



Day 21: Nehemiah 8

- Underline Key Words, Phrases, and People
- Highlight the word Law
- Box the phrase 'all the people' and 'the people'
- [Bracket] everything 'all the people' do
- {Curly Bracket} the word 'rejoicing'
- Write out any questions that come to mind

Ezra Reads the Law

8 And all the people gathered as one man into the square before the Water Gate^a. And they told Ezra the scribe to bring the Book^b of the Law of Moses that the LORD had commanded Israel. ²So Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly, both men and women and all who could understand what they heard, on the first day of the seventh month^c. ³And he read from it facing the square before the Water Gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of the men and the women and those who could understand. And the ears of all the people were attentive to the Book of the Law. ⁴And Ezra the scribe stood on a wooden platform that they had made for the purpose. And beside him stood Mattithiah, Shema, Anaiah, Uriah, Hilkiah, and Maaseiah on his right hand, and Pedaiah, Mishael, Malchijah, Hashum, Hashbaddanah, Zechariah, and Meshullam(A) on his left hand. ⁵And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was above all the people, and as he opened it all the people stood. ⁶And Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God, and all the people answered, "Amen, Amen," lifting up their hands. And they bowed their heads and worshiped the LORD with their faces to the ground. ⁷Also Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodiah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, the Levites, helped the people to understand the Law, while the people remained in their places. ⁸They read from the book, from the Law of God, clearly, and they gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading.

This Day Is Holy

⁹And Nehemiah, who was the governor, and Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, "This day is holy to the LORD your God; do not mourn or weep." (B)For all the people wept as they heard the words

of the Law. ¹⁰Then he said to them, "Go your way. Eat the fat and drink sweet wine and send portions to anyone who has nothing ready, for this day is holy to our Lord. And do not be grieved, for the joy of the LORD is your strength." ¹¹So the Levites calmed all the people, saying, "Be quiet, for this day is holy; do not be grieved." ¹²And all the people went their way to eat and drink and to send portions and to make great rejoicing, because they had understood the words that were declared to them. (C)

Feast of Booths Celebrated

¹³On the second day the heads of fathers' houses of all the people, with the priests and the Levites, came together to Ezra the scribe in order to study the words of the Law. ¹⁴And they found it written in the Law that the LORD had commanded by Moses that the people of Israel should dwell in booths during the feast of the seventh month^d, ¹⁵and that they should proclaim it and publish it in all their towns and in Jerusalem, "Go out to the hills and bring branches of olive, wild olive, myrtle, palm, and other leafy trees to make booths, as it is written." ¹⁶So the people went out and brought them and made booths for themselves, each on his roof, and in their courts and in the courts of the house of God, and in the square at the Water Gate and in the square at the Gate of Ephraim. ¹⁷And all the assembly of those who had returned from the captivity made booths and lived in the booths, for from the days of Jeshua the son of Nun to that day the people of Israel had not done so^e. And there was very great rejoicing. ¹⁸And day by day, from the first day to the last day, he read from the Book of the Law of God. They kept the feast seven days, and on the eighth day there was a solemn assembly, according to the rule.

Study

- A.** This name should ring a bell. Where have we read about this man before?
- Hint: Look back in Nehemiah...but not too far back.

- B.** Read Leviticus 23:23-25. What Jewish Holiday falls on the ‘first day of the seventh month’? (See chapter title in ESV Bible)
- C.** Listen to the lyrics of Chris Tomlin’s ‘*Holy Is the Lord*’. What connection does this song have to this passage?

The opening scene is of a great gathering of the people in a square located in the shadow of the Temple. It is note-worthy that ALL people come, all those who could listen, be taught, and learn. Men, women, young people; everyone is present and ready to be served by one of their priests. Ezra, clearing his throat, gets up on the wooden pulpit made for this very purpose. I can’t help think about the carpenter who made this platform. Did they know that their skills would be used in helping create what would be a crucial moment in the story of Israel; that their work would be immortalized in the pages of Scripture for holding the pages of Scriptures? We can only guess.

Starting early in the morning, Ezra reads the people sections of the Law (Torah). While our English translations render the Hebrew word as ‘Law’, the meaning of *Torah* is actually closer to ‘instruction’ or ‘teaching’. This means that Ezra is reading the ‘teachings’ or ‘instructions’ of God. God’s people are being instructed in how to live in a society focused on Him. They are being taught what it looks like to walk rightly before a Holy God. They take actions that reveal a sense of reverence toward God and seriousness as they hear His Word.

The priests and Levites work together to make sure the people understand what they are hearing as Ezra reads. They make sure that the people not only hear what is being read, but that they get what it is saying.

What does this reading produce? Repentance. The people weep for they understand, likely for the first time, the depth of which they have not lived as they should.

This gathering did not just happen on a day like any other. No it occurred on the Feast of Trumpets. This was joyous and celebratory day. Nehemiah, Ezra, and the Levites encourage the people to live, give, and celebrate. Live, give, and celebrate they do and this passage gives the reason: because

Notes

- a)** *Water Gate* See map on back of Wk3 Message Notes.
- b)** *the book* Whether this book is referring to the Pentateuch (the first 5 books of the bible) or just Deuteronomy (the fifth book of the bible and last book of the Pentateuch) is unclear.
- c)** *the first day of the seventh month* Feast of Trumpets (Hebrew – Rosh Hashanah) occurs on the first day of Tishri. This is the seventh month on the Hebrew calendar and usually occurs in late September to mid-October. It is the beginning of a 10 day period of evaluation and spiritual renewal ending with the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur). This period of time is often referred to as the Days of Awe, or the High Holy Days.
- d)** This is referring to the Feast of Booths we first saw in Ezra 3:4. Review your notes on Study point A) of Day 4 or read Leviticus 23:33-43. What is the point of this feast, according to God?
- e)** This was actually observed in Ezra 3 and a couple other times since Joshua but not in the fully formed way that God desired and is seen in this passage.

Since the beginning of the book of Nehemiah, the focus has been on the walls of Jerusalem and the efforts taken to rebuild them despite opposition. Chapter 8 marks a shift in focus. Part of that shift is Ezra once again stepping to the fore and leading the people in rebuilding of a different kind. Ezra wants to help rebuild the people spiritually and once again they ‘had a mind to work’.

they had understood the words that were declared to them (v. 12).

The next day some of the leaders come back for more and they realize that they are in the midst of a great feast: The Feast of Booths (Tabernacles). They began making preparations, building themselves small dwelling, eating together, and hearing the Law read to them. The good times were so good that the Hebrew stretches as far as it can to communicate that there was 'VERY GREAT REJOICING'! After this week long feast they have a day of solemn or thoughtful assembly as it was instructed.

Against the backdrop of the rebuilding of the temple and the wall, these holidays took on an even greater meaning; Jerusalem was for the first time since its destruction, restored once again as the center of Jewish life. The Temple Mount again served as the focus of Jewish prayer and service. The people of God were worshiping in the city of God, in the land He had given them. Restoration was happening and they could feel it.

In one sentence or phrase, briefly sum up the Main Point(s) of what you read today:

Questions

What principles might we take away or apply to our own lives as we read about how the Israelites conducted themselves as they gathered for the reading of God's Word? (Be careful not to over or under think it here).

Have you ever read anything in Scripture that challenged either a way of thinking or behavior in your life? Have you ever been moved to repentance (turning from it) and following through (even if not perfectly)? If so, did you experience a measure of joy or blessing in the wake of that experience? How would our lives change if we were more open to being corrected and guided by God's Word?

Day 22: Nehemiah 9

- Underline Key Words, Phrases, and People
- Highlight** actions of God
- Box** actions of Israelites
- [Bracket] words describing God's character
- {Curly Bracket} words 'Therefore' & 'Because'
- Write out any questions that come to mind

The People of Israel Confess Their Sin

9 Now on the twenty-fourth day of this month the people of Israel were assembled with fasting and in sackcloth, and with earth on their heads.^a ²And the Israelites separated themselves from all foreigners and stood and confessed their sins and the iniquities of their fathers. ³And they stood up in their place and read from the Book of the Law of the LORD^b their God for a quarter of the day; for another quarter of it they made confession and worshiped the LORD their God. ⁴On the stairs of the Levites stood Jeshua, Bani, Kadmiel, Shebaniah, Bunni, Sherebiah, Bani, and Chenani; and they cried with a loud voice to the LORD their God. ⁵Then the Levites, Jeshua, Kadmiel, Bani, Hashabneiah, Sherebiah, Hodiah, Shebaniah, and Pethahiah, said,

The section below is a long prayer said on this occasion. The biblical books that hold the events recounted are named in the margins. While Leviticus and Deuteronomy are not listed, language borrowing from the two books is woven throughout the prayer. (A)

“Stand up and bless the LORD your God from everlasting to everlasting. Blessed be your glorious name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise.

⁶ “You are the LORD, you alone. You have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them; and you preserve all of them; and the host of heaven worships you. ⁷You are the LORD, the God who chose Abram and brought him out of Ur of the Chaldeans and gave him the name Abraham.(B) ⁸You found his heart faithful before you, and made with him the covenant to give to his offspring the land of the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Amorite, the Perizzite, the Jebusite, and the Girgashite. And you have kept your promise, for you are righteous.

⁹“And you saw the affliction of our fathers in Egypt and heard their cry at the Red Sea, ¹⁰and performed signs and wonders against Pharaoh and all his servants and all the people of his land, for you knew that they acted arrogantly against our fathers. And you made a name for yourself, as it is to this day. ¹¹And you divided the sea before them, so that they went through the midst of the sea on dry land, and you cast their pursuers into the depths, as a stone into mighty waters. ¹²By a pillar of cloud you led them in the day, and by a pillar of fire in the night to light for them the way in which they should go. ¹³You came down on Mount Sinai and spoke with them from heaven and gave them right rules and true laws, good statutes and commandments, ¹⁴and you made known to them your holy Sabbath and commanded them commandments and statutes and a law by Moses your servant. ¹⁵You gave them bread from heaven for their hunger and brought water for them out of the rock for their thirst, and you told them to go in to possess the land that you had sworn to give them.

¹⁶“But they and our fathers acted presumptuously and stiffened their neck and did not obey your commandments. ¹⁷They refused to obey and were not mindful of the wonders that you performed among them, but they stiffened their neck and appointed a leader to return to their slavery in Egypt.(C) But you are a God ready to forgive, gracious and merciful,

Genesis

Exodus/Numbers

slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and did not forsake them. ¹⁸Even when they had made for themselves a golden calf and said, ‘This is your God who brought you up out of Egypt,’ and had committed great blasphemies, ¹⁹you in your great mercies did not forsake them in the wilderness. The pillar of cloud to lead them in the way did not depart from them by day, nor the pillar of fire by night to light for them the way by which they should go. ²⁰You gave your good Spirit to instruct them and did not withhold your manna from their mouth and gave them water for their thirst. ²¹Forty years you sustained them in the wilderness, and they lacked nothing. Their clothes did not wear out and their feet did not swell.

²²“And you gave them kingdoms and peoples and allotted to them every corner. So they took possession of the land of Sihon king of Heshbon and the land of Og king of Bashan. ²³You multiplied their children as the stars of heaven^c, and you brought them into the land that you had told their fathers to enter and possess. ²⁴So the descendants went in and possessed the land, and you subdued before them the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, and gave them into their hand, with their kings and the peoples of the land, that they might do with them as they would. ²⁵And they captured fortified cities and a rich land, and took possession of houses full of all good things, cisterns already hewn, vineyards, olive orchards and fruit trees in abundance. So they ate and were filled and became fat and delighted themselves in your great goodness.^d

²⁶“Nevertheless, they were disobedient and rebelled against you and cast your law behind their back and killed your prophets, who had warned them in order to turn them back to you, and they committed great blasphemies. ²⁷Therefore you gave them into the hand of their enemies, who made them suffer. And in the time of their suffering they cried out to you and you heard them from heaven, and according to your great mercies you gave them saviors who saved them from the hand of their enemies. ²⁸But after they had rest they did

Exodus/Numbers

Joshua

Judges/Ruth

evil again before you, and you abandoned them to the hand of their enemies, so that they had dominion over them. Yet when they turned and cried to you, you heard from heaven, and many times you delivered them according to your mercies. ²⁹And you warned them in order to turn them back to your law. Yet they acted presumptuously and did not obey your commandments, but sinned against your rules, which if a person does them, he shall live by them, and they turned a stubborn shoulder and stiffened their neck and would not obey. ³⁰Many years you bore with them and warned them by your Spirit through your prophets. Yet they would not give ear. Therefore you gave them into the hand of the peoples of the lands. ³¹Nevertheless, in your great mercies you did not make an end of them or forsake them, for you are gracious and merciful God.

³²“Now, therefore, our God, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God, who keeps covenant and steadfast love, let not all the hardship seem little to you that has come upon us, upon our kings, our princes, our priests, our prophets, our fathers, and all your people, since the time of the kings of Assyria until this day. ³³Yet you have been righteous in all that has come upon us, for you have dealt faithfully and we have acted wickedly. ³⁴Our kings, our princes, our priests, and our fathers have not kept your law or paid attention to your commandments and your warnings that you gave them. ³⁵Even in their own kingdom, and amid your great goodness that you gave them, and in the large and rich land that you set before them, they did not serve you or turn from their wicked works. ³⁶Behold, we are slaves this day; in the land that you gave to our fathers to enjoy its fruit and its good gifts, behold, we are slaves. ³⁷And its rich yield goes to the kings whom you have set over us because of our sins. They rule over our bodies and over our livestock as they please, and we are in great distress.

³⁸“Because of all this we make a firm covenant^f in writing; on the sealed document are the names of our princes, our Levites, and our priests.

Judges/Ruth

Samuel/Kings

Ezra/Nehemiah

Study

- A.** Turn to the Table of Contents in the front of your bible. Look at the books referenced in this prayer (including Leviticus and Deuteronomy) and where they fall in the Old Testament.
- What do you notice?
 - What might this tell us about what was read over the festival week by Ezra and the priests?
- B.** Read Genesis 17:1-8. What do you notice about this passage?
- C.** Read Numbers 14:1-10. How do the people of Israel come off looking in this passage?
- D.** Why do you think the fact that God lead the people of Israel as a pillar of fire and cloud and provided food for them in the wilderness is mentioned twice?

Notes

- a) This is two days after the close of the Festival of Booths.
- b) LORD signals to us that the Hebrew word used here is *Yahweh* the personal name of God He gave to His covenant people.
- c) This is an explicit fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham in Gen 22:17.
- d) This language is pulled straight from Deuteronomy 8, the heart of the message of that book. God warned the people that their abundance in the land would tempt them

- to forget their God and go their own way.
- e) The people were very much under the rule of the Persian Empire. The Israelites knew this was not what God had desired for them.
 - f) *Covenant* is an agreement between a party of greater strength with a lesser for mutual benefit.

Nehemiah chapter 9 is a powerful and important passage of Scripture. I believe if we can understand what is said in this passage we can understand much about the character of God, the waywardness of man, the persistence of stubbornness, and the vast reaches of the grace of God. We also see a concise history of the covenant people of God which helps us to draw some of the timelines of the bible together within the greater story God is unfolding in His dealings with His people.

The people gather in a spirit of repentance. They read the Law for a quarter of a day (3 hours) and then have an equally long session of confession and worship. This may seem like a strange combination but the prayer goes to show us that based on the history of God's people and His interactions with them, confession and worship go together nicely if we rightly understand the heart of God and His grace.

Throughout the history we see a people bent on not bending. They are a 'stiff-necked people'. They are rebels, blasphemers, revelers, and idolaters but they are also the object of affection for a covenant-keeping and faithful God. Despite their lack of deservedness, their God keeps His promises to them.

It is natural to the truly spiritually alive to, in one moment, regrettably admit (confess) the bankruptcy of human merit before God and celebrate the riches of grace, freely given by God. It is spiritual maturity to see ourselves realistically; being both realistic about our lowly state when seen alone and our exalted state when seen in relation to our place with God.

It is this dual reality that is illuminated by the history of God's people held within this passage. This is not done to make God's people feel bad about themselves but to help them see themselves for what they are and, more importantly, see God for who He is.

The chapter ends with a resolve to start fresh; to clean the slate, and give this walk with God another go.

In one sentence or phrase, briefly sum up the Main Point(s) of what you read today:

Questions

When is the last time you took the time to reflect on the character of God? Have you ever prayed a prayer like this one, recounting God's character, confessing shortcomings, and celebrating the grace of God.

How important do you think the fact that the people *understood* the Word of God that was read to them that previous week was for their passion in this prayer? What can we glean from that?

- Underline Key Words, Phrases, and People
- **Highlight** the phrase 'we will (not)'
- **Box** the word 'obligate'
- **[Bracket]** All the sub-groups of the people that are mentioned as being present.
- **{Curly Bracket}** the statement of the covenant renewal that the writer tries to make stand out the most
- Write out any questions that come to mind

The People Who Sealed the Covenant

10 "On the seals are the names of Nehemiah the governor, the son of Hacaliah, Zedekiah, ² Seraiah, Azariah, Jeremiah, ³ Pashhur, Amariah, Malchijah, ⁴ Hattush, Shebaniah, Malluch, ⁵ Harim, Meremoth, Obadiah, ⁶ Daniel, Ginnethon, Baruch, ⁷ Meshullam, Abijah, Mijamin,(A) ⁸ Maaziah, Bilgai, Shemaiah; these are the priests. ⁹ And the Levites: Jeshua the son of Azaniah, Binnui of the sons of Henadad, Kadmiel; ¹⁰ and their brothers, Shebaniah, Hodiah, Kelita, Pelaiah, Hanan, ¹¹ Mica, Rehob, Hashabiah, ¹² Zaccur, Sherebiah, Shebaniah, ¹³ Hodiah, Bani, Beninu. ¹⁴ The chiefs of the people: Parosh, Pahath-moab, Elam, Zattu, Bani, ¹⁵ Bunni, Azgad, Bebai, ¹⁶ Adonijah, Bigvai, Adin, ¹⁷ Ater, Hezekiah, Azzur, ¹⁸ Hodiah, Hashum, Bezai, ¹⁹ Hariph, Anathoth, Nebai, ²⁰ Magpiash, Meshullam, Hezir, ²¹ Meshezabel, Zadok, Jaddua, ²² Pelatiah, Hanan, Anaiah, ²³ Hoshea, Hananiah, Hasshub, ²⁴ Hallohesh, Pilha, Shobek, ²⁵ Rehum, Hashabnah, Maaseiah, ²⁶ Ahiah, Hanan, Anan, ²⁷ Malluch, Harim, Baanah.

The Obligations of the Covenant

²⁸ "The rest of the people, the priests, the Levites, the gatekeepers, the singers, the temple servants, and all who have separated themselves from the peoples of the lands to the Law of God, their wives, their sons, their daughters, all who have knowledge and understanding, ²⁹ join with their brothers, their nobles, and enter into a curse and an oath^a to walk in God's Law that was given by Moses the servant of God, and to observe and do all the commandments of the LORD our Lord and his rules and his statutes.^b ³⁰ We will not give our daughters to the peoples of the land or take their daughters

for our sons. ³¹ And if the peoples of the land bring in goods or any grain on the Sabbath day to sell, we will not buy from them on the Sabbath or on a holy day. And we will forego the crops of the seventh year and the exaction of every debt.

³² "We also take on ourselves the obligation to give yearly a third part of a shekel for the service of the house of our God: ³³ for the showbread, the regular grain offering, the regular burnt offering, the Sabbaths, the new moons, the appointed feasts, the holy things, and the sin offerings to make atonement for Israel, and for all the work of the house of our God. ³⁴ We, the priests, the Levites, and the people, have likewise cast lots for the wood offering, to bring it into the house of our God, according to our fathers' houses, at times appointed, year by year, to burn on the altar of the LORD our God, as it is written in the Law. ³⁵ We obligate ourselves to bring the firstfruits of our ground and the firstfruits of all fruit of every tree, year by year, to the house of the LORD; ³⁶ also to bring to the house of our God, to the priests who minister in the house of our God, the firstborn of our sons and of our cattle, as it is written in the Law, and the firstborn of our herds and of our flocks; ³⁷ and to bring the first of our dough, and our contributions, the fruit of every tree, the wine and the oil, to the priests, to the chambers of the house of our God; and to bring to the Levites the tithes from our ground, for it is the Levites who collect the tithes in all our towns where we labor. ³⁸ And the priest, the son of Aaron, shall be with the Levites when the Levites receive the tithes. And the Levites shall bring up the tithes of the tithes to the house of our God, to the chambers of the storehouse. ³⁹ For the people of Israel and the sons of Levi shall bring the contribution of grain, wine, and oil to the chambers, where the vessels of the sanctuary are, as well as the priests who minister, and the gatekeepers and the singers. We will not neglect the house of our God."

Study

- A. Whose name in this verse is getting familiar?
- B. Write in list form what the Israelites 'obligate' themselves to do in this renewed covenant with God. None of these 'obligations' are new, but are found in Leviticus and Deuteronomy and were a part of the covenant relationship already:
1. Observe and do all the commandments of the LORD our Lord and His rules and His statutes.
 2. We will not
 3. We will not
 4. We will
 5. We take on ourselves to
 6. We obligate ourselves
 - i. to bring (v.35)
 - ii. to bring (v.36)
 - iii. to bring (v.37)
 7. We will not

Notes

- a) Remember in Deuteronomy 28 we read about how the covenant agreement with Yahweh included both blessing and curse that was connected to the obedience of the people to their end of the agreement. If they lived within the covenant God would bless them. If they did not, God would bring judgment upon them.
- b) *commandments, statutes, and laws* this phrase is used often in the Old Testament to communicate the idea of 'the whole law' or 'everything God instructs us to do'.

The renewal of the covenant with God in chapter 10 of Nehemiah is really the culminating moment of the string of events that began in chapter 8 with Ezra's reading of the law to the people so that they could understand the instruction and teaching of the Lord their God. God has been about restoring the people of God, in the city of God, in right

worship of God. The Temple is standing and is serving as the center of Jewish worship once again. The city of Jerusalem is walled and gated, legitimate in the eyes of those who pass by.

The people of God are back in the land and celebrating the festivals God gave them. Not only that but, as we saw at the end of chapter 8, they are doing so with a heart that is overflowing in genuine praise and joy in the Lord.

The people of God, in this passage are reaffirming their vows. Just as a married couple might renew their vows after many years of the ups and downs of life in close relationship, God's people (all of them) renew their devotion and solidarity with God in covenant relationship. They are not starting a new relationship but reaffirming an enduring one with a ceremonial new beginning.

In one sentence or phrase, briefly sum up the Main Point(s) of what you read today:

Questions

If you are follower of Jesus Christ (Spirit-indwelled member of the New Covenant), what would it look like to reaffirm your relationship with God every now and then? How might this help you? Also, how can we help ourselves think about this as a renewal of an enduring relationship, not the start of a new one?

Why do you think the leaders and priests went out of their way to put their stamp on the covenant renewal before the people?



Day 24: Nehemiah 11-12:26

- Underline Key Words, Phrases, and People
- Highlight** the phrase 'in Jerusalem lived' or 'lived in Jerusalem'
- [Bracket] various people groups
- {Curly Bracket} words 'Therefore' & 'Because'
- Write out any questions that come to mind

The Leaders in Jerusalem

11 Now the leaders of the people lived in Jerusalem. And the rest of the people cast lots^a to bring one out of ten to live in Jerusalem the holy city, while nine out of ten remained in the other towns. ²And the people blessed all the men who willingly offered to live in Jerusalem.

³These are the chiefs of the province who lived in Jerusalem; but in the towns of Judah everyone lived on his property in their towns: Israel, the priests, the Levites, the temple servants, and the descendants of Solomon's servants. ⁴And in Jerusalem lived certain of the sons of Judah and of the sons of Benjamin. Of the sons of Judah: Athaiah the son of Uzziah, son of Zechariah, son of

Amariah, son of Shephatiah, son of Mahalalel, of the sons of Perez; ⁵and Maaseiah the son of Baruch, son of Col-hozeh, son of Hazaiah, son of Adaiah, son of Joiarib, son of Zechariah, son of the Shilonite. ⁶All the sons of Perez who lived in Jerusalem were 468 valiant men.

⁷And these are the sons of Benjamin: Sallu the son of Meshullam, son of Joed, son of Pedaiah, son of Kolaiah, son of Maaseiah, son of Ithiel, son of Jeshaiiah, ⁸and his brothers, men of valor, 928. ⁹Joel the son of Zichri was their overseer; and Judah the son of Hassenuah was second over the city.

¹⁰Of the priests: Jedaiah the son of Joiarib, Jachin, ¹¹Seraiah the son of Hilkiah, son of Meshullam, son of Zadok, son of Meraioth, son of Ahitub, ruler of the house of God, ¹²and their brothers who did the work of the house, 822; and Adaiah the son of Jeroham, son of Pelaliah, son of Amzi, son of Zechariah, son of Pashhur, son of Malchijah, ¹³and his brothers, heads of fathers' houses, 242; and Amashsai, the son of Azarel, son of Ahzai, son of Meshillemoth, son of Immer, ¹⁴and their brothers, mighty men of valor, 128; their overseer was Zabdiel the son of Haggadolim.

¹⁵And of the Levites: Shemaiah the son of Hasshub, son of Azrikam, son of Hashabiah, son of Bunni; ¹⁶and Shabbethai and Jozabad, of the chiefs of the Levites, who were over the outside work of the house of God; ¹⁷and Mattaniah the son of Mica, son of Zabdi, son of Asaph, who was the leader of the praise, who gave thanks, and Bakbukiah, the second among his brothers; and Abda the son of Shammua, son of Galal, son of Jeduthun. ¹⁸All the Levites in the holy city were 284.

¹⁹The gatekeepers, Akkub, Talmon and their brothers, who kept watch at the gates, were 172. ²⁰And the rest of Israel, and of the priests and the Levites, were in all the towns of Judah, every one in his inheritance. ²¹But the temple servants lived on Ophel; and Ziha and Gishpa were over the temple servants.

²²The overseer of the Levites in Jerusalem was Uzzi the son of Bani, son of Hashabiah, son of Mattaniah, son of Mica, of the sons of Asaph, the singers, over the work of the house of God. ²³For there was a command from the king concerning them, and a fixed provision for the singers, as every day required. ²⁴And Pethahiah the son of Meshezabel, of the sons of Zerah the son of Judah, was at the king's side in all matters concerning the people.

Villages Outside Jerusalem

²⁵ And as for the villages, with their fields, some of the people of Judah lived in Kiriath-arba and its villages, and in Dibon and its villages, and in Jekabzeel and its villages, ²⁶ and in Jeshua and in Moladah and Beth-pelet, ²⁷ in Hazar-shual, in Beersheba and its villages, ²⁸ in Ziklag, in Meconah and its villages, ²⁹ in En-rimmon, in Zorah, in Jarmuth, ³⁰ Zanoah, Adullam, and their villages, Lachish and its fields, and Azekah and its villages. So they encamped from Beersheba to the Valley of Hinnom. ³¹ The people of Benjamin also lived from Geba onward, at Michmash, Aija, Bethel and its villages, ³² Anathoth, Nob, Ananiah, ³³ Hazor, Ramah, Gittaim, ³⁴ Hadid, Zeboim, Neballat, ³⁵ Lod, and Ono, the valley of craftsmen. ³⁶ And certain divisions of the Levites in Judah were assigned to Benjamin.^b

Priests and Levites

12 These are the priests and the Levites who came up with Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua: Seraiah, Jeremiah, Ezra, ² Amariah, Malluch, Hattush, ³ Shecaniah, Rehum, Meremoth, ⁴ Iddo, Ginnethoi, Abijah, ⁵ Mijamin, Maadiah, Bilgah, ⁶ Shemaiah, Joiarib, Jedaiah, ⁷ Sallu, Amok, Hilkiyah, Jedaiah. These were the chiefs of the priests and of their brothers in the days of Jeshua.

⁸ And the Levites: Jeshua, Binnui, Kadmiel, Sherebiah, Judah, and Mattaniah, who with his brothers was in charge of the songs of thanksgiving. ⁹ And Bakbukiah and Unni and their brothers stood opposite them in the service. ¹⁰ And Jeshua was the father of Joiakim, Joiakim the father of Eliashib, Eliashib the father of Joiada, ¹¹ Joiada the father of Jonathan, and Jonathan the father of Jaddua.

¹² And in the days of Joiakim were priests, heads of fathers' houses: of Seraiah, Meraiah; of Jeremiah, Hananiah; ¹³ of Ezra, Meshullam; of Amariah, Jehohanan; ¹⁴ of Malluchi, Jonathan; of Shebaniah, Joseph; ¹⁵ of Harim, Adna; of Meraioth, Helkai; ¹⁶ of Iddo, Zechariah; of Ginnethon, Meshullam; ¹⁷ of Abijah, Zichri; of Miniamin, of Moadiah, Piltai; ¹⁸ of Bilgah, Shammua; of Shemaiah, Jehonathan; ¹⁹ of Joiarib, Mattenai; of Jedaiah, Uzzi; ²⁰ of Sallai, Kallai; of Amok, Eber; ²¹ of Hilkiyah, Hashabiah; of Jedaiah, Nethanel.

²² In the days of Eliashib, Joiada, Johanan, and Jaddua, the Levites were recorded as heads of fathers' houses; so too were the priests in the reign of Darius the Persian. ²³ As for the sons of Levi,

their heads of fathers' houses were written in the Book of the Chronicles until the days of Johanan the son of Eliashib. ²⁴ And the chiefs of the Levites: Hashabiah, Sherebiah, and Jeshua the son of Kadmiel, with their brothers who stood opposite them, to praise and to give thanks, according to the commandment of David the man of God, watch by watch. ²⁵ Mattaniah, Bakbukiah, Obadiah, Meshullam, Talmon, and Akkub were gatekeepers standing guard at the storehouses of the gates. ²⁶ These were in the days of Joiakim the son of Jeshua son of Jozadak, and in the days of Nehemiah the governor and of Ezra, the priest and scribe.

Study

- A.** Let's review the main groups listed in this section:
- Israel = the people of God, Hebrews, the remnant
 - Sons of Judah and Benjamin = These two tribes (of the original twelve) represent the southern kingdom (1 King 12:21-23) who were exiled to Babylonia but returning to rebuild
 - Levites = descendants of Levi and one of the original tribes; assigned various temple duties
 - Priests = a subset of the Levites who conducted sacrifices and other rituals
 - Temple servants = a certain class of Levites dedicated to work in the temple (Ezra 2:40-43)
 - Descendants of Solomon's servants = most likely foreigners who Solomon hired to build the original temple and returned voluntarily from Babylonia (1 Kings 9:20-21)

Notes

- a)** *sacred lots*" The primary reason for casting lots was to render an impartial, unbiased decision on important matters. Once they were cast, no one could argue that the decision was the result of human intervention like nepotism, politics, favoritism, and so on. This practice would be the same as throwing dice or flipping a

coin we commonly use today. "The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the Lord" Proverbs 16:33

- b) In section 11:25-36 care is taken to list the villages that surround Jerusalem that are in the process of repopulation. To move closer towards restoration, the nearby towns and their resources were integral in building a thriving nation. These villages were established early in the nation of Israel's history described in Joshua 15:20-63 and Ezra 2:26-33.

After Nehemiah arrived in Jerusalem he led the construction of Jerusalem's walls but even more important than the stone wall was the rebuilding of the people of God. Sins were confessed and vows were renewed all in an effort to reestablish the covenant they had been previously broken. Now we turn to the practicalities of the process: the repopulation of the nation. With the great walls rebuilt, the small population living in what once was a great city became obvious and the leaders devised a plan. Some volunteered and others were selected using

sacred lots, approximately ten percent of the suburban population were relocated within Jerusalem in hopes of building a stronger city. This move required sacrifice; however, leaders knew it was vital to increase the population and establish roles and responsibilities within the city.

The precise genealogy records reflect their identity as the people of Yahweh, the descendants of their patriarch Abraham. While each major group contributed in some way to daily life, the record takes special note to mention many leaders of the community. Also described in detail are the groups who participated in the care and function of temple worship. The team arranged to care for the temple were of the utmost importance as worship set the tone for the people as a whole. Scripture includes a history of the priests and Levites who returned with Zerubbabel (remember he led the rebuilding of the temple foundation) and Jeshua the high priest when the first wave of exiles returned to Jerusalem from Babylon. Again why would the lineage matter so greatly? Part of renewing the covenant with God

meant following His instructions for worship to the letter. He originally set forth these guidelines for worship which specifically instructed that worship activities be conducted by Levites.

In one sentence or phrase, briefly sum up the Main Point(s) of what you read today:

Questions

Imagine yourself living in the suburbs of Jerusalem at this time. How would you respond to the call to move to the city? Jot down some ideas of how you might react. What would be the pros and cons to relocating?



Day 25: Nehemiah 12:27-47

- Underline Key Words, Phrases, and People
- Highlight words 'thanks', 'joy', 'rejoicing'
- Box when King David is mentioned
- [Bracket] emotions described in this passage
- {Curly Bracket} Gate/Tower names on wall
- Write out any questions that come to mind

Dedication of the Wall

²⁷ And at the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem they sought the Levites in all their places, to bring them to Jerusalem to celebrate the dedication with gladness, with thanksgivings and with singing, with cymbals, harps, and lyres. ²⁸ And the sons of the singers gathered together from the district surrounding Jerusalem and from the villages of the Netophathites; ²⁹ also from Beth-gilgal and from the region of Geba and Azmaveth, for the singers had built for themselves villages around Jerusalem. ³⁰ And the priests and the Levites purified themselves, and they purified the people and the gates and the wall.

³¹ Then I brought the leaders of Judah up onto the wall and appointed two great choirs that gave thanks. One went to the south on the wall to the Dung Gate. ³² And after them went Hoshaiiah and half of the leaders of Judah, ³³ and Azariah, Ezra, Meshullam,^a ³⁴ Judah, Benjamin, Shemaiah, and Jeremiah, ³⁵ and certain of the priests' sons with trumpets: Zechariah the son of Jonathan, son of Shemaiah, son of Mattaniah, son of Micaiah, son of Zaccur, son of Asaph; ³⁶ and his relatives, Shemaiah, Azarel, Milalai, Gilalai, Maai, Nethanel, Judah, and Hanani, with the musical instruments of David the man of God. And Ezra the scribe went before them. ³⁷ At the Fountain Gate they went up straight before them by the stairs of the city of David, at the ascent of the wall, above the house of David, to the Water Gate on the east.

³⁸ The other choir of those who gave thanks went to the north, and I followed them with half of the people, on the wall, above the Tower of the Ovens, to the Broad Wall, ³⁹ and above the Gate of Ephraim, and by the Gate of Yeshanah, and by the Fish Gate and the Tower of Hananel and the Tower of the Hundred, to the Sheep Gate; and they came to a halt at the Gate of the Guard.(B) ⁴⁰ So both choirs of those who gave thanks stood in the house of God, and I and half of the officials with me; ⁴¹ and the priests Eliakim, Maaseiah, Miniamin, Micaiah, Elioenai, Zechariah, and Hananiah, with trumpets; ⁴² and Maaseiah, Shemaiah, Eleazar, Uzzi, Jehohanan, Malchijah, Elam, and Ezer. And the singers sang with Jezrahiah as their leader. ⁴³ And they offered great sacrifices that day and rejoiced, for God had made them rejoice with great joy; the women and children also rejoiced. And the joy of Jerusalem was heard far away.

Service at the Temple

⁴⁴ On that day men were appointed over the storerooms, the contributions, the firstfruits, and the tithes, to gather into them the portions required by the Law for the priests and for the Levites according to the fields of the towns, for Judah rejoiced over the priests and the Levites who ministered. ⁴⁵ And they performed the service of their God and the service of purification, as did the singers and the gatekeepers, according to the command of David and his son Solomon. ⁴⁶ For long ago in the days of David and Asaph there were directors of the singers, and there were songs of praise and thanksgiving to God. ⁴⁷ And all Israel in the days of Zerubbabel and in the days of Nehemiah gave the daily portions for the singers

and the gatekeepers; and they set apart that which was for the Levites; and the Levites set apart that which was for the sons of Aaron.

Study

- A. *“to celebrate the dedication with gladness, with thanksgivings and with singing, with cymbals, harps, and lyres” (12:27b)* Let's learn more about these ancient instruments:

Cymbals: There are two types. The first are examples of finger samples used extensively throughout the middle east at this time. Cymbal clappers were another variety of percussion used in worship. Visit www.musicofthebible.com to learn more.



Harp: The harp is a very ancient instrument. The oldest recovered illustration of a harp dates back to 3300 BC in the biblical town of

Megiddo, located in the Valley of Jezreel in ancient Israel. Standing almost three feet tall, the harp had of two sets of strings (five on each side of the instrument) that could be played in much the same manner as modern harps or possibly with a bow.

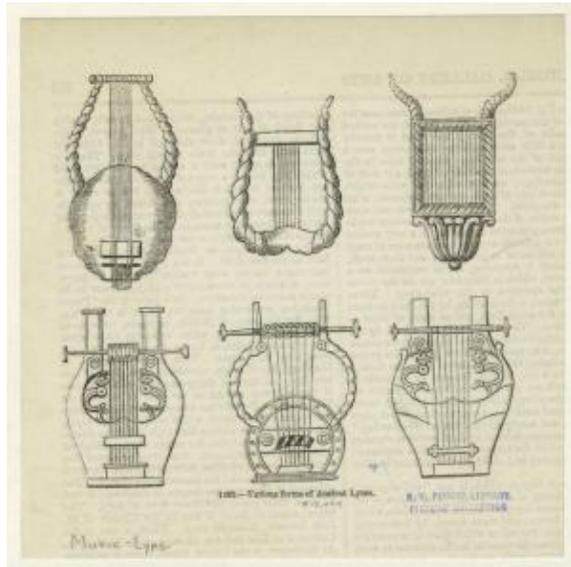


Example of a ten string harp.

www.musicofthebible.com

Lyres: (Photo from New York Public Library digital collection). The key difference between a lyre and a harp is the construction and placement of the

strings. The lyre is similar to a modern guitar where the strings pass over a bridge which causes vibrations in the body of the instrument. The harp's strings directly enter the hollow body of the instrument without the use of a bridge.



establishing an event, date or thing set apart to honor the Lord. A great spectacle was organized to celebrate the rebuilding of city's walls. The temple musicians, who lived nearby with a convenient commute, were organized into two groups parading on top of the walls praising the faithfulness and greatness of their God. The choirs meet in the temple along with the priests and leaders where temple sacrifices are conducted (v. 40). The joy was overwhelming! The nation of Israel was taking shape. What was once a pile of rubble, now was a great wall offering protection to the people and symbolized the restoration of the covenant between the Lord and His people.

You notice how many times King David was mentioned in this section? The author wanted the readers to understand that the practice of using choirs to worship was established by the great king. King David incorporated music as a key way to worship the Lord and he authored many songs recorded in the book of Psalms. Many viewed the

reign of King David as the height of Israel's faithfulness to the Lord so the leaders focused on reestablishing practice of that time.

Perhaps even before the city streets are cleared of decorations, Nehemiah addresses the necessary practices of storing and distributing temple contributions (v. 44). The law of Moses established that the people of Israel were to give ten percent of their resources to the temple. These resources were meant to sustain the labor force of the temple as their full-time work was serving the Lord and Israel. The section concludes noting that during this time all in Israel followed this commandment and the needs of the community were met.

In one sentence or phrase, briefly sum up the Main Point(s) of what you read today:

- B.** Look at the top map on the back of the Wk 4 Message Notes. Find the locations where Nehemiah reports the choirs stationed themselves. How does knowing the layout of Jerusalem give a better picture of what's happening in this scene?

Notes

- a)** The priest Meshullam was included within the list of the leaders of Judah during this important celebration. He is a reoccurring character in this book and had great prominence along other important priests such as Ezra himself. Interestingly the Scriptures make mention of his alliance with Tobiah the Ammonite as Meshullam's daughter married Tobiah's son (Neh 6:18)

With the covenant renewed and the groundwork of city living established, the time to celebrate has arrived! Dedication was an important aspect of Jewish culture and was the ceremony of

Questions

In ancient times, the celebration of dedication was vital to a life of faith. How does the Church put that principle into practice today? Have there been moments of 'dedication' in your spiritual life?

Musical worship is one way of many that we connect with the Lord. List below one or two of the most impactful worship songs in your Christian journey and why this song spoke to you personally.

The people were asked by God Himself to contribute their resources to the Temple. What do you think would have happened if the people had not contributed toward the ministry of the Levites?



Day 26: Nehemiah 13

- Underline Key Words, Phrases, and People
- Highlight** 'Remember' prayers of Nehemiah
- [Bracket] Action Nehemiah takes
- {Curly Bracket} names Tobiah and Sanballat
- Write out any questions that come to mind

Nehemiah's Final Reforms

13 On that day they read from the Book of Moses in the hearing of the people. And in it was found written that no Ammonite or Moabite should ever enter the assembly of God, ²for they did not meet the people of Israel with bread and water, but hired Balaam against them to curse them—yet our God turned the curse into a blessing.^a ³As soon as the people heard the law, they separated from Israel all those of foreign descent.

⁴Now before this, Eliashib the priest^b, who was appointed over the chambers of the house of our God, and who was related to Tobiah, ⁵prepared for Tobiah a large chamber where

they had previously put the grain offering, the frankincense, the vessels, and the tithes of grain, wine, and oil, which were given by commandment to the Levites, singers, and gatekeepers, and the contributions for the priests.(A) ⁶While this was taking place, I was not in Jerusalem, for in the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes king of Babylon I went to the king.^c And after some time I asked leave of the king ⁷and came to Jerusalem, and I then discovered the evil that Eliashib had done for Tobiah, preparing for him a chamber in the courts of the house of God. ⁸And I was very angry, and I threw all the household furniture of Tobiah out of the chamber. ⁹Then I gave orders, and they cleansed the chambers, and I brought back there the vessels of the house of God, with the grain offering and the frankincense.

¹⁰I also found out that the portions of the Levites had not been given to them, so that the Levites and the singers, who did the work, had fled each to his field. ¹¹So I confronted the officials and said, "Why is the house of God forsaken?" And I gathered them together and set them in their stations. ¹²Then all Judah brought the tithe of the grain, wine, and oil into the storehouses. ¹³And I appointed as treasurers over the storehouses Shelemiah the priest, Zadok the scribe, and Pedaiah of the Levites, and as their assistant Hanan the son of Zaccur, son of Mattaniah, for they were considered reliable, and their duty was to distribute to their brothers. ¹⁴Remember me, O my God, concerning this, and do not wipe out my good deeds that I have done for the house of my God and for his service.

¹⁵In those days I saw in Judah people treading winepresses on the Sabbath, and bringing in heaps of grain and loading them on donkeys, and also wine, grapes, figs, and all kinds of loads, which they brought into Jerusalem on the Sabbath day. And I warned them on the day when they sold food. ¹⁶Tyrians also, who lived in the city, brought in fish and all kinds of goods and sold them on the Sabbath to the people of Judah, in Jerusalem itself! ¹⁷Then I confronted the nobles of Judah

and said to them, “What is this evil thing that you are doing, profaning the Sabbath day?

¹⁸Did not your fathers act in this way, and did not our God bring all this disaster on us and on this city? Now you are bringing more wrath on Israel by profaning the Sabbath.”

¹⁹As soon as it began to grow dark at the gates of Jerusalem before the Sabbath, I commanded that the doors should be shut and gave orders that they should not be opened until after the Sabbath. And I stationed some of my servants at the gates, that no load might be brought in on the Sabbath day. ²⁰Then the merchants and sellers of all kinds of wares lodged outside Jerusalem once or twice. ²¹But I warned them and said to them, “Why do you lodge outside the wall? If you do so again, I will lay hands on you.” From that time on they did not come on the Sabbath. ²²Then I commanded the Levites that they should purify themselves and come and guard the gates, to keep the Sabbath day holy. Remember this also in my favor, O my God, and spare me according to the greatness of your steadfast love.

²³In those days also I saw the Jews who had married women of Ashdod, Ammon, and Moab. ²⁴And half of their children spoke the language of Ashdod, and they could not speak the language of Judah, but only the language of each people. ²⁵And I confronted them and cursed them and beat some of them and pulled out their hair. And I made them take an oath in the name of God, saying, “You shall not give your daughters to their sons, or take their daughters for your sons or for yourselves. ²⁶Did not Solomon king of Israel sin on account of such women? Among the many nations there was no king like him, and he was beloved by his God, and God made him king over all Israel. Nevertheless, foreign women made even him to sin.^d ²⁷Shall we then listen to you and do all this great evil and act treacherously against our God by marrying foreign women?”

(C)

²⁸And one of the sons of Jehoiada, the son of Eliashib the high priest, was the son-in-law

of Sanballat the Horonite.(B) Therefore I chased him from me. ²⁹Remember them, O my God, because they have desecrated the priesthood and the covenant of the priesthood and the Levites.

³⁰Thus I cleansed them from everything foreign, and I established the duties of the priests and Levites, each in his work; ³¹and I provided for the wood offering at appointed times, and for the firstfruits.

Remember me, O my God, for good.

Study

A. Tobiah

- How do the opening lines about Ammonites and Moabites tell us about the event described in verse 4-5?
 1. Hint: see discussion of Tobiah in Day 20
- Through whom might have Tobiah gained such influence with the priests?
 1. Hint: what in-law of Tobiah is mentioned many times among the leaders of Jerusalem?

B. Sanballat

- Give two reasons why this discovery is disappointing to Nehemiah.
 - 1.
 - 2.
- Based on what we have read about Nehemiah’s interaction with Sanballat in this book, on a scale of 1 to 10, how mad do you think Nehemiah was in this scenario?

C. Review the Covenant renewal in Nehemiah 10 (see Study B). Cross out the 'obligations' the Israelites did not live up to. *Tip:* some might not be mentioned specifically but we can assume they were not kept based on the other stated events of the passage.

1. Observe and do all the commandments of the LORD our Lord and His rules and His statutes.
2. We will not give our daughters or take their daughters for our sons in marriage to the people of the land.
3. We will not sell or buy on the Sabbath.
4. We will forego the crops on the seventh year and the collection of every debt.
5. We take on ourselves to give to the House of the Lord.
6. We obligate ourselves
 - i. to bring our firstfruits of produce as an offering
 - ii. to bring firstborn sons (offerings for them) and livestock
 - iii. to bring tithes to the Levites (for their upkeep)
7. We will not neglect the house of the Lord (Temple)

- c) After serving as Governor of Judah for 12 years, Nehemiah is summoned to return to Babylon in 433-432BC. He stayed for an unspecified amount of time and then returned to Jerusalem.
- d) The account of the failure of Solomon toward the end of his reign is recorded in 1 Kings 11.

Thud. The muffled echo of the end of Nehemiah is: thud. God had taken His people out of exile in Babylon, brought them to the land, turned the hearts of kings to finance and protect them. Yahweh gave them leaders to guide them, prophets to encourage them, and strength to sustain them. The Lord of Hosts had moved in every form of mercy to keep His promises to His people. His hand was on Zerubbabel, Jeshua, Ezra, and Nehemiah as they strove to serve their God by leading and instructing His people. They worked tirelessly despite constant opposition. The result: thud.

God's people have once again proven that they, unlike their God, cannot keep a promise. They cannot be faithful. They cannot show mercy. They will not keep covenant.

Nehemiah 13 is a tragic reel of an exacerbated leader attempting purification. Nehemiah was concerned about pure fellowship (and a pure Temple), pure finances and the purity of those they were following (verses 1, 3, 9, 12, 13). This passage is the toe that finds the edge of the effectiveness of human leadership. No matter how good the teaching, how solid the leader, or how clear the call, the hearts of man are prone to wonder; to focus on lesser things.

We see that the Israelites have broken covenant in many ways, if not completely. The *leaders* of the people who opposed the restoration of Israel are now married in. The children of those who were to be a part of building a newer, better, purer Jewish society do not even speak the language. Instead, they use the tongues of those nations that God called the people drive out going all the way back to when they first entered the land. We must not undersell the incredible failure this is. The very foundations of this new society are incurably cracked. But that does not mean that Nehemiah won't try. He has too much invested he has too much sweat, heart and devotion in the game.

Notes

- a) *Balaam* was a diviner who though he did not curse the Israelites as enemies wanted, his sin was returning to King Balak to inform him how to get the Israelites to curse themselves by enticing them with prostitutes and unclean food sacrificed to idols. The Israelites fell into sins due to these traps and God sent a deadly plague to them as a result. (See Numbers 22)
- b) *Eliashib* was the High Priest during the time of Ezra and Nehemiah. But he compromised in several ways while Nehemiah was away.

But Nehemiah is a realist. Four times he calls out to God to ‘Remember’ him. In this request he is basically saying, “Lord, I know you called me to lead this people in restoring a covenant society with you. I have failed. I have not given up but I know this is beyond my capacity to save. Remember that I tried my best. Remember that I really thought I was doing the right things. Remember my pure motives before you. Remember my work for my good, even if the outcome is far from that.”

I wonder if Nehemiah looked around at what he and other leaders had built: a Temple and city that were just a shadow of the former glory of Jerusalem, a society where the nobility took advantage of the poor, and a people whose hearts were still just as far from God as they had been when they had set out from Babylon. You wonder if he thought to himself, “The strength of those who bear the burdens is failing. There is just too much rumble. By ourselves we will not be able to rebuild...”

In one sentence or phrase, briefly sum up the Main Point(s) of what you read today:

What is a way you could encourage the spiritual leaders in your life? Continuing to tithe is one way but what is another way God could use you to minister to those placed in your life to equip you for ministry?

A major theme of Nehemiah’s challenge to the people was how they cared more about their own prosperity than the sustained worship of God (working on the Sabbath and not tithing to the Temple). Do you feel that this upside-down priority is prevalent in your life or the Church as a whole today?

Questions

Who have you let into your assembly (relational sphere) who influences you to oppose God? God wants us to surround ourselves with people who spur us on toward love and good deeds (Hebrews 10:24-25). What can we do to make sure we have people in our lives who encourage us to walk with God?

This passage shows Nehemiah’s value of purity in life and worship. How seriously do you think you take purity in your everyday walk with God? What does ‘purity before God’ even mean for us now (in the New Covenant)?



Wk5- Message Notes

- Ezra reads the _____ to the people.
- The people _____ and _____ because they understand God's teachings.
- The people celebrate the Feast of Booths with _____.
- The _____ of God's _____ is recounted in prayer.
- The people _____ their covenant with God.
- The leaders lived in the city but the rest of the people _____ to see who will live in Jerusalem.
- The dedication ceremony for the wall has _____.
- Finally, the _____ workers are appointed and provided for.

