

Nehemiah 11:1 ¶ And the rulers of the people dwelt at Jerusalem: the rest of the people also cast lots, to bring one of ten to dwell in Jerusalem the holy city, and nine parts *to dwell* in other cities.

Nehemiah 11:2 And the people blessed all the men, that willingly offered themselves to dwell at Jerusalem.

This chapter focuses on the distribution of the people in the land, especially on those that lived in Jerusalem.

Nehemiah recorded that the governmental and religious leaders of the people lived in Jerusalem. Lots were cast among the rest of the population to bring one out of ten to live in Jerusalem, leaving the rest to populate the other cities of Israel. The people praised those who volunteered to live in Jerusalem; it's understandable that most people preferred to live on their own land (the land of their inheritance).

JFB offered a good explanation for the need of maintaining a strong population in Jerusalem: "That city being the metropolis of the country, it was right and proper that the seat of government should be there. But the exigency of the times required that special measures should be taken to insure the residence of an adequate population for the custody of the buildings and the defense of the city. From the annoyances of restless and malignant enemies, who tried every means to demolish the rising fortifications, there was some danger attending a settlement in Jerusalem. Hence the greater part of the returned exiles, in order to earn as well as secure the rewards of their duty, preferred to remain in the country or the provincial towns. To remedy this state of things, it was resolved to select every tenth man of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin by lot, to become a permanent inhabitant of the capital. The necessity of such an expedient commended it to the general approval. It was the more readily submitted to because the lot was resorted to on all the most critical conjunctures of the Jewish history, and regarded by the people as a divine decision (Proverbs 18:18). This awakened strongly the national spirit; and patriotic volunteers came forward readily to meet the wishes of the authorities, a service which, implying great self-denial as well as courage, was reckoned in the circumstances of so much importance as entitled them to the public gratitude. No wonder that the conduct of these volunteers drew forth the tribute of public admiration; for they sacrificed their personal safety and comfort for the interests of the community because Jerusalem was at that time a place against which the enemies of the Jews were directing a thousand plots. Therefore, residence in it at such a juncture was attended with expense and various annoyances from which a country life was entirely free."

I liked Ironside's observation: "To most of us, perhaps, the details that follow in the balance of the chapter can, in the very nature of things, possess very little interest. It is a mere tabulation of families and individuals whose names to us are often well-nigh unpronounceable, and usually, forgotten almost as soon as read. But in the sight of God it is a tabulation of great importance, and, like other lists we have noticed in these post-captivity books, will be consulted at the judgment-seat of Christ. For these willing offerers will then learn how good was their

choice when they accepted loss in this world that they might the better care for the city of God's choice."

Nehemiah 11:3 Now these *are* the chief of the province that dwelt in Jerusalem: but in the cities of Judah dwelt every one in his possession in their cities, *to wit*, Israel, the priests, and the Levites, and the Nethinims, and the children of Solomon's servants.

Nehemiah 11:4 And at Jerusalem dwelt *certain* of the children of Judah, and of the children of Benjamin.

Beginning in verse 3 is a summarized breakdown of those that lived in Jerusalem. It is noted that many lived on their own properties in Judah, but the leaders lived in Jerusalem. I liked the wording of the CJB for verse 3: "*In the cities of Y'hudah, everyone lived on his own property — the people of Isra'el, the cohanim, the L'vi'im, the temple servants and the descendants of Shlomo's servants. But the leaders of the province lived in Yerushalayim.*"

There were several from both the tribes of Judah and Benjamin that lived in Jerusalem.

Of the children of Judah; Athaiah the son of Uzziah, the son of Zechariah, the son of Amariah, the son of Shephatiah, the son of Mahalaleel, of the children of Perez;

Nehemiah 11:5 And Maaseiah the son of Baruch, the son of Colhozeh, the son of Hazaiah, the son of Adaiah, the son of Joiarib, the son of Zechariah, the son of Shiloni.

Nehemiah 11:6 All the sons of Perez that dwelt at Jerusalem *were* four hundred threescore and eight valiant men.

This section lists those from the tribe of Judah living in Jerusalem. It is noted that the tally included 468 valiant men that descended from Perez.

Nehemiah 11:7 And these *are* the sons of Benjamin; Sallu the son of Meshullam, the son of Joed, the son of Pedaiah, the son of Kolaiah, the son of Maaseiah, the son of Ithiel, the son of Jesaiah.

Nehemiah 11:8 And after him Gabbai, Sallai, nine hundred twenty and eight.

This section lists those from the tribe of Benjamin living in Jerusalem, totaling 928.

Nehemiah 11:9 And Joel the son of Zichri *was* their overseer: and Judah the son of Senuah *was* second over the city.

It is noted that the city leader was Zichri and that Judah the son of Senuah was his second in command.

Nehemiah 11:10 Of the priests: Jedaiah the son of Joiarib, Jachin.

Nehemiah 11:11 Seraiah the son of Hilkiah, the son of Meshullam, the son of Zadok, the son of Meraioth, the son of Ahitub, *was* the ruler of the house of God.

Nehemiah 11:12 And their brethren that did the work of the house *were* eight hundred twenty and two: and Adaiah the son of Jeroham, the son of Pelaliah, the son of Amzi, the son of Zechariah, the son of Pashur, the son of Malchiah,

Nehemiah 11:13 And his brethren, chief of the fathers, two hundred forty and two: and Amashai the son of Azareel, the son of Ahasai, the son of Meshillemoth, the son of Immer,

Nehemiah 11:14 And their brethren, mighty men of valour, an hundred twenty and eight: and their overseer *was* Zabdiel, the son of *one of* the great men.

This section lists the priests and their kinsmen that were responsible for doing work in the temple—a workforce of 1,192. It is noted that Seraiah, descendant of Ahitub, was the ruling authority at the temple, the chief assistant to the high priest. He was assisted by Amashai and Zabdiel.

Nehemiah 11:15 Also of the Levites: Shemaiah the son of Hashub, the son of Azrikam, the son of Hashabiah, the son of Bunni;

Nehemiah 11:16 And Shabbethai and Jozabad, of the chief of the Levites, *had* the oversight of the outward business of the house of God.

Nehemiah 11:17 And Mattaniah the son of Micha, the son of Zabdi, the son of Asaph, *was* the principal to begin the thanksgiving in prayer: and Bakbukiah the second among his brethren, and Abda the son of Shammua, the son of Galal, the son of Jeduthun.

Nehemiah 11:18 All the Levites in the holy city *were* two hundred fourscore and four.

This section lists the rest of the Levites who were responsible for temple affairs outside the temple grounds, a total of 284 men.

Nehemiah 11:19 Moreover the porters, Akkub, Talmon, and their brethren that kept the gates, *were* an hundred seventy and two.

Nehemiah 11:20 ¶ And the residue of Israel, of the priests, *and* the Levites, *were* in all the cities of Judah, every one in his inheritance.

Nehemiah 11:21 But the Nethinims dwelt in Ophel: and Ziha and Gispa *were* over the Nethinims.

This section notes that there were 172 porters and gatekeepers. The rest of the priests and Levites lived on their own lands throughout Judah.

The Nethinims lived in Ophel; their leaders were Ziha and Gispa. “The tradition is that the Gibeonites (Josh. 9:27) were the original caste, afterwards called Nethinim. Their numbers were added to afterwards from captives taken in battle; and they were formally given by David to the Levites (Ezra 8:20), and so were called Nethinim, i.e., the given ones, given to the Levites to be their servants.” (Easton’s Dictionary)

Nehemiah 11:22 The overseer also of the Levites at Jerusalem *was* Uzzi the son of Bani, the son of Hashabiah, the son of Mattaniah, the son of Micha. Of the sons of Asaph, the singers *were* over the business of the house of God.

Nehemiah 11:23 For *it was* the king’s commandment concerning them, that a

certain portion should be for the singers, due for every day.

The overseer of the Levites in Jerusalem was Uzzi, a descendant of Micha.

The sons of Asaph were the singers that served in the temple. The king had commanded that a group of singers were responsible to serve daily at the temple. It should be noted that the king had commanded that the temple be rebuilt (implicit would be that it serve as originally intended).

Ezra 1:1–3 “Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The LORD God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the LORD God of Israel, (he is the God,) which is in Jerusalem.”

Nehemiah 11:24 And Pethahiah the son of Meshezabeel, of the children of Zerah the son of Judah, was at the king’s hand in all matters concerning the people.

The king’s chief administrative assistant was Pethahiah, son of Meshezabeel of the descendants of Zerah the son of Judah.

Nehemiah 11:25 And for the villages, with their fields, some of the children of Judah dwelt at Kirjatharba, and in the villages thereof, and at Dibon, and in the villages thereof, and at Jekabzeel, and in the villages thereof,

Nehemiah 11:26 And at Jeshua, and at Moladah, and at Bethpheet,

Nehemiah 11:27 And at Hazarshual, and at Beersheba, and in the villages thereof,

Nehemiah 11:28 And at Ziklag, and at Mekonah, and in the villages thereof,

Nehemiah 11:29 And at Enrimmon, and at Zareah, and at Jarmuth,

Nehemiah 11:30 Zanoah, Adullam, and in their villages, at Lachish, and the fields thereof, at Azekah, and in the villages thereof. And they dwelt from Beersheba unto the valley of Hinnom.

Nehemiah 11:31 The children also of Benjamin from Geba dwelt at Michmash, and Aija, and Bethel, and in their villages,

Nehemiah 11:32 And at Anathoth, Nob, Ananiah,

Nehemiah 11:33 Hazor, Ramah, Gittaim,

Nehemiah 11:34 Hadid, Zeboim, Neballat,

Nehemiah 11:35 Lod, and Ono, the valley of craftsmen.

Nehemiah 11:36 And of the Levites were divisions in Judah, and in Benjamin.

This section lists the other towns and cities occupied by the tribes of Judah (v25-30) and Benjamin (v31-35). Levites lived both in Judah and Benjamin.

The NIV Commentary provides some interesting facts:

- Kirjatharba was “the archaic name of the city of Hebron,” the location of the tomb of the patriarchs.
- Beersheba marked the southernmost point of Israel’s population.
- Zareah was the home of Manoah, Samson’s father.
- Adullam was the city where David hid in a cave from Saul.
- Geba was the northernmost city of Judah.
- Michmash was the strategic pass to the Jordan Valley where Saul and Jonathan fought the Philistines.
- Anathoth was the birthplace of the prophet Jeremiah.
- Lod is “today the site of Israel’s international airport, ten miles from the coast.”