

Nehemiah 8:11-18 ESV - Returning to the Lord

So the Levites calmed all the people, saying, "Be quiet, for this day is holy; do not be grieved." 12 And all the people went their way to eat and drink and to send portions and to make great rejoicing, because they had understood the words that were declared to them.

13 On the second day the heads of fathers' houses of all the people, with the priests and the Levites, came together to Ezra the scribe in order to study the words of the Law.

14 And they found it written in the Law that the LORD had commanded by Moses that the people of Israel should dwell in booths during the feast of the seventh month, 15 and that they should proclaim it and publish it in all their towns and in Jerusalem, "Go out to the hills and bring branches of olive, wild olive, myrtle, palm, and other leafy trees to make booths, as it is written."

16 So the people went out and brought them and made booths for themselves, each on his roof, and in their courts and in the courts of the house of God, and in the square at the Water Gate and in the square at the Gate of Ephraim.

17 And all the assembly of those who had returned from the captivity made booths and lived in the booths, for from the days of Jeshua the son of Nun to that day the people of Israel had not done so. And there was very great rejoicing.

18 And day by day, from the first day to the last day, he read from the Book of the Law of God. They kept the feast seven days, and on the eighth day there was a solemn assembly, according to the rule.

Nehemiah 9:1-38 ESV

Now on the twenty-fourth day of this month the people of Israel were assembled with fasting and in sackcloth, and with earth on their heads. 2 And the Israelites separated themselves from all foreigners and stood and confessed their sins and the iniquities of their fathers.

3 And they stood up in their place and read from the Book of the Law of the LORD their God for a quarter of the day; for another quarter of it they made confession and worshiped the LORD their God. 4 On the stairs of the Levites stood Jeshua, Bani, Kadmiel, Shebaniah, Bunni, Sherebiah, Bani, and Chenani; and they cried with a loud voice to the LORD their God.

5 "Stand up and bless the LORD your God from everlasting to everlasting. Blessed be Your glorious name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise.

6 "You are the LORD, You alone. You have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them; and You preserve all of them; and the host of heaven worships You.

7 You are the LORD, the God who chose Abram and brought him out of Ur of the Chaldeans and gave him the name

Abraham. 8 You found his heart faithful before You, and made with him the covenant to give to his offspring the land of the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Amorite, the Perizzite, the Jebusite, and the Girgashite. And You have kept Your promise, for You are righteous.

9 "And You saw the affliction of our fathers in Egypt and heard their cry at the Red Sea, 10 and performed signs and wonders against Pharaoh and all his servants and all the people of his land, for You knew that they acted arrogantly against our fathers. And You made a name for Yourself, as it is to this day.

11 And You divided the sea before them, so that they went through the midst of the sea on dry land, and You cast their pursuers into the depths, as a stone into mighty waters.

12 By a pillar of cloud You led them in the day, and by a pillar of fire in the night to light for them the way in which they should go. 13 You came down on Mount Sinai and spoke with them from heaven and gave them right rules and true laws, good statutes and commandments, 14 and You made known to them Your holy Sabbath and commanded them commandments and statutes and a law by Moses your servant.

15 You gave them bread from heaven for their hunger and brought water for them out of the rock for their thirst, and You told them to go in to possess the land that You had sworn to give them.

16 "But they and our fathers acted presumptuously and stiffened their neck and did not obey Your commandments. 17 They

refused to obey and were not mindful of the wonders that You performed among them, but they stiffened their neck and appointed a leader to return to their slavery in Egypt.

But You are a God ready to forgive, gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and did not forsake them. 18 Even when they had made for themselves a golden calf and said, 'This is your God who brought you up out of Egypt,' and had committed great blasphemies, 19 You in your great mercies did not forsake them in the wilderness.

The pillar of cloud to lead them in the way did not depart from them by day, nor the pillar of fire by night to light for them the way by which they should go. 20 You gave Your good Spirit to instruct them and did not withhold Your manna from their mouth and gave them water for their thirst. 21 Forty years You sustained them in the wilderness, and they lacked nothing. Their clothes did not wear out and their feet did not swell.

22 "And You gave them kingdoms and peoples and allotted to them every corner. So they took possession of the land of Sihon king of Heshbon and the land of Og king of Bashan. 23 You multiplied their children as the stars of heaven, and You brought them into the land that You had told their fathers to enter and possess.

24 So the descendants went in and possessed the land, and You subdued before them the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, and gave them into their hand, with their kings and the peoples of the land, that they might do with them as they would. 25 And they captured fortified cities and a rich land, and took possession

of houses full of all good things, cisterns already hewn, vineyards, olive orchards and fruit trees in abundance. So they ate and were filled and became fat and delighted themselves in Your great goodness.

26 "Nevertheless, they were disobedient and rebelled against you and cast Your law behind their back and killed Your prophets, who had warned them in order to turn them back to You, and they committed great blasphemies.

27 Therefore You gave them into the hand of their enemies, who made them suffer. And in the time of their suffering they cried out to You and You heard them from heaven, and according to Your great mercies You gave them saviors who saved them from the hand of their enemies.

28 But after they had rest they did evil again before You, and You abandoned them to the hand of their enemies, so that they had dominion over them. Yet when they turned and cried to You, You heard from heaven, and many times You delivered them according to Your mercies.

29 And You warned them in order to turn them back to Your law. Yet they acted presumptuously and did not obey Your commandments, but sinned against Your rules, which if a person does them, he shall live by them, and they turned a stubborn shoulder and stiffened their neck and would not obey.

30 Many years You bore with them and warned them by Your Spirit through Your prophets. Yet they would not give ear. Therefore You gave them into the hand of the peoples of the

lands. 31 Nevertheless, in Your great mercies You did not make an end of them or forsake them, for You are a gracious and merciful God.

32 "Now, therefore, our God, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God, who keeps covenant and steadfast love, let not all the hardship seem little to You that has come upon us, upon our kings, our princes, our priests, our prophets, our fathers, and all Your people, since the time of the kings of Assyria until this day.

33 Yet You have been righteous in all that has come upon us, for You have dealt faithfully and we have acted wickedly. 34 Our kings, our princes, our priests, and our fathers have not kept Your law or paid attention to Your commandments and Your warnings that You gave them. 35 Even in their own kingdom, and amid Your great goodness that You gave them, and in the large and rich land that you set before them, they did not serve You or turn from their wicked works.

36 Behold, we are slaves this day; in the land that You gave to our fathers to enjoy its fruit and its good gifts, behold, we are slaves. 37 And its rich yield goes to the kings whom You have set over us because of our sins. They rule over our bodies and over our livestock as they please, and we are in great distress.

38 "Because of all this we make a firm covenant in writing; on the sealed document are the names of our princes, our Levites, and our priests.

Nehemiah 10:28-39 ESV - Commitment to God

"The rest of the people, the priests, the Levites, the gatekeepers, the singers, the temple servants, and all who have separated themselves from the peoples of the lands to the Law of God, their wives, their sons, their daughters, all who have knowledge and understanding, 29 join with their brothers, their nobles, and enter into a curse and an oath to walk in God's Law that was given by Moses the servant of God, and to observe and do all the commandments of the LORD our Lord and His rules and His statutes.

30 We will not give our daughters to the peoples of the land or take their daughters for our sons. 31 And if the peoples of the land bring in goods or any grain on the Sabbath day to sell, we will not buy from them on the Sabbath or on a holy day. And we will forego the crops of the seventh year and the exaction of every debt.

32 "We also take on ourselves the obligation to give yearly a third part of a shekel for the service of the house of our God: 33 for the showbread, the regular grain offering, the regular burnt offering, the Sabbaths, the new moons, the appointed feasts, the holy things, and the sin offerings to make atonement for Israel, and for all the work of the house of our God.

34 We, the priests, the Levites, and the people, have likewise cast lots for the wood offering, to bring it into the house of our God, according to our fathers' houses, at times appointed, year by year, to burn on the altar of the LORD our God, as it is written in the Law.

35 We obligate ourselves to bring the firstfruits of our ground and the firstfruits of all fruit of every tree, year by year, to the house of the LORD; 36 also to bring to the house of our God, to the priests who minister in the house of our God, the firstborn of our sons and of our cattle, as it is written in the Law, and the firstborn of our herds and of our flocks; 37 and to bring the first of our dough, and our contributions, the fruit of every tree, the wine and the oil, to the priests, to the chambers of the house of our God; and to bring to the Levites the tithes from our ground, for it is the Levites who collect the tithes in all our towns where we labor.

38 And the priest, the son of Aaron, shall be with the Levites when the Levites receive the tithes. And the Levites shall bring up the tithe of the tithes to the house of our God, to the chambers of the storehouse. 39 For the people of Israel and the sons of Levi shall bring the contribution of grain, wine, and oil to the chambers, where the vessels of the sanctuary are, as well as the priests who minister, and the gatekeepers and the singers. We will not neglect the house of our God."

Nehemiah 11:1-4 ESV

Now the leaders of the people lived in Jerusalem. And the rest of the people cast lots to bring one out of ten to live in Jerusalem the holy city, while nine out of ten remained in the other towns. 2 And the people blessed all the men who willingly offered to live in Jerusalem. 3 These are the chiefs of the province who lived in Jerusalem; but in the towns of Judah everyone lived on his property in their towns: Israel, the priests, the Levites, the temple servants, and the descendants of Solomon's servants. 4

And in Jerusalem lived certain of the sons of Judah and of the sons of Benjamin.

Nehemiah 12:27-47 ESV - The Dedication

And at the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem they sought the Levites in all their places, to bring them to Jerusalem to celebrate the dedication with gladness, with thanksgivings and with singing, with cymbals, harps, and lyres. 28 And the sons of the singers gathered together from the district surrounding Jerusalem and from the villages of the Netophathites; 29 also from Beth-gilgal and from the region of Geba and Azmaveth, for the singers had built for themselves villages around Jerusalem.

30 And the priests and the Levites purified themselves, and they purified the people and the gates and the wall. 31 Then I brought the leaders of Judah up onto the wall and appointed two great choirs that gave thanks. One went to the south on the wall to the Dung Gate.

32 And after them went Hoshai and half of the leaders of Judah, 33 and Azariah, Ezra, Meshullam, 34 Judah, Benjamin, Shemaiah, and Jeremiah, 35 and certain of the priests' sons 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 relatives, 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.

37 At the Fountain Gate they went up straight before them by the stairs of the city of David, at the ascent of the wall, above the house of David, to the Water Gate on the east. 38 The other choir of those who gave thanks went to the north, and I followed them with half of the people, on the wall, above the Tower of the Ovens, to the Broad Wall, 39 and above the Gate of Ephraim, and by the Gate of Yeshanah, 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 choirs of those who gave thanks stood in the house of God, and I and half of the officials with me; 41 and the priests with trumpets. And the singers sang with Jezrahiah as their leader. 43 And they offered great sacrifices that day and rejoiced, for God had made them rejoice with great joy; the women and children also rejoiced. And the joy of Jerusalem was heard far away.

44 On that day men were appointed over the storerooms, the contributions, the firstfruits, and the tithes, to gather into them the portions required by the Law for the priests and for the Levites according to the fields of the towns, for Judah rejoiced over the priests and the Levites who ministered.

45 And they performed the service of their God and the service of purification, as did the singers and the gatekeepers, according to the command of David and his son Solomon. 46 For long ago in the days of David and Asaph there were directors of the singers, and there were songs of praise and thanksgiving to God. 47 And all Israel in the days of Zerubbabel and in the days of Nehemiah gave the daily portions for the singers and the

gatekeepers; and they set apart that which was for the Levites; and the Levites set apart that which was for the sons of Aaron.

Nehemiah 13:1-31 ESV - Returning to God

On that day they read from the Book of Moses in the hearing of the people. And in it was found written that no Ammonite or Moabite should ever enter the assembly of God, 2 for they did not meet the people of Israel with bread and water, but hired Balaam against them to curse them--yet our God turned the curse into a blessing.

3 As soon as the people heard the law, they separated from Israel all those of foreign descent. 4 Now before this, Eliashib the priest, who was appointed over the chambers of the house of our God, and who was related to Tobiah, 5 prepared for Tobiah a large chamber where they had previously put the grain offering, the frankincense, the vessels, and the tithes of grain, wine, and oil, which were given by commandment to the Levites, singers, and gatekeepers, and the contributions for the priests.

6 While this was taking place, I was not in Jerusalem, for in the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes king of Babylon I went to the king. And after some time I asked leave of the king 7 and came to Jerusalem, and I then discovered the evil that Eliashib had done for Tobiah, preparing for him a chamber in the courts of the house of God.

8 And I was very angry, and I threw all the household furniture of Tobiah out of the chamber. 9 Then I gave orders, and they

cleansed the chambers, and I brought back there the vessels of the house of God, with the grain offering and the frankincense. 10 I also found out that the portions of the Levites had not been given to them, so that the Levites and the singers, who did the work, had fled each to his field.

11 So I confronted the officials and said, "Why is the house of God forsaken?" And I gathered them together and set them in their stations. 12 Then all Judah brought the tithe of the grain, wine, and oil into the storehouses. 13 And I appointed as treasurers over the storehouses Shelemiah the priest, Zadok the scribe, and Pedaiah of the Levites, and as their assistant Hanan the son of Zaccur, son of Mattaniah, for they were considered reliable, and their duty was to distribute to their brothers.

14 Remember me, O my God, concerning this, and do not wipe out my good deeds that I have done for the house of my God and for His service.

15 In those days I saw in Judah people treading winepresses on the Sabbath, and bringing in heaps of grain and loading them on donkeys, and also wine, grapes, figs, and all kinds of loads, which they brought into Jerusalem on the Sabbath day. And I warned them on the day when they sold food.

16 Tyrians also, who lived in the city, brought in fish and all kinds of goods and sold them on the Sabbath to the people of Judah, in Jerusalem itself!

17 Then I confronted the nobles of Judah and said to them, "What is this evil thing that you are doing, profaning the

Sabbath day? 18 Did not your fathers act in this way, and did not our God bring all this disaster on us and on this city? Now you are bringing more wrath on Israel by profaning the Sabbath."

19 As soon as it began to grow dark at the gates of Jerusalem before the Sabbath, I commanded that the doors should be shut and gave orders that they should not be opened until after the Sabbath. And I stationed some of my servants at the gates, that no load might be brought in on the Sabbath day.

20 Then the merchants and sellers of all kinds of wares lodged outside Jerusalem once or twice. 21 But I warned them and said to them, "Why do you lodge outside the wall? If you do so again, I will lay hands on you." From that time on they did not come on the Sabbath.

22 Then I commanded the Levites that they should purify themselves and come and guard the gates, to keep the Sabbath day holy. Remember this also in my favor, O my God, and spare me according to the greatness of your steadfast love.

23 In those days also I saw the Jews who had married women of Ashdod, Ammon, and Moab. 26 Did not Solomon king of Israel sin on account of such women? Among the many nations there was no king like him, and he was beloved by his God, and God made him king over all Israel. Nevertheless, foreign women made even him to sin. 27 Shall we then listen to you and do all this great evil and act treacherously against our God by marrying foreign women?"

29 Remember them, O my God, because they have desecrated the priesthood and the covenant of the priesthood and the Levites. 30 Thus I cleansed them from everything foreign, and I established the duties of the priests and Levites, each in his work; 31 and I provided for the wood offering at appointed times, and for the firstfruits. Remember me, O my God, for good.

Psalms 4:1-8 ESV - A Psalm of David.

Answer me when I call, O God of my righteousness! You have given me relief when I was in distress. Be gracious to me and hear my prayer!

2 O men, how long shall my honor be turned into shame? How long will you love vain words and seek after lies?

3 But know that the LORD has set apart the godly for Himself; the LORD hears when I call to him.

4 Be angry, and do not sin; ponder in your own hearts on your beds, and be silent.

5 Offer right sacrifices, and put your trust in the LORD. 6 There are many who say, "Who will show us some good? Lift up the light of Your face upon us, O LORD!" 7 You have put more joy in my heart than they have when their grain and wine abound.

8 In peace I will both lie down and sleep; for you alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety.