



## **A Devoted People and A Dedicated City**

Chris Lindberg // Nehemiah 11-12

Repopulating the city required significant sacrifice

Israelites would have faced the same challenges (even more so)

- Was more than just having to “pack everything up”<sup>1</sup>
- To move into Jerusalem at this time took sacrifice/cost
  - Agricultural lifestyle/communities we comfortable
  - Family and neighbors settled in “surrounding villages” (11:25)
  - Leaving that safety net was a considerable inconvenience<sup>2</sup>

Not only *sacrifice* BUT *surrender*

Repopulating the city was an opportunity for surrender

Let’s read...

### **Nehemiah 11:1-2**

*<sup>1</sup> Now the leaders of the people settled in Jerusalem. The rest of the people cast lots to bring one out of every ten of them to live in Jerusalem, the holy city, while the remaining nine were to stay in their own towns. <sup>2</sup> The people commended all who volunteered to live in Jerusalem.*

Two important Biblical principles seen in these verses

#### **Servant leadership**

- The leaders of the people settled first – Nehemiah’s influence
- Important – in whatever sphere – to model servant leadership
  - Church

---

<sup>1</sup> Raymond Brown, *The Message of Nehemiah: God’s Servant in a Time of Change*, The Bible Speaks Today (Leicester, England ; Downers Grove, Ill: Inter-Varsity Press, 1998), 195.

<sup>2</sup> D. A. Carson, ed., *New Bible Commentary: 21st Century Edition*, 4th ed (Leicester, England ; Downers Grove, Ill., USA: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994), 439.

- Work
- Home
- Community
- Same principle points forward to the ministry of Christ

### **Mark 10:45**

*<sup>45</sup> For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”*

### **Nehemiah 11:1-2**

*<sup>1</sup> Now the leaders of the people settled in Jerusalem. The rest of the people cast lots to bring one out of every ten of them to live in Jerusalem, the holy city, while the remaining nine were to stay in their own towns. <sup>2</sup> The people commended all who volunteered to live in Jerusalem.*

Servant Leadership

Alignment with God’s will

Casting Lots

- Not a matter of “drawing the short straw” even though, given the hardship of city life, we may think so – Not gambling, either
- Casting lots was a posture of surrender
  - Discerned whether they were *destined* to live in Jerusalem
    - Not a “have to” but a “get to”

### **Nehemiah 10:34**

*<sup>34</sup> “We—the priests, the Levites and the people—have cast lots to determine when each of our families is to bring to the house of our God at set times each year a contribution of wood to burn on the altar of the Lord our God, as it is written in the Law.*

- Here the Israelites are creating systematic giving as part of their renewed covenant.<sup>3</sup>
- Nehemiah is creating order -perceived as God’s assignment to each family

### **Joshua 18:6**

*<sup>6</sup> After you have written descriptions of the seven parts of the land, bring them here to me and I will cast lots for you in the presence of the Lord our God.*

---

<sup>3</sup> Brown, *The Message of Nehemiah*, 190.

- Joshua (before the Lord) dividing up the tribes of Israel

### **Proverbs 16:33**

<sup>33</sup> *The lot is cast into the lap,  
but its every decision is from the LORD.*

Not a “have to” but a “get to”

- The people of Israel viewed the move into the city as surrendering to the divine will of God.

Should we cast lots today? Article in the resource section...

### **Romans 12:2**

<sup>2</sup> *Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.*

Step back to series - Ephesians 4 – “made new in attitude of your mind”  
“put on new self”

“the way of life you learned when you heard about Christ and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus.”

Step back to series – Read The Road – The Beatitudes as a manual for Christian living

So, what we see in chapter 11 is an opportunity to surrender among the people of God, and what follows is a list/account of the leaders, people and gatekeepers who inhabited the city.

Then later in chapter 12 after another list of the priests and Levites we see the ceremonial dedication of the wall.

Processional – Nehemiah 12:31

Walls of Jerusalem image

### **Nehemiah 12:27**

*<sup>27</sup> At the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem, the Levites were sought out from where they lived and were brought to Jerusalem to celebrate joyfully the dedication with songs of thanksgiving and with the music of cymbals, harps and lyres.*

Israel's worship was an overflow of joy – celebration, thanksgiving, and devotion.

Nehemiah certainly has reason for thanksgiving

- Hanani's encounter in the palace as Susa
- The Persian king, Artaxerxes, allowed Nehemiah to go to Judah
- Protection during the journey
- Colleagues who shared in his vision and joined in the difficult work of construction
- Protection against their enemies

### **Nehemiah 12:43**

*<sup>43</sup> And on that day they offered great sacrifices, rejoicing because God had given them great joy. The women and children also rejoiced. The sound of rejoicing in Jerusalem could be heard far away.*

“Rejoicing in Jerusalem could be heard far away.”

- Similar to the response when the Temple was rebuilt

### **Ezra 3:11-13**

*<sup>11</sup> With praise and thanksgiving they sang to the Lord:*

*“He is good;  
his love toward Israel endures forever.”*

*And all the people gave a great shout of praise to the Lord, because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid. <sup>12</sup> But many of the older priests and Levites and family heads, who had seen the former temple, wept aloud when they saw the foundation of this temple being laid, while many others shouted for joy. <sup>13</sup> No one could distinguish the sound of the shouts of joy from the sound of weeping, because the people made so much noise. And the sound was heard far away.*

Big Idea:

**Through sacrifice and surrender, Israel was called to repopulate a literal city, and Jesus calls us to figuratively do the same.**

Matthew 5:14-16

<sup>14</sup> “You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. <sup>15</sup> Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. <sup>16</sup> In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

### **OIKOS – Salt and Light Series**

Our response is worship

- Dedicate the “city” of our heart – Celebration that can be heard from far away

Resources:

Should Churches Select Elders by Casting Lots?

Jerusalem's Walls and Gates in the days of Nehemiah