

free everyone from his house and from the results of his labor, who does not obey this promise. So may he be shaken out and stripped (*or, have nothing left*)."

Those who were assembled said, "Amen" and praised the Lord. The people did exactly as they were promised.

B. Principles of Nehemiah's Administration 5:14 - 19

¹⁴ Furthermore from the time of my appointment to be governor ¹ of the land of Judah, that being the twentieth year of the reign of Artaxerxes to the thirty second year, during those twelve years neither I nor my relatives partook of any of the food allowance designated for me as governor .
¹⁵ The governor who proceeded me laid heavy burdens ² upon the people and exacted food and wine from them, and additionally, forty shekels of silver.³ Even their servants tyrannized the people. I, however did not act in that manner because of my reverence for God. ¹⁶ I was also supportive of the work on the wall ⁴ and purchased no land. All my servants were gathered there to work. ⁵ ¹⁷ Even though I provided sustenance for one hundred fifty men, Jews and officials at my table, among these there were also people of the surrounding nations. ¹⁸ What was prepared for the day amounted to one ox, six choice (*or, selected, hand picked*) sheep, ⁶ and poultry, all of which was prepared for me, along with a quantity of wine,⁷ yet with all this I did not rely on the food allowance for the governor, because the demands of the government were heavy on the people.

¹⁹ Remember on my behalf, O God,
all that I have done for my people!
(*or, O my God, remember me
and all that I have done
to benefit these people.*)⁸

<CHAPTER 6>

VI. Continuation of Work on the Wall 6:1 - 19

A. Psychological Attacks on Nehemiah 6:1 - 14

1. Plot to Trap Nehemiah away from Home 6:1 - 4

¹ When Sanballat, Tobiah,⁹ Geshem the Arab and the rest of our enemies were informed that I had rebuilt the wall and that there was no remaining breach (although up to that time I had not yet hung the doors in the gate openings). ² Sanballat and Geshem sent a message to me saying, "Come and let us get together [in Hakkephirim,]¹⁰ in the valley of the Ono." They, however, intended to do

1 MT: "from the day when ...appointed me governor." Possibly a scribal error. The Hebrew word *penam* perhaps should have been *pena*.

2 Literally: "made heavy." LXX: "a collar" or "ox yoke."

3 Hebrew uncertain. NEB: "exacting as a double toll of bread and wine to the value of 40 shekels of silver. Vulgate: "for their food for one day" MT *ahr* seems to be saying that the forty shekels are meant to be for food, not in addition to the food.

4 Peshitta: "I was of good courage." LXX: "I did not treat them harshly. "

5 I.e. not with the thought of purchasing and speculating in property.

6 Vulgate: "rams." Ethiopic & Peshitta: "goats."

7 The Hebrew is awkward, reading in such a way that one cannot determine the quantity. *nbl* (ten skins of wine) possibly should be read *nkl* which in Hebrew has virtually the same appearance. That would translate as "all sorts of wine."

8 Another example of the "remembrance motif." "Gedaehniss Motif.

9 Some scholars feel that the name "Tobiah" is a gloss since it is the only name in Hebrew without a preposition. The preposition is found, however in 23 MT manuscripts and in Syriac & the LXX.

10 Either the Hebrew word is a proper name as translated above, or it simply means "valley." More scholars seem to be opting for the Hebrew word being a proper name, thus giving a location 27 miles North West of Jerusalem between Ashdod and

me harm. ³ I sent messengers to them, saying, "I am engaged in an important task and I cannot go down. Why ¹¹ should the work stop while I leave to go down to you?" ⁴ Four times they sent the same message and my answer was always the same. ¹²

2 Charges of Seditious 6:5 - 9

⁵ Sanballat then sent a fifth message by his servant, along with an open letter ¹³ in his hand. ⁶ Its message was, "The nations have received a report (*or, rumor*) according to Geshem ¹⁴ who confirms this, that you and the Jews intend to rebel so that is your reason for building the wall. Based on an earlier report you wish to become their king ¹⁵ ⁷ You have also appointed prophets in Jerusalem to make proclamations concerning you. ¹⁶ "He is king of Judah (*or, he reigns in Judah*) ¹⁷ This message will be reported to the king. Therefore come and let us confer together."

⁸ Then I said to him (*or, sent word to him*), saying, "None of the things alleged by you have occurred! You are fabricating them out of your imagination." ¹⁸ ⁹ (For they all intended to intimidate us, assuming, "They will cease. ¹⁹ They will tire of the work and not complete it.) But now, O God, strengthen my hands! ²⁰

3. Attempt at Betrayal Through False Friends 6:10 - 14

¹⁰ Then I went into the house of Shemaiah the son of Delaiah, son of Mehet-abel, who was in seclusion, and who said,

"Let us go into seclusion in the temple of God,
within the inside of the sanctuary,
under the protective covering of the temple,
for they are coming to kill you.
They plan to come to kill you at night "

¹¹ I responded, "Should a person like me flee? (*or, I am not the sort of person who would flee!*) Additionally, would a person like me go into the temple to save his life? ²¹ (*or, Who in my position would go into the sanctuary in order to stay alive?*) I will not go!" ¹² It was then that I realized, and saw clearly that God had not sent him [*an oracle*] but he, himself, had pronounced this prophecy against me because Tobiah and Sanballat had bribed him. ¹³ It was for this reason ²² that he was suborned, that I should become intimidated and cause me by my reaction to commit sin, so they could discredit me (*or, humiliate me, ruin my reputation*).

Samaria. That location may be referred to in Joshua 9:17.

11 Omitted in the LXX, Ethiopic & Peshitta. They use "lest," possibly having read the Hebrew wrongly.

12 Nehemiah suspects foul play.

13 The Ethiopic translation interprets this as "unsealed."

14 Hebrew: *Gashmu*.

15 Hebrew unclear. Literally: "You are being a king for them." Vulgate: "You have a mind to set yourself king over them."

LXX & Ethiopic: "You wish to become their king."

16 Literally: "you, saying."

17 Reading *malek* for *melek*.

18 Literally: "from our heart you are fabricating them (or, imagining them)."

19 Literally: "their hands will drop from." Vulgate: "their hands would cease."

20 Literally: "and now strengthen my hands." This can mean: 1. Now strengthen my hands. 2. And now to strengthen my hands. 3. Now I have strengthened my hands.

21 Nehemiah as a layman was not allowed to enter the temple area. He was possibly a eunuch and was therefore excluded from any religious participation in the temple.

22 I.e. to frighten him.

14 O my God, remember Tobiah and Sanballat,²³ because of these deeds they have done! Also remember the evil deeds of the prophetess Noadiah and the rest of the prophets²⁴ who wanted to intimidate me.

B. Completion of the Wall 6:15 - 16

15 So the wall was finished on the twenty-fifth day of the month Elul,²⁵ in the space of fifty two days. 16 When all our enemies heard about it all the nations surrounding it became intimidated,²⁶ and fell greatly²⁷ in their own estimation of themselves,²⁸ for they realized that this work had been accomplished with the help of our God.²⁹

C. Jewish Correspondence with Tobiah 6:17 - 19³⁰

17 During this time many of the important people of Judah often corresponded with Tobiah and Tabiald who then replied.³¹ 18 Many in Judah were bound to him by an oath³² because he was the son-in-law of Shecaniah, the son of Arah; and his son Jehohanan had married the daughter of Meshullam the son of Berechiah. 19 They also spoke of his virtuous deeds in my presence,³³ and reported my words to him. Tobiah sent letters to intimidate me.

<CHAPTER 7>

VII Reorganization of Jerusalem 7:1 - 73a

A Appointment and Instruction to Watchmen 7:1 - 3

1 When the wall had been rebuilt and I had hung the doors and appointed responsible Jews to be gate keepers, cantors (*or, musicians, singers*) and Levites,³⁴ 2 I gave my brother Hananiah [and Hananiah]³⁵ the governor responsibility over the fortress³⁶ and all of Jerusalem, for he was more trustworthy (*or, dependable*) and revered God more than most. 3 I (*or, he*)³⁷ said to them, "Do not

23 LXX: "Remember his deeds" which would appear to suggest that one name was added after the LXX was completed.

24 Some LXX manuscripts and Ethiopic have "priests."

25 August/September. Is the text corrupted? 52 days seems almost too brief a time to do the building. Josephus in *Antiquities* 5:8 reports that it took place after working on it two years and four months. Katherine Kenyon feels the wall was extended 2600 meters or possibly, if the northern wall is included 4,650 meters. Josephus comment in *Antiquities* seems more reasonable than the 52 day completion noted in verse 15.

26 Some recent scholarship emends the vowel points. *wiiraw* = "saw." *wiraw* = "afraid." The latter was the interpretation of the LXX and the Vulgate. Either vowel point selection would be acceptable. Possibly the intent of the Hebrew words is that they saw it as an astonishing achievement.

27 Some scholars emend the Hebrew word *wiphlw* which means "marvelous."

28 MFT: "sorely disoriented." NAS: "lost their confidence." Literally: "they fell very much in their own eyes."

29 Another example of Gedaechmiss Motif.

30 Some scholars feel these verses should follow verse 14.

31 Literally: "the princes of Judah were increasing their letters going to Tobiah."

32 Literally: "lords of an oath."

33 Literally: "good things." The word can be vocalized to read "his rumors." Literally: "also his good deeds (qualities). They were saying in my presence."

34 Some scholars feel "cantors and Levites" is a later addition to the text. This, however has no manuscript evidence.

35 Possibly an explanatory gloss. These are identical names. Hanani is an abbreviation. Some scholars feel that two persons with the same name each had a specific task. Hanani - governor of Jerusalem. Hananiah - commander of the fortress. Other scholars seem to feel the verse is that this was a joint venture.

36 LXX: "citadel." The Hebrew word *birh* can mean "fortress" or "castle." Cf. Nehemiah 2:8; 7:2. Peshitta: "fortress."

37 Hebrew permits either "I" or "he." Who spoke? Nehemiah or Hanani?

open the gates of Jerusalem until the heat of the day;³⁸ and while they are still standing guard³⁹ let the gates be barred. Appoint inhabitants of Jerusalem as guards to watch for trouble, placing them at assigned positions opposite their own houses.⁴⁰

B. The Population of Jerusalem 7:4 - 7:3a

4 The city was wide spread and spacious but the number of residents was few since no houses⁴¹ had been built.⁴²

5 Then God prompted me⁴³ to assemble⁴⁴ the leaders, officials and the population in order to enroll them by families. I found the genealogy register of those who had come first. In it I found the following:⁴⁵

6 These are the inhabitants of the province who came up out of the captivity of those exiles whom king Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon had deported,⁴⁶ but had returned to Jerusalem and Judah, each to his own community. 7 These came with Zerubbabel, Jeshua (*or, Joshua*), Nehemiah, Azariah⁴⁷ Raamiah,⁴⁸ Nahamani, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispereth,⁴⁹ Bigvai, Nehum,⁵⁰ and Baanah.

The list of the number of males of the people of Israel:⁵¹

The descendants of:

8 of Parosh	2,172	
9 of Shatiah	327	
10 of Aran	652	
11 of Pahath-moab ⁵² (through the line of Jeshua and Joab)	2,182	
12 of Elam	1,254	
13 of Zattu	845	
14 of Zaccai	760	
15 of Binnui ⁵³	648	
16 of Bebai	628	
17 of Azgad	2,322	
18 of Adonikam		667
19 of Bigvai	2,067	

38 The meaning is obscure. 1. Were the gates to be opened some time after sunrise and remain open until evening? 2. Were the gates to be closed during the heat of the day? Either can be derived from the Hebrew words.

39 Hebrew is ambiguous. Literally: "and while they are standing." Emended: "while the heat lasts." TAN: "before you leave your posts." Vulgate: "and while they were yet standing by." LXX: "while they were watching." Possibly: "before the guards went off duty."

40 The Hebrew is obscure. In verses 1 - 3 three different Hebrew words are used for "appoint."

41 Omitted by LXX, Ethiopic, Peshitta & Vulgate.

42 Literally: "and there were no houses built."

43 Literally: "gave it into my head."

44 LXX: "gather into companies." Vulgate: "to muster them." Peshitta: "according to their families."

45 Literally: "I found written in it."

46 Some manuscripts read: "been carried into exile in Babylon."

47 Ezra 2:2: Seraiah.

48 Ezra 2:2: Reclaiiah.

49 Ezra 2:2: Mispar.

50 Ezra 2:2: Rehum.

51 The listing of the census is apparently only males.

52 Cf. Ezra 2:6; 10:19-20.

53 Bani in Ezra 2:10.

20 of Adin	655
21 of Ater (through Hezekiah)	98
22 of Hashum ⁵⁴	328
23 of Bezai	324
24 of Hariph ⁵⁵	112
25 of Gibeon ⁵⁶	95
26 The men of Bethlehem and Netophah ⁵⁷	188
27 of Ana thoth	128
28 of Beth-azmaveth ⁵⁸	42
29 of Kiriath-jearim, ⁵⁹ Bhephirah and Beeroth	743
30 of Ramah and Geba	621
31 of Michmas	122
32 of Bethel and Ai ⁶⁰	123
33 of the other Nebo	52
34 of the other Elam	1,254
35 of Harim	320
36 of Jericho	345
37 of Lod, Hadid and Ono	721
38 of Senaah	3,930
39 The priests: the descendants of Jediah (through the family of Jeshua)	973
40 of Immer	1,052
41 of Pashhur	1,247
42 of Harim	1,017
43 The Levites: the descendants of Jeshua (through Kadmiel, through the line of Hodavah) ⁶¹	74
44 The singers: the descendants of Asaph	148
45 The Warders (<i>or, Gate Keepers</i>): the descendants of Shallum, Ater, Talmon, Akkub, Hatita and Shobai	138
46 The temple servants: ⁶² the descendants of Ziha, Hasupha, Tabbaoth, 47 Keros, Sia, ⁶³ Padon,	

54 The order is different in I Esdras which adds 5 names.

55 Cf. Ezra 2:15. Jorah.

56 Gibbar in Ezra 2:20.

57 The total varies in Ezra and I Esdras.

58 Azmareth in Ezra 2:24.

59 Kiriatharim in Ezra 2:25.

60 Ezra has a different order.

61 Hodariah in Ezra 2:40.

62 Hebrew: *Nethinim*. Those given to service in the sanctuary. They apparently had different distinguishing responsibilities from the priests, Levites and porters.

63 Sigha in Ezra 2:44.

- 48 Lebana, Hagaba, Shalmal, ⁶⁴
 49 Hanan, Giddel, Gahar,
 50 Reaiah, Rezin, Nekoda,
 51 Gazzam, Uzza, Paseah,
 52 Besai, Meunim, Nephushesim, ⁶⁵
 53 Bazlith, Hakupha, Harhur,
 54 Bazhith, ⁶⁶ Mehida, Harsha,
 55 Barkos, Sisera, Temah,
 56 Neziah and Hatipha.
 57 The descendants of the servants of Solomon:
 of Sotai, Sophereth, Perida, ⁶⁷
 58 Jaala, Darkon, Giddel,
 59 Shephaliah, Hattil, Pokereth-hazzebaim and Amon. ⁶⁸
 60 The temple servants and the descendants of the servants of Solomon 392.

⁶¹ The following were those who came up from Tel melah, Tel harsha, Cherub, Addon and Immer, but they were unable to prove their ancestral home nor their genealogical ancestry, whether they were descendants of Israel.

⁶² The descendants of Pelaiah, Tobiah and Nekoda 642.

⁶³ From the priests: the descendants of Hobaiah, Hakkoz and Barzillai, (who had married one of the daughters of Barzillai the Gileadite and had taken their name.)

⁶⁴ These searched the genealogical records but were unable to find their names in the genealogies, so they were disqualified for the priesthood. ⁶⁵ The governor ⁶⁹ ordered that they were not to eat the most holy food until a priest should appear with Urim and Thummim.

⁶⁶ The entire assembly was 42,360, ⁶⁷ which, with the addition of the number of male and female servants brought that total to 7,337. and in addition there were 245 male and female singers. ⁷⁰ ⁶⁸ [Their horses numbered 736, mules 245,] ⁷¹ ⁶⁹ camels 435, and their donkeys 6,720.

⁷⁰ Some of the heads of the clans donated toward the work. The governor donated 1000 darics of gold to the treasury ⁷² along with 50 basins and 530 vestments for the priests. ⁷³ ⁷¹ Those of the population who were heads of ancestral homes gave 2,000 darics of gold and 2,200 minas of silver. ⁷⁴ ⁷² The remainder of the population gave 20,000 darics of Gold and 67 priestly robes.

⁷³ So the priests, Levites, warders (*or, gate keepers*), singers, some of the people, the temple servants and all Israel resided in the towns. ⁷⁵

⁶⁴ Shumlai in Ezra 2:46. Ezra has a different order.

⁶⁵ Or, Nephushesim. Ezra 2:50: Nephisim.

⁶⁶ Bezluth in Ezra 2:52.

⁶⁷ Ezra 2:55 has Hassophereth and Peruda.

⁶⁸ Ami in Ezra 2:51.

⁶⁹ Or "Tirshatha," a Persian title given the Persian governor in Judah. The title was equal to "his excellency."

⁷⁰ Cf/ AMET 263b

⁷¹ Cf. Ezra 2:66. This appears in some Hebrew manuscripts.

⁷² The MT & LXX say 1000 darics of gold were given. The traditional translations often use the word "darics," the name of that monetary amount came from Darius. Scholars feel a daric consisted of 8,424 grams of gold. A very sizable amount! One scholar feels it amounted to 19 pounds of gold.

⁷³ 500 is omitted by the LXX.

⁷⁴ A mina was comprised of 18.2 troy ounces or about 1.66 pounds of silver.

⁷⁵ The Hebrew word *nethinim* = "those given:" These were apparently designated to be of service in the sanctuary -- being

VIII. Reading the Law 7:73b - 8:18
A. Assembly to Hear the Law 7:73b - 8:2

When the seventh month ⁷⁶ had come, the children of Israel were in their tents.

<CHAPTER 8>

¹ All the people ⁷⁷ unitedly assembled in the square (*or, plaza*) ⁷⁸ in front of the Water Gate. They asked Ezra the scribe ⁷⁹ to bring the scroll of the teachings (*or, Law*) of Moses which the Lord had already prescribed ⁸⁰ to Israel. ² On the first day of the seventh month Ezra the priest brought the teaching (*or, Law*) before the congregation, both male and female and all who were capable of understanding. ⁸¹

B. The Reading of the Law 8:2 - 8

³ The teachings (*or, Law*) were read facing the square, in front of the Water Gate ⁸² from dawn ⁸³ until midday in the presence of males and females and those who were capable of understanding. All the people listened attentively to the teaching of the scroll (*or, book*). ⁸⁴

⁴ Ezra the scribe stood on a wooden pulpit (*or, platform*) ⁸⁵ which had been purposely made ⁸⁶ and to his right stood Mattithiah, Shema, ⁸⁷ Anaiyah, Uriah, Hilkihah, ⁸⁸ and Maaseiah. To his left, Pedaiah, Mishael, Malchijah, Hashum, Hash-baddanah, Zechariah and Meshullam. ⁸⁹ ⁵ Ezra opened the scroll (*or, book*) in the sight of all the people for he was higher than all of them. When he opened it all the people rose to their feet. ⁹⁰ ⁶ Ezra blessed the Lord the great God, ⁹¹ and all the people shouted, "Amen, Amen" with upraised hands and bowed heads. Then they worshipped the Lord, prostrating themselves before the Lord, with their faces to the ground. ⁷ Also ⁹² Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodiah, Maseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiian [*the Levites*] ⁹³ instructed ⁹⁴ the people in their understanding (*or, explained*) the teachings (*or, the*

different from the priests, Levites and porters.

76 Tishri or Ethanim mid-September - mid-October.

77 Vulgate & I Esdras: "multitudes." Peshitta: "before the people."

78 Literally: "broad place."

79 Peshitta & I Esdras have "priest scribe." Some translators use "priest and scholar of the Law."

80 Literally: "commanded." Some scholars have tried to identify the exact passages read by Ezra but to no avail. The phrase "the Lord had already prescribed..." literally is: "The Lord had commanded." TAN: "with which the Lord charged Israel."

81 Ezra's message was no new manifesto but simply the foundations of faith. The Law assumes it will be understood and is to be followed by wise and understanding people.

82 Presumably the east side of the city of Jerusalem. The exact location has never been definitely located.

83 Literally: "from the light."

84 Literally: "the ears of all the people were to the book of the Law."

85 Hebrew: *mighdal* which is usually translated as "tower." Possibly an elevated stage in this instance. It apparently was wide enough to accommodate Ezra and thirteen helpers.

86 Omitted by LXX. The same root word with different vowel points could read "for speaking." A few LXX manuscripts, possibly because their scribes were well acquainted with the MT have "for speaking to the people."

87 LXX: "Zaccur."

88 No doubt a corruption of Hashabnah.

89 This name is missing from I Esdras 9:44. Scholars question the name which may have been added to have seven on each side. In Hebrew the name might be a corruption of the word for "to his left."

90 The Hebrew word *amt* "to rise" possibly carries the thought of "they all stood still." Surely this was done out of respect to God's teaching (*or Law*).

91 An unusual expression in the Old Testament. It is found in the Jewish papyri.

92 MT: "and the Levites" follows the writing of the names which are Levitical.

93 Cf. I Esdras 9:98 and Vulgate.

94 Peshitta: "they were attending to the people."

Law), while the people remained in their places. 8 They⁹⁵ read from the scroll, from the teaching of God distinctly (*or, with interpretation*), making the meaning clear and expanding on the words so that the people understood what was read.⁹⁶

C. Injunction to Celebrate with Joy 8:9 - 12

9 [Nehemiah, the governor]⁹⁷ and Ezra the priestly scribe along with the Levites explained to the people, saying, "Today is holy (*or, consecrated*) to the Lord your God. Do not mourn or weep" for the people wept⁹⁸ when they heard the words of the Law (*or, teachings*). 10 Additionally Ezra said to them, "Go your way, eat rich food, drink sweet wine,⁹⁹ and sent portions to whoever has nothing prepared for them, for this day is consecrated to our Lord!¹⁰⁰ Do not be sad for your rejoicing is in the Lord, your strength." 11 The Levites calmed (*or, quieted*) all the people, saying, "Hush! The day is holy; do not be depressed." 12 So all the people went their way to eat and drink and to send portions, and to make great merriment¹⁰¹ (*and a joyous feat*) because they had understood the words that were made clear to them.

D. Celebration of the Feast of Booths 8:13 - 18

13 On the following day the heads of the ancestral houses of all classes along with the priests and Levites met together with Ezra the scribe in order¹⁰² to study the word of the Law. 14 They found it written in the teachings that the Lord had prescribed by Moses that the people of Israel should dwell in arbors (*or, booths*) during the feast of the seventh month. 15 They were also to make¹⁰³ a proclamation that is as follows in all the towns in Judea and in Jerusalem. "Go into the hills and bring branches of olive, oleaster¹⁰⁴ myrtle,¹⁰⁵ palm and other leafy trees to make booths (*or, tabernacles*), as it is written.¹⁰⁶ 16 So the people went out and brought branches for themselves, placing these on the roof over in their courtyards and in the court of the house of God as well as the plaza of the Water Gate and in the plaza of the Ephraim Gate. 17 The entire community [of those who returned from exile] made booths and lived in the booths as in the days of Joshua the son of Nun. Since that day the people of Israel had not done this. There was great rejoicing.¹⁰⁷ 18 Day by day,¹⁰⁸ from the first day to

95 The reference is apparently to the Levites.

96 Since the writings were in Hebrew apparently they "translated and gave understanding." At this point the language had changed sufficiently that it could be called Aramaic and thus needed some interpretation. Cf. a footnote in TEV. The verses 6 - 8 rule out bibliolity y.

97 Cf. footnote Nehemiah 6:65 Footnote 64.

98 Why did they weep? 1. Because they had not been following the law? 2. Weeping for those who had died while in exile? 3. They were fearful of the threats continuing? 4. Weeping was a part of all Canaanite festival procedures..

99 MT: "eat the fat, and sweet drinks" LXX & I Esdras say "the food was to be given to the poor that have nothing." "Sweet drinks" in Hebrew: *mamtaqqim*. Vulgate: "mulsum" "wine mixed with honey," a kind of mead. The root word in Hebrew is also an Ugaritic word, referring to kissing.

100 The basis for this expression is not explained. Is this the forerunner of the agape meal?

101 Literally: "make a great rejoicing."

102 Omitted by LXX, Vulgate and Peshitta.

103 Literally: "and that they will cause to be heard."

104 Some translate the Hebrew word as "pine" In Hebrew the word "olive" is repeated so many translators have "wild olive" or "oleaster: one form of which is "Russian olives." The oleaster does not produce much fruit, nor does he Russian olive.

105 The Hebrew word *al hds* is generally translated as myrtle. Grammatically it resembles *an ndr* meaning "goodly trees." Vulgate: "oil trees." LXX: "cypress." The exact species seems to be uncertain.

106 Cf. Leviticus 23:39 - 43. Hebrew: *Succoth*. Temporary shelters of interwoven branches in which people lived during the harvest season.

107 Scholars are divided: 1. Is this a new festival 2. Is this an old festival, again restored to the calendar of celebration? 3. The addition of arbors (*or, booths*) adds to the old festival.

108 An expression favored by the Chronicler. Is this a hint as to who recorded the book in written form?

the last day he read from the scroll of the teachings. They kept the festival for seven days and on the eighth day there was a solemn assembly¹⁰⁹ as had been prescribed.

<CHAPTER 9>

IX. Mixed Marriage Reform 9:1 - 5a

¹ On the twenty-fourth day of the same month¹¹⁰ the Israelites were gathered¹¹¹ to fast, wearing sackcloth,¹¹² and with earth¹¹³ on their heads.¹¹⁴ ² The population of Israel descent had separated themselves¹¹⁵ from those who were of foreign extraction (*or, ancestry*), confessing their own sins as well as the wickedness of their ancestors. ³ They remained standing in their place as the scroll of the teachings (*or, Law*) of the Lord their God were read for one quarter of the day, for another quarter of the day they confessed¹¹⁶ their sins and worshipped, lying prostrate before their God. ⁴ Standing on a raised platform¹¹⁷ were Jeshua, Bani, Kadmiel, Shebaniah, Bunni, Sherebiah, Bani¹¹⁸ and Chenani.¹¹⁹ They called out loudly to the Lord their God. ⁵ Then the Levites, Jeshua, Kadmiel, Ban, Hashabneiah, Sherebiah, Hodiah, Shebaniah and Pethahahiah¹²⁰ said,

Rise and bless the Lord your God
(*or, Shout eternal praises to the Lord your God*)
from Everlasting to Everlasting
(*or, who is for ever and ever.*)

*X Penitential Psalm 9:5b - 11*¹²¹

A. Doxology 9:5b

"Blessed be your glorious name,
which is exalted above all blessing and praise."¹²²

B. God the Unique and Powerful Creator 9:6

⁶ [Ezra said,]¹²³ "You alone are the Lord;
You, Lord alone are God.
You have made heaven, the heaven of heavens,¹²⁴
with all their host.

109 Literally: '*aseret* "closing ceremony."

110 Possibly May 16, 397 BCE.

111 Succoth was celebrated from the 15th to the 22nd of the month Tishri.

112 Hebrew: *suq* a coarse hair cloth worn as a sign of mourning. Originally *saq* meant a loin cloth bound by a rope.

113 The Peshitta has "ashes."

114 Literally: "on them." LXX translates "heads."

115 This no doubt gave the people a renewed sense of solidarity with past generations.

116 LXX adds: "to the Lord."

117 Possibly a reference to some cult approaches used by the Levites, or there may have been steps from one courtyard of the temple to another. Cf. Mishnah, Middoth 3:5.

118 Possibly Binnui. LXX reads the Hebrew as "son of."

119 Some LXX manuscripts have named only two Levites.

120 Such lists of names are thought of as originally having been identical, as in the Peshitta. However these lists very possibly had some differentiation. Scholars these days more readily accept differences basing them on the activities of the persons listed.

121 Scholars feel this is a very well organized penitential psalm.

122 The Hebrew in verses 5 & 6 is rough, possibly due to an early copying error. TEV: "Let everyone praise his glorious name although no human praise is great enough."

123 Omitted in Hebrew. Found in the LXX.

124 Or, "The highest heaven." Literally: "the heavens of the."

The earth and all that is on it,
the seas and everything in them.
You preserve them all (*or, you keep them all alive*)
and the heavenly powers worship you.

C. Election of the Hebrews and their Covenant 9:7 - 8

7 You are the Lord, God who chose Abraham,
and who brought him out of Ur of the Chaldees
and changed his name to Abraham.
8 When you found him to be true (*or, reliable, steady*) before you,
you made a covenant with him,
give his descendants the land of the Canaanites,
the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites,¹²⁵
the Jebusites and the Girgashites.
You have fulfilled the promise
because you are faithful.

D. Egyptian Sojourn and Exodus 9:9 - 11¹²⁶

9 You saw the misery of our ancestors in Egypt
and heard their plea for help at the Sea of Reeds (*or, Red Sea*).
10 You performed signs and miracles against Pharaoh,
and all his servants and all the people of his land.
You knew that they acted presumptuously toward our ancestors
and you made your name famous and it endures to this day.
11 You split the sea before them,
so that they passed dry-shod through the midst of the sea,
but you hurled their pursuers into the depths
(*or, drowned their pursuers*)
like a stone into the raging waters.

F. The Wilderness Wandering 9:12 - 21

1. Salvation from Natural Dangers 9:12 - 15

12 You led them with a column of cloud by day,
and a column of fire by night
to light the way they were to go.
13 You came down to Mount Sinai,
and spoke to them from heaven;
you gave them just decrees, true laws,

125 LXX, Peshitta & Arabic add "Hivites" before Jebusites.

126 The long passage: 9 - 31 is used in Synagogues on the 24th of Tishri as part of the penitential liturgy. The prayer is very close to the so-called "Words of the Heavenly Luminaries" found in Qumran 4QDibHam.