

Nehemiah 12:1 ¶ Now these *are* the priests and the Levites that went up with Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua:

This chapter opens with a record of the priests and Levites that returned to Israel with Zerubbabel and Jeshua (the high priest).

...Seraiah, Jeremiah, Ezra,

Nehemiah 12:2 Amariah, Malluch, Hattush,

Nehemiah 12:3 Shechaniah, Rehum, Meremoth,

Nehemiah 12:4 Iddo, Ginnetho, Abijah,

Nehemiah 12:5 Miamin, Maadiah, Bilgah,

Nehemiah 12:6 Shemaiah, and Joarib, Jedaiah,

Nehemiah 12:7 Sallu, Amok, Hilkiyah, Jedaiah. These *were* the chief of the priests and of their brethren in the days of Jeshua.

Nehemiah 12:8 Moreover the Levites: Jeshua, Binnui, Kadmiel, Sherebiah, Judah, *and* Mattaniah, *which was* over the thanksgiving, he and his brethren.

Nehemiah 12:9 Also Bakbukiah and Unni, their brethren, *were* over against them in the watches.

Nehemiah 12:10 And Jeshua begat Joiakim, Joiakim also begat Eliashib, and Eliashib begat Joiada,

JFB notes (beginning with Jeshua): "This enumeration was of great importance, not only as establishing their individual purity of descent, but because the chronology of the Jews was henceforth to be reckoned, not as formerly by the reigns of their kings, but by the successions of their high priests."

Nehemiah 12:11 And Joiada begat Jonathan, and Jonathan begat Jaddua.

Nehemiah 12:12 And in the days of Joiakim were priests, the chief of the fathers: of Seraiah, Meraiah; of Jeremiah, Hananiah;

Nehemiah 12:13 Of Ezra, Meshullam; of Amariah, Jehohanan;

Nehemiah 12:14 Of Melicu, Jonathan; of Shebaniah, Joseph;

Nehemiah 12:15 Of Harim, Adna; of Meraioth, Helkai;

Nehemiah 12:16 Of Iddo, Zechariah; of Ginnethon, Meshullam;

Nehemiah 12:17 Of Abijah, Zichri; of Miniamin, of Moadiah, Piltai;

Nehemiah 12:18 Of Bilgah, Shammua; of Shemaiah, Jehonathan;

Nehemiah 12:19 And of Joarib, Mattenai; of Jedaiah, Uzzi;

Nehemiah 12:20 Of Sallai, Kallai; of Amok, Eber;

Nehemiah 12:21 Of Hilkiyah, Hashabiah; of Jedaiah, Nethaneel.

Nehemiah 12:22 The Levites in the days of Eliashib, Joiada, and Johanan, and Jaddua, *were* recorded chief of the fathers: also the priests, to the reign of Darius the Persian.

Nehemiah 12:23 The sons of Levi, the chief of the fathers, *were* written in the book of the chronicles, even until the days of Johanan the son of Eliashib.

Nehemiah 12:24 And the chief of the Levites: Hashabiah, Sherebiah, and Jeshua the son of Kadmiel, with their brethren over against them, to praise *and* to give thanks, according to the commandment of David the man of God, ward over against ward.

It's interesting to me that specific people were assigned to praise and give thanks to God, a practice instituted by David, referenced as "the man of God," a far more important title than the king of Israel.

Nehemiah 12:25 Mattaniah, and Bakbukiah, Obadiah, Meshullam, Talmon, Akkub, were porters keeping the ward at the thresholds of the gates.

Nehemiah 12:26 These *were* in the days of Joiakim the son of Jeshua, the son of Jozadak, and in the days of Nehemiah the governor, and of Ezra the priest, the scribe.

The rest of the chapter is a record of those that served at the dedication of the walls of Jerusalem. It is significant to note that the main emphasis is on giving praise and thanks to God—especially through music and singing.

Nehemiah 12:27 ¶ And at the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem they sought the Levites out of all their places, to bring them to Jerusalem, to keep the dedication with gladness, both with thanksgivings, and with singing, *with* cymbals, psalteries, and with harps.

Nehemiah 12:28 And the sons of the singers gathered themselves together, both out of the plain country round about Jerusalem, and from the villages of Netophathi;

Nehemiah 12:29 Also from the house of Gilgal, and out of the fields of Geba and Azmaveth: for the singers had builded them villages round about Jerusalem.

Nehemiah 12:30 And the priests and the Levites purified themselves, and purified the people, and the gates, and the wall.

I liked Guzik's comment on purification: "We can be made pure and clean before God today, right now, by doing what the Bible says to do - not in following an Old Testament ceremony, but by receiving the word of the New Testament: *If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* (1John 1:9)"

Constable offers this summary of the following verses: "One large choir mounted the city wall and walked around it counterclockwise, evidently beginning at the Valley Gate (v31-37). Another choir mounted it, probably at the same place, and proceeded in a clockwise direction (v38-39). Both groups appear to have sung as they walked (v42). They met at the temple (v40-42). There the priests offered many sacrifices and the people rejoiced greatly (v43). This was the same wall that Tobiah had earlier claimed would be so weak that even a fox walking on it would break it down (Neh 4:3)!"

Nehemiah 12:31 Then I brought up the princes of Judah upon the wall, and appointed two great *companies of them that gave thanks, whereof one went on the right hand upon the wall toward the dung gate:*

Nehemiah 12:32 And after them went Hoshaiah, and half of the princes of Judah,

Nehemiah 12:33 And Azariah, Ezra, and Meshullam,

Nehemiah 12:34 Judah, and Benjamin, and Shemaiah, and Jeremiah,

Nehemiah 12:35 And *certain* of the priests' sons with trumpets; *namely*, Zechariah the son of Jonathan, the son of Shemaiah, the son of Mattaniah, the son of Michaiiah, the son of Zaccur, the son of Asaph:

Nehemiah 12:36 And his brethren, Shemaiah, and Azarael, Milalai, Gilalai, Maai, Nethaneel, and Judah, Hanani, with the musical instruments of David the man of God, and Ezra the scribe before them.

Nehemiah 12:37 And at the fountain gate, which was over against them, they went up by the stairs of the city of David, at the going up of the wall, above the house of David, even unto the water gate eastward.

Nehemiah 12:38 And the other *company of them that gave* thanks went over against *them*, and I after them, and the half of the people upon the wall, from beyond the tower of the furnaces even unto the broad wall;

Nehemiah 12:39 And from above the gate of Ephraim, and above the old gate, and above the fish gate, and the tower of Hananeel, and the tower of Meah, even unto the sheep gate: and they stood still in the prison gate.

Nehemiah 12:40 So stood the two *companies of them that gave* thanks in the house of God, and I, and the half of the rulers with me:

Nehemiah 12:41 And the priests; Eliakim, Maaseiah, Miniamin, Michaiiah, Elioenai, Zechariah, *and* Hananiah, with trumpets;

Nehemiah 12:42 And Maaseiah, and Shemaiah, and Eleazar, and Uzzi, and Jehohanan, and Malchijah, and Elam, and Ezer. And the singers sang loud, with Jezrahiah *their* overseer.

Nehemiah 12:43 Also that day they offered great sacrifices, and rejoiced: for God had made them rejoice with great joy: the wives also and the children rejoiced: so that the joy of Jerusalem was heard even afar off.

I liked Ironside's observation and application on the following verses: "Nor were the servants of the Lord forgotten, for the people brought their tithes into the storehouse, and out of willing hearts gave abundantly for the maintenance of the sons of Aaron, in accordance with the Word (vers. 44-47).

One is reminded of the two-fold offering of **Hebrews 13:15, 16**: "By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name. But to do good and to communicate, forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." These two offerings should never be divorced—thanksgiving going up to God from grateful hearts, and benevolence flowing forth toward men, the practical expression of that gratitude."

Nehemiah 12:44 ¶ And at that time were some appointed over the chambers for the treasures, for the offerings, for the firstfruits, and for the tithes, to gather into them out of the fields of the cities the portions of the law for the priests and Levites: for Judah rejoiced for the priests and for the Levites that waited.

Nehemiah 12:45 And both the singers and the porters kept the ward of their God, and the ward of the purification, according to the commandment of David, *and* of Solomon his son.

Nehemiah 12:46 For in the days of David and Asaph of old *there were* chief of the singers, and songs of praise and thanksgiving unto God.

Nehemiah 12:47 And all Israel in the days of Zerubbabel, and in the days of Nehemiah, gave the portions of the singers and the porters, every day his portion: and they sanctified *holy things* unto the Levites; and the Levites sanctified *them* unto the children of Aaron.