

Nehemiah

Return to Me

Teaching Series by Pastor Trey Graham

Nehemiah prayed... “Remember the word which You commanded Your servant Moses, saying, ‘If you are unfaithful I will scatter you among the peoples; but if you **return to Me** and keep My commandments and do them, though those of you who have been scattered were in the most remote part of the heavens, I will gather them from there and will bring them to the place where I have chosen to cause My name to dwell.’”

Nehemiah 1:8-9

So **the wall was completed** on the twenty-fifth of the month Elul, **in fifty-two days**. Nehemiah 6:15

TIMELINE

- *Now it happened in the month **Chislev** [**late November – early December**], in the twentieth year, while I was in Susa the capitol, that Hanani, one of my brothers, and some men from Judah came ... Nehemiah 1:1a
- *And it came about in the month **Nisan** [**March/April**], in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, that wine was before him... Nehemiah 2:1a
- *Nehemiah's trip to Jerusalem took 2-3 months (**April or May to June or July**)
- *Construction work must have begun on 3rd day of **Av** [**late July**]
- *Wall was completed on the twenty-fifth of the month **Elul** [**late September**], 10 months after Nehemiah learned of the problem & after 2 months of work

They read from the book, from the
law [תּוֹרָה torah] of God, translating
to give the sense **so that they**
understood the reading.

Nehemiah 8:8

While they stood in their place, they read from the book of the law [תּוֹרָה torah] of the Lord their God for a fourth of the day [3 hours]; and for another fourth [3 hours] they confessed and worshiped the Lord their God. Nehemiah 9:3

“However, **You are just** in all that has come upon us; for You have dealt faithfully, but **we have acted wickedly**. For our kings, our leaders, our priests and our fathers have not kept Your law or paid attention to Your commandments and Your admonitions with which You have admonished them.”

Nehemiah 9:33-34

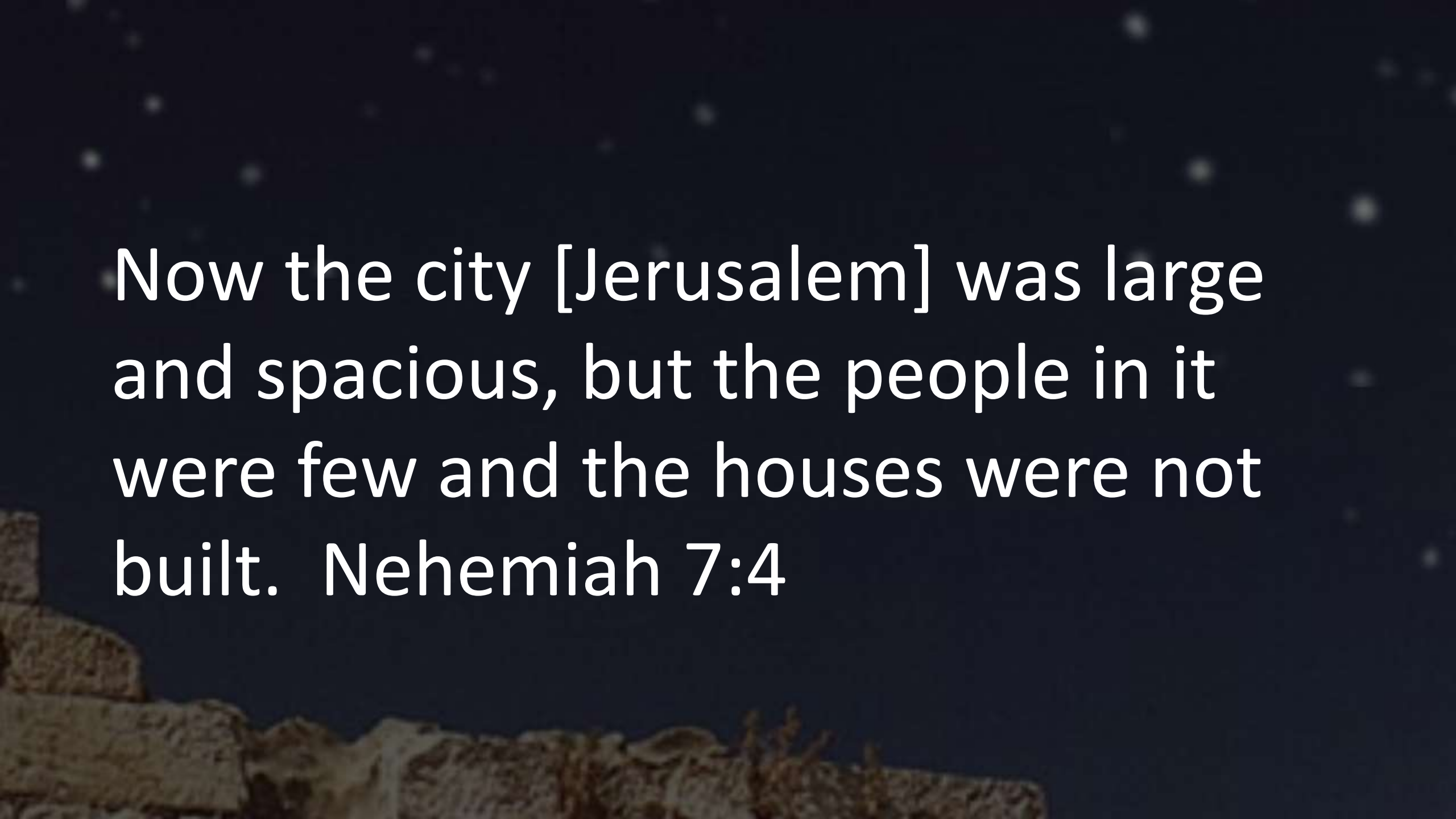
are joining with their kinsmen, their nobles, and are taking on themselves a curse and **an oath to walk in God's law** [תּוֹרָה torah], which was given through Moses, God's servant, and **to keep and to observe all the commandments of God our Lord**, and His ordinances and His statutes; and that we will not give our daughters to the peoples of the land or take their daughters for our sons.

Nehemiah 10:28-30

Commitments in this written prayer...

- Everyone can and should participate, no matter their job
- Walk in God's law (torah)
- Keep God's commandments
- Raise children to know, love and serve God
- Prioritize time with God over business ventures
- Show compassion to others in need
- Give faithfully to God's house (Temple)
- Celebrate God's appointed holy days
- Give back to God from what He has given them

Nehemiah Chapter 11



Now the city [Jerusalem] was large
and spacious, but the people in it
were few and the houses were not
built. Nehemiah 7:4

Now the leaders of the people lived in Jerusalem, but the rest of the people [who did not live in Jerusalem] cast lots to bring one out of ten to live in Jerusalem, the **holy city** [הַקֹּדֶשׁ עִיר Ir HaKodesh], while nine-tenths remained in the other cities. Nehemiah 11:1

The Bible calls Jerusalem the Holy City

- Awake, awake, clothe yourself in your strength, O Zion; clothe yourself in your beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the **holy city**; Isaiah 52:1a
- Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your **holy city**, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy place. Daniel 9:24
- Then you will know that I am the Lord your God, dwelling in Zion, **My holy mountain**. So Jerusalem will be holy, and strangers will pass through it no more. Joel 3:17
- Leave out the court which is outside the temple and do not measure it, for it has been given to the nations; and they will tread under foot the **holy city** for forty-two months. Revelation 11:2

And the people blessed all the men who volunteered to live in Jerusalem. Now these are the heads of the provinces who lived in Jerusalem, but in the cities of Judah each lived on his own property in their cities—the Israelites, the priests, the Levites, the temple servants and the descendants of Solomon's servants. Nehemiah 11:2-3

*The following verses list the names of the new residents

Some of the sons of **Judah** and some of the sons of **Benjamin** lived in Jerusalem. From the sons of **Judah**: Athaiah the son of Uzziah, the son of Zechariah, the son of Amariah, the son of Shephatiah, the son of Mahalalel, of the sons of Perez; 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 the Shilonite. All the sons of Perez who lived in Jerusalem were 468 able men. Nehemiah 11:4-6

Now 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 Jeshaiiah; and after him Gabbai and Sallai, 928. Joel the son of Zichri was their overseer, and Judah the son of Hassenuah was second in command of the city. Nehemiah 11:7-9



From the priests: Jedaiah the son of Joiarib, Jachin, Seraiah the son of Hilkiah, the son of Meshullam, the son of Zadok, the son of Meraioth, the son of Ahitub, the leader of the house of God, and their kinsmen who performed the work of the temple, 822; and Adaiah the son of Jeroham, the son of Pelaliah, the son of Amzi, the son of Zechariah, the son of Pashhur, the son of Malchijah, and his kinsmen, heads of fathers' households, 242; and Amashsai the son of Azarel, the son of Ahzai, the son of Meshillemoth, the son of Immer, and their brothers, valiant warriors, 128. And their overseer was Zabdiel, the son of Haggadolim. Nehemiah 11:10-14

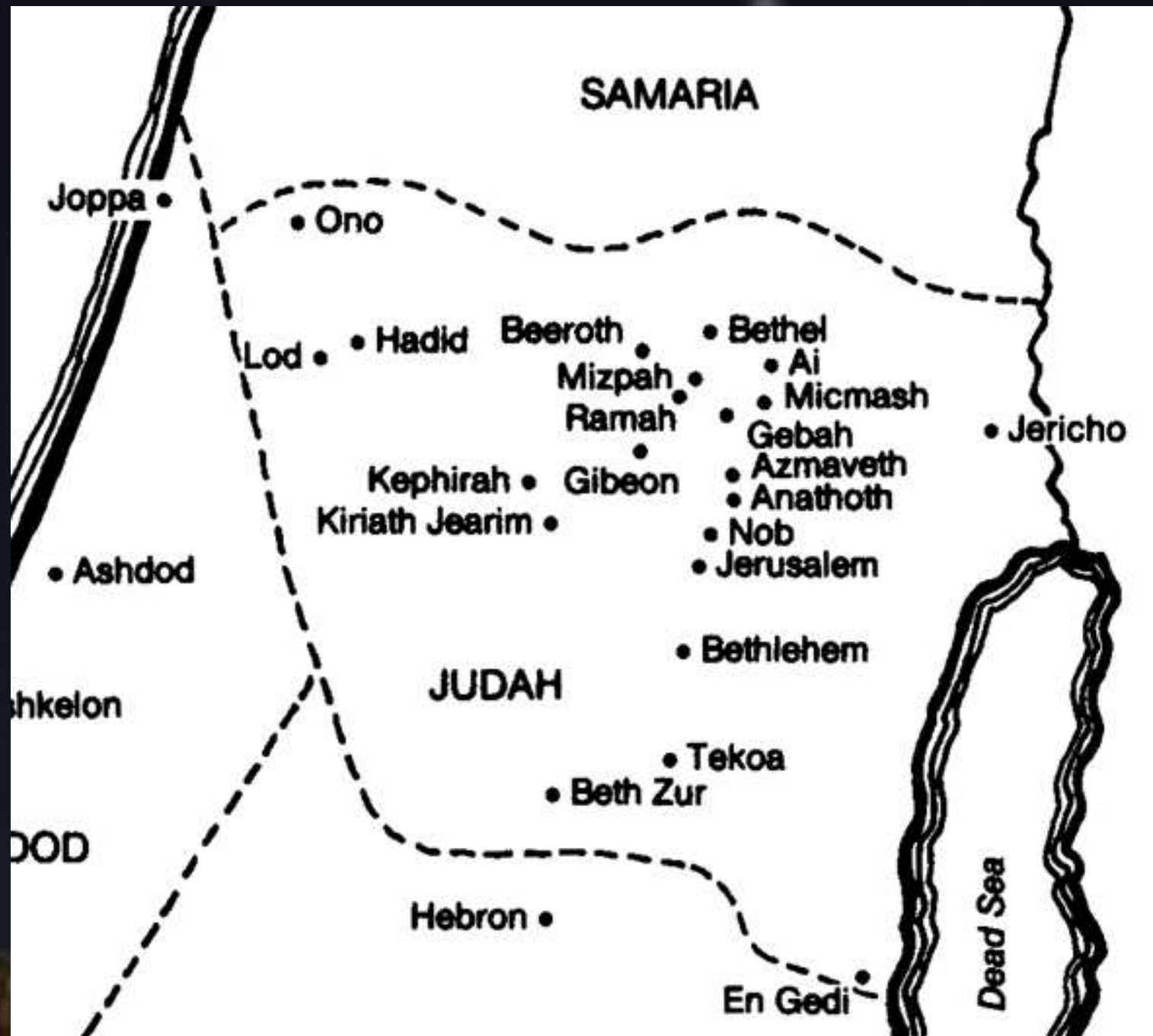
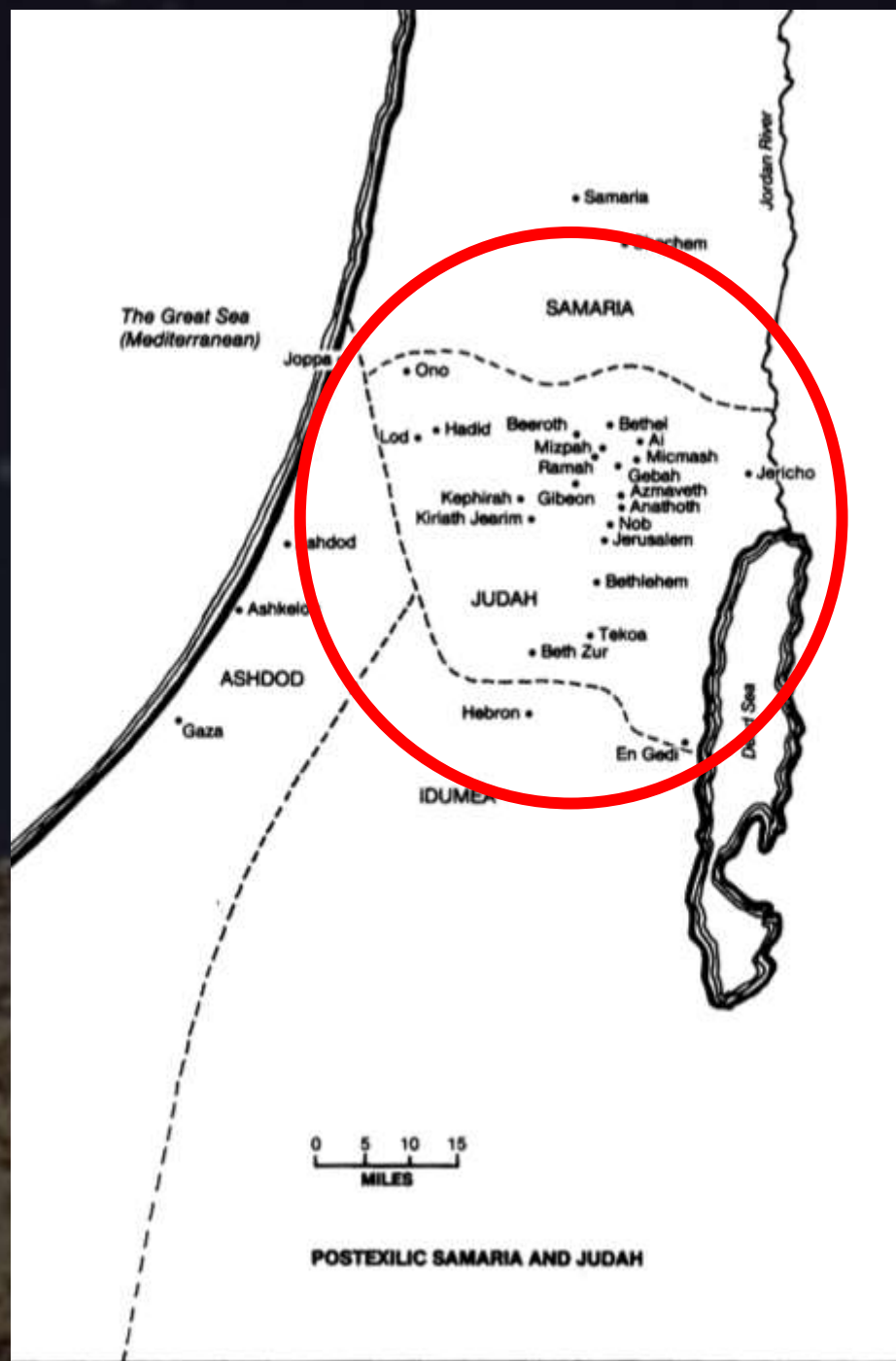
Now from the Levites: Shemaiah the son of Hasshub, the son of Azrikam, the son of Hashabiah, the son of Bunni; and Shabbethai and Jozabad, from the leaders of the Levites, who were in charge of the outside work of the house of God; and Mattaniah the son of Mica, the son of Zabdi, the son of Asaph, who was the leader in beginning the thanksgiving at prayer, and Bakbukiah, the second among his brethren; and Abda the son of Shammua, the son of Galal, the son of Jeduthun. All the Levites in the holy city were 284. Also the gatekeepers, Akkub, Talmon and their brethren who kept watch at the gates, were 172. Nehemiah 11:15-19
[total of 3,044 men plus their families]

The rest of Israel, of the priests and of the Levites, were in all the cities of Judah, each on his own inheritance. But the temple servants were living in Ophel, and Ziha and Gishpa were in charge of the temple servants. Now the overseer of the Levites in Jerusalem was Uzzi the son of Bani, the son of Hashabiah, the son of Mattaniah, the son of Mica, from the sons of Asaph, who were the singers for the service of the house of God. For there was a commandment from the king [Artaxerxes] concerning them and a firm regulation for the song leaders day by day. **Pethahiah** the son of Meshezabel, of the sons of Zerah the son of Judah, **was the king's representative** in all matters concerning the people.

Nehemiah 11:20-24

Now as for the villages with their fields, some of the sons of Judah lived in Kiriath-arba [Hebron] and its towns, in Dibon and its towns, and in Jekabzeel and its villages, and in Jeshua, in Moladah and Beth-pelet, and in Hazar-shual, in Beersheba and its towns, and in Ziklag, in Meconah and in its towns, and in En-rimmon, in Zorah and in Jarmuth, Zanoah, Adullam, and their villages, Lachish and its fields, Azekah and its towns. So they encamped from Beersheba as far as the valley of Hinnom. Nehemiah 11:25-30

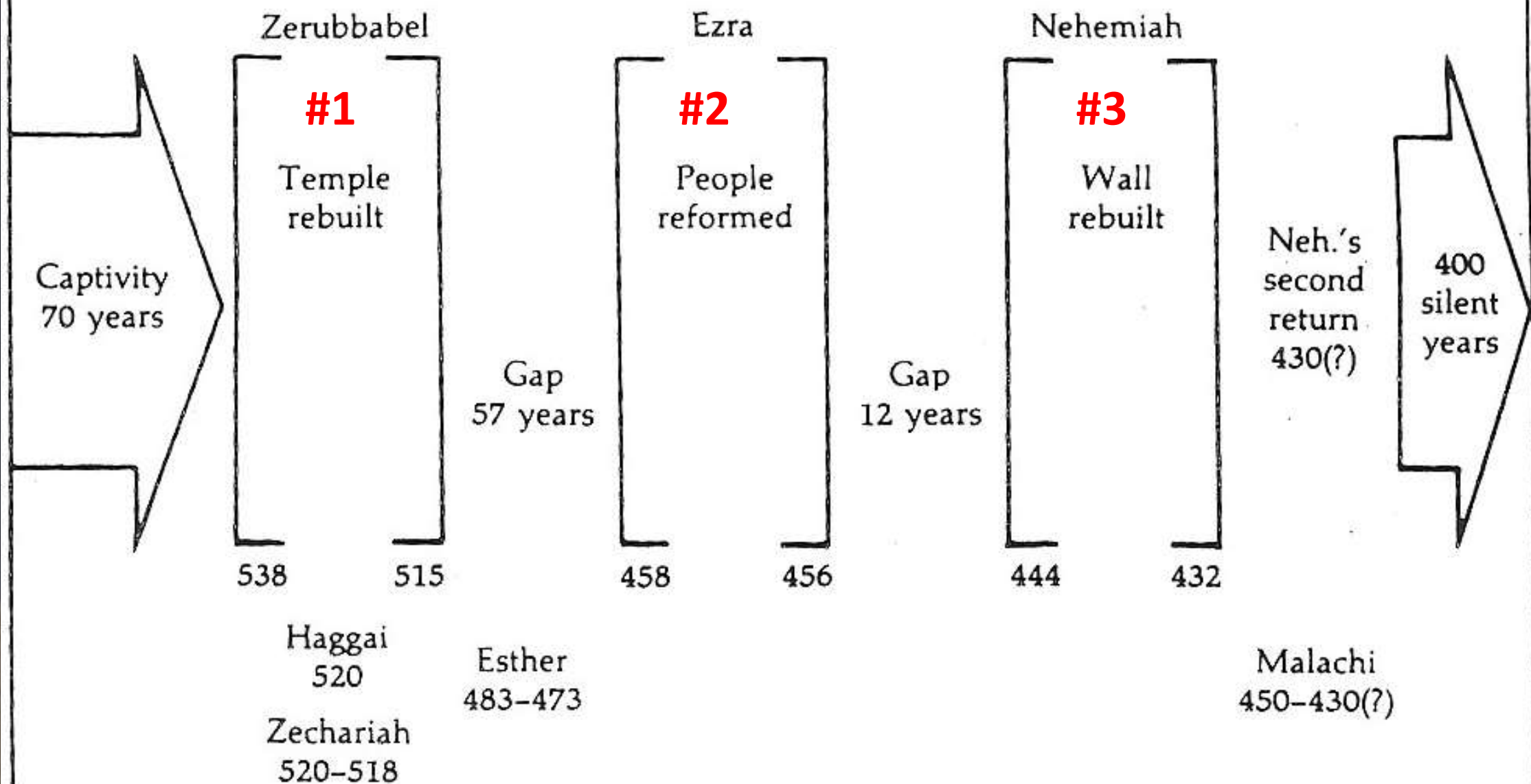
The sons of Benjamin also lived from Geba onward, at Michmash and Aiya, at Bethel and its towns, at Anathoth, Nob, Ananiah, Hazor, Ramah, Gittaim, Hadid, Zeboim, Neballat, Lod and Ono, the valley of craftsmen. From the Levites, some divisions in Judah belonged to Benjamin. Nehemiah 11:31-36



Nehemiah Chapter 12

Now these are the priests and the Levites who came up with [governor] Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and [high priest] Jeshua [almost 100 years earlier, in 538 BC]: Seraiah, Jeremiah, Ezra, Amariah, Malluch, Hattush, Shecaniah, Rehum, Meremoth, Iddo, Ginnethoi, Abijah, Mijamin, Maadiah, Bilgah, Shemaiah and Joiarib, Jedaiah, Sallu, Amok, Hilkiah and Jedaiah. These were the heads of the priests and their kinsmen in the days of Jeshua. Nehemiah 12:1-7

The Three Returns from Exile



The Levites were Jeshua, Binnui, Kadmiel, Sherebiah, Judah, and Mattaniah who was in charge of the songs of thanksgiving, he and his brothers. Also Bakbukiah and Unni, their brothers, stood opposite them in their service divisions. [High priest] Jeshua became the father of [high priest] Joiakim, and Joiakim became the father of Eliashib, and Eliashib became the father of Joiada, and Joiada became the father of Jonathan, and Jonathan became the father of Jaddua. Nehemiah 12:8-11

Now in the days of Joiakim [high priest, son of Jeshua], the priests, the heads of fathers' households were: of Seraiah, Meraiah; of Jeremiah, Hananiah; of Ezra, Meshullam; of Amariah, Jehohanan; of Malluchi, Jonathan; of Shebaniah, Joseph; of Harim, Adna; of Meraioth, Helkai; of Iddo, Zechariah; of Ginnethon, Meshullam; of Abijah, Zichri; of Miniamin, of Moadiah, Piltai; of Bilgah, Shammua; of Shemaiah, Jehonathan; of Joiarib, Mattenai; of Jedaiah, Uzzi; of Sallai, Kallai; of Amok, Eber; of Hilkiah, Hashabiah; of Jedaiah, Nethanel.

Nehemiah 12:12-21

As for the Levites, the heads of fathers' households were registered in the days of Eliashib, Joiada, and Johanan and Jaddua; so were the priests in the reign of Darius [II] the Persian [ruled 423-404 BC]. The sons of Levi, the heads of fathers' households, were registered in the Book of the Chronicles [log or diary] up to the days of [high priest] Johanan the son of Eliashib. Nehemiah 12:22-23

The heads of the Levites were Hashabiah, Sherebiah and Jeshua the son of Kadmiel, with their brothers opposite them, to praise and give thanks, as prescribed by David the man of God, division corresponding to division. Mattaniah, Bakbukiah, Obadiah, Meshullam, Talmon and Akkub were gatekeepers keeping watch at the storehouses of the gates. These served in the days of [high priest] Joiakim the son of Jeshua, the son of Jozadak, and in the days of Nehemiah the governor and of Ezra the priest and scribe. Nehemiah 12:24-26

Now at the dedication [חֲנֻכָּה hanukkah] of the wall of Jerusalem they sought out the Levites from all their places, to bring them to Jerusalem so that they might celebrate the dedication [חֲנֻכָּה hanukkah] with gladness, with hymns of thanksgiving [תּוֹדָה todah] and with songs to the accompaniment of cymbals, harps and lyres. Nehemiah 12:27

So the sons of the singers were assembled from the district around Jerusalem, and from the villages of the Netophathites, from Bethgilgal and from their fields in Geba and Azmaveth, for the singers had built themselves villages around Jerusalem. The priests and the Levites purified themselves; they also purified the people, the gates and the wall.

Nehemiah 12:28-30

Then I had the leaders of Judah come up **on top of the wall**, and I appointed two great choirs, the first proceeding to the right on top of the wall toward the Refuse [Dung] Gate.

Nehemiah 12:31

Now Tobiah the Ammonite was near him and he said, “Even what they are building—if a fox should jump on it, he would break their stone wall down!” Nehemiah 4:3

Hoshaiah and half of the leaders of Judah followed them, with Azariah, Ezra, Meshullam, Judah, Benjamin, Shemaiah, Jeremiah, and some of the sons of the priests with trumpets; and Zechariah the son of Jonathan, the son of Shemaiah, the son of Mattaniah, the son of Micaiah, the son of Zaccur, the son of Asaph, and his kinsmen, Shemaiah, Azarel, Milalai, Gilalai, Maai, Nethanel, Judah and Hanani, with the musical instruments of David the man of God. And Ezra the scribe went before them. Nehemiah 12:32-36

At the Fountain Gate they went directly up the steps of the city of David by the stairway of the wall above the house of David to the Water Gate on the east. The second choir proceeded to the left, while I followed them with half of the people **on the wall**, above the Tower of Furnaces, to the Broad Wall, and above the Gate of Ephraim, by the Old Gate, by the Fish Gate, the Tower of Hananel and the Tower of the Hundred, as far as the Sheep Gate; and they stopped at the Gate of the Guard. Nehemiah 12:37-39

JERUSALEM IN THE TIME OF NEHEMIAH

C. 445 B.C.

BOOK OF NEHEMIAH

Nehemiah was governor of Judah under Artaxerxes I of Persia. He rebuilt Jerusalem during the Second Temple period.



Two balanced processions were formed, and after leaving the city through the Valley Gate on the west of the city they proceeded in opposite directions, each going half-way round the city before re-entering and joining up for a united service of praise in the temple.

— New Bible Commentary

Then the two choirs took their stand in the house of God. So did I and half of the officials with me; and the priests, Eliakim, Maaseiah, Miniamin, Micaiah, Elioenai, Zechariah and Hananiah, with the trumpets; and Maaseiah, Shemaiah, Eleazar, Uzzi, Jehohanan, Malchijah, Elam and Ezer. And the singers sang, with Jezrahiah their leader, Nehemiah 12:40-42

*What is missing in this description? Weapons.

Why all the names?

- God knows every person
- Every person matters
- Every person has an important role to play
- Every person is called to join in God's work
- Every person is called to worship God

and on that day they offered great sacrifices and rejoiced because God had given them great joy, even the women and children rejoiced, so that the joy [שִׂמְחָה simchah] of Jerusalem was heard from afar. Nehemiah 12:43

*Do non-believers see the joy of believers today?

On that day men were also appointed over the chambers for the stores, the contributions, the first fruits and the tithes, to gather into them from the fields of the cities the portions required by the law for the priests and Levites; for Judah rejoiced over the priests and Levites who served. For they performed the worship of their God and the service of purification, together with the singers and the gatekeepers in accordance with the command of David and of his son Solomon. Nehemiah 12:44-45

For in the days of David and Asaph, in ancient times, there were leaders of the singers, songs of praise and hymns of thanksgiving to God. So all Israel in the days of Zerubbabel and Nehemiah gave the portions due the singers and the gatekeepers as each day required, and set apart the consecrated portion for the Levites, and the Levites set apart the consecrated portion for the sons of Aaron. Nehemiah 12:46-47

Prayer During vs. Prayer After

- During the difficult assignment, how is your prayer life?
- During the struggle, how much do you need the Lord?
- During the pain, how much do you call out to God?

- After God heals you, do you still worship Him?
- After God delivers you from the attacks of your enemies, do you still call out to Him?
- After God opens the door or provides the blessing, do you still praise Him?

Nehemiah

Return to Me

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Then Samuel spoke to all the house of Israel, saying, “If you **return to the Lord** with all your heart, remove the foreign gods and the Ashtaroth from among you and direct your hearts to the Lord and serve Him alone; and He will deliver you from the hand of the Philistines.” 1 Samuel 7:3