-31; for the Levites
- Tithes for Gatekeepers and Musicians Also (1 Chronicles 9: 17, 33)
- The First Fruits: Number 18:12-13; for the Priests
- Contributions: Leviticus 7:34; for the Priests

# Nehemiah 13: 1-3

- The Congregation Heard the Book of Moses Read Aloud During the Wall Dedication Ceremonies
- Deuteronomy 23:3-6: No Ammonite or Moabite May Enter the Assembly of the Lord
- Recall the Covenantal Statement of Nehemiah 10:28
- The People of Judah Had Not Fully Separated Themselves From Their Neighbors; Think About Tobiah
- Once Again, Nehemiah, Ezra, and the Levites Had to Explain God's Word to the People

# Nehemiah Returns to a Mess

- Nehemiah Returned to Artaxerxes' Court in 433 BC
- He Later Asked for Permission to Return to Judah Where He Found Numerous Problems
- #1: Eliashib the High Priest Had Allowed Tobiah to Reside in One of the Temple Storerooms
  - The Presence of a Foreigner Profaned the Room and Its Contents; Nehemiah Ordered Everything Thrown out and the Room Purified for Temple and Levite Items
  - Why Didn't Nehemiah Remove Eliashib as High Priest?

# Nehemiah Returns to a Mess

- #2: The Levites, Musicians, and Gatekeepers Were Not Getting Their 90% Portion of the Tithes
  - The Levites and Musicians Had Returned to Their Ancestral Fields
  - Their Temple Duties Had Been Neglected
  - Nehemiah Recalled the Levites and Musicians to Their Duties
  - Nehemiah Appointed More Trustworthy Officials to Supervise the Storerooms and to Distribute the Tithes and First Fruits

# Nehemiah Returns to a Mess

- #3: A Violation of the 4<sup>th</sup> Commandment to Keep the Sabbath Day Holy (Exodus 20:8-10)
  - People Making Wine; Gathering Grain; Loading Donkeys with Grain, Wine, Grapes, Figs, and Other Items; Bringing Their Loads to Jerusalem on the Sabbath; Selling Food on the Sabbath; Trading with People of Tyre on the Sabbath
  - Nehemiah Shut the Gates of Jerusalem From Dusk on the Sabbath Until the Sabbath Was Over

# Nehemiah Returns to a Mess

- #4: Intermarriage With Women From Ashdod, Ammon, and Moab
  - Children of These Marriages Could No Longer Speak Aramaic or Hebrew
  - Nehemiah Rebuked the Men, Pronounced a Religious Curse on Them, and Pulled Out Their Hair
  - He Made the Men Take an Oath Before God Not to Take Foreign Wives; Violate the Oath = the Religious Curse
  - The Worst Case: the Grandson of Eliashib the High Priest Had Married a Daughter of Sanballat the Horonite, a Moabite

# Nehemiah Returns to a Mess

- #4: Intermarriage With Women From Ashdod, Ammon, and Moab
  - Leviticus 21:14 Prohibited a High Priest From Marrying a Foreigner
  - Since Anyone in Eliashib's Family Could Become the High Priest, This Intermarriage Was a Significant Problem and a Direct Challenge to Nehemiah's Authority
  - Nehemiah Expelled the Grandson From the Community
  - Why Didn't Nehemiah Remove Eliashib as High Priest?
  - Instead, He Asks God to Judge Eliashib (Nehemiah 13:29)
  - Nehemiah Purifies the Priests and Levites



# Nehemiah's Last Words

- “Remember Me With Favor, My God:
- He Was a Long-Suffering Spiritual Leader
- He Had Tried His Best to Restore the People of Judah to a Covenantal Relationship With God