

F. Levites under Joiakim 12:24 - 26

²⁴ The heads of the Levites: Hashabiah, Sherebiah and Jeshua, Binnui, ¹ the son of ² Kadmiel, with his associates who worked in shifts in order that praise and thanks as prescribed in the commandment of David, ³ the man of God might be given. ²⁵ Martanian, Bakbukiah, Obadiah, Meshullam, Talmon and Akkub ⁴ were warders (*or, gate keepers*) standing guard at the storehouses (*or, collection centers*) ⁵ near the gates. ²⁶ These served in the days of Jolakim the son of Jeshua, son of Jozadak and in the days of Nehemiah the governor and Ezra the priest / scribe.

XIV. Dedication of the Walls of Jerusalem 12:27 - 79

²⁷ When the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem took place the Levites were invited from the entire area, bringing them to Jerusalem to celebrate the joyful dedication with rejoicing, thanksgivings ⁶ and singing, accompanied by cymbals, harps (*or, lutes*) ⁷ and lyres (*or, zithers*). ²⁸ The descendants⁸ of the cantors (*or, singers*)⁹ assembled together from the vicinity of Jerusalem and the settlement of Netophathites; ²⁹ also from Beth-gilgal and from the countryside of Geba and Azmaveth. ¹⁰ for the cantors had built villages for themselves around Jerusalem. ³⁰ The priests and Levites purified themselves and purified the people and the gates and wall. ¹¹

³¹ Then I brought the princes of Judah forward to ¹² the wall, and appointed ¹³ two great choirs ¹⁴ which gave thanks ¹⁵ and went in a great procession. ¹⁶ One choir went to the right ¹⁷ on the wall to the Dung (*or Rubbish*) Gate; ¹⁸ ³² followed by Hoshaiiah and half of the princes of Judah, ¹⁹ ³³ and Azariah, Ezra, Meshullam, ³⁴ Judah, Benjamin, ²⁰ Shemiah and Jeremiah, ³⁵ and some of the priestly ranks with trumpets; Zechariah the son of Jonathan, son of Shemaiah, son of Mattaniah, son of Micaiah, son of Zaccur, son of Asaph, ³⁶ and his associates, Shemaiah, Azarel, Miilalai, Gilalai, ²¹ Maai, Nethanel, Judan and Hanani had musical instruments as David ²² the man of God had. Ezra the scribe went before them. ³⁷ At the Fountain Gate they went up straight ahead ²³ by the stairs of the

1 The Hebrew text is questionable. LXX reads the Hebrew as "his brother." Some manuscripts omit "Binnui."

2 Omitted by Peshitta.

3 Literally: "in the commandment of David."

4 These names are omitted by LXX manuscripts B, Delta & Aleph. Some Hebrew manuscripts have the names of verse 25 listed as cantors (*or, singers*).

5 KJV: "thresholds" reading *sippe* in place of the Hebrew *asuppe* as does the Peshitta & the Targums.

6 The Hebrew word implies singing thanks. MT: "the dedication and the joy."

7 Hebrew: *nebhel*. KJV: "psalteries" Josephus describes it as a harp with 10 - 12 strings. BDB: portable musical instrument: either a portable harp, lute or guitar, though the shape might favor a lute.

8 NEB: "The Levites."

9 Literally: "sons of the musicians."

10 NEB: "Beth-azmoth."

11 Cf. II Chronicles 29:20 - 24; Exodus 19:10, 14 - 15; Ezra 6:20, Numbers 19:18; Ezekiel 36:25.

12 Hebrew unclear. *maleh* Possibly "above, beside, on top."

13 LXX: "they appointed."

14 Literally: "thanksgiving choirs."

15 Here & in verses 38 & 40 the Hebrew word *todot* is translated as "thanks." Literally: "thanksgivings" or "thanksgiving choir."

16 Probable reading. *vetah adukot* is a hapax legomenon. "In procession" is presumably the meaning.

17 LXX, Peshitta & Vulgate: "they went." Literally: "and procession to the right."

18 Apparently the two groups began on the wall on the southwest side of Jerusalem, going in opposite directions until they met in front of the temple in the northwest portion of the city.

19 This might have had a ritual meaning which is no longer known to us.

20 Possibly a corruption of Miniamin. Cf. LXX.

21 In the LXX Azarel is Azriel. Gilalai is omitted in the LXX & Arabic versions.

22 Some scholars translate giving the impression that the same instruments which David had were used again at this time.

23 Literally: "opposite them."

city of David at the ascent to (*or, alongside*) the wall, above the house of David, to the Water Gate at the east.

3. *The Clockwise Company 12:38 - 42*

³⁸ The second choir (*or, company*) of those who gave thanks, going left. ²⁴ I followed them with half of the people on (*or, alongside*) ²⁵ the wall, above the tower of the Furnaces (*or, Ovens*) to the Broad Wall, ²⁶ ³⁹ and above the Gate of Ephraim and the Old Gate ²⁷ and by the Fish Gate and the Tower of Hananel and the tower of the Hundred, to the Sheep gate; and they came to a halt at the Gate of the Guard. ⁴⁰ So both companies of those who gave thanks took up their stations at the house of God: I and half of the officials who accompanied me; ⁴¹ and also the priests: Eliakim, Maaseiah, Miniamin, Micaiah, Elionai, Zechariah, and Hananiah, who had trumpets: ⁴² and Maaseiah, Shemaiah, Eleazar, Uzzi, Johohanan, Malchijah, Elam and Ezer. These musicians sang ²⁸ under the direction of Jezrahaiah, making loud music. ²⁹

D. *Sacrifice and Celebration 12:43*

⁴³ They offered great sacrifices that day and rejoiced, for God had made them rejoice with great joy. The women and children also rejoiced. The joy of Jerusalem was heard from far away.

XV. *The Ideal Community 12:44 - 13:3*

⁴⁴ At that time ³⁰ men were appointed to be responsible for the storeroom, for the contributions, ³¹ the first fruits and the tithes; to gather them based on the amounts regulated by the law, ³² for the priests and the Levites, according to the portions of land ³³ as prescribed by the Law for the towns, for Judah rejoiced because of the priests and Levites who were in office at that time. ⁴⁵ They conducted ³⁴ the worship (*or, service*) of their God and the service of purification, as did the cantors and the warders, according to the command of David and his son Solomon. ⁴⁶ Long ago,

24 So: emended. Literally: "opposite."

25 Hebrew unclear.

26 Note the similarity of these arrangements.

Group 1.	Led by Ezra to the left.	Group 2	Led by Nehemiah to the right
	Thanksgiving choir. Hozhaiah		Thanksgiving choir Jozrahiah
	Half of the princes		Half of the officials
	Priests & musical instruments		Priests and musical instruments
	Some priests are named		Seven priests are named
	Azariah to Jeremiah		Eliakim to Hananiah
	Instrument list		Singers
	Zechariah & 8 others		Jezrahiah & 8 others

27 Scholars have not been able to definitely locate the "Old" or "Jeremiah" Gate. Cf. Nehemiah 3:6. NAB: "City Gate."

28 Literally: "caused their voices to be heard."

29 Literally: "made themselves heard." The LXX manuscripts A, B, & Aleph omit this reference.

30 Apparently no time was lost in attending to this. Nehemiah was a man of action.

31 I.e. gifts given as offerings to be presented to the Lord. These were sometimes called "heave offerings." Such offerings were not to be burned.

32 "The law" is omitted by LXX manuscripts A, B, Aleph. & Ethiopic. The Vulgate translates a similar appearing Hebrew word "thanksgiving." Law: *twrh*, Thanksgiving: *twdh*. *Resh* and *Daleth* are *veary* similar in appearance.

33 Literally: "fields." Several Hebrew manuscripts have "chiefs." Fields: *lshdi*. Chiefs: *lshsi*. The LXX has "out of the fields" or "from the fields" i.e. arable land.

34 Literally: "watched."

David and Asaph³⁵ were directors³⁶ of the cantors and there were songs of praise and thanksgiving to God.³⁷ ³⁷ In the days of Zerubbabel and Nehemiah all Israel gave the daily portions³⁸ for the cantors and warders and they set apart what belonged to the Levites. The Levites set apart that which belonged to the sons of Aaron.³⁹

<CHAPTER 13>⁴⁰

¹ On that day there was a public reading of the book of Moses⁴¹ in the hearing of the people, and in it was discovered that it was written that no Ammonite or Moabite should ever enter the assembled people (*or, congregation*) of God ² since they did not meet the Israelites with bread and water, but rather hired⁴² Balaam against them to curse them. (Our God turned the curse into a blessing.) ³ When the people heard the teaching (*or, Law*), they separated all those of foreign descent⁴³ from the land.

XVI Nehemiah's Reforms 13:4 - 31

A Expulsion of Tobiah 13:4 - 9⁴⁴

⁴ Prior to this⁴⁵ Eliashib the priest⁴⁶ had appointed a relative of (*or, close associate of*) Tobiah as supervisor over the rooms of the house of our God. ⁵ He prepared a large room for Tobiah,⁴⁷ the previous use of which had been as a storage place for the cereal offerings, fruit, incense, vessels and the tithes of grain, wine and oil, which were prescribed by the commandment⁴⁸ to the Levites, cantors, and warders along with gifts⁴⁹ for the priests. ⁶ During that time I was not in Jerusalem,⁵⁰ since in the thirty-second year of king Artaxerxes⁵¹ of Babylon I went to the king,⁵² and after some time I requested permission of the king, ⁷ and came to Jerusalem. It was then that I discovered the wickedness of Tobiah who prepared a room for himself in the courts of the house of God, through the permission of Eliashib. ⁹ I was very displeased⁵³ and I threw all of Tobiah's

35 Hebrew unclear. This phrase is omitted in one Hebrew manuscript along with the LXX, Peshitta, Ethiopic and Arabic. Some scholars emend to read, "their leaders."

36 Literally: "heads."

37 MT more literally: "leaders of the musicians and gate keepers and songs of praise and thanksgiving."

38 Literally: "a days matter on its day." In a similar passage: Ezra 2:40 - 42: "as every day required."

39 Verses 41 - 47 sound quite idealistic.

40 12:44 - 13:3 appears to be an editorial interlude. Questions are raised by scholars concerning these verses. They have been linked by scholars to Ezra 9:1 - 10:11 but there is no agreement as to where they might fit into that passage, nor is there any manuscript evidence.

41 No doubt the Pentateuch (the five books of Moses). The immediate passage referred to is possibly Deuteronomy 23:3 - 5.

42 LXX & Peshitta "they hired" implying Moab and Ammon. Deuteronomy 23:4. Cf. Numbers 22:3 - 11 for the Balaam story.

43 The Hebrew word means "mixture." The Hebrew word is also attested to by Syriac, Targumic, Aramaic & Neo-Hebrew translations. Literally: "to enter into a mixture" in the sense of "intrusion," (a heterogeneous body of people) who are to be separated from the *qahal*, the people of God. TAN: "alien admixture." American Jewish Translation: "alien mixture."

44 The verses 4 - 31 seem to be a portion of Nehemiah's memoirs, a continuation of 10:1 - 40.

45 Implying some specific incident that has been lost by the chronicler.

46 Possibly the High Priest. LXX says of Eliashib, "the priest dwelt in the temple treasury."

47 LXX: "he built a great building for himself there."

48 Hebrew: *mtswt*. Literally: "a legal obligation of dues."

49 Literally: "a heave offering."

50 Verse 6 seems to interrupt the narrative. Literally: "in all this time."

51 The emperor of the Persian Empire, also called the king of Babylon.

52 After a 12 year stay in Jerusalem (445 - 433 BCE) his leave of absence was up and he returned to the Persian court. Since there is no clear reference as to when Nehemiah returned it might be possible that the 12 year period includes the time from the permission to leave for Babylon to the time of his again returning to Jerusalem.

53 "Literally: "was evil to me." A Hebrew idiom which could be interpreted as "it appeared as evil in my eye."

belongings out of the room. ⁹ I then gave orders and they purified the room and I had the vessels of the house of God brought back along with the cereal offering and the frankincense replaced in that room.

B. Restoration of Levitical Support 13:10 - 14

¹⁰ I also discovered that because the Levites and some of the cantors had not been paid ⁵⁴ what was due them for the tasks they had performed in the temple and had returned ⁵⁵ to their own farms. ¹¹ Consequently, I censured (*or, contended with*) the officials and asked, "Why is the house of God deserted (*or, abandoned*)? I gathered them together and reinstated them to their designated duties. ¹² Then all Judah [*again*] brought the tithes of grain, ⁵⁶ new wine and fine oil to the treasuries (*or, storehouses*). ¹³ I appointed Shelemiah the priest as treasurer ⁵⁷ over the treasuries (*or, storehouses*), assisted by Zadok the scribe and Pedaiah, the Levites were assisted by Hanan the son of Zaccur, son of Mattaniah, for they were regarded as being reliable (*or, trustworthy*). Their duty was the distribution of the portions to their associates. ¹⁴ Remember me, O God. concerning this, and do not blot out my good deeds that I have done for the house of my God and for his attendants. ⁵⁸

C. Sabbath Reforms 13:15 - 22

¹⁵ At that time in Judah I witnessed men treading wine presses on the Sabbath and bringing in heaps [*of grain*] and loading them on their asses; as well as wine, grapes, figs and all kinds of burdens which they brought to Jerusalem on the Sabbath day and I admonished ⁵⁹ them for selling food on the very day ⁶⁰ when they sold food. ⁶¹ ¹⁶ Men of Tyre ⁶² also, resided in the city and brought in fish and all kinds of merchandise which they sold to the people of Judah in Jerusalem on the Sabbath. ¹⁷ Then I censured ⁶³ the authorities ⁶⁴ saying, "What is this wicked thing you are doing, profaning the Sabbath Day? ¹⁸ This is precisely what our ancestors did, ⁶⁵ and did not our God bring all the evil on us and on this city? Yet you bring additional wrath ⁶⁶ on Israel by profaning the Sabbath!"

¹⁹ When dusk was approaching ⁶⁷ for the Sabbath I ordered that the gates of Jerusalem closed before the Sabbath began [*so no merchandise could enter on the Sabbath, nor should the gates be opened*] and gave orders (*or, commanded*) that they not be opened until after the Sabbath had ended. I stationed some of my servants above the gates, [*to watch*] that no burdens might be brought in on the Sabbath Day. ²⁰ Then on one or two occasions the merchants and vendors of all kinds of wares

⁵⁴ Payment was in kind: food, oil, etc. as had been determined by the Law of Moses.

⁵⁵ Literally: "fled."

⁵⁶ Apparently only a 'vegetable' tithe, not one including livestock. Cf. II Chronicles 31:6.

⁵⁷ A unique Hebrew word. "I made treasurer." *atswh*. Possibly this should be *atswch* in Hebrew which would be a very simple error to make. The LXX & Peshitta read the latter.

⁵⁸ This interjection is also found in verses 22, 29 & 31. The Gedaechniss Motif. The end of this verse is ambiguous and the LXX translators chose to omit "and for his attendants."

⁵⁹ Literally: "I bore witness."

⁶⁰ I.e. the Sabbath day. MT: "I warned them on the day of their selling food."

⁶¹ LXX, manuscripts A, B & Aleph: "their sale." LXX manuscript L & Ethiopic: "when they were selling."

⁶² Omitted in LXX, manuscripts B & A.

⁶³ Literally: "contended with" "I instituted a court case against..." would be an good translation.

⁶⁴ LXX in manuscripts B, A, Aleph in the original hand have "sons of Judah" and in a marginal hand have "authorities."

⁶⁵ Some scholars feel this is not from the same written source because of the hackneyed terms which are not normal for the writer of Nehemiah.

⁶⁶ Literally: "you causing to add wrath."

⁶⁷ Literally: "when they threw shadows, the gates..." Arabic: "black" though the Arabic word would also be a word that might be translated as "shadow."

camped outside Jerusalem. ⁶⁸ 21 I cautioned ⁶⁹ them, saying, "Why are you spending the night alongside the wall? If you do so again I will use force against you." ⁷⁰ From that time they did not come on the Sabbath. ⁷¹ I ordered the Levites to purify themselves and come to guard ⁷² the gates, to keep the Sabbath Day holy.

Remember this also in my favor, O God, and spare ⁷³ me according to the greatness of your steadfast love.

D. Marriage Reforms 13:23 - 29

²³ At that time I also saw the Jews who had married ⁷⁴ women who were Ashdodites, Ammonites, Moabites, ²⁴ and half of their children spoke the language of their respective national background. ⁷⁵ They were unable to speak the Hebrew language as was done in Judah. ²⁵ I initiated a court case against them and reprimanded them, striking ⁷⁶ some of them, tearing out their hair; and I made them swear an oath in the name of God, saying:

"You shall not give your daughters to their sons,

or take their daughters as wives for your sons, or for yourselves.

²⁶ Is not that the way king Solomon of Israel sinned because of such women?

Among the many nations there was no other king like him,

and he was so beloved by his God,

that God had him reign as king over all of Israel.

Yet those foreigners even made him sin. ⁷⁷

²⁷ How then dare we acquiesce to you ⁷⁸

and tolerate this great evil, ⁷⁹ when you act treacherously

against God by marrying ⁸⁰ foreign women?"

²⁸ One of the sons of Jehoiada, son of Eliashib, the high priest was the son-in-law of Sanballat, the Horonite. Consequently I banished him from my presence.

²⁹ Remember them, O my God because ⁸¹ they have defiled ⁸² the priesthood and the covenant of the priesthood and the Levites.

F. Recapitulation 13:30 - 32

³⁰ I then purged them of every foreign element and I established job requirements for priests and Levites that suited each job. ³¹ I arranged for the wood offering, at scheduled times and for the first fruits. Remember me, O my God, to my credit.

68 The LXX adds: "and they all lodged and engaged in business outside Jerusalem."

69 Literally: "If you repent/"

70 Literally: "send a hand against you."

71 Verse 22 is considered by many scholars to be an addition.

72 There is a parallel meaning to the Hebrew word "guard" and "come." "That they should come and take their places as watchers" is a possible translation.

73 Possibly an Akkadian root word, *hasu*.

74 Literally: "made to dwell."

75 Literally: "and according to the language of a people and a people." Absent from the LXX.

76 Peshitta: "buried."

77 Literally: "turned to sin."

78 Vulgate & Arabic: "Shall we also be disobedient?" Literally: "Shall we listen to you?"

79 Peshitta & LXX: "to break covenant."

80 Literally: "giving dwelling."

81 Literally: "for the defiling of."

82 LXX: "concerning rights of inheritance of the priesthood."