

[[@Nehemiah]]

Nehemiah

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF NEHEMIAH

This book is, by the authors of the Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions, called the "Second" Book of Ezra, it being a continuation of the same history, and was by the Jews reckoned as one book with Ezra; Kimchi on **Isa 9:7**, calls it Ezra, so the Talmud {a}; and it has been quoted by Christian writers under his name; see the argument of the book of Ezra; but not as if it was written by him; for it is a clear case it was written by Nehemiah, whose name it bears, as appears from **Ne 1:1** and throughout Nehemiah speaks of himself under the first person; and the style also is very different from that of Ezra, being plainer and easier than his. It has always had a place in the canon of Scriptures, both with Jews and Christians; and is of use to show the fulfilment of the prophecy of Zechariah, and especially of Daniel concerning the building of the wall of Jerusalem in troublesome times; to carry on the history of the Jews, and describe the state of the church in those times, what opposition was made to it, and what enemies it had, and what must be expected when any work of God is set about; it is the last of the historical books that was written, as is thought, and contains an history of the space of about twelve years, from the twentieth of Artaxerxes to the thirty second of his reign, see **Ne 1:1**.

{a} T. Bab. Succah, fol. 37. 1. & Gloss. in ib. fol. 12. 1.

[[@Nehemiah 1]]

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION NEHEMIAH 1

This chapter relates how that Nehemiah, being at Shushan in Persia, and meeting with some Jews, inquired of the state of Jerusalem, of which having a melancholy account, he betook to mourning, fasting, and prayer, **Ne 1:1**, and his prayer is recorded, **Ne 1:5**.

[[@Nehemiah 1:1]] Ver. [[1 >> Bible:Nehemiah 1:1]]. The words of Nehemiah the son of Hachaliah,.... Or his transactions and deeds; for yrbd "dibre" signifies things done, as well as words spoken; who Hachaliah his father was is not known; the Arabic version adds, the high priest, without any foundation; though some have thought that Nehemiah was a priest, from a passage in

"Therefore whereas we are now purposed to keep the purification of the temple upon the five and twentieth day of the month Chislev, we thought it necessary to certify you thereof, that ye also might keep it, as the feast of the tabernacles, and of the fire, which was given us when Neemias offered sacrifice, after that he had builded the temple and the altar." (2 Maccabees 1:18)

and from signing and sealing the covenant at the head of priests,

Ne 10:1, but he rather seems to be of the tribe of Judah, see **Ne 2:3**, and Nehemiah may be the same that went up with Zerubbabel, and returned again, and then became the king's cupbearer; though some are of another opinion, See Gill on "Ezr 2:2",

and it came to pass in the month Chisleu; the ninth month, as the Arabic version; of which see **Ezr 10:9**,

in the twentieth year; not of Nehemiah's age, for, if he went up with Zerubbabel, he must be many years older; but in the twentieth year of the reign of Artaxerxes, **Ne 1:1**,

as I was in Shushan the palace; a city in Persia, the royal seat of the kings of it; as Ecbatana was in the summer time, this in the spring, as Cyrus made it, according to Xenophon {b}; but others say {c} it was their seat in winter, and this was the season now when Nehemiah was with the king there; for Chisleu was a winter month, answering to part of November and of December; of Shushan, See Gill on "Da 8:2", to which may be added what a traveller of the last century says {d} of it,

"we rested at Valdac, once the great city Susa, but now very ruinous; it was first built by Tythonus, and his son Memnon, but enlarged by Darius the son of Hystaspes; in the building whereof Memnon was so exceeding prodigal, that, as Cassiodorus writeth, he joined the stones together with gold--such was the beauty and delectableness of it for situation, that they called it "Susa", which in the Persian tongue signified a "lily", but now it is called Valdac, because of the poverty of the place;"

and it is generally supposed to have its name from the abundance of lilies about it; but Dr. Hyde {e} gives another signification of its name, he says the Persians called it, "Sus", which signifies "liquorice", but for what reasons he says not. There is a city now called Shustera, and is thought by some travellers to be built at least very near where Shushan formerly stood {f}.

{b} Cyropaedia, l. 8. c. 44. {c} Athenaeus, l. 12. c. 1. {d} Cartwright's Preacher's Travels, p. 87, 88. {e} Hist. Relig. Vet. Pers. c. 35. p. 414. {f} Tavernier, tom. 1. l. 4. c. 1.

[[@Nehemiah 1:2]]Ver. [[2 >> Bible:Nehemiah 1:2]]. That Hanani, one of my brethren,.... Either in natural relation, **Ne 7:2**, or being a Jew of the same nation and religion; so Jarchi interprets it, one of my companions or acquaintance:

he and certain men of Judah; who came from thence to Shushan on some account or another: and I asked them concerning the Jews that had escaped, which were left of the captivity; who were returned from it to their own land; he inquired of their health and prosperity, in what circumstances they were, whether prosperous or adverse, whether they flourished, or were in distress:

and concerning Jerusalem; whether it was rebuilt, the houses and walls of it, and in what condition it was.

[[@Nehemiah 1:3]]Ver. [[3 >> Bible:Nehemiah 1:3]]. And they said unto me, the remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province,.... In Judea, now reduced to a province of the Persian empire:

are in great affliction and reproach; harassed and distressed, calumniated and vilified, by their enemies the Samaritans:

the wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are burnt with fire; that is, its wall and gates were in the same condition in which Nebuchadnezzar had left them, for since his times as yet they had never been set up; for this is not to be understood of what was lately done by their adversaries, which is not at all probable.

[[@Nehemiah 1:4]]Ver. [[4 >> Bible:Nehemiah 1:4]]. And it came to pass, when I heard these words,.... This sad and melancholy account of things:

that I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days; sat down upon the ground in dust and ashes, after the manner of mourners, and wept bitterly, and mourned in a most sorrowful manner, see **Job 2:8**,

and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven; that made it, and dwells in it.

[[@Nehemiah 1:5]]Ver. [[5 >> Bible:Nehemiah 1:5]]. And said, I beseech thee, O Lord God of heaven,.... He prayed not to the host of heaven, the sun in it, as the Persians, but to the God of it, in an humble suppliant manner:

the great and terrible God; who is to be feared, and had in reverence of all his creatures, because of his greatness and glory, being God over all, blessed for ever, and his name holy and reverend:

that keepeth covenant and mercy for them that love him, and observe his commandments; who keep them from a principle of love to him; to those he has made gracious promises in his covenant, which he truly and faithfully performs; and the consideration of these perfections in God animates and encourages good men in prayer to him.

[[@Nehemiah 1:6]]Ver. [[6 >> Bible:Nehemiah 1:6]]. Let thine ear be now attentive,.... To his prayer, as in **Ne 1:11**,

and thine eyes open; to behold with pity and compassion the distressed case of Jerusalem, and the Jews in it:

I pray before thee now, day and night, for the children of Israel thy servants; this he had continued to do ever since he heard of their trouble and calamity:

and confess the sins of the children of Israel, which we have sinned against thee: both I and my father's house have sinned; he considered sin as the cause of all this evil that had befallen his people, and confesses it with sorrow and humiliation, and not their sins only, but his own personal and family sins.

[[@Nehemiah 1:7]]Ver. [[7 >> Bible:Nehemiah 1:7]]. We have dealt very corruptly against thee,.... Corrupted his covenant, laws, and precepts, as well as themselves, ways, and works; all which were against the Lord, contrary to his nature, mind, and will:

and have not kept the commandments, nor the statutes, nor the judgments, which thou commandedst thy servant Moses; the laws, moral, ceremonial, and judicial.

[[@Nehemiah 1:8]]Ver. [[8 >> Bible:Nehemiah 1:8]]. Remember, I beseech thee, the word that thou commandedst thy servant Moses,.... To publish and declare to the children of Israel,

Deuteronomy 28:64,

saying, if ye transgress; the law of God:

I will scatter you abroad among the nations; as now they had been among the Assyrians, Chaldeans, Medes, and Persians.

[[@Nehemiah 1:9]]Ver. [[9 >> Bible:Nehemiah 1:9]]. But if ye return unto me, and keep my commandments, and do them,.... Return by repentance, and, as a proof of the genuineness of it, yield obedience to the commands of God, and continue therein:

though there were of you cast out unto the uttermost part of the heaven; that is, the uttermost parts of the earth, the most distant regions; so called, because at the extreme parts of the horizon, according to our apprehension, the heavens and earth touch each other; so that what is the uttermost part of the one is supposed to be of the other:

yet will I gather them from thence and will bring them unto the place that I have chosen to set my name there; that is to Jerusalem where the temple was built, and his name was called upon.

[[@Nehemiah 1:10]]Ver. [[10 >> Bible:Nehemiah 1:10]]. Now these are thy servants, and thy people,.... Meaning those that were in Jerusalem and Judah, gathered out of several countries, and returned to Jerusalem:

whom thou hast redeemed by thy great power, and by thy strong hand; touching and moving the heart of Cyrus to proclaim liberty to them.

[[@Nehemiah 1:11]]Ver. [[11 >> Bible:Nehemiah 1:11]]. O Lord, I beseech thee, let now thine ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servant,.... To the prayer of Nehemiah, put up at this time:

and to the prayer of thy servants, who desire to fear thy name; the prayer of the Jews in Judea, whose desire was to worship the Lord in his temple, according to his will:

and prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this day; meaning himself, who was to wait on the king of Persia that day, and, if he had opportunity, intended to lay the case of the Jews before him, and therefore entreats he might meet with success:

and grant him mercy in the sight of this man; King Artaxerxes, who was but a man, and whose heart was in the hands of God, and he could easily move him to pity and compassion towards his poor people the Jews:

for I was the king's cupbearer; in the execution of which office he was often in the king's presence, and hoped to have an opportunity of speaking to him in the behalf of the Jews; this with the Persians was reckoned a very honourable office {g}. A son of Prexaspes, a very honourable man, was made cupbearer to Cambyses; and so it was with the Greeks and Romans {h}; and the poets not only make Ganymedes to be Jupiter's cupbearer {i}, but even Vulcan himself is put into this office {k}.

{g} Herodot. Thalia, sive, l. 3. c. 34. Xenophon. Cyropaedia, l. 5. c. 36. {h} Vid. Athenaei Deipnosophist. l. 10. {i} Homer. Iliad. 21. ver. 234. {k} Homer. Iliad. 1. prope finem.

[[@Nehemiah 2]]

Chapter 2

INTRODUCTION TO NEHEMIAH 2

Nehemiah being sorrowful in the king's presence, the reason of it was asked by the king, which he declared, and then took the opportunity to request of the king that he might be sent to Jerusalem to rebuild it, which was granted him, **Ne 2:1**, upon which he set out, and came to Jerusalem, to the great grief of the enemies of Israel, **Ne 2:9** and after he had been three days in Jerusalem, he privately took a survey of it, to see what condition it was in, unknown to the rulers there, **Ne 2:12**, whom he afterwards exhorted to rise up and build the wall of the city, which they immediately set about, **Ne 2:17** not regarding the scoffs and taunts of their enemies, **Ne 2:19**.

[[@Nehemiah 2:1]] Ver. [[1 >> Bible:Nehemiah 2:1]]. And it came to pass in the month Nisan; in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes,.... It was still but in the twentieth year of his reign; for though Nisan or March was the first month of the year with the Jews, and from whence the reigns of their kings were dated {l}; yet, with other nations, Tisri or September was the beginning of the reigns of their kings {m}; so that Chisleu or November being since, see **Ne 1:1**, it was no more in Nisan or March than the twentieth of the said king's reign, and was three or four months after Nehemiah had first heard of the distress of his people; which time he either purposely spent in fasting and prayer on that account, or until now his turn did not come about to exercise his office, in waiting upon the king as his cupbearer: but now it was

that wine was before him; the king; it was brought and set in a proper place, from whence it might be taken for his use:

and I took up the wine, and gave it to the king; according to Xenophon {n}, the cupbearer with the Persians and Medes used to take the wine out of the vessels into the cup, and pour some of it into their left hand, and sup it up, that, if there was any poison in it, the king might not be harmed, and then he delivered it to him upon three fingers {o}:

now I had not been before time sad in his presence; but always pleasant and cheerful, so that the sadness of his countenance was the more taken notice of.

{l} Misp. Roshhashanah, c. 1. sect. 3. {m} T. Bab. Rashhashanah, fol. 3. 1. {n} Cyropaedia, l. 1. c. 11. {o} Vid. Heliodor. Ethiopic. l. 7. c. 27.

[[@Nehemiah 2:2]]Ver. [[2 >> Bible:Nehemiah 2:2]]. Wherefore the king said unto me, why is thy countenance sad, seeing thou art not sick?.... He had no disorder upon him to change his countenance and make him sorrowful, and therefore asks what should be the reason of it:

this is nothing else but sorrow of heart; this is not owing to any bodily disease or pain, but some inward trouble of mind; or "wickedness of heart" {p}, some ill design in his mind, which being conscious of, and thoughtful about, was discovered in his countenance; he suspected, as Jarchi intimates, a design to kill him, by putting poison into his cup:

then I was very sore afraid; lest the king should have suspicion of an ill design on him; or lest, since he must be obliged to give the true reason, he should not succeed in his request, it being so large, and perhaps many about the king were no friends to the Jews.

{p} bl er ponhria kardiav, Sept. "malum nescio quod in corde tuo est", V. L.

[[@Nehemiah 2:3]]Ver. [[3 >> Bible:Nehemiah 2:3]]. And I said unto the king, let the king live for ever,.... Which some think he said to take off the king's suspicion of his having a design upon his life, though it seems to be a common salutation of the kings in those times, see **Da 6:6**,

why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' sepulchres, [lieth] waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire? a man's native place, and where his ancestors lie interred, being always reckoned near and dear, the king and his nobles could not object to his being concerned for the desolations thereof.

[[@Nehemiah 2:4]]Ver. [[4 >> Bible:Nehemiah 2:4]]. Then the king said unto me, for what dost thou make request?.... The king supposed that there was a meaning in those looks and words of his, that he had a favour to ask of him, and therefore encourages him to it; or the king of himself moved this, as being desirous of doing anything for him he would propose, to make him easy:

so I prayed to the God of heaven; secretly, in an ejaculatory way, giving him thanks for thus disposing the king's heart towards him, and entreating he might be directed what to ask, and in a proper manner, and that he might succeed.

[[@Nehemiah 2:5]]Ver. [[5 >> Bible:Nehemiah 2:5]]. And I said unto the king; if it please the king, and if thy servant have found favour in thy sight,.... He submits what he had to say wholly to the pleasure of the king, and puts it upon his unmerited favour, and not on any desert of his own:

that thou wouldest send me unto Judah, unto the city of my fathers' sepulchres, that I may build it; the wall of it, and the houses in it; the favour was, that he might have leave to go thither, and set about such a work, for which he was so much concerned.

[[@Nehemiah 2:6]]Ver. [[6 >> Bible:Nehemiah 2:6]]. And the king said unto me, the queen also sitting by him,.... Which it seems was not very common for the queens of Persia to dine

with the kings their husbands; though this may be observed, not so much for the singularity of it, as for the providence of God in it, that so it should be, she having a good respect for Nehemiah, and the Jewish nation, and forwarded the king in his grant to him: if this king was Darius Hystaspis, this his queen was Atossa, daughter of Cyrus {q}, who might be the more friendly to the Jews, on account of her father's great regard unto them:

for how long shall thy journey be? and when wilt thou return? what time would he ask to do this business in? this shows the king had a great respect for him, and was loath to part with him, at least for any great length of time:

so it pleased the king to send me, when he promised to return unto him, not in twelve years, which was the time of his government in Judea, but in a lesser space, perhaps a year at most, since in less than two months the wall of Jerusalem was finished; and it may be that he then returned to the king of Persia, who sent him again under the character of a governor, finding it was for his interest to have such a man in those parts.

{q} Herodot. Polymnia, sive l. 7. c. 1.

[[@Nehemiah 2:7]]Ver. [[7 >> Bible:Nehemiah 2:7]]. Moreover, I said unto the king, let letters be given me to the governors beyond the river,.... The river of Euphrates, on that side of it towards the land of Judea:

that they may convey me over till I come into Judah; furnish him with provisions, and a guard to protect him.

[[@Nehemiah 2:8]]Ver. [[8 >> Bible:Nehemiah 2:8]]. And a letter unto Asaph the keeper of the king's forest,.... The forest or mountain of Lebanon, which, because of its odoriferous and fruit bearing trees, was more like an orchard or paradise, as this word signifies, and so it is translated in **Ecclesiastes 2:5** and at the extreme part of it, it seems, there was a city called Paradisus {r}; such an officer as here was among the Romans, called Saltuarius {s}, and is now among us:

that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the palace which appertaineth to the house; not the king's palace near the temple, for that might have occasioned suspicion in the king, that his view was to set up himself as king in Judea; but for the gates of the courts adjoining to the temple, and of the wall of the outward court, and of the wall which was to encompass the mountain of the house, the whole circumference of it:

and for the wall of the city; to make gates of in various places for that, where they stood before:

and for the house which I shall enter into; and dwell in during his stay at Jerusalem:

and the king granted me; all the above favours:

according to the good hand of my God upon me; the kind providence of God, which wrought on the heart of the king, and disposed it towards him, and overruled all things for good.

{r} Ptolem. Geograph. l. 5. c. 15. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 23. {s} Vid. Servium in Virgil. Aeneid. l. 2. ver. 485.

[[@Nehemiah 2:9]]Ver. [[9 >> Bible:Nehemiah 2:9]]. Then I came to the governors beyond the river,.... Who these governors were, whether the same who were in the second year of this king's reign eighteen years ago, Tatnai and Shetharboznai, is not certain:

now the king had sent captains of the army and horsemen with me; both to do him honour, and for his safety; and coming thus attended, must serve to recommend him to the governor, who received him from them at the river Euphrates, and conducted him to Judah.

[[@Nehemiah 2:10]]Ver. [[10 >> Bible:Nehemiah 2:10]]. When Sanballat the Horonite,.... Who either presided at Horonaim, or sprung from thence, a city of Moab, Isa 15:5

and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite; who was formerly a slave, but now raised, from a low mean estate, to be governor in the land of Ammon, though still a vassal of the king of Persia:

heard of it, it grieved them exceedingly that there came a man to seek the welfare of the children of Israel; to which the Moabites and Ammonites were always averse, and ever bore an hatred to Israel, and envied everything that tended to their happiness.

[[@Nehemiah 2:11]]Ver. [[11 >> Bible:Nehemiah 2:11]]. So I came to Jerusalem, and was there three days. Before he entered on any business, resting himself from the fatigue of the journey, and receiving the visits of his friends, as Ezra before him did, **Ezr 8:32**.

[[@Nehemiah 2:12]]Ver. [[12 >> Bible:Nehemiah 2:12]]. And I arose in the might, I and some few men with me,.... Both the season of the night, and the small number of men to accompany him, were chosen for greater secrecy, that the business he came upon might not as yet be known, and so no schemes formed to obstruct or discourage:

neither told I any man what God had put in my heart to do at Jerusalem; he was satisfied that what he had in view was from the Lord, who had stirred him up to it, but thought it prudent for the present to conceal it, until things were prepared to put it in execution:

neither was there any beast with me, save the beast that I rode upon; he only rode perhaps on a mule, being not yet recovered quite from the fatigue of his journey, and for the sake of honour; the rest went on foot, that there might be no noise made, and so pass on unheard and unobserved.

[[@Nehemiah 2:13]]Ver. [[13 >> Bible:Nehemiah 2:13]]. And I went out by night, by the gate of the valley,.... Where that formerly stood, for the gates had been burnt, and were not as yet rebuilt; this was the gate that led to the valley of Jehoshaphat, according to some; or rather to the valley of dead bodies, through which the brook Kidron ran, see 2Ch 26:9 it is the gate through which Christ went to Calvary; it led to Shiloh, Bethhoron, and Golan:

even before the dragon well; so called from its winding about, just as a crooked winding river is called serpentine; though some think here stood an image of a dragon, either in wood, or

stone, or brass, out of the mouth of which the water flowed from the well; and others, that since the desolations of Jerusalem, serpents or dragons had their abode here:

and to the dung port; by which they used to carry the dung out of the city, and by which they went to Joppa, the sea, and all the western parts:

and viewed the walls of Jerusalem: in what condition they were, what was necessary to be wholly taken down, and where to begin to build: it must have been a moonlight night or he could not have taken a view; for to have carried torches or lamps with them would have discovered them:

and the gates thereof were consumed with fire; nothing of them remained.

[[@Nehemiah 2:14]] Ver. [[14 >> Bible:Nehemiah 2:14]]. Then I went on to the pool of the fountain, and to the king's pool..... That led to the fountain Siloah or Gihon, so called; it was the way to the potter's field, to Bethlehem, Hebron, Gaza, and Egypt. Rauwolff says {t} there is still standing on the outside of the valley Tyropaeum (which distinguishes the two mountains Zion and Moriah) the gate of the fountain, which hath its name, because it leadeth towards the fountain of Siloah, called the king's pool:

but there was no place for the beast that was under me to pass; because of the heaps of rubbish that lay there.

{t} Travels, par. 3. c. 3. p. 227.

[[@Nehemiah 2:15]] Ver. [[15 >> Bible:Nehemiah 2:15]]. Then went I up in the night by the brook,.... The brook Kidron:

and viewed the wall; that was on that side:

and turned back; did not go quite round the wall, the way perhaps being obstructed with rubbish, and was unpassable or he had not time to do it:

and entered by the gate of the valley, and so returned; into the city, the same way he went out of it, **Ne 2:13.**

[[@Nehemiah 2:16]] Ver. [[16 >> Bible:Nehemiah 2:16]]. And the rulers knew not whither I went, or what I did..... The rulers of the city of Jerusalem, who seem to be officers of the king of Persia, since they are distinguished from Jewish rulers in the next clause:

neither had I as yet told it to the Jews; what he came about and designed to do:

nor to the priests, nor to the nobles, nor to the rulers; the principal men among the Jews, both ecclesiastical and civil:

nor to the rest that did the work; of building and repairing; neither those that were employed in it, nor those that overlooked it.

[[@Nehemiah 2:17]]Ver. [[17 >> Bible:Nehemiah 2:17]]. Then said I unto them,.... The priests and princes of the Jews:

you see the distress that we are in; lie open to our enemies, and exposed to their insults:

how Jerusalem lieth waste, and the gates thereof are burnt with fire, **Ne 1:3**,

come, and let us build up the wall of Jerusalem that we be no more a reproach; to their neighbours about them, who scoffed at them as a defenceless people and frequently came in upon them, and spoiled and plundered them of their goods and substance.

[[@Nehemiah 2:18]]Ver. [[18 >> Bible:Nehemiah 2:18]]. Then I told them of the hand of my God which was good upon me..... Of the kind providence of God in exalting him in the court of the king of Persia, in giving him an opportunity of laying the sad case of Jerusalem before him, and in inclining his heart to show favour to him, and grant his request:

as also the king's words that he had spoken to me; what passed between them on this subject, the commission he gave him, and the letters he sent by him to his governors on this side the river:

and they said, let us rise up and build; encouraged by this account of things, they proposed to set about the work immediately:

so they strengthened their hands for this good work; animated and encouraged one another to proceed to it at once with cheerfulness, and to go on in it with spirit and resolution.

[[@Nehemiah 2:19]]Ver. [[19 >> Bible:Nehemiah 2:19]]. But when Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arabian,.... This third man might be both an Arabian by birth, and governor of some part of Arabia near Judea:

heard it; of their beginning to build:

they laughed us to scorn, and despised us; as very silly people, that undertook what they could never perform:

and said; adding threatenings to their scoffs:

what is this thing that ye do? do ye know what ye are about? have ye any authority to do it? it is unlawful, you will certainly suffer for it:

will ye rebel against the king? the king of Persia; it will be deemed rebellion and treason, and you will be taken up and treated as rebels and traitors; take care what you do, be it at your peril if you proceed.

[[@Nehemiah 2:20]]Ver. [[20 >> Bible:Nehemiah 2:20]]. Then answered I them, and said unto them,.... With much spirit and boldness, not at all intimidated by their scoffs or threats:

the God of heaven, he will prosper us; whom we serve, and under whose protection we are, who will supply us with everything we want, and succeed this undertaking, in whose name we engage in it, and on whom we depend, and we care not what man can do to us:

therefore we his servants will arise and build; in spite of all opposition, difficulties, and discouragements:

but you have no portion, nor right, nor memorial in Jerusalem; no part of the city belonged to them; they had no jurisdiction there; they had no name there, nor their ancestors, in times past; nor had they done anything to perpetuate their memory in it: in short, they had nothing to do with them, neither in religious nor in civil things; and it was best for them to mind their own affairs where they presided, and not trouble themselves about theirs.

[[@Nehemiah 3]]

Chapter 3

INTRODUCTION TO NEHEMIAH 3

This chapter contains the names of the builders of the wall of Jerusalem, the order in which they worked, where they began, and where they ended, which was the sheep gate, **Ne 3:1**.

[[@Nehemiah 3:1]] Ver. [[1 >> Bible:Nehemiah 3:1]]. Then Eliashib the high priest rose up with his brethren the priests,.... This was the grandson of Jeshua or Joshua the high priest, his father's name was Joiakim, **Ne 12:10**, being high priest, and rising first, he set a good example both to the priests and to the people, and served no doubt greatly to animate and encourage them:

and they built the sheep gate; so called, because the sheep were led through it to the temple, and near it was the sheep market, where they were sold, and the sheep pool, where the sacrifices were washed; and this being near the temple, and for the service of it, the priests undertook that; not that they laboured with their hands at it, though it is possible some of them might; but they were at the expense of it, employed labourers, and paid them, and directed them, and had the oversight of them: this gate was to the south of the city; and Rauwolff {u} says, it was still standing by Moriah, the mountain of the temple, which the Turks have taken to themselves, and built on it a Turkish mosque or temple. Near the gate you see still, he says, the sheep pond, which is large and deep, wherein the Nethinims used to wash the beasts, and then gave them to the priests; it is said {w} to lead to the mount of Olives, to Bethany, to Jericho, the desert, and all the east country to Jordan:

they sanctified it; this being for sacred use, and they sacred persons; and this the first part of the building, they prayed for a blessing on it, and in it on the whole work undertaken, of which this was the firstfruits:

and set up the doors of it; and so finished it:

even unto the tower of Meah they sanctified it, unto the tower of Hananeel; so far they built, and what they built they sanctified. The tower of Meah, or a "hundred", as the word signifies, might be so called, either because it was one hundred cubits from the sheep gate on one side, and as many from the tower of Hananeel on the other side, standing between both; or because

it was one hundred cubits high: these two towers, perhaps, were firm and strong, and needed no repair, since no mention is made of any; though they seem to me to be one and the same tower; see **Jer 31:38**.

{u} Travels, par. 3. c. 3. p. 226, 228. {w} Vid. Quistorp. in loc.

[[@Nehemiah 3:2]]Ver. [[2 >> Bible:Nehemiah 3:2]]. And next unto him builded the men of Jericho,.... The posterity of those that formerly inhabited that city; these began where Eliashib and the priests ended, and went on from thence:

and next to them; or rather "to him", the high priest:

builded Zaccur the son of Imri; who probably was the chief of the men of Jericho.

[[@Nehemiah 3:3]]Ver. [[3 >> Bible:Nehemiah 3:3]]. But the fish gate did the sons of Hassenaah build,.... So called, because fish was brought from the sea coasts through it, and near it was the fish market; this also was southward, according to Dr. Lightfoot {x}; others say northward; some say it led to the sea of Galilee, Jordan, and all the east and north country: but it is most likely to be westward towards the Mediterranean sea, Tyre, and Joppa, from whence fish were brought; and Rauwolff says {y} it is still standing towards the west, behind Mount Sion, and over against Mount Gihon, see **2Ch 33:14** he also says, this gate was called the gate of Hebron, because the road of Hebron went through it, which is about seven or eight hours' walking distant from it:

who also laid the beams thereof, and set up the doors thereof, the locks thereof, and the bars thereof; completely finished it.

{x} Chorograph. Cent. of the Land of Israel, c. 26. p. 27. vol. 2. {y} Ut supra, (Travels, par. 3. c. 3.) p. 226, 227.

[[@Nehemiah 3:4]]Ver. [[4 >> Bible:Nehemiah 3:4]]. And next unto them repaired Meremoth, the son of Uriah, the son of Koz,.... And the men under him; see **Ezr 8:33**, this part of the wall on which they worked was not wholly demolished, only weakened, and therefore did not rebuild it, but repaired and strengthened it, and this phrase is used all along afterwards:

and next unto them repaired Meshullam, the sort of Berechiah, the son of Meshezabeel: and next unto them repaired Zadok, the son of Baana; but who they were cannot be said.

[[@Nehemiah 3:5]]Ver. [[5 >> Bible:Nehemiah 3:5]]. And next unto them the Tekoites repaired,.... The inhabitants of Tekoa, a city in the tribe of Judah; see **Am 1:1**

but their nobles put not their necks to the work of their Lord; either of Nehemiah, as some, or rather of the lord and prince appointed over their families, as Aben Ezra, to whom they would not be subject; though it seems best, with Jarchi, to understand it of the Lord their God, by whose command this work was begun; but they refused to give any assistance to it with their

purses or presence, but withdrew from it, as refractory oxen withdraw their necks from the yoke. This is observed to their disgrace, when the common people of their city were ready to work, and did.

[[@Nehemiah 3:6]]Ver. [[6 >> Bible:Nehemiah 3:6]]. Moreover, the old gate repaired Jehoiada, the son of Paseah, and Meshullam the son of Besodeiah,.... Which some think was so called because it led to the old city Salem. Dr. Lightfoot {a} thinks it is the same with the second or third gate, **Zep 1:10**. According to Vatablus, it was the gate of the old pool, Isa 22:11, or rather, perhaps, it was the gate of the old wall Josephus speaks of {b}; it led to the north of the land:

they laid the beams thereof; as in **Ne 3:3**.

{a} Ut supra. (Chorograph. Cent. of the Land of Israel, c. 26. p. 27. vol. 2.) {b} **Deuteronomy** Bello Jud. l. 5. c. 4. sect. 2, 3.

[[@Nehemiah 3:7]]Ver. [[7 >> Bible:Nehemiah 3:7]]. And next unto them repaired Melatiah the Gibeonite, and Jadon the Meronothite, the men of Gibeon and Mizpah,.... Which places were both in the tribe of Benjamin, Jos 18:25 and one of these men was of the one place, and the other of the other:

unto the throne of the governor on this side the river; where the governor of those parts under the king of Persia had his seat, and now Nehemiah; but, according to Aben Ezra, Cisse, rendered "throne", is the name of a man who was the governor.

[[@Nehemiah 3:8]]Ver. [[8 >> Bible:Nehemiah 3:8]]. Next unto him repaired Uzziel the son of Harhaiah, of the goldsmiths,.... Or Tzorephim, which, according to Jarchi, was the name of a family so called from their trade and business:

next unto him also repaired Hananiah the son of one of the apothecaries; or confectioners, which also might be the name of a family so called for the same reason:

and they fortified Jerusalem unto the broad wall; which reached from the gate of Ephraim to the corner gate, which was broken down by Joash, king of Israel, but was rebuilt so strong by Uzziah, king of Judah, that it stood firm to this time; wherefore these men repaired up to it, but left that as they found it; see 2Ch 25:23, and were not careful to repair it, it not wanting any repair.

[[@Nehemiah 3:9]]Ver. [[9 >> Bible:Nehemiah 3:9]]. And next unto them repaired Rephaiah, the son of Hur, the ruler of the half part of Jerusalem. That city belonging partly to the tribe of Judah, and partly to the tribe of Benjamin; one part of it was under a governor that was of the tribe of Judah, as this man seems to be; and the other part under one of the tribe of Benjamin; see **Ne 3:12**.

[[@Nehemiah 3:10]]Ver. [[10 >> Bible:Nehemiah 3:10]]. And next unto him repaired Jedaiah, the son of Harumaph, over against his house,.... That part of the wall which stood right against his house; and to take this part he could not well object to it, and it might be reasonably thought he would take care to repair it well, and make it strong for his own safety: and next unto him repaired Hattush, the son of Hashabniah; but who he was is not known.

[[@Nehemiah 3:11]]Ver. [[11 >> Bible:Nehemiah 3:11]]. Malchijah the son of Harim, and Hashub the son of Pahathmoab,.... The fathers of these were heads of families that came out of captivity with Zerubbabel, **Ezr 2:6**

repaired the other piece: or second piece, below and next to that which Hattush repaired, the last builder mentioned:

and the tower of the furnaces; near to which were furnaces for the baking of bread, or of bricks.

[[@Nehemiah 3:12]]Ver. [[12 >> Bible:Nehemiah 3:12]]. And next unto him repaired Shallum, the son of Hallohesh,.... So called, as Ben Melech says, from his being an enchanter of serpents, or a wise prudent counsellor:

the ruler of the half part of Jerusalem; of the other half; see **Ne 3:9**

he and his daughters; who were rich widows or heiresses, and employed men to build at their own expense; he seems to have had no sons.

[[@Nehemiah 3:13]]Ver. [[13 >> Bible:Nehemiah 3:13]]. The valley gate repaired Hanun,.... Of which see **Ne 2:13**,

and the inhabitants of Zanoah; a city in the tribe of Judah,

Jos 15:34,

they built it, and set up the doors thereof, &c. see **Ne 3:3**,

and a thousand cubits on the wall to the dung gate; that is, they repaired the wall to such a length from the valley gate to the dung gate; see **Ne 2:13**.

[[@Nehemiah 3:14]]Ver. [[14 >> Bible:Nehemiah 3:14]]. But the dung gate repaired Malchiah the son of Rechab,.... If this was one of the Rechabites, they were forbid to build houses,

Jer 35:7 but, perhaps, though they might not build private houses for themselves to dwell in, they might be employed in building walls and fortresses for public security; though it is more probable that this man was not of that family:

the ruler of part of Bethhacerem; or of the tract of Bethhacerem, a place between Tekoah and Jerusalem; see **Jer 6:1**,

he built it, and set up the doors thereof; &c. as in **Ne 3:3**.

[[@Nehemiah 3:15]]Ver. [[15 >> Bible:Nehemiah 3:15]]. But the gate of the fountain,.... Of which see **Ne 2:14**

repaired Shallum, the son of Colhozeh, the ruler of part of Mizpah; of a tract, district, town, or city so called; perhaps that in the tribe of Benjamin; see **Ne 3:7**,

he built it, and covered it; roofed it, which is not said of any of the other gates, whether because of the fountain at it:

and set up the doors thereof, &c. finished it completely:

and the wall of the pool of Siloah, by the king's garden; which was formerly without the wall, on the west, but afterwards taken in by Manasseh, who built it; see 2Ch 33:14, and from hence the king's garden was watered:

and unto the stairs that go down from the city of David: Zion, which was built on an eminence, from which they went down by steps into the lower city Acra.

[[@Nehemiah 3:16]]Ver. [[16 >> Bible:Nehemiah 3:16]]. After him repaired Nehemiah the son of Azruk, the ruler of the half part of Bethzur. A strong fortified place in the tribe of Judah,

Jos 15:58,

unto the place over against the sepulchres of David; where he and his family, and the kings of his race, were buried, which remained to this time untouched by the Babylonians, and to many ages after; see **Ac 2:29**

and to the pool that was made; not a natural, but an artificial one, which was made by Hezekiah, **2Ki 20:20**,

and unto the house of the mighty; where was a garrison of soldiers in former time for defence.

[[@Nehemiah 3:17]]Ver. [[17 >> Bible:Nehemiah 3:17]]. After him repaired the Levites, Rehum the son of Bani,.... Who was one of them, as he that follows was another:

next unto him repaired Hashabiah, the ruler of the half part of Keilah: a city of the tribe of Judah, **Jos 15:4**

in his part; either with the men of that part of Keilah under his jurisdiction, or at the expense of that part of it.

[[@Nehemiah 3:18]]Ver. [[18 >> Bible:Nehemiah 3:18]]. After him repaired their brethren,.... Either the brethren of the two before named particularly, or the Levites their brethren in general, as Jarchi:

Bavai, the son of Henadad, the ruler of the half part of Keilah; the other half of that place.

[[@Nehemiah 3:19]]Ver. [[19 >> Bible:Nehemiah 3:19]]. And next to him repaired Ezer, the son of Jeshua, the ruler of Mizpah,.... Either of another Mizpah, or of the other half of Mizpah, **Ne 3:15**

another piece; or a second piece; one of the two pieces; for another is mentioned in the next verse:

over against the going up to the armoury, at the turning [of the wall]; the western wall towards the south, near to which was a place where armour was laid up; perhaps the same with the tower of David, to which there is an allusion in **So 4:4**.

[[@Nehemiah 3:20]]Ver. [[20 >> Bible:Nehemiah 3:20]]. After him Baruch the son of Zabbai earnestly repaired the other piece,.... Towards and next to that Ezer the last builder mentioned had repaired; and this he did "earnestly", or in anger as the word signifies, being angry with himself or others that there was any backwardness shown to the work; and therefore, with all haste and eagerness imaginable, attended to it:

from the turning of the wall; see the preceding verse:

unto the door of the house of Eliashib the high priest; of whom see **Ne 3:1**, now either his house was upon the wall, or that part of the wall that was right against the door of his house is here meant.

[[@Nehemiah 3:21]]Ver. [[21 >> Bible:Nehemiah 3:21]]. After him repaired Meremoth the son of Uriah, the son of Koz, another piece,.... He had wrought before in another part, **Ne 3:4**, but having finished that, he sets his hand a second time to the work:

from the door of the house of Eliashib, even to the end of the house of Eliashib; the door of his house seems to have been at one end of it, and from that end to the other was a considerable length; he being a great man, the high priest, had a large house.

[[@Nehemiah 3:22]]Ver. [[22 >> Bible:Nehemiah 3:22]]. And after him repaired the priests, the men of the plain. Either of the plain of Jericho, where, in later times at least, there was a station of the priests, or of the plain about Jerusalem; those also assisted in the repairs of the wall.

[[@Nehemiah 3:23]]Ver. [[23 >> Bible:Nehemiah 3:23]]. After him,.... The last of the priests before mentioned:

repaired Benjamin, and Hashub, over against their house; as much of the wall as the length of their house, or houses, were:

after him repaired Azariah the son of Maaseiah, the son of Ananiah, by his house: as far as that reached.

[[@Nehemiah 3:24]]Ver. [[24 >> Bible:Nehemiah 3:24]]. After him repaired Binnui the son of Henadad, another piece..... Beginning where Azariah ended:

unto the turning of the wall, even unto the corner; the corner where the wall turned from the south to the east.

[[@Nehemiah 3:25]]Ver. [[25 >> Bible:Nehemiah 3:25]]. Palal the son of Uzai, over against the turning of the wall,.... Who dwelt there, and so repaired what was right against him:

and the tower which lieth out from the king's high house: which might be built for prospect, or his upper house:

that was by the court of the prison; and we often read in Jeremiah of the court of the prison being in or near the king's house, see

Jer 32:2,

after him Pedaiah the son of Parosh; went on from hence with the repair.

[[@Nehemiah 3:26]]Ver. [[26 >> Bible:Nehemiah 3:26]]. Moreover, the Nethinims dwelt in Ophel,.... An high tower upon the wait, in this part of it, see 2Ch 27:3, these were servants to the Levites, and repaired here, where their dwellings were:

unto the place over against the water gate toward the east: and as one part of their work was to fetch water for the temple, they were here very properly situated; it led to the king's garden, the valley of Jehoshaphat, and from thence a plain way to Bethany:

and the tower that lieth out; from the wall.

[[@Nehemiah 3:27]]Ver. [[27 >> Bible:Nehemiah 3:27]]. After them the Tekoites repaired another piece,.... Having finished what they undertook in another part of the wall, Ne 3:5, they engage in this part of it; which shows their great zeal and diligence, when their nobles were so backward to it, and withdrew from it:

over against the great tower that lieth out; the same as in the preceding verse:

even unto the wall of Ophel; from right against the great tower unto the wall the Tekoites repaired.

[[@Nehemiah 3:28]]Ver. [[28 >> Bible:Nehemiah 3:28]]. From above the horse gate repaired the priests,.... So called, either because near it were stables for horses; or through it horses were led to be watered at the brook of Kidron, to which it was near; or to be exercised in the valley; Josephus {c} speaks of the "hippie", or horse tower, which might be near it:

everyone over against his house; for it seems there was a row of houses in which the priests dwelt, and each of them repaired as much of the wall as was right against his house.

{c} Ut supra. (**Deuteronomy** Bello Jud. l. 5. c. 4. sect. 2, 3.)

[[@Nehemiah 3:29]]Ver. [[29 >> Bible:Nehemiah 3:29]]. After them repaired Zadok the son of Immer, over against his house,.... After the last of the priests, this begun where they ended, and repaired as far as his house reached; and being, perhaps, a person of some note, his house might be a large one:

after him repaired also Shemaiah, the son of Shechaniah, the keeper of the east gate; that is, of the temple; for the gates of the city having been burnt so long, it cannot be thought there should be a keeper of any of them.

[[@Nehemiah 3:30]]Ver. [[30 >> Bible:Nehemiah 3:30]]. After him repaired Hananiah the son of Shelemiah, and Hanun the sixth son of Zalaph, another piece,.... This last man had six sons; but only his youngest son wrought at this work, which is observed to his great commendation:

after him repaired Shelemiah the son of Berechiah, over against his chamber; the same as in **Ne 3:4** who having finished what he engaged in there, took his part where his chamber was, and repaired over against that.

[[@Nehemiah 3:31]]Ver. [[31 >> Bible:Nehemiah 3:31]]. After him repaired Malchiah, the goldsmith's son,.... Or the son of Tzoreph, as some, so called from his business:

unto the place of the Nethinims, and of the merchants; he repaired up to the place where these dwelt:

over against the gate Miphkad; where some think was an house of visitation or correction; and others, where the sanhedrim sat, tried causes, and exercised justice:

and to the going up of the corner; from the east to the north.

[[@Nehemiah 3:32]]Ver. [[32 >> Bible:Nehemiah 3:32]]. And between the going up of the corner unto the sheep gate,.... Where the building first began and where it now ended:

repaired the goldsmiths and the merchants; or druggists; which was done at their expense; and so the wall all round, with the gates of it, were rebuilt and repaired, which was all done in fifty two days, **Ne 6:15**.

[[@Nehemiah 4]]

Chapter 4

INTRODUCTION TO NEHEMIAH 4

This chapter relates, how the Jews, while building, were mocked by their enemies, to which no answer was returned but by prayer to God, and they went on notwithstanding in their work, **Ne 4:1** and how that their enemies conspired against them, to hinder them by force of arms, **Ne 4:7** to oppose which, both spiritual and temporal weapons were made use of, so that the work was still carried on, **Ne 4:13**.

[[@Nehemiah 4:1]]Ver. [[1 >> Bible:Nehemiah 4:1]]. But it came to pass, that when Sanballat heard that we builded the wall,.... Or were building it; for as yet it was not finished, see **Ne 4:6**,

he was wroth, and took great indignation; inwardly, though outwardly he pretended to treat the work with contempt, as if it never would be accomplished, which yet he feared:

and mocked the Jews; as a set of foolish builders, and unable to finish what they had begun.

[[@Nehemiah 4:2]]Ver. [[2 >> Bible:Nehemiah 4:2]]. And he spake before his brethren,.... Tobiah the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arabian, and perhaps some other governors of the king of Persia in those parts:

and before the army of Samaria: which, and the inhabitants of it, were implacable enemies of the Jews:

and said, what do these feeble Jews? what do they pretend to do, or what can they do?

will they fortify themselves? by building a wall about their city; can they think they shall ever be able to do this, or that it will be allowed?

will they sacrifice? meaning not their daily sacrifice, as Jarchi, that they had done a long time, but for the dedication of their building, as Aben Ezra:

will they make an end in a day? they seem to be in as great a hurry and haste as if they meant it; and indeed, unless they can do it very quickly, they never will: they will soon be stopped:

will they revive the stones out of the heaps of the rubbish which are burnt? where will they find materials? do they imagine that they can make burnt stones firm and strong again, or harden the dust and rubbish into stones, or make that, which is as if dead, alive? to do this is the same as to revive a dead man, and they may as well think of doing the one as the other; burnt stones being reckoned as dead, as Eben Ezra observes.

[[@Nehemiah 4:3]]Ver. [[3 >> Bible:Nehemiah 4:3]]. Now Tobiah the Ammonite was by him,.... Who was one of his brethren he spake before, **Ne 4:2**,

and he said; in the like contemptuous and scoffing manner;

even that which they build, if a fox go up, he shall break down their stone wall; signifying not only that it was so low that a fox could easily get up to it, or leap over it; but that the materials were so bad, and the work so poorly done, that the weight of a fox would break it down; of which creatures many were thereabout, since Jerusalem was desolate, see **Lam 5:18**.

[[@Nehemiah 4:4]]Ver. [[4 >> Bible:Nehemiah 4:4]]. Hear, O our God, for we are despised,.... Here begins the prayer of Nehemiah, who had been informed of what these men said in contempt of him, and his builders, and to whom he sent no answer, but applied to God:

and turn their reproach upon their own head; as they have despised and reproached us, let them be despised and reproached by their neighbours:

give them for a prey in the land of captivity; let them be carried captive, as we have been, and become a prey and booty to their enemies.

[[@Nehemiah 4:5]]Ver. [[5 >> Bible:Nehemiah 4:5]]. And cover not their iniquity, and let not their sin be blotted out from before thee,.... Let it not go unpunished, and even let it not be pardoned; which is spoken, not from a private spirit of revenge, but from a public spirit for the glory of God, and his justice; and not as a mere imprecation, but as a prophecy of what would be the case, in like manner as many of David's petitions in the Psalms; and for this there was a good foundation, since God had threatened the Moabites and Ammonites with utter destruction:

for they have provoked thee to anger before the builders; by despising his people, and mocking at the work the Lord had called them to; and this they did publicly, and on purpose to discourage the workmen.

[[@Nehemiah 4:6]]Ver. [[6 >> Bible:Nehemiah 4:6]]. So built we the wall,.... Went on in building it, notwithstanding their scoffs and threats:

and all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof; it was carried all round the city to half the height of it:

for the people had a mind to work; their heart was in it, they had a good will to it, and they made haste to finish it.

[[@Nehemiah 4:7]]Ver. [[7 >> Bible:Nehemiah 4:7]]. And it came to pass that when Sanballat, and Tobiah, and the Arabians,.... Who were under and influenced by Geshem the Arabian:

and the Ammonites; over whom Tobiah was governor:

and the Ashdodites; who were of Ashdod or Azotus, one of the principalities of the Philistines, who were always enemies to the Jews:

heard that the walls of Jerusalem were made up; or "the length of them went up" {d}; that is, the height of them; that they rose up high apace, and were got up to, or almost to their proper height:

and that the breaches began to be stopped; for the walls were not all thrown down by the Chaldeans, but breaches made here and there, which were now repaired:

then they were very wroth; and could not avoid showing it; before they mocked them, as attempting what they could not go through with; but now, perceiving the work went on with great success, they were enraged.

{d} hkwra htle "ascendisset longitudo", Montanus; so Coeceius in rad.

Kra.

[@Nehemiah 4:8] Ver. [[8 >> Bible:Nehemiah 4:8]]. And conspired all of them together,.... All the above men and people entered into a confederacy and combination:

to come and to fight against Jerusalem; to bring an army with them, and by force cause the Jews to desist; the Jews {e} pretend they came to war, and brought with them an army of 180,000 men, which is not probable:

and to hinder it; the building of the walls of it; or "to make a wandering for him" {f}; for Nehemiah, or the people, or both, to, cause them to stray from their work, to frighten them from it, that they might become like men at their wits end, not knowing what to do, where to turn themselves, or what course to steer, but to wander about as persons out of their senses; so Aben Ezra. **Deuteronomy** Dieu joins this clause to the next verse, to cause everyone of them to wander, we prayed, &c.

{e} Pirke Eliezer, c. 38. {f} hewt wl twvel "ad faciendum ei errorem", Montanus; "ei aberrationem", Genevenses; "vagationem et palationem", alii apud **Deuteronomy** Dieu.

[@Nehemiah 4:9] Ver. [[9 >> Bible:Nehemiah 4:9]]. Nevertheless, we made our prayer unto our God,.... Spread their case before him in prayer, entreating direction and help from him:

and set a watch against them day and night, because of them; to give notice of their approach, that they might prepare to defend themselves; though they prayed to God, and trusted in him for deliverance, they did not neglect the use of means.

[@Nehemiah 4:10] Ver. [[10 >> Bible:Nehemiah 4:10]]. And Judah said,.... Several of the men of Judah:

the strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed; through much labour, in carrying heavy loads of stone and timber to the builders, and yet more through fear of the enemy:

and there is much rubbish; which ought to be removed, but that the labourers were so weak that they could not do it:

so that we are not able to build the wall; to finish it before the enemy comes to attack us.

[[@Nehemiah 4:11]]Ver. [[11 >> Bible:Nehemiah 4:11]]. And our adversaries said, they shall not know,.... Our designs upon them:

neither see; or perceive what we are about to do:

till we come in the midst of them; with an army suddenly, at an unawares, and unexpected: and slay them; they being unarmed, and not prepared to defend themselves: and cause the work to cease; as it must in course, the builders being slain.

[[@Nehemiah 4:12]]Ver. [[12 >> Bible:Nehemiah 4:12]]. And it came to pass, when the Jews that dwelt by them,.... Near Samaria, Arabia, and Ashdod, and had intelligence of their designs:

came, they said to us ten times; that is, they came to them at Jerusalem, and often told them, as this phrase "ten times" signifies,

See Gill on "**Genesis 31:7**",

from all places whence ye shall return unto us: they will be upon you, come which way you will, so that ye are in the utmost danger: or "from all places"; where you are repairing and rebuilding:

return to us; that ye may enjoy peace and prosperity with us under Sanballat, &c. and escape the wrath and fury you are now exposed to; or "from all places we come, that ye may return to us"; so **Deuteronomy** Dieu; these Jews, though they pretended to be friends, to their brethren, yet seemed to be in friendship with their enemies, and sought to discourage them, and weaken their minds, and cause them to cease building.

[[@Nehemiah 4:13]]Ver. [[13 >> Bible:Nehemiah 4:13]]. Therefore set I in the lower places behind the wall,.... Where the wall was lowest, and the enemy could more easily break it down, or get over it:

and on the higher places; where the wall was higher; or rather on the towers upon the walls, as the word signifies the tops of rocks, which are dry and smooth, see Eze 24:2.

I even set the people after their families; according to their rank, number, strength, and valour:

with their swords, their spears, and their bows; with weapons they could use both near, and at a distance.

[[@Nehemiah 4:14]]Ver. [[14 >> Bible:Nehemiah 4:14]]. And I looked,.... Took a view of the people, and observed that they were in their proper place, and sufficiently armed, and also whether the enemy was coming:

and rose up and said unto the nobles, and to the rulers, and to the rest of the people; who were under their nobles and rulers, as their captains and commanders:

be not ye afraid of them; of their enemies, their numbers, and their threats:

remember the Lord, which is great and terrible; who is greater than they, and is to be feared and trusted in by his people, and is terrible even to the kings of the earth:

and fight for your brethren, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your houses; intimating, that they were in danger of losing all that was near and dear, valuable and precious to them, if they did not fight for them; and therefore it became them to quit themselves like men, and be strong.

[[@Nehemiah 4:15]]Ver. [[15 >> Bible:Nehemiah 4:15]]. And it came to pass, when our enemies heard it was known unto us,.... What they intended, as might be reported to them from the preparations made by the Jews to receive them, and defend themselves:

and God had brought their counsel to naught; which was to come upon them secretly and unawares; but being discovered, they dropped their design, and their scheme came to nothing:

so that we returned all of us to the wall, every man to his work; to that part of it where he wrought, in order to finish it.

[[@Nehemiah 4:16]]Ver. [[16 >> Bible:Nehemiah 4:16]]. And it came to pass from that time forth,.... That they were thus alarmed of danger from their enemies:

that the half of my servants wrought in the work; of building the wall; his domestic servants, his guards, or mighty men, as Jarchi, men of war, the soldiers:

and the other half of them held both the spears, the shields, and the bows; some offensive, others defensive weapons; some to fight with at a distance, others near at hand:

and the habergeons; coats of mail, which they took and clothed themselves with:

and the rulers were behind all the house of Judah; the Jews that were working at the wall, to animate and encourage them, protect and defend them.

[[@Nehemiah 4:17]]Ver. [[17 >> Bible:Nehemiah 4:17]]. They which builded on the wall,.... That laid the mortar and stones upon it, and timber where it was necessary:

and they that bore burdens; that carried the mortar, stones, and timber to the builders, and served them:

with those that laded; which prepared the above for them, and laid them on their shoulders:

everyone with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon; which is not to be understood strictly and literally, for without both hands they could not well perform either of the above works; but proverbially, signifying that they were intent on both

working and fighting, and were ready and prepared to do the latter, as well as the former, having weapons lying by them, or girt about them, as is explained in the following verse.

[[@Nehemiah 4:18]]Ver. [[18 >> Bible:Nehemiah 4:18]]. For the builders had everyone his sword girded by his side, and so builded,.... Thus accoutred he wrought, and was prepared for either service:

and he that sounded the trumpet was by me; to give the alarm of war, that everyone might lay aside his work, and prepare for the battle: this officer stood by Nehemiah, that when he found it necessary, might give him orders to sound his trumpet, for the men to gather to him.

[[@Nehemiah 4:19]]Ver. [[19 >> Bible:Nehemiah 4:19]]. And I said unto the nobles, and to the rulers, and to the rest of the people,.... See Gill on "Ne 4:14",

the work is great and large; the building of the wall all around the city of Jerusalem:

and we are separated upon the wall one far from another; some at work on one part of it, and some at another, so that the distance between one another, at least in the further part, was very considerable.

[[@Nehemiah 4:20]]Ver. [[20 >> Bible:Nehemiah 4:20]]. In what place therefore ye hear the sound of the trumpet,... Be it what part of the wall soever they were at work, even the most distant:

resort ye thither to us; to Nehemiah, and the half of his servants armed, where the trumpet was blown; that was to be the place of rendezvous:

our God shall fight for us; and give us victory over our enemies; none have any reason to be intimidated, when they shall hear the sound of the trumpet.

[[@Nehemiah 4:21]]Ver. [[21 >> Bible:Nehemiah 4:21]]. So we laboured in the work,.... Of building the wall: and half of them held the spears; and other weapons before mentioned, **Ne 4:16**

from the rising of the morning till the stars appeared; that is, from morning to evening, the space of time the builders and labourers worked.

[[@Nehemiah 4:22]]Ver. [[22 >> Bible:Nehemiah 4:22]]. Likewise at the same time said I unto the people,.... That were at work upon the wall:

let everyone with his servant lodge within Jerusalem; every builder had a servant, or a lad, as the word signifies, to wait upon him, to bring mortar or stone, or what he wanted; and some of these builders, with their lads, came out of the country towns and villages in the morning, and returned at night; now Nehemiah proposed, for the safety of the city and its walls, that for the present they would lodge in Jerusalem:

that in the night they may be a guard unto us, and labour on the day; might help to protect them in the night, should they be surprised with the enemy, and be ready for their work in the daytime.

[[@Nehemiah 4:23]]Ver. [[23 >> Bible:Nehemiah 4:23]]. So neither I, nor my brethren,.... The nobles and rulers:

nor my servants; his domestic servants that waited upon him:

nor the men of the guard which followed me; his bodyguard, which attended him as a commissioner of the king of Persia for state and grandeur:

none of us put off our clothes; at night when they laid themselves down to sleep, but laid in, them, that they might be ready upon an alarm made:

saving that everyone put them off for washing; not for common washing, because dirty, but for washing on account of ceremonial uncleanness, which required washing both of bodies and garments, see Le 15:5, &c. and the Vulgate Latin version expresses it by baptism, as the apostle calls such ceremonial ablutions in **Heb 6:2**. It is in the margin of our Bibles, "everyone went with his weapon for water"; when he went to Siloam, or any other place, for water, he took a weapon with him to defend himself upon occasion; which is no bad sense of the words. Noldius {g} renders the words, "everyone with his weapon (and) water"; both were at his bolster, ready, if wanted, see

1Sa 26:11.

{g} Ebr. Concord. Partic. p. 322.

[[@Nehemiah 5]]

Chapter 5

INTRODUCTION TO EZRA 5

In this chapter is a complaint of the poor against the rich for oppression of them, **Ne 5:1** for which Nehemiah being angry, reproved them, and made them promise, and swear to it, to make restitution, **Ne 5:6** and set them an example himself, taking nothing of them during his twelve years' government, supporting himself and his at his own expenses, **Ne 5:14**.

[[@Nehemiah 5:1]]Ver. [[1 >> Bible:Nehemiah 5:1]]. And there was a great cry of the people, and of their wives,.... Those of the poorer sort:

against their brethren the Jews; the rich that oppressed them; and this cry or complaint was made to Nehemiah for redress.

[[@Nehemiah 5:2]]Ver. [[2 >> Bible:Nehemiah 5:2]]. For there were that said, we, our sons, and our daughters, are many,.... Not that they complained of the number of their children, for a numerous offspring was always reckoned a blessing with the Jews; but this they observed to

show that their families, being large, required a considerable quantity of food to support them:

therefore we take up corn for them, that we may eat and live; that is, they were obliged to take it at an exorbitant price, which is the thing complained of; or otherwise they must starve, the rich taking the advantage of their poverty and present dearth.

[[@Nehemiah 5:3]]Ver. [[3 >> Bible:Nehemiah 5:3]]. Some also there were that said, we have mortgaged our lands, vineyards, and houses,.... Made them over to others, put them into their hands as pledges for money received of them:

that we may buy corn; for the support of their families:

because of the dearth; or famine; which might be occasioned by their enemies lying in wait and intercepting all provisions that might be brought to them; for this seems not to be the famine spoken of in **Hag 1:10** for that was some years before this, and for a reason which now was not.

[[@Nehemiah 5:4]]Ver. [[4 >> Bible:Nehemiah 5:4]]. There were also that said,.... Who though they were able to buy corn for their families without mortgaging their estates: yet, say they,

we have borrowed money for the king's tribute, and that upon our lands and vineyards; for though the priests, Levites, and Nethinims, were exempted from it, yet not the people in common; and some of these were so poor, that they could not pay it without borrowing upon their estates, and paying large usury for it, see **Ezr 6:8**

[[@Nehemiah 5:5]]Ver. [[5 >> Bible:Nehemiah 5:5]]. Yet now our flesh is as the flesh of our brethren,.... We are of the same nature, nation, stock, and religion: our children as their children; are circumcised as they, and have a right to the same privileges in church and state:

and, lo, we bring into bondage our sons and daughters to be servants; shall be obliged to it, unless relieved:

and some of our daughters are brought into bondage already; sold to be servants, as they might in case of the poverty of parents, **Ex 21:7**, and some were sometimes taken to be bondmen in payment of their parents' debts, **2Ki 4:1**

neither is it in our power to redeem them, for other men have our lands and vineyards; as pledges for money borrowed.

[[@Nehemiah 5:6]]Ver. [[6 >> Bible:Nehemiah 5:6]]. And I was very angry when I heard their cry, and these words. Their complaint expressed in this manner; it not only raised pity and compassion in his breast towards these poor distressed people, but indignation at the rich that oppressed them.

[[@Nehemiah 5:7]]Ver. [[7 >> Bible:Nehemiah 5:7]]. Then I consulted with myself,.... What was to be done, what method to be taken to redress such grievances:

and I rebuked the nobles and the rulers; who were the men that monopolized the corn in this dear season, and sold it at an extravagant price, and had got the lands, vineyards, and houses of the poor mortgaged to them, and to whom they had lent money on usury:

and said unto them, you exact usury everyone of his brother; which was contrary to the express law of God, Ex 22:25 and which even the Indians {h} strictly observed, who neither let out money, nor took any upon usury:

and I set a great assembly against them; either of the poor that were oppressed, who brought in their accusations and complaints against them, or a large body of the people, who were not guilty, to hear them, that the delinquents might be put to public shame; or he called a large court of judicature, and set them to examine these allegations, and to do justice.

{h} Aelian. Var. Hist. l. 4. c. 1.

[[@Nehemiah 5:8]]Ver. [[8 >> Bible:Nehemiah 5:8]]. And I said unto them,.... The nobles, and rulers, and other rich persons that exacted usury of the poor:

we after our ability; speaking of himself in the plural number, which now obtained in the court of Persia; or of Zerubbabel, Ezra, and others, who, according as their worldly circumstances, having been captives, would admit of:

have redeemed our brethren the Jews, which were sold unto the Heathen; not that they had given a ransom for them to Cyrus, or any other king of Persia, which would be contrary to the prophecies concerning their redemption, Isa 45:13 but such who had sold themselves to particular persons in Babylon, who, without being redeemed, could not take the advantage of the liberty granted by Cyrus, and his successors; and it may be there were others also in the like circumstances, in other neighbouring nations, that had been redeemed this way. The Jewish canon {i} now is, he that sells himself, and his children, to Gentiles, they do not redeem; but they redeem the children after their father's death; which the commentators {k} explain of the third time that he sells himself:

and will you even sell your brethren? their lands and vineyards mortgaged to them, and even their persons:

or shall they be sold unto us? must we be obliged to buy them, and to redeem them:

then they held their peace, and found nothing to answer; being convinced they had done wrong, by the arguments used, to which they could make no reply.

{i} Misn. Gittin, c. 4. sect. 9. {k} Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

[[@Nehemiah 5:9]]Ver. [[9 >> Bible:Nehemiah 5:9]]. Also I said, it is not good that ye do,.... The meaning is, that it was very bad; it is a "meiosis", by which more is intended than is expressed:

ought ye not to walk in the fear of our God; in reverence of him and his law, and according to that:

because of the reproach of the Heathen our enemies? whose mouths will be open to reproach the true religion, and the good ways of God; and say, these are the men that pretend to fear God, and serve him, and yet break his law, and use their brethren ill, see **Romans 2:24**.

[[@Nehemiah 5:10]]Ver. [[10 >> Bible:Nehemiah 5:10]]. I likewise, and my brethren, and my servants, might exact of them money and corn,.... For our maintenance, in consideration of the services done by us, which would appear but reasonable, but this we decline for the sake of easing our poor brethren:

I pray you let us leave off this usury; and not exact it, as has been too much and too long used.

[[@Nehemiah 5:11]]Ver. [[11 >> Bible:Nehemiah 5:11]]. Restore, I pray you, even this day, their lands, their vineyards, their oliveyards, and their houses,.... Which they had made over to them for corn they had had, or money they borrowed of them; it is entreated that an immediate restitution be made, and the rather, if what Aben Ezra observes is true, that this was the year of release, when debts were not to be exacted, but forgiven, **Deuteronomy 15:1**,

also the hundredth part of the money, and of the corn, the wine, and the oil, that ye exact of them; the hundredth part of the money might be what they took for usury, as the Romans did in later times, even so much a month; so that if the loan was one hundred pounds, a pound was given every month for it, and so one hundred and twelve pounds in the year; and the hundredth part of the corn, wine, and oil, might be the hundredth part of those fruits of the earth which the rulers demanded for their salary, see **Ne 5:15**.

[[@Nehemiah 5:12]]Ver. [[12 >> Bible:Nehemiah 5:12]]. Then said they, we will restore them,.... The lands, vineyards, oliveyards, and houses:

and will require nothing of them; not the hundredth part of the fruits of the earth by way of salary:

so will we do as thou sayest; they approved of his proposal, and readily agreed to it:

then I called the priests, and took an oath of them that they should do according to this promise; not that the priests were delinquents, they were not charged with anything of this kind, nor were they the men that promised restitution; but the priests were called to administer the oath to the nobles, and rulers, and rich men, to oblige them the more to keep their word; an oath being sacred, priests in an holy office were made use of to give it, that it might be the more solemn, and the more strictly regarded.

[[@Nehemiah 5:13]]Ver. [[13 >> Bible:Nehemiah 5:13]]. Also I shook my lap,.... The fore skirts of his garment, shaking the dust out of them, as a symbol of what follows; a like rite

was used in the case of peace and war, the choice of either, by the Romans, as proposed by their ambassadors to the Carthaginians, as having either in their bosom to shake out {l}:

and said, so God shake out every man from his house, and from his labour; what he has got by his labour:

that performeth not his promise; confirmed by an oath:

even thus be he shaken out, and emptied; of all that he has in the world, and out of the world too, as Jarchi adds:

and all the congregation said, Amen; so let it be, even those that had taken pledges and usury, as well as others:

and praised the Lord; that had given them such a governor to direct, advise, and exhort them to their duty, and had inclined their hearts to attend thereunto:

and the people did according to this promise; they punctually kept it, and the oath they had sworn.

{l} Florus, l. 2. c. 6. Liv. l. 21. c. 18.

[[@Nehemiah 5:14]] Ver. [[14 >> Bible:Nehemiah 5:14]]. Moreover, from the time that I was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah,.... That is, by the king of Persia, which was not done when he was first sent into Judea; but very probably when he had finished the wall in fifty two days, he returned to Persia, and gave the king an account of his success, and how things stood in those parts, when he judged it necessary to send him again in the character of a governor, and which was still within the same year, as follows: from the twentieth year, even unto the thirty second year of Artaxerxes, that is, twelve years; see Ne 13:6.

I and my brethren have not eaten the bread of the governor; which was fit and proper for him, and used to be given him; neither he, nor those that assisted him in the government, the principal men he brought along with him, and put into posts and places under him.

[[@Nehemiah 5:15]] Ver. [[15 >> Bible:Nehemiah 5:15]]. But the former governors, that had been before me, were chargeable to the people,.... Between him and Zerubbabel, for Ezra was no governor; according to the Jewish chronology {m}, when Ezra came to Jerusalem, Zerubbabel returned to Babylon, and there died, and his son Methullam was in his stead, and after him succeeded Hananiah his son:

and had taken of them bread and wine, besides forty shekels of silver; which amounted to between four and five pounds, and this they had every day:

yea, even their servants bare rule over the people; required a salary, or at least perquisites of them, which the governors connived at:

but so did not I, because of the fear of God; neither took anything himself of the people, nor suffered his servants; because the fear of God was upon his heart, and before his eyes, and therefore could not allow himself to oppress the poor.

{m} Seder Olam Zuta, p. 108, 109.

[[@Nehemiah 5:16]]Ver. [[16 >> Bible:Nehemiah 5:16]]. Yea, also I continued in the work of this wall,.... Of building the wall of Jerusalem; here he gave his constant attendance to direct and encourage the workmen, and see that they kept to their work, and did it well:

neither bought we any land; neither he nor the principal men with him, though they could have bought it cheap, but they chose not to take the advantage of the poverty of the people:

and all my servants were gathered thither unto the work: all were employed in it, taking no wages for their work, being maintained at his expense.

[[@Nehemiah 5:17]]Ver. [[17 >> Bible:Nehemiah 5:17]]. Moreover, there were at my table an hundred and fifty of the Jews and rulers,.... Every day at his own cost, which must be considerable to provide for such a number, and of such rank:

besides those that came unto us from among the Heathen that are about us; who were proselytes, and came thither to worship, or on a civil account, to give intelligence, and take directions.

[[@Nehemiah 5:18]]Ver. [[18 >> Bible:Nehemiah 5:18]]. Now that which was prepared for me daily was one ox and six choice sheep,... Or fat ones; of beef and mutton a considerable quantity, abundantly sufficient for his guests and servants, and shows what a good table he kept:

also fowls were prepared for me; what number is not said:

and once in ten days store of all sorts of wine; the country afforded; that is, either once in ten days his stock of wine was renewed, or a more liberal entertainment was made, a banquet of wine, **Es 5:6**,

yet for all this required not I the bread of the governor; the salary that used to be given him, but did this at his own expense, out of his own estate in Judea; or what he had got by his office as cupbearer to the king of Persia, the salary of which perhaps was continued:

because the bondage was heavy upon the people; the tribute of the king of Persia, and their labour and expense in building the walls of the city.

[[@Nehemiah 5:19]]Ver. [[19 >> Bible:Nehemiah 5:19]]. Think upon me, my God, for good, according to all that I have done for this people. He expected not any recompence from the people, but from the Lord; and from him not in a way of merit, but of grace and good will, who forgets not what is done for his name's sake, **Heb 6:10**.

[[@Nehemiah 6]]

Chapter 6

INTRODUCTION TO NEHEMIAH 6

Sanballat and his brethren, hearing the wall was finished, sent to Nehemiah, to have a meeting with him at a place named, which he refused, **Ne 6:1**, then they sent him a terrifying letter, suggesting that he, and the Jews with him, would be treated as rebels, since their intention, as reported, was to make him king, which letter he regarded not, **Ne 6:3**, then they employed some that pretended to be prophets to advise him to flee to the temple for safety, which he rejected, **Ne 6:10** and so the work went on and was finished, though there was a secret correspondence carried on between their enemies and some false brethren among themselves, **Ne 6:15**.

[[@Nehemiah 6:1]]Ver. [[1 >> Bible:Nehemiah 6:1]]. Now it came to pass, when Sanballat and Tobiah, and Geshem the Arabian, and the rest of our enemies, heard that I had builded the wall,.... Quite finished it:

and that there was no breach left therein; but all was made up firm and strong:

though at that time I had not set up the doors upon the gates; not upon all of them, though some might by the particular builders of them; and they all of them might be ready made, though not as yet put upon the hinges.

[[@Nehemiah 6:2]]Ver. [[2 >> Bible:Nehemiah 6:2]]. Then Sanballat and Geshem sent unto me,.... Messengers:

saying, come, let us meet together in some one of the villages; in Cephirim, which Jarchi takes to be the name of a place, perhaps the same with Cephirah, a city in the tribe of Benjamin, **Jos 18:26**

in the plain of Ono; which was in the same tribe, see **1Ch 8:12**, they might pretend a friendly meeting, to accommodate differences between them, or to converse together about the general interest of the king of Persia in those parts:

but they thought to do me mischief; to kill him, or at least to confine him; this he either conjectured from their general character and behaviour, or he had intelligence of their design.

[[@Nehemiah 6:3]]Ver. [[3 >> Bible:Nehemiah 6:3]]. And I sent messengers unto them,.... He did not show any open contempt of them, nor did he even return answer by the messenger that came from them, but sent some of his own people to them:

saying, I am doing a great work; was about an affair of great importance, very busy, and not at leisure to give them a meeting:

so that I cannot come down; Jerusalem being built on an eminence, and the place proposed to meet at in a plain, going thither is expressed by coming down:

why should the work cease, while I leave it, and come down to you? signifying that it would cease if he left it; and it being of greater consequence than anything they could have to

converse about, he argues it would be wrong to relinquish it on such an account; this was the reason he thought fit to give, but was not the only, nor the principal reason, which is suggested in the preceding verse.

[[@Nehemiah 6:4]]Ver. [[4 >> Bible:Nehemiah 6:4]]. Yet they sent unto me four times after this sort,.... Being very desirous of getting him into their hands, and therefore were very pressing and importunate:

and I answered them after the same manner; every time as before, he being as much bent on finishing the work as they were to divert him from it.

[[@Nehemiah 6:5]]Ver. [[5 >> Bible:Nehemiah 6:5]]. Then sent Sanballat his servant unto me in like manner the fifth time,.... In his own name, neither Tobiah nor Geshem joining with him, he being more solicitous and anxious to get him into his hands than any of them; and it may be, as some think, pretending more friendship for him than the rest, and therefore writes alone, as if they knew nothing of his writing:

with an open letter in his hand: which having in it an intimation of Nehemiah being guilty of treason, anyone that would might read it, and so spread the defamation.

[[@Nehemiah 6:6]]Ver. [[6 >> Bible:Nehemiah 6:6]]. Wherein was written, it is reported among, the Heathen,.... Among the several neighbouring nations; it was an affair that was not whispered about among a few only; it was common talk, it was in every body's mouth in divers nations:

and Gashmu saith it; the same with Geshem the Arabian; he affirms it, and will abide by his assertion, and engages to make good what he says; he mentions him by name, who he knew would not be offended with him for making use of it, and who doubtless agreed that he should; that Nehemiah might not think this was the talk of some of the lower rank of the people, but even was averred by no less than the king's governor in Arabia:

that thou and the Jews think to rebel; that they had formed a scheme, and were taking measures to raise a rebellion against the king of Persia, and revolt from him:

for which cause thou buildest the wall; the wall of Jerusalem, for their security against any force that might be sent to quell them:

that thou mayest be their king, according to these words; written in this epistle, and reported among the Heathens.

[[@Nehemiah 6:7]]Ver. [[7 >> Bible:Nehemiah 6:7]]. And thou hast also appointed prophets to preach of thee at Jerusalem,.... This he said to cover what he and Tobiah had been doing, tampering with, corrupting, and hiring the prophets to discourage him, and put him upon methods, whereby the work would cease:

saying, there is a king in Judah; besides Artaxerxes, whose yoke they were casting off, having got a king of their own, and among them:

and now shall it be reported to the king, according to these words; such a report as this, and in those very words, will soon reach the ears of the king of Persia:

come now, therefore, and let us take counsel together; contrive the best method to put a stop to this report, if a false one, and to wipe off the reproach that is upon thee, and may affect us; and thus partly terrifying him, and partly pretending friendship to him, hoped to get him into his hands.

[[@Nehemiah 6:8]]Ver. [[8 >> Bible:Nehemiah 6:8]]. Then I sent unto him,.... Whether a letter, or a messenger, is not said:

saying there are no such things done as thou sayest; that there was any scheme formed to rebel, and make him king, or that prophets were appointed to declare him such:

but thou feignest them out of thine own heart; in short, that they were no other than lies of his own inventing.

[[@Nehemiah 6:9]]Ver. [[9 >> Bible:Nehemiah 6:9]]. For they all made us afraid,.... Or you all, as Aben Ezra interprets it; or all the Heathen nations, as Jarchi; this was the design of all those scandalous reports, to intimidate them, and with this they pleased themselves, as follows:

their hands shall be weakened from the work, that it be not done; this they hoped would be the effect of those reports sent to them:

now, therefore, O God, strengthen my hands; and let them not have what they will, and hope for; according to Aben Ezra, these words are directed to Sanballat, that if he was a friend, as he pretended, that instead of weakening, he would strengthen his hands by a sincere reconciliation; so Vatablus; but they are an address to God, such short ejaculations being usual with Nehemiah.

[[@Nehemiah 6:10]]Ver. [[10 >> Bible:Nehemiah 6:10]]. Afterward I came unto the house of Shemaiah the son of Delaiah, the son of Mehetabeel, who was shut up,.... Either in his own house, or in a chamber in the temple, as if he had given himself up to meditation, fasting, and prayer; or, as he might suggest to Nehemiah, for his safety, and so designed it as an example to him; this man might be a priest of the course of Delaiah, 1Ch 24:18 or however he was a person Nehemiah had a good opinion of, and came to him on the letters sent to him by his enemies, to consult with him, and the rest, since they had suggested that he had appointed prophets to speak of him as a king:

and he said let us meet together in the house of God, within the temple, and let us shut the doors of the temple; this looks as if he was in his own house, or if in a chamber of the temple, that he thought that was not secret and safe enough, and therefore proposed going within the temple, into the holy place, where none but priests might go:

for they will come to slay thee; meaning his enemies, Sanballat and his companions: yea, in the night they will come to slay thee; that very night, and therefore no time should be lost in providing for his safety.

[[@Nehemiah 6:11]]Ver. [[11 >> Bible:Nehemiah 6:11]]. And I said, should such a man as I flee?.... The king's commissioner, who had the conducting and management of the whole affair of building the wall of Jerusalem, on whom it wholly depended; for, should he absent himself, the people would depart and leave their work, and the city and wall be left defenceless, which was what was hoped for from this scheme; and who had expressed such confidence in God, and had had such success:

and who is there, that, being as I am; in such a post, and in such circumstances, and on whom so much depended:

would go into the temple to save his life? or where there was little reason to believe it would be preserved long, should he take such a step as that:

I will not go in; as being neither lawful, nor honourable, nor safe.

[[@Nehemiah 6:12]]Ver. [[12 >> Bible:Nehemiah 6:12]]. And, lo, I perceived that God had not sent him,.... Because he advised to that which was against the cause of God and true religion:

but that he pronounced the prophecy against me; for by fleeing, as he advised, it would seem that he was guilty of the crimes of rebellion and treason he was charged with; and leaving the people, as they would in course break up, he himself could not be long in safety, no, not in the temple:

for Tobiah and Sanballat had hired him; this he found out afterwards, on purpose to intimidate him, and take such measures as that thereby he would lose his character and his influence.

[[@Nehemiah 6:13]]Ver. [[13 >> Bible:Nehemiah 6:13]]. Therefore was he hired, that I should be afraid, and do so,

and sin,.... By distrusting the power and providence of God to protect him, and by going into such a part of the temple, which he, being no priest, had no right to go into:

and that they might have matter for an evil report, that they might reproach me; as a rebel and traitor against the king, which had been reported of him, and which would be strengthened by such a step.

[[@Nehemiah 6:14]]Ver. [[14 >> Bible:Nehemiah 6:14]]. My God, think thou on Tobiah and Sanballat according to these their works,.... Their wicked counsels and schemes, and not only confound and disappoint them, but reward them as they deserve:

and on the prophetess Noadiah: whom Aben Ezra takes to be the same with Shemaiah, because he said, down, "let us meet", &c. **Ne 6:10**, but no doubt it is the name of a woman, a false prophetess, and was hired, and in the same scheme with Shemaiah:

and the rest of the prophets that would have put me in fear; and so put him on leaving the people, and the work he was engaged in, and flee for his safety; it seems there were more than are by name mentioned, who sought to discourage and intimidate him.

[[@Nehemiah 6:15]]Ver. [[15 >> Bible:Nehemiah 6:15]]. So the wall was finished in the twenty fifth day of the month Elul,.... The sixth month, answering to part of August and part of September:

in fifty and two days; which Aben Ezra reckons from the time that Sanballat sent his letter to Nehemiah, when no more were wanting than to set the doors upon the gates, **Ne 6:1**, but rather these, with Jarchi, must be reckoned from the time the building was begun; which, reckoning back from the twenty fifth of Elul, it will appear it was begun the third day of the fifth month Ab; nor need this be thought incredible, considering the number of workmen, their ardour and diligence in building, and that the walls were not wholly built all around, only repaired, and breaches made up, and much of the old materials were made use of, which were at hand, and stone unhewed, and especially being attended with the blessing of God, which succeeded the undertaking: nor are there wanting examples similar to this; and as it is observed by many from Curtius {x}, the walls of new Alexandria, which were sixty furlongs in length, or more than seven miles, were finished in seventeen days; if Nicephorus {y} is to be credited, the high walls which surrounded Constantinople, and were twenty miles in circumference, were finished in two months time. Josephus is not to be regarded, who, contrary to the Scriptures says {z}, this wall of Jerusalem was two years and four months in building.

{x} Hist. l. 7. c. 6. Justin e Togo, l. 12. c. 5. {y} Hist. l. 14. c. 1. {z} Antiqu. l. 11. c. 5. sect. 8.

[[@Nehemiah 6:16]]Ver. [[16 >> Bible:Nehemiah 6:16]]. And it came to pass, that when all our enemies heard thereof,.... That the wall was finished:

and all the Heathen that were about us saw these things; the neighbouring nations, who not only heard with their ears, but saw with their eyes what was done:

they were much cast down in their own eyes; through shame and confusion, because of their own scoffs and jeers; through grief and vexation at the unexpected success of the Jews, and through the fear of them that was fallen upon them, as Jarchi notes:

for they perceived that this work was wrought of our God; his special providence and blessing attending it, as appeared by its being so soon effected.

[[@Nehemiah 6:17]]Ver. [[17 >> Bible:Nehemiah 6:17]]. Moreover, in those days,.... While the wall was building:

the nobles of Judah sent many letters to Tobiah, and the letters of Tobiah came unto them; letters passed between them frequently, they informing him how things went on at Jerusalem,

and he advising them to what was detrimental to the true interest of their nation; such false friends had Nehemiah about him, and yet the work succeeded under him; which showed it the more to be of God.

[[@Nehemiah 6:18]] Ver. [[18 >> Bible:Nehemiah 6:18]]. For there were many in Judah sworn unto him,.... To Tobiah, who not only in a private manner corresponded with him by letters, but bound themselves by an oath to him to be true to his interest, and do as he should advise them:

because he was the son in law of Shechaniah, the son of Arah; of a family that came up with Zerubbabel from the captivity, **Ezr 2:5** and very probably of considerable note:

and his son Johanan had taken the daughter of Meshullam the son of Berechiah; a very eminent person, concerned in building the wall, **Ne 3:4**.

[[@Nehemiah 6:19]] Ver. [[19 >> Bible:Nehemiah 6:19]]. Also they reported his good deeds before me,.... Recommended him as a very worthy man, deserving of respect and notice by Nehemiah, and to be taken into his friendship, and admitted to conversation with him, whose counsel and advice might be of service:

and uttered my words to him; reported both what he said and did; for the word used signifies both words and actions:

and Tobiah sent letters to put me in fear; perceiving, by the intelligence of his friends, that Nehemiah would have nothing to say to him, nor to do with him, he threatened him.

[[@Nehemiah 7]]

Chapter 7

INTRODUCTION TO NEHEMIAH 7

Nehemiah having built the wall, and set up the doors, appointed two persons to take the charge of the city, and set watches for the safety of it, and to take special care about opening and shutting the gates of it, **Ne 7:1**, and concerned he was for the peopling of it, and having found a register of the first comers to it, gives their names, **Ne 7:4** and some account of the freewill offerings made for the work they came about, **Ne 7:70**.

[[@Nehemiah 7:1]] Ver. [[1 >> Bible:Nehemiah 7:1]]. Now it came to pass, when the wall was built, and I had set up the doors,.... Which was not done when Sanballat sent his first letter, but now was, **Ne 6:1**,

and the porters and the singers, and the Levites were appointed; not to attend the doors of the gates of the wall, but to return to their service in the temple, who had been employed in one thing or another, while the wall and gates were building and repairing; see **Ne 3:17**.

[[@Nehemiah 7:2]]Ver. [[2 >> Bible:Nehemiah 7:2]]. That I gave my brother Hanani,.... Who first brought him the melancholy account of the state of Jerusalem, **Ne 1:2**,

and Hananiah the ruler of the palace; the king's palace, in which the viceroy of the king of Persia dwelt, and now Nehemiah; to these two men he gave

charge over Jerusalem; committed it to their care during his absence, who may be supposed now to return to Persia, as he had promised, **Ne 2:6**,

for he was a faithful man; this is said of Hananiah, and given as a reason why such a trust was committed to him; Hanani's character was well known, and his journey from Jerusalem to Shushan was a full proof of his hearty concern for the interest of it:

and feared God above many; Hananiah was exemplary in his fear of God, few were equal to him, and none exceeded him; or of many days, as Jarchi; of a long time he had feared the Lord, and served him many years.

[[@Nehemiah 7:3]]Ver. [[3 >> Bible:Nehemiah 7:3]]. And I said unto them, let not the gates of Jerusalem be opened until the sun be hot,.... Or until the heat of the day, or near noon; at least not till the sun had been up some time, and shone out clearly, and caused much heat; that if any enemies were near, or lying in wait, they might be discovered, and the inhabitants also up and ready to defend themselves:

and while they stand by; according to Aben Ezra, Hanani and Hananiah were to be present at the opening and shutting of the gates, and so Grotius; but these being the chief rulers, it is not likely; but rather those whom they appointed to look after them, these were to stand by while their servants did it; they were not to leave it wholly to them, but to see it done themselves:

let them shut the doors, and bar them; or "lay hold" {a} on them, handle them to see whether they are shut fast or not:

and appoint watches of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, everyone in his watch, and everyone to be over against his house; no foreigners were to be of the watch, only inhabitants, and those everyone in their turn, and to be placed over against where they dwelt; and so it might be thought would be the more careful and diligent in their watch.

{a} wzxaw "et tractate", Junius & Tremellius; "contrectate eas", Piscator.

[[@Nehemiah 7:4]]Ver. [[4 >> Bible:Nehemiah 7:4]]. Now the city was large and great,.... The circumference of it, all within the wall; for that was built on its old foundation, and enclosed as much ground as ever it did: Hecataeus {b}, an Heathen writer, says the circumference of Jerusalem was fifty furlongs, which was more than six miles; but Josephus {c} makes the circuit of it but thirty three furlongs or about six miles:

but the people were few therein; in comparison of the largeness of the place; for though there were 42,360 that came up at first with Zerubbabel, and many more with Ezra, yet a great number chose to settle in the towns and cities in the country, Jerusalem being in such a desolate condition:

and the houses were not builded; some were, but they were but few, many of them still lay in ruins.

{b} Apud Euseb. Praepar. par. Evangel. l. 9. c. 4. p. 408. & apud Joseph. contr. Apion, l. 1. c. 22. {c} **Deuteronomy** Bell. Jud. l. 5. c. 4. sect. 3.

[[@Nehemiah 7:5]]Ver. [[5 >> Bible:Nehemiah 7:5]]. And my God put into mine heart,.... Every good motion in him, and whatever he thought of that was conducive to the good and welfare of Jerusalem, Nehemiah always ascribed it to God; see **2 Corinthians 3:5**

to gather together the nobles, and the rulers, and the people, that they might be reckoned by genealogy; that their number might be known, and of what families they were, and in what cities they formerly dwelt; and this was not only of use for the present purpose of Nehemiah, but was of service hereafter to show the pedigree of families, and that it might be clearly known from whence the Messiah sprung:

and I found a register of the genealogy of them which came up at the first; from Babylon to Jerusalem, along with Zerubbabel, as appears from **Ne 7:7**, and this was of great use to him, whereby he would know not only their names and number, but to what city they belonged, and who to the city of Jerusalem, that they might be called upon to come, and rebuild their houses, and take up their residence there:

and found written therein; the names of the persons and families after mentioned.

[[@Nehemiah 7:6]]Ver. [[6 >> Bible:Nehemiah 7:6]]. These are the children of the province that went up out of the captivity,.... Who were of the province of Judea, as it was now reduced, and came up out of the captivity of Babylon through the edict of Cyrus; see **Ezr 2:1**, where the same preface is given to the list of names as here; and from hence to the end of **Ne 7:69** the same account is given of persons and families as there, with some little difference of numbers and names; in some instances there are more in this list, in others fewer, which may be thus accounted for; that list was made in Babylon, when, upon the edict of Cyrus, the Jews, who intended to go up with Zerubbabel, gave in their names, and they were registered; but this was made when they came to Jerusalem; now some of those that gave in their names changed their minds, and tarried in Babylon, and some might die by the way, which makes the numbers fewer in some instances; and others who did not give in their names at first, but, being better disposed towards their own country, followed after and joined those which were returning, and increased the number of others; to which may be added what Abendana observes, that in Ezra an account is given of those that came out of the captivity by the companies, in which they came not genealogized, and had a mixture of persons of other families in them, and some that had no genealogy; but afterwards, when they were genealogized according to their families, a register of their genealogies was made, and is what Nehemiah now found, and here gives; and, as for difference of names, that may be owing to the carelessness of copiers, or to the different pronunciation of names, or some men might have two names; the matter is of no great moment.

[[@Nehemiah 7:7]]Ver. [[7 >> Bible:Nehemiah 7:7]]. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

[[@Nehemiah 7:8]]Ver. [[8 >> Bible:Nehemiah 7:8]]. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

[[@Nehemiah 7:9]]Ver. [[9 >> Bible:Nehemiah 7:9]]. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

[[@Nehemiah 7:10]]Ver. [[10 >> Bible:Nehemiah 7:10]]. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

[[@Nehemiah 7:11]]Ver. [[11 >> Bible:Nehemiah 7:11]]. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

[[@Nehemiah 7:12]]Ver. [[12 >> Bible:Nehemiah 7:12]]. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

[[@Nehemiah 7:13]]Ver. [[13 >> Bible:Nehemiah 7:13]]. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

[[@Nehemiah 7:14]]Ver. [[14 >> Bible:Nehemiah 7:14]]. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

[[@Nehemiah 7:15]]Ver. [[15 >> Bible:Nehemiah 7:15]]. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

[[@Nehemiah 7:16]]Ver. [[16 >> Bible:Nehemiah 7:16]]. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

[[@Nehemiah 7:17]]Ver. [[17 >> Bible:Nehemiah 7:17]]. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

[[@Nehemiah 7:18]]Ver. [[18 >> Bible:Nehemiah 7:18]]. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

[[@Nehemiah 7:19]]Ver. [[19 >> Bible:Nehemiah 7:19]]. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

[[@Nehemiah 7:20]]Ver. [[20 >> Bible:Nehemiah 7:20]]. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

[[@Nehemiah 7:21]]Ver. [[21 >> Bible:Nehemiah 7:21]]. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

[[@Nehemiah 7:22]]Ver. [[22 >> Bible:Nehemiah 7:22]]. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

[[@Nehemiah 7:23]]Ver. [[23 >> Bible:Nehemiah 7:23]]. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

[[@Nehemiah 7:24]]Ver. [[24 >> Bible:Nehemiah 7:24]]. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

[[@Nehemiah 7:25]]Ver. [[25 >> Bible:Nehemiah 7:25]]. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

[[@Nehemiah 7:26]]Ver. [[26 >> Bible:Nehemiah 7:26]]. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

[[@Nehemiah 7:27]]Ver. [[27 >> Bible:Nehemiah 7:27]]. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

[[@Nehemiah 7:28]]Ver. [[28 >> Bible:Nehemiah 7:28]]. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

[[@Nehemiah 7:29]]Ver. [[29 >> Bible:Nehemiah 7:29]]. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

[[@Nehemiah 7:30]]Ver. [[30 >> Bible:Nehemiah 7:30]]. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

[[@Nehemiah 7:31]]Ver. [[31 >> Bible:Nehemiah 7:31]]. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

[[@Nehemiah 7:32]]Ver. [[32 >> Bible:Nehemiah 7:32]]. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

[[@Nehemiah 7:33]]Ver. [[33 >> Bible:Nehemiah 7:33]]. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

[[@Nehemiah 7:34]]Ver. [[34 >> Bible:Nehemiah 7:34]]. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

[[@Nehemiah 7:35]]Ver. [[35 >> Bible:Nehemiah 7:35]]. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

[[@Nehemiah 7:36]]Ver. [[36 >> Bible:Nehemiah 7:36]]. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

[[@Nehemiah 7:37]]Ver. [[37 >> Bible:Nehemiah 7:37]]. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

[[@Nehemiah 7:38]]Ver. [[38 >> Bible:Nehemiah 7:38]]. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

[[@Nehemiah 7:39]]Ver. [[39 >> Bible:Nehemiah 7:39]]. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

[[@Nehemiah 7:40]]Ver. [[40 >> Bible:Nehemiah 7:40]]. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

[[@Nehemiah 7:41]]Ver. [[41 >> Bible:Nehemiah 7:41]]. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

[[@Nehemiah 7:42]]Ver. [[42 >> Bible:Nehemiah 7:42]]. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

[[@Nehemiah 7:43]]Ver. [[43 >> Bible:Nehemiah 7:43]]. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

[[@Nehemiah 7:44]]Ver. [[44 >> Bible:Nehemiah 7:44]]. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

[[@Nehemiah 7:45]]Ver. [[45 >> Bible:Nehemiah 7:45]]. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

[[@Nehemiah 7:46]]Ver. [[46 >> Bible:Nehemiah 7:46]]. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

[[@Nehemiah 7:47]]Ver. [[47 >> Bible:Nehemiah 7:47]]. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

[[@Nehemiah 7:48]]Ver. [[48 >> Bible:Nehemiah 7:48]]. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

[[@Nehemiah 7:49]]Ver. [[49 >> Bible:Nehemiah 7:49]]. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

[[@Nehemiah 7:50]]Ver. [[50 >> Bible:Nehemiah 7:50]]. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

[[@Nehemiah 7:51]]Ver. [[51 >> Bible:Nehemiah 7:51]]. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

[[@Nehemiah 7:52]]Ver. [[52 >> Bible:Nehemiah 7:52]]. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

[[@Nehemiah 7:53]]Ver. [[53 >> Bible:Nehemiah 7:53]]. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

[[@Nehemiah 7:54]]Ver. [[54 >> Bible:Nehemiah 7:54]]. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

[[@Nehemiah 7:55]]Ver. [[55 >> Bible:Nehemiah 7:55]]. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

[[@Nehemiah 7:56]]Ver. [[56 >> Bible:Nehemiah 7:56]]. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

[[@Nehemiah 7:57]]Ver. [[57 >> Bible:Nehemiah 7:57]]. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

[[@Nehemiah 7:58]]Ver. [[58 >> Bible:Nehemiah 7:58]]. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

[[@Nehemiah 7:59]]Ver. [[59 >> Bible:Nehemiah 7:59]]. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

[[@Nehemiah 7:60]]Ver. [[60 >> Bible:Nehemiah 7:60]]. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

[[@Nehemiah 7:61]]Ver. [[61 >> Bible:Nehemiah 7:61]]. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

[[@Nehemiah 7:62]]Ver. [[62 >> Bible:Nehemiah 7:62]]. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

[[@Nehemiah 7:63]]Ver. [[63 >> Bible:Nehemiah 7:63]]. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

[[@Nehemiah 7:64]]Ver. [[64 >> Bible:Nehemiah 7:64]]. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

[[@Nehemiah 7:65]]Ver. [[65 >> Bible:Nehemiah 7:65]]. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

[[@Nehemiah 7:66]]Ver. [[66 >> Bible:Nehemiah 7:66]]. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

[[@Nehemiah 7:67]]Ver. [[67 >> Bible:Nehemiah 7:67]]. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

[[@Nehemiah 7:68]]Ver. [[68 >> Bible:Nehemiah 7:68]]. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

[[@Nehemiah 7:69]]Ver. [[69 >> Bible:Nehemiah 7:69]]. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

[[@Nehemiah 7:70]]Ver. [[70 >> Bible:Nehemiah 7:70]]. And some of the chief of the fathers gave unto the work,.... Of building the city and the temple, and for that service, **Ezr 2:68**,

the Tirshatha gave to the treasure a thousand drachms of gold; each of which was one pound sterling, and so amounted to so many pounds: of these "dracmons", or "darics", a Persian coin, mention is made in **Ezr 2:69**, they were golden staters, or shekels and had their name as is said, not from Darius, the father of Xerxes, though it is certain, from Herodotus {d}, that he coined golden money; but from some other king of the same name, more ancient {e}, which must be Darius the Mede; and if they are the same with the Adarcon in **Ezr 8:27** as they seem to be, then those in 1Ch 29:7 were pieces of money not so called in the times of David, but of Ezra, the writer of that book: whether this Tirshatha was Zerubbabel, or Nehemiah, is not easy to say, since this donation is not the same with that in Ezra, not made at the same time nor are the gifts the same, nor the persons that gave them. Zerubbabel was Tirshatha when the Jews came out of Babylon, and Nehemiah now:

fifty basins; which were vessels, in the which the blood of the sacrifices was received and out of which it was sprinkled:

five hundred and thirty priests' garments; which were laid up in the wardrobe, and used on occasion.

{d} Melpomene, sive, l. 4. c. 166. {e} Scholiast. in Aristoph. Eccles. p. 741, 742. So Harpocration. Lexic. in voce dardikov, and Suidas on the same word.

[[@Nehemiah 7:71]]Ver. [[71 >> Bible:Nehemiah 7:71]]. And some of the chief of the fathers gave to the treasure of the work,.... To be put into the treasure, out of which the expenses of the temple, and service of it were defrayed:

twenty thousand drachms of gold; which were so many pounds of our money, and somewhat more: for, according to Bishop Cumberland {f}, a drachm of gold was of the value of twenty shillings and four pence: and 2200 pounds of silver; "the maneh", or pound, with the Jews, was of the value of sixty shekels, Eze 45:12 and so is reckoned by our Brerewood {g} to be of our money seven pounds and ten shillings; he reckoning a shekel at half a crown, whereas

it was little more than two shillings and four pence; and so sixty of them, or a "maneh", came to about seven pounds; wherefore this sum here was seven times so many pounds of silver.

{f} Scripture Weights and Measures, ch. 4. p. 115. {g} **Deuteronomy** Ponder & Pret. Vet. Num. c. 4.

[[@Nehemiah 7:72]]Ver. [[72 >> Bible:Nehemiah 7:72]]. And that which the rest of the people gave was twenty thousand drachms of gold,.... Worth as many pounds of our money, and somewhat more:

and two thousand pound of silver; of which See Gill on "Ne 7:71":

and threescore and seven priests' garments; having been so long in Babylon, and no use of sacrifices, and so not of garments to minister in, no care was taken to provide any; which seems to be the reason why so many were given, when they returned to their own land, and sacrificed.

[[@Nehemiah 7:73]]Ver. [[73 >> Bible:Nehemiah 7:73]]. So the priests and the Levites, and the porters, and the singers, and some of the people, and the Nethinims, and all Israel, dwelt in their cities,.... The same is said in **Ezr 2:70**,

See Gill on "Ezr 2:70",

and, when the seventh month came, the children of Israel were in their cities; the month Tisri, answering to part of September, in which month was the feast of tabernacles; at this time of the year they were in their cities when they came forth out of Babylon, and so they were now; see **Ezr 3:1**.

[[@Nehemiah 8]]

Chapter 8

INTRODUCTION TO NEHEMIAH 8

Ezra being desired to bring forth the book of the law, read it to the people and others, expounded it to them, **Ne 8:1** and Nehemiah exhorted the people to express joy and gladness on this occasion, which they did, **Ne 8:9** and observing the feast of tabernacles was in the law commanded to be observed, they kept it very strictly and joyfully, **Ne 8:13**.

[[@Nehemiah 8:1]]Ver. [[1 >> Bible:Nehemiah 8:1]]. And all the people gathered themselves together as one man into the street that was before the watergate,.... A large and commodious street for such a company of people, which led to the water gate, of which see **Ne 3:26** hither the people gathered with great unanimity, zeal, and affection:

and they spoke unto Ezra the scribe; the same who is called Ezra the priest, and scribe of the law of God, and said to be a ready one, **Ezr 7:6**, who came to Jerusalem thirteen years before this time; but very probably returned to Babylon again, and was lately come from thence:

to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the Lord had commanded to Israel; to observe what was commanded in it, and which he had ordered to be read, particularly every seventh year, at the feast of tabernacles,

Deuteronomy 31:10 which was now drawing near, though this was not the precise time of reading it; hence some have thought this year was the sabbatical year; see **Ne 5:11**.

[[@Nehemiah 8:2]]Ver. [[2 >> Bible:Nehemiah 8:2]]. And Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation,.... Having a perfect copy of it, which the people knew, and therefore desired him to bring it; he brought it either out of his own case or chest, or out of the temple where it was laid up; some restrain this to the book of Deuteronomy; this he produced in sight of the whole assembly:

both of men and women; adult persons of each sex, who met promiscuously; though Grotius thinks the women had a separate place:

and all that could hear with understanding; all under age, who yet were capable of hearing the law read to some advantage to them:

upon the first day of the seventh month; the month Tisri, answering to part of September and October; this was a high day, for not only the first of every month was a festival, but the first of the seventh month was the feast of blowing of trumpets, **Le 23:24**, and besides, this was New Year's day, the first day of their civil year, as the first of Nisan was of their ecclesiastical year, and was of greater antiquity than that; and so Jarchi says, this was the first day of the year; to which may be added, that this was the day on which the altar was first set up, on the Jews' return from captivity, **Ezr 3:6**.

[[@Nehemiah 8:3]]Ver. [[3 >> Bible:Nehemiah 8:3]]. And he read therein,.... Some passages in it, here and there, which it was necessary the people should have knowledge of; for it can hardly be thought be began and read on just in the order in which it was: this he did

before the street; at the top of it, at one end of it:

that was before the water gate; which looked directly to that:

from the morning until midday; from the rising of the sun to noon, so that he must read six hours; but very probably was relieved at times by the men with him, after mentioned:

before the men and the women, and those that could understand; see **Ne 8:2**,

and the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law; to the hearing of it read, and to the things contained in it; hence Maimonides {h} gathers, that as soon as the reader begins the reading of the law, it is not lawful to speak about anything, not even the constitutions of the law, but silently to attend to what is read.

{h} Hilchot Tephillah, c. 12. sect. 9.

[[@Nehemiah 8:4]]Ver. [[4 >> Bible:Nehemiah 8:4]]. And Ezra the scribe stood upon a pulpit of wood, which they had made for the purpose,.... Or to speak out of, as the Syriac and Arabic versions; this, in the Hebrew text, is called a "tower" {i}, partly because of its height, and partly because in the form of one; and also for its largeness, considering the use it was for; for it was so large as to hold fourteen men, as appears by what follows: a pulpit of wood was made for the king in the court, to read the law from {k}; though, according to Jacob Leo, it was a throne like an high tower,

See Gill on "2Ki 11:14", the pulpits, in the Jewish synagogues, made after the same manner, as Aben Ezra observes, are called by the same {l} name:

and beside him stood Mattithiah, and Shema, and Anaiah; and Urijah, and Hilkiah, and Maaseiah, on his right hand; and on his left hand, Pedaiah, and Mishael, and Malchiah, and Hashum, and Hashbadana, Zechariah, and Meshullam; in all thirteen; there were six on his right, and seven on his left, who stood here, not merely in honour to him, and as approvers and supporters of the truth of what he read, but to relieve him when weary.

{i} Ue Idgm le "super turrem ligni", Montanus; so Dionysius is said, "concionari ex turri alta", Ciceron. Tuscul. Quaest. 1. 5. {k} Schulchan Aruch, par. 1. c. 141. sect. 7. {l} Misn. Sotah, c. 7. sect. 8.

[[@Nehemiah 8:5]]Ver. [[5 >> Bible:Nehemiah 8:5]]. And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people (for he was above all the people),.... So plainly seen by them, and what he did, and the more easily heard, for which purpose the pulpit was made for him to stand in:

and, when he opened it, all the people stood up; that they might the better hear the law read, as well as in honour and reverence of it; the Jews say {m}, that from the times of Moses to Rabban Gamaliel, they learned the law only standing; but after his death a disease came into the world, and they learned it sitting; and now it is a canon with them, that it is not necessary to stand at the reading of the law {n}.

{m} T. Bab. Megillah, fol. 21. 1. {n} Schulchan Aruch, par. 1. Orach Chayim, c. 146. sect. 4.

[[@Nehemiah 8:6]]Ver. [[6 >> Bible:Nehemiah 8:6]]. And Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God,.... Before he began to read in the book of the law, he addressed himself to God in a short prayer, wholly in the benedictory way; ascribing blessing, honour, and glory to him, celebrating his being and perfections, setting forth his greatness and his excellency, who was the author and giver of the law he was about to read; and this he the rather did, that what he read might be the more carefully attended to, and come with the greater authority, weight, and influence on those that heard it; and so, Maimonides {o} says, it is the custom with the Jews, in their synagogues, for the reader, after he has opened the book, and looked out the place he reads, to say this blessing,

"Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, King of the world, who hath chosen us out of all people, and hath given us his law; blessed art thou, O Lord, who hast given us the law; and all the people answer, Amen;"

as they now did, as follows:

and all the people answered, Amen, Amen: repeating the word, to declare their hearty assent to what Ezra had expressed; the Jews have many rules concerning pronouncing the "Amen", that it must not be too quick, curt, and short, nor with too high a voice {p}:

with lifting up their hands; a prayer gesture, to which the apostle refers, **1 Timothy 2:8**,

and they bowed their heads, and worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground; expressing hereby the awful sense they had of the Divine Being, and their profound adoration of him.

{o} Hilchot Tephillah, c. 12. sect. 5. {p} Schulchan Aruch, ut supra, (par. 1.) c. 124. sect. 12.

[[@Nehemiah 8:7]]Ver. [[7 >> Bible:Nehemiah 8:7]]. Also Jeshua, and Bani, and Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodijah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, and the Levites,.... That is, others of them besides those named; for they seem all to be Levites, unless they can be thought to be priests, and so the Levites are distinguished from them; but the former seems evident from **Ne 9:4** these also

caused the people to understand the law; as well as Ezra; from whence it is plain that he did not only read the law, but gave the sense of it, especially where there was any seeming difficulty, and these men were assisting in the same work: and the people stood in their place; to hear the law read and explained; they did not move from their first station, but continued in it from morning to noon; they were both attentive and constant.

[[@Nehemiah 8:8]]Ver. [[8 >> Bible:Nehemiah 8:8]]. So they read in the book,.... Ezra and those with him; he first began to read and expound, and when weary they relieved him, and did the same:

in the law of God distinctly; which was the book they read in, and which they read plainly and intelligibly, so as to be heard and understood; this seems to respect the clear and distinct pronunciation of the words of it, and not the explanation or meaning of it, which is after expressed; some think the sense is, that they first read it in Hebrew, and then translated it into Chaldee, that the people might better understand it, being just come out of Babylon, where they had been used to the Chaldee language; but though this was a practice in later times, it does not seem to have obtained so early, or that there was a necessity of it:

and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading; not hereby how to read it, but chiefly to understand what was read, that they might clearly know their duty to God and men: the Talmudists {q} give the meaning of the text thus; "by the law of God" they understand the Scripture; by the phrase "distinctly", the Targum or translation of it into Chaldee; by "the sense", the verses or the accents; and by "the reading", the distinction of the accents: some think from hence came the practice of reading the law in the synagogues every sabbath day,

Ac 13:15.

{q} T. Bab. Nedarim, fol. 37. 2. & Megillah, fol. 3. 1. & Hieros. Megillah, fol. 74. 4.

[[@Nehemiah 8:9]]Ver. [[9 >> Bible:Nehemiah 8:9]]. And Nehemiah which is the Tirshatha,.... Or governor, as Zerubbabel had been, and now Nehemiah, see **Ezr 2:63**

and Ezra the priest and scribe; see **Ne 8:1**,

and the Levites that taught the people; see **Ne 8:7**

said unto all the people, this day is holy unto the Lord your God; being both the new moon and the feast of blowing of trumpets:

mourn not, nor weep; which was unsuitable to a festival, and especially such an one as this, in which trumpets were to be blown, and gladness to be shown, Nu 10:10

for all the people wept when they heard the words of the law; perceiving they had not kept it, but had broke it in many instances, and so liable to the wrath and judgment of God in case of disobedience.

[[@Nehemiah 8:10]]Ver. [[10 >> Bible:Nehemiah 8:10]]. Then he said unto them,.... Nehemiah the Tirshatha or governor:

go your way; to their own houses, and refresh themselves; it being noon, and they had stood many hours attentive to the reading and expounding of the law:

eat the fat, and drink the sweet: not a common meal, but a feast, consisting of the richest provisions, the best of food and liquors

and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared; for the poor, who had no food at home provided for them; the widow, fatherless, and stranger, who at festivals were to partake of the entertainment,

Deuteronomy 16:11

for this day is holy unto our Lord: neither be you sorry; confirming what the Levites had said and exhorted to, **Ne 8:9**

for the joy of the Lord is your strength; to rejoice, as the Lord commanded them on such days as these, was a means both of increasing their bodily strength and their inward strength, and of fitting them the more to perform their duty to God and men with cheerfulness, which sorrow and heaviness made unfit for; and the joy which has the Lord for its object, and comes from him, is the cause of renewing spiritual strength, so as to run and not be weary, walk and not faint, in the ways of God.

[[@Nehemiah 8:11]]Ver. [[11 >> Bible:Nehemiah 8:11]]. So the Levites stilled all the people,.... Made them quiet and easy, being backed by the governor:

saying, hold your peace; refrain from weeping and mourning:

for the day is holy; a festival, set apart for joy and gladness:

neither be ye grieved; inwardly; as they were not to show any signs of sorrow outwardly, so they were not to cherish grief inwardly.

[[@Nehemiah 8:12]]Ver. [[12 >> Bible:Nehemiah 8:12]]. And all the people went their way to eat and to drink,.... Freely and cheerfully:

and to send portions; to the poor, who had nothing to eat and drink:

and to make great mirth; with music, vocal and instrumental:

because they had understood the words that were declared unto them; the meaning of the several laws read and explained unto them, whereby they better understood their duty, and in what instances and in what manner it was to be performed; how much more reason is there for joy and gladness, when the Gospel, and the doctrines of it, are clearly known and understood? **Psalm 89:15.**

[[@Nehemiah 8:13]]Ver. [[13 >> Bible:Nehemiah 8:13]]. And on the second day were gathered together,.... The second day of the month, and of the new year, the day after the feast of blowing of trumpets, and after the law had been read and explained:

the chief of the fathers of all the people: heads of tribes and families: the priests and the Levites; who, though they were instructors of others, needed to be taught themselves, of which they were sensible: and therefore came

unto Ezra the scribe, even to understand the words of the law; some things in it, which, upon reading the day before, they observed had some difficulty in them, and which they did not clearly and thoroughly understand; and therefore applied to Ezra, a ready scribe in the law, for better information, and that they might be better able to teach the people; which was highly commendable in them.

[[@Nehemiah 8:14]]Ver. [[14 >> Bible:Nehemiah 8:14]]. And they found written in the law which the Lord had commanded by Moses,.... The children of Israel, to be observed by them; either by hearing it read the day before, or by conversation with Ezra, they perceived it was enjoined in the law, particularly in

Le 23:39

that the children of Israel should dwell in booths, in the feast of the seventh month: which was the same month, and this the second day of it, and therefore the time drew near for keeping it; for it was to begin the fifteenth.

[[@Nehemiah 8:15]]Ver. [[15 >> Bible:Nehemiah 8:15]]. And that they should publish and proclaim in all their cities, and in Jerusalem,.... That is, as Jarchi interprets it, by supplying it thus,

and they commanded that they should publish, &c. Ezra and those with him gave orders that heralds should proclaim in all cities where the Jews dwelt that the feast of tabernacles would be kept, and they should prepare for it; and which seems to be the true sense, since it is not

written in the law that such a proclamation should be made; but this was an order of their own, thereby to give notice of it, that all might be provided:

go forth unto the mount, and fetch olive branches, and pine branches, and myrtle branches, and palm branches, and branches of thick trees, to make booths, as it is written; in Le 23:40, where the first three of these seem to be called boughs of goodly trees; though the Jews {r} commonly understand them of pomecitrans, of which the Syriac version here interprets the myrtle branches; and by them are meant the citron branches, with the leaves and fruit, and which the Jews make absolutely necessary to the keeping of the feast, and for beautiful ones will give a large price; some of them go every year to Spain, and buy as many as they can, and dispose of them wherever Jews live {s}: and those branches were to be fetched, not properly speaking to make the booths of, which were made of boards and planks, but for the decoration of them; and it was not necessary, according to Aben Ezra, that some of each of these should be gathered for that purpose, but of any sort of them; for he interprets the words disjunctively olive branches, or pine branches, or myrtle branches, &c. these, according to the common notion of the Jews, were tied up in little bundles, and carried in the hand, which they call "lulabs"; and they observe {t}, the thick branches were for them, which included the rest; now these they were to fetch from the mount of Olives, and other mountains about Jerusalem; near to which also there was a place called Motza {u}; whither they went, and gathered the willows of the brook mentioned in Le 23:39.

{r} T. Bab. Succah, fol. 35. 1. {s} Buxtorf. Synagog. Jud. c. 21. p. 454. {t} Succah, fol. 12. 1. {u} Misn. Saccah, c. 4. sect. 5.

[[@Nehemiah 8:16]]Ver. [[16 >> Bible:Nehemiah 8:16]]. So the people went forth, and brought them,.... Went out of Jerusalem to the mountains adjacent, and fetched in branches of the said trees, one or another:

and made themselves booths, everyone upon the roof of his house; which were flat, **Deuteronomy 22:8**, and they might be made anywhere, so be it they were open to the air:

and in their courts, and in the courts of the house of God; the common people in the courtyards belonging to their houses, and the priests and Levites in the courts of the temple, the yards or open places adjoining to them:

and in the street of the watergate; which led to that, and seems to have been a very large street, in which many booths might be built, **Ne 3:26**

and in the street of the gate of Ephraim; which led to the gate through which the road lay to the tribe of Ephraim, see 2Ki 14:13, none were erected without the walls of the city, for fear of the enemy.

[[@Nehemiah 8:17]]Ver. [[17 >> Bible:Nehemiah 8:17]]. And all the congregation of them that were come again out of captivity made booths,.... These came to Jerusalem, and made them booths there; for there only was this feast kept, see **Joh 7:2**,

and sat under the booths; there they dwelt during the seven days of it, in commemoration of their ancestors dwelling in booths in the wilderness, see Le 23:42

for since the days of Jeshua the son of Nun unto that day had not the children of Israel done so; Joshua observed it, when he had brought and settled the people of Israel in the land of Canaan; and it had been observed since, before this time, as appears from **1Ki 8:2 Ezr 3:4**; but not so, with such exactness, with such zeal and affection, with such a regard to the law of God, as to read it every day of the feast, as in the next verse, and with such joy and gladness; wherefore there is no reason to suspect a corruption in the text, as a learned man {w} does, who supposes that Joshua is put for Josiah:

and there was very great gladness; that they were restored unto and settled in their land, had the book of the law, and the knowledge of it, and were directed and enabled to observe it.

{w} Delancy's Life of King David, vol. 1. p. 395. marg.

[[@Nehemiah 8:18]]Ver. [[18 >> Bible:Nehemiah 8:18]]. Also day by day, from the first day unto the last day, he read in the book of the law of God,.... That is, Ezra; this was done by him every day during the feast, whereas only the first and last days were the holy convocations on which it seems to have been read:

and they kept the feast seven days, and on the eighth day was a solemn assembly, according to the manner; prescribed in **Le 23:39**.

[[@Nehemiah 9]]

Chapter 9

INTRODUCTION TO NEHEMIAH 9

In this chapter we have an account of a fast kept by the Jews, which was observed, as by outward acts of humiliation, so by confession of sin, reading the law, and worshipping the Lord, **Ne 9:1** and of a long prayer that the Levites made, in which they celebrate the divine perfections, take notice of various instances of the goodness of God to the people of Israel, acknowledge their manifold transgressions, observe the Lord's correction of them for them, in which they own he was righteous, **Ne 9:4**.

[[@Nehemiah 9:1]]Ver. [[1 >> Bible:Nehemiah 9:1]]. Now in the twenty fourth day of this month,.... The seventh month, the month Tisri or September, two days after the feast of tabernacles was ended:

the children of Israel were assembled with fasting, and with sackclothes, and earth upon them; which were all outward tokens of mourning and humiliation, see **Joe 1:8** which they could not show during the festival; but that being over, they return to it, see **Ne 8:9**.

[[@Nehemiah 9:2]]Ver. [[2 >> Bible:Nehemiah 9:2]]. And the seed of Israel separated themselves from all strangers,.... Such as were genuine Israelites, of the seed of Abraham, who had married wives of the Gentiles, strangers to the commonwealth of Israel, either before the reformation by Ezra, not being then discovered, or had fallen into this evil since;

but now, on the reading of the law, were convinced of it, and so separated themselves from such wives, which was a proof of the truth of their repentance:

and stood and confessed their sins, and the iniquities of their fathers: particularly their taking of strange wives, which their fathers had also done, and set them a bad example, which they had followed; of standing and confessing, see Lu 18:13.

[[@Nehemiah 9:3]]Ver. [[3 >> Bible:Nehemiah 9:3]]. And they stood up in their place,.... In the outward court of the temple, where men used to stand when they prayed and confessed their sins: and read in the book of the law of the Lord their God; that they might the better know the mind and will of God, and do their duty: this they did

one fourth part of the day; the space of three hours, from sun rising, or six o'clock in the morning, to the time of the morning sacrifice, which was about nine o'clock:

and another fourth part they confessed; the goodness of God to them, and the sins they had been guilty of:

and worshipped the Lord their God; bowed down before him in prayer and supplication, and so spent three hours more, which reached to noon or twelve o'clock; and from thence to three o'clock, about the time of the evening sacrifice, and from thence to sun setting, or six o'clock, and so spent the whole day in the above exercises alternately.

[[@Nehemiah 9:4]]Ver. [[4 >> Bible:Nehemiah 9:4]]. Then stood up upon the stairs of the Levites,.... On an ascent; an elevated place where the Levites used to stand when they sang at the time of sacrifice, and where they might be seen and heard by the people:

Jeshua and Bani, Kadmiel, Shebaniah, Bunni, Sherebiah, Bani, and Chenani; who seem to be all Levites, see Ne 8:7,

and cried with a loud voice unto the Lord their God; praying with great fervency, and making bitter lamentation for the sins of the people and their own.

[[@Nehemiah 9:5]]Ver. [[5 >> Bible:Nehemiah 9:5]]. Then the Levites, Jeshua,.... Or, then the Levites, even Jeshua:

and Kadmiel, Bani, Hashabniah, Sherebiah, Hodijah, Shebaniah, and Pethahiah; the same as before, with a little variation of their names, and perhaps some of them might have two names:

and said; to the men that stood and confessed their sins, Ne 9:2

stand up; for though they are before said to stand, yet, through shame and confusion of face, and awe of the Divine Majesty, might be fallen on their faces to the ground:

and bless the Lord your God for ever and ever; for all the great and good things he had done for them, notwithstanding their sins; and particularly for his pardoning grace and mercy they had reason to hope for:

and blessed be thy glorious name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise: the glory of which name, nature, and perfections of his, cannot be set forth by the highest praises of men, and the largest ascriptions of blessing and honour to him.

[[@Nehemiah 9:6]]Ver. [[6 >> Bible:Nehemiah 9:6]]. Thou, even thou art Lord alone,.... Whose name alone is Jehovah, the one only true and living God:

thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host; the airy and starry heavens, and the sun, moon, and stars in them, and the third heaven, the seat of God, angels, and saints:

the earth, and all things that are therein; men, beasts, trees, metals, minerals, &c.

the seas, and all that is therein; fishes, sea plants, &c. see **Ac 4:24**,

and thou preservest them all; they consist in thee, and are upheld in their being by thee, **Heb 1:3**

and the host of heaven worshipped thee; not the sun, moon, and stars, only in their way, **Psalm 148:2** but the angels chiefly, **Heb 1:6**.

[[@Nehemiah 9:7]]Ver. [[7 >> Bible:Nehemiah 9:7]]. Thou art the Lord the God, who didst choose Abram,.... From among the Chaldeans, and out of his father's family:

and broughtest him forth out of Ur of the Chaldees; by calling him from thence, of which see **Genesis 11:28**, to which may be added what Amama {x} on that place observes; that some think that the sacred fire, which the Chaldeans worshipped, was kept in this city, from whence it was called Ur, that being worshipped by them and by the Assyrians under the name of Ur {y}:

and gavest him the name of Abraham; which was changed when the covenant of circumcision was given him, **Genesis 17:5**.

{x} Anti-barbar. Biblic. 1. 3. p. 652. {y} Fortunati Schaech. Elaeochrism. Myrothec. 1. 1. c. 9. col. 44.

[[@Nehemiah 9:8]]Ver. [[8 >> Bible:Nehemiah 9:8]]. And foundest his heart faithful before thee,.... A true believer in his word and promises, **Genesis 15:6** and closely attached to the fear of him, and observance of his commands, as abundantly appeared in the trial of him, in offering up his son, **Genesis 22:1**,

and madest a covenant with him, to give the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Jebusites, and the Girgashites, to give it, [I say], to his seed; not to him personally, but to his posterity, at least including and chiefly designing them; of which covenant see **Genesis 15:18**,

and hast performed thy words, for thou art righteous; in all his ways and works, faithful to his promise, a covenant keeping God, and who kept and fulfilled this covenant, assisting Joshua to conquer the land of Canaan, and put Israel into the possession of it.

[[@Nehemiah 9:9]]Ver. [[9 >> Bible:Nehemiah 9:9]]. And didst see the affliction of our fathers in Egypt,.... The hard bondage in which their lives were made bitter; and was not a mere spectator of it, but looked upon them in it with pity and compassion, and sent them a deliverer, **Ex 2:23**

and hearest their cry by the Red sea; which was before them, and the rocks on both sides of them, and the host of Pharaoh behind, pressing upon them, when he heard them, and wrought salvation for them,

Ex 14:10.

[[@Nehemiah 9:10]]Ver. [[10 >> Bible:Nehemiah 9:10]]. And shewedst signs and wonders upon Pharaoh, and on all his servants, and on all the people of his land,.... By inflicting the ten plagues upon them:

for thou knowest that they dealt proudly against them; behaved haughtily to them, and despised them, see **Ex 18:11**

so didst thou get thee a name, as it is this day; displayed his power on Pharaoh, and his goodness to Israel, the fame of which reached all over the world, and continued to that day, see **Ex 9:16**.

[[@Nehemiah 9:11]]Ver. [[11 >> Bible:Nehemiah 9:11]]. And thou didst divide the sea before them, so that they went through the midst of the sea on dry land,.... That is, the Israelites, see **Ex 14:21**,

and their persecutors thou threwest into the deeps; with great ease, and with indignation, meaning the Egyptians, that pursued hotly after them, and were thrown into the sea:

as a stone into the mighty waters; where they sunk and perished, see

Ex 15:4.

[[@Nehemiah 9:12]]Ver. [[12 >> Bible:Nehemiah 9:12]]. Moreover, thou leddest them in the day by a cloudy pillar,.... The Israelites, to shelter them from the heat of the sun in a dry and barren wilderness:

and in the night by a pillar of fire, to give them light in the way wherein they should go; through a trackless desert, see

Ex 13:21.

[[@Nehemiah 9:13]]Ver. [[13 >> Bible:Nehemiah 9:13]]. Thou camest down also upon Mount Sinai,.... By some visible tokens of his presence, as a cloud, fire, smoke, &c. which must be understood consistent with his omniscience, see Ex 19:18,

and spakest with them from heaven; the decalogue or ten commandments,

Ex 20:1,

and gavest them right judgments and true laws, good statutes and commandments; both judicial and ceremonial, which were of excellent use to them in their civil and ecclesiastical polity; these were not spoken to Israel, but given to Moses on the mount, to be delivered to them.

[[@Nehemiah 9:14]]Ver. [[14 >> Bible:Nehemiah 9:14]]. And madest known unto them thy holy sabbath,.... Which was not made known to others, and was peculiar to the Jewish nation, and a privilege granted to them, to have rest corporeal and spiritual, typical of the rest in Christ:

and commandedst them precepts, statutes, and laws, by the hand of Moses thy servant; moral, ceremonial, and judicial, such as other nations had not, **Deuteronomy 4:8**.

[[@Nehemiah 9:15]]Ver. [[15 >> Bible:Nehemiah 9:15]]. And gavest them bread from heaven for their hunger,.... To satisfy that, meaning the manna, Ex 16:3

and broughtest forth water for them out of the rock, for their thirst; to quench it; this was done both quickly after they came out of the land of Egypt, and a little before their entrance into the land of Canaan, see Ex 17:6

and promisedst them that they should go in to possess the land which thou hadst sworn to give them; which oath was made to them and to their fathers also, see Nu 14:30.

[[@Nehemiah 9:16]]Ver. [[16 >> Bible:Nehemiah 9:16]]. But they and our fathers dealt proudly,.... Behaved in a haughty manner towards God, their kind benefactor:

and hardened their necks; refused to take the yoke of his law, as refractory oxen, that withdraw their necks from the yoke:

and hearkened not to thy commandments; to do them, though they promised they would, Ex 24:7.

[[@Nehemiah 9:17]]Ver. [[17 >> Bible:Nehemiah 9:17]]. And refused to obey,.... Though exhorted, admonished, and threatened, such was their obstinacy:

neither were mindful of thy wonders that thou didst among them; in delivering them at the Red sea, in raining manna about them, and giving them water out of the rock:

but hardened their necks; see the preceding verse:

and in their rebellion appointed a captain to return to their bondage; they not only proposed it, but determined upon it, which is reckoned the same as if they had done it, see Nu 14:4,

but thou art a God ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness; as he had proclaimed his name before Moses, and as the whole of his conduct towards the people of Israel abundantly shewed, see Ex 34:6

and forsookest them not; when in the wilderness, where otherwise they must have perished, but still fed and protected them, notwithstanding their provocations.

[[@Nehemiah 9:18]]Ver. [[18 >> Bible:Nehemiah 9:18]]. Yea, when they had made them a molten calf,.... In imitation of the Apis, or ox of the Egyptians:

and said, this is thy god that brought thee out of Egypt; or the image of thy god, as the Arabic version, see Ex 32:4,

and had wrought great provocations; of all which nothing was greater than idolatry.

[[@Nehemiah 9:19]]Ver. [[19 >> Bible:Nehemiah 9:19]]. Yet thou in thy manifold mercies forsookest them not in the wilderness,.... Where no supply could be had, if he had cast them off, see Ne 9:17,

the pillar of the cloud departed not from them by day, to lead them in the way; which, if it had, they would have been scorched by the heat of the sun:

neither the pillar of fire by night, to show them light, and the way wherein they should go; or otherwise they would have lost their way, and not have known which way to have gone.

[[@Nehemiah 9:20]]Ver. [[20 >> Bible:Nehemiah 9:20]]. Thou gavest also thy good spirit to instruct them,.... In the knowledge of the laws delivered to them; the spirit of prophecy, according to Ben Melech, and which Aben Ezra interprets of the spirit put upon the seventy elders, Nu 11:17,

and withheldest not thy manna from their mouth; all the while they were in the wilderness, until they came to Canaan's land; called the Lord's manna, because prepared by him, and given by him to them; a part or portion and gift from the Lord, as Ben Melech, from whence it had its name, see Ex 16:15

and gavest them water for their thirst; which seems to have respect to the last rock stricken for them, after their many provocations in the wilderness, Nu 20:11.

[[@Nehemiah 9:21]]Ver. [[21 >> Bible:Nehemiah 9:21]]. Yea, forty years didst thou sustain them in the wilderness, so that they lacked nothing,.... As not for food, so neither for raiment, as follows:

their clothes waxed not old, and their feet swelled not; of which see **Deuteronomy 8:4.**

[[@Nehemiah 9:22]]Ver. [[22 >> Bible:Nehemiah 9:22]]. Moreover, thou gavest them kingdoms and nations,.... The two kingdoms of Sihon and Og, and the seven nations of Canaan:

and didst divide them into corners; or "corner"; into every corner of the land of Canaan, so that they possessed the whole of it, a few cities excepted; Jarchi interprets it of one corner, that they might not be mixed with the people of the land, but be all together in one place; but Aben Ezra understands it of the Canaanites, of their being divided and scattered into corners, when they fled from the Israelites; but the former sense seems best:

so they possessed the land of Sihon, and the land of the king of Heshbon; or "eren", or "namely" {z}, "the land of the king of Heshbon"; for Sihon was king of Heshbon, and so the land the same:

and the land of Og king of Bashan; those lands both lay on the other side Jordan, and were possessed by the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh.

{z} So Piscator, Patrick, Rambachius.

[[@Nehemiah 9:23]]Ver. [[23 >> Bible:Nehemiah 9:23]]. Their children also multipliedst thou as the stars of heaven,.... Fulfilling the promise made to Abraham, **Genesis 15:5** their number when they came out of Egypt, and just before they entered into the land of Canaan, being upwards of 600,000 men, besides women and children, Ex 12:37

and broughtest them into the land, concerning which thou hadst promised to their fathers, that they should go in to possess it; the land of Canaan, promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and their seed, into which the Lord brought them by Joshua; he was the instrument, but the thing was of God.

[[@Nehemiah 9:24]]Ver. [[24 >> Bible:Nehemiah 9:24]]. So the children went in and possessed the land,.... Not the fathers of the Israelites that came out of Egypt, they died in the wilderness, all excepting two, but their children, which seems to be the reason of this manner of expression, see Nu 14:30

and thou subduedst before them the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites; by means of Joshua, the general of the armies of Israel; there is an elegant paronomasia in the word for "subdue", and the Canaanites, which cannot be expressed in our language:

and gavest them into their hands, with their kings, and the people of the land, that they might do with them as they would; no less than thirty one kings, see Jos 12:9.

[[@Nehemiah 9:25]]Ver. [[25 >> Bible:Nehemiah 9:25]]. And they took strong cities,.... Such as, in an hyperbolical way, are said to be walled up to heaven, **Deuteronomy 1:28**

and a fat land; of a good and fruitful soil, abounding with all good things, **Deuteronomy 8:7**

and possessed houses full of all goods; ready built and furnished for them, both with good provisions and good furniture:

wells digged; to supply them with water:

vineyards, and olive yards, and fruit trees in abundance; which they planted not:

and they did eat, and were filled, and became fat; in body, though in mind became wanton and wicked; they made their hearts fat, or stupid, as Aben Ezra interprets it, see **Deuteronomy 32:15**

and delighted themselves in thy great goodness; not in praising the Lord for it, and using it to his honour and glory, but indulged themselves to luxury and intemperance; though it may be understood of a lawful pleasure in the enjoyment of the great affluence they were brought into, which last agrees with what follows.

[[@Nehemiah 9:26]]Ver. [[26 >> Bible:Nehemiah 9:26]]. Nevertheless, they were disobedient, and rebelled against thee,.... Notwithstanding all these favours and mercies bestowed upon them, which was great ingratitude:

and cast thy law behind their backs; as of no account, and unworthy of their regard; that which they should have had continually before their eyes, as the rule and guide of their actions, they cast behind them, not caring to look into it, and read it:

and slew thy prophets, which testified against them to turn them to thee; the prophets that bore a testimony against their sins, admonished them of them, called heaven and earth to record against them should they continue in them, and all to turn them from them by repentance to the Lord; those they were so wroth with on this account as to slay them, see Mt 23:37,

and they wrought great provocations; serving Baalim and Ashtaroth, and other gods of the nations, than which nothing was more provoking to the Lord.

[[@Nehemiah 9:27]]Ver. [[27 >> Bible:Nehemiah 9:27]]. Therefore thou deliveredst them into the hand of their enemies, who vexed them,.... As the kings of Mesopotamia, Moab, Canaan, and others:

and in the time of their trouble, when they cried unto thee; as they usually did, **Jud 3:9**,

thou heardest them from heaven; and according to thy manifold mercies thou gavest them saviours, who saved them out of the hands of their enemies; such were judges, Othniel, Ehud, Barak, Gideon, &c. and this was, done for them, not on account of their merits, but the abundant unmerited mercy of the Lord towards them.

[[@Nehemiah 9:28]]Ver. [[28 >> Bible:Nehemiah 9:28]]. But after they had rest,.... From their enemies, enjoyed their liberty, and were in prosperity:

they did evil again before thee; relapsed into idolatry:

therefore leftest thou them in the hand of their enemies, so that they had the dominion over them; as the Philistines had for the space of forty years, Jud 13:1,

yet when they returned and cried unto thee, thou heardest them from heaven, and many times didst thou deliver them, according to thy mercies; this was their case frequently in the times of the judges; they sinned and fell into the hands of their enemies, then they repented, and cried to God for help, and he had compassion upon them, and saved them.

[[@Nehemiah 9:29]]Ver. [[29 >> Bible:Nehemiah 9:29]]. And testifiedst against them,.... By sending prophets to them, to admonish them of their sins, and remind them of their duty:

that thou mightest bring them again unto thy law; to regard it, and walk according it:

yet they dealt proudly; with an haughty air rejected the counsel of God:

and hearkened not unto thy commandments; yielded not obedience to them:

but sinned against thy judgments; transgressed his laws, which were so just, righteous, reasonable, and equitable:

which if a man do, he shall live in them; or by them, in the land of Canaan, see Le 18:5, and withdrew the shoulder, and hardened their neck, and would not hear; like oxen, that wriggle and struggle, and draw back, and will not admit the yoke upon them.

[[@Nehemiah 9:30]]Ver. [[30 >> Bible:Nehemiah 9:30]]. Yet many years didst thou forbear them,.... Throughout the reigns of several kings, such was God's longsuffering towards them: or, "thou didst draw upon them"; that is, his mercy, as Jarchi interprets it; he drew it out of his heart, and prolonged it towards them:

and testifiedst against them by thy Spirit in thy prophets; who reproved and admonished them, as they were moved by the Holy Spirit of God in them, who spoke in his name, and what he suggested to them:

yet they would not give ear; to what the prophets said, and the Spirit of God in them:

therefore gavest thou them into the hand of the people of the lands: people that were lords of many countries, as the Assyrians and Chaldeans.

[[@Nehemiah 9:31]]Ver. [[31 >> Bible:Nehemiah 9:31]]. Nevertheless, for thy great mercies' sake, For the displaying of that, and the glorifying of it, which is so large and exceeding abundant:

thou didst not utterly consume them, nor forsake them; some were left in the land, and those that were carried captive found favour in the eyes of those that carried them away, and were suffered to live, and many of them now had returned to their own land:

for thou art a gracious and merciful God; of which they had abundant proof and evidence.

[[@Nehemiah 9:32]]Ver. [[32 >> Bible:Nehemiah 9:32]]. Now therefore, our God, the great, the mighty, and the terrible God, who keepest covenant and mercy,.... The same titles Nehemiah gives to the Lord, **Ne 1:5** and it may be reasonably thought the whole prayer is his composure, which was delivered by him to the Levites:

let not all the trouble seem little before thee; as if it was not enough; let it be judged sufficient, and no more be added, but mercy shown; Aben Ezra thinks the word "little" is not to be connected with "trouble", but with the nearest antecedent "mercy", and so Gussetius {z}; as if the sense was, let not thy mercy be small with thee, but let it be largely extended along with all the trouble, or at the time when trouble of every kind

comes upon us, on our kings, on our princes, and on our priests, and on our prophets, and on our fathers, and on all thy people, since the times of the kings of Assyria unto this day; but this sense is not clear, and makes it have respect to times to come; whereas it relates to time past, and to all the trouble and affliction they had met with from the Assyrian kings, from the time they invaded their land, and carried them captive, until this very time.

{z} Ebr. Comment. p. 937.

[[@Nehemiah 9:33]]Ver. [[33 >> Bible:Nehemiah 9:33]]. Howbeit, thou art just in all that is brought upon us,.... They own the justice of God, could not complain of any wrong done them; and had he shown them no mercy at all, it was but what they deserved:

for thou hast done right, but we have done wickedly; he had done according to the truth of his word of promise, he had faithfully kept it, but they had transgressed his righteous law.

[[@Nehemiah 9:34]]Ver. [[34 >> Bible:Nehemiah 9:34]]. Neither have our kings, our princes, our priests, nor our fathers, kept thy law,.... All ranks of men, from the highest to the lowest, had shown no regard, nor yielded obedience to the holy law of God:

nor hearkened unto thy commandments, and thy testimonies, wherewith thou didst testify against them; moral and ceremonial, which were a testification of the will of God to them, and a testimony against them if they observed them not.

[[@Nehemiah 9:35]]Ver. [[35 >> Bible:Nehemiah 9:35]]. For they have not served thee in their kingdom,.... When in it, whether of Israel or of Judah, and when in the most flourishing circumstances:

and in thy great goodness that thou gavest them; amidst all the prosperity and affluence of good things they enjoyed, which was an obligation upon them to serve the Lord;

and in the large and fat land which thou gavest before them; the land of Canaan, a land flowing with milk, which lay open for them, their enemies being driven out before them, see **Ne 9:25**,

neither turned they from their wicked works; their idolatries more especially.

[[@Nehemiah 9:36]]Ver. [[36 >> Bible:Nehemiah 9:36]]. Behold, we are servants this day,.... For though they had leave to return to their land, and rebuild their city and temple, yet they were still in subjection to the kings of Persia:

and for the land thou gavest unto our fathers, to eat the fruit thereof, and the good thereof, behold, we are servants in it; though the rightful owners and proprietors of it by the gift of God to their ancestors, to hold it and enjoy the good of it, and yet were obliged to pay tribute for it to the kings of Persia, all excepting priests and Levites; see **Ezr 6:8**.

[[@Nehemiah 9:37]]Ver. [[37 >> Bible:Nehemiah 9:37]]. And it yieldeth much increase unto the kings whom thou hast set over us, because of our sins,.... Though a very fruitful land, and brought forth much, yet not for them, but for foreign kings, that had the sovereignty over them, and enacted much toll, tribute, and custom from them, which greatly lessened the profit of the earth to them:

also they have dominion over our bodies; and could oblige them to work for them, and do any service they should command:

and over our cattle, at their pleasure; to carry burdens for them, or ride post with them:

and we are in great distress; being servants and tributaries to a foreign power.

[[@Nehemiah 9:38]]Ver. [[38 >> Bible:Nehemiah 9:38]]. And because of all this,.... Of all this distress, and that it might be removed, and be clear of it; or "in all this distress and evil", as Jarchi and Aben Ezra, in the midst of it all:

we make a sure covenant; or faithfully promise to observe the law of God, and particularly put away strange wives, and not intermarry with the people of the land:

and write it; that it may remain and be a testimony against them should they break it, being their own handwriting:

and our princes, Levites, and priests, seal unto it; as witnesses of it, and thereby binding themselves to observe the same things; their names that sealed are given in the next chapter.

[[@Nehemiah 10]]

Chapter 10

INTRODUCTION TO NEHEMIAH 10

In this chapter we have the names of the persons that signed and sealed the covenant mentioned in the last chapter, Ne 10:1, and the things they agreed unto and promised to perform; in general to observe the law of God, in particular not to marry with the people of the land, to keep the sabbaths weekly and yearly, to pay annually the third part of the shekel for the service of the temple, to bring into it the wood offerings, first fruits, firstborn, and tithes, Ne 10:28.

[[@Nehemiah 10:1]]Ver. [[1 >> Bible:Nehemiah 10:1]]. Now those that sealed were,.... That sealed the covenant, made **Ne 9:38**.

Nehemiah the Tirshatha, the son of Hachaliah; the governor of the Jews:

and Zidkijah; who seems also to have been a prince, since, without, it could not be said it was sealed by their princes, **Ne 9:38** though some think both these were priests, and then the princes must be supposed to be among the chief of the people, **Ne 10:14**, from hence to the end of the twenty seventh their names follow; the names of the priests,

Ne 10:2, who were in all twenty one; no mention is made either of Eliashib the high priest, nor of Ezra the priest and scribe; some think the former had not behaved well in his office, and that the latter was either sick, or returned to Babylon, or however hindered by some providence or another, since we hear of him both a little before and after, **Ne 8:2** then the names of the Levites, **Ne 10:9**, in all seventeen, most of which we have met with in this book before; next follow the names of the chief of the people, **Ne 10:14**, their number in all forty four; and their names may be observed in the list of those that came out of Babylon with Zerubbabel; the whole number of those that sealed, princes, priests, Levites, and chief of the people, were eighty four.

[[@Nehemiah 10:2]]Ver. [[2 >> Bible:Nehemiah 10:2]]. See Gill on "Ne 10:1".

[[@Nehemiah 10:3]]Ver. [[3 >> Bible:Nehemiah 10:3]]. See Gill on "Ne 10:1".

[[@Nehemiah 10:4]]Ver. [[4 >> Bible:Nehemiah 10:4]]. See Gill on "Ne 10:1".

[[@Nehemiah 10:5]]Ver. [[5 >> Bible:Nehemiah 10:5]]. See Gill on "Ne 10:1".

[[@Nehemiah 10:6]]Ver. [[6 >> Bible:Nehemiah 10:6]]. See Gill on "Ne 10:1".

[[@Nehemiah 10:7]]Ver. [[7 >> Bible:Nehemiah 10:7]]. See Gill on "Ne 10:1".

[[@Nehemiah 10:8]]Ver. [[8 >> Bible:Nehemiah 10:8]]. See Gill on "Ne 10:1".

[[@Nehemiah 10:9]]Ver. [[9 >> Bible:Nehemiah 10:9]]. See Gill on "Ne 10:1".

[[@Nehemiah 10:10]]Ver. [[10 >> Bible:Nehemiah 10:10]]. See Gill on "Ne 10:1".

[[@Nehemiah 10:11]]Ver. [[11 >> Bible:Nehemiah 10:11]]. See Gill on "Ne 10:1".

[[@Nehemiah 10:12]]Ver. [[12 >> Bible:Nehemiah 10:12]]. See Gill on "Ne 10:1".

[[@Nehemiah 10:13]]Ver. [[13 >> Bible:Nehemiah 10:13]]. See Gill on "Ne 10:1".

[[@Nehemiah 10:14]]Ver. [[14 >> Bible:Nehemiah 10:14]]. See Gill on "Ne 10:1".

[[@Nehemiah 10:15]]Ver. [[15 >> Bible:Nehemiah 10:15]]. See Gill on "Ne 10:1".

[[@Nehemiah 10:17]]Ver. [[17 >> Bible:Nehemiah 10:17]]. See Gill on "Ne 10:1".

[[@Nehemiah 10:18]]Ver. [[18 >> Bible:Nehemiah 10:18]]. See Gill on "Ne 10:1".

[[@Nehemiah 10:19]]Ver. [[19 >> Bible:Nehemiah 10:19]]. See Gill on "Ne 10:1".

[[@Nehemiah 10:20]]Ver. [[20 >> Bible:Nehemiah 10:20]]. See Gill on "Ne 10:1".

[[@Nehemiah 10:21]]Ver. [[21 >> Bible:Nehemiah 10:21]]. See Gill on "Ne 10:1".

[[@Nehemiah 10:22]]Ver. [[22 >> Bible:Nehemiah 10:22]]. See Gill on "Ne 10:1".

[[@Nehemiah 10:23]]Ver. [[23 >> Bible:Nehemiah 10:23]]. See Gill on "Ne 10:1".

[[@Nehemiah 10:24]]Ver. [[24 >> Bible:Nehemiah 10:24]]. See Gill on "Ne 10:1".

[[@Nehemiah 10:25]]Ver. [[25 >> Bible:Nehemiah 10:25]]. See Gill on "Ne 10:1".

[[@Nehemiah 10:26]]Ver. [[26 >> Bible:Nehemiah 10:26]]. See Gill on "Ne 10:1".

[[@Nehemiah 10:27]]Ver. [[27 >> Bible:Nehemiah 10:27]]. See Gill on "Ne 10:1".

[[@Nehemiah 10:28]]Ver. [[28 >> Bible:Nehemiah 10:28]]. And the rest of the people,.... That did not sign and seal:

the priests, the Levites, the porters, the singers, the Nethinims; the porters and singers were Levites; but those so called were such as waited upon the priests, as the Nethinims were persons that waited on them:

and all they that had separated themselves from the people of the lands unto the law of God; proselytes, who had renounced Heathenism, and embraced the true religion, had received the law of God, and professed to walk according to it;

their wives, their sons, and their daughters, everyone having knowledge, and having understanding; of the nature of the covenant, and the things contained in it, of what was required of them, and of what they promised, of the nature of an oath they entered into, and of the sin of perjury.

[[@Nehemiah 10:29]]Ver. [[29 >> Bible:Nehemiah 10:29]]. They clave to their brethren, their nobles,.... Who had signed and sealed the covenant, they declared their approbation of it, attended to it, and ratified what they had done in their name:

and entered into a curse, and into an oath, to walk in God's law, which was given by Moses the servant of God; they bound themselves with an oath that they would keep the law of God, and added a curse or imprecation on themselves to it should they break it; or, according to Piscator, they went into the space between the two pieces of the calf, which they cut asunder for the confirmation of the covenant, and so they cursed themselves if they should break it, see Jer 34:18

and to observe and do all the commandments of the Lord our God, and his judgments and his statutes; all the laws, moral, ceremonial, and judicial; this they engaged to do in general; some particulars follow.

[[@Nehemiah 10:30]]Ver. [[30 >> Bible:Nehemiah 10:30]]. And that we would not give our daughters unto the people of the land, nor take their daughters for our sons,.... Intermarry with them as they had done, and were prone to do, and even did after this,

Ne 13:23.

[[@Nehemiah 10:31]]Ver. [[31 >> Bible:Nehemiah 10:31]]. And if the people of the land bring ware,.... Any thing to be sold, any sort of goods, that being sold might be taken away, as the word signifies;

or any victuals on the sabbath day to sell; anything to make food of; wheat or barley, as Aben Ezra interprets it; the same word is rendered corn, See Gill on "**Genesis 42:1**"; to sell which was not lawful on the sabbath day, see **Am 8:5**

that we would not buy it of them on the sabbath, or on the holy day; any festival, as the feast of the passover, pentecost, and tabernacles:

and that we would leave the seventh year: the ground untilled in that year, the vines unpruned, and the fruits of the earth, which sprung of themselves, for the poor to gather, Le 25:4,

and the exaction of every debt; that they would not demand the payment of any debt on the seventh year, as the law required they should not,

Deuteronomy 15:2.

[[@Nehemiah 10:32]]Ver. [[32 >> Bible:Nehemiah 10:32]]. Also we made ordinance, for us,.... Laws among themselves, binding them to that which the laws of God did not:

to charge ourselves yearly with the third part of a shekel, for the service of the house of our God; the particulars of which follow in the next verse; for the defrayment of which there used to be a treasury in the temple; but now there was none, and therefore they took this method to assess themselves; and being poor, instead of the half shekel, which in some cases was required, they only charged themselves with the third part of one; though Aben Ezra thinks this was added to the half shekel, and was paid over and above that; according to Brerewood {a}, it was of the value of ten pence of our money: Waserus {b} has given us the figure of one of these coins, with this inscription, a "third" part of a shekel of Israel.

{a} **Deuteronomy** Pond. & Pret. Vet. Num. c. 1. {b} **Deuteronomy** Antiqu. Num. Heb. l. 2.

[[@Nehemiah 10:33]]Ver. [[33 >> Bible:Nehemiah 10:33]]. For the shewbread,.... To defray the expenses of the twelve loaves, which every week were set on the table of shewbread,

Le 24:5,

and for the continual meat offering, and for the continual burnt offering; for the daily sacrifice, morning and evening, which always had a meat offering along with it, Ex 29:38, of the sabbaths, and of the new moons; on which were additional sacrifices, Nu 28:9, and for the set feasts; of passover, pentecost, and tabernacles; in which also were offered other sacrifices, besides the daily one,

Nu 28:16,

and for the holy things: which were both by way of thanksgiving to God, and that they might feast and rejoice together:

and for the sin offerings, to make an atonement for Israel; for the whole body of the people, and so were made at the public expense:

and for all the work of the house of our God; whatever else was necessary that is not mentioned.

[[@Nehemiah 10:34]]Ver. [[34 >> Bible:Nehemiah 10:34]]. And we cast the lots among the priests, the Levites, and the people,.... The priests and Levites were in one lot, and the people in another, as Aben Ezra:

for the wood offering; for providing wood to burn upon the altar continually, concerning which Maimonides {c} thus writes:

"what is the wood offering? there was a time fixed for families to go out unto the forests, and bring in wood of disposition (to be laid in order on the altar); and the day when it came to the turn of a family to bring the wood, they offered up freewill burnt offerings, which were called a wood offering; and it was to them as a good day (or festival), and they were forbid to mourn, fast, or do any work on it;"

and he observes, that if a single person brought wood of his own free will, he was obliged to the same; and Josephus {d} speaks of a feast called culoforia, when it was customary for all to bring wood to the altar, to keep alive the sacred fire, that it might not go out, which, according to him, was on the fourteenth of the month Lois, or August; but this was not the business of all the people, lots were cast, as here said, who should do it, and when:

to bring it into the house of our God; the temple, where there was a place called the "wood room", into which the wood was brought after it had been wormed by the priests {e}

after the houses of our fathers; or families on whom the lot fell to do it: some render it,

into the house of our fathers, meaning the same as before; the temple so called, because they built it, and worshipped God in it; so Jarchi and Aben Ezra:

at times appointed, year by year; as the lot directed; these, according to the Jewish doctors {f}, were nine times in the year; on the first of Nisan (or March), the sons of Arach, of the tribe of Judah, brought the wood; on the twentieth of Tammuz (or June), the posterity of David, of the tribe of Judah; on the fifth of Ab (or July), the children of Parosh, of the tribe of Judah; on the seventh of the same month, the sons of Jonadab the son of Rechab; on the tenth of the same month, the posterity of Senaah, of the tribe of Benjamin; on the fifteenth of the same month, the children of Zattu, and with them the priests and Levites, and all who were of an uncertain tribe, &c. on the twentieth of the same month, the posterity of Pahathmoab, of the tribe of Judah; on the twentieth of Elul (or August), the children of Adin, of the tribe of Judah; on the first of Tebeth (or December), the posterity of Parosh again brought the wood:

to burn upon the altar of the Lord our God, as it is written in the law; the wood should be burnt upon it, and fire kept on it continually, **Le 6:12**, for this refers only to that, the wood offering is nowhere spoken of in the law.

{c} Hilchot Cele Hamikdash, c. 6. sect. 9, 10. Vid. Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Taanith, c. 4. sect. 5. {d} **Deuteronomy** Bello Jud. l. 2. c. 17. sect. 6. {e} See Lightfoot's Prospect of the Temple, ch. 25. {f} Misn. Taanith, c. 4. sect. 5.

[[@Nehemiah 10:35]]Ver. [[35 >> Bible:Nehemiah 10:35]]. And to bring the firstfruits of our ground,.... Not that they cast lots to do this, but they bound themselves with an oath, according to the law, to do it; this is the first of all the fruits of the earth, Ex 23:19, though Aben Ezra restrains it to the sheaf of the firstfruits, and to the two wave loaves, Le 23:10, and the firstfruits of all fruit of all trees; which, as Aben Ezra observes, their wise men restrain to the seven kinds only mentioned in **Deuteronomy 8:8**.

[[@Nehemiah 10:36]]Ver. [[36 >> Bible:Nehemiah 10:36]]. Also the firstborn of our sons and of our cattle,.... Such as were unclean, as Aben Ezra notes, as the ass, &c. and are distinguished from clean ones mentioned in the following clause; now both these, their sons, and this sort of cattle, were to be redeemed by a price paid to the priests: as it is written in the law,

Ex 13:2,

and the firstlings of our herds, and of our flocks; clean cattle, which were to be offered, Nu 18:17,

to bring to the house of our God, unto the priests that minister in the house of our God; a price for the one sort, and the other for sacrifice.

[[@Nehemiah 10:37]]Ver. [[37 >> Bible:Nehemiah 10:37]]. And that we should bring the first fruits of our dough,.... According to the law in Nu 15:20

and our offerings; their heave offerings, Nu 18:8

and the fruit of all manner of trees; bore by them on the fourth year after their planting, Le 19:23

of wine and oil; to which Aben Ezra restrains the fruit of the trees, see Nu 18:12, all these they were to bring

unto the priests, to the chambers the house of our God; there to be laid up for the use of it; and oil and wine were frequently used in sacrifices:

and the tithes of our ground unto the Levites, that the same Levites might have the tithes in all the cities of our village; the tenth part of the produce of their agriculture everywhere throughout the land, see

Nu 18:21.

[[@Nehemiah 10:38]]Ver. [[38 >> Bible:Nehemiah 10:38]]. And the priest the son of Aaron shall be with the Levites, when the Levites take tithes,.... There was always to be a priest with the Levites at such times, to take notice what quantity they received, that they might not be under any temptation, or lie under any suspicion of defrauding the priests of their due, who were to have a part in the tithes, as follows:

and the Levites shall bring up the tithe of the tithes unto the house of our God, to the chambers, into the treasure house: which were in the court of the priests for that purpose; for out of the tithes of the Levites there was another tithe or tenth part taken, and given to the priests, see Nu 18:26.

[[@Nehemiah 10:39]]Ver. [[39 >> Bible:Nehemiah 10:39]]. For the children of Israel, and the children of Levi, shall bring the offering of the corn, of the new wine, and the oil, unto the chambers,.... In the temple:

where are the vessels of the sanctuary; to put the said things into, that they might be ready at hand when wanted, as they often were for the meat and drink offerings:

and the priests that minister, and the porters, and the singers; who dwelt there when in their ministrations, and were supported by the above tithes and gifts:

and we will not forsake the house of our God; neither forsake the assembling themselves there for worship, nor neglect to make the necessary provisions for the service of it, as they had too much done, but now resolve for the future to behave better.

[[@Nehemiah 11]]

Chapter 11

INTRODUCTION TO NEHEMIAH 11

This chapter treats of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, those of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, who settled there by lot, or of their own accord, their names and numbers, Ne 11:1, and of the priests and Levites who dwelt there, Ne 11:10, and of the rest of the people, priests, and Levites, that dwelt in the other cities and villages of Judah and Benjamin, Ne 11:20.

[[@Nehemiah 11:1]]Ver. [[1 >> Bible:Nehemiah 11:1]]. And the rulers of the people dwelt at Jerusalem,.... Where it was proper they should, being the metropolis of the nation, both for the performance of their offices, and to protect and defend it, as well as to set an example to the people, and encourage them to dwell there also:

the rest of the people also cast lots to bring one of ten to dwell in Jerusalem the holy city; so called, because of the temple and the worship of God in it; and so it is called by Julian the emperor {g}; and some {h} have thought that the Cadytis of Herodotus {i} is the same with Jerusalem, which had its name from hvdq, "holy", and is now called by the Turks "cuds", that is, "holy" {k}: now, though it was the chief city, and the place of public worship, yet the people were not forward of settling in it, partly because of the rage of the enemy, which this city was the butt of, and partly because it was more to their worldly advantage to dwell in the country, and where they could have better supplies; they consulted their own ease, safety, and

profit; wherefore this method was taken to oblige some to dwell in it, by taking one out of ten by lot, that there might be a sufficient number to rebuild the houses of it, repopulate and defend it:

and nine parts to dwell in other cities; to which they belonged, or where they pleased, any where in the land of Israel.

{g} Ep. 25. p. 154. {h} Prideaux's Connection, par. 1. p. 56, 57. {i} Euterpe, sive, l. 2. c. 159. & Thalia, sive, l. 3. c. 5. {k} Sandys's Travels, l. 5. p. 121. Ed. 5.

[[@Nehemiah 11:2]]Ver. [[2 >> Bible:Nehemiah 11:2]]. And the people blessed all the men that willingly offered themselves to dwell at Jerusalem. Who were not taken by lot, but of their own accord settled at Jerusalem; they praised them for it, and wished them all happiness and prosperity, since they denied themselves of ease and profit for the sake of the public good; and it is this which makes the difference between the list of the inhabitants of Jerusalem in **1Ch 9:2** &c. and this here, that takes in all that settled there, whether voluntarily or by lot; this only such as were fixed by the lot, and of them only those who were of greatest note and esteem, as Jarchi observes, and so it follows.

[[@Nehemiah 11:3]]Ver. [[3 >> Bible:Nehemiah 11:3]]. Now these are the chief of the province that dwelt in Jerusalem,.... That is, of Judea, reduced to a province by the king of Babylon, and now a province of the Persian monarchy:

but in the cities of Judah dwelt everyone in his possession in their cities; in which they or their ancestors had formerly dwelt: to wit, Israel: the people in general of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, and such of the other tribes that returned with them:

the priests, and the Levites, and the Nethinims, and the children of Solomon's servants; of whom see **Ezr 2:55**.

[[@Nehemiah 11:4]]Ver. [[4 >> Bible:Nehemiah 11:4]]. And at Jerusalem dwelt certain of the children of Judah, and of the children of Benjamin,.... It belonging partly to one tribe and partly to the other, and so inhabited by both, as it originally was,

Jos 15:63

of the children of Judah; Athaiah; called Uthai, **1Ch 9:4** whose lineage is traced through Uzziah, Zechariah, Amariah, Shephatiah, Mahalaleel,

of the children of Perez; a son of Judah, see **1Ch 9:4**.

[[@Nehemiah 11:5]]Ver. [[5 >> Bible:Nehemiah 11:5]]. And Maaseiah,.... Who seems to be the same with Asaiah, **1Ch 9:5** and whose genealogy is carried up through Baruch, Colhozeh, Hazaiah, Adaiah, Joiarib, Zechariah, to Shiloni; perhaps the same with Shelah, another son of Judah, see **1Ch 9:5**.

[[@Nehemiah 11:6]]Ver. [[6 >> Bible:Nehemiah 11:6]]. All the sons of Perez that dwelt at Jerusalem were four hundred threescore and eight valiant men. And so well qualified to defend the city against its enemies.

[[@Nehemiah 11:7]]Ver. [[7 >> Bible:Nehemiah 11:7]]. And these are the sons of Benjamin,.... That were of that tribe, and inhabited Jerusalem, namely, that follow:

Sallu the son of Meshullam; who from him is traced up through Joed, Pedaiah, Kolaiah, Maaseiah, Ithiel, to Jesaiah.

[[@Nehemiah 11:8]]Ver. [[8 >> Bible:Nehemiah 11:8]]. And after him,.... That is, Sallu: were Gabbai and Sallai; in all nine hundred and twenty eight; there were more of the tribe of Benjamin than of the tribe of Judah, they having perhaps a greater share in the city, or were better disposed to dwell in it.

[[@Nehemiah 11:9]]Ver. [[9 >> Bible:Nehemiah 11:9]]. And Joel the son of Zichri was their overseer,.... Or chief governor of the city:

and Judah the son of Senuah was second over the city; or the deputy governor of it; so Pitholaus is called an under governor in Jerusalem by Josephus {l}

{l} Antiqu. l. 14. c. 6. sect. 1.

[[@Nehemiah 11:10]]Ver. [[10,11 >> Bible:Nehemiah 11:10-11]]. Of the priests,.... Who dwelt in Jerusalem, of whom the same account is given in these two verses as in **1Ch 9:10**, only Seraiah here is called Azariah there.

[[@Nehemiah 11:11]]Ver. [[11 >> Bible:Nehemiah 11:11]]. See Gill on "Ne 11:10".

[[@Nehemiah 11:12]]Ver. [[12 >> Bible:Nehemiah 11:12]]. And their brethren that did the work of the house were eight hundred twenty and two,.... That offered the sacrifices, burnt incense, set on the shewbread, lighted the lamps, &c.

and Adaiah the son of Jeroham; see **1Ch 9:12** whose genealogy is traced here through Pelaliah, Amzi, Zechariah, Pashur, to Malchiah.

[[@Nehemiah 11:13]]Ver. [[13 >> Bible:Nehemiah 11:13]]. And his brethren, chief of the fathers, two hundred forty and two,.... That is, the brethren or relations of Adaiah:

and Amashai; called Maasai, **1Ch 9:12**, whose lineage is traced here through Azareel, Ahasai, Meshillemoth, to Immer.

[[@Nehemiah 11:14]]Ver. [[14 >> Bible:Nehemiah 11:14]]. And their brethren, mighty men of valour, an hundred twenty and eight,.... The brethren of Adaiah and Amashai, who were able men to do the work of their office as priests, and men of courage to fight the enemy, and defend the city upon occasion:

and their overseer was Zabdiel, the son of one of the great men; or the son of Hagedolim, or Gedolim, as some, who take it to be the proper name of a man.

[[@Nehemiah 11:15]]Ver. [[15 >> Bible:Nehemiah 11:15]]. Also of the Levites,.... Who dwelt in Jerusalem:

Shemaiah the son of Hashub: traced from him through Azrikam and Hashabiah to Bunni; these were of the sons of Merari, the third son of Levi, see **1Ch 9:14**.

[[@Nehemiah 11:16]]Ver. [[16 >> Bible:Nehemiah 11:16]]. And Shabbethai and Jozabad, of the chief of the Levites,.... Along with Shemaiah; these had

the oversight of the outward business of the house of God: who had the care of the repairs of the temple, and of getting in the wood for the altar, as Jarchi, and collecting the third part of the shekel, to purchase things with for the use of the temple.

[[@Nehemiah 11:17]]Ver. [[17 >> Bible:Nehemiah 11:17]]. And Mattaniah the son of Micha, the son of Zabdi, the son of Asaph,.... Zabdi is called Zichri in **1Ch 9:15**

was the principal to begin the thanksgiving in prayer: he was the precentor, or led the song at the time of the daily sacrifice, in which prayer was also made, as in many of the songs, hymns, and psalms of David:

and Bakbukiah the second among his brethren; he was the next singer, or deputy to Mattaniah; perhaps the same that is called Bakbakkar, **1Ch 9:15**

and Abda the son of Shammua; called Obadiah the son of Shemaiah, **1Ch 9:16**

the son of Galal, the son of Jeduthun: one of the three principal singers.

[[@Nehemiah 11:18]]Ver. [[18 >> Bible:Nehemiah 11:18]]. All the Levites in the holy city were two hundred fourscore and four. Who had their residence there, Ne 11:1.

[[@Nehemiah 11:19]]Ver. [[19 >> Bible:Nehemiah 11:19]]. Moreover, the porters, Akkub, Talmon, and their brethren that kept the gates, were one hundred and seventy two. Of whom see **1Ch 9:17**.

[[@Nehemiah 11:20]]Ver. [[20 >> Bible:Nehemiah 11:20]]. And the residue of Israel, of the priests and the Levites,..... All of them, besides those that dwelt at Jerusalem: were in all the cities of Judah, everyone in his inheritance; the Israelites in the cities, houses, and estates enjoyed by their ancestors, and the priests and Levites in the cities given out of the several tribes.

[[@Nehemiah 11:21]]Ver. [[21 >> Bible:Nehemiah 11:21]]. But the Nethinims dwelt in Ophel,.... An high place or tower on the wall of Jerusalem, see **2Ch 27:3**, and Ziha, and Gispa, were over the Nethinims; had the oversight of them, and took care that they did their work; they were such themselves, but the principal of them, see **Ezr 2:43**.

[[@Nehemiah 11:22]]Ver. [[22 >> Bible:Nehemiah 11:22]]. The overseer also of the Levites at Jerusalem was Uzzi, the son of Bani,.... He was the supervisor of them, that looked after them that they did their work in ministering to the priests, as they had occasion for them; this man's genealogy is further traced through Hashabiah and Mattaniah, to Micha the son of Asaph, **Ne 11:17**,

of the sons of Asaph, the singers were over the business of the house of God; which, according to Jarchi, was to take care of the repairs of the temple and other things; but one would think rather that part of the service of the house which lay in singing the songs of it is respected.

[[@Nehemiah 11:23]]Ver. [[23 >> Bible:Nehemiah 11:23]]. For it was the king's commandment concerning them,.... Either of King David as some, see **Ne 12:24** or rather of the king of Persia:

that a certain portion should be for the singers, due for every day; he settled a daily salary for them, to be paid out of his treasury; having perhaps a peculiar respect for such sort of men, being a lover of music, by means of which they had a settled habitation in Jerusalem.

[[@Nehemiah 11:24]]Ver. [[24 >> Bible:Nehemiah 11:24]]. And Pethahiah the son of Meshezabeel, of the children of Zerah, the son of Judah,.... The twin brother of Pharez,

Genesis 38:30 was

at the king's hand in all matters concerning the people; to speak for them to the king, as Jarchi; when they had a favour to ask of him, a petition to present to him, he delivered it for them, and by him the king returned the answer.

[[@Nehemiah 11:25]]Ver. [[25 >> Bible:Nehemiah 11:25]]. And for the villages, with their fields,.... The cities and villages in the country, an account of the inhabitants of them next follows:

some of the children of Judah dwelt at Kirjatharba, and in the villages thereof; the same with Hebron, Jos 15:54

and at Dibon; the same with Dimonah, Jos 15:22

and at Jekabzeel, and in the villages thereof; the same with Kabzeel, one of the uttermost cities of the tribe of Judah southward,

Jos 15:21, of which city was Benaiah, one of David's worthies,

2Sa 23:20, from hence to the end of Ne 11:30 mention is made of various cities and towns, in the tribe of Judah, inhabited by the men of it, which are to be met with in Jos 15:1 excepting Jeshua and Mekonah, Ne 11:26, of which we nowhere else read.

[[@Nehemiah 11:26]]Ver. [[26 >> Bible:Nehemiah 11:26]]. See Gill on "Ne 11:25"

[[@Nehemiah 11:27]]Ver. [[27 >> Bible:Nehemiah 11:27]]. See Gill on "Ne 11:25"

[[@Nehemiah 11:28]]Ver. [[28 >> Bible:Nehemiah 11:28]]. See Gill on "Ne 11:25"

[[@Nehemiah 11:29]]Ver. [[29 >> Bible:Nehemiah 11:29]]. See Gill on "Ne 11:25"

[[@Nehemiah 11:30]]Ver. [[30 >> Bible:Nehemiah 11:30]]. See Gill on "Ne 11:25"

[[@Nehemiah 11:31]]Ver. [[31 >> Bible:Nehemiah 11:31]]. The children also of Benjamin, from Geba, dwelt at Michmash,.... Geba was a city on the southern border of Benjamin, Jos 18:24 and Michmash on the northern, of which see 1Sa 13:2 in this and the four following verses are the names of several cities in the tribe of Benjamin, inhabited by the men of that tribe, as Alia, the same with Ai, that lay on the east of Bethel, here also mentioned, see **Jos 7:2** Anathoth, the birth place of Jeremiah the prophet, **Jer 1:1**. Nob, a city of the priests, 1Sa 21:1. Ananiah is nowhere else mentioned; Hazor is to be distinguished from another of this name in the tribe of Naphtali, Jos 19:36. Ramah, a place well known in Benjamin, Jos 18:25. Gittaim, of which see **2Sa 4:3**. Hadid, the same with Adida, which lay in a plain,

"Simon also set up Adida in Sephela, and made it strong with gates and bars." (1 Maccabees 12:38)

Zeboim, a valley of this name, is read in 1Sa 13:18. Neballat we read of nowhere else; of Lod and Ono, see **1Ch 8:12** and the valley of craftsmen, or Chorasin, **1Ch 4:14**.

[[@Nehemiah 11:32]]Ver. [[32 >> Bible:Nehemiah 11:32]]. See Gill on "Ne 11:31".

[[@Nehemiah 11:33]]Ver. [[33 >> Bible:Nehemiah 11:33]]. See Gill on "Ne 11:31".

[[@Nehemiah 11:34]]Ver. [[34 >> Bible:Nehemiah 11:34]]. See Gill on "Ne 11:31".

[[@Nehemiah 11:35]]Ver. [[35 >> Bible:Nehemiah 11:35]]. See Gill on "Ne 10:31".

[[@Nehemiah 11:36]]Ver. [[36 >> Bible:Nehemiah 11:36]]. And of the Levites were divisions in Judah, and in Benjamin. They were scattered about, some here and some there, in both these tribes, for the better instruction of the people.

[[@Nehemiah 12]]

Chapter 12

INTRODUCTION TO NEHEMIAH 12

This chapter gives an account of the chief of the priests and Levites in the days of Zerubbabel, Jeshua, Joiakim, Eliashib, and Nehemiah,

Ne 12:1, of the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem, and of the joy expressed on that occasion, Ne 12:27, and of the appointment of some persons over the treasuries for the priests, Levites, singers, and porters, Ne 12:44.

[[@Nehemiah 12:1]]Ver. [[1 >> Bible:Nehemiah 12:1]]. Now these are the priests and the Levites that went up with Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua,.... Who went up from the captivity in Babylon to Jerusalem with them; the one was the prince, the other the high priest, the same with Joshua the high priest, **Zec 3:1**, the names of the priests are given in this and the six following verses:

Seraiah, Jeremiah, Ezra; not Jeremiah the prophet, who cannot be thought to live so long as through the captivity; but Ezra may be Ezra the priest and scribe, who might come up with Zerubbabel to Jerusalem, and return to Babylon again, and from thence come again as he did, in the seventh year of Artaxerxes, **Ezr 7:1**, though this by some {m} is not thought very probable.

{m} Vid. Rainold de Lib. Apocryph. praelect. 153. p. 402, &c.

[[@Nehemiah 12:2-7]]Ver. [[2-7 >> Bible:Nehemiah 12:2-7]]. Amariah, Malluch, Hattush,.... Whose names are among the sealers of the covenant, Ne 10:3. Malluch is afterwards called Melicu, Ne 12:14,

Shechaniah, called Shebaniah, Ne 12:14 and so in Ne 10:4

Rehum, who, by transposition of letters, is Harim, Ne 12:15, and so in Ne 10:5.

Meremoth, called Meraioth, Ne 12:15,

Iddo, Ginnetho, read Ginnethon, Ne 12:16 so in Ne 10:6.

Abijah; there was a course of a priest of this name, of which Zechariah the father of John the Baptist was, **Lu 1:5**.

Miamin, Maadiah, Bilgah; the first two are called Miniamin and Moadiah, Ne 12:17.

Shemaiah, Joiarib, Jedaiah, Sallu; called Sallai, Ne 12:20.

Amok, Hilkiah, Jedaiah these were the chief of the priests, and of their brethren, in the days of Jeshua; heads of courses; or, however, priests of the greatest note in the times of Jeshua the high priest.

[[@Nehemiah 12:3]]Ver. [[3 >> Bible:Nehemiah 12:3]]. See Gill on "Ne 12:2".

[[@Nehemiah 12:4]]Ver. [[4 >> Bible:Nehemiah 12:4]]. See Gill on "Ne 12:2".

[[@Nehemiah 12:5]]Ver. [[5 >> Bible:Nehemiah 12:5]]. See Gill on "Ne 12:2".

[[@Nehemiah 12:6]]Ver. [[6 >> Bible:Nehemiah 12:6]]. See Gill on "Ne 12:2".

[[@Nehemiah 12:7]]Ver. [[7 >> Bible:Nehemiah 12:7]]. See Gill on "Ne 12:2"

[[@Nehemiah 12:8]]Ver. [[8 >> Bible:Nehemiah 12:8]]. Moreover the Levites,.... Who lived in the same times: were

Jeshua, Binnui, Kadmiel, Sherebiah, Judah, and Mattaniah; most of these are made mention of in **Ne 8:7**, the last of them is said to be

over the thanksgiving, he and his brethren; he was the precentor, or had the directing and conducting of the songs of the temple, particularly the thanksgiving song at the daily sacrifices; Jarchi takes the word here used to be the name of a musical instrument.

[[@Nehemiah 12:9]]Ver. [[9 >> Bible:Nehemiah 12:9]]. Also Bakbukiah and Unni,.... Two other Levites; the first is mentioned in Ne 11:17,

their brethren, were over against them in the watches; the Levites were divided into twenty four wards, and these were placed one against another, 1Ch 23:6.

[[@Nehemiah 12:10]]Ver. [[10,11 >> Bible:Nehemiah 12:10-11]]... And Jeshua begat Joiakim, Joiakim also begat Eliashib, and Eliashib begot Joiada, and Joiada begat Jonathan, and Jonathan begot Jaddua. This is an account of the high priests in succession in the second temple, the first six of them; and if Jaddua, the last mentioned, is the same with Jaddus, as Josephus {n} supposes, who went forth in his pontifical robes to meet Alexander the great returning from his conquests of Tyre and Gaza, from whom he obtained many favours, and whom he had into the temple, and showed him the prophecy of Daniel concerning himself; this paragraph must be written by another hand, and not Nehemiah, since it can hardly be thought he should live so long; and as to his times, this account of him, or the history of his own times, seems not to have gone through the priesthood of Eliashib, the third of those high priests, see

Ne 13:28, and to reach no further than to the thirty second of Darius Hystaspis, Ne 13:6 this fragment therefore might be inserted by some godly man under a divine direction in later times, as we have several insertions in the books of Moses and Joshua of the like kind; and particularly in **1Ch 3:19** where the genealogy of Zerubbabel is carried down beyond the times of the Maccabees, and so could not be placed there by Ezra.

{n} Antiqu. l. 11. c. 8. sect. 5.

[[@Nehemiah 12:11]]Ver. [[11 >> Bible:Nehemiah 12:11]]. See Gill on "Ne 12:10".

[[@Nehemiah 12:12-21]]Ver. [[12-21 >> Bible:Nehemiah 12:12-21]]. And in the days of Joiakim were priests, the chief of the fathers,.... This was the son and successor of Jeshua, or Joshua, the first high priest of the second temple; the principal men of the priesthood in his time were as follow, and who were the sons, or however the descendants of the priests in the time of his father before mentioned: these were Meraiah, Hananiah, Meshullam, Jehohanan, Jonathan, Joseph, Adna, Helkai, Zechariah, (the prophet of that name,) Meshullam, Zichri, Piltai, Shammua, Jehonathan, Mattenai, Uzzi, Kallai, Eber, Hashabiah, Nethaneel; in all twenty, whereas there are twenty two named, as in his father's days, there being no sons or descendants from two of them, namely, Hattush and Miamin.

[[@Nehemiah 12:13]]Ver. [[13 >> Bible:Nehemiah 12:13]]. See Gill on "Ne 12:12"

[[@Nehemiah 12:14]]Ver. [[14 >> Bible:Nehemiah 12:14]]. See Gill on "Ne 12:12".

[[@Nehemiah 12:15]]Ver. [[15 >> Bible:Nehemiah 12:15]]. See Gill on "Ne 12:12".

[[@Nehemiah 12:16]]Ver. [[16 >> Bible:Nehemiah 12:16]]. See Gill on "Ne 12:12".

[[@Nehemiah 12:17]]Ver. [[17 >> Bible:Nehemiah 12:17]]. See Gill on "Ne 12:12".

[[@Nehemiah 12:18]]Ver. [[18 >> Bible:Nehemiah 12:18]]. See Gill on "Ne 12:12".

[[@Nehemiah 12:19]]Ver. [[19 >> Bible:Nehemiah 12:19]]. See Gill on "Ne 12:12".

[[@Nehemiah 12:20]]Ver. [[20 >> Bible:Nehemiah 12:20]]. See Gill on "Ne 12:12".

[[@Nehemiah 12:21]]Ver. [[21 >> Bible:Nehemiah 12:21]]. See Gill on "Ne 12:12".

[[@Nehemiah 12:22]]Ver. [[22 >> Bible:Nehemiah 12:22]]. The Levites, in the days of Eliashib,.... The third priest of the second temple:

Joiada; he was the son of Eliashib, and the fourth high priest:

and Johanan; the same with Jonathan, Ne 12:11 and whom Josephus {o} also calls Joannes:

and Jaddua; the same as in Ne 12:10 in the days of each of these were

recorded chief of the fathers; the principal men among the Levites:

also the priests, to the reign of Darius the Persian; thought to be Darius Codomannus, the last king of the Persian monarchy, whom Alexander conquered; and if so, this verse must be inserted after the death of Nehemiah, and as the next verse also seems to be; for these two verses interrupt the natural order of the relation: an account is given of the priests in the times of Joiakim, Ne 12:12, these verses being inserted, the account goes on, Ne 12:24, &c. of the chief of the Levites in the times of Joiakim only.

{o} Antiqu. l. 11. c. 7. sect. 1.

[[@Nehemiah 12:23]]Ver. [[23 >> Bible:Nehemiah 12:23]]. The sons of Levi, the chief of the fathers, were written in the book of the chronicles,.... Some think this refers to **1Ch 9:14**, &c.

until the days of Johanan the son of Eliashib; from whence Dr. Lightfoot {p} concludes, that the Chronicles were written by Ezra in the times of this Johanan.

{p} Works, vol. 1. p. 146.

[[@Nehemiah 12:24]]Ver. [[24 >> Bible:Nehemiah 12:24]]. And the chief of the Levites,.... Here the thread of the history of Nehemiah, interrupted by the insertion of the two preceding verses, is carried from the priests to the Levites in the times of the third high priest:

Hashabiah, Sherebiah, and Jeshua the son of Kadmiel; these were singers, since it follows:

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; which office of theirs they performed by turns in courses, as David under a divine direction ordered, see

1Ch 23:5.

[[@Nehemiah 12:25]]Ver. [[25 >> Bible:Nehemiah 12:25]]. Mattaniah, and Bakbukiah, Obadiah, Meshullam, Talmon, Akkub, were porters,.... At the gates of the temple, see **1Ch 9:15**,

keeping the ward, at the thresholds of the gates; of the temple, where they stood and watched; or "at the collection of the gates", meaning either where the people were gathered together, or where money gathered was laid up; and so some render it, "the treasures of the gates": unless a place called Asuppim should be meant, 1Ch 26:15.

[[@Nehemiah 12:26]]Ver. [[26 >> Bible:Nehemiah 12:26]]. These were in the days of Joikim the son of Jeshua, the son of Jozadak,.... Who was high priest in Babylon, and whose grandson was now high priest in the time referred to:

and in the days of Nehemiah the governor; the writer of this book:

and of Ezra the priest, the scribe; who was contemporary with him.

[[@Nehemiah 12:27]]Ver. [[27 >> Bible:Nehemiah 12:27]]. And at the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem,.... In which many priests and Levites assisted, and seems to be the reason of the above account of them; the dedication of the wall takes in the whole city, gates, and houses, Ne 12:30, and if a new house was to be dedicated, much more a new city, and especially the holy city, in which stood the temple of the Lord, see **Deuteronomy 20:5**, this dedication was made by prayer and songs of praise, as follow, and no doubt by sacrifices, and was kept as a festival; and indeed, according to the Jewish writers {q}, it was annually observed on the seventh of Elul, or August; it was on the twenty fifth of that month that the wall was finished, **Ne 6:15**, but the gates were not set up, and all things for the dedication were not ready till Elul, or August, following; and then all being finished, they made and served the seventh of that month as a festival:

they sought the Levites out of all their places, to bring them to Jerusalem, to keep the dedication with gladness; to assist in the solemnity of the day both with vocal and instrumental music, as follows:

both with thanksgiving and with singing; with songs of praise and thankfulness vocally, that they had been able, notwithstanding all the malice of their enemies, to build the wall in so short a time; or with a song, perhaps the thirtieth psalm was sung on this occasion:

with cymbals, psalteries, and with harps; some playing on one, and some on another, which were the three principal instruments of music used by them, see 1Ch 15:16.

{q} Megillath Thainith, c. 3. apud Selden. de Synedr. l. 3. c. 13. sect. 12.

[[@Nehemiah 12:28]]Ver. [[28 >> Bible:Nehemiah 12:28]]. And the sons of the singers gathered themselves together,.... Such of the Levites that were singers, and their sons that were trained up as such:

both out of the plain country round about Jerusalem the plain of Jordan by Jericho, and the plain of Saron and Lydda:

and from the villages of Netophathi: see **1Ch 9:16**, here they dwelt, when not in their courses, to minister in the temple; but on this public occasion were summoned together.

[[@Nehemiah 12:29]]Ver. [[29 >> Bible:Nehemiah 12:29]]. Also from the house of Gilgal,... Which likewise was in a champaign country in the plains of Jericho, **Deuteronomy 11:30**,

and out of the fields of Geba; which was a Levitical city in the tribe of Benjamin, Jos 21:17

and Azmaveth; the same with Bethazmaveth, **Ne 7:28** where it follows Anathoth and Netophah, as it does in **Ezr 2:24**, and was very probably in the tribe of Benjamin:

for the singers had builded them villages round about Jerusalem; that they might be near it, to do their duty when required; by which it appears that the said places were near Jerusalem.

[[@Nehemiah 12:30]]Ver. [[30 >> Bible:Nehemiah 12:30]]. And the priests and the Levites purified themselves,.... By washing their bodies and their clothes, perhaps by sprinkling the water of purification on them, see **Nu 8:6**.

[[@Nehemiah 12:31]]Ver. [[31 >> Bible:Nehemiah 12:31]]. Then I brought up the princes of Judah upon the wall,.... Which was so broad as to walk upon it, and there was a procession of the princes on it at its dedication, and here is described the manner of it; the princes of Benjamin must be included here:

and appointed two great companies of them that gave thanks; he divided the people who were met together to praise God on this occasion into two companies: whereof

one went on the right hand upon the wall; that is, on the southern part of it:

towards the dung gate; of which see **Ne 2:13** some Jewish writers, as Jarchi and Ben Melech, give a different sense of twdw^t ytv, which we render "two companies", and take them to be two eucharistical loaves of leavened bread, with which a rite or ceremony was performed at the enlargement of a court or city; at the utmost boundary of which those were carried, and one was eaten and the other burnt {r}; which rite is thus described by Maimonides {s},

"how do they add to a city? the sanhedrim make two eucharistical sacrifices, and they take the leavened bread in them, and the sanhedrim go after the two eucharistical sacrifices, which follow one another, and they stand with harps, and psalteries, and cymbals, at every corner and at every stone in Jerusalem, and say, I will extol thee, for thou hast lifted up, &c. (#**Psalm 30:1**) until they come to the end of the place they consecrate, there they stand and eat the thanksgiving loaf, one of the two, and the other is burnt."

{r} Miss. Shebuot, c. 2. sect. 2. & Maimon, & Bartenora in ib. {s} Hilchot, Beth-habechirah, c. 6. sect. 12. Vid. Selden. de Synedr. l. 3. c. 13. sect. 6.

[[@Nehemiah 12:32]]Ver. [[32 >> Bible:Nehemiah 12:32]]. And after them went Hoshaiah, and half of the princes of Judah. The other half of them, with Hoshaiah at the head of them.

[[@Nehemiah 12:33]]Ver. [[33 >> Bible:Nehemiah 12:33]]. And Azariah, Ezra, and Meshullam. Not Ezra the priest and the scribe, for he has another place assigned him in this procession,

Ne 12:36, but this seems to be one of the princes.

[[@Nehemiah 12:34]]Ver. [[34 >> Bible:Nehemiah 12:34]]. Judah and Benjamin,.... Not the tribes, but the names of the two princes, as Jarchi:

and Shemaiah and Jeremiah; who were two others.

[[@Nehemiah 12:35]]Ver. [[35 >> Bible:Nehemiah 12:35]]. And certain of the priests' sons with trumpets,.... To blow with on this occasion; for these the priests sounded: namely,

Zechariah the son of Jonathan, the son of Shemaiah, the son of Mattaniah, the son of Michaiah, the son of Zaccur, the son of Asaph; not the Levite, but a priest of this name.

[[@Nehemiah 12:36]]Ver. [[36 >> Bible:Nehemiah 12:36]]. And his brethren,.... The brethren of Zechariah, the priest's son, and such are those that follow:

Shemaiah, and Azrael, Milalai, Gilalai, Maai, Nethaneel, and Judah, Hanani, with the musical instruments of David the man of God; which were invented by him, and ordered by him to be used in religious service, under the divine direction:

and Ezra the scribe before them; for he being a priest also, and a man of great eminence, was placed at the head of them in this procession.

[[@Nehemiah 12:37]]Ver. [[37 >> Bible:Nehemiah 12:37]]. And at the fountain gate, which was over against them,.... Of which see **Ne 2:14** and which was to the south of the dung gate:

they went up; that is, one of the two companies, that which took to the right on the wall, Ne 12:31 with which these words are to be connected:

by the stairs of the city of David; which went up to the city of Zion, built on an eminence: at the going up of the wall, above the house of David; where the wall was higher, and there was an ascent to it:

even unto the water gate eastward; of which see **Ne 3:26** turning from the south to the east, and so drew nigh the temple.

[[@Nehemiah 12:38]]Ver. [[38 >> Bible:Nehemiah 12:38]]. And the other company of them that gave thanks went over against them,.... On the left hand, on the northern part of the wall: and I after them; Nehemiah, he brought up the rear of his company, as Ezra led the van of his: and the half of the people upon the wall; the chief of them, for all could not walk upon it: from beyond the tower of the furnaces; where they baked their bread, or their bricks, see **Ne 3:11**,

even unto the broad wall; where the wall was broader than common, for some reason or another, see **Ne 3:8**.

[[@Nehemiah 12:39]]Ver. [[39 >> Bible:Nehemiah 12:39]]. And from above the gate of Ephraim,.... The gate which led to the tribe of Ephraim, where that tribe formerly dwelt, see **Ne 8:16**

and above the old gate; of which mention is made, **Ne 3:6**

and above the fish gate, and the tower of Hananeel, and the tower of Meah, even unto the sheep gate; of all which see **Ne 3:1**, and they stood still in the prison gate; which was not a gate of the city, but of the court of the prison, **Ne 3:25**, which was near both the king's palace and the temple, see **Jer 20:1**.

[[@Nehemiah 12:40]]Ver. [[40 >> Bible:Nehemiah 12:40]]. So stood the two companies of them that gave thanks in the house of God,.... Having made their procession on the wall in different ways, they met in the temple, that is, in the great court of it, for no other would hold them:

and I, and the half of the rulers with me; Nehemiah, and the other half with Hoshaiah, Ne 12:32.

[[@Nehemiah 12:41]]Ver. [[41 >> Bible:Nehemiah 12:41]]. And the priests,.... They stood there also, whose names follow:

Eliakim, Maaseiah, Miniamin, Michaiah, Elioenai, Zechariah, and Hananiah, with trumpets; to sound on this occasion.

[[@Nehemiah 12:42]]Ver. [[42 >> Bible:Nehemiah 12:42]]. And Maaseiah, and Shemaiah, and Eleazar, and Uzzi, and Jehohanan, and Malchijah, and Elam, and Ezer,.... These seem to be all priests that blew the trumpets:

and the singers sang loud, with Jezrahiah their overseer; these were the Levites, that sung the songs of praise vocally, and raised their voices very high, Jezrahiah being precentor, who led the tune, as well as played on instruments.

[[@Nehemiah 12:43]]Ver. [[43 >> Bible:Nehemiah 12:43]]. Also that day they offered great sacrifices, and rejoiced,.... Or many sacrifices, as Ben Melech interprets it; and these perhaps of the larger sort of cattle, oxen; and which, at least many of them, being peace offerings, the people feasted on them, so that it was a festival day:

for God had made them rejoice with great joy; on account of the wall being set up all around, and so were in greater safety from their enemies:

the wives also and the children rejoiced; while the priests blew the trumpets, and the singers sung and played on their instruments, the women and children gave loud shouts for joy:

so that the joy of Jerusalem was heard even afar off; as at the laying of the foundation of the temple, **Ezr 3:13**.

[[@Nehemiah 12:44]]Ver. [[44 >> Bible:Nehemiah 12:44]]. And at that time were some appointed over the chamber for the treasuries,.... On the selfsame day the dedication was; while the people were in a good disposition, and a suitable frame for such service, certain persons from among the priests were appointed to be overseers of the chambers fixed upon for treasuries, to lay up safe in them the following things, and take care of them, that they were put to the use for which they were designed:

for the offerings, for the first fruits, 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; what by the law of God were assigned them for their maintenance, and which the people had lately bound themselves to bring in, **Ne 10:35**,

for Judah rejoiced for the priests, and for the Levites that waited; at the temple, and performed their services there; they were so pleased with their ministrations that day, that they were determined to take care of them, and provide well for them, and that nothing should be wanting to them, enjoined by the law of God, and that they might not be obliged to dwell in fields and villages for the sake of their living,

Ne 12:28.

[[@Nehemiah 12:45]]Ver. [[45 >> Bible:Nehemiah 12:45]]. And both the singers and the porters kept the ward of their God, and the ward of their purification,.... The singers kept their turns in course in the temple, and were not wanting to officiate on all occasions, besides morning and evening services; and the porters they diligently kept the gates of the temple, that no impure person or thing in a ceremonial sense entered:

according to the commandment of David, and Solomon his son; who made very good rules and orders relative to the better and more regular performance of service by them; see 1Ch 25:1.

[[@Nehemiah 12:46]]Ver. [[46 >> Bible:Nehemiah 12:46]]. For in the days of David and Asaph of old there were chief of the singers,.... Persons appointed over the rest to instruct them, and see that they did their work aright, as besides Asaph, Haman, and Jeduthun, and their sons, 1Ch 25:2

and songs of praise and thanksgiving unto God; such were made by them, some under divine inspiration, which bear the names of David and Asaph, as may be observed in the book of Psalms.

[[@Nehemiah 12:47]]Ver. [[47 >> Bible: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,.... While these two men governed they did their duty, and punctually paid the Levites their dues at the proper season:

and they sanctified holy things unto the Levites; set them apart for their use, and brought them to them, their offerings, firstfruits, and tithes: and the Levites sanctified them unto the children of Aaron; the Levites set apart the tenth part of the tithes, and delivered them to the priests, and so each had what belonged to them.

[[@Nehemiah 13]]

Chapter 13

INTRODUCTION TO NEHEMIAH 13

This chapter relates the reformation of various abuses crept in among the Jews by Nehemiah, who removed the Moabites and Ammonites, mixed with them, Ne 13:1, threw the household goods of Tobiah out of a chamber of the temple, and restored it to its former use, Ne 13:4, took care that the Levites had their portion given them which had been kept from them, Ne 13:10 prevented the profanation of the sabbath by selling goods on that day, Ne 13:15, and put a stop to the marrying of strange wives, which had prevailed again among them,

Ne 13:23.

[[@Nehemiah 13:1]]Ver. [[1 >> Bible:Nehemiah 13:1]]. On that day,.... Not when the wall of the city was dedicated, nor quickly after; for it cannot be thought that people should be so corrupted so soon as this chapter shows; but when Nehemiah had governed them twelve years, and had been at Babylon, and was returned again, as appears from Ne 13:6, compared with **Ne 2:1**,

they read in the book of Moses in the audience of the people; for from the time of the reading of the law by Ezra, **Ne 8:1** it became a custom to read the law publicly:

and therein was found written, that the Ammonite and the Moabite should not come into the congregation of the Lord; that is, be admitted to marry with any of the people of Israel; See Gill on "**Deuteronomy 23:3**".

[[@Nehemiah 13:2]]Ver. [[2 >> Bible:Nehemiah 13:2]]. Because they met not the children of Israel with bread,.... The same reason is given, and what follows in this verse is observed in

Deuteronomy 23:4;

See Gill on "**Deuteronomy 23:4**" See Gill on "**Deuteronomy 23:5**".

[[@Nehemiah 13:3]]Ver. [[3 >> Bible:Nehemiah 13:3]]. Now it came to pass, when they had heard the law,.... Or the law concerning the Ammonite and the Moabite, and which included other nations also, and forbad marriage with them:

that they separated from Israel all the mixed multitude; all of these, and other nations, they had contracted affinity with.

[[@Nehemiah 13:4]]Ver. [[4 >> Bible:Nehemiah 13:4]]. And before this,.... Before the above law was read, and observed and acted upon:

Eliashib the priest; whom some take to be a common priest; so Bishop Usher {a}; but he seems rather to be the high priest, by comparing it with Ne 13:28,

having the oversight of the chamber of the house of our God; which has led some to the notion of his being a common priest; but chamber may be put for chambers, and those for the whole house or temple, which the high priest had the greatest concern in, and oversight of:

was allied to Tobiah; the servant and Ammonite, an inveterate enemy of the Jews, **Ne 2:10**, having married a daughter of Shecaniah, and his son a daughter of Meshullam, who were both priests, and so as it seems related to Eliashib, **Ne 6:18**.

{a} Annal. Vet. Test. p. 200.

[[@Nehemiah 13:5]]Ver. [[5 >> Bible:Nehemiah 13:5]]. And he had prepared for him a great chamber,.... In the temple, by throwing together several chambers, as Piscator observes:

where aforetime they laid the meat offerings, the frankincense, and the vessels, and the tithes of the corn, the new wine, and the oil, which was commanded to be given to the Levites, and to the singers, and the porters, and the offerings of the priests; see Ne 10:37.

[[@Nehemiah 13:6]]Ver. [[6 >> Bible:Nehemiah 13:6]]. But in all this time was not I at Jerusalem,.... Nehemiah, who was absent all the while these things were done by Eliashib, or otherwise they would not have been suffered:

for in the thirty second year of Artaxerxes, king of Babylon, came I unto the king from Jerusalem; after he had governed there twelve years, to whom he came to give an account of affairs there; this was not Xerxes, as some {b} have thought, for he reigned but twenty one years; but Darius Hystaspis, who reigned thirty six years, according to Ptolemy's canon, and with which Herodotus {c} agrees; he is called king of Babylon, because that, with the whole empire, was in the hands of the king of Persia, as it had been from the times of Cyrus:

and after certain days obtained I leave of the king; to return to Jerusalem again; not after five years, as Dr. Prideaux {d} thinks; for it is not likely that Nehemiah would stay so long ere he asked leave of the king to return to Jerusalem, which was so much his care, and on whose prosperity his heart was so much set; rather at most it was but a full year he stayed ere he got leave to return, as Vatablus and Piscator interpret it; in which sense the phrase of certain days is used in Le 25:29, and in other places quoted by the last mentioned interpreter.

{b} Apud Ganz. Tzemach David, par. 2. fol. 8. 2. {c} Polymnia, sive, l. 7. c. 1. {d} Connect. par. 1. p. 397.

[[@Nehemiah 13:7]]Ver. [[7 >> Bible:Nehemiah 13:7]]. And I came to Jerusalem,.... Through the king's leave, and with a commission from him:

and understood of the evil that Eliashib did for Tobiah; was informed of the mal-administration of his office:

in preparing him a chamber in the courts of the house of God; whereby it was profaned and polluted.

[[@Nehemiah 13:8]]Ver. [[8 >> Bible:Nehemiah 13:8]]. And it grieved me sore,.... That such a sacred place should be converted to common use, and to that of an Heathen, and of an enemy to the Jews and their religion:

therefore I cast forth all the household stuff of Tobiah out of the chamber; as being chief magistrate, and acting by commission under the king of Persia, and to regulate everything amiss, according to the Jewish laws, as well as those of the king, his power being, no doubt, as large as Ezra's, **Ezr 7:25**, by "household stuff" is meant what is movable in the house, as chairs, tables, vessels for dressing, caring, drinking, &c. there are various opinions about this with the ancients {e}.

{e} Vid. Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 1. c. 19.

[[@Nehemiah 13:9]]Ver. [[9 >> Bible:Nehemiah 13:9]]. Then I commanded, and they cleansed the chambers,.... By which it appears there were more than one, or that several were thrown into one; which was done not only by washing them, but as this was a ceremonial uncleanness, contracted by the habitation of an Heathen in them, their purification might be by the water of separation, Nu 19:9

and thither brought I again the vessels of the house of God, with the meat offering and the frankincense; replaced them where they were before.

[[@Nehemiah 13:10]]Ver. [[10 >> Bible:Nehemiah 13:10]]. And I perceived that the portion of the Levites had not been given them,.... The tithes, being removed to some other place, might be converted to another use; or the people, seeing what was done by Eliashib, neglected to bring them in, as judging they would not be properly disposed of; and besides, the Levites had deserted their station upon this:

for the Levites and the singers that did the work were fled everyone to his field; to look after their country farms, or to get their living by agriculture, since there was no care taken of them at Jerusalem; see Ne 12:28.

[[@Nehemiah 13:11]]Ver. [[11 >> Bible:Nehemiah 13:11]]. Then I contended with the rulers;.... The ecclesiastical rulers, the priests that were appointed over those chambers, Ne 12:44, he expostulated with them warmly, and chode them severely for their conduct:

and said, why is the house of God forsaken? no care being taken of the maintenance of the ministers of it, contrary to the promise made

Ne 10:37,

and I gathered them together; the Levites and singers that were dispersed in the countries round about:

and set them in their place; in the temple, and in the course of their ministry there.

[[@Nehemiah 13:12]]Ver. [[12 >> Bible:Nehemiah 13:12]]. Then brought all Judah the tithe of corn, and the new wine, and the oil, into the treasuries. When they saw a reformation made, and things were going in their proper channel, and a right use would be made of their tithes, these given to proper persons, who were now reinstated in their office.

[[@Nehemiah 13:13]]Ver. [[13 >> Bible:Nehemiah 13:13]]. And I made treasurers over the treasuries,.... New ones, since the others appointed were either dead or unfaithful to their trust, Ne 12:44,

Shelemiah the priest, and Zadok the scribe; who also was a priest, as Ezra was both priest and scribe; one that besides his office as a priest was expert in the law, and capable of instructing others:

and of the Levites, Pedaiah, and next to them was Hanan the son of Zaccur, the son of Mattaniah, for they were counted faithful; had a good report of all that knew them, for men of fidelity and uprightness, and so fit for such a trust:

and their office was to distribute unto their brethren; to deliver to them their share in the tithes, first fruits, &c.

[[@Nehemiah 13:14]]Ver. [[14 >> Bible:Nehemiah 13:14]]. Remember me, O my God, concerning this,.... Not in a way of strict justice, as if he thought he merited anything at the hand of God for what he had done; but in a way of grace and mercy, that he would graciously accept thereof, as done for the honour of his name, and overlook all failings and infirmities therein, see Ne 13:22

and wipe not out my good deeds that I have done for the house of my God, and for the offices thereof; for the support of the worship of God in the temple, and for the regulating of the wards and courses in it, both priests and Levites, and for the maintenance of them; which being done from a right principle, love to God, and with a right view, the glory of his name, might be truly reckoned good works: and which he desires might not be wiped or blotted out of the book of his remembrance, see **Ho 6:10**.

[[@Nehemiah 13:15]]Ver. [[15 >> Bible:Nehemiah 13:15]]. In those days saw I in Judah some treading winepresses on the sabbath,.... Which was not a work of necessity, and so did not drive away the sabbath, as the Jews express themselves, but might have been deferred to another day:

and bringing in sheaves; of wheat, it being the time of wheat harvest:

and lading asses; with goods to be carried from place to place, and sold on that day; this was contrary to the express law, for the ass was to rest, **Deuteronomy 5:14**,

as also wine, grapes, and figs: it being the time of ingathering the fruits of the earth:

and all manner of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the sabbath day; besides those borne on asses, others were carried on men's shoulders; this was contrary to the law of the sabbath, which required that both men and beasts should have rest:

and I testified against them in the day wherein they sold victuals; that is, the sabbath day; and if it was not lawful to sell food, then not anything else; so far from it, that according to the Jewish canons {f}, such that were in partnership might not discourse together of what they should sell or buy on the morrow, the day after the sabbath; and so far from gathering and carrying grapes and figs, that a man might not go into his gardens and fields to see what were wanting, or how the fruits were: now Nehemiah admonished the Jews of these evils they committed, and testified against them as breakers of the law, and called heaven and earth to testify against them, should they go on to violate it.

{f} Maimon. Hilchot Sabbat, c. 24. sect. 1, 2.

[[@Nehemiah 13:16]]Ver. [[16 >> Bible:Nehemiah 13:16]]. There dwelt men of Tyre also therein, which brought fish,.... From Tyre and Zidon, and the parts adjacent: these they brought from Joppa, and from thence to Jerusalem, and had houses or lodgings near the fish gate or fish market, where they sold them:

and all manner of ware; or merchandise, which, being a trading city, they had from all nations:

and sold on the sabbath day unto the children of Judah, and in Jerusalem; or even in Jerusalem, the holy city, where stood the temple, and where the worship of God was kept, and where the magistrates lived, who should have been terrors to evildoers: indeed, the law of the sabbath was not binding on these Tyrians, but then they tempted the Jews to break it, by bringing their ware to sell.

[[@Nehemiah 13:17]]Ver. [[17 >> Bible:Nehemiah 13:17]]. Then I contended with the nobles,.... The rulers of the city, the civil magistrates, sharply reproved them for their neglect of duty:

and said unto them, what evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the sabbath day? by suffering servile works to be done in it, and things sold on it.

[[@Nehemiah 13:18]]Ver. [[18 >> Bible:Nehemiah 13:18]]. Did not your fathers thus,.... Profane the sabbath in like manner:

and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon our city? suffered them to be carried captive into a strange land, and their city destroyed for their sins, and for this of sabbath breaking among the rest, see Jer 17:21,

yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the sabbath; additional judgments to those that had been already upon them for the same evil with others.

[[@Nehemiah 13:19]]Ver. [[19 >> Bible:Nehemiah 13:19]]. And it came to pass, that when the gates of Jerusalem began to be dark before the sabbath,.... Or "were shaded" {g}; that is, as Jarchi interprets it, when the shadows of the eve of the sabbath were stretched out upon the gates; the sabbath did not begin till sun setting, and the stars appeared; but before that, as the sun was declining, the shadows through the houses in Jerusalem, and mountains about it, spread themselves over the gates: and when it was near dusk, and as soon as it was so,

I commanded that the gates should be shut, and charged that they should not be opened till after the sabbath; until sun setting the next day:

and some of my servants set I at the gates, that there should be burden brought in on the sabbath day; the porters being not to be trusted, being liable to be bribed and corrupted, which he knew his servants were not; and therefore, since it might be necessary on a few occasions to open the gates to let some persons in and out, and especially such who dwelt near, and came to worship, he placed his servants there, to take care that none were admitted that had any burdens upon them.

{g} wllu "obumbratae", Pagninus, Montanus; "obumbrarentur", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Rambachius; "incidentibus umbris", Tigurine version.

[[@Nehemiah 13:20]]Ver. [[20 >> Bible:Nehemiah 13:20]]. For the merchants and sellers of all kind of ware,.... The Tyrians particularly, Ne 13:16 lodged without Jerusalem once or twice; one sabbath day or two, not being able to get into the city, such strict watch and care being taken to keep the gates shut; this they did, hoping the Jews would come out to them and buy their goods, though they were not admitted to bring them within the city.

[[@Nehemiah 13:21]]Ver. [[21 >> Bible:Nehemiah 13:21]]. Then I testified against them,.... Against their continuance there, and threatened them, and called heaven and earth to witness what he would do to them, if they did not depart:

why lodge ye about the wall? of the city, waiting an opportunity to get in, and tempting the Jews to come out and buy their ware:

if ye do so again, I will lay hands on you; beat them, or slay them, at least imprison them:

from that time forth came they no more on the sabbath; finding there was no likelihood of getting into the city, and that they were liable to be taken up and punished.

[[@Nehemiah 13:22]]Ver. [[22 >> Bible:Nehemiah 13:22]]. And I commanded the Levites that they should cleanse themselves,.... From all ceremonial uncleanness, that they might be fit in a ceremonial sense to perform the duties of the office on the sabbath day:

and that they should come and keep the gates, to sanctify the sabbath day; not the gates of the city, his servants were placed there, nor was this the work of the Levites, and much less did this require a particular purification to fit for it; but the gates of the temple, that no impure person might enter there; and on that day it required the greater diligence, because of the number of people that came to worship:

remember me, O my God, concerning this also; with respect to his care to have the sabbath kept holy, as well as his concern for the honour of the house of God, and the maintenance of his ministers, Ne 13:14,

and spare me according to the greatness of thy mercy; he desired to be dealt with, not according to any merits of his own, but according to the abundant mercy of God; that he would kindly and graciously vouchsafe to accept any good that he had done for his mercy sake, and forgive whatever was amiss in him.

[[@Nehemiah 13:23]]Ver. [[23 >> Bible:Nehemiah 13:23]]. In those days also I saw Jews that married wives of Ashdod, of Ammon, and of Moab. Ashdod, or Azotus, as it is called in **Ac 8:40**, was one of the five cities of the Philistines; which, though none of the seven nations with whom marriage was forbid, yet it was very unfit and improper to marry with them, Jud 14:3. This place was a mart of the Arabians {h}, where they sold their goods, to which the

Jews might resort, and thereby be ensnared into such marriages; and which with the Ammonites and Moabites were unlawful, Ne 13:1.

{h} Mela de Situ Orbis, l. 1. c. 10.

[[@Nehemiah 13:24]]Ver. [[24 >> Bible:Nehemiah 13:24]]. And their children spoke half in the speech of Ashdod,.... Which they learned of their mothers, so that it was a mixed language they spoke, partly Jewish and partly Philistine; but some refer this not to their speech, but to the number of their children; that half of them, which Jarchi interprets many of them, spoke in the language of Ashdod, even as many as were most with their mothers, and chiefly brought up by them:

and could not speak in the Jews' language; not at all, or so much as to be understood well, which inclines to the last sense:

but according to the language of each people; their mothers were of, whether of Ashdod, or of Ammon, or of Moab.

[[@Nehemiah 13:25]]Ver. [[25 >> Bible:Nehemiah 13:25]]. And I contended with them,.... Argued with them, faithfully admonished them, and sharply reproved them:

and cursed them; assuring them that the curse of God would come upon them, unless they repented. Aben Ezra interprets it of excommunicating them, either with "Cherem" or "Niddui", which were two sorts of excommunication among the Jews; but it is a question whether as yet those were used by them:

and smote certain of them; ordered them to be beaten with rods or scourges, as transgressors of the law:

and plucked off their hair; or ordered it to be plucked off by the executioner that smote them; which sort of punishment, as it was painful, it was disgraceful and ignominious, see **Isa 1:6**,

and made them swear by God, saying, ye shall not give your daughters unto their sons, nor take their daughters unto your sons, or for yourselves; not intermarry with them; this they had sworn to before,

Ne 10:29.

[[@Nehemiah 13:26]]Ver. [[26 >> Bible:Nehemiah 13:26]]. Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things?.... By marrying strange wives, by whom he was drawn into idolatry,

1Ki 11:3,

yet among many nations was there no king like him; as not for grandeur and riches, so not for wisdom, and yet was ensnared by his idolatrous wives:

who was beloved of God; alluding to his name Jedidiah, which signifies beloved of the Lord, 2Sa 12:24

and God made him king over all Israel; which was a proof of his love to him, and so he was under the greater obligation to serve him, and him only, and yet his heart, through his wives, was turned after other gods:

even him did outlandish women cause to sin; and if so great and wise a man was enticed by them to idolatry, much more may you, and therefore it was very dangerous to marry with them.

[[@Nehemiah 13:27]]Ver. [[27 >> Bible:Nehemiah 13:27]]. Shall we then hearken unto you to do all this great evil,.... To suffer it to be done, and connive at it, and not punish for it:

to transgress against our God; his law, his mind, and will:

in marrying strange wives? forbidden by him, **Deuteronomy 7:1**.

[[@Nehemiah 13:28]]Ver. [[28 >> Bible:Nehemiah 13:28]]. And one of the sons of Joiada, the son of Eliashib the high priest,.... A grandson of the high priest; for the high priest here is Eliashib, according to our version, and not Joiada his son, according to Dr. Prideaux {i}; the person designed, Josephus {k} makes to be Manasseh, the brother of Jaddua the high priest: was

son in law to Sanballat the Horonite; married a daughter of his, who was the avowed enemy of the Jewish nation; and for whom, according to the same writer, Sanballat obtained leave of Alexander to build a temple on Mount Gerizim; but this is to protract the age of Nehemiah and Sanballat to too great a length; besides, Eliashib seems to have been now high priest, and not even his son Joiada, and much less Jaddua, a grandson of Joiada:

therefore I chased him from me; drove him from his court, suffered him not to minister at the altar; banished him from the city, as Jarchi, and even from the land of Judea.

{i} Connect. par. 1. p. 412. {k} Antiqu. l. 11. c. 8. sect. 2, 4.

[[@Nehemiah 13:29]]Ver. [[29 >> Bible:Nehemiah 13:29]]. Remember them, O my God,.... The priests, and punish them: because they have defiled the priesthood; by marrying strange wives, and rendering themselves unfit to officiate in it:

and the covenant of the priesthood, and of the Levites; made with Levi, Aaron, and Phinehas, see Nu 24:11, of the corruption of which, complaint is made, **Mal 2:4**.

[[@Nehemiah 13:30]]Ver. [[30 >> Bible:Nehemiah 13:30]]. Thus cleansed I them from all strangers,.... Both people and priests from strange wives, obliging them to put them away, or flee their country:

and appointing the wards of the priests and the Levites, everyone in his business: to do the work of their office in their courses and turns.

[[@Nehemiah 13:31]]Ver. [[31 >> Bible:Nehemiah 13:31]]. And for the wood offering, at times appointed,.... Of which see Ne 10:34. Levites were appointed to receive the wood that was brought at the times and by the persons fixed, and lay it up in its proper place, and carry it to the altar when wanted:

and for the first fruits; to receive and take care of them, and distribute them to the persons to whom they belonged:

remember me, O my God, for good; to bless him with all good things, temporal and spiritual, to keep him faithful, to make him useful in church and state, and protect him from all his enemies: or rather this may respect what goes before, that as to the wood offering and the firstfruits, that God would graciously remember him as to them, since the one was as necessary to the altar as the other was to those that minister at it.