**Nehemiah**

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**Chapter 1**

1 The words of Nehemiʹah the son of Hacaliʹah: Now in the month of Chisʹlev, in the 20th year, I was in Shuʹshan the citadel. 2 At that time Hanaʹni, one of my brothers, arrived with other men from Judah, and I asked them about the remaining Jews who had escaped the captivity, and also about Jerusalem. 3 They replied: “Those remaining there in the province who have survived the captivity are in a terrible situation and in disgrace. The walls of Jerusalem are broken down, and its gates have been burned with fire.”

4 As soon as I heard these words, I sat down and began to weep and mourn for days, and I kept fasting and praying before the God of the heavens. 5 I said: “O Jehovah, the God of the heavens, the great and awe-inspiring God who keeps his covenant and shows loyal love to those who love him and keep his commandments, 6 please, let your ear be attentive and your eyes open to listen to the prayer of your servant that I am praying to you today, day and night, concerning your servants the Israelites, all the while confessing the sins that the people of Israel have committed against you. We have sinned, both I and the house of my father. 7 We have certainly acted corruptly against you by not keeping the commandments, regulations, and judicial decisions that you gave to your servant Moses.

8 “Remember, please, the word that you commanded your servant Moses: ‘If you act unfaithfully, I will scatter you among the peoples. 9 But if you return to me and observe my commandments and obey them, though your dispersed people should be at the end of the heavens, I will gather them from there and bring them to the place that I have chosen to have my name reside.’ 10 They are your servants and your people, whom you redeemed by your great power and by your mighty hand. 11 O Jehovah, please, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of your servant and to the prayer of your servants who take delight in fearing your name, and please, grant success to your servant today, and may this man show me compassion.”

Now I was cupbearer to the king.

**Chapter 2**

1 In the month of Niʹsan, in the 20th year of King Artaxerxʹes, wine was set before him, and as usual I took up the wine and gave it to the king. But I had never been gloomy in his presence. 2 So the king said to me: “Why do you look so gloomy when you are not sick? This can be nothing but gloominess of heart.” At this I became very frightened.

3 Then I said to the king: “Long live the king! Why should I not look gloomy when the city, the place where my forefathers are buried, lies in ruins, and its gates have been consumed by fire?” 4 The king then said to me: “What is it that you are seeking?” At once I prayed to the God of the heavens. 5 I then said to the king: “If it pleases the king and if your servant has found favor with you, send me to Judah, to the city where my forefathers are buried, so that I may rebuild it.” 6 Then the king, with his royal consort sitting beside him, said to me: “How long will your journey be, and when will you return?” So it pleased the king to send me, and I gave him a set time.

7 Then I said to the king: “If it pleases the king, let letters be given me for the governors of the region Beyond the River, granting me safe passage until I reach Judah, 8 as well as a letter to Aʹsaph the keeper of the Royal Park, so that he may give me timber for beams for the gates of the Fortress of the House and for the walls of the city and for the house where I will go.” So the king gave them to me, for the good hand of my God was upon me.

9 Eventually I came to the governors of the region Beyond the River and gave them the king’s letters. The king also sent with me army chiefs and horsemen. 10 When Sanbalʹlat the Horʹonite and Tobiʹah the Amʹmonite official heard about it, they were very displeased that someone had come to do something good for the people of Israel.

11 At length I came to Jerusalem, and I stayed there for three days. 12 I rose up by night, I and a few men with me, and I did not tell anyone what my God had put into my heart to do for Jerusalem, and there was no animal with me except the one I was riding. 13 And I went out at night through the Valley Gate, passing in front of the Fountain of the Big Snake to the Gate of the Ash Heaps, and I inspected the walls of Jerusalem that were broken down and its gates that had been consumed by fire. 14 And I passed along to the Fountain Gate and to the King’s Pool, and there was not enough space for the animal I was riding to pass. 15 But I continued up the valley by night, and I kept inspecting the wall, after which I came back and entered through the Valley Gate, and then I returned.

16 The deputy rulers did not know where I had gone and what I was doing, for I had not yet said anything to the Jews, the priests, the nobles, the deputy rulers, and the rest of the workers. 17 Finally I said to them: “You can see what a terrible situation we are in, how Jerusalem lies in ruins and its gates have been burned with fire. Come, let us rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, so that this disgrace will not continue.” 18 Then I told them of how the good hand of my God was upon me and also of the words that the king had spoken to me. At this they said: “Let us get up and build.” So they strengthened themselves for the good work.

19 Now when Sanbalʹlat the Horʹonite, Tobiʹah the Amʹmonite official, and Geʹshem the Arabian heard of it, they began to mock us and show us their contempt and say: “What are you doing? Are you rebelling against the king?” 20 However, I replied: “The God of the heavens is the One who will grant us success, and we his servants will get up and build; but you have neither share nor claim nor memorial in Jerusalem.”

**Chapter 3**

1 Eliʹashib the high priest and his brothers the priests got up to build the Sheep Gate. They sanctified it and set up its doors; they sanctified it as far as the Tower of Meʹah, as far as the Tower of Hananʹel. 2 And next to them the men of Jerʹicho were building; and next to them Zacʹcur the son of Imʹri was building.

3 The sons of Hassenaʹah built the Fish Gate; they timbered it and then set up its doors, its bolts, and its bars. 4 And next to them Merʹemoth the son of Uriʹjah the son of Hakʹkoz did repair work, and next to them Meshulʹlam the son of Berechiʹah the son of Meshezʹabel did repair work, and next to them Zaʹdok the son of Baʹana did repair work. 5 And next to them the Tekoʹites did repair work, but their prominent men would not lower themselves to share in the service of their masters.

6 Joiʹada the son of Paseʹah and Meshulʹlam the son of Besodeiʹah repaired the Gate of the Old City; they timbered it and then set up its doors, its bolts, and its bars. 7 Next to them Melatiʹah the Gibʹeonite and Jaʹdon the Meronʹothite did repair work, men of Gibʹeon and Mizʹpah who were under the authority of the governor of the region Beyond the River. 8 Next to them Uzʹziel the son of Harhaiʹah, one of the goldsmiths, did repair work, and next to him Hananiʹah, one of the ointment mixers, did repair work; and they paved Jerusalem as far as the Broad Wall. 9 And next to them Rephaʹiah the son of Hur, a prince of half the district of Jerusalem, did repair work. 10 And next to them Jedaʹiah the son of Haruʹmaph did repair work in front of his own house, and next to him Hatʹtush the son of Hashabneiʹah did repair work.

11 Malchiʹjah the son of Haʹrim and Hasʹshub the son of Paʹhath-moʹab repaired another section, as well as the Tower of the Ovens. 12 And next to them Shalʹlum the son of Halloʹhesh, a prince of half the district of Jerusalem, did repair work, along with his daughters.

13 Haʹnun and the inhabitants of Zanoʹah repaired the Valley Gate; they built it and then set up its doors, its bolts, and its bars, and they repaired 1,000 cubits of the wall as far as the Gate of the Ash Heaps. 14 Malchiʹjah the son of Reʹchab, a prince of the district of Beth-haccheʹrem, repaired the Gate of the Ash Heaps; he built it and set up its doors, its bolts, and its bars.

15 Shalʹlun the son of Colhoʹzeh, a prince of the district of Mizʹpah, repaired the Fountain Gate; he built it and its roof, set up its doors, its bolts, and its bars, and also repaired the wall of the Pool of the Canal to the King’s Garden and as far as the Stairway that goes down from the City of David.

16 After him Nehemiʹah the son of Azʹbuk, a prince of half the district of Beth-zur, did repair work from in front of the Burial Places of David as far as the pool that had been built and as far as the House of the Mighty Ones.

17 After him the Levites did repair work: Reʹhum the son of Baʹni; and next to him Hashabiʹah, a prince of half the district of Keiʹlah, did repair work for his district. 18 After him their brothers did repair work: Bavʹvai the son of Henʹadad, a prince of half the district of Keiʹlah.

19 And next to him Eʹzer the son of Jeshʹua, a prince of Mizʹpah, was repairing another section in front of the ascent to the Armory at the Buttress.

20 After him Barʹuch the son of Zabʹbai worked with fervor and repaired another section, from the Buttress as far as the entrance of the house of Eliʹashib the high priest.

21 After him Merʹemoth the son of Uriʹjah the son of Hakʹkoz repaired another section, from the entrance of the house of Eliʹashib as far as the end of Eliʹashib’s house.

22 And after him the priests, men of the district of the Jordan, did repair work. 23 After them Benjamin and Hasʹshub did repair work in front of their own house. After them Azariʹah the son of Maaseiʹah the son of Ananiʹah did repair work near his own house. 24 After him Binʹnui the son of Henʹadad repaired another section, from the house of Azariʹah as far as the Buttress and as far as the corner.

25 After him Paʹlal the son of Uʹzai did repair work in front of the Buttress and the tower that goes out from the King’s House, the upper one that belongs to the Courtyard of the Guard. After him there was Pedaiʹah the son of Paʹrosh.

26 And the temple servants who lived in Oʹphel did repair work as far as in front of the Water Gate on the east and the protruding tower.

27 After them the Tekoʹites repaired another section, from in front of the great protruding tower as far as the wall of Oʹphel.

28 The priests did repair work above the Horse Gate, each in front of his own house.

29 After them Zaʹdok the son of Imʹmer did repair work in front of his own house.

And after him Shemaiʹah the son of Shecaniʹah, the keeper of the East Gate, did repair work.

30 After him Hananiʹah the son of Shelemiʹah and Haʹnun the sixth son of Zaʹlaph repaired another section.

After him Meshulʹlam the son of Berechiʹah did repair work in front of his own hall.

31 After him Malchiʹjah, a member of the goldsmith guild, did repair work as far as the house of the temple servants and the traders, in front of the Inspection Gate and as far as the roof chamber of the corner.

32 And between the roof chamber of the corner and the Sheep Gate, the goldsmiths and the traders did repair work.

**Chapter 4**

1 Now as soon as Sanbalʹlat heard that we were rebuilding the wall, he became angry and very upset, and he kept mocking the Jews. 2 And in the presence of his brothers and the army of Samarʹia, he said: “What are the feeble Jews doing? Will they do this by themselves? Will they offer sacrifices? Will they finish up in a day? Will they bring the charred stones to life out of the heaps of dusty rubble?”

3 Now Tobiʹah the Amʹmonite, who was standing beside him, said: “If even a fox would climb up on what they are building, it would knock down their stone wall.”

4 Hear, O our God, for we are being treated with contempt, and make their reproach return on their own heads, and give them over as plunder in a land of captivity. 5 And do not cover over their guilt or let their sin be erased from before you, for they have insulted the builders.

6 So we kept building the wall, and the entire wall was joined together and rebuilt up to half its height, and the people continued to put their heart into the work.

7 Now as soon as Sanbalʹlat, Tobiʹah, the Arabians, the Amʹmonites, and the Ashʹdodites heard that the repairing of the walls of Jerusalem was progressing and that the gaps were being filled in, they became very angry. 8 They conspired together to come and fight against Jerusalem and to create a disturbance in it. 9 But we prayed to our God and kept a guard posted against them day and night.

10 However, people of Judah were saying: “The strength of the laborers has failed, and there is so much rubble; we will never be able to build the wall.”

11 And our enemies kept saying: “Before they know it or see us, we will come right in among them and kill them and stop the work.”

12 Whenever the Jews living near them came in, they told us again and again: “They will come at us from all directions.”

13 So I kept men posted at the lowest parts of the space behind the wall at the exposed places, and I posted them by families with their swords, their lances, and their bows. 14 When I saw their fear, I immediately rose and said to the nobles and the deputy rulers and the rest of the people: “Do not be afraid of them. Remember Jehovah, who is great and awe-inspiring; and fight for your brothers, your sons and daughters, your wives and homes.”

15 Now after our enemies heard that what they were doing had become known to us and that the true God had frustrated their plan, we all went back to work on the wall. 16 From that day forward, half of my men would do the work and half of them would hold the lances, the shields, the bows, and the coats of mail. And the princes stood behind the whole house of Judah 17 who were building the wall. Those who were carrying the loads did the work with one hand while holding a weapon in the other hand. 18 And each of the builders had a sword strapped to his hip while building, and the one to blow the horn stood beside me.

19 I then said to the nobles and the deputy rulers and the rest of the people: “The work is large and extensive, and we are spread out on the wall far apart from one another. 20 When you hear the sound of the horn, gather together to where we are. Our God will fight for us.”

21 So we kept working while the other half were holding the lances, from the break of dawn until the stars came out. 22 At that time I said to the people: “Let the men, each along with his attendant, spend the night inside Jerusalem, and they will guard us by night and work during the day.” 23 So neither I nor my brothers, my attendants, and the guards who followed me ever took off our garments, and each of us kept his weapon in his right hand.

**Chapter 5**

1 However, there was a great outcry from the people and their wives against their Jewish brothers. 2 Some were saying: “We are many with our sons and our daughters. We must get grain in order to eat and stay alive.” 3 Others were saying: “We are giving our fields and our vineyards and our houses as security to get grain during the food shortage.” 4 Still others were saying: “We have borrowed money on our fields and our vineyards for the king’s tribute. 5 Now we are of the same flesh and blood as our brothers, and our children are just like their children; yet we have to subject our sons and daughters to slavery, and some of our daughters are already in slavery. But we are powerless to stop this, because our fields and our vineyards belong to others.”

6 I became very angry when I heard their outcry and these words. 7 So I considered these things in my heart, and I took issue with the nobles and the deputy rulers and said to them: “Each one of you is demanding interest from your own brother.”

Further, I arranged for a great assembly because of them. 8 And I said to them: “To the extent possible, we have bought back our own Jewish brothers who were sold to the nations; but will you now sell your own brothers, and are they to be sold back to us?” At this they became speechless, and they could find nothing to say. 9 Then I said: “What you are doing is not good. Should you not walk in the fear of our God so that the nations, our enemies, cannot reproach us? 10 Moreover, I, my brothers, and my attendants are lending them money and grain. Let us, please, stop this lending on interest. 11 Please, restore to them on this very day their fields, their vineyards, their olive groves, and their houses, as well as the hundredth of the money, the grain, the new wine, and the oil that you are demanding as interest from them.”

12 To this they said: “We will restore these things to them and ask nothing back. We will do precisely as you say.” So I called the priests and made those men swear to keep this promise. 13 Also, I shook out the folds of my garment and said: “In this manner may the true God shake out from his house and from his possessions every man who does not carry out this promise, and in this manner may he be shaken out and emptied.” To this all the congregation said: “Amen!” And they praised Jehovah, and the people did as they promised.

14 Moreover, from the day that he commissioned me to become their governor in the land of Judah, from the 20th year to the 32nd year of King Artaxerxʹes, 12 years, neither I nor my brothers ate the food allowance due the governor. 15 But the former governors who were before me had burdened the people and had been taking from them 40 silver shekels for bread and wine each day. Also, their attendants had oppressed the people. But I did not do that because of the fear of God.

16 Furthermore, I took a hand in the work on this wall, and not a field did we acquire; all my attendants were gathered there for the work. 17 There were 150 Jews and deputy rulers dining at my table, as well as those who came to us from the nations. 18 Every day one bull, six choice sheep, and birds were prepared for me, and once every ten days we had all sorts of wine in abundance. Despite all this I did not demand the food allowance due the governor, because the people were already bearing their burden of service. 19 Do remember me favorably, O my God, for all that I have done in behalf of this people.

**Chapter 6**

1 Now as soon as Sanbalʹlat, Tobiʹah, Geʹshem the Arabian, and the rest of our enemies were told that I had rebuilt the wall and that there were no gaps left in it (although up to that time I had not set up the doors in the gates), 2 Sanbalʹlat and Geʹshem immediately sent this message to me: “Come, and let us set a time to meet together in the villages of the Valley Plain of Oʹno.” But they were scheming to harm me. 3 So I sent messengers to them, saying: “I am engaged in a great work, and I am not able to go down. Why should the work stop while I leave it to come to you?” 4 They sent me the same message four times, and I gave them the same reply each time.

5 Then Sanbalʹlat sent his attendant to me with the same message a fifth time, with an open letter in his hand. 6 There it was written: “Among the nations it has been heard, and Geʹshem is also saying it, that you and the Jews are scheming to rebel. That is why you are building the wall; and according to these reports you are to become their king. 7 Also, you have appointed prophets to proclaim about you throughout Jerusalem, ‘There is a king in Judah!’ And now these things will be told to the king. So come, and let us discuss this together.”

8 However, I sent him this reply: “None of the things you are saying have taken place; you are making them up out of your own imagination.” 9 For they were all trying to frighten us, saying: “Their hands will slacken in the work, and it will not be done.” Now, I pray, strengthen my hands.

10 Then I went to the house of Shemaiʹah the son of Delaʹiah the son of Mehetʹabel while he was confined there. He said: “Let us set a time to meet at the house of the true God, within the temple, and let us close the doors of the temple, for they are coming to kill you. They are coming to kill you by night.” 11 But I said: “Should a man like me run away? Can a man like me go into the temple and live? I will not go in!” 12 Then I realized that God had not sent him, but that Tobiʹah and Sanbalʹlat had hired him to speak this prophecy against me. 13 He had been hired to frighten me and to cause me to sin, so that they would have grounds to damage my reputation in order to reproach me.

14 Do remember, O my God, Tobiʹah and Sanbalʹlat and these deeds, and also Noadiʹah the prophetess and the rest of the prophets who were constantly trying to frighten me.

15 So the wall was completed on the 25th day of Eʹlul, in 52 days.

16 As soon as all our enemies heard of it and all the surrounding nations saw it, they became greatly ashamed, and they realized that it was with our God’s help that this work had been done. 17 In those days the nobles of Judah were sending many letters to Tobiʹah, and Tobiʹah would reply to them. 18 Many in Judah swore allegiance to him, for he was a son-in-law of Shecaniʹah the son of Aʹrah, and his son Jehohaʹnan had married the daughter of Meshulʹlam the son of Berechiʹah. 19 Also, they would constantly tell me good things about him and then report to him what I said. Then Tobiʹah would send letters to frighten me.

**Chapter 7**

1 As soon as the wall had been rebuilt I set up the doors; then the gatekeepers, the singers, and the Levites were appointed. 2 I then put my brother Hanaʹni in charge of Jerusalem, along with Hananiʹah the chief of the Fortress, for he was a most trustworthy man and feared the true God more than many others. 3 So I said to them: “The gates of Jerusalem should not be opened until the heat of the day, and while they are standing guard, they should shut the doors and bolt them. And assign the inhabitants of Jerusalem as guards, each to his assigned guardpost and each in front of his own house.” 4 Now the city was spacious and large, and there were few people inside it, and the houses had not been rebuilt.

5 But my God put it into my heart to gather together the nobles and the deputy rulers and the people to be enrolled genealogically. Then I found the book of genealogical enrollment of those who first came up, and I found written in it:

6 And these were the people of the province who came up out of the captivity of the exiles, those whom King Nebuchadnezʹzar of Babylon had exiled and who later returned to Jerusalem and Judah, each to his own city, 7 those who came with Zerubʹbabel, Jeshʹua, Nehemiʹah, Azariʹah, Raamiʹah, Nahamʹani, Morʹdecai, Bilʹshan, Misʹpereth, Bigʹvai, Neʹhum, and Baʹanah.

The number of the Israelite men included: 8 the sons of Paʹrosh, 2,172; 9 the sons of Shephatiʹah, 372; 10 the sons of Aʹrah, 652; 11 the sons of Paʹhath-moʹab, of the sons of Jeshʹua and Joʹab, 2,818; 12 the sons of Eʹlam, 1,254; 13 the sons of Zatʹtu, 845; 14 the sons of Zacʹcai, 760; 15 the sons of Binʹnui, 648; 16 the sons of Beʹbai, 628; 17 the sons of Azʹgad, 2,322; 18 the sons of Adoniʹkam, 667; 19 the sons of Bigʹvai, 2,067; 20 the sons of Aʹdin, 655; 21 the sons of Aʹter, of Hezekiʹah, 98; 22 the sons of Haʹshum, 328; 23 the sons of Beʹzai, 324; 24 the sons of Haʹriph, 112; 25 the sons of Gibʹeon, 95; 26 the men of Bethʹlehem and Netoʹphah, 188; 27 the men of Anʹathoth, 128; 28 the men of Beth-azʹmaveth, 42; 29 the men of Kirʹiath-jeʹarim, Chephiʹrah, and Beerʹoth, 743; 30 the men of Raʹmah and Geʹba, 621; 31 the men of Michʹmas, 122; 32 the men of Bethʹel and Aʹi, 123; 33 the men of the other Neʹbo, 52; 34 the sons of the other Eʹlam, 1,254; 35 the sons of Haʹrim, 320; 36 the sons of Jerʹicho, 345; 37 the sons of Lod, Haʹdid, and Oʹno, 721; 38 the sons of Senaʹah, 3,930.

39 The priests: the sons of Jedaʹiah of the house of Jeshʹua, 973; 40 the sons of Imʹmer, 1,052; 41 the sons of Pashʹhur, 1,247; 42 the sons of Haʹrim, 1,017.

43 The Levites: the sons of Jeshʹua, of Kadʹmiel, of the sons of Hoʹdevah, 74. 44 The singers: the sons of Aʹsaph, 148. 45 The gatekeepers: the sons of Shalʹlum, the sons of Aʹter, the sons of Talʹmon, the sons of Akʹkub, the sons of Hatiʹta, the sons of Shoʹbai, 138.

46 The temple servants: the sons of Ziʹha, the sons of Hasuʹpha, the sons of Tabbaʹoth, 47 the sons of Keʹros, the sons of Siʹa, the sons of Paʹdon, 48 the sons of Lebaʹnah, the sons of Hagʹabah, the sons of Salʹmai, 49 the sons of Haʹnan, the sons of Gidʹdel, the sons of Gaʹhar, 50 the sons of Reaʹiah, the sons of Reʹzin, the sons of Nekoʹda, 51 the sons of Gazʹzam, the sons of Uzʹza, the sons of Paseʹah, 52 the sons of Beʹsai, the sons of Meuʹnim, the sons of Nephushʹesim, 53 the sons of Bakʹbuk, the sons of Hakuʹpha, the sons of Harʹhur, 54 the sons of Bazʹlith, the sons of Mehiʹda, the sons of Harʹsha, 55 the sons of Barʹkos, the sons of Sisʹera, the sons of Teʹmah, 56 the sons of Neziʹah, the sons of Hatiʹpha.

57 The sons of the servants of Solʹomon: the sons of Soʹtai, the sons of Sopheʹreth, the sons of Periʹda, 58 the sons of Jaʹala, the sons of Darʹkon, the sons of Gidʹdel, 59 the sons of Shephatiʹah, the sons of Hatʹtil, the sons of Poʹchereth-hazzebaʹim, the sons of Aʹmon. 60 All the temple servants and the sons of the servants of Solʹomon were 392.

61 And these went up from Tel-meʹlah, Tel-harʹsha, Cheʹrub, Adʹdon, and Imʹmer, but they were unable to verify their paternal house and their origin, as to whether they were Israelites: 62 the sons of Delaʹiah, the sons of Tobiʹah, the sons of Nekoʹda, 642. 63 And of the priests: the sons of Habaiʹah, the sons of Hakʹkoz, the sons of Barzilʹlai, who took a wife from the daughters of Barzilʹlai the Gilʹeadite and was called by their name. 64 These looked for their records to establish their genealogy, but they could not be found, so they were disqualified from the priesthood. 65 The governor told them that they should not eat from the most holy things until there was a priest who could consult the Uʹrim and Thumʹmim.

66 The total number of the entire congregation was 42,360, 67 apart from their male and female slaves, who were 7,337; they also had 245 male and female singers. 68 Their horses were 736, their mules 245, 69 their camels 435, their donkeys 6,720.

70 Some of the heads of the paternal houses contributed to the work. The governor gave to the treasury 1,000 gold drachmas, 50 bowls, and 530 priests’ robes. 71 And some of the heads of the paternal houses gave to the project treasury 20,000 gold drachmas and 2,200 silver miʹnas. 72 And the rest of the people gave 20,000 gold drachmas, 2,000 silver miʹnas, and 67 priests’ robes.

73 And the priests, the Levites, the gatekeepers, the singers, some of the people, the temple servants, and all the rest of Israel settled in their cities. When the seventh month arrived, the Israelites had settled in their cities.

**Chapter 8**

1 All the people then gathered with one accord at the public square in front of the Water Gate, and they told Ezʹra the copyist to bring the book of the Law of Moses, which Jehovah had commanded Israel. 2 So Ezʹra the priest brought the Law before the congregation of men, women, and all who could listen with understanding, on the first day of the seventh month. 3 And he read aloud from it before the public square in front of the Water Gate, from daybreak until midday, to the men, the women, and all who could understand; and the people listened attentively to the book of the Law. 4 And Ezʹra the copyist was standing on a wooden podium made for the occasion; and standing alongside him on his right were Mattithiʹah, Sheʹma, Anaiʹah, Uriʹah, Hilkiʹah, and Maaseiʹah; and on his left were Pedaiʹah, Mishʹael, Malchiʹjah, Haʹshum, Hash-badʹdanah, Zechariʹah, and Meshulʹlam.

5 Ezʹra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was above all the people. As he opened it, all the people stood up. 6 Then Ezʹra praised Jehovah the true God, the great One, at which all the people answered, “Amen! Amen!” and lifted up their hands. They then bowed low and prostrated themselves to Jehovah with their faces to the ground. 7 And Jeshʹua, Baʹni, Sherebiʹah, Jaʹmin, Akʹkub, Shabʹbethai, Hodiʹah, Maaseiʹah, Keliʹta, Azariʹah, Joʹzabad, Haʹnan, and Pelaʹiah, who were Levites, were explaining the Law to the people, while the people remained standing. 8 And they continued reading aloud from the book, from the Law of the true God, clearly explaining it and putting meaning into it; so they helped the people to understand what was being read.

9 And Nehemiʹah, who was then the governor, Ezʹra the priest and copyist, and the Levites who were instructing the people said to all the people: “This day is holy to Jehovah your God. Do not mourn or weep.” For all the people were weeping as they heard the words of the Law. 10 He said to them: “Go, eat the choice things and drink what is sweet, and send portions of food to those who have nothing prepared; for this day is holy to our Lord, and do not feel sad, for the joy of Jehovah is your stronghold.” 11 And the Levites were calming all the people, saying: “Be quiet! for this day is holy, and do not feel sad.” 12 So all the people went away to eat and to drink and to send out portions of food and to carry on a great rejoicing, for they understood the words that had been made known to them.

13 And on the second day, the heads of the paternal houses of all the people, the priests, and the Levites gathered around Ezʹra the copyist to gain further insight into the words of the Law. 14 Then they found written in the Law that Jehovah had commanded through Moses that the Israelites should dwell in booths during the festival in the seventh month, 15 and that they should make proclamation and announce throughout all their cities and throughout Jerusalem, saying: “Go out to the mountainous region and bring in leafy branches from olive trees, pine trees, myrtle and palm trees, and the leafy branches of other trees to make booths, according to what is written.”

16 So the people went out and brought them in to make booths for themselves, each one on his roof, as well as in their courtyards, in the courtyards of the house of the true God, in the public square of the Water Gate, and in the public square of the Gate of Eʹphraim. 17 Thus all those of the congregation who had come back from the captivity made booths and were dwelling in the booths, for the Israelites had not done it this way from the days of Joshua the son of Nun until that day, so that there was very great rejoicing. 18 And day by day there was a reading from the book of the Law of the true God, from the first day until the last day. And they held the festival for seven days, and there was a solemn assembly on the eighth day, as was required.

**Chapter 9**

1 On the 24th day of this month the Israelites assembled; they were fasting with sackcloth and dust on themselves. 2 Those of Israelite descent then separated themselves from all the foreigners, and they stood and confessed their own sins and the errors of their fathers. 3 Then they stood up at their place and read aloud from the book of the Law of Jehovah their God for a fourth of the day; and for another fourth of it they were confessing and bowing down to Jehovah their God.

4 Jeshʹua, Baʹni, Kadʹmiel, Shebaniʹah, Bunʹni, Sherebiʹah, Baʹni, and Chenaʹni stood on the raised platform of the Levites, and they cried out with a loud voice to Jehovah their God. 5 And the Levites Jeshʹua, Kadʹmiel, Baʹni, Hashabneiʹah, Sherebiʹah, Hodiʹah, Shebaniʹah, and Pethahiʹah said: “Stand up and praise Jehovah your God throughout all eternity. And let them praise your glorious name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise.

6 “You alone are Jehovah; you made the heavens, yes, the heaven of the heavens and all their army, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. And you preserve all of them alive, and the army of the heavens are bowing down to you. 7 You are Jehovah the true God, who chose Aʹbram and brought him out of Ur of the Chaldeʹans and gave him the name Abraham. 8 You found his heart faithful before you, so you made a covenant with him to give him the land of the Caʹnaanites, the Hitʹtites, the Amʹorites, the Perʹizzites, the Jebʹusites, and the Girʹgashites, to give it to his offspring; and you kept your promises, because you are righteous.

9 “So you saw the affliction of our forefathers in Egypt, and you heard their outcry at the Red Sea. 10 Then you performed signs and miracles against Pharʹaoh and all his servants and all the people of his land, for you knew that they acted presumptuously against them. You made a name for yourself that remains to this day. 11 And you split the sea before them, so that they crossed through the sea on the dry land, and you hurled their pursuers into the depths like a stone thrown into the turbulent waters. 12 You led them by day with a pillar of cloud, and by night with a pillar of fire, to light up for them the way they should go. 13 And you came down on Mount Siʹnai and spoke with them from heaven and gave them righteous judgments, laws of truth, good regulations and commandments. 14 You made known to them your holy Sabbath, and you gave them commandments, regulations, and a law through your servant Moses. 15 You gave them bread from heaven when they were hungry, and you brought water out of the crag when they were thirsty, and you told them to enter and take possession of the land that you had sworn to give to them.

16 “But they, our forefathers, acted presumptuously and became stubborn, and they would not listen to your commandments. 17 They refused to listen, and they did not remember your extraordinary acts that you performed among them, but they became stubborn and appointed a head to return to their slavery in Egypt. But you are a God ready to forgive, compassionate and merciful, slow to anger and abundant in loyal love, and you did not abandon them. 18 Even when they made for themselves a metal statue of a calf and were saying, ‘This is your God who led you up out of Egypt,’ and they committed great acts of disrespect, 19 even then you, in your great mercy, did not abandon them in the wilderness. The pillar of cloud did not depart from over them by day to lead them in the way, nor the pillar of fire by night to light up for them the way they should go. 20 And you gave your good spirit to give them insight, and you did not hold back your manna from their mouth, and you gave them water when they were thirsty. 21 For 40 years you provided them with food in the wilderness. They lacked nothing. Their garments did not wear out, and their feet did not become swollen.

22 “You gave them kingdoms and peoples, apportioning them piece by piece, so that they took possession of the land of Siʹhon, that is, the land of the king of Heshʹbon, as well as the land of Og the king of Baʹshan. 23 And you made their sons as numerous as the stars of the heavens. Then you brought them into the land that you had promised their forefathers that they should enter and possess. 24 So their sons went in and took possession of the land, and you subdued before them the Caʹnaanites, who were the inhabitants of the land, and you gave them into their hand, both their kings and the peoples of the land, to do with them as they pleased. 25 And they captured fortified cities and a fertile land, and they took possession of houses full of all sorts of good things, cisterns already dug, vineyards, olive groves, and fruit trees in abundance. So they ate and grew satisfied and fat, and they basked in your great goodness.

26 “However, they became disobedient and rebelled against you and turned their back on your Law. They killed your prophets who warned them so as to bring them back to you, and they committed acts of great disrespect. 27 For this you gave them into the hand of their adversaries, who kept causing them distress. But they would cry out to you in the time of their distress, and you would hear from the heavens; and because of your great mercy, you would give them saviors to rescue them out of the hand of their adversaries.

28 “But as soon as they had relief, they would again do what is bad before you, and you would abandon them to the hand of their enemies, who would dominate them. Then they would return and call to you for help, and you would hear from the heavens and rescue them time and again because of your great mercy. 29 Although you would warn them so as to bring them back to your Law, they behaved presumptuously and refused to listen to your commandments; and they sinned against your regulations, by which a man will live if he observes them. But they stubbornly turned their back and stiffened their neck, and they refused to listen. 30 You extended patience to them for many years and kept warning them by your spirit through your prophets, but they refused to listen. Finally you gave them into the hand of the peoples of the lands. 31 And in your great mercy, you did not exterminate them or abandon them, for you are a compassionate and merciful God.

32 “And now, O our God, the God great, mighty, and awe-inspiring, who has kept his covenant and shown loyal love, do not treat lightly all the hardship that has found us, our kings, our princes, our priests, our prophets, our forefathers, and all your people from the days of the kings of Assyrʹia down to this day. 33 You have been righteous in all that has come upon us, for you have acted faithfully; but we are the ones who have acted wickedly. 34 As for our kings, our princes, our priests, and our forefathers, they have not observed your Law nor paid attention to your commandments or to your reminders by which you warned them. 35 Even when they were in their kingdom and enjoying the abundant goodness that you gave them and they were in the broad and fertile land that you bestowed on them, they did not serve you and did not turn away from their bad practices. 36 So here we are today, slaves—yes, slaves in the land that you gave to our forefathers to eat its fruitage and its good things. 37 Its abundant produce is for the kings whom you have put over us because of our sins. They rule over our bodies and over our livestock as they see fit, and we are in great distress.

38 “So in view of all this, we are making a binding agreement in writing, and it is attested by the seal of our princes, our Levites, and our priests.”

**Chapter 10**

1 Those who attested it by putting their seal to it were:

Nehemiʹah the governor, the son of Hacaliʹah,  
And Zedekiʹah, 2 Seraiʹah, Azariʹah, Jeremiah, 3 Pashʹhur, Amariʹah, Malchiʹjah, 4 Hatʹtush, Shebaniʹah, Malʹluch, 5 Haʹrim, Merʹemoth, Obadiʹah, 6 Daniel, Ginʹnethon, Barʹuch, 7 Meshulʹlam, Abiʹjah, Mijʹamin, 8 Maaziʹah, Bilʹgai, and Shemaiʹah; these are the priests.

9 Also the Levites: Jeshʹua the son of Azaniʹah, Binʹnui of the sons of Henʹadad, Kadʹmiel, 10 and their brothers Shebaniʹah, Hodiʹah, Keliʹta, Pelaʹiah, Haʹnan, 11 Miʹca, Reʹhob, Hashabiʹah, 12 Zacʹcur, Sherebiʹah, Shebaniʹah, 13 Hodiʹah, Baʹni, and Beniʹnu.

14 The heads of the people: Paʹrosh, Paʹhath-moʹab, Eʹlam, Zatʹtu, Baʹni, 15 Bunʹni, Azʹgad, Beʹbai, 16 Adoniʹjah, Bigʹvai, Aʹdin, 17 Aʹter, Hezekiʹah, Azʹzur, 18 Hodiʹah, Haʹshum, Beʹzai, 19 Haʹriph, Anʹathoth, Neʹbai, 20 Magʹpiash, Meshulʹlam, Heʹzir, 21 Meshezʹabel, Zaʹdok, Jadʹdua, 22 Pelatiʹah, Haʹnan, Anaiʹah, 23 Hosheʹa, Hananiʹah, Hasʹshub, 24 Halloʹhesh, Pilʹha, Shoʹbek, 25 Reʹhum, Hashabʹnah, Maaseiʹah, 26 Ahiʹjah, Haʹnan, Aʹnan, 27 Malʹluch, Haʹrim, and Baʹanah.

28 The rest of the people—the priests, the Levites, the gatekeepers, the singers, the temple servants, and everyone who separated himself from the peoples of the lands to follow the Law of the true God, along with their wives, their sons, and their daughters, all those with knowledge and understanding— 29 joined their brothers, their prominent men, and bound themselves with a curse and an oath, to walk in the Law of the true God, which had been given through Moses the servant of the true God, and to observe carefully all the commandments of Jehovah our Lord, his judgments, and his regulations. 30 We will not give our daughters to the peoples of the land, and we will not take their daughters for our sons.

31 If the peoples of the land bring in their wares and every kind of grain to sell on the Sabbath day, we will not buy anything from them on the Sabbath or on a holy day. We will also forgo the produce of the seventh year and every outstanding debt.

32 Also, we imposed the obligation on ourselves for each of us to give a third of a shekel yearly for the service of the house of our God, 33 for the layer bread, the regular grain offering, the regular burnt offering of the Sabbaths and the new moons, and for the appointed feasts, for the holy things, for the sin offerings to make atonement for Israel, and for all the work of the house of our God.

34 Also, we cast lots concerning the supply of the wood that the priests, the Levites, and the people should bring to the house of our God by our paternal houses, at the appointed times, year by year, to burn on the altar of Jehovah our God, according to what is written in the Law. 35 We will also bring the first ripe fruits of our land and the first ripe fruits of every sort of fruit tree, year by year, to the house of Jehovah, 36 as well as the firstborn of our sons and of our livestock—according to what is written in the Law—and the firstborn of our herds and of our flocks. We will bring them to the house of our God, to the priests who minister at the house of our God. 37 Also, the firstfruits of our coarse meal, our contributions, the fruitage of every sort of tree, new wine, and oil, we should bring to the priests to the storerooms of the house of our God, along with the tenth from our land to the Levites, for the Levites are the ones who collect the tenths in all our agricultural cities.

38 And the priest, the son of Aaron, must be with the Levites when the Levites collect the tenth; and the Levites should offer up a tenth of the tenth to the house of our God, to the rooms of the storehouse. 39 For it is to the storerooms that the Israelites and the sons of the Levites should bring the contribution of the grain, the new wine, and the oil, and that is where the utensils of the sanctuary are, as well as the priests who minister, the gatekeepers, and the singers. We will not neglect the house of our God.

**Chapter 11**

1 Now the princes of the people were living in Jerusalem; but the rest of the people cast lots to bring one out of every ten to live in Jerusalem, the holy city, while the other nine stayed in the other cities. 2 Moreover, the people blessed all the men who volunteered to live in Jerusalem.

3 And these are the heads of the province who lived in Jerusalem. (The rest of Israel, the priests, the Levites, the temple servants, and the sons of the servants of Solʹomon, lived in the other cities of Judah, each one in his own possession in his city.

4 Also, there lived in Jerusalem some of the people of Judah and of Benjamin.) Of the people of Judah were Athaiʹah son of Uzziʹah son of Zechariʹah son of Amariʹah son of Shephatiʹah son of Mahalʹalel of the sons of Peʹrez, 5 and Maaseiʹah son of Barʹuch son of Colhoʹzeh son of Hazaiʹah son of Adaiʹah son of Joiʹarib son of Zechariʹah son of the Shelaʹnite. 6 All the sons of Peʹrez who were dwelling in Jerusalem were 468 capable men.

7 And these were the people of Benjamin: Salʹlu son of Meshulʹlam son of Joʹed son of Pedaiʹah son of Kolaiʹah son of Maaseiʹah son of Ithʹiel son of Jeshaʹiah, 8 and after him Gabbaʹi and Sallaʹi, 928; 9 and Joel the son of Zichʹri was their overseer, and Judah the son of Hassenuʹah was second in charge of the city.

10 Of the priests: Jedaʹiah son of Joiʹarib, Jaʹchin, 11 Seraiʹah son of Hilkiʹah son of Meshulʹlam son of Zaʹdok son of Meraʹioth son of Ahiʹtub, a leader of the house of the true God, 12 and their brothers who did the work of the house, 822; and Adaiʹah son of Jeroʹham son of Pelaliʹah son of Amʹzi son of Zechariʹah son of Pashʹhur son of Malchiʹjah, 13 and his brothers, heads of paternal houses, 242; and Amashʹsai son of Azʹarel son of Ahʹzai son of Meshilʹlemoth son of Imʹmer, 14 and their brothers who were mighty, courageous men, 128; and their overseer was Zabʹdiel, a member of a prominent family.

15 And of the Levites: Shemaiʹah son of Hasʹshub son of Azriʹkam son of Hashabiʹah son of Bunʹni, 16 and Shabʹbethai and Joʹzabad, of the heads of the Levites, who were in charge of the outside business of the house of the true God; 17 and Mattaniʹah, son of Miʹcah son of Zabʹdi son of Aʹsaph, the conductor of the singing, who led the praises during prayer, and Bakbukiʹah, the second of his brothers, and Abʹda son of Shammuʹa son of Gaʹlal son of Jeduʹthun. 18 All the Levites in the holy city were 284.

19 And the gatekeepers were Akʹkub, Talʹmon, and their brothers who kept guard in the gates, 172.

20 The rest of Israel, the priests, and the Levites were in all the other cities of Judah, each in his own inherited property. 21 The temple servants were living in Oʹphel, and Ziʹha and Gishʹpa were in charge of the temple servants.

22 The overseer of the Levites in Jerusalem was Uzʹzi son of Baʹni son of Hashabiʹah son of Mattaniʹah son of Miʹca, of the sons of Aʹsaph, the singers; he was in charge of the work of the house of the true God. 23 For there was a royal order in their behalf, and there was a fixed provision for the singers as each day required. 24 And Pethahiʹah son of Meshezʹabel of the sons of Zeʹrah son of Judah was the king’s adviser for every matter of the people.

25 Regarding the settlements with their fields, some of the people of Judah lived in Kirʹiath-arʹba and its dependent towns, in Diʹbon and its dependent towns, in Jekabʹzeel and its settlements, 26 in Jeshʹua, in Molaʹdah, in Beth-pelʹet, 27 in Haʹzar-shuʹal, in Beʹer-sheʹba and its dependent towns, 28 in Zikʹlag, in Mecoʹnah and its dependent towns, 29 in En-rimʹmon, in Zoʹrah, and in Jarʹmuth, 30 in Zanoʹah, in Adulʹlam and their settlements, in Laʹchish and its fields, and in Azeʹkah and its dependent towns. They settled from Beʹer-sheʹba clear to the Valley of Hinʹnom.

31 And the people of Benjamin were in Geʹba, Michʹmash, Aiʹja, Bethʹel and its dependent towns, 32 Anʹathoth, Nob, Ananiʹah, 33 Haʹzor, Raʹmah, Gitʹtaim, 34 Haʹdid, Zeboʹim, Nebalʹlat, 35 Lod, and Oʹno, the valley of the craftsmen. 36 And some divisions of the Levites from Judah were assigned to Benjamin.

**Chapter 12**

1 These were the priests and the Levites who went up with Zerubʹbabel the son of Shealʹtiel, and Jeshʹua: Seraiʹah, Jeremiah, Ezʹra, 2 Amariʹah, Malʹluch, Hatʹtush, 3 Shecaniʹah, Reʹhum, Merʹemoth, 4 Idʹdo, Ginʹnethoi, Abiʹjah, 5 Mijʹamin, Maadiʹah, Bilʹgah, 6 Shemaiʹah, Joiʹarib, Jedaʹiah, 7 Salʹlu, Aʹmok, Hilkiʹah, and Jedaʹiah. These were the heads of the priests and their brothers in the days of Jeshʹua.

8 The Levites were Jeshʹua, Binʹnui, Kadʹmiel, Sherebiʹah, Judah, and Mattaniʹah, who led the songs of thanksgiving along with his brothers. 9 And Bakbukiʹah and Unʹni their brothers stood opposite them for guard duties. 10 Jeshʹua became father to Joiʹakim, and Joiʹakim became father to Eliʹashib, and Eliʹashib to Joiʹada. 11 And Joiʹada became father to Jonʹathan, and Jonʹathan became father to Jadʹdua.

12 In the days of Joiʹakim, these were the priests, the heads of the paternal houses: for Seraiʹah, Meraiʹah; for Jeremiah, Hananiʹah; 13 for Ezʹra, Meshulʹlam; for Amariʹah, Jehohaʹnan; 14 for Malʹluchi, Jonʹathan; for Shebaniʹah, Joseph; 15 for Haʹrim, Adʹna; for Meraʹioth, Helʹkai; 16 for Idʹdo, Zechariʹah; for Ginʹnethon, Meshulʹlam; 17 for Abiʹjah, Zichʹri; for Miniʹamin, ... ; for Moadiʹah, Pilʹtai; 18 for Bilʹgah, Shammuʹa; for Shemaiʹah, Jehonʹathan; 19 for Joiʹarib, Matteʹnai; for Jedaʹiah, Uzʹzi; 20 for Sallaʹi, Kalʹlai; for Aʹmok, Eʹber; 21 for Hilkiʹah, Hashabiʹah; for Jedaʹiah, Nethanʹel.

22 The heads of the paternal houses of the Levites in the days of Eliʹashib, Joiʹada, Johaʹnan, and Jadʹdua were recorded, as were the priests, down to the kingship of Dariʹus the Persian.

23 The Levites who were heads of the paternal houses were recorded in the book of the history of the times, down to the days of Johaʹnan the son of Eliʹashib. 24 The heads of the Levites were Hashabiʹah, Sherebiʹah, and Jeshʹua the son of Kadʹmiel, and their brothers stood opposite them to offer praise and give thanks according to the instructions of David the man of the true God, guard group corresponding to guard group. 25 Mattaniʹah, Bakbukiʹah, Obadiʹah, Meshulʹlam, Talʹmon, and Akʹkub were standing guard as gatekeepers, guarding the storerooms by the gates. 26 These served in the days of Joiʹakim the son of Jeshʹua the son of Joʹzadak and in the days of Nehemiʹah the governor and Ezʹra the priest and copyist.

27 At the inauguration of the walls of Jerusalem, they sought the Levites and brought them to Jerusalem from all the places they lived to celebrate the inauguration with rejoicing, with songs of thanksgiving, and with cymbals, stringed instruments, and harps. 28 And the sons of the singers gathered together from the district, from all around Jerusalem, from the settlements of the Netophʹathites, 29 from Beth-gilʹgal, and from the fields of Geʹba and Azʹmaveth, for the singers had built settlements for themselves all around Jerusalem. 30 And the priests and the Levites purified themselves, and they purified the people, the gates, and the wall.

31 Then I brought the princes of Judah up on top of the wall. Further, I appointed two large thanksgiving choirs and processions, and the one walked to the right on the wall toward the Gate of the Ash Heaps. 32 Hoshaiʹah and half of the princes of Judah walked behind them, 33 along with Azariʹah, Ezʹra, Meshulʹlam, 34 Judah, Benjamin, Shemaiʹah, and Jeremiah. 35 With them were some of the sons of the priests with the trumpets: Zechariʹah son of Jonʹathan son of Shemaiʹah son of Mattaniʹah son of Micaiʹah son of Zacʹcur son of Aʹsaph, 36 and his brothers Shemaiʹah, Azʹarel, Milʹalai, Gilʹalai, Maʹai, Nethanʹel, Judah, and Hanaʹni, with the musical instruments of David the man of the true God; and Ezʹra the copyist went before them. 37 At the Fountain Gate they went straight ahead up the Stairway of the City of David by the ascent of the wall above the House of David and on to the Water Gate to the east.

38 The other thanksgiving choir walked in the opposite direction, and I followed it with half of the people, on the wall up over the Tower of the Ovens and on to the Broad Wall 39 and up over the Gate of Eʹphraim and on to the Gate of the Old City and on to the Fish Gate, the Tower of Hananʹel, the Tower of Meʹah, and on to the Sheep Gate; and they came to a halt at the Gate of the Guard.

40 At length the two thanksgiving choirs stood before the house of the true God; so did I and half of the deputy rulers with me, 41 and the priests Eliʹakim, Maaseiʹah, Miniʹamin, Micaiʹah, Elioeʹnai, Zechariʹah, and Hananiʹah, with the trumpets, 42 and Maaseiʹah, Shemaiʹah, Eleaʹzar, Uzʹzi, Jehohaʹnan, Malchiʹjah, Eʹlam, and Eʹzer. And the singers sang loudly under the oversight of Izrahiʹah.

43 On that day they offered great sacrifices and rejoiced, for the true God made them rejoice with great joy. The women and the children also rejoiced, so that the rejoicing of Jerusalem could be heard far away.

44 On that day men were appointed over the storehouses for the contributions, the firstfruits, and the tenths. Into them they were to gather from the fields of the cities the portions required by the Law for the priests and the Levites, for there was rejoicing in Judah because of the priests and the Levites who were ministering. 45 And they began taking care of the duties of their God and the obligation of the purification, as did the singers and the gatekeepers, according to the instructions of David and his son Solʹomon. 46 For long ago in the days of David and Aʹsaph, there were directors for the singers and for the songs of praise and thanksgiving to God. 47 And during the days of Zerubʹbabel and during the days of Nehemiʹah, all Israel gave portions to the singers and the gatekeepers, according to the daily need. They also set aside the portion for the Levites, and the Levites set aside the portion for the descendants of Aaron.

**Chapter 13**

1 On that day the book of Moses was read in the hearing of the people, and it was found written that no Amʹmonite or Moʹabite should ever enter the congregation of the true God, 2 for they had not met the Israelites with bread and water, but instead they had hired Baʹlaam against them to curse them. However, our God had changed the curse into a blessing. 3 As soon as they heard the Law, they began to separate from Israel all those of foreign descent.

4 Now before this, the priest in charge of the storerooms of the house of our God was Eliʹashib, a relative of Tobiʹah. 5 He had made available for him a large storeroom, where previously they used to put the grain offering, the frankincense, and the utensils and the tenth of the grain, the new wine, and the oil, to which the Levites, the singers, and the gatekeepers are entitled, along with the contribution for the priests.

6 And during all this time I was not in Jerusalem, for I went to the king in the 32nd year of King Artaxerxʹes of Babylon; and sometime later I asked the king for a leave of absence. 7 Then I came to Jerusalem and noticed the terrible thing that Eliʹashib had done in behalf of Tobiʹah, making a storeroom available for him in the courtyard of the house of the true God. 8 This was very displeasing to me, so I threw all of Tobiʹah’s household furniture out of the storeroom. 9 After that I gave orders, and they cleansed the storerooms; and I put back there the utensils of the house of the true God, with the grain offering and the frankincense.

10 I also found out that the portions of the Levites had not been given them, so that the Levites and the singers who did the work had gone off, each to his own field. 11 So I reprimanded the deputy rulers and said: “Why has the house of the true God been neglected?” Then I gathered them together and assigned them back to their posts. 12 And all Judah brought in the tenth of the grain, the new wine, and the oil to the storerooms. 13 Then I put Shelemiʹah the priest, Zaʹdok the copyist, and Pedaiʹah of the Levites in charge of the storerooms, and Haʹnan the son of Zacʹcur the son of Mattaniʹah was their assistant, for these men were considered reliable. It was their responsibility to make the distribution to their brothers.

14 Do remember me, O my God, concerning this, and do not wipe out my acts of loyal love that I have done for the house of my God and its services.

15 In those days I saw people in Judah treading winepresses on the Sabbath, bringing in heaps of grain and loading them on donkeys, and bringing wine, grapes, figs, and every sort of load into Jerusalem on the Sabbath day. So I warned them against selling provisions on that day. 16 And the Tyrʹians who lived in the city were bringing in fish and all kinds of merchandise, selling them to the people of Judah and in Jerusalem on the Sabbath. 17 So I reprimanded the nobles of Judah and said to them: “What is this evil thing that you are doing, even profaning the Sabbath day? 18 Was not this what your forefathers did, so that our God brought all this disaster on us and also on this city? Now you are adding to the burning anger against Israel by profaning the Sabbath.”

19 So as soon as the shadows began to fall on the gates of Jerusalem before the Sabbath, I ordered that the doors be closed. I also said that they should not open them until after the Sabbath, and I stationed some of my own attendants at the gates so that no loads would be brought in on the Sabbath day. 20 So the traders and the sellers of all kinds of merchandise spent the night outside Jerusalem once or twice. 21 Then I warned them and said to them: “Why are you spending the night in front of the wall? If you do it again, I will use force against you.” From that time on they did not come on the Sabbath.

22 And I told the Levites that they should regularly purify themselves and come and guard the gates to keep the Sabbath day holy. This, also, do remember to my credit, O my God, and show me pity according to your abundant loyal love.

23 In those days I also saw Jews who had married Ashʹdodite, Amʹmonite, and Moʹabite women. 24 Half of their sons were speaking Ashʹdodite and half spoke the language of the different peoples, but none of them knew how to speak the language of the Jews. 25 So I reprimanded them and called down a curse on them and struck some of the men and pulled out their hair and made them swear by God: “You should not give your daughters to their sons, and you should not accept any of their daughters for your sons or yourselves. 26 Was it not because of these that King Solʹomon of Israel sinned? Among the many nations there was no king like him; and he was loved by his God, so that God made him king over all Israel. But the foreign wives caused even him to sin. 27 Is it not something unheard of for you to commit this great evil in acting unfaithfully against our God by marrying foreign women?”

28 One of the sons of Joiʹada the son of Eliʹashib the high priest had become a son-in-law of Sanbalʹlat the Horʹonite. So I drove him away from me.

29 Do remember them, O my God, because they have defiled the priesthood and the covenant of the priesthood and the Levites.

30 And I purified them from every foreign defilement, and I assigned duties to the priests and to the Levites, each to his own service, 31 and arranged for the supply of the wood at appointed times and for the first ripe fruits.

Do remember me favorably, O my God.