

# THE BOOK OF NEHEMIAH

## Nehemiah's commission

**1**<sup>1</sup>THE NARRATIVE OF NEHEMIAH son of Hacaliah.

In the month Kislev in the twentieth year, when I was in Susa the capital city, <sup>2</sup>it happened that one of my brothers, Hanani, arrived with some others from Judah; and I asked them about Jerusalem and about the Jews, the families still remaining of those who survived the captivity. <sup>3</sup>They told me that those still remaining in the province who had survived the captivity were facing great trouble and reproach; the wall of Jerusalem was broken down and the gates had been destroyed by fire. <sup>4</sup>When I heard this news, I sat down and wept; I mourned for some days, fasting and praying to the God of heaven. <sup>5</sup>This was my prayer: 'O LORD God of heaven, O great and terrible God who faithfully keepest covenant with those who love thee and observe thy commandments, <sup>6</sup>let thy ear be attentive and thine eyes open, to hear my humble prayer which I make to thee day and night on behalf of thy servants the sons of Israel. I confess the sins which we Israelites have all committed against thee, and of which I and my father's house are also guilty. <sup>7</sup>We have wronged thee and have not observed the commandments, statutes, and rules which thou didst enjoin upon thy servant Moses. <sup>8</sup>Remember what thou didst impress upon him in these words: "If you are unfaithful, I will disperse you among the nations; <sup>9</sup>but if you return to me and observe my commandments and fulfil them, I will gather your children who have been scattered to the ends of the earth and will bring them home to the place which I have chosen as a dwelling for my Name."<sup>10</sup>They are thy servants and thy people, whom thou hast redeemed with thy great might and thy strong hand. <sup>11</sup>O Lord, let thy ear be attentive to my humble prayer, and to the prayer of thy servants who delight to revere thy name. Grant me good success this day, and put it into this man's heart to show me kindness.'

**2**<sup>1</sup>Now I was the king's cupbearer, and one day, in the month Nisan, in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, when his wine was ready, I took it up and handed it to the king, and as I stood before him I was feeling very unhappy. <sup>2</sup>He said to me, 'Why do you look so unhappy? You are not ill; it can be nothing but unhappiness.' I was much afraid <sup>3</sup>and answered, 'The king will live for ever. But how can I help looking unhappy when the city where my forefathers are buried lies waste and its gates are burnt?' <sup>4</sup>'What are you asking of me?' said the king. I prayed to the God of heaven, <sup>5</sup>and then I answered, 'If it please your majesty, and if I enjoy your favour, I beg you to send me to Judah, to the city where my forefathers are buried, so that I may rebuild it.' <sup>6</sup>The king, with the queen consort sitting beside him, asked me, 'How long will the journey last, and when will you return?' Then the king approved the request and let me go, and I told him how long I should be. <sup>7</sup>Then I said to the king, 'If it please your majesty, let letters be given me for the governors in the province of Beyond-Euphrates with orders to grant me all the help I need for my journey to Judah. <sup>8</sup>Let me have also a letter for Asaph, the keeper of your royal forests, instructing him to supply me with timber to make beams for the gates of the citadel, which adjoins the palace, and for the city wall, and for the

palace which I shall occupy.' The king granted my requests, for the gracious hand of my God was upon me. <sup>9</sup>I came in due course to the governors in the province of Beyond-Euphrates and presented to them the king's letters; the king had given me an escort of army officers with cavalry. <sup>10</sup>But when Sanballat the Horonite and the slave Tobiah, an Ammonite, heard this, they were much vexed that someone should have come to promote the interests of the Israelites.

## **The walls of Jerusalem rebuilt**

<sup>11</sup>WHEN I ARRIVED IN JERUSALEM, I waited three days. <sup>12</sup>Then I set out by night, taking a few men with me; but I told no one what my God was prompting me to do for Jerusalem. I had no beast with me except the one on which I myself rode. <sup>13</sup>I went out by night through the Valley Gate towards the Dragon Spring and the Dung Gate, and I inspected the places where the walls of Jerusalem had been broken down and her gates burnt. <sup>14</sup>Then I passed on to the Fountain Gate and the King's Pool; but there was no room for me to ride through. <sup>15</sup>I went up the valley in the night and inspected the city wall; then I re-entered the city by the Valley Gate. <sup>16</sup>So I arrived back without the magistrates knowing where I had been or what I was doing. I had not yet told the Jews, the priests, the nobles, the magistrates, or any of those who would be responsible for the work.

<sup>17</sup>Then I said to them, 'You see our wretched plight. Jerusalem lies in ruins, its gates destroyed by fire. Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem and be rid of the reproach.' <sup>18</sup>I told them how the gracious hand of my God had been upon me and also what the king had said to me. They replied, 'Let us start the rebuilding.' So they set about the work vigorously and to good purpose.

<sup>19</sup>But when Sanballat the Horonite, Tobiah the Ammonite slave, and Geshem the Arab heard of it, they jeered at us, asking contemptuously, 'What is this you are doing? Is this a rebellion against the king?' <sup>20</sup>But I answered them, 'The God of heaven will give us success. We, his servants, are making a start with the rebuilding. You have no stake, or claim, or traditional right in Jerusalem.'

**3**<sup>1</sup>Eliashib the high priest and his fellow-priests started work and rebuilt the Sheep Gate. They laid its beams [laid its beams: *prob. rdg, Heb consecrated it*] and set its doors in place; they carried the work as far as the Tower of the Hundred, as far as the Tower of Hananel, and consecrated it. <sup>2</sup>Next to Eliashib the men of Jericho worked; and next to them Zaccur son of Imri.

<sup>3</sup>The Fish Gate was built by the sons of Hassenaah; they laid its tie-beams and set its doors in place with their bolts and bars. <sup>4</sup>Next to them Meremoth son of Uriah, son of Hakkoz, repaired his section; next to them Meshullam son of Berechiah, son of Meshezabel; next to them Zadok son of Baana did the repairs; <sup>5</sup>and next again the men of Tekoa did the repairs, but their nobles would not demean themselves to serve their governor.

<sup>6</sup>The Jeshanah Gate [The Jeshanah Gate: *or The gate of the Old City*] was repaired by

Joiada son of Paseah and Meshullam son of Besodeiah; they laid its tie-beams and set its doors in place with their bolts and bars. <sup>7</sup>Next to them Melatiah the Gibeonite and Jadon the Meronothite, the men of Gibeon and Mizpah, did the repairs as far as the seat of the governor of the province of Beyond-Euphrates. <sup>8</sup>Next to them Uzziel son of Harhaiah, a goldsmith, did the repairs, and next Hananiah, a perfumer; they reconstructed Jerusalem as far as the Broad Wall. <sup>9</sup>Next to them Rephaiah son of Hur, ruler of half the district of Jerusalem, did the repairs. <sup>10</sup>Next to them Jedaiah son of Harumaph did the repairs opposite his own house; and next Hattush son of Hashabniah. <sup>11</sup>Malchiah son of Harim and Hasshub son of Pahath-moab repaired a second section including the Tower of the Ovens [*Or Furnaces*]. <sup>12</sup>Next to them Shallum son of Hallohesh, ruler of half the district of Jerusalem, did the repairs with the help of his daughters.

<sup>13</sup>The Valley Gate was repaired by Hanun and the inhabitants of Zanoah; they rebuilt it and set its doors in place with their bolts and bars, and they repaired a thousand cubits of the wall as far as the Dung Gate. <sup>14</sup>The Dung Gate itself was repaired by Malchiah son of Rechab, ruler of the district of Beth-hakkerem; he rebuilt [*prob. rdg, Heb he will rebuild*] it and set its doors in place with their bolts and bars. <sup>15</sup>The Fountain Gate was repaired by Shallun son of Col-hozeh, ruler of the district of Mizpah; he rebuilt it and roofed it and set its doors in place with their bolts and bars; and he built the wall of the Pool of Shelah next to the king's garden and onwards as far as the steps leading down from the City of David.

<sup>16</sup>After him Nehemiah son of Azbuk, ruler of half the district of Beth-zur, did the repairs as far as a point opposite the burial-place of David, as far as the artificial pool and the House of the Heroes [*Or and the barracks*]. <sup>17</sup>After him the Levites did the repairs: Rehum son of Bani and next to him Hashabiah, ruler of half the district of Keilah, did the repairs for his district. <sup>18</sup>After him their kinsmen did the repairs: Binnui son of Henadad, ruler of half the district of Keilah; <sup>19</sup>next to him Ezer son of Jeshua, ruler of Mizpah, repaired a second section opposite the point at which the ascent meets the escarpment; <sup>20</sup>after him Baruch son of Zabbai repaired a second section, from the escarpment to the door of the house of Eliashib the high priest. <sup>21</sup>After him Meremoth son of Uriah, son of Hakkoz, repaired a second section, from the door of the house of Eliashib to the end of the house of Eliashib.

<sup>22</sup>After him the priests of the neighbourhood of Jerusalem did the repairs. <sup>23</sup>Next Benjamin and Hasshub did the repairs opposite their own house; and next Azariah son of Maaseiah, son of Ananiah, did the repairs beside his house. <sup>24</sup>After him Binnui son of Henadad repaired a second section, from the house of Azariah as far as the escarpment and the corner. <sup>25</sup>Palal son of Uzai worked opposite the escarpment and the upper tower which projects from the king's house and belongs to the court of the guard. After him Pedaiah son of Parosh [*prob. rdg, Heb adds* <sup>26</sup>and the temple-servitors lodged on Ophel (*cp 11.21*)] worked as far as a point on the east opposite the Water Gate and the projecting tower. <sup>27</sup>Next the men of Tekoa repaired a second section, from a point opposite the great projecting tower as far as the wall of Ophel.

<sup>28</sup>Above the Horse Gate the priests did the repairs opposite their own houses. <sup>29</sup>After

them Zadok son of Immer did the repairs opposite his own house; after him Shemaiah son of Shecaniah, the keeper of the East Gate, did the repairs. <sup>30</sup>After him Hananiah son of Shelemiah and Hanun, sixth son of Zalaph, repaired a second section. After him Meshullam son of Berechiah did the repairs opposite his room. <sup>31</sup>After him Malchiah, a goldsmith, did the repairs as far as the house of the temple-servitors and the merchants, opposite the Mustering Gate, as far as the roof-chamber at the corner. <sup>32</sup>Between the roof-chamber at the corner and the Sheep Gate the goldsmiths and merchants did the repairs.

**4**<sup>1</sup>WHEN SANBALLAT HEARD that we were rebuilding the wall, he was very indignant; in his anger he jeered at the Jews <sup>2</sup>and said in front of his companions and of the garrison in Samaria, 'What do these feeble Jews think they are doing? Do they mean to reconstruct the place? Do they hope to offer sacrifice and finish the work in a day? Can they make stones again out of heaps of rubble, and burnt at that?' <sup>3</sup>Tobiah the Ammonite, who was beside him, said, 'Whatever it is they are building, if a fox climbs up their stone walls, it will break them down.'

<sup>4</sup>Hear us, our God, for they treat us with contempt. Turn back their reproach upon their own heads and let them become objects of contempt in a land of captivity. <sup>5</sup>Do not condone their guilt or let their sin be struck off the record, for they have openly provoked the builders.

<sup>6</sup>We built up the wall until it was continuous all round up to half its height; and the people worked with a will. <sup>7</sup>But when Sanballat and Tobiah, the Arabs and Ammonites and Ashdodites, heard that the new work on the walls of Jerusalem had made progress and that the filling of the breaches had begun, they were very angry; <sup>8</sup>and they all banded together to come and attack Jerusalem and to create confusion. <sup>9</sup>So we prayed to our God, and posted a guard day and night against them.

<sup>10</sup>But the men of Judah said, 'The labourers' strength has failed, and there is too much rubble; we shall never be able to rebuild the wall by ourselves.' <sup>11</sup>And our adversaries said, 'Before they know it or see anything, we shall be upon them and kill them, and so put an end to the work.' <sup>12</sup>When the Jews who lived among them came in to the city, they warned us many times that they would gather from every place where they lived to attack us, <sup>13</sup>and that they would station themselves on the lowest levels below the wall, on patches of open ground. Accordingly I posted my people by families, armed with swords, spears, and bows. <sup>14</sup>Then I surveyed the position and at once addressed the nobles, the magistrates, and all the people. 'Do not be afraid of them', I said. 'Remember the Lord, great and terrible, and fight for your brothers, your sons and daughters, your wives and your homes.' <sup>15</sup>Our enemies heard that everything was known to us, and that God had frustrated their plans; and we all returned to our work on the wall.

<sup>16</sup>From that day forward half the men under me were engaged in the actual building, while the other half stood by holding their spears, shields, and bows, and wearing coats of mail; and officers supervised all the people of Judah <sup>17</sup>who were engaged on the wall. The porters carrying the loads had one hand on the load and a weapon in the other.

<sup>18</sup>The builders had their swords attached to their belts as they built; the trumpeter was beside me. <sup>19</sup>I addressed the nobles, the magistrates, and all the people: 'The work is great and covers much ground', I said. 'We are isolated on the wall, each man at some distance from his neighbour. <sup>20</sup>Wherever the trumpet sounds, rally to us there, and our God will fight for us.' <sup>21</sup>So we continued with the work, half the men holding the spears, from daybreak until the stars came out. <sup>22</sup>At the same time I had said to the people, 'Let every man and his servant pass the night in Jerusalem, to act as a guard for us by night and a working party by day.' <sup>23</sup>So neither I nor my kinsmen nor the men under me nor my bodyguard ever took off our clothes, each keeping his right hand on [keeping his right hand on: *prob. rdg, Heb obscure*] his weapon.

**5**<sup>1</sup>THERE CAME A TIME when the common people, both men and women, raised a great outcry against their fellow-Jews. <sup>2</sup>Some complained that they were giving their sons and daughters as pledges [that they ... as pledges: *prob. rdg, Heb that they, their sons and daughters were many*] for food to keep themselves alive; <sup>3</sup>others that they were mortgaging their fields, vineyards, and houses to buy corn in the famine; <sup>4</sup>others again that they were borrowing money on their fields and vineyards to pay the king's tax. <sup>5</sup>'But', they said, 'our bodily needs are the same as other people's, our children are as good as theirs; yet here we are, forcing our sons and daughters to become slaves. Some of our daughters are already enslaved, and there is nothing we can do, because our fields and vineyards now belong to others.' <sup>6</sup>I was very angry when I heard their outcry and the story they told. <sup>7</sup>I mastered my feelings and reasoned with the nobles and the magistrates. I said to them, 'You are holding your fellow-Jews as pledges for debt.' I rebuked them severely <sup>8</sup>and said, 'As far as we have been able, we have bought back our fellow-Jews who had been sold to other nations; but you are now selling your own fellow-countrymen, and they will have to be bought back by us!' They were silent and had not a word to say. <sup>9</sup>I went on, 'What you are doing is wrong. You ought to live so much in the fear of God that you are above reproach in the eyes of the nations who are our enemies. <sup>10</sup>Speaking for myself, I and my kinsmen and the men under me are advancing them money and corn. Let us give up this taking of persons as pledges for debt. <sup>11</sup>Give back today to your debtors their fields and vineyards, their olive-groves and houses, as well as the income [*prob. rdg, Heb hundredth*] in money, and in corn, new wine, and oil.' <sup>12</sup>'We will give them back', they promised, 'and exact nothing more. We will do what you say.' So, summoning the priests, I put the offenders on oath to do as they had promised. <sup>13</sup>Then I shook out the fold of my robe and said, 'So may God shake out from his house and from his property every man who does not fulfil this promise. May he be shaken out like this and emptied!' And all the assembled people said 'Amen' and praised the LORD. And they did as they had promised.

<sup>14</sup>Moreover, from the time when I was appointed governor in the land of Judah, from the twentieth to the thirty-second year of King Artaxerxes, a period of twelve years, neither I nor my kinsmen drew the governor's allowance of food. <sup>15</sup>Former governors had laid a heavy burden on the people, exacting from them a daily toll [*a daily toll: prob. rdg, Heb obscure*] of bread and wine to the value of forty shekels of silver. Further, the men under them had tyrannized over the people; but, for fear of God, I did not behave like this. <sup>16</sup>I also put all my energy into the work on this wall, and I acquired no land; and all my men were gathered there for the work. <sup>17</sup>Also I had as guests at my

table a hundred and fifty Jews, including the magistrates, as well as men who came to us from the surrounding nations. <sup>18</sup>The provision which had to be made each day was an ox and six prime sheep; fowls also were prepared for me, and every ten days skins of wine in abundance. Yet, in spite of all this, I did not draw the governor's allowance, because the people were so heavily burdened. <sup>19</sup>Remember for my good, O God, all that I have done for this people.

<sup>6</sup><sup>1</sup>When the news came to Sanballat, Tobiah, Geshem the Arab, and the rest of our enemies, that I had rebuilt the wall and that not a single breach remained in it, although I had not yet set up the doors in the gates, <sup>2</sup>Sanballat and Geshem sent me an invitation to come and confer with them at Hakkephirim in the plain of Ono; this was a ruse on their part to do me harm. <sup>3</sup>So I sent messengers to them with this reply: 'I have important work on my hands at the moment; I cannot come down. Why should the work be brought to a standstill while I leave it and come down to you?' <sup>4</sup>They sent me a similar invitation four times, and each time I gave them the same answer. <sup>5</sup>On a fifth occasion Sanballat made a similar approach, but this time his messenger came with an open letter. <sup>6</sup>It ran as follows: 'It is reported among the nations – and Gashmu [*Geshem in 2.19 and 6.I, 2*] confirms it – that you and the Jews are plotting rebellion, and it is for this reason that you are rebuilding the wall, and – so the report goes – that you yourself want to be king. <sup>7</sup>You are also said to have put up prophets to proclaim in Jerusalem that Judah has a king, meaning yourself. The king will certainly hear of this. So come at once and let us talk the matter over.' <sup>8</sup>Here is the reply I sent: 'No such thing as you allege has taken place; you have made up the whole story.' <sup>9</sup>They were all trying to intimidate us, in the hope that we should then relax our efforts and that the work would never be finished. So I applied myself to it with greater energy.

<sup>10</sup>One day I went to the house of Shemaiah son of Delaiah, son of Mehetabel, for he was confined to his house. He said, 'Let us meet in the house of God, within the sanctuary, and let us shut the doors, for they are coming to kill you – they are coming to kill you by night.' <sup>11</sup>But I said, 'Should a man like me run away? And can a man like me go into the sanctuary and survive [*and survive: or to save his life*]? I will not go in.' <sup>12</sup>Then it dawned on me: God had not sent him. His prophecy aimed at harming me, and Tobiah and Sanballat had bribed him to utter it. <sup>13</sup>He had been bribed to frighten me into compliance and into committing sin; then they could give me a bad name and discredit me. <sup>14</sup>Remember Tobiah and Sanballat, O God, for what they have done, and also the prophetess Noadiah and all the other prophets who have tried to intimidate me.

<sup>15</sup>On the twenty-fifth day of the month Elul the wall was finished; it had taken fifty-two days. <sup>16</sup>When our enemies heard of it, and all the surrounding nations saw it [*Or were afraid*], they thought it a very wonderful achievement [*they thought ... achievement: prob. rdg, Heb they fell very much in their own eyes*], and they recognized that this work had been accomplished by the help of our God.

<sup>17</sup>All this time the nobles in Judah were sending many letters to Tobiah, and receiving replies from him. <sup>18</sup>For many in Judah were in league with him, because he was a son-in-law of Shecaniah son of Arah, and his son Jehohanan had married a daughter of Meshullam son of Berechiah. <sup>19</sup>They were always praising [*Or repeating rumours about*]

him in my presence and repeating to him what I said. Tobiah also wrote to me to intimidate me.

**7**<sup>1</sup>NOW WHEN THE WALL HAD BEEN REBUILT, and I had set the doors in place and the gate-keepers [*prob. rdg, Heb adds the singers and the Levites*] had been appointed, <sup>2</sup>I gave the charge of Jerusalem to my brother Hanani, and to Hananiah, the governor of the citadel, for he was trustworthy and God-fearing above other men. <sup>3</sup>And I said to them, 'The entrances to Jerusalem are not to be left open during the heat of the day; the gates must be kept shut and barred while the gate-keepers are standing at ease. Appoint guards from among the inhabitants of Jerusalem, some on sentry-duty and others posted in front of their own homes.'

<sup>4</sup>The city was large and spacious; there were few people in it and no houses had yet been rebuilt. <sup>5</sup>Then God prompted me to assemble the nobles, the magistrates, and the people, to be enrolled family by family. And I found the book of the genealogies of those who had been the first to come back. This is what I found written in it: <sup>6</sup> [*vv6-73: cp Ezra 2.1-70*] Of the captives whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had taken into exile, these are the people of the province who have returned to Jerusalem and Judah, each to his own town, <sup>7</sup>led by Zerubbabel, Jeshua [*Or Joshua (cp Hag. 1.1)*], Nehemiah, Azariah, Raamiah, Nahamani, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispereth, Bigvai, Nehum and Baanah.

The roll of the men of the people of Israel: <sup>8</sup>the family of Parosh, two thousand one hundred and seventy-two; <sup>9</sup>the family of Shephatiah, three hundred and seventy-two; <sup>10</sup>the family of Arah, six hundred and fifty-two; <sup>11</sup>the family of Pahath-moab, namely the families of Jeshua and Joab, two thousand eight hundred and eighteen; <sup>12</sup>the family of Elam, one thousand two hundred and fifty-four; <sup>13</sup>the family of Zattu, eight hundred and forty-five; <sup>14</sup>the family of Zaccai, seven hundred and sixty; <sup>15</sup>the family of Binnui, six hundred and forty-eight; <sup>16</sup>the family of Bebai, six hundred and twenty-eight; <sup>17</sup>the family of Azgad, two thousand three hundred and twenty-two; <sup>18</sup>the family of Adonikam, six hundred and sixty-seven; <sup>19</sup>the family of Bigvai, two thousand and sixty-seven; <sup>20</sup>the family of Adin, six hundred and fifty-five; <sup>21</sup>the family of Ater, namely that of Hezekiah, ninety-eight; <sup>22</sup>the family of Hashum, three hundred and twenty-eight; <sup>23</sup>the family of Bezai, three hundred and twenty-four; <sup>24</sup>the family of Harif, one hundred and twelve; <sup>25</sup>the family of Gibeon, ninety-five. <sup>26</sup>The men of Bethlehem and Netophah, one hundred and eighty-eight; <sup>27</sup>the men of Anathoth, one hundred and twenty-eight; <sup>28</sup>the men of Beth-azmoth, forty-two; <sup>29</sup>the men of Kiriath-jearim, Kephirah, and Beeroth, seven hundred and forty-three; <sup>30</sup>the men of Ramah and Geba, six hundred and twenty-one; <sup>31</sup>the men of Michmas, one hundred and twenty-two; <sup>32</sup>the men of Bethel and Ai, one hundred and twenty-three; <sup>33</sup>the men of [*prob. rdg, cp Ezra 2.29; Heb adds the other*] Nebo, fifty-two; <sup>34</sup>the men [*prob. rdg, Heb family (also in vv35-38)*] of the other Elam, one thousand two hundred and fifty-four; <sup>35</sup>the men of Harim, three hundred and twenty; <sup>36</sup>the men of Jericho, three hundred and forty-five; <sup>37</sup>the men of Lod, Hadid, and Ono, seven hundred and twenty-one; <sup>38</sup>the men of Senaah, three thousand nine hundred and thirty.

<sup>39</sup>Priests: the family of Jedaiah, of the line of Jeshua, nine hundred and seventy-three;

<sup>40</sup>the family of Immer, one thousand and fifty-two; <sup>41</sup>the family of Pashhur, one thousand two hundred and forty-seven; <sup>42</sup>the family of Harim, one thousand and seventeen.

<sup>43</sup>Levites: the families of Jeshua and [and: *prob. rdg, cp Ezra 2.40; Heb to*] Kadmiel, of the line of Hodvah, seventy-four. <sup>44</sup>Singers: the family of Asaph, one hundred and forty-eight. <sup>45</sup>Door-keepers: the family of Shallum, the family of Ater, the family of Talmon, the family of Akkub, the family of Hatita, and the family of Shobai, one hundred and thirty-eight in all.

<sup>46</sup>Temple-servitors: the family of Ziha, the family of Hasupha, the family of Tabbaoth, <sup>47</sup>the family of Keros, the family of Sia, the family of Padon, <sup>48</sup>the family of Lebanah, the family of Hagabah, the family of Shalmi, <sup>49</sup>the family of Hanan, the family of Giddel, the family of Gahar, <sup>50</sup>the family of Reaiah, the family of Rezin, the family of Nekoda, <sup>51</sup>the family of Gazzam, the family of Uzza, the family of Paseah, <sup>52</sup>the family of Besai, the family of the Meunim, the family of the Nephishesim [*Or Nephushesirn*], <sup>53</sup>the family of Bakbuk, the family of Hakupha, the family of Harhur, <sup>54</sup>the family of Bazlith [*Or Bazluth (cp Ezra 2.52)*], the family of Mehida, the family of Harsha, <sup>55</sup>the family of Barkos, the family of Sisera, the family of Temah, <sup>56</sup>the family of Neziah, and the family of Hatipha.

<sup>57</sup>Descendants of Solomon's servants: the family of Sotai, the family of Sophereth, the family of Perida, <sup>58</sup>the family of Jaalah, the family of Darkon, the family of Giddel, <sup>59</sup>the family of Shephatiah, the family of Hattil, the family of Pochereth-hazzebaim, and the family of Amon.

<sup>60</sup>The temple-servitors and the descendants of Solomon's servants amounted to three hundred and ninety-two in all.

<sup>61</sup>The following were those who returned from Tel-melah, Tel-harsha, Kerub, Addon, and Immer, but could not establish their father's family nor whether by descent they belonged to Israel: <sup>62</sup>the family of Delaiah, the family of Tobiah, the family of Nekoda, six hundred and forty-two. <sup>63</sup>Also of the priests: the family of Hobaiah, the family of Hakkoz, and the family of Barzillai who had married a daughter of Barzillai the Gileadite and went by his [*prob. rdg, cp 1Esdras 5.38; Heb their*] name. <sup>64</sup>These searched for their names among those enrolled in the genealogies, but they could not be found; they were disqualified for the priesthood as unclean, <sup>65</sup>and the governor forbade them to partake of the most sacred food until there should be a priest able to consult the Urim and the Thummim.

<sup>66</sup>The whole assembled people numbered forty-two thousand three hundred and sixty, <sup>67</sup>apart from their slaves, male and female, of whom there were seven thousand three hundred and thirty-seven; and they had two hundred and forty-five singers, men and women. <sup>68</sup>Their horses numbered seven hundred and thirty-six, their mules two hundred and forty-five, <sup>69</sup>their camels four hundred and thirty-five, and their asses six thousand seven hundred and twenty.

<sup>70</sup>Some of the heads of families gave contributions for the work. The governor gave to the treasury a thousand drachmas of gold, fifty tossing-bowls, and five hundred and thirty priestly robes. <sup>71</sup>Some of the heads of families gave for the fabric fund twenty thousand drachmas of gold and two thousand two hundred minas of silver. <sup>72</sup>What the rest of the people gave was twenty thousand drachmas of gold, two thousand minas of silver, and sixty-seven priestly robes.

<sup>73</sup>The priests, the Levites, and some of the people lived in Jerusalem and its suburbs [in Jerusalem and its suburbs: *prob. rdg, cp 1Esdras 5.46; Heb omitted*]; the door-keepers, the singers, the temple-servitors, and all other Israelites, lived in their own towns.

## **The law read by Ezra and the covenant renewed**

WHEN THE SEVENTH MONTH CAME, and the Israelites were now settled in their towns, **8**<sup>1</sup>the people assembled as one man in the square in front of the Water Gate, and Ezra the scribe [*Or doctor of the law*] was asked to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the LORD had enjoined upon Israel. <sup>2</sup>On the first day of the seventh month, Ezra the priest brought the law before the assembly, every man and woman, and all who were capable of understanding what they heard [*were capable ... heard: or would teach them to understand*]. <sup>3</sup>He read from it, facing the square in front of the Water Gate, from early morning till noon, in the presence of the men and the women, and those who could understand [*could understand: or were to instruct*], all the people listened attentively to the book of the law. <sup>4</sup>Ezra the scribe stood on a wooden platform made for the purpose [*Or for the address*], and beside him stood Mattithiah, Shema, Anaiah, Uriah, Hilkiah, and Maaseiah on his right hand, and on his left Pedaiah, Mishael, Malchiah, Hashum, Hashbaddanah, Zechariah and Meshullam. <sup>5</sup>Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was standing above them; and when he opened it, they all stood. <sup>6</sup>Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God, and all the people raised their hands and answered, 'Amen, Amen'; and they bowed their heads and prostrated themselves humbly before the LORD. <sup>7</sup>Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodiah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, the Levites [*prob. rdg, Heb and the Levites*], expounded the law to the people while they remained in their places. <sup>8</sup>They read from the book of the law of God clearly, made its sense plain and gave instruction in what was read.

<sup>9</sup>Then Nehemiah the governor and Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who instructed the people, said to them all, 'This day is holy to the LORD your God; do not mourn or weep.' For all the people had been weeping while they listened to the words of the law. <sup>10</sup>Then he said to them, 'You may go now; refresh yourselves with rich food and sweet drinks, and send a share to all who cannot provide for themselves; for this day is holy to our Lord. Let there be no sadness, for joy in the LORD is your strength.' <sup>11</sup>The Levites silenced the people, saying, 'Be quiet, for this day is holy; let there be no sadness.' <sup>12</sup>So all the people went away to eat and to drink, to send shares to others and to celebrate the day with great rejoicing, because they had understood what had been explained to them.

<sup>13</sup>On the second day the heads of families of the whole people, with the priests and the

Levites, assembled before Ezra the scribe to study the law. <sup>14</sup>And they found written in the law that the LORD had given commandment through Moses that the Israelites should live in arbours [*Or tabernacles or booths*] during the feast of the seventh month, <sup>15</sup>and that they should make proclamation throughout all their cities and in Jerusalem: 'Go out into the hills and fetch branches of olive and wild olive, myrtle and palm, and other leafy boughs to make arbours, as prescribed.' <sup>16</sup>So the people went out and fetched them and made arbours for themselves, each on his own roof, and in their courts and in the courts of the house of God, and in the square at the Water Gate and the square at the Ephraim Gate. <sup>17</sup>And the whole community of those who had returned from the captivity made arbours and lived in them, a thing that the Israelites had not done from the days of Joshua son of Nun to that day; and there was very great rejoicing. <sup>18</sup>And day by day, from the first day to the last, the book of the law of God was read. They kept the feast for seven days, and on the eighth day there was a closing ceremony, according to the rule.

**9**<sup>1</sup>ON THE TWENTY-FOURTH DAY of this month the Israelites assembled for a fast, clothed in sackcloth and with earth on their heads. <sup>2</sup>Those who were of Israelite descent separated themselves from all the foreigners; they took their places and confessed their sins and the iniquities of their forefathers. <sup>3</sup>Then they stood up in their places, and the book of the law of the LORD their God was read for one fourth of the day, and for another fourth they confessed and did obeisance to the LORD their God. <sup>4</sup>Upon the steps assigned to the Levites stood Jeshua, Bani, Kadmiel, Shebaniah, Bunni, Sherebiah, Bani, and Kenani, and they cried aloud to the LORD their God. <sup>5</sup>Then the Levites, Jeshua, Kadmiel, Bani, Hashabniah, Sherebiah, Hodiah, Shebaniah, and Pethahiah, said, 'Stand up and bless the LORD your God, saying: From everlasting to everlasting thy glorious name is blessed [*thy glorious name is blessed: prob. rdg, Heb and let them bless thy glorious name*] and exalted above all blessing and praise. <sup>6</sup>Thou alone art the LORD; thou hast made heaven, the highest heaven with all its host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. Thou preservest all of them, and the host of heaven worships thee. <sup>7</sup>Thou art the LORD, the God who chose Abram and brought him out of Ur of the Chaldees and named him Abraham. <sup>8</sup>Thou didst find him faithful to thee and didst make a covenant with him to give to him and to his descendants the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, and the Girgashites; and thou didst fulfil thy promise, for thou art just.

<sup>9</sup>And thou didst see the misery of our forefathers in Egypt and didst hear their cry for help at the Red Sea [*Or the Sea of Reeds*], <sup>10</sup>and didst work signs and portents against Pharaoh, all his courtiers and all the people of his land, knowing how arrogantly they treated our forefathers, and thou didst win for thyself a name that lives on to this day. <sup>11</sup>Thou didst tear the sea apart before them so that they went through the middle of it on dry ground; but thou didst cast their pursuers into the depths, like a stone cast into turbulent waters. <sup>12</sup>Thou didst guide them by a pillar of cloud in the day-time and by a pillar of fire at night to give them light on the road by which they travelled. <sup>13</sup>Thou didst descend upon Mount Sinai and speak with them from heaven, and give them right judgements and true laws, and statutes and commandments which were good, <sup>14</sup>and thou didst make known to them thy holy sabbath and give them commandments, statutes, and laws through thy servant Moses. <sup>15</sup>Thou gavest them bread from heaven to stay their hunger and thou broughtest water out from a rock for them to quench their

thirst, and thou didst bid them enter and take possession of the land which thou hadst solemnly sworn to give them. <sup>16</sup>But they, our forefathers, were arrogant and stubborn, and disobeyed thy commandments. <sup>17</sup>They refused to obey and did not remember the miracles which thou didst accomplish among them; they remained stubborn, and they appointed a man to lead them back to slavery in Egypt. But thou art a forgiving god, gracious and compassionate, long-suffering and ever constant, and thou didst not forsake them. <sup>18</sup>Even when they made the image of a bull-calf in metal and said, "This is your god who brought you up from Egypt", and were guilty of great blasphemies, <sup>19</sup>thou in thy great compassion didst not forsake them in the wilderness. The pillar of cloud did not fail to guide them on their journey by day nor the pillar of fire by night to give them light on the road by which they travelled. <sup>20</sup>Thou gavest thy good spirit to instruct them; thy manna thou didst not withhold from them, and thou gavest them water to quench their thirst. <sup>21</sup>Forty years long thou didst sustain them in the wilderness, and they lacked nothing; their clothes did not wear out and their feet were not swollen.

<sup>22</sup>Thou gavest them kingdoms and peoples, allotting these to them as spoils of war. Thus they took possession of the land of Sihon king of Heshbon and the land of Og king of Bashan. <sup>23</sup>Thou didst multiply their descendants so that they became countless as the stars in the sky, bringing them into the land which thou didst promise to give to their forefathers as their possession. <sup>24</sup>When their descendants entered the land and took possession of it, thou didst subdue before them the Canaanites who inhabited it and gavest these, kings and peoples alike, into their hands to do with them whatever they wished. <sup>25</sup>They captured fortified cities and a fertile land and took possession of houses full of all good things, rock-hewn cisterns, vineyards, olive-trees, and fruit-trees in abundance; so they ate and were satisfied and grew fat and found delight in thy great goodness. <sup>26</sup>But they were defiant and rebelled against thee; they turned their backs on thy law and killed thy prophets, who solemnly warned them to return to thee, and they were guilty of great blasphemies. <sup>27</sup>Because of this thou didst hand them over to their enemies who oppressed them. But when, in the time of their oppression, they cried to thee for help, thou heardest them from heaven and in thy great compassion didst send them saviours to save them from their enemies. <sup>28</sup>But when they had had a respite, they once more did what was wrong in thine eyes; and thou didst abandon them to their enemies who held them in subjection. But again they cried to thee for help, and many times over thou heardest them from heaven and in thy compassion didst save them. <sup>29</sup>Thou didst solemnly warn them to return to thy law, but they grew arrogant and did not heed thy commandments; they sinned against thy ordinances, which bring life to him who keeps them. Stubbornly they turned away in mulish obstinacy and would not obey. <sup>30</sup>Many years thou wast patient with them and didst warn them by thy spirit through thy prophets; but they would not listen. Therefore thou didst hand them over to foreign peoples. <sup>31</sup>Yet in thy great compassion thou didst not make an end of them nor forsake them; for thou art a gracious and compassionate god.

<sup>32</sup>Now therefore, our God, thou great and mighty and terrible God, who faithfully keepest covenant, do not make light of the hardships that have befallen us – our kings, our princes, our priests, our prophets, our forefathers, and all thy people – from the days of the kings of Assyria to this day. <sup>33</sup>In all that has befallen us thou hast been just, thou hast kept faith, but we have done wrong. <sup>34</sup>Our kings, our princes, our priests, and

our forefathers did not keep thy law nor heed thy commandments and the warnings which thou gavest them. <sup>35</sup>Even under their own kings, while they were enjoying the great prosperity which thou gavest them and the broad and fertile land which thou didst bestow upon them, they did not serve thee; they did not abandon their evil ways. <sup>36</sup>Today we are slaves, slaves here in the land which thou gavest to our forefathers so that they might eat its fruits and enjoy its good things. <sup>37</sup>All its produce now goes to the kings whom thou hast set over us because of our sins. They have power over our bodies, and they do as they please with our beasts, while we are in dire distress.

<sup>38</sup>Because of all this we make a binding declaration in writing, and our princes, our Levites, and our priests witness the sealing.

**10**<sup>1</sup>Those who witness the sealing are Nehemiah the governor, son of Hacaliah, Zedekiah, <sup>2</sup>Seraiah, Azariah, Jeremiah, <sup>3</sup>Pashhur, Amariah, Malchiah, <sup>4</sup>Hattush, Shebaniah, Malluch, <sup>5</sup>Harim, Meremoth, Obadiah, <sup>6</sup>Daniel, Ginnethon, Baruch, <sup>7</sup>Meshullam, Abiah, Mijamin, <sup>8</sup>Maaziah, Bilgai, Shemaiah; these are the priests. <sup>9</sup>The Levites: Jeshua [*prob. rdg, Heb and Jeshua*] son of Azaniah, Binnui of the family of Henadad, Kadmiel; <sup>10</sup>and their brethren, Shebaniah, Hodiah [*Or, with Ezra 2.40, Hodaviah*], Kelita, Pelaiah, Hanan, <sup>11</sup>Mica, Rehob, Hashabiah, <sup>12</sup>Zaccur, Sherebiah, Shebaniah, <sup>13</sup>Hodiah, Bani, Beninu. <sup>14</sup>The chiefs of the people: Parosh, Pahath-moab, Elam, Zattu, Bani, <sup>15</sup>Bunni, Azgad, Bebai, <sup>16</sup>Adoniah, Bigvai, Adin, <sup>17</sup>Ater, Hezekiah, Azzur, <sup>18</sup>Hodiah, Hashum, Bezai, <sup>19</sup>Hariph, Anathoth, Nebai [*Or Nobai*], <sup>20</sup>Magpiash, Meshullam, Hezir, <sup>21</sup>Meshezabel, Zadok, Jaddua, <sup>22</sup>Pelathiah, Hanan, Ananiah, <sup>23</sup>Hoshea, Hananiah, Hasshub, <sup>24</sup>Hallohesh, Pilha, Shobek, <sup>25</sup>Rehum, Hashabnah, Maaseiah, <sup>26</sup>Ahiah, Hanan, Anan, <sup>27</sup>Malluch, Harim, Baanah.

<sup>28</sup>The rest of the people, the priests, the Levites, the door-keepers, the singers, the temple-servitors, with their wives, their sons, and their daughters, all who are capable of understanding, all who for the sake of the law of God have kept themselves apart from the foreign population, <sup>29</sup>join with the leading brethren [*the leading brethren: prob. rdg, Heb their brethren, their leading men*], when the oath is put to them, in swearing to obey God's law given by Moses the servant of God, and to observe and fulfil all the commandments of the LORD our Lord, his rules and his statutes.

<sup>30</sup>We will not give our daughters in marriage to the foreign population or take their daughters for our sons. <sup>31</sup>If on the sabbath these people bring in merchandise, especially corn, for sale, We will not buy from them on the sabbath or on any holy day. We will forgo the crops of the seventh year and release every person still held as a pledge for debt.

<sup>32</sup>We hereby undertake the duty of giving yearly the third of a shekel for the service of the house of our God, <sup>33</sup>for the Bread of the Presence, the regular grain-offering and whole-offering, the sabbaths, the new moons, the appointed seasons, the holy-gifts, and the sin-offerings to make expiation on behalf of Israel, and for all else that has to be done in the house of our God. <sup>34</sup>We, the priests, the Levites, and the people, have cast lots for the wood-offering, so that it may be brought into the house of our God by each family in turn, at appointed times, year by year, to burn upon the altar of the LORD our

God, as prescribed in the law. <sup>35</sup>We undertake to bring the firstfruits of our land and the firstfruits of every fruit-tree, year by year, to the house of the LORD; <sup>36</sup>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 prescribed in the law, and the first-born of our herds and of our flocks; <sup>37</sup>and to bring to the priests the first kneading of our dough, and the first of the fruit of every tree, of the new wine and of the oil, to the store-rooms in the house of our God; and to bring to the Levites the tithes from our land, for it is the Levites who collect the tithes in all our farming villages. <sup>38</sup>The Aaronite priest shall be with the Levites when they collect the tithes; and the Levites shall bring up one tenth of the tithes to the house of our God, to the appropriate rooms in the storehouse. <sup>39</sup>For the Israelites and the Levites shall bring the contribution of corn, new wine, and oil to the rooms where the vessels of the sanctuary are kept, and where the ministering priests, the door-keepers, and the singers are lodged. We will not neglect the house of our God.'

**11**<sup>1</sup>THE LEADERS OF THE PEOPLE settled in Jerusalem; and the rest of the people cast lots to bring one in every ten to live in Jerusalem, the holy city, while the remaining nine lived in other towns. <sup>2</sup>And the people were grateful to all those who volunteered to live in Jerusalem.

<sup>3</sup>These are the chiefs of the province who lived in Jerusalem; but, in the towns of Judah, other Israelites, priests, Levites, temple-servitors, and descendants of Solomon's servants lived on their own property, in their own towns. <sup>4</sup>Some members of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin lived in Jerusalem. Of Judah: Athaiah son of Uzziah, son of Zechariah, son of Amariah, son of Shephatiah, son of Mahalalel of the family of Perez, <sup>6</sup> [v5 and v6 transposed without this being noted] all of whose family, to the number of four hundred and sixty-eight men of substance, lived in Jerusalem; <sup>5</sup>and Maaseiah son of Baruch, son of Col-hozeh, son of Hazaiiah, son of Adaiah, son of Joiarib, son of Zechariah of the Shelanite family.

<sup>7</sup>These were the Benjamites: Sallu son of Meshullam, son of Joed, son of Pedaiah, son of Kolaiah, son of Maaseiah, son of Ithiel, son of Isaiah, <sup>8</sup>and his kinsmen Gabbai and Sallai, nine hundred and twenty-eight in all. <sup>9</sup>Joel son of Zichri was their overseer, and Judah son of Hassenuah was second over the city [second over the city: *or over the second quarter of the city*].

<sup>10</sup>Of the priests: Jedaiah son of Joiarib, son of [son of: *prob. rdg, Heb obscure*] Seraiah, son of Hilkiah, son of Meshullam, son of Zadok, son of Meraioth, son of Ahitub, supervisor of the house of God, <sup>12</sup>and his [*prob. rdg, Heb their*] brethren responsible for the work in the temple, eight hundred and twenty-two in all; and Adaiah son of Jeroham, son of Pelaliah, son of Amzi, son of Zechariah, son of Pashhur, son of Malchiah, <sup>13</sup>and his brethren, heads of fathers' houses, two hundred and forty-two in all; and Amasai [*prob. rdg, Heb Amshsai*] son of Azarel, son of Ahzai, son of Meshillemoth, son of Immer, <sup>14</sup>and his brethren, men of substance, a hundred and twenty-eight in all; their overseer was Zabdiel son of Haggadolim.

<sup>15</sup>And of the Levites: Shemaiah son of Hasshub, son of Azrikam, son of Hashabiah, son

of Bunni; <sup>16</sup>and Shabbethai and Jozabad of the chiefs of the Levites, who had charge of the external business of the house of God; <sup>17</sup>and Mattaniah son of Micah, son of Zabdi, son of Asaph, who as precentor led the prayer of thanksgiving, and Bakbukiah who held the second place among his brethren; and Abda son of Shammua, son of Galal, son of Jeduthun. <sup>18</sup>The number of Levites in the holy city was two hundred and eighty-four in all.

<sup>19</sup>The gate-keepers who kept guard at the gates were Akkub, Talmon, and their brethren, a hundred and seventy-two. <sup>20</sup>The rest of the Israelites [*prob. rdg, Heb adds the levitical priests*] were in all the towns of Judah, each man on his own inherited property. <sup>21</sup>But the temple-servitors lodged on Ophel, and Ziha and Gishpa were in charge of them.

<sup>22</sup>The overseer of the Levites in Jerusalem was Uzzi son of Bani, son of Hashabiah, son of Mattaniah, son of Mica, of the family of Asaph the singers, for the supervision of the business of the house of God. <sup>23</sup>For they were under the king's orders, and there was obligatory duty for the singers every day. <sup>24</sup>Pethahiah son of Meshezabel, of the family of Zerah son of Judah, was the king's adviser on all matters affecting the people.

<sup>25</sup>As for the hamlets with their surrounding fields: some of the men of Judah lived in Kiriath-arba and its villages, in Dibon and its villages, and in Jekabzeel and its hamlets, <sup>26</sup>in Jeshua, Moladah, and Bethpelet, <sup>27</sup>in Hazarshual, and in Beersheba and its villages, <sup>28</sup>in Ziklag and in Meconah and its villages, <sup>29</sup>in Enrimmon, Zorah, and Jarmuth, <sup>30</sup>in Zanoah, Adullam, and their hamlets, in Lachish and its fields and Azekah and its villages. Thus they occupied the country from Beersheba to the Valley of Hinnom.

<sup>31</sup>The men of Benjamin lived in [*prob. rdg, Heb from*] Geba, Michmash, Aiah, and Bethel with its villages, <sup>32</sup>in Anathoth, Nob, and Ananiah, <sup>33</sup>in Hazor, Ramah, and Gittaim, <sup>34</sup>in Hadid, Zeboim, and Neballat, <sup>35</sup>in Lod, Ono, and [*and: prob. rdg, Heb omitted*] Geharashim [*Or and the Valley of Woods or and the Valley of Craftsmen*]. <sup>36</sup>And certain divisions of the Levites in Judah were attached to Benjamin.

**12**<sup>1</sup>These are the priests and the Levites who came back with Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua [*Or Joshua*]: Seraiah, Jeremiah, Ezra, <sup>2</sup>Amariah, Malluch, Hattush, <sup>3</sup>Shecaniah, Rehum, Meremoth, <sup>4</sup>Iddo, Ginnethon, Abiah, <sup>5</sup>Mijamin, Maadiah, Bilgah, <sup>6</sup>Shemaiah, Joiarib, Jedaiah, <sup>7</sup>Sallu, Amok, Hilkiah, Jedaiah. These were the chiefs of the priests and of their brethren in the days of Jeshua.

<sup>8</sup>And the Levites: Jeshua, Binnui, Kadmiel, Sherebiah, Judah, and Mattaniah, who with his brethren was in charge of the songs of thanksgiving. <sup>9</sup>And Bakbukiah and Unni their brethren stood opposite them in the service. <sup>10</sup>And Jeshua was the father of Joiakim, Joiakim the father of Eliashib, Eliashib of Joiada, <sup>11</sup>Joiada the father of Jonathan, and Jonathan the father of Jaddua. <sup>12</sup>And in the days of Joiakim the priests who were heads of families were: of Seraiah, Meraiah; of Jeremiah, Hananiah; <sup>13</sup>of Ezra, Meshullam; of Amariah, Jehohanan; <sup>14</sup>of Malluch [*prob. rdg, Heb Malluchi or Melichu*] Jonathan; of Shebaniah, Joseph; <sup>15</sup>of Harim, Adna; of Meraioth, Helkai; <sup>16</sup>of Iddo, Zechariah; of

Ginnethon, Meshullam; <sup>17</sup>of Abiah, Zichri; of Miniamin [*A name is missing here*]; of Moadiah, Piltai; <sup>18</sup>of Bilgah, Shammua; of Shemaiah, Jehonathan; <sup>19</sup>of Joiarib, Mattenai; of Jedaiah, Uzzi; <sup>20</sup>of Sallu [*prob. rdg, cp v7; Heb Sallai*], Kallai; of Amok, Eber; <sup>21</sup>of Hilkiah, Hashabiah; of Jedaiah, Nethaneel.

<sup>22</sup>[*prob. rdg, Heb prefixes The Levites*] The heads of the priestly families [heads ... families: *prob. rdg, Heb heads of the families and the priests*] in the days of Eliashib, Joiada, Johanan, and Jaddua were recorded down to the reign of Darius the Persian.

<sup>23</sup>The heads of the levitical families were recorded in the annals only down to the days of Johanan the grandson of Eliashib. <sup>24</sup>And the chiefs of the Levites: Hashabiah, Sherebiah, Jeshua, Binnui [*Jeshua, Binnui: prob. rdg, Heb and Jeshua son of*], Kadmiel, with their brethren in the other turn of duty, to praise and to give thanks, according to the commandment of David the man of God, turn by turn. <sup>25</sup>Mattaniah, Bakbukiah, Obadiah, Meshullam, Talmon, and Akkub were gate-keepers standing guard at the gatehouses. <sup>26</sup>This was the arrangement in the days of Joiakim son of Jeshua, son of Jozadak, and in the days of Nehemiah the governor and of Ezra the priest and scribe.

<sup>27</sup>At the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem they sought out the Levites in all their settlements, and brought them to Jerusalem to celebrate the dedication with [*prob. rdg, Heb and*] rejoicing, with thanksgiving and song, to the accompaniment of cymbals, lutes, and harps. <sup>28</sup>And the Levites [*the Levites: prob. rdg, Heb the sons of*], the singers, were assembled from the district round Jerusalem and from the hamlets of the Netophathites, <sup>29</sup>also from Beth-gilgal and from the region of Geba and Beth-azmoth [*Beth-azmoth: prob. rdg, cp 7.28, Heb Azmoth*], for the singers had built themselves hamlets in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem. <sup>30</sup>The priests and the Levites purified themselves; and they purified the people, the gates, and the wall. <sup>31</sup>Then I brought the leading men of Judah up on to the city wall, and appointed two great choirs to give thanks. One went in procession [*One ... procession: prob. rdg, Heb Processions*] to the right, going along the wall to the Dung Gate; <sup>32</sup>and after it went Hoshaiiah with half the leading men of Judah, <sup>33</sup>and Azariah, Ezra, Meshullam, <sup>34</sup>Judah, Benjamin, Shemaiah, and Jeremiah; <sup>35</sup>and certain of the priests with trumpets: Zechariah son of Jonathan, son of Shemaiah, son of Mattaniah, son of Micaiah, son of Zaccur, son of Asaph, <sup>36</sup>and his kinsmen, Shemaiah, Azarel, Milalai, Gilalai, Maai, Nethaneel, Judah, and Hanani, with the musical instruments of David the man of God; and Ezra the scribe led them. <sup>37</sup>They went past the Fountain Gate and thence straight forward by the steps up to the City of David, by the ascent to the city wall, past the house of David, and on to the Water Gate on the east. <sup>38</sup>The other thanksgiving choir went to the left [*to the left: prob. rdg, Heb to the front*], and I followed it with half the leading men of [*the leading men of: prob. rdg, Heb omitted*] the people, continuing along the wall, past the Tower of the Ovens [*Or Furnaces*] to the Broad Wall, <sup>39</sup>and past the Ephraim Gate, and over the Jeshanah Gate [*the Jeshanah Gate: or the gate of the Old City*], and over the Fish Gate, taking in the Tower of Hananel and the Tower of the Hundred, as far as the Sheep Gate; and they halted at the Gate of the Guardhouse. <sup>40</sup>So the two thanksgiving choirs took their place in the house of God, and I and half the magistrates with me; <sup>41</sup>and the priests Eliakim, Maaseiah, Miniamin, Micaiah, Elioenai, Zechariah, and Hananiah, with trumpets; <sup>42</sup>and Maaseiah, Shemaiah, Eleazar, Uzzi, Jehohanan, Malchiah, Elam, and Ezer. The singers, led by Izrahiah, raised their voices. <sup>43</sup>A great sacrifice was celebrated

that day, and they all rejoiced because God had given them great cause for rejoicing; the women and children rejoiced with them. And the rejoicing in Jerusalem was heard a long way off.

<sup>44</sup>On that day men were appointed to take charge of the store-rooms for the contributions, the firstfruits, and the tithes, to gather in the portions required by the law for the priests and Levites according to the extent of the farmlands round the towns; for all Judah was full of rejoicing at the ministry of the priests and Levites. <sup>45</sup>And they performed the service of their God and the service of purification, as did the singers and the door-keepers, according to the rules laid down by David and his son Solomon. <sup>46</sup>For it was in the days of David that Asaph took the lead as chief of the singers and director [*prob. rdg, Heb song*] of praise and thanksgiving to God. <sup>47</sup>And in the days of Zerubbabel and of Nehemiah all Israel gave the portions for the singers and the door-keepers as each day required; and they set apart the portion for the Levites, and the Levites set apart the portion for the Aaronites.

## **Nehemiah's reforms**

**13**<sup>1</sup>ON THAT DAY AT THE PUBLIC READING from the book of Moses, it was found to be laid down that no Ammonite or Moabite should ever enter the assembly of God, <sup>2</sup>because they did not meet the Israelites with food and water but hired Balaam to curse them, though our God turned the curse into a blessing. <sup>3</sup>When the people heard the law, they separated from Israel all who were of mixed blood.

<sup>4</sup>But before this, Eliashib the priest, who was appointed over the store-rooms of the house of our God, and who was connected by marriage with Tobiah, <sup>5</sup>had provided for his use a large room where formerly they had kept the grain-offering, the incense, the temple vessels, the tithes of corn, new wine, and oil prescribed for the Levites, singers, and door-keepers, and the contributions for the priests. <sup>6</sup>All this time I was not in Jerusalem because, in the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes king of Babylon, I had gone to the king. <sup>7</sup>Some time later, I asked permission from him and returned to Jerusalem. There I discovered the wicked thing that Eliashib had done for Tobiah's sake in providing him with a room in the courts of the house of God. <sup>8</sup>I was greatly displeased and threw all Tobiah's belongings out of the room. <sup>9</sup>Then I gave orders that the room should be purified, and that the vessels of the house of God, with the grain-offering and incense, should be put back into it.

<sup>10</sup>I also learnt that the Levites had not been given their portions; both they and the singers, who were responsible for their respective duties, had made off to their farms. <sup>11</sup>So I remonstrated with the magistrates and said, 'Why is the house of God deserted?' And I recalled the men and restored them to their places. <sup>12</sup>Then all Judah brought the tithes of corn, new wine, and oil into the storehouses; <sup>13</sup>and I put in charge of them Shelemiah the priest, Zadok the accountant, and Pedaiah a Levite, with Hanan son of Zaccur, son of Mattaniah, as their assistant, for they were considered trustworthy men; their duty was the distribution of their shares to their brethren. <sup>14</sup>Remember this, O God, to my credit, and do not wipe out of thy memory the devotion which I have shown in the house of my God and in his service.

<sup>15</sup>In those days I saw men in Judah treading winepresses on the sabbath, collecting quantities of produce and piling it on asses – wine, grapes, figs, and every kind of load, which they brought into Jerusalem on the sabbath; and I protested to them about selling food on that day. <sup>16</sup>Tyrians living in Jerusalem also brought in fish and all kinds of merchandise and sold them on the sabbath to the people of Judah, even in Jerusalem. <sup>17</sup>Then I complained to the nobles of Judah and said to them, 'How dare you profane the sabbath in this wicked way? <sup>18</sup>Is not this just what your fathers did, so that our God has brought all this evil on us and on this city? Now you are bringing more wrath upon Israel by profaning the sabbath.' <sup>19</sup>When the entrances to Jerusalem had been cleared in preparation for the sabbath, I gave orders that the gates should be shut and not opened until after the sabbath. And I appointed some of the men under me to have charge of the gates so that no load might enter on the sabbath. <sup>20</sup>Then on one or two occasions the merchants and all kinds of traders camped just outside Jerusalem, <sup>21</sup>but I cautioned them. 'Why are you camping in front of the city wall?' I asked. 'If you do it again, I will take action against you.' After that they did not come on the sabbath again, <sup>22</sup>And I commanded the Levites who were to purify themselves and take up duty as guards at the gates, to ensure that the sabbath was kept holy. Remember this also to my credit, O God, and spare me in thy great love.

<sup>23</sup>In those days also I saw that some Jews had married women from Ashdod, Ammon, and Moab. <sup>24</sup>Half their children spoke the language of Ashdod or of the other peoples and could not speak the language of the Jews. <sup>25</sup>I argued with them and reviled them, I beat them and tore out their hair; and I made them swear in the name of God: 'We will not marry our daughters to their sons, or take any of their daughters in marriage for our sons or for ourselves.' <sup>26</sup>'Was it not for such women', I said, 'that King Solomon of Israel sinned? Among all the nations there was no king like him; he was loved by his God, and God made him king over all Israel; nevertheless even he was led by foreign women into sin. <sup>27</sup>Are we then to follow your example and commit this grave offence, breaking faith with our God by marrying foreign women?'

<sup>28</sup>Now one of the sons of Joiada son of Eliashib the high priest had married a daughter of Sanballat the Horonite; therefore I drove him out of my presence. <sup>29</sup>Remember, O God, to their shame that they have defiled the priesthood and the covenant of the priests [*Or* priesthood] and the Levites.

<sup>30</sup>Thus I purified them from everything foreign, and I made the Levites and the priests resume the duties of their office; <sup>31</sup>I also made provision for the wood-offering, at appointed times, and for the firstfruits. Remember me for my good, O God.