

## NEHEMIAH

### Conversational Version

**1:1**The Memoirs of Nehemiah Son of Hacaliah

#### Report from Jerusalem

In the **month Chislev, the twentieth year**, I was in Susa, the capital. <sup>2</sup>Hanani, one of my brothers, and some men came from Judah. I asked them about the Jews that had survived the captivity and about Jerusalem. <sup>3</sup>They told me, “*The remnant in the province is in dire straits and dishonor. The wall around Jerusalem has been torn down and its gates burned.*”

#### Nehemiah’s Prayer

<sup>4</sup>When I heard it, I sat down and cried and mourned for days. I fasted and prayed,

<sup>5</sup>“*LORD God of heaven, great awesome God that keeps covenant and enduring love for those who love you and keep your commandments, let your ear be attentive and your eyes open to my praying day and night for the Israelites your servants, and for confessing our sins against you. Even I and my father’s family have sinned. We’ve acted corruptly and not kept the commandments, statutes, or ordinances you gave Moses. Remember your promise to him, ‘If you’re not faithful, I’ll scatter you among the nations. But if you come back to me and keep my commandments—though scattered beyond the horizons—I’ll gather you up and bring you to the place where I’ve put my name.’ They’re the people you’ve redeemed by your power and strength. Please listen to my prayer and the prayer of your servants who delight in honoring you. Make me successful today; grant me mercy from this man.*”

I was the king’s cupbearer.

**Neh 1:1-11**

#### Nehemiah Sent to Jerusalem

**2:1**In the **month Nisan, twentieth year of King Artaxerxes**, wine was present, and I took it up to him. I hadn’t been sad in his presence *before*. <sup>2</sup>So he asked me, “*Why do you look sad, but you’re not sick? This is nothing but sadness in you.*”

I was apprehensive. <sup>3</sup>“*Long live the King! Why wouldn’t I look sad when the city where my ancestors are buried lies in ruins and its gates are burned?*”

<sup>4</sup>“*What would you ask?*”

I prayed to the God of heaven <sup>5</sup>and told the king, “*If it pleases you, if I am pleasing to you, send me to Judah, to the city of my ancestors’ tombs so I can rebuild it.*”

<sup>6</sup>(The queen was sitting beside him.) He asked me, “*How long will it take? When will you be back?*”

I set a time, and he agreed to send me.

<sup>7</sup>“*If it pleases you, give me letters to the governors of Beyond the River to let me travel through to Judah. <sup>8</sup>Also, give me a letter to Asaph the keeper of the king’s forest, to give me timber to make beams for the gates of the fortress that’s by the Temple, for the city wall and a house for myself.*”

He granted them because my God’s good hand was on me.

Neh 2:1-8

### Nehemiah Inspects the Walls of Jerusalem

<sup>9</sup>I delivered the king’s letters to the governors of Beyond the River. He’d sent officers of the army and cavalry for my protection. <sup>10</sup>When Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite official heard about it, they didn’t like it that someone had come to help the Israelites.

<sup>11</sup>I arrived at Jerusalem and was there three days. <sup>12</sup>Then I and a few men got up during the night without telling anybody what God had put in my mind to do for Jerusalem. The only animal with us was the one I was riding. <sup>13</sup>I went out by the Valley Gate toward the Dragon’s Well and on to the Refuse Gate, inspecting the walls that were torn down and the gates that were burned up. <sup>14</sup>I passed on to the Fountain Gate and the King’s Pool, but there wasn’t any way for the animal I was riding to get past. <sup>15</sup>I went up the valley and inspected the wall. Then I went in the Valley Gate again and came back. <sup>16</sup>The officials didn’t know where I’d gone or what I’d done. I hadn’t told the Jews, the priests, nobles, officials, or anyone that would be doing the work.

<sup>17</sup>Then I told them, “*You can see the bad situation we’re in. Jerusalem lies in ruins; its gates are burned. Let’s rebuild the wall so we can put an end to this disgrace.*” <sup>18</sup>I told them how God had helped me, and what the king had told me. They said, “*Let’s build*”; so they started on the good work. <sup>19</sup>But when Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem the Arab heard about it, they mocked and despised us, “*What are you doing? Revolting against the king?*” <sup>20</sup>I answered them, “*The God of heaven will give us success. We, his servants, will do the building; you don’t have any part, any legal or historical claim in Jerusalem.*”

Neh 2:9-20

### Rebuilding the Walls

<sup>3:1</sup>Then Eliashib the high priest with his relatives the priests built the Sheep Gate. They consecrated it and hung its doors and consecrated the wall to the Tower of a Hundred and the Tower of Hananel.

<sup>2</sup>Next to him men from Jericho built, and next to them Zaccur son of Imri.

<sup>3</sup>The sons of Hassenaah built the Fish Gate. They laid its beams and hung its doors with its bolts and bars.

<sup>4</sup>Next to them Meremoth son of Uriah son of Hakkoz made repairs,

next Meshullam son of Berechiah son of Meshezabel, and next Zadok son of Baana made repairs.

**5**Next to him men from Tekoa did repairs, but their nobles didn't support their masters' work.

**6**Joiada son of Paseah and Meshullam son of Besodeiah repaired the Old Gate. They laid its beams and hung its doors with its bolts and bars. Neh 3:1-6

**7**Next to them Melatiah the Gibeonite and Jadon the Meronothite, the men from Gibeon and Mizpah repaired the headquarters of the governor of Beyond the River.

**8**Next to him Uzziel son of Harhaiah of the goldsmiths did repairs.

Next to him Hananiah, who manufactured perfume, fortified Jerusalem as far as the Broad Wall.

**9**Next to them Rephaiah son of Hur, the official of half the district of Jerusalem, did repairs.

**10**Next to them Jedaiah son of Harumaph did repairs across from his house.

Next to him Hattush son of Hashabneiah made repairs.

**11**Malchijah son of Harim and Hasshub son of Pahath-moab repaired a section and the Tower of Furnaces.

**12**Next to him Shallum son of Hallohesh, the official of half the district of Jerusalem, did repairs, he and his daughters.

**13**Hanun and the people from Zanoah repaired the Valley Gate. They built it, hung its doors with its bolts and bars, and 1500ft of the wall to the Refuse Gate.

**14**Malchijah son of Rechab, the official of the district of Beth-haccerem, repaired the Refuse Gate. He built it, covered it, and hung its doors with its bolts and bars. Neh 3:7-14

**15**Shallum son of Col-hozeh, the official of the district of Mizpah, repaired the Fountain Gate. He built it, covered it, and hung its doors with its bolts and bars. *He repaired* the wall of the Pool of Shelah at the King's Garden as far as the steps that go down from The City of David.

**16**After him Nehemiah son of Azbuk, official of half the district of Beth-zur, did repairs as far as the Artificial Pool and the House of the Mighty Men.

**17**After him the Levites carried out repairs under Rehum son of Bani.

Next to him Hashabiah, the official of half the district of Keilah, carried out repairs for his district.

**18**After him their brothers did repairs under Bavvai son of Henadad, official of the other half of the district of Keilah.

**19**Next to him Ezer son of Jeshua, the official of Mizpah, repaired the section by the ascent of the armory at the Angle.

**20**After him Baruch son of Zabbai zealously repaired the section from the Angle to the doorway of the house of Eliashib the high priest.

**21** After him Meremoth son of Uriah son of Hakkoz repaired the section from the doorway of Eliashib's house to the end of it. Neh 3:15-21

**22** After him the priests, the men from the valley, carried out repairs.

**23** After them Benjamin and Hasshub carried out repairs by their house.

After them Azariah son of Maaseiah son of Ananiah made repairs beside his house.

**24** After him Binnui son of Henadad repaired the section from Azariah's house to the Angle and on to the corner.

**25** Palal son of Uzai *made repairs* by the Angle and the tower projecting from the king's upper house, which is by the court of the guard.

After him Pedaiah son of Parosh *made repairs*.

**26** The Temple servants living in Ophel *made repairs* up to the front of the Water Gate toward the east and the projecting tower. Neh 3:22-26

**27** After him men from Tekoa repaired the section by the great projecting tower to the wall of Ophel.

**28** Above the Horse Gate each priest did repairs by his house.

**29** After them Zadok son of Immer made repairs by his house.

After him Shemaiah son of Shecaniah, keeper of the East Gate, did repairs.

**30** After him Hananiah son of Shelemiah and Hanum sixth son of Zalaph, repaired another section.

After him Meshullam son of Berechiah did repairs by his own quarters.

**31** After him Malchijah one of the goldsmiths, carried out repairs as far as the house of the Temple servants and the merchants, by the Inspection Gate to the upper room of the corner.

**32** Between the upper room of the corner and the Sheep Gate, the goldsmiths and merchants did repairs. Neh 3:27-32

## Opposition to the Work

**4:1** When Sanballat heard we were rebuilding the wall, he was furious and ridiculed the Jews. **2** In front of his relatives and wealthy men in Samaria, he asked,

*"What are these feeble Jews doing? Are they going to restore it for themselves? Can they offer sacrifices? Can they finish it in a day? Can they remake something out of the charred stones from dusty rubble?"*

**3** Tobiah the Ammonite was close by and said, "Even a fox could jump on that stone wall they're building and break it down!"

**4** "Listen how they despise us, God! Turn their mockery back on their heads and give them up for plunder in a land that takes them captive. **5** Don't forgive them; don't blot out their sin. They've tried to demoralize the builders."

**6**We were able to join the whole wall together to half its original height because the people were willing to work. Neh 4:1-6

**7**Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabs, the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites heard that repairing the walls was continuing and that we were closing up the breaks in it. They were really mad. **8**They conspired to fight Jerusalem and create confusion in it, **9**but we prayed to God and set up a guard day and night. **10**The people from Judah were saying, “*The laborers were getting worn out, but there's still a lot of rubble to move. We can't rebuild the wall ourselves.*”

**11**Our enemies said, “*They won't know it till we attack them, kill them, and stop the work.*” **12**When the Jews that lived close to them came and told us ten times, “*They'll come up against us from every direction,*” **13**I stationed men behind the wall in the lowest parts, the exposed places. I stationed the people in families with their swords, spears, and bows. **14**When I saw how afraid they were, I told the nobles, the officials, and the rest of the people, “*You don't have to be afraid of them. Remember our great awesome Lord. Fight for your brothers, your children, your wives and houses.*” Neh 4:7-14

**15**When our enemies heard that we knew about *their plans* and that God had frustrated it, each of us went back to work on the wall. **16**From then on, half of my men worked while the other half held spears, shields, bows, and breastplates. The commanders were behind the people of Judah. **17**The ones that were rebuilding the wall and carrying burdens did their work with one hand and held a weapon in the other. **18**Each one attached his sword to his side as he built while the bugler stood close to me. **19**I told the nobles, the officials, and the rest of the people,

*“The work is important and extensive, and we're a long way apart on the wall.*

**20***Wherever you hear the bugle, rally there. Our God will fight for us.”*

**21**We carried out the work with half of them holding spears from dawn till the stars came out. **22**I told the people then, “*Each man and his servant, spend the night inside Jerusalem so you can be guards at night and workmen during the day.*” **23**I, my brothers, servants, and guards didn't change clothes. Everybody kept a weapon on them. Neh 4:15-23

### Nehemiah Stops the Oppression of the Poor

**5:1**There was a loud outcry by husbands and wives against their fellow Jews. **2**Some were saying, “*There are a lot of us along with our sons and daughters. We need more food to survive.*” **3**Others said, “*We're mortgaging our fields, vineyards, and houses for grain because of the famine.*” **4**Yet others were saying,

*“We've borrowed money for the king's tax on our fields and vineyards.*

**5***Our flesh is like our brothers' flesh, our children like their children; yet we're forcing our children to be slaves. Some of our daughters have already been forced into slavery. We're helpless because we've mortgaged our fields and vineyards to other people.”*

<sup>6</sup>I was irate when I heard their outcries. <sup>7</sup>I thought it over and contended with the nobles and rulers, “*You’re charging your fellow Jews interest?!*” I convened a large assembly against them <sup>8</sup>and said, “*As far as we were able, we’ve redeemed our Jewish brothers that were sold to Gentiles. Would you even sell your fellow Jews so they can be sold to us?*”

They couldn’t think of anything to say.

Neh 5:1-8

<sup>9</sup>Again I said,

“*What you’re doing is not right. Shouldn’t you fear God over the mockery by other nations, our enemies?*” <sup>10</sup>*I, my brothers, and servants are also lending them money and grain. Quit charging interest!* <sup>11</sup>*Right now, give them back their fields, vineyards, olive groves, houses, the hundredth part of the money and grain, new wine, and olive oil that you’ve been taxing them.*”

<sup>12</sup>They said they’d do it. I called the priests and made them swear to it. <sup>13</sup>I shook out the front of my garment, “*May God shake out every man’s house and possessions who doesn’t fulfill that oath. May he shake him out this way and empty him.*”

The assembly said, “*Amen!*” and praised the LORD.

The offenders did what they vowed.

Neh 5:9-13

### Nehemiah’s Generosity

<sup>14</sup>From the day the king appointed me governor of Judah, my kinsmen and I had never eaten the governor’s food allowance—from the **twentieth to thirty-second year of King Artaxerxes** (12 years). <sup>15</sup>The former governors had laid burdens on the people and took bread and wine from them besides 1 lb <sup>40</sup> shekels of silver. Even their assistants lorded it over the people. I didn’t do that because I respected God. <sup>16</sup>I applied myself to the work on the wall. We didn’t buy any land; my servants gathered there to work. <sup>17</sup>There were 150 Jews and officials at my table, besides those who came from nations around. <sup>18</sup>I had an ox and six choice sheep prepared each day as well as birds; every ten days I provided wine in abundance. But I still didn’t demand the governor’s food allowance; the people were in heavy servitude. <sup>19</sup>God, remember me for the good I’ve done for them.

Neh 5:14-19

### Conspiracy Against Nehemiah

<sup>6</sup><sup>1</sup>Sanballat, Tobiah, Geshem the Arab, and the rest of our enemies found out I’d rebuilt the wall so there wasn’t any break in it—although I hadn’t set up the doors in the gates yet. <sup>2</sup>Sanballat and Geshem sent me a message, “*Meet us at Chephirim in the Plain of Ono.*” They were planning to harm me. <sup>3</sup>I sent messengers, “*I’m in an extensive project. Why should the work stop while I’m with you?*” <sup>4</sup>They sent me four messages like that; I answered them the same way. <sup>5</sup>Then Sanballat sent his servant a fifth time with an open letter in hand. <sup>6</sup>He’d written,

*"It's reported among the countries—and Gashmu tells me it's true—that you and the Jews plan to revolt; that's why you're rebuilding the wall. Those reports say you'll be their king. <sup>7</sup>You've also appointed prophets to make a declaration in Jerusalem about you, 'There's a king in Judah!' Those reports will be passed on to the king. Come; let's talk about it."*

Neh 6:1-7

<sup>8</sup>I sent him a message, *"We haven't done things like what you're saying. You've made them up."* <sup>9</sup>They were trying to scare us so we'd get discouraged and quit. But now, God, give me courage.

<sup>10</sup>When I went into the house of Shemaiah son of Delaiah son of Mehetabel, who was confined at home, he said, *"Let's meet in God's Temple and close the doors; they're going to come during the night to kill you."* <sup>11</sup>I said, *"Should a man like me run to the Temple to save my life? I won't do that."* <sup>12</sup>I sensed that God hadn't sent him. He gave me that warning because Tobiah and Sanballat had hired him <sup>13</sup>to scare me so I'd act accordingly and sin. They'd have a bad report to accuse me of. <sup>14</sup>God, remember Tobiah and Sanballat for what they've done, as well as Noadiah the prophetess, and the other prophets that were trying to scare me.

Neh 6:8-14

<sup>15</sup>The wall was completed on the **twenty-fifth of the month Elul** (in 52 days). <sup>16</sup>When our enemies heard it and the nations around us saw it, they lost their confidence. They recognized that our God had helped accomplish the work. <sup>17</sup>During that time lots of letters went back and forth between Tobiah and the nobles in Judah. <sup>18</sup>Many in Judah were bound to him under oath because he was the son-in-law of Shecaniah son of Arah. His son Jehohanan had married the daughter of Meshullam son of Berechiah. <sup>19</sup>In addition, they kept telling me about the good things he's done and reporting to him how I responded. Tobiah kept sending letters to intimidate me.

Neh 6:15-19

### The Walls Are Finished

<sup>7:1</sup>The wall had been rebuilt, and I'd set up the doors and appointed gatekeepers, singers, and Levites. <sup>2</sup>I put Hanani my brother—along with Hananiah commander of the fortress—in charge of Jerusalem because he was a reliable man that respected God more than most. <sup>3</sup>I told them,

*"Don't open the gates till the sun is hot. While they're standing guard, shut and bolt the doors. Appoint guards from the people that live inside Jerusalem, each at his post by his own house."*

<sup>4</sup>The city was big and open, but there weren't many people in it, and houses hadn't been built.

<sup>5</sup>Then God put it in my heart to gather the nobles, the officials, and the people to be enrolled by genealogies. I found the scroll with the genealogies for the ones that came up first; it read as follows:

Neh 7:1-5

### Lists of Returning Exiles

**6-7**the number of Israelites that came back to Jerusalem and Judah with Zerubbabel, Jeshua, Nehemiah, Azariah, Raamiah, Nahamani, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispereth, Bigvai, Nehum, and Baanah:

<b>8</b> the family of Parosh	2,172	
<b>9</b> the family of Shephatiah	372	
<b>10</b> the family of Arah	652	
<b>11</b> the family of Pahath-moab (descendants of Jeshua and Joab)	2,818	<b>Neh 7:6-11</b>
<b>12</b> the family of Elam	1,254	
<b>13</b> the family of Zattu	845	
<b>14</b> the family of Zaccai	760	
<b>15</b> the family of Binnui	648	
<b>16</b> the family of Bebai	628	
<b>17</b> the family of Azgad	2,322	
<b>18</b> the family of Adonikam	667	
<b>19</b> the family of Bigvai	2,067	
<b>20</b> the family of Adin	655	
<b>21</b> the family of Ater (descendants of Hezekiah)	98	
<b>22</b> the family of Hashum,	328	
<b>23</b> the family of Bezai	324	
<b>24</b> the family of Hariph	112	
<b>25</b> the family of Gibeon	95	
<b>26</b> the people from Bethlehem and Netophah	188	<b>Neh 7:12-26</b>
<b>27</b> the people from Anathoth	128	
<b>28</b> the people from Beth-azmaveth	42	
<b>29</b> the people from Kiriath-jearim, Chephirah, and Beeroth	743	
<b>30</b> the people from Rama and Geba	621	
<b>31</b> the people from Michmas	122	
<b>32</b> the people from Bethel and Ai	123	
<b>33</b> the people from the other Nebo	52	
<b>34</b> the people from the other		

Elam	1,254
<sup>35</sup> the people from Harim	320
<sup>36</sup> the people from Jericho	345
<sup>37</sup> the people from Lod, Hadid, And Ono	721
<sup>38</sup> the people from Senaah	3,930

<sup>39</sup>the priests

the family of Jehaiah (through Jeshua)	973
<sup>40</sup> the family of Immer	1,052
<sup>41</sup> the family of Passhur	1,247
<sup>42</sup> the family of Harim	1,017

**Neh 7:27-39**<sup>43</sup>the Levites

the families of Jeshua and Kadmiel (descendants of Hodevah)	74
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<sup>44</sup>the singers: the family of Asaph 148

<sup>45</sup> <u>the gatekeepers</u> : the families of Shallum, Ater, Talmon, Akkub, Hatita, and Shobai	138
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<sup>46</sup>the Temple servants: the descendants of Ziha, Hasupha, Tabbaoth, <sup>47</sup>Keros, Sia, Padon,  
<sup>48</sup>Lebana, Hagaba, Shalmai, <sup>49</sup>Hanan, Giddel, Gahar, <sup>50</sup>Reaiah, Rezin, Nekoda, <sup>51</sup>Gazzam, Uzza,  
Paseah, <sup>52</sup>Besai, Meunim, Nephushesim, <sup>53</sup>Bakbuk, Hakupha, Harhur, <sup>54</sup>Bazlith, Mahida,  
Harsha, <sup>55</sup>Barkos, Sisera, Temah, <sup>56</sup>Neziah, and Hatipha.

<sup>57</sup>the sons of Solomon's servants: the descendants of Sotai, Sophereth, Perida, <sup>58</sup>Jaala, Darkon,  
Giddel, <sup>59</sup>Shephatiah, Hattil, Pochereth-hazzebaim, and Amon. <sup>60</sup>All the Temple servants and sons  
of Solomon's servants *numbered* 392. **Neh 7:40-60**

<sup>61</sup>These were the ones that came up from Tel-melah, Tel-harsha, Cherub, Addon, and  
Immer; but couldn't show that their ancestors' houses or their descendants were from Israel: <sup>62</sup>the  
sons of Delaiah, Tobiah, and Nekoda, 642.

<sup>63</sup>from the priests: the families of Hobaiah, Hakkoz, Barzillai. (This Barzillai had married  
a daughter of Barzillai from Gileadite and took his name.) <sup>64</sup>They searched the genealogical  
records but couldn't find their names. So they were considered unqualified *and excluded* from the  
priesthood. <sup>65</sup>The governor told them not to eat the priests' portion of the sacrifices till a priest  
arose with Urim and Thummim.

### Totals of People and Gifts

<sup>66</sup>The whole assembly *numbered* 42,360,

<sup>67</sup>plus the male and female servants (7,337)  
and male and female singers (245).

<sup>68</sup>They had 736 horses, 245 mules, <sup>69</sup>435 camels, and 6,720 donkeys.

<sup>70</sup>The governor donated to the treasury 19 lbs <sup>1,000 drachmas</sup> of gold, 50 basins, and 530 priests' vestments.

<sup>71</sup>For the work, some leaders of families donated to the treasury 375 lbs <sup>20,000 darics</sup> of gold and 2,750 lbs <sup>2,200 minas</sup> of silver.

<sup>72</sup>The rest of the people gave 375 lbs <sup>20,000 drachmas</sup> of gold, 2,500 lbs <sup>2,000 minas</sup> of silver, and 67 priests' vestments.

<sup>73</sup>The priests, Levites, gatekeepers, singers, some of the people, the Temple servants, and all Israel, lived in their towns.

By the **seventh month**, the Israelites were in their towns.

Neh 7:61-73

### Ezra Reads the Law

<sup>8:1</sup>The people congregated in the square by the Water Gate, and asked Ezra to bring *The Book of the Law of Moses* the LORD had given Israel. <sup>2</sup>On the **first day, seventh month**, he brought it to the assembly of men and women—anybody that could understand. <sup>3</sup>He read from early morning till noon, and the people listened. <sup>4</sup>He stood on a wooden podium built for that purpose. Beside him stood Pedaiah, Mishael, Malchijah, Hashum, Hash-baddanah, Zechariah, and Meshullam on his left; and Mattithiah, Shema, Anaiah, Uriah, Hilkiah, and Maaseiah on his right. <sup>5</sup>He unrolled the scroll where everybody could see *it*, because he was standing above them. When he unrolled it, they stood up. <sup>6</sup>He blessed the LORD the great God, and the people answered, “*Amen! Amen!*” and raised their hands. Then they bowed low in worship with their faces toward the ground. <sup>7</sup>Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodiah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, and the Levites explained the Law while they stood in their places. <sup>8</sup>As they read the Law, they translated *it* so the people could understand it.

Neh 8:1-8

### A Holy Day Declared

<sup>9</sup>Then Nehemiah the governor, Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites that taught the people, said, “*Today is set aside to the LORD your God. Don't mourn or cry.*” (The people had been crying when they heard what the Law said.) <sup>10</sup>He told them,

“*Go eat the tasty food, drink the sweet things, and share with anyone that doesn't have anything fixed. Don't grieve; the joy of the LORD makes you strong.*”

<sup>11</sup>The Levites calmed the people, <sup>12</sup>and they went away to eat, drink, share, and celebrate a great feast because they understood what had been explained to them.

Neh 8:9-12

## Festival of Booths Celebrated

<sup>13</sup>The next day the heads of families, the priests, and the Levites gathered to Ezra to gain greater insight into the Law. <sup>14</sup>They found how the LORD had commanded the Israelites to camp in booths during the festival of the **seventh month**. <sup>15</sup>So they circulated a proclamation in their towns and in Jerusalem, “*Go out to the hills, get olive branches, wild olive branches, myrtle branches, palm branches, and branches from leafy trees to make booths, like it's written.*” <sup>16</sup>So the people went out and brought them in to make booths on their roofs, in their courts, in the courts of God’s Temple, in the square by the Water Gate and the square by the Ephraim Gate. <sup>17</sup>The whole assembly that had come back from the captivity made booths and camped in them. Israelites hadn’t done that since Joshua’s time. There was a lot of celebrating. <sup>18</sup>Ezra read from God’s Law every day first to last. They celebrated the festival for a week, and on the eighth day held a solemn assembly as required by the Law.

Neh 8:13-18

## The People Confess Their Sin

<sup>9:1</sup>On the **twenty-fourth of that month**, the Israelites gathered with fasting in burlap and doused with dust. <sup>2</sup>They separated from foreigners and confessed their and their ancestors’ sins. <sup>3</sup>While they stood in their place, they read from the Law for a fourth of the day. For another fourth they confessed and worshiped the LORD their God. <sup>4</sup>On the Levites’ platform stood **Jeshua, Bani, Kadmiel, Shebaniah, Bunni, Sherebiah, Bani, and Chenani**, and appealed to the LORD their God.

Neh 9:1-4

<sup>5</sup>Then the Levites **Jeshua, Kadmiel, Bani, Hashabneiah, Sherebiah, Hodiah, Shebaniah, and Pethahiah** said,

*“Bless the LORD your God forever!*

*“May your glorious name be blessed  
and regarded above all blessing and praise!*

<sup>6</sup>*You alone are the LORD.*

*You made earth and sky,  
the highest heavens with all their host,  
the earth and everything on it,  
the oceans and what's in them.*

*The heavenly host bows to you.*

<sup>7</sup>*You're the LORD God*

*who chose Abram  
and brought him from Ur of the Chaldees,  
and named him Abraham.*

<sup>8</sup>*You found him faithful  
and made a covenant with him*

*to give his descendants the land of the Canaanites, Hittites,  
Amorites, Perizzites, Jebusites, and Gergashites.*

*You fulfilled your promise  
because you're good.*

**Neh 9:5-8**

**9** “*You saw our ancestors' suffering in Egypt  
and heard their outcry by the Red Sea.*

**10** *You performed signs and wonders against Pharaoh,  
his officials, and his people.*

*You knew they acted arrogantly toward them  
and made a name for yourself till now.*

**11** *You separated the sea  
so they went through it on dry seabed;  
but you threw their pursuers into the depths  
like stones into raging water.*

**12** *You led them during the day with a pillar of cloud  
and at night with a pillar of fire to light the way.*

**Neh 9:9-12**

**13** *Then you came down on Mount Sinai  
and spoke to them from heaven;  
you gave them just ordinances and true laws,  
good statutes and commandments.*

**14** *You told them about your holy Sabbath  
and laid down commandments, statutes, and law  
through your servant Moses.*

**15** *You gave them bread from the sky for their hunger  
and brought water out of rock for their thirst.*

*You told them to go in and take possession of  
the land you swore to give them.*

**Neh 9:13-15**

**16** “*But our ancestors acted arrogantly;  
they became stubborn  
and ignored your commandments.*

**17** *They didn't remember the awesome deeds  
you did among them.*

*They became stubborn and appointed a leader  
to take them back to slavery in Egypt.*

*But you're a forgiving God,  
gracious and merciful,  
slow to get angry and full of enduring love:*

*you didn't abandon them.*

**18** *Even when they made a calf out of molten metal  
and said, 'This is your God  
that brought you up from Egypt,'  
and committed extreme blasphemies,*

**19** *in your great mercy  
you didn't abandon them in the desert.*

*The pillar of cloud didn't leave them during the day  
to guide them on their way;  
the pillar of fire didn't leave them at night  
to light the way.*

**Neh 9:16-19**

**20** *You gave them your good Spirit to teach them;  
you didn't withhold your manna from them;  
you gave them water for their thirst.*

**21** *For 40 years you provided for them in the desert,  
and they had what they needed.*

*Their clothes didn't wear out,  
and their feet didn't swell.*

**22** *You delivered kingdoms and nations to them  
and allotted every corner to them.*

*They took the land of Sihon, king of Heshbon,  
and the land of Og, king of Bashan.*

**23** *You made their descendants as numerous as the stars  
and took them into the land  
you told their ancestors to possess.*

**24** *So their descendants went in and took possession of it;  
you subdued its people, the Canaanites;  
you delivered them to your people along with their kings  
to do with them whatever they wanted.*

**25** *They captured fortified towns and a fertile land;  
they took possession of houses full of every good thing:  
hewn cisterns, vineyards,  
olive groves, and fruit trees in abundance.*

*They ate their fill, got fat,  
and reveled in your great goodness.*

**Neh 9:20-25**

**26** *"But they became disobedient,  
rebelled against you,  
tossed your Law aside,*

*and killed the prophets that admonished them  
to come back to you;  
they committed great blasphemies.*

**27** *So you delivered them to their oppressors;  
but when they appealed to you in their distress,  
you heard them from heaven, and with your great mercy,  
gave them deliverers to rescue them.* Neh 9:26-27

**28** *But as soon as they got comfortable,  
they sinned again;  
so you abandoned them to their enemies  
to rule them over.*

*When they appealed to you again, you heard from heaven  
and rescued them many times in your great mercy,*

**29** *and admonished them to return to your Law.*

*But they acted arrogantly  
ignored your commandments,  
sinned against your ordinances  
that if people observe, they'll live.*

*They turned a stubborn shoulder,  
stiffened their neck,  
and wouldn't listen.*

**30** *But you bore with them for many years  
and admonished them by your Spirit through your prophets;  
yet they wouldn't listen.*

*So you delivered them to the nations that lived in the lands.*

**31** *But in your great mercy  
you didn't make an end to them or abandon them,  
because you're a gracious and merciful God.* Neh 9:28-31

**32** *"Now, great, powerful, awesome God  
that keeps covenant and enduring love,  
don't consider the hardship insignificant  
that has come on us, our kings, officials, and priests,  
our prophets, ancestors, and all your people  
from the time of the kings of Assyria till now.*

**33** *You're justified in everything that's happened to us,  
because you've dealt faithfully;  
but we've acted sinfully.*

**34** *Our kings, leaders, priests, and ancestors*

*haven't kept your Law  
or paid attention to your commandments and admonitions.*

**35***But they, in their own kingdom,  
with your great goodness that you gave them,  
with the wide, rich land you set in front of them,  
did not serve you or turn from their sins.* **Neh 9:32-35**

**36***We're slaves today  
in the land you gave our ancestors to eat its fruit and bounty.*

**37***Its abundant produce is for the kings  
that you set over us because of our sins.  
They rule our bodies and our livestock as they please;  
we're in great distress.*

**38***Because of that, we're signing a covenant;  
and our officials, Levites, and priests have set their seal to it.”* **Neh 9:36-38**

### People That Sealed the Covenant

**10:1-8**The sealed document showed the names of these priests: Nehemiah the governor, son of Hacaliah; Zedekiah, Seraiah, Azariah, Jeremiah, Pashhur, Amariah, Malchijah, Hattush, Shebaniah, Malluch, Harim, Meremoth, Obadiah, Daniel, Ginnethon, Baruch, Meshullam, Abijah, Mijamin, Maaziah, Bilgai, and Shemaiah;

**9**the Levites: Jeshua son of Azaniah, Binnui of the family of Henadad, Kadmiel; **10**and their brothers Shebanaih, Hodiah, Kelita, Pelaiah, Hanan, **11**Mica, Rehob, Hashabiah, **12**Zaccur, Sherebiah, Shebaniah, **13**Hodiah, Bani, Beninu;

**14**the leaders of the people: Parosh, Pahath-moab, Elam, Zattu, Bani, **15**Bunni Azgad, Bebai, **16**Adonijah, Bigvai, Adin, **17**Ater, Hezekiah, Azzur, **18**Hodiah, Hashum, Bezai, **19**Hariph, Anathoth, Nebai, **20**Magpiash, Meshullam, Hezir, **21**Meshezabel, Zadok, Jaddua, **22**Pelatiah, Hanan, Anaiah, **23**Hoshea, Hananiah, Hasshub, **24**Hallohesh, Pilha, Shobek, **25**Rehum, Hashabnah, Maaseiah, **26**Ahiah, Hanan, Anan, **27**Malluch, Harim, Baanah. **Neh 10:1-27**

### Obligations of the Covenant

**28**The rest of the people—the priests, Levites, gatekeepers, singers, Temple servants, everybody that separated from the people in the land, their wives, their sons and daughters, everybody that had knowledge and understanding—**29**are joining their kinsmen and nobles in taking a curse and an oath. *They swear* to follow God's Law through Moses, to observe his commandments, **30**and not to intermarry with the people in the territory. **31**If any people in the land bring wares or grain to sell on the Sabbath or a holy day, we won't buy them. We won't plant crops in the seventh year or exact any debt *that year*.

<sup>32</sup>We've obligated ourselves to contribute yearly .13 oz <sup>1/2</sup> of a shekel of silver for the service in God's Temple: <sup>33</sup>for the showbread, the continual grain offering and burnt offering; the Sabbaths, new moons, and appointed times; for the holy things, the sin offerings to atone for Israel, and the work on God's Temple.

Neh 10:28-33

<sup>34</sup>Likewise, we cast lots for supplying wood to the priests, Levites, and the people so they could bring it to God's Temple by families at set times each year. It was for burning on the altar as the Law requires. <sup>35</sup>*We committed to* bringing the first part of the harvest from our ground and trees to the LORD's Temple every year; <sup>36</sup>to bringing our male firstborns, cattle, herds, and flocks as the Law requires, especially in written form, for the priests that minister in God's Temple. <sup>37</sup>We'll also bring the first of our dough, our contributions, the fruit of every tree, the new wine and the olive oil to the priests at the rooms of God's Temple. *We'll bring* a tenth from our ground to the Levites, because they're the ones that receive the tithes in the rural towns. <sup>38</sup>The priest, the descendant of Aaron, will be with the Levites when they receive the tithes. The Levites will bring up a tenth of the tithes to the storerooms in God's Temple. <sup>39</sup>The people of Israel and the Levites will bring the contribution of grain, new wine, and olive oil to the chambers. There are the utensils for the sanctuary, the priests that are ministering, the gatekeepers, and the singers. That way we won't neglect the Temple of our God.

Neh 10:34-39

### The Leaders in Jerusalem

<sup>11:1</sup>The people's leaders *already* lived in Jerusalem, but the rest of the people cast lots to bring one in ten to live in Jerusalem, the holy city, while nine-tenths stayed in the other towns. <sup>2</sup>The people commended those who volunteered to move to Jerusalem.

<sup>3</sup>These are the leaders of the province who lived in Jerusalem, but in the towns of Judah each lived on his own property: the Israelites, priests, Levites, Temple servants, and descendants of Solomon's servants. <sup>4</sup>Some of the people of Judah and Benjamin lived in Jerusalem.

From Judah was Athaiah son of Uzziah (son of Zechariah son of Amariah son of Shephatiah) son of Mahalalel.

From Perez was <sup>5</sup>Maaseiah (son of Baruch son of Col-hozeh son of Hazaiah son of Adaiah son of Joiarib son of Zechariah) son of the Shilonite. <sup>6</sup>The descendants of Perez that lived in Jerusalem were 468 capable men.

<sup>7</sup>These are the descendants of Benjamin: Sallu son of Meshullam (son of Joed son of Pedaiah son of Kolaiah son of Maaseiah son of Ithiel) son of Jeshaiah; <sup>8</sup>and after him Gabbai and Sallai: 928. <sup>9</sup>Joel son of Zichri was their overseer. Judah son of Hassenuah was second in command in the city.

Neh 11:1-9

<sup>10</sup>From the priests:

Jedaiah Ben-Joiarib, Jachin, <sup>11</sup>Seraiah Ben-Hilkiah (Ben-Meshullam Ben-Zadok Ben-Meraioth Ben-Ahitub), supervisor of God's Temple, <sup>12</sup>and their relatives that did the work on the Temple, 822;

Adaiah Ben-Jeroham (Ben-Pelaliah Ben-Amzi Ben-Zechariah Ben-Pashhur Ben-Malchijah),  
<sup>13</sup>and his associates, leaders of families: 242,

Amashsai (Ben-Azarel Ben-Ahzai Ben-Meshillemoth Ben-Immer,) <sup>14</sup>and their brothers,  
 trained soldiers: 128.

Zabdiel Ben-Haggedolim was their officer.

<sup>15</sup>From the Levites:

Shemaiah Ben-Hasshub Ben-Azrikam Ben-Hashabiah Ben-Bunni;

<sup>16</sup>Shabbethai and Jozabad, from the leaders of the Levites, who supervised the  
 outside work on God's Temple;

<sup>17</sup>Mattaniah Ben-Mica Ben-Zabdi Ben-Asaph, who led in thanksgiving;

Bakbukiah, the second among his relatives;

Abda Ben-Shammua Ben-Galal Ben-Jeduthun.

<sup>18</sup>The Levites in the holy city numbered 284.

Neh 11:10-18

<sup>19</sup>The gatekeepers, Akkub, Talmon, and their relatives, who guarded the gates, were 172.

<sup>20</sup>The rest of Israel, the priests, and Levites lived in towns in Judah on their own inheritances, <sup>21</sup>but  
 the Temple servants lived in Ophel. Ziha and Gishpa supervised them.

<sup>22</sup>The overseer of the Levites in Jerusalem was Uzzi son of Bani (son of Hashabiah son of  
 Mattaniah son of Mica) from the descendants of Asaph, singers for the service of God's Temple. <sup>23</sup>The  
 king laid out the daily responsibilities for the song leaders. <sup>24</sup>Pethahiah son of Meshezabel, of the  
 sons of Zerah son of Judah, was the king's advisor in everything that had to do with public  
 administration.

Neh 11:19-24

## Villages Outside Jerusalem

<sup>25</sup>The villages with their fields: some people of Judah lived in Kiriath-arba, Dibon,  
 Jekabzeel; <sup>26</sup>in Jeshua, Moladah, and Beth-pelet <sup>27</sup>in Hazar-shual, Beersheba, <sup>28</sup>in Ziklag,  
 Meconah, <sup>29</sup>Enrimmon, Zorah, Jarmuth, <sup>30</sup>Zanoah, Adullam, Lachis, Azekah, each with their  
 fields, settlements, and villages. They camped from Beersheba all the way to the Valley of  
 Hinnom. <sup>31</sup>Some people of Benjamin lived at Geba, Michmash and Aija, Bethel and its  
 settlements, <sup>32</sup>at Anathoth, Nob, Ananiah, <sup>33</sup>Hazor, Ramah, Gittaim, <sup>34</sup>Hadid, Zeboim, Neballat,  
<sup>35</sup>Lod and Ono, the valley of craftsmen. <sup>36</sup>Some divisions of Levites that lived in Judah moved to  
 live in Benjamin.

Neh 11:25-36

## Priests and Levites

<sup>12:1</sup>These are the priests and Levites that came up with Zerubbabel *the king*, son of  
 Shealtiel, and Jeshua *the high priest*: Seraiah, Jeremiah, Ezra, <sup>2</sup>Amariah, Malluch, Hattush,  
<sup>3</sup>Shecaniah, Rehum, Meremoth, <sup>4</sup>Iddo, Ginnethoi, Abijah, <sup>5</sup>Mijamin, Maadiah, Bilgah, <sup>6</sup>Shemaiah

and Joiarib, Jedaiah,<sup>7</sup> Sallu, Amok, Hilkiah, and Jedaiah. These were the leaders of the priests and their relatives at the time of Jeshua.

<sup>8</sup>The Levites were Jeshua, Binnui, Kadmiel, Sherebiah, Judah, and Mattaniah, who with his brothers was in charge of the songs of thanksgiving.<sup>9</sup>Bakbukiah and Unni, their brothers, stood across from them in their service divisions.<sup>10</sup>Jeshua was father of Joiakim (father of Eliashib father of Joiada<sup>11</sup>father of Jonathan father of Jaddua).

Neh 12:1-11

<sup>12</sup>At the time of Joiakim the priests, the family leaders were:

of Seraiah, Meraiah;  
of Jeremiah, Hananiah;

<sup>13</sup>of Ezra, Meshullam;  
of Amariah, Jehohanan;

<sup>14</sup>of Malluchi, Jonathan;  
of Shebaniah, Joseph;

<sup>15</sup>of Harim, Adna;  
of Meraioth, Helkai;

<sup>16</sup>of Iddo, Zechariah;  
of Ginnethon, Meshullam;

<sup>17</sup>of Abijah, Zichri;  
of Miniamin, of Moadiah, Piltai;

Neh 12:12-17

<sup>18</sup>of Bilgah, Shammua;  
of Shemaiah, Jehonathan;

<sup>19</sup>of Joiarib, Mattenai;  
of Jedaiah, Uzzi;

<sup>20</sup>of Sallai, Kallai;  
of Amok, Eber;

<sup>21</sup>of Hilkiah, Hashabiah;  
of Jedaiah, Nethanel.

Neh 12:18-21

<sup>22</sup>The heads of the Levites' families were registered at the time of Eliashib, Joiada, Johanan, and Jaddua; so were the priests during the reign of Darius the Persian.<sup>23</sup>The Levites, heads of families, were registered in *The Book of Chronicles* up to the time of Johanan son of Eliashib.<sup>24</sup>The heads of the Levites were Hashabiah, Sherebiah, and Jeshua son of Kadmiel, with their brothers opposite to them, to praise and give thanks, as prescribed by David, the man of God, division corresponding to division.<sup>25</sup>Mattaniah, Bakbukiah, Obadiah, Meshullam, Talmon, and Akkub watched over the storehouses by the gates.<sup>26</sup>These served at the time of Joiakim son of Jeshua son of Jozadak, Nehemiah the governor, and Ezra the priest and scribe.

## Dedication of the Walls

<sup>27</sup>At the dedication of the wall at Jerusalem, they sought out the Levites from wherever they were living, to bring them to Jerusalem so they could celebrate the dedication with hymns of thanksgiving and songs accompanied by cymbals, harps, and lyres. <sup>28</sup>The singers gathered from the district around Jerusalem and the villages around Netophah, <sup>29</sup>from Beth-gilgal and their fields in Geba and Azmaveth, because the singers had built villages around Jerusalem. <sup>30</sup>The priests and Levites purified themselves, the people, the gates, and the wall.

Neh 12:22-30

<sup>31</sup>Then I had the leaders of Judah come up on the wall, and I appointed two large choirs. The first choir went right on the wall toward the Refuse Gate. <sup>32</sup>Hoshaiah and half of the leaders of Judah followed them, <sup>33</sup>with Azariah, Ezra, Meshullam, <sup>34</sup>Judah, Benjamin, Shemaiah, Jeremiah, <sup>35</sup>some of the priests with trumpets; Zechariah son of Jonathan (son of Shemaiah son of Mattaniah son of Micaiah son of Zaccur son of Asaph, <sup>36</sup>and his relatives), Shemaiah, Azarel, Milalai, Gilalai, Maai, Nethanel, Judah and Hanani, with the musical instruments of David, the man of God. Ezra the scribe went ahead of them. <sup>37</sup>At the Fountain Gate they went up the steps of The City of David by the stairway of the wall above David's palace to the Water Gate on the east.

<sup>38</sup>The second choir went left, while I followed them with half the people on the wall, above the Tower of Furnaces, to the broad wall, <sup>39</sup>and above the Ephraim Gate, by the Old Gate, the Fish Gate, the Tower of Hananel, and the Tower of the Hundred as far as the Sheep Gate, and they stopped at the Guard Gate. <sup>40</sup>Then the two choirs took their place in God's Temple. So did I and half of the officials with me; <sup>41</sup>and the priests Eliakim, Maaseiah, Miniamin, Micaiah, Elioenai, Zechariah, and Hananiah, with the trumpets; <sup>42</sup>and Maaseiah, Shemaiah, Eleazar, Uzzi, Jehohanan, Malchijah, Elam, and Ezer. The singers sang with Jezrahiah their leader, <sup>43</sup>and on that day they offered a great number of sacrifices and celebrated because God had made them happy. The women and children celebrated too; the joy in Jerusalem was heard a long way off. Neh 12:31-43

### Provisions for Temple Worship

<sup>44</sup>On that day, men were also appointed to oversee the rooms for storing contributions, harvest firstfruits, and tithes, to gather into them from the fields of the towns the portions required by the Law for the priests and Levites; because Judah celebrated over the priests and Levites that served. <sup>45</sup>They performed the worship of God and the service of purification, together with the singers and the gatekeepers according to the command of David and Solomon. <sup>46</sup>In the time of David and Asaph, there were leaders of the singers, and *there were* songs of praise and hymns of thanksgiving to God. <sup>47</sup>Israel at the time of Zerubbabel and Nehemiah gave the portions due the singers and gatekeepers as each day required. They set apart the consecrated portion for the Levites, and the Levites set apart the consecrated portion for the descendants of Aaron.

Neh 12:44-47

### Nehemiah's Final Reforms

**13:1** That day they read out loud from the *Book of Moses* so the people could hear it. There they found that no Ammonite or Moabite should ever enter God's assembly. **2** That was because they didn't provide the Israelites with bread and water, but hired Balaam to curse them. But our God turned the curse into a blessing. **3** When they heard the Law, they excluded all foreigners from Israel.

**4** Before this, Eliashib the priest—who was responsible for the rooms of God's Temple and related to Tobiah—**5** had provided him a large room where they used to put the grain offerings, frankincense, utensils; the tithes of grain, wine, and olive oil prescribed for the Levites, singers, and gatekeepers; and the contributions for the priests. **6** During that time I wasn't in Jerusalem.

In the **thirty-second year of Artaxerxes**, king of Babylon, I'd gone back to the king and after some time asked leave from him. **7** I returned to Jerusalem and learned what evil Eliashib had done by providing Tobiah a room in the courts of the Temple. **8** I threw out his belongings **9** and ordered the rooms purified. I put back in there the utensils for God's Temple, the grain offerings, and the frankincense.

**Neh 13:1-9**

**10** I also discovered that the Levites hadn't been receiving their portions, so they and the singers that performed service had gone to their fields. **11** I reprimanded the officials, “*Why is God's Temple abandoned?*” I gathered them together and restored them to their posts. **12** Then Judah brought a tenth of the grain, wine, and olive oil to the storehouses. **13** I appointed Shelemiah the priest, Zadok the scribe, Hanan son of Zaccur son of Mattaniah, and Pedaiah from the Levites to oversee the storehouses because I considered them reliable. They were responsible for distributing to their fellow Levites. **14** Remember me for this, God. Don't blot out my loyal efforts for your Temple and its services.

**15** At that time, I saw some people in Judah treading winepresses on the Sabbath. They were bringing into Jerusalem sacks of grain loaded on donkeys, as well as wine, grapes, figs—all kinds of merchandise on the Sabbath. I admonished them the day they sold the food. **16** Men from Tyre were living there too. They were importing fish and other merchandise, and selling them to Judah on the Sabbath, right in Jerusalem. **17** I reprimanded the nobles of Judah,

“*What's this sin you're committing, profaning the Sabbath? 18 Didn't your ancestors do the same thing, and our God brought this trouble on us and this city? You're adding to his wrath on Israel.*”

**Neh 13:10-18**

**19** I commanded that the gates be shut the day before Sabbath at dusk and not opened till after Sabbath. I stationed some of my guards at the gates so no merchandise would come in on the Sabbath. **20** Once or twice the traders and merchants spent the night just outside Jerusalem. **21** I warned them, “*Why are you spending the night by the wall? Do it again, and I'll use force on you.*” From then on, they didn't come on the Sabbath. **22** I commanded the Levites to purify

themselves and come as gatekeepers to sanctify the Sabbath. Remember me for this too, God. Have mercy on me in keeping with your great enduring love.

<sup>23</sup>At that time, I saw that the Jews had married women from Ashdod, Ammon, and Moab.

<sup>24</sup>Half of their children spoke in the language of Ashdod and couldn't speak the language of Judah.

<sup>25</sup>I contended with them, cursed them, struck some of them, pulled out their hair, and made them swear by God,

*"Don't intermarry with them. <sup>26</sup>Didn't Solomon sin in this matter? Among the nations there wasn't a king like him. God loved him and made him king over all Israel, but foreign women caused even him to sin. <sup>27</sup>Do we then hear that he acted unfaithfully against our God?"*

<sup>28</sup>Even one of the sons of Joiada son of Eliashib the high priest, was a son-in-law of Sanballat; so I banished him. <sup>29</sup>Remember them, God, for defiling the priesthood and the covenant between the priesthood and the Levites.

<sup>30</sup>I purified them from everything foreign and appointed specific duties for the priests and the Levites. <sup>31</sup>I arranged for the supply of wood at appointed times and for the firstfruits of harvest to be brought in at the appointed times. Remember me, God, for the good I've done. **Neh 13:19-31**

Version by Virgil Warren: christir.org