



The Book of Nehemiah

The Dedication of the Wall

Nehemiah 12:27-47

I. THE TIMING OF THE DEDICATION

A. After the Rebuilding of the Wall (see Nehemiah 6:15)

1. The wall was fully rebuilt and finished in Nehemiah 6:15.
2. The fully rebuilt wall included the wall itself and all the doors having been set upon the gates (Nehemiah 7:1).
3. There we had discussion as to whether the rebuilding of the wall took fifty-two days or twelve years. See notes above for details.

B. After Nehemiah's Return from Shushan

1. When the wall was complete, Nehemiah planned a trip to Shushan and gave the charge over Jerusalem to Hanani and Hananiah in his absence (Nehemiah 7:2).
2. Nehemiah 13:6 confirms that the trip Nehemiah planned was indeed accomplished and that he was in Shushan for "*certain days*" before obtaining leave of king Artaxerxes to return to Jerusalem.
3. Consider the following information in order to get a better understanding of the events surrounding Nehemiah's trip to Shushan and back.
 - a. Before Nehemiah left—Nehemiah journeyed to Shushan after the completion of the wall (see above).
 - b. While Nehemiah was gone—Nehemiah 13:4-5 talks of trouble that took place in Jerusalem and Nehemiah 13:6 confirms that this was accomplished in Nehemiah's absence.
 - c. After Nehemiah's return
 - (1) According to Nehemiah 13:1, the events of Nehemiah 12:27-47 and Nehemiah 13:1-3 took place on the same day. This is designated by Nehemiah 13:1's use of the phrase "*On that day.*"
 - a) This includes the dedication of the wall chronicled in Nehemiah 12:27-47.
 - b) This includes the separation from the mixed multitude spoken of in Nehemiah 13:1-3.
 - (2) Shortly after the separation from the mixed multitude, Nehemiah took action against Eliashib for his alliance with Tobiah (see Nehemiah 13:6-7). He did so after first providing the back story as to why action was necessary (see Nehemiah 13:4-5).



II. THE PREPARATION FOR THE DEDICATION (Nehemiah 12:27-30)

A. The Retrieval of the Levites (Nehemiah 12:27)

1. The timing of the retrieval—*“at the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem”*
2. The parties involved in the retrieval
 - a. Those retrieving—*“they”*
 - b. The retrieved—*“the Levites”*
3. The places involved in the retrieval
 - a. The people sought the Levites *“out of all their places.”*
 - b. They desired to bring the Levites to Jerusalem.
4. The purpose of the retrieval
 - a. The purpose stated—*“to keep the dedication”*
 - b. The purpose accomplished
 - (1) The spirit—*“with gladness”*
 - (2) The worship
 - a) With thanksgivings
 - b) With singing
 - (3) The resources
 - a) Cymbals
 - b) Psalteries
 - c) Harps

B. The Gathering of the Singers’ Sons (Nehemiah 12:28-29)

1. The people gathering—*“the sons of the singers”* (Nehemiah 12:28);
Note: While the Levites were retrieved, the sons of the singers gathered.
2. The places from which they gathered (Nehemiah 12:28-29)
 - a. Out of the plain country round about Jerusalem (Nehemiah 12:28)
 - b. From the villages of Netophathi (Nehemiah 12:28)
 - c. From the house of Gilgal (Nehemiah 12:29)
 - d. Out of the fields of Geba and Azmaveth (Nehemiah 12:29)
3. The explanation of the places—*“for the singers had builded them villages round about Jerusalem”* (Nehemiah 12:29)

C. The Purifying Work of the Priests and Levites (Nehemiah 12:30)

1. The workers in the purification
 - a. The priests
 - b. The Levites
2. The recipients of the purification
 - a. People
 - (1) Themselves
 - (2) The people
 - b. Objects
 - (1) The gates
 - (2) The wall



III. THE ORGANIZATION OF THE DEDICATION (Nehemiah 12:31-42)

A. The Introduction of the Organization (Nehemiah 12:31)

1. The leader in the organization—“*I*”
 - a. The “*I*” is a pronoun referring to Nehemiah.
 - b. This is the first usage of this first-person pronoun “*I*” by Nehemiah since Nehemiah 7:5. This further confirms that the passage has returned to the present situation.
 - c. One could read Nehemiah 1:1—Nehemiah 7:5, skip to Nehemiah 12:27—Nehemiah 13:31, and have a full account of the present situation.
2. The means of the organization
 - a. The princes of Judah (and others) were brought up upon the wall. Note: The princes of Judah would be the heads of each tribe (Numbers 1:16).
 - b. Two great companies were appointed.
3. The purpose of the organization—“*that gave thanks*”

B. The Positioning of the Organization (Nehemiah 12:31-39)

1. The location of the first company (Nehemiah 12:31-37)
 - a. The positioning of this company (Nehemiah 12:31, 37)
 - (1) On the right hand upon the wall toward the dung gate (Nehemiah 12:31)
 - (2) At the fountain gate even unto the water gate eastward (Nehemiah 12:37)
 - b. The people in this company (Nehemiah 12:32-36)
 - (1) Of the princes (Nehemiah 12:32)
 - a) Hoshaiiah
 - b) Half of the princes of Judah
 - (2) Of the priests (Nehemiah 12:33-34)
 - a) Azariah (Nehemiah 12:33)
 - b) Ezra (Nehemiah 12:33)
 - c) Meshullam (Nehemiah 12:33)
 - d) Judah (Nehemiah 12:34)
 - e) Benjamin (Nehemiah 12:34)
 - f) Shemaiah (Nehemiah 12:34)
 - g) Jeremiah (Nehemiah 12:34)
 - (3) Of the priests’ sons (Nehemiah 12:35-36)
 - a) Zechariah (Nehemiah 12:35)
 - a) Son of Jonathan
 - b) Son of Shemaiah
 - c) Son of Mattaniah
 - d) Son of Michaiah
 - e) Son of Zaccur
 - f) Son of Asaph



- b) His brethren (Nehemiah 12:36)
 - a) Shemaiah
 - b) Azarael
 - c) Milalai
 - d) Gilalai
 - e) Maai
 - f) Nethaneel
 - g) Judah
 - h) Hanani
- (4) Ezra, the scribe (Nehemiah 12:36)
- c. The practice of this company (Nehemiah 12:31, 35-36)
 - (1) They “*gave thanks*” (Nehemiah 12:31).
 - (2) They employed the use of instruments in doing so (Nehemiah 12:35-36).
 - a) Trumpets (Nehemiah 12:35)
 - b) Musical instruments of David the man of God (Nehemiah 12:36)
- 2. The location of the second company (Nehemiah 12:38-39)
 - a. The position of this company (Nehemiah 12:38-39)
 - (1) From beyond the tower of the furnaces even unto the broad wall (Nehemiah 12:38)
 - (2) From above the gate of Ephraim unto the sheep gate (Nehemiah 12:39)
 - a) Above the old gate
 - b) Above the fish gate
 - c) Above the tower of Hananeel
 - d) Above the tower of Meah
 - (3) They stood still in the prison gate (Nehemiah 12:39).
 - b. The people in this company (Nehemiah 12:38)
 - (1) The other company
 - (2) I—obviously Nehemiah
 - (3) The half of the people
 - c. The practice of this company—“*that gave thanks*” (Nehemiah 12:38)
- C. The Performance of the Organization (Nehemiah 12:40-42)
 - 1. The giving of thanks (Nehemiah 12:40)
 - a. The deeds—“*gave thanks in the house of God*”; Note: It would appear that the dedication service moved from the wall to the temple.
 - b. The people
 - (1) I—again, obviously Nehemiah
 - (2) The half of the rulers with me
 - 2. The playing of instruments (Nehemiah 12:41-42)
 - a. The deeds—“*with trumpets*” (Nehemiah 12:41)
 - b. The people (Nehemiah 12:41-42)



- (1) Their general identity—“*the priests*” (Nehemiah 12:41)
 - (2) Their specific identities (Nehemiah 12:41-42)
 - a) Eliakim (Nehemiah 12:41)
 - b) Maaseiah (Nehemiah 12:41)
 - c) Miniamin (Nehemiah 12:41)
 - d) Michaiiah (Nehemiah 12:41)
 - e) Elioenai (Nehemiah 12:41)
 - f) Zechariah (Nehemiah 12:41)
 - g) Hananiah (Nehemiah 12:41)
 - h) Maaseiah (Nehemiah 12:42)
 - i) Shemaiah (Nehemiah 12:42)
 - j) Eleazar (Nehemiah 12:42)
 - k) Uzzi (Nehemiah 12:42)
 - l) Jehohanan (Nehemiah 12:42)
 - m) Malchijah (Nehemiah 12:42)
 - n) Elam (Nehemiah 12:42)
 - o) Ezer (Nehemiah 12:42)
 3. The singing (Nehemiah 12:42)
 - a. The deeds—“*sang loud*”
 - b. The people
 - (1) The singers
 - (2) With Jezrahiah, their overseer
- IV. THE MANIFESTATIONS IN THE DEDICATION (Nehemiah 12:43)
- A. The Companions of the Dedication
 1. They offered “*great sacrifices.*”
 2. They rejoiced.
 - B. The Joy in the Dedication
 1. The source of the joy—“*God had made them rejoice*”
 2. The magnitude of the joy—“*with great joy*”
 3. The participants in the joy
 - a. They (the male leadership)
 - b. The wives also
 - c. The children
 4. The expression of the joy—“*the joy of Jerusalem was heard even afar off*”
- V. THE MOTIVATION FROM THE DEDICATION (Nehemiah 12:44-47)
- A. The Care for the Priests and Levites (Nehemiah 12:44)
 1. The connection in timing—“*at that time*”; Note: It would seem that the dedication service prompted the people to get some other things right.



2. The need for leaders
 - a. The identity of those appointed—“*some*”
 - b. The nature of the task appointed—“*over the chambers*”
 - (1) For the treasures
 - (2) For the offerings
 - (3) For the firstfruits
 - (4) For the tithes
 - c. The purpose of the task appointed—“*to gather into them out of the fields of the cities the portions of the law for the priests and Levites*”
 - d. The motivation of the task appointed—“*for Judah rejoiced for the priests and for the Levites that waited*”

- B. The Care for the Singers and Porters (Nehemiah 12:45-46)
 1. The participants in the work (Nehemiah 12:45)
 - a. The singers
 - b. The porters
 2. The nature of the work (Nehemiah 12:45-46)
 - a. They kept the ward of their God (Nehemiah 12:45).
 - b. They kept the ward of the purification (Nehemiah 12:45).
 - c. They sang songs of praise and thanksgiving unto God (Nehemiah 12:46).
 3. The origin of the work (Nehemiah 12:45-46)
 - a. The appointment of the work (Nehemiah 12:45)
 - (1) According to the commandment of David
 - (2) According to the commandment of Solomon, his son
 - b. The organization of the work (Nehemiah 12:46)
 - (1) The time of organization—“*in the days of David and Asaph of old*”
 - (2) The nature of organization
 - a) There were chief of the singers.
 - b) There were songs.

 - C. The Provisions for the Ministers (Nehemiah 12:47)
 1. The givers of the provisions—“*all Israel...gave*”
 2. The time of the provisions
 - a. In the days of Zerubbabel
 - b. In the days of Nehemiah
 3. The nature of the provisions
 - a. For the singers and porters
 - (1) Portions
 - (2) Every day
 - b. For the priests and Levites
 - (1) They sanctified holy things unto the Levites.
 - (2) The Levites sanctified the holy things unto the children of Aaron.



VI. SPIRITUAL LESSONS FROM THE DEDICATION

A. Lessons Concerning the People

1. The service of dedication demanded the purification of the participants. Before dedicating the wall, the priests and Levites purified themselves and the people (Nehemiah 12:30).
2. This dedication involved people who were simply doing what they were told to do. Submission is necessary to participate in God's service.
3. Some of the participants in the dedication received recognition with their names provided in the account. Some were only identified as "*the other company*" (Nehemiah 12:38). Others were not mentioned by name at all. God's work and worship will, at times, bring notoriety. At other times, it will bring obscurity. Serving God requires an ability to properly handle either of the above.
4. Nehemiah led in all aspects of Israel's dealings, but his leadership in the community was not simply secular. The man that led in building the wall also led in the worship of God. We need men like this today.
5. The rejoicing of the men spilled over to their wives and children (Nehemiah 12:43). The same should be true in our lives.

B. Lessons Concerning the Worship

1. The spirit of the worshippers was important to God. When the people sought out the Levites to come to Jerusalem, it was desired that they would keep the dedication "*with gladness*" (Nehemiah 12:27).
2. Technically, music was not necessary for a dedication service; however, it played an important role in the dedication of the wall. Obviously, music is integral in worship and can facilitate a right spirit toward God.
3. The purpose of the dedication service was to give God the walls and gates, but before those gifts were set apart for the Lord, they were purified (Nehemiah 12:30). Our gifts to the Lord should first be purified.
4. This service was ordered and yet that structure did not hinder the worship. People were put in specific locations and given instructions on how they were to thank and praise the Lord and this order yielded a glorious time of worship (consider 1 Corinthians 14:26-33).
5. The worship involved the use of musical instruments and the voices of singers. The passage does not mention it, but it is highly unlikely that the musicians played void of heart and spirit. The passage is clear that the "*singers sang loud*" (Nehemiah 12:42). God's worship should be given with heart and spirit by its offerers.
6. This dedication used songs and instruments from David's and Asaph's days (Nehemiah 12:36, 46). Culturally, much had changed, but the music of the past was chosen as the means to worship God.
7. A proper attitude in worship led the people to provide for the ministers who led them in that worship (Nehemiah 12:44-47). The same is true of those who have a right heart today.