

## **NEHEMIAH 7-13**

**<sup>1</sup>Now when the wall had been built and I had set up the doors, and the gatekeepers, the singers, and the Levites had been appointed, <sup>2</sup>I gave my brother Hanani charge over Jerusalem, along with Hananiah the commander of the citadel – for he was a faithful man and feared God more than many. <sup>3</sup>And I said to them, “The gates of Jerusalem are not to be opened until the sun is hot; while the gatekeepers are still standing guard, let them shut and bar the doors. Appoint guards from among the inhabitants of Jerusalem, some at their watch posts, and others before their own houses.”**

**<sup>4</sup>The city was wide and large, but the people within it were few and not enough houses had been built.**

**<sup>5</sup>Then my God put it into my mind to assemble the nobles and the officials and the people to be enrolled by genealogy. And I found the book of the genealogy of those who were the first to come back, and I found the following written in it:**

**<sup>6</sup>These are the people of the province who came up out of the captivity of those exiles whom King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon had carried into exile; they returned to Jerusalem and Judah, each to his town. <sup>7</sup>They came with Zerubbabel, Jeshua, Nehemiah, Azariah, Raamiah, Nahamani, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispereth, Bigvai, Nehum, Baanah.**

Nehemiah’s memoirs continue.

Some suggest that the inclusion of ‘the singers and the Levites’ in verse 1 is out of place here where the focus is on the city walls rather than the temple.

In chapter three we learned that Rephaiah ruled over half the area covered by the city (see 3:9), and Shallum over the other half (see 3:12). Jerusalem is now a walled city. Nehemiah recounts that he gave his brother Hanani charge over the city. He also made Hananiah commander of the citadel.

The gates of the city are to be barred. They are to be opened only in the heat of the day and are to be guarded at all times. Others are on guard throughout the city.

Constructing the walls is one thing, but the work of building houses within the city was yet to be done. Nehemiah is praised for this in the Book of Ecclesiasticus:

The memory of Nehemiah also is lasting;  
he raised our fallen walls, and set up gates  
and bars, and rebuilt our ruined houses.

– Ecclesiasticus 49:13

To organise the movement of people into the city Nehemiah decided to take a census. He tells how he found the census that was made when the exiles returned to Judah from Babylon

With minor variations verses 6-7 parallel Ezra 2:1-2, and verses 8-73 are clearly from the same source as Ezra 2:3-70, even though there are at times minor variations in the spelling of names and in numbers. Since the list in Nehemiah appears to be part of his memoirs, whereas the list in Ezra is not part of his, it is likely that Nehemiah’s list is older. It is not possible to reconstruct the original list which is the source behind both lists.

## 1. Listed according to families (see Ezra 2:3-20)

The number of the Israelite people: <sup>8</sup>the descendants of Parosh, two thousand one hundred seventy-two. <sup>9</sup>Of Shephatiah, three hundred seventy-two. <sup>10</sup>Of Arah, six hundred fifty-two. <sup>11</sup>Of Pahath-moab, namely the descendants of Jeshua and Joab, two thousand eight hundred eighteen. <sup>12</sup>Of Elam, one thousand two hundred fifty-four. <sup>13</sup>Of Zattu, eight hundred forty-five. <sup>14</sup>Of Zaccai, seven hundred sixty. <sup>15</sup>Of Binnui, six hundred forty-eight. <sup>16</sup>Of Bebai, six hundred twenty-eight. <sup>17</sup>Of Azgad, two thousand three hundred twenty-two. <sup>18</sup>Of Adonikam, six hundred sixty-seven. <sup>19</sup>Of Bigvai, two thousand sixty-seven. <sup>20</sup>Of Adin, six hundred fifty-five. <sup>21</sup>Of Ater, namely of Hezekiah, ninety-eight. <sup>22</sup>Of Hashum, three hundred twenty-eight. <sup>23</sup>Of Bezai, three hundred twenty-four. <sup>24</sup>Of Hariph, one hundred twelve. <sup>25</sup>Of Gibeon, ninety-five.

## 2. Listed according to the towns in which they settled (see Ezra 2:21-35)

<sup>26</sup>The people of Bethlehem and Netophah, one hundred eighty-eight. <sup>27</sup>Of Anathoth, one hundred twenty-eight. <sup>28</sup>Of Beth-azmaveth, forty-two. <sup>29</sup>Of Kiriath-jearim, Chephirah, and Beeroth, seven hundred forty-three. <sup>30</sup>Of Ramah and Geba, six hundred twenty-one. <sup>31</sup>Of Michmas, one hundred twenty-two. <sup>32</sup>Of Bethel and Ai, one hundred twenty-three. <sup>33</sup>Of the other Nebo, fifty-two. <sup>34</sup>The descendants of the other Elam, one thousand two hundred fifty-four. <sup>35</sup>Of Harim, three hundred twenty. <sup>36</sup>Of Jericho, three hundred forty-five. <sup>37</sup>Of Lod, Hadid, and Ono, seven hundred twenty-one. <sup>38</sup>Of Senaah, three thousand nine hundred thirty.

## 3. Priestly families (see Ezra 2:36-39)

<sup>39</sup>The priests: the descendants of Jedaiah, namely the house of Jeshua, nine hundred seventy-three. <sup>40</sup>Of Immer, one thousand fifty-two. <sup>41</sup>Of Pashhur, one thousand two hundred forty-seven. <sup>42</sup>Of Harim, one thousand seventeen.

## 4. Levites, singers and gatekeepers (see Ezra 2:40-42)

<sup>43</sup>The Levites: the descendants of Jeshua, namely of Kadmiel of the descendants of Hodevah, seventy-four. <sup>44</sup>The singers: the descendants of Asaph, one hundred forty-eight. <sup>45</sup>The gatekeepers: the descendants of Shallum, of Ater, of Talmon, of Akkub, of Hatita, of Shobai, one hundred thirty-eight.

## 5. Temple Servants (see Ezra 2:43-58)

<sup>46</sup>The temple servants: the descendants of Ziha, of Hasupha, of Tabbaoth, <sup>47</sup>of Keros, of Sia, of Padon, <sup>48</sup>of Lebana, of Hagaba, of Shalmi, <sup>49</sup>of Hanan, of Giddel, of Gahar, <sup>50</sup>of Reaiah, of Rezin, of Nekoda, <sup>51</sup>of Gazzam, of Uzza, of Paseah, <sup>52</sup>of Besai, of Meunim, of Nephushesim, <sup>53</sup>of Bakbuk, of Haku-pha, of Harhur, <sup>54</sup>of Bazlith, of Mehida, of Harsha, <sup>55</sup>of Barkos, of Sisera, of Temah, <sup>56</sup>of Nezhiah, of Hatipha. <sup>57</sup>The descendants of Solomon's servants: of Sotai, of Sophereth, of Perida, <sup>58</sup>of Jaala, of Darkon, of Giddel, <sup>59</sup>of Shephatiah, of Hattil, of Pochereth-hazzebaim, of Amon.

**<sup>60</sup>All the temple servants and the descendants of Solomon's servants were three hundred ninety-two.**

6. List of those unable to prove their lineage (see Ezra 2:59-63)

**<sup>61</sup>The following were those who came up from Tel-melah, Tel-harsha, Cherub, Addon, and Immer, but they could not prove their ancestral houses or their descent, whether they belonged to Israel: <sup>62</sup>the descendants of Delaiah, of Tobiah, of Nekoda, six hundred forty-two. <sup>63</sup>Also, of the priests: the descendants of Hobaiah, of Hakkoz, of Barzillai (who had married one of the daughters of Barzillai the Gileadite and was called by their name). <sup>64</sup>These sought their registration among those enrolled in the genealogies, but it was not found there, so they were excluded from the priesthood as unclean; <sup>65</sup>the governor told them that they were not to partake of the most holy food, until a priest with Urim and Thummim should come.**

Summary of assembly (see Ezra 2:64-67)

**<sup>66</sup>The whole assembly together was forty-two thousand three hundred sixty, <sup>67</sup>besides their male and female slaves, of whom there were seven thousand three hundred thirty-seven; and they had two hundred forty-five singers, male and female. <sup>68</sup>They had seven hundred thirty-six horses, two hundred forty-five mules, <sup>69</sup>four hundred thirty-five camels, and six thousand seven hundred twenty donkeys.**

Voluntary contributions (see Ezra 2:68-69)

**<sup>70</sup>Now some of the heads of ancestral houses contributed to the work. The governor gave to the treasury one thousand darics of gold, fifty basins, and five hundred thirty priestly robes. <sup>71</sup>And some of the heads of ancestral houses gave into the building fund twenty thousand darics of gold and two thousand two hundred minas of silver. <sup>72</sup>And what the rest of the people gave was twenty thousand darics of gold, two thousand minas of silver, and sixty-seven priestly robes.**

Where the returned exiles settled (see Ezra 2:70).

**<sup>73</sup>So the priests, the Levites, the gatekeepers, the singers, some of the people, the temple servants, and all Israel settled in their towns.**

Chapters 8-10 are not part of the memoirs of Nehemiah. This scene is placed here not as an indication of when it happened so much as to place it as the climax of Ezra-Nehemiah. The temple is built, Jerusalem is established as a walled city, the people are registered, and now the law is proclaimed. The temple makes possible the cult. The walls protect the city. The real protector of the city, however, is YHWH who has been active throughout. To experience YHWH's protection, the people of Yehud need to listen to YHWH's voice and carry out his will. This is found in the Torah (see page 40 for comments on the 'law'). It is important to have both Ezra and Nehemiah present, and to portray the people as keen to live by the Law.

We do not know how much of what we have come to know as the Torah Ezra brought with him from Babylon (see Ezra 7:14). No doubt there was much sharing and discussion among the various schools. In this scene everyone is summoned to a solemn assembly and the results of all this remembering, reflection and sharing is read out to them.

Standing on a dais, and surrounded by leaders of the community, Ezra opens the sacred book and spends the whole of the morning reading aloud from it. The text is in Hebrew. The language of the people in Yehud is Aramaic. The Levites task was to help the people understand what they were hearing. The expression 'with interpretation' translates the Hebrew מְפָרָשׁ (mepōrāš; a word that derives from the verb to break open). They either translated or explained the text for the people.

**7:73** When the seventh month came – the people of Israel being settled in their towns – <sup>8:1</sup>all the people gathered together into the square before the Water Gate. They told the scribe Ezra to bring the book of the law of Moses, which YHWH had given to Israel. <sup>2</sup>Accordingly, the priest Ezra brought the law before the assembly, both men and women and all who could hear with understanding. This was on the first day of the seventh month. <sup>3</sup>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. <sup>4</sup>The scribe Ezra stood on a wooden platform that had been made for the purpose; and beside him stood Mattithiah, Shema, Anaiah, Uriah, Hilkiah, and Maaseiah on his right hand; and Pedaiah, Mishael, Malchijah, Hashum, Hash-baddanah, Zechariah, and Meshulam on his left hand. <sup>5</sup>And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was standing above all the people; and when he opened it, all the people stood up. <sup>6</sup>Then Ezra blessed YHWH, the great God, and all the people answered, "Amen, Amen," lifting up their hands. Then they bowed their heads and worshiped YHWH with their faces to the ground. <sup>7</sup>Also 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. <sup>8</sup>So they read from the book, from the law of God, with interpretation. They gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading.

**<sup>9</sup>And 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 YHWH your God; do not mourn or weep." For all the people wept when they heard the words of the law. <sup>10</sup>Then he said to them, "Go your way, eat the fat and drink sweet wine and send portions of them to those for whom nothing is prepared, for this day is holy to YHWH; and do not be grieved, for the joy of YHWH is your strength." <sup>11</sup>So the Levites stilled all the people, saying, "Be quiet, for this day is holy; do not be grieved." <sup>12</sup>And 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.**

This is the only time Ezra and Nehemiah are pictured together. Whatever obedience is due to the governor and the high priest, ultimately obedience is to God as God has revealed his will in the Torah.

The people's reaction to hearing the book of the law is a profoundly emotional one. Are they, perhaps, regretting their failure to observe it? Are they afraid that God might punish them for this failure? Whatever the cause of their emotion, their leaders challenge them to stop looking at themselves, and to rejoice in the gift God has given them in reminding them of his presence and action in the history of their people, and in revealing to them his will.

The law of YHWH is perfect,  
reviving the soul;  
the decrees of YHWH are sure,  
making wise the simple;  
the precepts of YHWH are right,  
rejoicing the heart;  
the commandment of YHWH is clear,  
enlightening the eyes;  
the fear of YHWH is pure,  
enduring forever;  
the ordinances of YHWH are true  
and righteous altogether.  
More to be desired are they than gold,  
even much fine gold;  
sweeter also than honey,  
and drippings of the honeycomb.

– Psalm 19:7-10

This is a day to rejoice in the Torah, and to be generous with their fellow Jews by ensuring that everyone has the wherewithall to join in the celebrations.

Legislation covering the Festival of Booths (verse 14; see Ezra 3:4) is found in Leviticus 23:33-36. The harvesting is complete. The people are awaiting the rains and the time for sowing. This creates the perfect circumstances for a seven-day pilgrimage to the sanctuary. The pilgrimage festival (*ḥag*), is called 'Tabernacles' or 'Booths' (*sukkôt*). In all likelihood the name comes from the fact that the influx of pilgrims to Jerusalem required the setting up temporary dwellings to accommodate them for a stay of seven days.

The 'eighth day' (verse 18) is a celebration in its own right, timed to come at the end of the seven day pilgrimage festival (see Leviticus 23:36). It is a day for a 'solemn assembly', and for the sacrifices that are common to all the autumn festivals. It is a day of special celebration, and especially prayer for rain. Zechariah 14:16-17 is relevant here, as is the following from Joel:

O children of Zion, be glad and rejoice in YHWH your God; for he has given the early rain for your vindication, he has poured down for you abundant rain, the early and the later rain, as before.

– Joel 2:23

Psalm 118 is a liturgical psalm composed for this very day.

This is recalled in the Second Book of Maccabees:

Since on the twenty-fifth day of Chislew we shall celebrate the purification of the temple, we thought it necessary to notify you, in order that you also may celebrate the festival of booths and the festival of the fire given when Nehemiah, who built the temple and the altar, offered sacrifices.

– 2Maccabees 1:18

**<sup>13</sup>On the second day the heads of ancestral houses of all the people, with the priests and the Levites, came together to the scribe Ezra in order to study the words of the law.**

**<sup>14</sup>And they found it written in the law, which YHWH had commanded by Moses, that the people of Israel should live in booths during the festival of the seventh month, <sup>15</sup>and that they should publish and proclaim in all their towns and in Jerusalem as follows, "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." <sup>16</sup>So the people went out and brought them, and made booths for themselves, each on the roofs of their houses, 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. <sup>17</sup>And all the assembly of those who had returned from the captivity made booths and lived in them; for from the days of Jeshua son of Nun to that day the people of Israel had not done so. And there was very great rejoicing. <sup>18</sup>And day by day, from the first day to the last day, he read from the book of the law of God. They kept the festival seven days; and on the eighth day there was a solemn assembly, according to the ordinance.**

**<sup>1</sup>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. <sup>2</sup>Then those of Israelite descent separated themselves from all foreigners, and stood and confessed their sins and the iniquities of their ancestors. <sup>3</sup>They stood up in their place and read from the book of the law of YHWH their God for a fourth part of the day, and for another fourth they made confession and worshipped YHWH their God. <sup>4</sup>Then Jeshua, Bani, Kadmiel, Shebaniah, Bunni, Sherebiah, Bani, and Chenani stood on the stairs of the Levites and cried out with a loud voice to YHWH their God. <sup>5</sup>Then the Levites, Jeshua, Kadmiel, Bani, Hashabneiah, Sherebiah, Hodiah, Shebaniah, and Pethahiah, said, "Stand up and bless YHWH your God from everlasting to everlasting. Blessed be your glorious name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise."**

**<sup>6</sup>And Ezra said: "You are YHWH, 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. To all of them you give life, and the host of heaven worships you. <sup>7</sup>You are YHWH, the God who chose Abram and brought him out of Ur of the Chaldeans and gave him the name Abraham; <sup>8</sup>and you found his heart faithful before you, and made with him a covenant to give to his descendants the land of the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Amorite, the Perizzite, the Jebusite, and the Girgashite; and you have fulfilled your promise, for you are righteous. <sup>9</sup>And you saw the distress of our ancestors in Egypt and heard their cry at the Red Sea. <sup>10</sup>You performed signs and wonders against Pharaoh and all his servants and all the people of his land, for you knew that they acted insolently against our ancestors. You made a name for yourself, which remains to this day.**

Like the previous chapter, chapter nine gives no indication of being part of Nehemiah's memoirs. It is written in the third person. The authors have placed it in this context for reasons of theology, not chronology. The separation mentioned in verse 2 is about commitment. Non-Jews were not expected to observe the Torah, and were not considered guilty for not observing it.

The assembly has been instructed to rejoice in the gift of the Torah. However, there is still a place for the confessing of sin and for fasting, as is clear from this passage.

The people recognise their solidarity with their ancestors and express their sorrow in ritual prayer, at which two groups of Levites assist. The final words of verse five introduce Ezra's prayer of penitence which follows in verses 6-37.

The prayer moves from creation to God's calling of Abraham to the liberation of Israel from slavery in Egypt. Abraham is presented as a model of faithfulness (see Genesis 15:6).

Ezra's prayer has elements in common with some of the psalms which remind the assembly of its history in order to highlight either gratitude or repentance (see especially Psalms 106 and 135).



Verses 13-14 sing of the giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai (see Exodus 19), with special reference to the Sabbath (see Exodus 31:13-17).

After recalling God's wonderful care for his people during their wanderings in the wilderness (verse 15), the prayer turns to the ingratitude and infidelity of their ancestors (verses 16-17).

In the second part of verse 17 Israel's classical creed is repeated (see Exodus 34:5-6), followed by examples of YHWH's faithful love for an unfaithful people.

**<sup>11</sup>You divided the sea before them, so that they passed through the sea on dry land, but you threw their pursuers into the depths, like a stone into mighty waters. <sup>12</sup>Moreover, you led them by day with a pillar of cloud, and by night with a pillar of fire, to give them light on the way in which they should go. <sup>13</sup>You came down also upon Mount Sinai, and spoke with them from heaven, and gave them right ordinances and true laws, good statutes and commandments, <sup>14</sup>and you made known your holy sabbath to them and gave them commandments and statutes and a law through your servant Moses. <sup>15</sup>For their hunger you gave them bread from heaven, and for their thirst you brought water for them out of the rock, and you told them to go in to possess the land that you swore to give them. <sup>16</sup>“But they and our ancestors acted presumptuously and stiffened their necks and did not obey your commandments; <sup>17</sup>they refused to obey, and were not mindful of the wonders that you performed among them; but they stiffened their necks and determined to return to their slavery in Egypt.**

**But you are a God ready to forgive, gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and you did not forsake them. <sup>18</sup>Even when they had cast an image of a calf for themselves and said, ‘This is your God who brought you up out of Egypt,’ and had committed great blasphemies, <sup>19</sup>you in your great mercies did not forsake them in the wilderness; the pillar of cloud that led them in the way did not leave them by day, nor the pillar of fire by night that gave them light on the way by which they should go. <sup>20</sup>You gave your good spirit to instruct them, and did not withhold your manna from their mouths, and gave them water for their thirst. <sup>21</sup>Forty years you sustained them in the wilderness so that they lacked nothing; their clothes did not wear out and their feet did not swell.**

**<sup>22</sup>You gave them kingdoms and peoples, and allotted to them every corner, so they took possession of the land of King Sihon of Heshbon and the land of King Og of Bashan. <sup>23</sup>You multiplied their descendants like the stars of heaven, and brought them into the land that you had told their ancestors to enter and possess. <sup>24</sup>So 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 hands, with their kings and the peoples of the land, to do with them as they pleased. <sup>25</sup>And they captured fortress cities and a rich land, and took possession of houses filled with all sorts of goods, hewn cisterns, vineyards, olive orchards, and fruit trees in abundance; so they ate, and were filled and became fat, and delighted themselves in your great goodness.**

**<sup>26</sup>Nevertheless they were disobedient and rebelled against you and cast your law behind their backs and killed your prophets, who had warned them in order to turn them back to you, and they committed great blasphemies.**

**<sup>27</sup>Therefore you gave them into the hands of their enemies, who made them suffer. Then 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 hands of their enemies. <sup>28</sup>But after they had rest, they again did evil before you, and you abandoned them to the hands 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 rescued them according to your mercies. <sup>29</sup>And 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 ordinances, by the observance of which a person shall live. They turned a stubborn shoulder and stiffened their neck and would not obey.**

Verses 22-25 sing of God's gift to them of the Promised Land. The victory over Sihon and Og is celebrated also in Psalm 135:11 and 136:19-20.

In verses 26-31 the psalm returns to the central theme: the contrast between God's faithful love and the infidelity of his people. YHWH had to punish them, so that they might recognise their sin and turn back to him. When they did so and cried out to God in their distress, God heard their cry and saved them. Even when they reverted to their sinful ways God kept offering them mercy.

In verses 32-37 the psalmist acknowledges the sins of his people, past and present. God has remained faithful to his 'covenant' (verse 32). It is the people who continue to sin, so that 'here we are slaves to this day' (verse 36).

<sup>30</sup>Many years you were patient with them, and warned them by your spirit through your prophets; yet they would not listen. Therefore you handed them over to the peoples of the lands. <sup>31</sup>Nevertheless, in your great mercies you did not make an end of them or forsake them, for you are a gracious and merciful God.

<sup>32</sup>Now therefore, our God – the great and mighty and awesome God, keeping covenant and steadfast love – do not treat lightly all the hardship that has come upon us, upon our kings, our officials, our priests, our prophets, our ancestors, and all your people, since the time of the kings of Assyria until today. <sup>33</sup>You have been just in all that has come upon us, for you have dealt faithfully and we have acted wickedly; <sup>34</sup>our kings, our officials, our priests, and our ancestors have not kept your law or heeded the commandments and the warnings that you gave them.

<sup>35</sup>Even in their own kingdom, and in the great goodness you bestowed on them, and in the large and rich land that you set before them, they did not serve you and did not turn from their wicked works.

<sup>36</sup>Here we are, slaves to this day – slaves in the land that you gave to our ancestors to enjoy its fruit and its good gifts. <sup>37</sup>Its rich yield goes to the kings whom you have set over us because of our sins; they have power also over our bodies and over our livestock at their pleasure, and we are in great distress."

Verse 38 is a statement from someone who was present at the signing. The author of Ezra chapters 8-10 appears to have found it along with the signatories (10:1-27) in the Jerusalem archives.

<sup>38</sup>Because of all this we make a firm agreement in writing, and on that sealed document are inscribed the names of our officials, our Levites, and our priests.

## Signatories to the Pact

The signatories begin with the governor, Nehemiah. Zedekiah is obviously someone of importance, but he is not mentioned elsewhere in the scroll.

**<sup>1</sup>Upon the sealed document are the names of Nehemiah the governor, son of Hacaliah, and Zedekiah;**

Then follow the priests. Many of them are descendants of priests named among those who returned to Yehud with Zerubbabel and Jeshua: Seraiah (see Nehemiah 12:1); Azariah (see Nehemiah 7:7); Jeremiah (see Nehemiah 12:1); Pashhur (see Nehemiah 7:41); Amariah (see Nehemiah 12:2); Hattush (see Nehemiah 12:2); Malluch (see Nehemiah 12:2); Meremoth (see Nehemiah 12:3); Abijah (see Nehemiah 12:4); Mijamin (see Nehemiah 12:5); Shemaiah (see Nehemiah 12:6).

**<sup>2</sup>Seraiah, Azariah, Jeremiah, <sup>3</sup>Pashhur, Amariah, Malchijah, <sup>4</sup>Hattush, Shebaniah, Malluch, <sup>5</sup>Harim, Meremoth, Obadiah, <sup>6</sup>Daniel, Ginnethon, Baruch, <sup>7</sup>Meshullam, Abijah, Mijamin, <sup>8</sup>Maaziah, Bilgai, Shemaiah; these are the priests.**

Similarly with the Levites, Jeshua, Binnui and Kadmiel (See Nehemiah 12:8).

**<sup>9</sup>And the Levites: Jeshua son of Azaniah, Binnui of the sons of Henadad, Kadmiel;**

**<sup>10</sup>and their associates, Shebaniah, Hodiah, Kelita, Pelaiah, Hanan, <sup>11</sup>Mica, Rehob, Hashabiah, <sup>12</sup>Zaccur, Sherebiah, Shebaniah, <sup>13</sup>Hodiah, Bani, Beninu.**

**<sup>14</sup>The leaders of the people: Parosh, Pahath-moab, Elam, Zattu, Bani, <sup>15</sup>Bunni, Azgad, Bebai, <sup>16</sup>Adonijah, Bigvai, Adin, <sup>17</sup>Ater, Hezekiah, Azzur, <sup>18</sup>Hodiah, Hashum, Bezai, <sup>19</sup>Hariph, Anathoth, Nebai, <sup>20</sup>Magpiash, Meshullam, Hezir, <sup>21</sup>Meshezabel, Zadok, Jaddua, <sup>22</sup>Pelathiah, Hanan, Anaiah, <sup>23</sup>Hoshea, Hananiah, Hasshub, <sup>24</sup>Hallohesh, Pilha, Shobek, <sup>25</sup>Rehum, Hashabnah, Maa-seiah, <sup>26</sup>Ahiah, Hanan, Anan, <sup>27</sup>Malluch, Harim, and Baanah.**

**<sup>28</sup>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 adhere to the law of God, their wives, their sons, their daughters, all who have knowledge and understanding, <sup>29</sup>join with their kin, their nobles, and enter into a curse and an oath to walk in God's law, which was given by Moses the servant of God, and to observe and do all the commandments of YHWH our Lord and his ordinances and his statutes.**

The stipulations of the pact are listed in the following verses (see page 77).

Difficult times often call for hard decisions.

On mixed marriages see Ezra 9-10 and Nehemiah 13:23-28 (see Deuteronomy 7:3; Exodus 34:12-16).

On the sabbath see Exodus 20:8-11. On the seventh year see Exodus 23:10-11.

On the temple tax see Exodus 30:13. It was to cover the expenses involved in verses 32-33.

Verse 34 is a practical way of ensuring a supply of wood for the sacrifices (see Leviticus 1:17).

Verses 35-39 concern the upkeep of the temple personnel.

**<sup>30</sup>We will not give our daughters to the peoples of the land or take their daughters for our sons;**

**<sup>31</sup>and if the peoples of the land bring in merchandise or any grain on the sabbath day to sell, we will not buy it 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.**

**<sup>32</sup>We also lay on ourselves the obligation to charge ourselves yearly one-third of a shekel for the service of the house of our God: <sup>33</sup>for the rows of bread, the regular grain offering, the regular burnt offering, the sabbaths, the new moons, the appointed festivals, the sacred donations, and the sin offerings to make atonement for Israel, and for all the work of the house of our God.**

**<sup>34</sup>We have also cast lots among the priests, the Levites, and the people, for the wood offering, to bring it into the house of our God, by ancestral houses, at appointed times, year by year, to burn on the altar of YHWH our God, as it is written in the law.**

**<sup>35</sup>We obligate ourselves to bring the first fruits of our soil and the first fruits of every tree, year by year, to the house of YHWH; <sup>36</sup>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 livestock, as it is written in the law, and the firstlings of our herds and of our flocks; <sup>37</sup>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 soil, for it is the Levites who collect the tithes in all our rural towns. <sup>38</sup>And the priest, the descendant of Aaron, shall be with the Levites when the Levites receive the tithes; and the Levites shall bring up a tithe of the tithes to the house of our God, to the chambers of the storehouse. <sup>39</sup>For the people of Israel and the sons of Levi shall bring the contribution of grain, wine, and oil to the storerooms where the vessels of the sanctuary are, and where the priests that minister, and the gatekeepers and the singers are. We will not neglect the house of our God.**

**<sup>1</sup>Now the leaders of the people lived in Jerusalem; and the rest of the people cast lots to bring one out of ten to live in the holy city Jerusalem, while nine-tenths remained in the other towns. <sup>2</sup>And the people blessed all those who willingly offered to live in Jerusalem.**

**<sup>3</sup>These are the leaders of the province who lived in Jerusalem; but in the towns of Judah all lived on their property in their towns: Israel, the priests, the Levites, the temple servants, and the descendants of Solomon's servants. <sup>4</sup>In Jerusalem lived some of the Judahites and of the Benjaminites.**

**Of the Judahites: Athaiah son of Uzziah son of Zechariah son of Amariah son of Shephatiah son of Mahalalel, of the descendants of Perez; <sup>5</sup>and Maaseiah son of Baruch son of Col-hozeh son of Hazaiah son of Adaiah son of Joarib son of Zechariah son of the Shilonite. <sup>6</sup>All the descendants of Perez who lived in Jerusalem were four hundred sixty-eight valiant warriors.**

**<sup>7</sup>These are the Benjaminites: Sallu son of Meshullam son of Joed son of Pedaiah son of Kolaiah son of Maaseiah son of Ithiel son of Jeshaiiah.**

**<sup>8</sup>And his brothers Gabbai, Sallai: nine hundred twenty-eight. <sup>9</sup>Joel son of Zichri was their overseer; and Judah son of Hassenuah was second in charge of the city.**

Verses 3-9 list the families of the laity who were chosen by lot to live in Jerusalem. Presumably the author of the Nehemiah scroll is working from archival material. A parallel list, though with variations, is found in 1Chronicles 9:3-9.

Verses 10-14 list the priests living in Jerusalem.

<sup>10</sup>Of the priests: Jedaiah son of Joiarib, Jachin, <sup>11</sup>Seraiah son of Hilkiyah son of Meshullam son of Zadok son of Meraioth son of Ahitub, officer of the house of God, <sup>12</sup>and their associates who did the work of the house, eight hundred twenty-two; and Adaiah son of Jeroham son of Pelaliah son of Amzi son of Zechariah son of Pashhur son of Malchijah, <sup>13</sup>and his associates, heads of ancestral houses, two hundred forty-two; and Amashsai son of Azarel son of Ahzai son of Meshillemoth son of Immer, <sup>14</sup>and their associates, valiant warriors, one hundred twenty-eight; their overseer was Zabdiel son of Haggadolim.

Verses 15-16 list the Levites living in Jerusalem, and verse 17 focuses on the singers.

<sup>15</sup>Of the Levites: Shemaiah son of Hasshub son of Azrikam son of Hashabiah son of Bunni; <sup>16</sup>and Shabbethai and Jozabad, of the leaders of the Levites, who were over the outside work of the house of God; <sup>17</sup>and Mattaniah son of Mica son of Zabdi son of Asaph, who was the leader to begin the thanksgiving in prayer, and Bakbukiah, the second among his associates; and Abda son of Shammua son of Galal son of Jeduthun. <sup>18</sup>All the Levites in the holy city were two hundred eighty-four.

Verses 19-24 record those from other groups.

<sup>19</sup>The gatekeepers, Akkub, Talmon and their associates, who kept watch at the gates, were one hundred seventy-two. <sup>20</sup>And the rest of Israel, and of the priests and the Levites, were in all the towns of Judah, all of them in their inheritance. <sup>21</sup>But the temple servants lived on Ophel; and Ziha and Gishpa were over the temple servants. <sup>22</sup>The overseer of the Levites in Jerusalem was Uzzi son of Bani son of Hashabiah son of Mattaniah son of Mica, of the descendants of Asaph, the singers, in charge of the work of the house of God. <sup>23</sup>For there was a command from the king concerning them, and a settled provision for the singers, as was required every day. <sup>24</sup>And Pethahiah son of Meshezabel, of the descendants of Zerach son of Judah, was at the king's hand in all matters concerning the people.

## Various Lists

### Cities of Judah and Benjamin

This is not a list of towns within Yehud. Rather it is a list of towns, some of them not in Yehud, where there was a significant Jewish presence. Verses 25-30 emphasises Levitical towns (compare Joshua 21:8-19).

<sup>11:25</sup>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, <sup>26</sup>and in Jeshua and in Moladah and Beth-pelet, <sup>27</sup>in Hazar-shual, in Beer-sheba and its villages, <sup>28</sup>in Ziklag, in Meconah and its villages, <sup>29</sup>in En-rimmon, in Zorah, in Jarmuth, <sup>30</sup>Zanoah, Adullam, and their villages, Lachish and its fields, and Azekah and its villages. So they camped from Beer-sheba to the valley of Hinnom.

<sup>31</sup>The people of Benjamin also lived from Geba onward, at Michmash, Aiija, Bethel and its villages, <sup>32</sup>Anathoth, Nob, Ananiah, <sup>33</sup>Hazor, Ramah, Gittaim, <sup>34</sup>Hadid, Zeboim, Neballat, <sup>35</sup>Lod, and Ono, the valley of artisans. <sup>36</sup>And certain divisions of the Levites in Judah were joined to Benjamin.

List of Priests and Levites who came to Yehud from Babylon with Zerubbabel

<sup>12:1</sup>These are the priests and the Levites who came up with Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua: Seraiah, Jeremiah, Ezra, <sup>2</sup>Amariah, Malluch, Hattush, <sup>3</sup>Shecaniah, Rehum, Meremoth, <sup>4</sup>Iddo, Ginnethoi, Abijah, <sup>5</sup>Mijamin, Maadiah, Bilgah, <sup>6</sup>Shemaiah, Joiarib, Jedaiah, <sup>7</sup>Sallu, Amok, Hilkiyah, Jedaiyah. These were the leaders of the priests and of their associates in the days of Jeshua.

<sup>8</sup>And the Levites: Jeshua, Binnui, Kadmiel, Sherebiah, Judah, and Mattaniah, who with his associates was in charge of the songs of thanksgiving. <sup>9</sup>And Bakbukiah and Unno their associates stood opposite them in the service.

List of High Priests

Jeshua was the high priest who accompanied Zerubbabel from Babylon. Eliashib was a contemporary of Nehemiah (see Nehemiah 3:1, 20, 21).

<sup>10</sup>Jeshua was the father of Joiakim, Joiakim the father of Eliashib, Eliashib the father of Joiada, <sup>11</sup>Joiada the father of Jonathan, and Jonathan the father of Jaddua.

List of priests in the period before Nehemiah's arrival

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



## List of Levites

<sup>22</sup>As for the Levites, in the days of Eliashib, Joiada, Johanan, and Jaddua, there were recorded the heads of ancestral houses; also the priests until the reign of Darius the Persian. <sup>23</sup>The Levites, heads of ancestral houses, were recorded in the Book of the Annals until the days of Johanan son of Eliashib. <sup>24</sup>The leaders of the Levites: Hashabiah, Sherebiah, and Jeshua son of Kadmiel, with their associates over against them, to praise and to give thanks, according to the commandment of David the man of God, section opposite to section. <sup>25</sup>Mattaniah, Bakbukiah, Obadiah, Meshullam, Talmon, and Akkub were gatekeepers standing guard at the storehouses of the gates. <sup>26</sup>These were in the days of Joiakim son of Jeshua son of Jozadak, and in the days of the governor Nehemiah and of the priest Ezra, the scribe.

## Preparation of the Levites and Priests for the Blessing of the Wall

<sup>27</sup>Now at the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem they sought out the Levites in all their places, to bring them to Jerusalem to celebrate the dedication with rejoicing, with thanksgivings and with singing, with cymbals, harps, and lyres. <sup>28</sup>The companies of the singers gathered together from the circuit around Jerusalem and from the villages of the Netophathites; <sup>29</sup>also from Beth-gilgal and from the region of Geba and Azmaveth; for the singers had built for themselves villages around Jerusalem. <sup>30</sup>And the priests and the Levites purified themselves; and they purified the people and the gates and the wall.

Procession heading to the right (The 'I' in verses 31 and 38 is presumably Nehemiah. The authors are drawing again on Nehemiah's memoirs)

<sup>31</sup>Then I brought the leaders of Judah up onto the wall, and appointed two great companies that gave thanks and went in procession. One went to the right on the wall to the Dung Gate; <sup>32</sup>and after them went Hoshaiiah and half the officials of Judah, <sup>33</sup>and Azariah, Ezra, Meshullam, <sup>34</sup>Judah, Benjamin, Shemaiah, and Jeremiah, <sup>35</sup>and some of the young priests with trumpets: Zechariah son of Jonathan son of Shemaiah son of Mattaniah son of Micaiah son of Zaccur son of Asaph; <sup>36</sup>and his kindred, Shemaiah, Azarel, Milalai, Gilalai, Maai, Nethanel, Judah, and Hanani, with the musical instruments of David the man of God; and the scribe Ezra went in front of them. <sup>37</sup>At the Fountain Gate, in front of them, they went straight up 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.

## Procession heading to the left

<sup>38</sup>The other company of those who gave thanks went to the left, and I followed them with half of the people on the wall, above the Tower of the Ovens, to the Broad Wall, <sup>39</sup>and above the Gate of Ephraim, and by the Old Gate, 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.

## Dedication Ceremony

<sup>12:40</sup>So both companies of those who gave thanks stood in the house of God, and I and half of the officials with me; <sup>41</sup>and the priests Eliakim, Maaseiah, Miniamin, Micaiah, Elioenai, Zechariah, and Hananiah, with trumpets; <sup>42</sup>and Maaseiah, Shemaiah, Eleazar, Uzzi, Jehohanan, Malchijah, Elam, and Ezer. And the singers sang with Jezrahiah as their leader. <sup>43</sup>They offered great sacrifices that day and rejoiced, for God had made them rejoice with great joy; the women and children also rejoiced. The joy of Jerusalem was heard far away.

<sup>44</sup>On that day men were appointed over the chambers for the stores, the contributions, the first fruits, and the tithes, to gather into them the portions required by the law for the priests and for the Levites from the fields belonging to the towns; for Judah rejoiced over the priests and the Levites who ministered. <sup>45</sup>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. <sup>46</sup>For in the days of David and Asaph long ago there was a leader of the singers, and there were songs of praise and thanksgiving to God. <sup>47</sup>In the days of Zerubbabel and in the days of Nehemiah all Israel gave the daily portions for the singers and the gatekeepers. They set apart that which was for the Levites; and the Levites set apart that which was for the descendants of Aaron.

<sup>13:1</sup>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, <sup>2</sup>because they did not meet the Israelites with bread and water, but hired Balaam against them to curse them – yet our God turned the curse into a blessing. <sup>3</sup>When the people heard the law, they separated from Israel all those of foreign descent.

Nehemiah's memoirs continue.

Verses 40-43 speak of the joy resulting from the dedication of the walls of Jerusalem. These verses follow from verses 31-39. Some scholars suggest that Psalm 147 may have been composed for this ceremony.

The author of verses 44-47 is describing in idealistic terms the functioning of the prescriptions mentioned earlier in regard to the contribution to support the temple personnel (see Nehemiah 10:28-39).

The Torah requires that no foreigner can belong to the 'assembly' [קָהָל, qāhāl] of God (see Deuteronomy 23:3-5; Ezekiel 44:9; though see Deuteronomy 23:7-8 and Isaiah 56:3).

We are reading here from Nehemiah's memoirs. Nehemiah's governorship began in the twentieth year of the reign of Artaxerxes (see Nehemiah 1:1; 2:1; 5:14), that is 445BC. He was governor for twelve years, till the 'thirty-second year of King Artaxerxes' (Nehemiah 5:14; 13:6); that is till 433. He returned for a second term some time before the end of Artaxerxes' reign (424). There is no record of when his second term ended.

During his absence in Susa a large room in the temple complex had been given to Nehemiah's old enemy, Tobiah the Ammonite. Nehemiah insisted that the room be cleansed and returned it to its original purpose.

He discovered also that the giving of tithes had ceased, with the result that the Levites had to leave the temple to support themselves. Are we seeing here an example of the power struggle that favoured the Zadokite priests, and reduced the Levites to be assistants to the priests?

Nehemiah set about reorganising the temple cult.

**<sup>4</sup>Now before this, the priest Eliashib, who was appointed over the chambers of the house of our God, and who was related to Tobiah, <sup>5</sup>prepared for Tobiah a large room 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.**

**<sup>6</sup>While this was taking place I was not in Jerusalem, for in the thirty-second year of King Artaxerxes of Babylon I went to the king. After some time I asked leave of the king <sup>7</sup>and returned to Jerusalem. I then discovered the wrong that Eliashib had done on behalf of Tobiah, preparing a room for him in the courts of the house of God. <sup>8</sup>And I was very angry, and I threw all the household furniture of Tobiah out of the room. <sup>9</sup>Then I gave orders and they cleansed the chambers, and I brought back the vessels of the house of God, with the grain offering and the frankincense.**

**<sup>10</sup>I also found out that the portions of the Levites had not been given to them; so that the Levites and the singers, who had conducted the service, had gone back to their fields. <sup>11</sup>So I remonstrated with the officials and said, "Why is the house of God forsaken?" And I gathered them together and set them in their stations. <sup>12</sup>Then all Judah brought the tithe of the grain, wine, and oil into the storehouses. <sup>13</sup>And I appointed as treasurers over the storehouses the priest Shelemiah, the scribe Zadok, and Pedaiah of the Levites, and as their assistant Hanan son of Zaccur son of Mattaniah, for they were considered faithful; and their duty was to distribute to their associates. <sup>14</sup>Remember 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.**

**<sup>15</sup>In those days I saw in Judah people treading wine presses on the sabbath, and bringing in heaps of grain and loading them on donkeys; and also wine, grapes, figs, and all kinds of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the sabbath day; and I warned them at that time against selling food. <sup>16</sup>Tyrians also, who lived in the city, brought in fish and all kinds of merchandise and sold them on the sabbath to the people of Judah, and in Jerusalem. <sup>17</sup>Then I remonstrated with the nobles of Judah and said to them, “What is this evil thing that you are doing, profaning the sabbath day? <sup>18</sup>Did not your ancestors act in this way, and did not our God bring all this disaster on us and on this city? Yet you bring more wrath on Israel by profaning the sabbath.”**

**<sup>19</sup>When it began to be 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 set some of my servants over the gates, to prevent any burden from being brought in on the sabbath day. <sup>20</sup>Then the merchants and sellers of all kinds of merchandise spent the night outside Jerusalem once or twice. <sup>21</sup>But I warned them and said to them, “Why do you spend the night in front of the wall? If you do so again, I will lay hands on you.” From that time on they did not come on the sabbath. <sup>22</sup>And 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 favour, O my God, and spare me according to the greatness of your steadfast love.**

Ezra mentioned the sabbath in his penitential prayer (see Nehemiah 9:14). Part of the pact agreed to and backed by an oath was to observe the sabbath (see Nehemiah 10:31). This, too, had fallen away.

Nehemiah had the gates of the city closed from dusk on Friday, and so put an end to marketing goods on the sabbath. Violation of the sabbath was seen by Jeremiah (see Jeremiah 17:19-27) and Ezekiel (see Ezekiel 20:12-24) as the cause of much of Israel’s misfortune.

It was particularly at the time of the Babylonian Exile that the Sabbath became an important element in Jewish self-identity. Unable to go to the temple, the exiles came together (this is the meaning of the word ‘synagogue’) on the Sabbath to remember and to pray. It was a day consecrated to God, and its observance was symbolic of the commitment of the people to keep their part of the covenant.

You shall keep my Sabbaths, for this is a sign between me and you throughout your generations, given in order that you may know that I, the Lord, sanctify you ... Whoever does any work on it shall be cut off from among the people ... Therefore the Israelites shall keep the Sabbath, observing the Sabbath throughout their generations, as a perpetual covenant.

– Exodus 31:13,16

If you refrain from trampling the Sabbath, from pursuing your own interests on my holy day; if you call the Sabbath a delight and the holy day of the Lord honourable; if you honour it, not going your own ways, serving your own interests, or pursuing your own affairs; then you shall take delight in the Lord.

– Isaiah 58:13-14

Nehemiah also encountered the problem of mixed marriages, with the watering down of religious purity. The efforts of Ezra (see Ezra 9-10), and his own earlier actions in this regard (see Nehemiah 10:30), had not succeeded in stamping out the practice that had proved the downfall of King Solomon (see verse 26).

Even a member of the high priestly family had married the daughter of the Samaritan governor, Sanballat the Horonite (see verse 28).

Nehemiah calls on God to ‘remember’ those responsible for undermining the covenant (verse 29; see 6:14). They must not be allowed to get away unscathed.

Verses 30-31 are the last verses to be cited from Nehemiah’s memoirs. Typically, he concludes with a prayer, in which he asks God to ‘remember’ him; that is to look upon him with love.

The Hebrew Bible concludes with the Books of Chronicles. It is interesting that our oldest Hebrew Bibles, the Aleppo Codex from the tenth century and the Leningrad Codex from early in the eleventh century, both end with the Book of Nehemiah, making the final words of the Bible: ‘Remember me, O my God, for good’. There is an echo here of the claim made in the first book of the Hebrew Bible: ‘God saw everything that he had made, and indeed it was very good’(Genesis 1:31).

**<sup>23</sup>In those days also I saw Jews who had married women of Ashdod, Ammon, and Moab; <sup>24</sup>and half of their children spoke the language of Ashdod, and they could not speak the language of Judah, but spoke the language of various peoples. <sup>25</sup>And I contended with 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. <sup>26</sup>Did not King Solomon 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. <sup>27</sup>Shall we then listen to you and do all this great evil and act treacherously against our God by marrying foreign women?”**

**<sup>28</sup>And one of the sons of Jehoiada, son of the high priest Eliashib, was the son-in-law of Sanballat the Horonite; I chased him away from me. <sup>29</sup>Remember them, O my God, because they have defiled the priesthood, the covenant of the priests and the Levites.**

**<sup>30</sup>Thus I cleansed them from everything foreign, and I established the duties of the priests and Levites, each in his work; <sup>31</sup>and I provided for the wood offering, at appointed times, and for the first fruits. Remember me, O my God, for good.**

