

Nehemiah

The words of Nehemi'ah the son of Hacali'ah. Now it happened in the month of Chislev, in the twentieth year, as I was in Susa the capital, that Hana'ni, one of my brethren, came with certain men out of Judah; and I asked them concerning the Jews that survived, who had escaped exile, and concerning

5 Jerusalem. And they said to me, "The survivors there in the province who escaped exile are in great trouble and shame; the wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates are destroyed by fire." When I heard these words I sat down and wept, and mourned for days; and I continued fasting and praying before the God of heaven. And I said, "O LORD God of heaven, the great

10 and terrible God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments; let thy ear be attentive, and thy eyes open, to hear the prayer of thy servant which I now pray before thee day and night for the people of Israel thy servants, confessing the sins of the people of Israel, which we have sinned against thee. Yea, I and my father's house

15 have sinned. We have acted very corruptly against thee, and have not kept the commandments, the statutes, and the ordinances which thou didst command thy servant Moses. Remember the word which thou didst command thy servant Moses, saying, 'If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the peoples; but if you return to me and keep my commandments and do

20 them, though your dispersed be under the farthest skies, I will gather them

thence and bring them to the place which I have chosen, to make my name dwell there.' They are thy servants and thy people, whom thou hast redeemed by thy great power and by thy strong hand. O Lord, let thy ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servant, and to the prayer of thy servants who delight to
5 fear thy name; and give success to thy servant today, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man." Now I was cupbearer to the king. In the month of Nisan, in the twentieth year of King Ar-ta-xerx'es, when wine was before him, I took up the wine and gave it to the king. Now I had not been sad in his presence. And the king said to me, "Why is your face sad, seeing you
10 are not sick? This is nothing else but sadness of the heart." Then I was very much afraid. I said to the king, "Let the king live for ever! Why should not my face be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' sepulchres, lies waste, and its gates have been destroyed by fire?" Then the king said to me, "For what do you make request?" So I prayed to the God of heaven. And I
15 said to the king, "If it pleases the king, and if your servant has found favor in your sight, that you send me to Judah, to the city of my fathers' sepulchres, that I may rebuild it." And the king said to me (the queen sitting beside him), "How long will you be gone, and when will you return?" So it pleased the king to send me; and I set him a time. And I said to the king,
20 "If it pleases the king, let letters be given me to the governors of the

province Beyond the River, that they may let me pass through until I come to Judah; and a letter to Asaph, the keeper of the king's forest, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the fortress of the temple, and for the wall of the city, and for the house which I shall occupy." And

5 the king granted me what I asked, for the good hand of my God was upon me. Then I came to the governors of the province Beyond the River, and gave them the king's letters. Now the king had sent with me officers of the army and horsemen. But when Sanbal'lat the Hor'onite and Tobi'ah the servant, the Ammonite, heard this, it displeased them greatly that some one

10 had come to seek the welfare of the children of Israel. So I came to Jerusalem and was there three days. Then I arose in the night, I and a few men with me; and I told no one what my God had put into my heart to do for Jerusalem. There was no beast with me but the beast on which I rode. I went out by night by the Valley Gate to the Jackal's Well and to the Dung

15 Gate, and I inspected the walls of Jerusalem which were broken down and its gates which had been destroyed by fire. Then I went on to the Fountain Gate and to the King's Pool; but there was no place for the beast that was under me to pass. Then I went up in the night by the valley and inspected the wall; and I turned back and entered by the Valley Gate, and so returned.

20 And the officials did not know where I had gone or what I was doing; and

I had not yet told the Jews, the priests, the nobles, the officials, and the rest that were to do the work. Then I said to them, "You see the trouble we are in, how Jerusalem lies in ruins with its gates burned. Come, let us build the wall of Jerusalem, that we may no longer suffer disgrace." And I told them
5 of the hand of my God which had been upon me for good, and also of the words which the king had spoken to me. And they said, "Let us rise up and build." So they strengthened their hands for the good work. But when Sanbal'lat the Hor'onite and Tobi'ah the servant, the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arab heard of it, they derided us and despised us and said, "What is this
10 thing that you are doing? Are you rebelling against the king?" Then I replied to them, "The God of heaven will make us prosper, and we his servants will arise and build; but you have no portion or right or memorial in Jerusalem." Then Eli'ashib the high priest rose up with his brethren the priests and they built the Sheep Gate. They consecrated it and set its doors; they consecrated
15 it as far as the Tower of the Hundred, as far as the Tower of Hanan'el. And next to him the men of Jericho built. And next to them Zaccur the son of Imri built. And the sons of Hassena'ah built the Fish Gate; they laid its beams and set its doors, its bolts, and its bars. And next to them Mer'emoth the son of Uri'ah, son of Hakkoz repaired. And next to them Meshul'lam the
20 son of Berechi'ah, son of Meshez'abel repaired. And next to them Zadok the

son of Ba'ana repaired. And next to them the Teko'ites repaired; but their nobles did not put their necks to the work of their Lord. And Joi'ada the son of Pase'ah and Meshul'lam the son of Besodei'ah repaired the Old Gate; they laid its beams and set its doors, its bolts, and its bars. And next to them

5 repaired Melati'ah the Gib'eonite and Jadon the Mero'nothite, the men of Gibeon and of Mizpah, who were under the jurisdiction of the governor of the province Beyond the River. Next to them Uz'ziel the son of Harhai'ah, goldsmiths, repaired. Next to him Hanani'ah, one of the perfumers, repaired; and they restored Jerusalem as far as the Broad Wall. Next to them

10 Rephai'ah the son of Hur, ruler of half the district of Jerusalem, repaired. Next to them Jedai'ah the son of Haru'maph repaired opposite his house; and next to him Hattush the son of Hashabnei'ah repaired. Malchi'jah the son of Harim and Hasshub the son of Pa'hath-mo'ab repaired another section and the Tower of the Ovens. Next to him Shallum the son of Hallo'hesh, ruler of

15 half the district of Jerusalem, repaired, he and his daughters. Hanun and the inhabitants of Zano'ah repaired the Valley Gate; they rebuilt it and set its doors, its bolts, and its bars, and repaired a thousand cubits of the wall, as far as the Dung Gate. Malchi'jah the son of Rechab, ruler of the district of Beth-hacche'rem, repaired the Dung Gate; he rebuilt it and set its doors, its

20 bolts, and its bars. And Shallum the son of Colho'zeh, ruler of the district of

Mizpah, repaired the Fountain Gate; he rebuilt it and covered it and set its doors, its bolts, and its bars; and he built the wall of the Pool of Shelah of the king's garden, as far as the stairs that go down from the City of David. After him Nehemi'ah the son of Azbuk, ruler of half the district of Beth-zur, 5 repaired to a point opposite the sepulchres of David, to the artificial pool, and to the house of the mighty men. After him the Levites repaired: Rehum the son of Bani; next to him Hashabi'ah, ruler of half the district of Kei'lah, repaired for his district. After him their brethren repaired: Bav'vai the son of Hen'adad, ruler of half the district of Kei'lah; next to him Ezer the son of 10 Jeshua, ruler of Mizpah, repaired another section opposite the ascent to the armory at the Angle. After him Baruch the son of Zab'bai repaired another section from the Angle to the door of the house of Eli'ashib the high priest. After him Mer'emoth the son of Uri'ah, son of Hakkoz repaired another section from the door of the house of Eli'ashib to the end of the house of 15 Eli'ashib. After him the priests, the men of the Plain, repaired. After them Benjamin and Hasshub repaired opposite their house. After them Azari'ah the son of Ma-asei'ah, son of Anani'ah repaired beside his own house. After him Bin'nui the son of Hen'adad repaired another section, from the house of Azari'ah to the Angle and to the corner. Palal the son of Uzai repaired 20 opposite the Angle and the tower projecting from the upper house of the

king at the court of the guard. After him Pedai'ah the son of Parosh and the temple servants living on Ophel repaired to a point opposite the Water Gate on the east and the projecting tower. After him the Teko'ites repaired another section opposite the great projecting tower as far as the wall of Ophel.

5 Above the Horse Gate the priests repaired, each one opposite his own house. After them Zadok the son of Immer repaired opposite his own house. After him Shemai'ah the son of Shecani'ah, the keeper of the East Gate, repaired. After him Hanani'ah the son of Shelemi'ah and Hanun the sixth son of Zalaph repaired another section. After him Meshul'lam the son of Berechi'ah

10 repaired opposite his chamber. After him Malchi'jah, one of the goldsmiths, repaired as far as the house of the temple servants and of the merchants, opposite the Muster Gate, and to the upper chamber of the corner. And between the upper chamber of the corner and the Sheep Gate the goldsmiths and the merchants repaired. Now when Sanbal'lat heard that we were building

15 the wall, he was angry and greatly enraged, and he ridiculed the Jews. And he said in the presence of his brethren and of the army of Sama'ria, "What are these feeble Jews doing? Will they restore things? Will they sacrifice? Will they finish up in a day? Will they revive the stones out of the heaps of rubbish, and burned ones at that?" Tobi'ah the Ammonite was by him, and

20 he said, "Yes, what they are building--if a fox goes up on it he will break

down their stone wall! Hear, O our God, for we are despised; turn back
their taunt upon their own heads, and give them up to be plundered in a
land where they are captives. Do not cover their guilt, and let not their sin
be blotted out from thy sight; for they have provoked thee to anger before
5 the builders. So we built the wall; and all the wall was joined together to
half its height. For the people had a mind to work. But when Sanbal'lat and
Tobi'ah and the Arabs and the Ammonites and the Ash'dodites heard that the
repairing of the walls of Jerusalem was going forward and that the breaches
were beginning to be closed, they were very angry; and they all plotted
10 together to come and fight against Jerusalem and to cause confusion in it.
And we prayed to our God, and set a guard as a protection against them
day and night. But Judah said, "The strength of the burden-bearers is failing,
and there is much rubbish; we are not able to work on the wall." And our
enemies said, "They will not know or see till we come into the midst of
15 them and kill them and stop the work." When the Jews who lived by them
came they said to us ten times, "From all the places where they live they
will come up against us." So in the lowest parts of the space behind the
wall, in open places, I stationed the people according to their families, with
their swords, their spears, and their bows. And I looked, and arose, and said
20 to the nobles and to the officials and to the rest of the people, "Do not be

afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and terrible, and fight for your brethren, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your homes."

When our enemies heard that it was known to us and that God had frustrated their plan, we all returned to the wall, each to his work. From that
5 day on, half of my servants worked on construction, and half held the spears, shields, bows, and coats of mail; and the leaders stood behind all the house of Judah, who were building on the wall. Those who carried burdens were laden in such a way that each with one hand labored on the work and with the other held his weapon. And each of the builders had his sword girded at
10 his side while he built. The man who sounded the trumpet was beside me. And I said to the nobles and to the officials and to the rest of the people, "The work is great and widely spread, and we are separated on the wall, far from one another. In the place where you hear the sound of the trumpet, rally to us there. Our God will fight for us." So we labored at the work,
15 and half of them held the spears from the break of dawn till the stars came out. I also said to the people at that time, "Let every man and his servant pass the night within Jerusalem, that they may be a guard for us by night and may labor by day." So neither I nor my brethren nor my servants nor the men of the guard who followed me, none of us took off our clothes;
20 each kept his weapon in his hand. Now there arose a great outcry of the

people and of their wives against their Jewish brethren. For there were those who said, "With our sons and our daughters, we are many; let us get grain, that we may eat and keep alive." There were also those who said, "We are mortgaging our fields, our vineyards, and our houses to get grain because of the famine." And there were those who said, "We have borrowed money for the king's tax upon our fields and our vineyards. Now our flesh is as the flesh of our brethren, our children are as their children; yet we are forcing our sons and our daughters to be slaves, and some of our daughters have already been enslaved; but it is not in our power to help it, for other men have our fields and our vineyards." I was very angry when I heard their outcry and these words. I took counsel with myself, and I brought charges against the nobles and the officials. I said to them, "You are exacting interest, each from his brother." And I held a great assembly against them, and said to them, "We, as far as we are able, have bought back our Jewish brethren who have been sold to the nations; but you even sell your brethren that they may be sold to us!" They were silent, and could not find a word to say. So I said, "The thing that you are doing is not good. Ought you not to walk in the fear of our God to prevent the taunts of the nations our enemies? Moreover I and my brethren and my servants are lending them money and grain. Let us leave off this interest. Return to them this very day

their fields, their vineyards, their olive orchards, and their houses, and the hundredth of money, grain, wine, and oil which you have been exacting of them." Then they said, "We will restore these and require nothing from them. We will do as you say." And I called the priests, and took an oath of them

5 to do as they had promised. I also shook out my lap and said, "So may God shake out every man from his house and from his labor who does not perform this promise. So may he be shaken out and emptied." And all the assembly said "Amen" and praised the LORD. And the people did as they had promised. Moreover from the time that I was appointed to be their

10 governor in the land of Judah, from the twentieth year to the thirty-second year of Ar-ta-xerx'es the king, twelve years, neither I nor my brethren ate the food allowance of the governor. The former governors who were before me laid heavy burdens upon the people, and took from them food and wine, besides forty shekels of silver. Even their servants lorded it over the people.

15 But I did not do so, because of the fear of God. I also held to the work on this wall, and acquired no land; and all my servants were gathered there for the work. Moreover there were at my table a hundred and fifty men, Jews and officials, besides those who came to us from the nations which were about us. Now that which was prepared for one day was one ox and six

20 choice sheep; fowls likewise were prepared for me, and every ten days skins

of wine in abundance; yet with all this I did not demand the food allowance of the governor, because the servitude was heavy upon this people.

Remember for my good, O my God, all that I have done for this people.

Now when it was reported to Sanbal'lat and Tobi'ah and to Geshem the Arab

5 and to the rest of our enemies that I had built the wall and that there was no breach left in it (although up to that time I had not set up the doors in the gates), Sanbal'lat and Geshem sent to me, saying, "Come and let us meet together in one of the villages in the plain of Ono." But they intended to do me harm. And I sent messengers to them, saying, "I am doing a great work
10 and I cannot come down. Why should the work stop while I leave it and come down to you?" And they sent to me four times in this way and I answered them in the same manner. In the same way Sanbal'lat for the fifth time sent his servant to me with an open letter in his hand. In it was written, "It is reported among the nations, and Geshem also says it, that you
15 and the Jews intend to rebel; that is why you are building the wall; and you wish to become their king, according to this report. And you have also set up prophets to proclaim concerning you in Jerusalem, 'There is a king in Judah.' And now it will be reported to the king according to these words. So now come, and let us take counsel together." Then I sent to him, saying,
20 "No such things as you say have been done, for you are inventing them out

of your own mind." For they all wanted to frighten us, thinking, "Their hands will drop from the work, and it will not be done." But now, O God, strengthen thou my hands. Now when I went into the house of Shemai'ah the son of Delai'ah, son of Mehet'abel, who was shut up, he said, "Let us meet
5 together in the house of God, within the temple, and let us close the doors of the temple; for they are coming to kill you, at night they are coming to kill you." But I said, "Should such a man as I flee? And what man such as I could go into the temple and live? I will not go in." And I understood, and saw that God had not sent him, but he had pronounced the prophecy
10 against me because Tobi'ah and Sanbal'lat had hired him. For this purpose he was hired, that I should be afraid and act in this way and sin, and so they could give me an evil name, in order to taunt me. Remember Tobi'ah and Sanbal'lat, O my God, according to these things that they did, and also the prophetess No-adi'ah and the rest of the prophets who wanted to make me
15 afraid. So the wall was finished on the twenty-fifth day of the month Elul, in fifty-two days. And when all our enemies heard of it, all the nations round about us were afraid and fell greatly in their own esteem; for they perceived that this work had been accomplished with the help of our God. Moreover in those days the nobles of Judah sent many letters to Tobi'ah, and
20 Tobi'ah's letters came to them. For many in Judah were bound by oath to

him, because he was the son-in-law of Shecani'ah the son of Arah: and his son Jehoha'nan had taken the daughter of Meshul'lam the son of Berechi'ah as his wife. Also they spoke of his good deeds in my presence, and reported my words to him. And Tobi'ah sent letters to make me afraid. Now when
5 the wall had been built and I had set up the doors, and the gatekeepers, the singers, and the Levites had been appointed, I gave my brother Hana'ni and Hanani'ah the governor of the castle charge over Jerusalem, for he was a more faithful and God-fearing man than many. And I said to them, "Let not the gates of Jerusalem be opened until the sun is hot; and while they are
10 still standing guard let them shut and bar the doors. Appoint guards from among the inhabitants of Jerusalem, each to his station and each opposite his own house." The city was wide and large, but the people within it were few and no houses had been built. Then God put it into my mind to assemble the nobles and the officials and the people to be enrolled by genealogy. And
15 I found the book of the genealogy of those who came up at the first, and I found written in it: These were the people of the province who came up out of the captivity of those exiles whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried into exile; they returned to Jerusalem and Judah, each to his town. They came with Zerub'babel, Jeshua, Nehemi'ah, Azari'ah, Raami'ah,
20 Naham'ani, Mor'decai, Bilshan, Mis'pereth, Bigva'i, Nehum, Ba'anah. The

number of the men of the people of Israel: the sons of Parosh, two thousand
a hundred and seventy-two. The sons of Shephati'ah, three hundred and
seventy-two. The sons of Arah, six hundred and fifty-two. The sons of
Pa'hath-mo'ab, namely the sons of Jeshua and Jo'ab, two thousand eight
5 hundred and eighteen. The sons of Elam, a thousand two hundred and fifty-
four. The sons of Zattu, eight hundred and forty-five. The sons of Zac'cai,
seven hundred and sixty. The sons of Bin'nui, six hundred and forty-eight.
The sons of Be'bai, six hundred and twenty-eight. The sons of Azgad, two
thousand three hundred and twenty-two. The sons of Adoni'kam, six hundred
10 and sixty-seven. The sons of Bigva'i, two thousand and sixty-seven. The sons
of Adin, six hundred and fifty-five. The sons of Ater, namely of Hezeki'ah,
ninety-eight. The sons of Hashum, three hundred and twenty-eight. The sons
of Be'zai, three hundred and twenty-four. The sons of Hariph, a hundred and
twelve. The sons of Gibeon, ninety-five. The men of Bethlehem and
15 Neto'phah, a hundred and eighty-eight. The men of An'athoth, a hundred and
twenty-eight. The men of Beth-az'maveth, forty-two. The men of Kir'iath-
je'arim, Chephi'rah, and Be-er'oth, seven hundred and forty-three. The men of
Ramah and Geba, six hundred and twenty-one. The men of Michmas, a
hundred and twenty-two. The men of Bethel and Ai, a hundred and twenty-
20 three. The men of the other Nebo, fifty-two. The sons of the other Elam, a

thousand two hundred and fifty-four. The sons of Harim, three hundred and
 twenty. The sons of Jericho, three hundred and forty-five. The sons of Lod,
 Hadid, and Ono, seven hundred and twenty-one. The sons of Sena'ah, three
 thousand nine hundred and thirty. The priests: the sons of Jedai'ah, namely
 5 the house of Jeshua, nine hundred and seventy-three. The sons of Immer, a
 thousand and fifty-two. The sons of Pashhur, a thousand two hundred and
 forty-seven. The sons of Harim, a thousand and seventeen. The Levites: the
 sons of Jeshua, namely of Kad'mi-el of the sons of Ho'devah, seventy-four.
 The singers: the sons of Asaph, a hundred and forty-eight. The gatekeepers:
 10 the sons of Shallum, the sons of Ater, the sons of Talmon, the sons of
 Akkub, the sons of Hati'ta, the sons of Sho'bai, a hundred and thirty-eight.
 The temple servants: the sons of Ziha, the sons of Hasu'pha, the sons of
 Tabb'a'oth, the sons of Keros, the sons of Si'a, the sons of Padon, the sons
 of Leba'na, the sons of Hag'aba, the sons of Shalmal, the sons of Hanan, the
 15 sons of Giddel, the sons of Gahar, the sons of Re-ai'ah, the sons of Rezin,
 the sons of Neko'da, the sons of Gazzam, the sons of Uzza, the sons of
 Pase'ah, the sons of Besai, the sons of Me-u'nim, the sons of Nephush'esim,
 the sons of Bakbuk, the sons of Haku'pha, the sons of Harhur, the sons of
 Bazlith, the sons of Mehi'da, the sons of Harsha, the sons of Barkos, the
 20 sons of Sis'era, the sons of Temah, the sons of Nezi'ah, the sons of Hati'pha.

The sons of Solomon's servants: the sons of So'tai, the sons of So'phereth,
 the sons of Peri'da, the sons of Ja'ala, the sons of Darkon, the sons of
 Giddel, the sons of Shephati'ah, the sons of Hattil, the sons of Po'chereth-
 hazzeba'im, the sons of Amon. All the temple servants and the sons of
 5 Solomon's servants were three hundred and ninety-two. The following were
 those who came up from Tel-me'lah, Tel-har'sha, Cherub, Addon, and Immer,
 but they could not prove their fathers' houses nor their descent, whether they
 belonged to Israel: the sons of Delai'ah, the sons of Tobi'ah, the sons of
 Neko'da, six hundred and forty-two. Also, of the priests: the sons of
 10 Hobai'ah, the sons of Hakkoz, the sons of Barzil'lai (who had taken a wife
 of the daughters of Barzil'lai the Gileadite and was called by their name).
 These sought their registration among those enrolled in the genealogies, but it
 was not found there, so they were excluded from the priesthood as unclean;
 the governor told them that they were not to partake of the most holy food,
 15 until a priest with Urim and Thummim should arise. The whole assembly
 together was forty-two thousand three hundred and sixty, besides their
 menservants and maidservants, of whom there were seven thousand three
 hundred and thirty-seven; and they had two hundred and forty-five singers,
 male and female. Their horses were seven hundred and thirty-six, their mules
 20 two hundred and forty-five, their camels four hundred and thirty-five, and

their asses six thousand seven hundred and twenty. Now some of the heads
of fathers' houses gave to the work. The governor gave to the treasury a
thousand darics of gold, fifty basins, five hundred and thirty priests' garments.
And some of the heads of fathers' houses gave into the treasury of the work
5 twenty thousand darics of gold and two thousand two hundred minas of
silver. And what the rest of the people gave was twenty thousand darics of
gold, two thousand minas of silver, and sixty-seven priests' garments. So the
priests, the Levites, the gatekeepers, the singers, some of the people, the
temple servants, and all Israel, lived in their towns. And when the seventh
10 month had come, the children of Israel were in their towns. And all the
people gathered as one man into the square before the Water Gate; and they
told Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses which the LORD
had given to Israel. And Ezra the priest brought the law before the assembly,
both men and women and all who could hear with understanding, on the first
15 day of the seventh month. And he read from it facing the square before the
Water Gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of the men and
the women and those who could understand; and the ears of all the people
were attentive to the book of the law. And Ezra the scribe stood on a
wooden pulpit which they had made for the purpose; and beside him stood
20 Mattithi'ah, Shema, Anai'ah, Uri'ah, Hilki'ah, and Ma-asei'ah on his right

hand; and Pedai'ah, Mish'a-el, Malchi'jah, Hashum, Hash-bad'danah, Zechari'ah,
and Meshul'lam on his left hand. And Ezra opened the book in the sight of
all the people, for he was above all the people; and when he opened it all
the people stood. And Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God; and all the
5 people answered, "Amen, Amen," lifting up their hands; and they bowed their
heads and worshiped the LORD with their faces to the ground. Also Jesh'ua,
Bani, Sherebi'ah, Jamin, Akkub, Shab'bethai, Hodi'ah, Ma-asei'ah, Keli'ta,
Azari'ah, Jo'zabad, Hanan, Pelai'ah, the Levites, helped the people to
understand the law, while the people remained in their places. And they read
10 from the book, from the law of God, clearly; and they gave the sense, so
that the people understood the reading. And Nehemi'ah, who was the
governor, and Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the
people said to all the people, "This day is holy to the LORD your God; do
not mourn or weep." For all the people wept when they heard the words of
15 the law. Then he said to them, "Go your way, eat the fat and drink sweet
wine and send portions to him for whom nothing is prepared; for this day is
holy to our Lord; and do not be grieved, for the joy of the LORD is your
strength." So the Levites stilled all the people, saying, "Be quiet, for this day
is holy; do not be grieved." And all the people went their way to eat and
20 drink and to send portions and to make great rejoicing, because they had

understood the words that were declared to them. On the second day the heads of fathers' houses of all the people, with the priests and the Levites, came together to Ezra the scribe in order to study the words of the law. And they found it written in the law that the LORD had commanded by Moses that the people of Israel should dwell in booths during the feast of the seventh month, and that they should publish and proclaim in all their towns and in Jerusalem, "Go out to the hills and bring branches of olive, wild olive, myrtle, palm, and other leafy trees to make booths, as it is written." So the people went out and brought them and made booths for themselves, each on his roof, and in their courts and in the courts of the house of God, and in the square at the Water Gate and in the square at the Gate of Ephraim. And all the assembly of those who had returned from the captivity made booths and dwelt in the booths; for from the days of Jeshua the son of Nun to that day the people of Israel had not done so. And there was very great rejoicing. And day by day, from the first day to the last day, he read from the book of the law of God. They kept the feast seven days; and on the eighth day there was a solemn assembly, according to the ordinance. Now on the twenty-fourth day of this month the people of Israel were assembled with fasting and in sackcloth, and with earth upon their heads. And the Israelites separated themselves from all foreigners, and stood

and confessed their sins and the iniquities of their fathers. And they stood up
in their place and read from the book of the law of the LORD their God
for a fourth of the day; for another fourth of it they made confession and
worshipped the LORD their God. Upon the stairs of the Levites stood Jeshua,
5 Bani, Kad'mi-el, Shebani'ah, Bunni, Sherebi'ah, Bani, and Chena'ni; and they
cried with a loud voice to the LORD their God. Then the Levites, Jeshua,
Kad'mi-el, Bani, Hashabnei'ah, Sherebi'ah, Hodi'ah, Shebani'ah, and Pethahi'ah,
said, "Stand up and bless the LORD your God from everlasting to
everlasting. Blessed be thy glorious name which is exalted above all blessing
10 and praise." And Ezra said: "Thou art the LORD, thou alone; thou hast made
heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all that is
on it, the seas and all that is in them; and thou preservest all of them; and
the host of heaven worships thee. Thou art the LORD, the God who didst
choose Abram and bring him forth out of Ur of the Chalde'ans and give him
15 the name Abraham; and thou didst find his heart faithful before thee, and
didst make with him the covenant to give to his descendants the land of the
Canaanite, the Hittite, the Amorite, the Per'izzite, the Jeb'usite, and the
Gir'gashite; and thou hast fulfilled thy promise, for thou art righteous. "And
thou didst see the affliction of our fathers in Egypt and hear their cry at the
20 Red Sea, and didst perform signs and wonders against Pharaoh and all his

servants and all the people of his land, for thou knewest that they acted insolently against our fathers; and thou didst get thee a name, as it is to this day. And thou didst divide the sea before them, so that they went through the midst of the sea on dry land; and thou didst cast their pursuers into the depths, as a stone into mighty waters. By a pillar of cloud thou didst lead them in the day, and by a pillar of fire in the night to light for them the way in which they should go. Thou didst come down upon Mount Sinai, and speak with them from heaven and give them right ordinances and true laws, good statutes and commandments, and thou didst make known to them thy holy sabbath and command them commandments and statutes and a law by Moses thy servant. Thou didst give them bread from heaven for their hunger and bring forth water for them from the rock for their thirst, and thou didst tell them to go in to possess the land which thou hadst sworn to give them.

"But they and our fathers acted presumptuously and stiffened their neck and did not obey thy commandments; they refused to obey, and were not mindful of the wonders which thou didst perform among them; but they stiffened their neck and appointed a leader to return to their bondage in Egypt. But thou art a God ready to forgive, gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and didst not forsake them. Even when they had made for themselves a molten calf and said, 'This is your God who brought

you up out of Egypt,' and had committed great blasphemies, thou in thy great mercies didst not forsake them in the wilderness; the pillar of cloud which led them in the way did not depart from them by day, nor the pillar of fire by night which lighted for them the way by which they should go.

5 Thou gavest thy good Spirit to instruct them, and didst not withhold thy manna from their mouth, and gavest them water for their thirst. Forty years didst thou sustain them in the wilderness, and they lacked nothing; their clothes did not wear out and their feet did not swell. And thou didst give them kingdoms and peoples, and didst allot to them every corner; so they

10 took possession of the land of Sihon king of Heshbon and the land of Og king of Bashan. Thou didst multiply their descendants as the stars of heaven, and thou didst bring them into the land which thou hadst told their fathers to enter and possess. So the descendants went in and possessed the land, and thou didst subdue before them the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites,

15 and didst give them into their hands, with their kings and the peoples of the land, that they might do with them as they would. And they captured fortified cities and a rich land, and took possession of houses full of all good things, cisterns hewn out, vineyards, olive orchards and fruit trees in abundance; so they ate, and were filled and became fat, and delighted

20 themselves in thy great goodness. "Nevertheless they were disobedient and

rebelled against thee and cast thy law behind their back and killed thy prophets, who had warned them in order to turn them back to thee, and they committed great blasphemies. Therefore thou didst give them into the hand of their enemies, who made them suffer; and in the time of their suffering they

5 cried to thee and thou didst hear them from heaven; and according to thy great mercies thou didst give them saviors who saved them from the hand of their enemies. But after they had rest they did evil again before thee, and thou didst abandon them to the hand of their enemies, so that they had dominion over them; yet when they turned and cried to thee thou didst hear

10 from heaven, and many times thou didst deliver them according to thy mercies. And thou didst warn them in order to turn them back to thy law. Yet they acted presumptuously and did not obey thy commandments, but sinned against thy ordinances, by the observance of which a man shall live, and turned a stubborn shoulder and stiffened their neck and would not obey.

15 Many years thou didst bear with them, and didst warn them by thy Spirit through thy prophets; yet they would not give ear. Therefore thou didst give them into the hand of the peoples of the lands. Nevertheless in thy great mercies thou didst not make an end of them or forsake them; for thou art a gracious and merciful God. "Now therefore, our God, the great and mighty

20 and terrible God, who keepest covenant and steadfast love, let not all the

hardship seem little to thee that has come upon us, upon our kings, our
princes, our priests, our prophets, our fathers, and all thy people, since the
time of the kings of Assyria until this day. Yet thou hast been just in all
that has come upon us, for thou hast dealt faithfully and we have acted
5 wickedly; our kings, our princes, our priests, and our fathers have not kept
thy law or heeded thy commandments and thy warnings which thou didst
give them. They did not serve thee in their kingdom, and in thy great
goodness which thou gavest them, and in the large and rich land which thou
didst set before them; and they did not turn from their wicked works.
10 Behold, we are slaves this day; in the land that thou gavest to our fathers to
enjoy its fruit and its good gifts, behold, we are slaves. And its rich yield
goes to the kings whom thou hast set over us because of our sins; they have
power also over our bodies and over our cattle at their pleasure, and we are
in great distress." Because of all this we make a firm covenant and write it,
15 and our princes, our Levites, and our priests set their seal to it. Those who
set their seal are Nehemi'ah the governor, the son of Hacali'ah, Zedeki'ah,
Serai'ah, Azari'ah, Jeremiah, Pashhur, Amari'ah, Malchi'jah, Hattush,
Shebani'ah, Malluch, Harim, Mer'emoth, Obadi'ah, Daniel, Gin'nethon, Baruch,
Meshul'lam, Abi'jah, Mi'jamin, Ma-azi'ah, Bil'gai, Shemai'ah; these are the
20 priests. And the Levites: Jeshua the son of Azani'ah, Bin'nui of the sons of

Hen'adad, Kad'mi-el; and their brethren, Shebani'ah, Hodi'ah, Keli'ta, Pelai'ah,
 Hanan, Mica, Rehob, Hashabi'ah, Zaccur, Sherebi'ah, Shebani'ah, Hodi'ah,
 Bani, Beni'nu. The chiefs of the people: Parosh, Pa'hath-mo'ab, Elam, Zattu,
 Bani, Bunni, Azgad, Be'bai, Adoni'jah, Bigva'i, Adin, Ater, Hezeki'ah, Azzur,
 5 Hodi'ah, Hashum, Be'zai, Hariph, An'athoth, Ne'bai, Mag'piash, Meshul'lam,
 Hezir, Meshez'abel, Zadok, Jad'du-a, Pelati'ah, Hanan, Anai'ah, Hoshe'a,
 Hanani'ah, Hasshub, Hallo'hesh, Pi'lha, Shobek, Rehum, Hashab'nah, Ma-
 ase'i'ah, Ahi'ah, Hanan, Anan, Malluch, Harim, Ba'anah. The rest of the
 people, the priests, the Levites, the gatekeepers, the singers, the temple
 10 servants, and all who have separated themselves from the peoples of the
 lands to the law of God, their wives, their sons, their daughters, all who
 have knowledge and understanding, join with their brethren, their nobles, and
 enter into a curse and an oath to walk in God's law which was given by
 Moses the servant of God, and to observe and do all the commandments of
 15 the LORD our Lord and his ordinances and his statutes. We will not give
 our daughters to the peoples of the land or take their daughters for our sons;
 and if the peoples of the land bring in wares or any grain on the sabbath
 day to sell, we will not buy from them on the sabbath or on a holy day;
 and we will forego the crops of the seventh year and the exaction of every
 20 debt. We also lay upon ourselves the obligation to charge ourselves yearly

with the third part of a shekel for the service of the house of our God: for the showbread, the continual cereal offering, the continual burnt offering, the sabbaths, the new moons, the appointed feasts, the holy things, and the sin offerings to make atonement for Israel, and for all the work of the house of our God. We have likewise cast lots, the priests, the Levites, and the people, for the wood offering, to bring it into the house of our God, according to our fathers' houses, at times appointed, year by year, to burn upon the altar of the LORD our God, as it is written in the law. We obligate ourselves to bring the first fruits of our ground and the first fruits of all fruit of every tree, year by year, to the house of the LORD; also to bring to the house of our God, to the priests who minister in the house of our God, the first-born of our sons and of our cattle, as it is written in the law, and the firstlings of our herds and of our flocks; and to bring the first of our coarse meal, and our contributions, the fruit of every tree, the wine and the oil, to the priests, to the chambers of the house of our God; and to bring to the Levites the tithes from our ground, for it is the Levites who collect the tithes in all our rural towns. And the priest, the son of Aaron, shall be with the Levites when the Levites receive the tithes; and the Levites shall bring up the tithe of the tithes to the house of our God, to the chambers, to the storehouse.

For the people of Israel and the sons of Levi shall bring the contribution of

grain, wine, and oil to the chambers, where are the vessels of the sanctuary,
and the priests that minister, and the gatekeepers and the singers. We will
not neglect the house of our God. Now the leaders of the people lived in
Jerusalem; and the rest of the people cast lots to bring one out of ten to
5 live in Jerusalem the holy city, while nine tenths remained in the other
towns. And the people blessed all the men who willingly offered to live in
Jerusalem. These are the chiefs of the province who lived in Jerusalem; but
in the towns of Judah every one lived on his property in their towns: Israel,
the priests, the Levites, the temple servants, and the descendants of Solomon's
10 servants. And in Jerusalem lived certain of the sons of Judah and of the sons
of Benjamin. Of the sons of Judah: Athai'ah the son of Uzzi'ah, son of
Zechari'ah, son of Amari'ah, son of Shephati'ah, son of Mahal'alel, of the
sons of Perez; and Ma-asei'ah the son of Baruch, son of Col-ho'zeh, son of
Hazai'ah, son of Adai'ah, son of Joi'arib, son of Zechari'ah, son of the
15 Shi'lonite. All the sons of Perez who lived in Jerusalem were four hundred
and sixty-eight valiant men. And these are the sons of Benjamin: Sallu the
son of Meshul'lam, son of Jo'ed, son of Pedai'ah, son of Kolai'ah, son of
Ma-asei'ah, son of I'thi-el, son of Jeshai'ah. And after him Gabba'i, Salla'i,
nine hundred and twenty-eight. Jo'el the son of Zichri was their overseer; and
20 Judah the son of Hassen'u-ah was second over the city. Of the priests:

Jedai'ah the son of Joi'arib, Jachin, Serai'ah the son of Hilki'ah, son of
 Meshul'lam, son of Zadok, son of Merai'oth, son of Ahi'tub, ruler of the
 house of God, and their brethren who did the work of the house, eight
 hundred and twenty-two; and Adai'ah the son of Jero'ham, son of Pelali'ah,
 5 son of Amzi, son of Zechari'ah, son of Pashhur, son of Malchi'jah, and his
 brethren, heads of fathers' houses, two hundred and forty-two; and Amash'sai,
 the son of Az'arel, son of Ah'zai, son of Meshil'lemoth, son of Immer, and
 their brethren, mighty men of valor, a hundred and twenty-eight; their
 overseer was Zab'diel the son of Haggado'lim. And of the Levites: Shemai'ah
 10 the son of Hasshub, son of Azri'kam, son of Hashabi'ah, son of Bunni; and
 Shab'bethai and Jo'zabad, of the chiefs of the Levites, who were over the
 outside work of the house of God; and Mattani'ah the son of Mica, son of
 Zabdi, son of Asaph, who was the leader to begin the thanksgiving in prayer,
 and Bakbuki'ah, the second among his brethren; and Abda the son of
 15 Sham'mua, son of Galal, son of Jedu'thun. All the Levites in the holy city
 were two hundred and eighty-four. The gatekeepers, Akkub, Talmon and their
 brethren, who kept watch at the gates, were a hundred and seventy-two. And
 the rest of Israel, and of the priests and the Levites, were in all the towns
 of Judah, every one in his inheritance. But the temple servants lived on
 20 Ophel; and Ziha and Gishpa were over the temple servants. The overseer of

the Levites in Jerusalem was Uzzi the son of Bani, son of Hashabi'ah, son
 of Mattani'ah, son of Mica, of the sons of Asaph, the singers, over the work
 of the house of God. For there was a command from the king concerning
 them, and a settled provision for the singers, as every day required. And
 5 Pethahi'ah the son of Meshez'abel, of the sons of Zerah the son of Judah,
 was at the king's hand in all matters concerning the people. And as for the
 villages, with their fields, some of the people of Judah lived in Kir'iath-ar'ba
 and its villages, and in Dibon and its villages, and in Jekab'zeel and its
 villages, and in Jeshua and in Mola'dah and Beth-pelet, in Ha'zar-shu'al, in
 10 Beer-sheba and its villages, in Ziklag, in Meco'nah and its villages, in En-
 rim'mon, in Zorah, in Jarmuth, Zano'ah, Adullam, and their villages, Lachish
 and its fields, and Aze'kah and its villages. So they encamped from Beer-
 sheba to the valley of Hinnom. The people of Benjamin also lived from
 Geba onward, at Michmash, Ai'ja, Bethel and its villages, An'athoth, Nob,
 15 Anani'ah, Hazor, Ramah, Git'taim, Hadid, Zebo'im, Nebal'lat, Lod, and Ono,
 the valley of craftsmen. And certain divisions of the Levites in Judah were
 joined to Benjamin. These are the priests and the Levites who came up with
 Zerub'babel the son of She-al'ti-el, and Jeshua: Serai'ah, Jeremiah, Ezra,
 Amari'ah, Malluch, Hattush, Shecani'ah, Rehum, Mer'emoth, Iddo, Gin'nethoi,
 20 Abi'jah, Mi'jamin, Ma-adi'ah, Bilgah, Shemai'ah, Joi'arib, Jedai'ah, Sallu,

Amok, Hilki'ah, Jedai'ah. These were the chiefs of the priests and of their brethren in the days of Jeshua. And the Levites: Jeshua, Bin'nui, Kad'mi-el, Sherebi'ah, Judah, and Mattani'ah, who with his brethren was in charge of the songs of thanksgiving. And Bakbuki'ah and Unno their brethren stood

5 opposite them in the service. And Jeshua was the father of Joi'akim, Joi'akim the father of Eli'ashib, Eli'ashib the father of Joi'ada, Joi'ada the father of Jonathan, and Jonathan the father of Jad'du-a. And in the days of Joi'akim were priests, heads of fathers' houses: of Serai'ah, Merai'ah; of Jeremiah, Hanani'ah; of Ezra, Meshul'lam; of Amari'ah, Jehoha'nan; of Mal'luchi,

10 Jonathan; of Shebani'ah, Joseph; of Harim, Adna; of Merai'oth, Hel'kai; of Iddo, Zechari'ah; of Gin'nethon, Meshul'lam; of Abi'jah, Zichri; of Mini'amin, of Moadi'ah, Pil'tai; of Bilgah, Sham'mu-a; of Shemai'ah, Jehon'athan; of Joi'arib, Matte'nai; of Jedai'ah, Uzzi; of Sal'lai, Kal'lai; of Amok, Eber; of Hilki'ah, Hashabi'ah; of Jedai'ah, Nethan'el. As for the Levites, in the days of

15 Eli'ashib, Joi'ada, Joha'nan, and Jad'du-a, there were recorded the heads of fathers' houses; also the priests until the reign of Darius the Persian. The sons of Levi, heads of fathers' houses, were written in the Book of the Chronicles until the days of Joha'nan the son of Eli'ashib. And the chiefs of the Levites: Hashabi'ah, Sherebi'ah, and Jeshua the son of Kad'mi-el, with

20 their brethren over against them, to praise and to give thanks, according to

the commandment of David the man of God, watch corresponding to watch.

Mattani'ah, Bakbuki'ah, Obadi'ah, Meshul'lam, Talmon, and Akkub were gatekeepers standing guard at the storehouses of the gates. These were in the days of Joi'akim the son of Jeshua son of Jo'zadak, and in the days of

5 Nehemi'ah the governor and of Ezra the priest the scribe. And at the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem they sought the Levites in all their places, to bring them to Jerusalem to celebrate the dedication with gladness, with thanksgivings and with singing, with cymbals, harps, and lyres. And the sons of the singers gathered together from the circuit round Jerusalem and

10 from the villages of the Netoph'athites; also from Beth-gilgal and from the region of Geba and Az'maveth; for the singers had built for themselves villages around Jerusalem. And the priests and the Levites purified themselves; and they purified the people and the gates and the wall. Then I brought up the princes of Judah upon the wall, and appointed two great

15 companies which gave thanks and went in procession. One went to the right upon the wall to the Dung Gate; and after them went Hoshai'ah and half of the princes of Judah, and Azari'ah, Ezra, Meshul'lam, Judah, Benjamin, Shemai'ah, and Jeremiah, and certain of the priests' sons with trumpets:

Zechari'ah the son of Jonathan, son of Shemai'ah, son of Mattani'ah, son of

20 Micai'ah, son of Zaccur, son of Asaph; and his kinsmen, Shemai'ah, Az'arel,

Mil'alai, Gil'alai, Ma'ai, Nethan'el, Judah, and Hana'ni, with the musical instruments of David the man of God; and Ezra the scribe went before them. At the Fountain Gate they went up straight before them by the stairs of the city of David, at the ascent of the wall, above the house of David, to the

5 Water Gate on the east. The other company of those who gave thanks went to the left, and I followed them with half of the people, upon the wall, above the Tower of the Ovens, to the Broad Wall, and above the Gate of E'phraim, and by the Old Gate, and by the Fish Gate and the Tower of Hanan'el and the Tower of the Hundred, to the Sheep Gate; and they came

10 to a halt at the Gate of the Guard. So both companies of those who gave thanks stood in the house of God, and I and half of the officials with me; and the priests Eli'akim, Ma-asei'ah, Mini'amin, Micai'ah, Eli-o-e'nai, Zechari'ah, and Hanani'ah, with trumpets; and Ma-asei'ah, Shemai'ah, Elea'zar, Uzzi, Jehoha'nan, Malchi'jah, Elam, and Ezer. And the singers sang with

15 Jezrahi'ah as their leader. And they offered great sacrifices that day and rejoiced, for God had made them rejoice with great joy; the women and children also rejoiced. And the joy of Jerusalem was heard afar off. On that day men were appointed over the chambers for the stores, the contributions, the first fruits, and the tithes, to gather into them the portions required by

20 the law for the priests and for the Levites according to the fields of the

towns; for Judah rejoiced over the priests and the Levites who ministered.

And they performed the service of their God and the service of purification, as did the singers and the gatekeepers, according to the command of David and his son Solomon. For in the days of David and Asaph of old there was

5 a chief of the singers, and there were songs of praise and thanksgiving to God. And all Israel in the days of Zerub'babel and in the days of Nehemi'ah gave the daily portions for the singers and the gatekeepers; and they set apart that which was for the Levites; and the Levites set apart that which was for the sons of Aaron. On that day they read from the book of Moses

10 in the hearing of the people; and in it was found written that no Ammonite or Moabite should ever enter the assembly of God; for they did not meet the children of Israel with bread and water, but hired Balaam against them to curse them--yet our God turned the curse into a blessing. When the people heard the law, they separated from Israel all those of foreign descent. Now

15 before this, Eli'ashib the priest, who was appointed over the chambers of the house of our God, and who was connected with Tobi'ah, prepared for Tobi'ah a large chamber where they had previously put the cereal offering, the frankincense, the vessels, and the tithes of grain, wine, and oil, which were given by commandment to the Levites, singers, and gatekeepers, and the

20 contributions for the priests. While this was taking place I was not in

Jerusalem, for in the thirty-second year of Ar-ta-xerx'es king of Babylon I went to the king. And after some time I asked leave of the king and came to Jerusalem, and I then discovered the evil that Eli'ashib had done for Tobi'ah, preparing for him a chamber in the courts of the house of God.

5 And I was very angry, and I threw all the household furniture of Tobi'ah out of the chamber. Then I gave orders and they cleansed the chambers; and I brought back thither the vessels of the house of God, with the cereal offering and the frankincense. I also found out that the portions of the Levites had not been given to them; so that the Levites and the singers, who did the

10 work, had fled each to his field. So I remonstrated with the officials and said, "Why is the house of God forsaken?" And I gathered them together and set them in their stations. Then all Judah brought the tithe of the grain, wine, and oil into the storehouses. And I appointed as treasurers over the storehouses Shelemi'ah the priest, Zadok the scribe, and Pedai'ah of the

15 Levites, and as their assistant Hanan the son of Zaccur, son of Mattani'ah, for they were counted faithful; and their duty was to distribute to their brethren. Remember me, O my God, concerning this, and wipe not out my good deeds that I have done for the house of my God and for his service.

In those days I saw in Judah men treading wine presses on the sabbath, and

20 bringing in heaps of grain and loading them on asses; and also wine, grapes,

figs, and all kinds of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the sabbath day; and I warned them on the day when they sold food. Men of Tyre also, who lived in the city, brought in fish and all kinds of wares and sold them on the sabbath to the people of Judah, and in Jerusalem. Then I
5 remonstrated with the nobles of Judah and said to them, "What is this evil thing which you are doing, profaning the sabbath day? Did not your fathers act in this way, and did not our God bring all this evil on us and on this city? Yet you bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the sabbath." When it began to be dark at the gates of Jerusalem before the sabbath, I
10 commanded that the doors should be shut and gave orders that they should not be opened until after the sabbath. And I set some of my servants over the gates, that no burden might be brought in on the sabbath day. Then the merchants and sellers of all kinds of wares lodged outside Jerusalem once or twice. But I warned them and said to them, "Why do you lodge before the
15 wall? If you do so again I will lay hands on you." From that time on they did not come on the sabbath. And I commanded the Levites that they should purify themselves and come and guard the gates, to keep the sabbath day holy. Remember this also in my favor, O my God, and spare me according to the greatness of thy steadfast love. In those days also I saw the Jews who
20 had married women of Ashdod, Ammon, and Moab; and half of their

children spoke the language of Ashdod, and they could not speak the language of Judah, but the language of each people. And I contended with them and cursed them and beat some of them and pulled out their hair; and I made them take oath in the name of God, saying, "You shall not give
5 your daughters to their sons, or take their daughters for your sons or for yourselves. Did not Solomon king of Israel sin on account of such women? Among the many nations there was no king like him, and he was beloved by his God, and God made him king over all Israel; nevertheless foreign women made even him to sin. Shall we then listen to you and do all this
10 great evil and act treacherously against our God by marrying foreign women?" And one of the sons of Jehoi'ada, the son of Eli'ashib the high priest, was the son-in-law of Sanbal'lat the Hor'onite; therefore I chased him from me. Remember them, O my God, because they have defiled the priesthood and the covenant of the priesthood and the Levites. Thus I
15 cleansed them from everything foreign, and I established the duties of the priests and Levites, each in his work; and I provided for the wood offering, at appointed times, and for the first fruits. Remember me, O my God, for good.*

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