**May 28, 2021**

**BIBLE STUDY**

**Straightway Church of Christ, Inc.**

**37 Market Street, New Haven, CT 06513**

**Bishop M. Ruel McCoy, Sr., Servant / Shepherd**

**The Late Bishop E. Samuel Green, Establishmentarian**

**“A DEDICATION CELEBRATION”**

**Nehemiah 12:1-47**

***Nehemiah 12:1 "Now these [are] the priests and the Levites that went up with Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua: Seraiah, Jeremiah, Ezra,"***

***Nehemiah 12:2 "Amariah, Malluch, Hattush,"***

***Nehemiah 12:3 "Shechaniah, Rehum, Meremoth,"***

***Nehemiah 12:4 "Iddo, Ginnetho, Abijah,"***

***Nehemiah 12:5 "Miamin, Maadiah, Bilgah,"***

***Nehemiah 12:6 "Shemaiah, and Joiarib, Jedaiah,"***

***Nehemiah 12:7 "Sallu, Amok, Hilkiah, Jedaiah. These [were] the chief of the priests and of their brethren in the days of Jeshua."***

These are the priests and Levites who went up with Zerubbabel. In recording their names here, Nehemiah was saying to the returnees, “Look, you have a hundred-year legacy.” Everyone stands on someone’s shoulders; many someones enabled you to be where you are. Jeshua was the high priest in Zerubbabel's time. Seraiah was the high priest murdered by Nebuchadnezzar. Jeremiah and Ezra, here, were not the same as those who have books named for them. We must take time, here, and recognize that Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, was descended from this Abijah. His wife, Elisabeth, was descended from Aaron. They were both descended from the priestly family of Aaron, in fact. All of the names listed were the names of the chief of each of the priestly families.

***Nehemiah 12:8 "Moreover the Levites: Jeshua, Binnui, Kadmiel, Sherebiah, Judah, [and] Mattaniah, [which was] over the thanksgiving, he and his brethren."***

***Nehemiah 12:9 "Also Bakbukiah and Unni, their brethren, [were] over against them in the watches."***

***Nehemiah 12:10 "And Jeshua begat Joiakim, Joiakim also begat Eliashib, and Eliashib begat Joiada,"***

***Nehemiah 12:11 "And Joiada begat Jonathan, and Jonathan begat Jaddua."***

We must continue to remember that Jeshua, Binnui, and Kadmiel were the leaders of the three divisions of the Levitical tribe. The others, mentioned here, were heads of families of the Levites. Jeshua was the high priest of Zerubbabel's time. Eliashab was mentioned as high priest, after Nehemiah reached Jerusalem. Joiada was in office 36 years. It was believed that Jonathan murdered his brother Jeshua, in the temple, so that he might be high priest. All of those listed above were high priests.

***Nehemiah 12:12 "And in the days of Joiakim were priests, the chief of the fathers: of Seraiah, Meraiah; of Jeremiah, Hananiah;"***

***Nehemiah 12:13 "Of Ezra, Meshullam; of Amariah, Jehohanan;"***

***Nehemiah 12:14 "Of Melicu, Jonathan; of Shebaniah, Joseph;"***

***Nehemiah 12:15 "Of Harim, Adna; of Meraioth, Helkai;"***

***Nehemiah 12:16 "Of Iddo, Zechariah; of Ginnethon, Meshullam;"***

***Nehemiah 12:17 "Of Abijah, Zichri; of Miniamin, of Moadiah, Piltai;"***

***Nehemiah 12:18 "Of Bilgah, Shammua; of Shemaiah, Jehonathan;"***

***Nehemiah 12:19 "And of Joiarib, Mattenai; of Jedaiah, Uzzi;"***

***Nehemiah 12:20 "Of Sallai, Kallai; of Amok, Eber;"***

***Nehemiah 12:21 "Of Hilkiah, Hashabiah; of Jedaiah, Nethaneel."***

This was the beginning of a list of the priestly families, starting with the high priest, Joiakim. Each of those mentioned, above, were the head of their priestly family. The families of Jedaiah and Joiarib did not put their mark to the covenant supposedly. They were, probably, listed toward the last for that reason. These were all the men who were the heads of priestly families.

***Nehemiah 12:22 "The Levites in the days of Eliashib, Joiada, and Johanan, and Jaddua, [were] recorded chief of the fathers: also the priests, to the reign of Darius the Persian."***

***Nehemiah 12:23 "The sons of Levi, the chief of the fathers, [were] written in the book of the chronicles, even until the days of Johanan the son of Eliashib."***

The only thing that I can make of this is, perhaps, they had the Levites recorded as the chief of the fathers, up until the time that Darius reigned. We know from our previous studies in Chronicles, that there were records kept of all of the heads of the families, and particularly of the civil and spiritual leaders. They thought it very important to keep an accurate genealogy of each family. The book of chronicles, mentioned above, was a record book other than the Chronicles in the Bible. It was terribly important to keep that type of record of the Levitical families during the Old Testament to see who could be high priest or priest. We are not told exactly why the record keeping ceased in the time of Johanan. When the Lord Jesus came to the earth, He was the High Priest forever. The ministry before the time of Jesus' visit to the earth was by family heritage. It was ministering the law. After Jesus was crucified, the ministry is of the Spirit. Anyone who has the Spirit of God dwelling within them can minister. In fact, everyone who is a believer should minister in some capacity.

***Nehemiah 12:24 "And the chief of the Levites: Hashabiah, Sherebiah, and Jeshua the son of Kadmiel, with their brethren over against them, to praise [and] to give thanks, according to the commandment of David the man of God, ward over against ward."***

***Nehemiah 12:25 "Mattaniah, and Bakbukiah, Obadiah, Meshullam, Talmon, Akkub, [were] porters keeping the ward at the thresholds of the gates."***

***Nehemiah 12:26 These [were] in the days of Joiakim the son of Jeshua, the son of Jozadak, and in the days of Nehemiah the governor, and of Ezra the priest, the scribe."***

David had re-set the functions of the temple up, just before he died. David truly was a man after God's own heart. Again, we see the beginning of the listing of the chief Levitical families. We see the keepers of the gates above. Perhaps, the keepers of the treasury door, as well. Nehemiah was a civil leader in the office of governor. Ezra, as priest and scribe, was a spiritual leader.

***Nehemiah 12:27 "And at the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem they sought the Levites out of all their places, to bring them to Jerusalem, to keep the dedication with gladness, both with thanksgivings, and with singing, [with] cymbals, psalteries, and with harps."***

***Nehemiah 12:28 "And the sons of the singers gathered themselves together, both out of the plain country round about Jerusalem, and from the villages of Netophathi;"***

***Nehemiah 12:29 "Also from the house of Gilgal, and out of the fields of Geba and Azmaveth: for the singers had builded them villages round about Jerusalem."***

The wall was finished in chapter 6, but until now, the walls were right and the people were wrong. We do not know exactly when the dedication of the wall took place. Some scholars believe it was dedicated at the end of its completion. Others believe it was dedicated after Nehemiah went back to see the king of Persia. It really does not matter when it was done. Some people do not believe in dedicating things like a wall of a city. To those people who believe in God, everything they come in contact with should be dedicated to God. This dedication would be a festive occasion. There would be much singing, playing of instruments, praising God, and blowing of the victory trumpet. This was a time of thanking God for His protection. The wall was a deterrent. God is our protection, and He was theirs. For God, the dedication of the people always comes before the dedication of the wall. God never honors things until the people related to the things are right. The people prepared to celebrate with thanksgiving and singing because everybody knew that God was behind their success in erecting the structure. Something is wrong with the fan who can sit still in his seat when his team scores the winning goal with one second left on the clock. How can we not praise God for all he has done on our behalf? That they sent for the Levites wherever they lived shows that they got religion back at the center of the nation’s life. This detail is important because if you want heaven to intervene in your earthly circumstances, God’s kingdom agenda must become your focus. We remember, from an earlier lesson, the little towns the people lived in around Jerusalem. The singers and musicians were all Levites. The towns, they had chosen to live in, would be fairly close to Jerusalem. They periodically had to come to Jerusalem to minister with their music and song.

***Nehemiah 12:30 "And the priests and the Levites purified themselves, and purified the people, and the gates, and the wall."***

The purification of the priests and Levites was of a spiritual nature. The purification of gates and wall would be of a more physical nature. After the priests and Levites had purified themselves, they purified the people, the city gates, and the wall. God is absolutely holy set apart and separate from sinners. He doesn’t tolerate wickedness. When we come before his presence, we must conform to his agenda. That means we confess our sins before him and walk by grace in righteousness. Because this is our Father’s world, and we are dirty sinful people, each of us must be made clean to worship God. If you are a Christian, Jesus Christ sanctified you. You are set apart for God.

***Nehemiah 12:31 "Then I brought up the princes of Judah upon the wall, and appointed two great [companies of them that gave] thanks, [whereof one] went on the right hand upon the wall toward the dung gate:"***

***Nehemiah 12:32 "And after them went Hoshaiah, and half of the princes of Judah,"***

***Nehemiah 12:33 "And Azariah, Ezra, and Meshullam,"***

***Nehemiah 12:34 "Judah, and Benjamin, and Shemaiah, and Jeremiah,"***

This was not just the chiefs of the Levites that climbed upon the wall, but the chiefs of the government, as well. The wall was a protection for the temple, but it was, also, a protection for people, as well. This was just saying that people were spread across the wall. The singers led a march of the princes. Hoshaiah was, probably, speaking of Hoshea. In the procession, next came the priests Azariah, Ezra, and then Meshullam. This was speaking of a group of people who were from the tribes of Benjamin and Judah next. Shemaiah and Jeremiah, again, were from priestly families. It appears, the priests and the people were mingled in together in this procession.

***Nehemiah 12:35 "And [certain] of the priests' sons with trumpets; [namely], Zechariah the son of Jonathan, the son of Shemaiah, the son of Mattaniah, the son of Michaiah, the son of Zaccur, the son of Asaph:"***

***Nehemiah 12:36 "And his brethren, Shemaiah, and Azarael, Milalai, Gilalai, Maai, Nethaneel, and Judah, Hanani, with the musical instruments of David the man of God, and Ezra the scribe before them."***

These trumpets would be blown in victory by the priests' sons. The musical instruments would be played, and the singers would sing praises. This procession across the wall was to be a victorious march. After this, would come another group of Levites led by Zechariah. Ezra would be acting as a scribe here.

***Nehemiah 12:37 "And at the fountain gate, which was over against them, they went up by the stairs of the city of David, at the going up of the wall, above the house of David, even unto the water gate eastward."***

***Nehemiah 12:38 "And the other [company of them that gave] thanks went over against [them], and I after them, and the half of the people upon the wall, from beyond the tower of the furnaces even unto the broad wall;"***

***Nehemiah 12:39 "And from above the gate of Ephraim, and above the old gate, and above the fish gate, and the tower of Hananeel, and the tower of Meah, even unto the sheep gate: and they stood still in the prison gate."***

***Nehemiah 12:40 "So stood the two [companies of them that gave] thanks in the house of God, and I, and the half of the rulers with me:"***

This was another group, who would mount another section of the wall from the stairs that went up the inside of the wall. Nehemiah was with this group. They started at the same place the other group had started and went in the opposite direction. Some of this was on the eastern wall. A great deal of the wall was covered with all these people. It would have been a very strong wall to hold up the weight of that many people.

***Nehemiah 12:41 "And the priests; Eliakim, Maaseiah, Miniamin, Michaiah, Elioenai, Zechariah, [and] Hananiah, with trumpets;"***

***Nehemiah 12:42 "And Maaseiah, and Shemaiah, and Eleazar, and Uzzi, and Jehohanan, and Malchijah, and Elam, and Ezer. And the singers sang loud, with Jezrahiah [their] overseer."***

These were the priests that were blowing the trumpets. The first mentioned, here, were playing instruments and the singers were singing. This had to be a tremendous, victorious sound of praise rising up to God. There were two choirs on the wall, to the right and to the left. In other words, they were stationed in such a way that they got a panoramic view of what God had done. Moreover, they could reflect on their unity in the flow of movement as they all converged on the house of God.

***Nehemiah 12:43 "Also that day they offered great sacrifices, and rejoiced: for God had made them rejoice with great joy: the wives also and the children rejoiced: so that the joy of Jerusalem was heard even afar off."***

It was a long-standing tradition to sacrifice at dedications. Nehemiah completed the dedication by the priests offering tremendous numbers of sacrifices. Everyone participated. This was a time of national joy and triumph. Another time the women had participated in a time of tremendous joy, had been just after the crossing of the Red Sea. The people rejoiced because God had given them great joy. Joy is a spiritual tranquility provided by God. When Paul was locked up in chains he said, “Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!” **(Phil 4:4).** Joy is not circumstantially determined, but rather divinely determined. According to Nehemiah, Jerusalem’s rejoicing was heard far away. It had been a long difficult road, full of peril. But the people were able to see the hand of God in their past. Their present circumstances weren’t perfect, but the God who gave them joy was.

***Nehemiah 12:44 "And at that time were some appointed over the chambers for the treasures, for the offerings, for the firstfruits, and for the tithes, to gather into them out of the fields of the cities the portions of the law for the priests and Levites: for Judah rejoiced for the priests and for the Levites that waited."***

Perhaps, we can safely assume that Nehemiah did some of the appointing. Some of these things were of a spiritual consequence, so we may assume the high priest appointed some of those men. We know the law had been read to all of the people, so there would be no excuse for not giving the portion that was their obligation to give. The priests and the Levites lived of these offerings. The priests and the Levites were not allowed to work aside from in the service of the LORD. They waited until the offerings were made to receive their portion.

***Nehemiah 12:45 "And both the singers and the porters kept the ward of their God, and the ward of the purification, according to the commandment of David, [and] of Solomon his son."***

The singers and the porters were in the service of the LORD. They did not have other occupations. They lived of the daily portions that were allotted to them. They were purified, as were the priests, because they were in the service of the LORD. David and Solomon had instituted the musicians and the doorkeepers in the temple that Solomon built.

***Nehemiah 12:46 "For in the days of David and Asaph of old [there were] chief of the singers, and songs of praise and thanksgiving unto God."***

The book of Psalms is a book of songs to be sung in worship. Asaph was the head of the singers in the temple in Solomon's temple. Many of the Psalms speak of being for Asaph. David felt that thanksgiving and praise in song was a vital part of worship. He was a singer and a musician himself. He wrote most of the Psalms, which are songs.

***Nehemiah 12:47 "And all Israel in the days of Zerubbabel, and in the days of Nehemiah, gave the portions of the singers and the porters, every day his portion: and they sanctified [holy things] unto the Levites; and the Levites sanctified [them] unto the children of Aaron."***

This was explaining that the singers and musicians had a daily portion. The Levites received of the things offered on the altar. The high priest and the priests received of the offerings of the altar, also. When the people got right with God, they prioritized things. They brought in the contributions and tenths. If modern believers really understood what the church is and the influence that we could make, there would be no problem getting Christians to serve and give and invest in eternal things. Our thinking must be conformed to the divine perspective, so that our actions follow. Too many Christians are trying to live in two kingdoms. They are trying to serve God and serve the world order at the same time, and you can’t do that. We have a desperate need for people who will put God’s kingdom first.

**QUESTIONS**

1. Who was the high priest in Zerubbabel's time?
2. Which high priest was murdered by Nebuchadnezzar?
3. Who was descended from Abijah?
4. Who was Elisabeth, mother of John, descended from?
5. Who were Jeshua, Binnui, and Kadmiel?
6. When was Eliashab was high priest?
7. Who did Jonothan murder to become high priest?
8. Which of the priests did not put their mark on the covenant?
9. Why did the genealogies become unimportant after Jesus?
10. Nehemiah was a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ leader in the office of governor.
11. When were the two times people believe the wall was dedicated?
12. To all who believe in God, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ should be dedicated.
13. The singers and musicians were all \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
14. Who were purified for the dedication of the wall?
15. Did the ordinary people get on the wall?
16. Who blew the trumpets?
17. What kind of songs would they sing?
18. Who led the second group to mount the wall?
19. Who was in the midst of them?
20. Name the priests that blew the trumpets.
21. Who was involved in all of the rejoicing that was going on?
22. Who did the appointing in verse 44?
23. Who got a daily portion?
24. When did much of the ministry of singing begin?
25. What are the Psalms?