

# NOON BIBLE STUDY: NEHEMIAH 11&12

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## SUMMARY

THE CITY OF JERUSALEM IS TURNING INTO A CITY AGAIN. THE WALLS ARE BUILT, THE WORSHIP OF THE LORD HAS RESUMED AND THE NATION HAS COMMITTED AGAIN TO THEIR COVENANT WITH GOD. NEXT IS THE SEEMINGLY NON-SPIRITUAL TASK OF RE-POPULATING THE CITY WITH PEOPLE AND PRIESTS AND RESUMING "NORMAL LIFE." WE'LL READ OF THE UNFAMILIAR NAMES WHO WILL MAKE JERUSALEM THEIR HOME AS WELL AS THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS FROM THE TIME OF THE RETURN UNTIL NEHEMIAH'S DAY. BUT THIS WORK IS ACTUALLY MORE SIGNIFICANT THAN WE MIGHT REALIZE - FOR IT'S NOT THE CITY ALONE THAT THE LORD CARES ABOUT, THAT IS BRICK AND MORTAR - BUT THE PEOPLE WHO MAKE UP THAT CITY.

## NEHEMIAH 11:1-2 - REFILLING JERUSALEM

THE TEXT TELLS US THAT THE LEADERS OF THE NATION HAD BEEN RESIDING IN THE CAPITAL CITY, BUT MORE PEOPLE WERE NEEDED TO FILL THE STREETS AND HOMES. THIS WILL HAPPEN THROUGH VOLUNTEERS WHO WILL MOVE TO JERUSALEM. WE'LL LEARN THEIR NAMES IN THE NEXT VERSES.

## NEHEMIAH 11:3-6 - SONS OF JUDAH WHO LIVED IN JERUSALEM

## NEHEMIAH 11:7-9 - SONS OF BENJAMIN WHO LIVED IN JERUSALEM

## NEHEMIAH 11:10-14 - PRIEST & TEMPLE WORKERS WHO LIVED IN JERUSALEM

## NEHEMIAH 11:15-18 - LEVITES WHO LIVED IN JERUSALEM

## NEHEMIAH 11:19-21 - GATEKEEPERS, TEMPLE SERVANT

V. 20 - ONE TENTH OF THE POPULATION RESETTLES IN JERUSALEM, AND THE REST REMAIN IN THEIR ANCESTRAL HOMELAND.

## NEHEMIAH 11:22-24 - ADDITIONAL OFFICIALS IN JERUSALEM

V. 22 - OVERSEER OF THE LEVITES IS NAMED UZZI WHO IS A DESCENDANT OF ASAPH, ONE OF THE PRAISE LEADERS APPOINTED BY DAVID (1 CHRONICLES 25:1)

V. 24 - REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PERSIAN EMPIRE

## NEHEMIAH 11:25-36 - OTHER POPULATED VILLAGES

(SEE MAP)



NEHEMIAH 12:1-7 - PRIESTLY ORDER AT THE RETURN

NEHEMIAH 12:8-11 - LEVITICAL ORDER AT THE RETURN

NEHEMIAH 12:12-21 - PRIESTS OF JOIAKIM'S DAY, THE NEXT GENERATION

NEHEMIAH 12:22-26 - LEVITES OF THE NEXT GENERATION

AS WE READ THESE UNFAMILIAR NAMES, WE MAY BE TEMPTED TO QUICKLY SKIP THEM TO GET TO THE "GOOD PART" OR THE "PRACTICAL APPLICATION" FOR OUR LIVES TODAY. IT WOULD SEEM THAT THERE IS NOT A LOT TO GLEAN FROM THIS SECTION (NOR THE PREVIOUS ONE, CHAPTER 11) BY WAY OF SOME INSPIRATIONAL NUGGET TO FUEL OUR SOULS TODAY. AGAIN, THESE ARE THE PARTS WE ARE TEMPTED TO IGNORE BECAUSE OF THE HARD-TO-PRONOUNCE NAMES AND UNKNOWN AND FORGOTTEN PLACES.

BUT LET'S PAUSE AND THINK ABOUT WHAT WE JUST READ.

WE READ ABOUT THE LIST OF PRIESTS THAT HAVE SERVED THE LORD STARTING FROM THE RETURN TO THE LAND WITH ZERUBBABEL (EZRA 2:1) TILL NEHEMIAH'S DAY (12:26). THAT'S OVER 100 YEARS! WE HAVEN'T READ SOME DRAMATIC STORY OF AMARIAH, MALLUCH OR HATTUSH (12:2) BUT THESE MEN WERE THE PRIESTS OF YAHWEH, SERVING HIS PEOPLE, SERVING HIM. THESE MEN WERE THE ONES PERMITTED TO ENTER THE MOST HOLY

PLACE IN THE TEMPLE ONCE A YEAR TO MAKE ATONEMENT. THESE WERE THE MEN WHO REPRESENTED GOD TO THE PEOPLE. THESE WERE THE MEN ENTRUSTED WITH THE SACRED WRITINGS AND HOLY SCRIPTURES.

AND AFTER 70 YEARS OF EXILE IN BABYLON, THEY RETURN TO THE PROMISED LAND, TO JERUSALEM ITSELF, TO RESUME THE WORSHIP OF GOD. AND THEY KEPT DOING IT THROUGH THE DAYS NEHEMIAH RECOUNTS NOW. THEY OFFERED THE SACRIFICES ON THE ALTAR THAT WAS REBUILT DURING JESHUA & ZERUBBABEL'S TIME (EZRA 3:2). THEY LED THE PASSOVER, UNLEAVENED BREAD AND TABERNACLE CELEBRATIONS (EZRA 6:19-22; 3:4; NEH. 8:14). THEY ENCOURAGED THE PEOPLE TO PRAISE AND GIVE THANKS TO THE LORD DAY BY DAY (12:24). THEIR ROLE WAS CRITICALLY IMPORTANT. AND THEIR OFFICE HAD BEEN PRESERVED BECAUSE THE LORD IS FAITHFUL!

SEE, WHAT WE'RE REALLY READING ABOUT HERE IS NOT JUST OBSCURE PEOPLE FROM AN OBSCURE TIME. WE'RE READING ABOUT THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD. WE'RE READING ABOUT GENERATIONS OF BELIEVER'S THAT WE SHOULD LONG TO HAVE A RECORD OF IN OUR OWN FAMILIES AND FELLOWSHIPS. HERE'S MY PARAPHRASED INTERPRETATION OF THIS SECTION:

WE, THE PEOPLE OF GOD HAD ALL TURNED FROM GOD. AFTER GOD TRYING TO GET US TO RETURN TO HIM TIME AND TIME AGAIN, WE EVENTUALLY FACED THE CONSEQUENCES OF OUR CHOICES AND WERE SENT AWAY FROM OUR HOMES AND EVEN MORE DEVASTATING, AWAY FROM HIS PRESENCE. FOR 70 YEARS WE EXISTED IN A FOREIGN LAND, UNKNOWN BY OUR NEIGHBORS, UNFAMILIAR WITH THE LANGUAGE AND TRADITIONS, FOOD AND SURROUNDINGS. AND YET IN SPITE OF THIS, GOD REMAINED FAITHFUL TO HIS PROMISE TO BRING US HOME AGAIN, BRING US TO HIMSELF AGAIN.

AND AT THE END OF THOSE 70 YEARS, THAT EXACTLY WHAT HE DID. GOD WORKED IN THE HEARTS OF GREAT KINGS AND THROUGH POWERFUL EMPIRES AND BROUGHT US BACK TO HIS LAND - AND NOT WITH THE GOAL OF JUST GETTING BY, BUT WITH PROVISIONS AND FAVOR TO THRIVE AGAIN - AS A PEOPLE, AS A NATION. AND SO WE RETURNED TO JERUSALEM, A PLACE ONCE FAMOUS FOR SO MANY AMAZING PEOPLE, MOMENTS AND STORIES WITH A CHANCE TO REBUILD THE CITY AND OUR LIVES.

AND GOD WAS SO GOOD - HE KEPT A LINE OF HIS CHOSEN PEOPLE, HIS PRIESTS, HIS SCRIBES, HIS LEVITES SO THAT WE COULD COME HOME AND REALLY SERVE HIM AND KNOW HIM AND WORSHIP HIM. HE DIDN'T BRING US BACK JUST TO FEND FOR AND FIGURE IT OUT OURSELVES. THERE IS A GREAT RECORD OF THESE FAITHFUL PEOPLE WHO STOOD IN THE GAP, WHO PRAYED, WHO LOVED, WHO LED. OUR GRANDFATHERS AND UNCLES. MEN WHO ARE DESCENDANTS OF THE GREAT HEROES OF OUR FAITH AND SOME WHO STARTED THEIR OWN LEGACY IN THIS GENERATION.

WE ARE PROUD OF THESE RECORDED NAMES, THE FAMILIES, THE CITIES - FOR THEY ARE A TESTIMONY TO GOD'S FAITHFULNESS TO US., GOD'S LOVE FOR US. AND SO WE WROTE THEM DOWN SO THAT THEIR MEMORY AND THIS TRUTH COULD NOT JUST BE RECORDED, BUT REMEMBERED. AND WE READ THEIR NAMES AGAIN TODAY REMEMBERING THAT GOD HAS NOT FAILED US, NOR WILL FOR OUR DAY. EACH ONE OF THEIR NAMES IS OUR REMINDER OF THAT! EVEN IN THE MOST DIFFICULT OF TIMES, GOD IS WORKING. GOD IS SUSTAINING, GOD IS PROVIDING. SOMETIMES HE'S WORKING THROUGH NAMES LIKE MOSES, DAVID AND ELIJAH...SOMETIMES HE IS AT WORK THROUGH SALLU, AMOK, & HILKIAH. AND THROUGH THEIR NAMES WE REMEMBER AND REJOICE IN HIM! PRAISE THE LORD.

SO MAYBE THERE IS PRACTICAL AND INSPIRING TRUTH IN THIS ODD SECTION AFTER ALL! AFTER LISTING THESE NAMES, NEHEMIAH WILL GIVE US A RECORD ABOUT THESE UNFAMILIAR PEOPLE AND WHAT IT LOOKED LIKE AS THEY SERVED THE LORD.

## NEHEMIAH 12:27-37 - PRAISE DURING DEDICATION OF TEMPLE WALLS

NEHEMIAH BRINGS US BACK TO WHEN THE WALLS OF JERUSALEM WERE DEDICATED AND TELLS US A LITTLE MORE DETAILED WHAT THIS TIME WAS LIKE. THERE WERE NOT ONE, BUT TWO, AND NOT CHOIRS BUT "GREAT CHOIRS" (12:31) ASSEMBLED ON THE WALL TO PRAISE AND THANK THE LORD IN SONG! TRUMPETERS AND SINGERS AND OTHERS WITH VARIOUS INSTRUMENTS.

## NEHEMIAH 12:38-43 - THE PROCESSION OF PRAISE

NOW THE CHOIRS, THE LEADERS AND THE ASSEMBLY TRAVEL FROM THE WALLS TO THE TEMPLE TO KEEP THE PRAISE SERVICE GOING STRONG! YOU HAVE TWO GROUPS OF CHOIRS AND THE PEOPLE WALKING THE WALLS AROUND THE CITY AND STOPPING AT EACH GATE FOR MORE PRAISE. SURELY THEY WOULD HAVE BEEN SINGING THE PSALMS ON THIS WONDERFUL DAY. IMAGINE THEIR VOICES SINGING THE FOLLOWING:

**PSALM 48:9-14** - WE HAVE THOUGHT ON YOUR LOVINGKINDNESS, O GOD, IN THE MIDST OF YOUR TEMPLE. 10 AS IS YOUR NAME, O GOD, SO IS YOUR PRAISE TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH; YOUR RIGHT HAND IS FULL OF RIGHTEOUSNESS. 11 LET MOUNT ZION BE GLAD, LET THE DAUGHTERS OF JUDAH REJOICE BECAUSE OF YOUR JUDGMENTS. 12 WALK ABOUT ZION AND GO AROUND HER; COUNT HER TOWERS; 13 CONSIDER HER RAMPARTS; GO THROUGH HER PALACES, THAT YOU MAY TELL IT TO THE NEXT GENERATION. 14 FOR SUCH IS GOD, OUR GOD FOREVER AND EVER; HE WILL GUIDE US UNTIL DEATH. (PS. 48:9-14 NAV)

**PSALM 122:2-7 (NLT)** - AND NOW HERE WE ARE, STANDING INSIDE YOUR GATES, O JERUSALEM. 3 JERUSALEM IS A WELL-BUILT CITY; ITS SEAMLESS WALLS CANNOT BE BREACHED. 4 ALL THE TRIBES OF ISRAEL-- THE LORD'S PEOPLE-- MAKE THEIR PILGRIMAGE HERE. THEY COME TO GIVE THANKS TO THE NAME OF THE LORD, AS THE LAW REQUIRES OF ISRAEL. 5 HERE STAND THE THRONES WHERE JUDGMENT IS GIVEN, THE THRONES OF THE DYNASTY OF DAVID. 6 PRAY FOR PEACE IN JERUSALEM. MAY ALL WHO LOVE THIS CITY PROSPER. 7 O JERUSALEM, MAY THERE BE PEACE WITHIN YOUR WALLS AND PROSPERITY IN YOUR PALACES.

**PSALM 100:1-5** - 1 SHOUT JOYFULLY TO THE LORD, ALL THE EARTH. 2 SERVE THE LORD WITH GLADNESS; COME BEFORE HIM WITH JOYFUL SINGING. 3 KNOW THAT THE LORD HIMSELF IS GOD; IT IS HE WHO HAS MADE US, AND NOT WE OURSELVES; WE ARE HIS PEOPLE AND THE SHEEP OF HIS PASTURE. 4 ENTER HIS GATES WITH THANKSGIVING AND HIS COURTS WITH PRAISE. GIVE THANKS TO HIM, BLESS HIS NAME. 5 FOR THE LORD IS GOOD; HIS LOVINGKINDNESS IS EVERLASTING AND HIS FAITHFULNESS TO ALL GENERATIONS.

NEHEMIAH 2 TOLD US ABOUT NEHEMIAH'S SECRET MIDNIGHT WALK AROUND THE BROKEN DOWN CITY AND ON THIS DAY THEY WALK AROUND THE WALLS WITH JOY.

**NEHEMIAH 12:43 (NLT)** - MANY SACRIFICES WERE OFFERED ON THAT JOYOUS DAY, FOR GOD HAD GIVEN THE PEOPLE CAUSE FOR GREAT JOY. THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN ALSO PARTICIPATED IN THE CELEBRATION, AND THE JOY OF THE PEOPLE OF JERUSALEM COULD BE HEARD FAR AWAY. (NEH. 12:43 NLT)

## NEHEMIAH 12:44-47 - SUMMARY

THE WORK OF GOD'S HOUSE RESUMES AND VARIOUS ASSIGNMENTS ARE GIVEN. IT WAS AN HONOR AND PRIVILEGE TO SERVE IN GOD'S HOUSE, AS IT IS FOR US TODAY TO SERVE GOD'S PEOPLE. NEHEMIAH RECORDS THE RETURN OF THE WORK OF SERVICE AS IN THE DAYS OF DAVID AND SOLOMON. THAT'S NO SMALL COMPARISON.

AND WITH THAT WE COMPLETE TWO CHAPTERS WHICH WE THOUGH STARTED OUT DRY AND DETAILED BUT IN THE END WERE ALIVE AND INSPIRED. WE'LL SEE WHAT AWAITS US NEXT IN OUR FINAL CHAPTER.