
⁴⁰So the two thanksgiving choirs stood in the house of God, likewise I and the half of the rulers with me; ⁴¹and the priests, Eliakim, Maaseiah, Minjamin, Michaiah, Elioenai, Zechariah, and Hananiah, with trumpets; ⁴²also Maaseiah, Shemaiah, Eleazar, Uzzi, Jehohanan, Malchijah, Elam, and Ezer. The singers sang loudly with Jezrahiah the director. ⁴³Also that day they offered great sacrifices, and rejoiced, for God had made them rejoice with great joy; the women and the children also rejoiced, so that the joy of Jerusalem was heard afar off. ⁴⁴And at the same time some were appointed over the rooms of the storehouse for the offerings, the firstfruits, and the tithes, to gather into them from the fields of the cities the portions specified by the Law for the priests and Levites; for Judah rejoiced over the priests and Levites who ministered. ⁴⁵Both the singers and the gatekeepers kept the charge of their God and the charge of the purification, according to the command of David and Solomon his son. ⁴⁶For in the days of David and Asaph of old *there were* chiefs of the singers, and songs of praise and thanksgiving to God. ⁴⁷In the days of Zerubbabel and in the days of Nehemiah all Israel gave the portions for the singers and the gatekeepers, a portion for each day. They also consecrated *holy things* for the Levites, and the Levites consecrated *them* for the children of Aaron.

1. A historic occasion

- a. Neh. takes great pains to list the main families that took place in the dedication of the wall
 - a1. There are slight differences among the lists of names of Neh. 10:2-8, 12:1-7, & 12:12-21
 - a2. Often, different names & spellings were used of the same person, such as using Ezra as a shortened form of Azariah
 - a3. Often heads of families are listed in one list, while key family members are in another list
- b. The need to document who participated in the event stresses its importance
- c. The pageantry was to emphasize the importance & solemn purpose of the occasion
 - a1. God had given Judah a new beginning
 - a2. Judah was to build spiritually upon the new foundation that was laid
- d. 22 of 24 priestly orders are listed here

2. The ceremony

- a. As in the dedication of reading the Law, 2 great thanksgiving choirs are assembled
 - a1. Starting at the Valley Gate Nehemiah led one choir east while Ezra led the other choir south around the wall
 - a2. The 2 choirs met at the Temple Gate & entered the temple mount together
- b. Numerous string instruments are mentioned: harps, psaltery, lyres, & viols
- c. At the temple worship & celebration commenced

3. The heart of worship

- a. At the temple the Levites ritually purified every article used in worship (altars, utensils, curtains...)
- b. Neh. was eager to reestablish regular temple worship
- c. The people were excited, so they gave enthusiastically & generously to the storehouse for the priests & Levites
 - a1. This offering must be maintained continually to support the temple work
 - a2. A onetime generous gift was commendable, but the gifts had to keep coming daily in order to support the workers of the temple
- d. Neh. set the worship order
 - a1. Every singer, Levite, priest, & Nethinim were set a portion of their allowance from the gifts in order to support their work
 - a2. As long as the work was supported, the functions of the temple would continue unhindered
- e. The expressed commitment & the continuing support of the work were tests to see if the hearts of the people were totally dedicated to the Lord
 - a1. Support of God's work is a test of one's faith
 - a2. Jam. 2 the faith of God's people can be seen in their ongoing actions of worship & service
- f. God is not interested in lip service, pageantry, or ritual
 - a1. God wants hearts of holiness, faithfulness, & commitment to him
 - a2. Jam. 1:27 God measures faithfulness in acts of kindness, self-sacrifice for others, obedience to his Word, pure worship, & fervent prayer
- g. A good start does not guarantee a good finish, for true commitment requires daily dedication even in trials