

Nehemiah Chapter 11

Verses 11:1 – 13:31“Detail of Nehemiah exercising his governorship are given in this section.

Verses 1-36: In this chapter, which offers some logistical notes on the functioning of the city of Jerusalem, it is clear that God’s assignments are never jobs for just one person. He expects His people to do their work in community with Him and each other. Jerusalem and Judah are resettled.

Verses 1-2: Three significant actions are noted in these verses:

- (1) A policy was established and “the rulers of the people dwelt at Jerusalem:
- (2) Lots were cast to choose “one of ten” in the general population to live in Jerusalem; and
- (3) The people “blessed” those who chose to reside in the holy city. These were practical and reasonable strategies to repopulate the city and create a sense of national identity among the people.

Nehemiah 11:1 "And the rulers of the people dwelt at Jerusalem: the rest of the people also cast lots, to bring one of ten to dwell in Jerusalem the holy city, and nine parts [to dwell] in [other] cities."

“Cast lots”: A method of decision-making which God honored (Prov. 16:33). Nehemiah redistributed the population so that one out of every 10 Jews lived in Jerusalem. The other 9 were free to reestablish their family heritage in the Land.

It seemed at this time, it was very important to increase the size of Jerusalem. The rulers were already living there. The reasons for this were probably several. One of the reasons would be that they must have the wall protected. Another reason could have been that in the event the out-lying cities and farms were destroyed, there would still be a remnant in Jerusalem. Another very good reason for their increasing the number in Jerusalem, would be to have innkeepers for those who came here to worship in the temple. This brought greater protection to the rulers as well. The last reason I will give was the fact that countries were sometimes judged by the size of their capitol city.

Nehemiah 11:2 "And the people blessed all the men, that willingly offered themselves to dwell at Jerusalem."

Who were not taken by lot, but of their own accord settled at Jerusalem. They praised them for it, and wished them all happiness and prosperity, since they denied themselves of ease and profit for the sake of the public good. And it is this which makes the difference between the list of the inhabitants of Jerusalem (in 1 Chron. 9:2 etc.). And this here, that takes in all that settled there, whether voluntarily or by lot. This only such as were fixed by the lot, and of them only those who were of greatest note and esteem, as Jarchi observes, and so it follows.

It appears from this, that some volunteered even before they were selected by lot. These were loyal to their land. They moved their homes and their families into the wall of Jerusalem.

Verses 3-24: This list corresponds well with (1 Chron. 9:2-17), and probably relates to those already living in Jerusalem, including laymen (verses 3-9), priests (verses 10-14), Levites (verses 15-18), gatekeepers (verse 19), temple servants (verse 21), and certain other individuals (verses 22-24). The duties of the "porters" (gatekeepers), are explained more fully in (1 Chron. 9:17-27), where it appears that the security of the temple area was their hereditary charge. The people who dwelt in Jerusalem are identified.

Nehemiah 11:3 "Now these [are] the chief of the province that dwelt in Jerusalem: but in the cities of Judah dwelt every one in his possession in their cities, [to wit], Israel, the priests, and the Levites, and the Nethinim, and the children of Solomon's servants."

That is, of Judea, reduced to a province by the king of Babylon, and now a province of the Persian monarchy.

"But in the cities of Judah dwelt everyone in his possession in their cities": In which they or their ancestors had formerly dwelt. To wit, Israel. The people in general of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, and such of the other tribes that returned with them.

"The priests, and the Levites, and the Nethinim, and the children of Solomon's servants": Of whom (see Ezra 2:55).

The chief of the province was speaking of those in authority within Judah. Of course, they lived in Jerusalem. Those who lived outside and ministered in Jerusalem were possibly those mentioned here.

Nehemiah 11:4 "And at Jerusalem dwelt [certain] of the children of Judah, and of the children of Benjamin. Of the children of Judah; Athaiah the son of Uzziah, the son of Zechariah, the son of Amariah, the son of Shephatiah, the son of Mahalaleel, of the children of Perez;"

It belonging partly to one tribe and partly to the other, and so inhabited by both, as it originally was (Joshua 15:63).

"Of the children of Judah": Athaiah; called Uthai (1 Chron. 9:4), whose lineage is traced through Uzziah, Zechariah, Amariah, Shephatiah, Mahalaleel.

"Of the children of Perez": A son of Judah (see 1 Chron. 9:4).

This seems to be a listing of the families of Judah and Benjamin, who dwelt within the city walls. This did not mean they no other tribes were represented, because we know for sure that some of the Levites lived in Jerusalem. We also know that some of the tribe of Ephraim and Manasseh as well, lived there. The Nethinim were not a tribe, and some of them lived there as well.

Nehemiah 11:5 "And Maaseiah the son of Baruch, the son of Col-hozeh, the son of Hazaiah, the son of Adaiah, the son of Joiarib, the son of Zechariah, the son of Shiloni."

Who seems to be the same with Asaiah (1 Chron. 9:5). And whose genealogy is carried up through Baruch, Col-hozeh, Hazaiah, Adaiah, Joiarib, Zechariah, to Shiloni. Perhaps the same with Shelah, another son of Judah (see 1 Chron. 9:5).

Nehemiah 11:6 "All the sons of Perez that dwelt at Jerusalem [were] four hundred threescore and eight valiant men."

And so well qualified to defend the city against its enemies.

The sons of Perez who were inside the wall, were there for defending the city. That was what was meant by them being valiant men.

They numbered 468 men. Counting their families, this would be a great portion of the over 20,000 needed for the city.

Nehemiah 11:7 "And these [are] the sons of Benjamin; Sallu the son of Meshullam, the son of Joed, the son of Pedaiah, the son of Kolaiah, the son of Maaseiah, the son of Ithiel, the son of Jesaiah."

That were of that tribe, and inhabited Jerusalem, namely, that follow.

"Sallu the son of Meshullam": Who from him is traced up through Joed, Pedaiah, Kolaiah, Maaseiah, Ithiel, to Jesaiah.

Nehemiah 11:8 "And after him Gabbai, Sallai, nine hundred twenty and eight."

That is, Sallu: were Gabbai and Sallai; in all "nine hundred twenty and eight": There were more of the tribe of Benjamin than of the tribe of Judah, they having perhaps a greater share in the city, or were better disposed to dwell in it.

Those of Benjamin, who came to dwell inside the city wall, were 928.

Nehemiah 11:9 "And Joel the son of Zichri [was] their overseer: and Judah the son of Senuah [was] second over the city."

Or chief governor of the city.

"And Judah the son of Senuah was second over the city. Or the deputy governor of it. So Pitholaus is called an under governor in Jerusalem by Josephus.

Joel had a job very similar to what the mayor of a modern city would have. His assistant, who would take his place if anything happened to him, was Judah.

Nehemiah 11:10 "Of the priests: Jedaiah the son of Joiarib, Jachin."

Who returned and dwelt at Jerusalem.

"Jedaiah, and Jehoiarib, and Jachin": Jedaiah was the son of Jeiarib, and Jachin is called Jachin.

Nehemiah 11:11 "Seraiah the son of Hilkiah, the son of Meshullam, the son of Zadok, the son of Meraioth, the son of Ahitub, [was] the ruler of the house of God."

That is, the son of Azariah, whose name was Seraiah (see 1 Chron. 6:13), whose pedigree is traced up from Hilkiah through Meshullam, called Shallum, (1 Chron. 6:12). Zadok, Meraioth, to Ahitub.

"The ruler of the house of God": High Priest in it; which is to be understood of Ahitub, and not of Azariah or Seraiah in the time of Ezra; for Joshua was then High Priest.

These were speaking of the heads of the families of priests. Some of them already had homes next to the walls of the city. Seraiah was the head of the high priestly family.

Nehemiah 11:12 And their brethren that did the work of the house [were] eight hundred twenty and two: and Adaiah the son of Jeroham, the son of Pelaliah, the son of Amzi, the son of Zechariah, the son of Pashur, the son of Malchiah,

That offered the sacrifices, burnt incense, set on the showbread, lighted the lamps, etc.

"And Adaiah the son of Jeroham": (See 1 Chron. 9:12), whose genealogy is traced here through Pelaliah, Amzi, Zechariah, Pashur, to Malchiah.

Even though this temple was smaller than Solomon's original masterpiece, it required the direct service of "eight hundred twenty and two" people, all of whom depended on the support of the rest of the nation to meet their daily needs. The number of hands necessary to keep a local church can usually add up to those of all members.

Nehemiah 11:13 "And his brethren, chief of the fathers, two hundred forty and two: and Amashai the son of Azareel, the son of Ahasai, the son of Meshillemoth, the son of Immer,"

That is, the brethren or relations of Adaiah.

"And Amashai": Called Maasiai (1 Chron. 9:12), whose lineage is traced here through Azareel, Ahasai, Meshillemoth, to Immer.

Nehemiah 11:14 "And their brethren, mighty men of valor, a hundred twenty and eight: and their overseer [was] Zabdiel, the son of [one of] the great men."

The brethren of Adaiah and Amashai, who were able men to do the work of their office as priests. And men of courage to fight the enemy, and defend the city upon occasion.

"And their overseer was Zabdiel, the son of one of the great men": Or the son of Hagedolim, or Gedolim, as some, who take it to be the proper name of a man.

All of these were families in the service of the LORD in a lesser capacity than the ones mentioned earlier. They were all Levites. All of them together were 1192. Mighty men of valor, in this instance, was pertaining to the service of the LORD.

Nehemiah 11:15 "Also of the Levites: Shemaiah the son of Hashub, the son of Azrikam, the son of Hashabiah, the son of Bunni;"

Who dwelt in Jerusalem.

"Shemaiah the son of Hashub": Traced from him through Azrikam and Hashabiah to Bunni. These were of the sons of Merari, the third son of Levi (see 1 Chron. 9:14).

Nehemiah 11:16 "And Shabbethai and Jozabad, of the chief of the Levites, [had] the oversight of the outward business of the house of God."

Along with Shemaiah. These;

"Had the oversight of the outward business of the house of God": Who had the care of the repairs of the temple, and of getting in the wood for the altar, as Jarchi. And collecting the third part of the shekel, to purchase things with, for the use of the temple.

Shemaiah was descended from Merari, one of the three Levitical families that all the others descended from. It appears he was in charge of the affairs of the church in worldly matters. He was in charge of the treasury, and Shabbethai and Jozabad were his subordinates. This service they did for the LORD, would be like a deacon in the church today. In the book of Acts, there were men who were set aside to serve tables. All these did the same thing at a different time.

Nehemiah 11:17 "And Mattaniah the son of Micha, the son of Zabdi, the son of Asaph, [was] the principal to begin the thanksgiving in prayer: and Bakbukiah the second among his brethren, and Abda the son of Shammua, the son of Galal, the son of Jeduthun."

Zabdi is called Zichri in (1 Chron. 9:15).

"Was the principal to begin the thanksgiving in prayer": He was the precentor, or led the song at the time of the daily sacrifice, in which prayer was also made. As in many of the songs, hymns, and psalms of David.

"And Bakbukiah the second among his brethren": He was the next singer, or deputy to Mattaniah. Perhaps the same that is called Bakbakkar (1 Chron. 9:15).

"And Abda the son of Shammua": Called Obadiah the son of Shemaiah (1 Chron. 9:16).

"The son of Galal, the son of Jeduthun": One of the three principal singers.

Asaph's descendants would be called to the service of leading the praise and worship in song and music. They were musicians and singers. In our churches today, Mattaniah would be choir leader.

Nehemiah 11:18 "All the Levites in the holy city [were] two hundred fourscore and four."

Who had their residence there (Nehemiah 11:1).

This was a certain group of Levites and not the whole, that made up the 284. The priests and the porters were Levites too, but not included in this number. They were given separately.

Nehemiah 11:19 "Moreover the porters, Akkub, Talmon, and their brethren that kept the gates, [were] a hundred seventy and two."

The "porters" were responsible for the security of the temple area rather than the city gates. A clear picture of their responsibilities can be found (in 1 Chron. 9:17-27).

These were Levites, as well, but with a different service to perform. They were keepers of the gates. Obviously, they did not need 172 all at once. They took shifts, so the gates were watched at all times.

Nehemiah 11:20 "And the residue of Israel, of the priests, [and] the Levites, [were] in all the cities of Judah, every one in his inheritance."

All of them, besides those that dwelt at Jerusalem. Were;

"In all the cities of Judah, everyone in his inheritance": The Israelites in the cities, houses, and estates enjoyed by their ancestors. And the priests and Levites in the cities given out of the several tribes.

These were just speaking of the others who did not live in Jerusalem, but lived in the adjoining towns and countryside.

Nehemiah 11:21 "But the Nethinim dwelt in Ophel: and Ziha and Gispa [were] over the Nethinim."

A high place or tower on the wall of Jerusalem (see 2 Chron. 27:3). "Ophel" (See note on 3:26).

"And Ziha, and Gispa, were over the Nethinim": Had the oversight of them, and took care that their needs were met.

Ophel was a fortified suburb of Jerusalem. It was not far from the temple hill. The Nethinim did servile work in the temple. They had to be near for this purpose. Ziha and Gispa were their leaders.

Nehemiah 11:22 "The overseer also of the Levites at Jerusalem [was] Uzzi the son of Bani, the son of Hashabiah, the son of Mattaniah, the son of Micha. Of the sons of Asaph, the singers [were] over the business of the house of God."

He was the supervisor of them, that looked after them that they did their work in ministering to the priests, as they had occasion for them. This man's genealogy is further traced through Hashabiah and Mattaniah, to Micha the son of Asaph (Neh. 11:17).

"Of the sons of Asaph, the singers were over the business of the house of God"; Which, according to Jarchi, was to take care of the repairs of the temple and other things. But one would think rather that part of the service of the house which lay in singing the songs of it is respected.

Uzzi seemed to be in charge of the business inside the house of God. Another name for Uzzi was Huzzi.

Nehemiah 11:23 "For [it was] the king's commandment concerning them, that a certain portion should be for the singers, due for every day."

Either of King David as some (see Neh. 12:24), or rather of the king of Persia.

"That a certain portion should be for the singers, due for every day": He settled a daily salary for them, to be paid out of his treasury. Having perhaps a peculiar respect for such sort of men, being a lover of music, by means of which they had a settled habitation in Jerusalem.

The king intended here, was Artaxerxes. It appears he had set aside some funds to care for the living of the singers every day.

Nehemiah 11:24 "And Pethahiah the son of Meshezabeel, of the children of Zerah the son of Judah, [was] at the king's hand in all matters concerning the people."

Nehemiah's name goes unmentioned in this chapter because his primary task was completed. The citizens had a new representative to King Artaxerxes, "Pethahiah". The twin brother of Pharez (Genesis 38:30).

"Was at the king's hand in all matters concerning the people": To speak for them to the king, as Jarchi. When they had a favor to ask of him, a petition to present to him, he delivered it for them, and by him the king returned the answer.

Pethahiah seemed to be in charge of anything, where the king was dealing with the Jewish people. His service was to take care of problems that might occur involving the king and the people.

Verses 25-36: The resettlement depicted in these verses goes beyond the confines of the new small province to include places that had belonged to Judah in the old days. The verses list towns in the former territories of Judah (verses 25-30), and Benjamin (verses 31-36), where other Jews lived.

These are the places where 90 percent of the people dwelt outside of Jerusalem (compare Ezra 2:21-23, 27, 34).

Nehemiah 11:25 "And for the villages, with their fields, [some] of the children of Judah dwelt at Kirjath-arba, and [in] the villages thereof, and at Dibon, and [in] the villages thereof, and at Jekabzeel, and [in] the villages thereof,"

The cities and villages in the country, an account of the inhabitants of them next follows.

"Some of the children of Judah dwelt at Kirjath-arba, and in the villages thereof": The same with Hebron (Joshua 15:54).

"And at Dibon": The same with Dimonah (Joshua 15:22).

"And at Jekabzeel, and in the villages thereof": The same with Kabzeel, one of the uttermost cities of the tribe of Judah southward (Joshua 15:21). Of which city was Benaiah, one of David's worthies (2 Sam. 23:20). From here to the end of (Neh. 11:30), mention is made of various cities and towns, in the tribe of Judah. Inhabited by the men of it, which are to be met with in (Joshua 15:1). Excepting Jeshua and Mekonah (Neh. 11:28), of which we nowhere else read.

Nehemiah 11:26-30 "And at Jeshua, and at Moladah, and at Beth-phelet," "And at Hazar-shual, and at Beer-sheba, and [in] the villages thereof," "And at Ziklag, and at Mekonah, and in the villages thereof," "And at En-rimmon, and at Zareah, and at Jarmuth," "Zanoah, Adullam, and [in] their villages, at Lachish, and the fields thereof, at Azekah, and [in] the villages thereof. And they dwelt from Beer-sheba unto the valley of Hinnom."

The villages, with their fields. The cities and villages in the country.

The above are a listing of the little villages where the people of Judah lived, who did not live inside the wall of Jerusalem. Some of them lived on farms around these areas, but most of them lived in the little villages and worked their fields from there. From Beer-sheba to the valley of Hinnom was speaking of Judah as far as it reached from the south and the north. There were 17 places listed for Judah.

Nehemiah 11:31-35 "The children also of Benjamin from Geba [dwelt] at Michmash, and Aija, and Beth-el, and [in] their villages," "[And] at Anathoth, Nob, Ananiah," "Hazor, Ramah, Gittaim," "Hadid, Zeboim, Neballat," "Lod, and Ono, the valley of craftsmen."

There were 15 if Geba was to be included in the little villages mentioned belonging to the descendants of Benjamin, who did not live in Jerusalem itself. Lod is called Lydda in the book of Acts. Perhaps they were woodworkers, which would cause them to be called the valley of craftsmen.

Nehemiah 11:36 "And of the Levites [were] divisions [in] Judah, [and] in Benjamin."

They were scattered about, some here and some there, in both these tribes, for the better instruction of the people.

Even though the tribes of Judah and Benjamin were both called Judah, they still separated into their individual tribes. They did not lose their distinction as being 2 of the tribes of Israel. The Levites were scattered among both tribes.

Nehemiah Chapter 11 Questions

1. The rulers of the people dwelt at _____.
2. In verse 1, why did they cast lots?
3. Why was it important for a tenth of the people to dwell in Jerusalem?
4. The country blessed all the men that did what?
5. The chief of the province was speaking of whom?
6. What was verse 4 a listing of?
7. How many of the sons of Perez dwelt at Jerusalem?
8. They were there to _____ the city.

9. How many of Benjamin came to dwell inside the city wall?
10. Joel had a job very similar to what the _____ of a modern city would have.
11. Who was his assistant?
12. Verses 10 and 11 were listing who?
13. Who was the head of the high priestly family?
14. The Levites, whose leaders were listed in verses 12 through 14, were a total of _____.
15. Shemaiah was descended from _____.
16. What was he in charge of?
17. Who were his assistants?
18. Who could you compare them with in our churches today?
19. What were Asaph's descendants called to do?
20. Mattaniah would be _____ _____ in a modern church.
21. What did the porters do?
22. Where did 90% of the general population live?
23. The Nethinim lived in _____.
24. Where was that located?
25. Who was overseer of the Levites at Jerusalem?
26. Who had ordered a certain portion to be given the singers?
27. Pethahiah was in charge of what?
28. How many little towns of Judah were there?
29. How many towns were there of Benjamin?
30. The Levites were _____ among the other tribes.