

# The Book Of Nehemiah

This book seems not to have been written by Ezra, because it is written in a quite differing and more plain and easy style, and without that mixture of Chaldee or Syriac words which is in the book of Ezra; but by Nehemiah, [Ne 1:1](#) who wrote an account of his own transactions, as Ezra did of his. But whether this be the same Nehemiah who came up with Zerubbabel, [Ezr 2:2](#); [Ne 7:7](#), may be questioned, the same name being oft given to divers persons. And for the name of *Tirshatha*, which is used both [Ezr 2:63](#); [Ne 7:65](#), [70](#), that seems to be the title of his office, and so belongs to any governor, whether it was Zerubbabel, or Nehemiah, or any other.

## Chapter 1

*Nehemiah, understanding by Hanani the affliction of the Jews, and the misery of Jerusalem, [Ne 1:1-3](#), mourneth, fasteth, and prayeth, [Ne 1:4](#). His prayer for them, [Ne 1:5-10](#); and for success in his petition to the king, [Ne 1:11](#).*

### [Ne 1:1](#)

*The words of Nehemiah, or rather, the acts, or deeds, as the word oft signifies; of which he here treats.*

*In the month Chisleu; which is the ninth month, containing part of November and part of December.*

*In the twentieth year of Artaxerxes, [Ne 2:1](#).*

*In Shushan; the chief and royal city of Persia, [Es 3:15](#).*

### [Ne 1:2](#)

*One of my brethren; of my family, or tribe, or nation.*

*That had escaped out of the slavery which they endured in strange lands.*

*Which, were left of the captivity; the remnant of those numerous captives.*

### [Ne 1:3](#)

*In the province, i.e. in Judea, which was now made a province under the Persian monarchs: [See Comment on Ezr 5:8](#).*

*In great affliction and reproach; despised and distressed by the neighbouring nations.*

*The wall is broken down, and the gates thereof are burned, i.e. the walls and gates continue in the same woeful plight in which Nebuchadnezzar left them; the Jews not being yet in a condition to rebuild them, nor having commission from the kings of Persia to do so, but only to build the temple and their own private houses. And this made their enemies scorn them; who also would have ruined them, but for fear of offending the Persian king.*

### [Ne 1:4-7](#)

*We have dealt very corruptly, or we have wholly corrupted, to wit, ourselves, and our ways, and thy worship.*

### [Ne 1:8-11](#)

*In the sight of this man, the king; who though a god by office, is but a man by nature, and therefore his heart is wholly at thy disposal.*

*I was the king's cup-bearer; whereby I had opportunity to speak to him, and some favour and freedom with him; which encouraged me to make this prayer, and to hope for some success.*

## Chapter 2

*Artaxerxes, understanding the cause of Nehemiah's sadness, [Ne 2:1-5](#), sendeth him with letters to Jerusalem, [Ne 2:6-8](#). Nehemiah, to the grief of the enemies, cometh to Jerusalem, [Ne 2:9-11](#), and secretly by night vieweth the ruins of Jerusalem, [Ne 2:12-16](#). He encourageth the Jews to build, [Ne 2:17-18](#). The enemies, deriding, charge them with rebellion against the king, [Ne 2:19](#). Nehemiah's answer, [Ne 2:20](#).*

### [Ne 2:1](#)

*In the month Nisan; which was four months after he had heard those sad tidings. The reason of this long silence and delay might be manifold; either because he thought fit that some time should be spent by himself, and possibly others of his brethren, in seeking God by solemn prayer and fasting, for God's blessing and the good success of this great affair; or because he could not take so long and dangerous a journey in the depth of winter; or because his turn of attending upon the king did not come to him till that time; or because till then he wanted a fit opportunity to move it to the king, by reason of the king's indisposition, or occasions, or multitude of attendants, among whom there probably were divers enemies to the Jews, who, he feared, might hinder his design and desire.*

*In the twentieth year of Artaxerxes; Artaxerxes Longimanus, the son of the great Xerxes, who reigned both with his father, and after his death alone: whence the years of his reign are computed two ways, one from the death of Xerxes, and the other from his first entrance upon the administration of the kingdom, which was committed to him in the fifth year of Xerxes, when he began the Grecian war, and left his son king or viceroy in his stead, as the manner of the Persians was. It may seem doubtful, and is not much material, which way of computation is here used. Others understand this of Artaxerxes Mnemon.*

### [Ne 2:2](#)

*Why is thy countenance sad? his fasting joined with inward grief had made a sensible change in his very countenance.*

*I was very sore afraid; partly, being daunted by the majesty of the king, and the suddenness and sharpness of his question; partly, fearing lest there was arising some jealousy or ill opinion in the king concerning him; partly, because it was an unusual and ungrateful thing to come into the king of Persia's presence with any badges or tokens of sorrow, [Es 4:2](#); and principally, from his doubts or fears of disappointment, because his request was great and*

invidious, and odious to the most of the Persian courtiers, and might be represented as dangerous, and might seem improper for a time of feasting and jollity.

### [Ne 2:3](#)

*Let the king live forever:* my sadness comes not from any discontent with my own condition, or any disaffection to the king, for whom my hearty prayers are that he may live forever; but from another cause.

*The place of my fathers' sepulchres,* which by all nations are esteemed sacred, and inviolable, and honourable. He saith not a word of the temple, or of religion, for he wisely considered that he spake before a heathen king and court, who cared for none of those things.

### [Ne 2:4](#)

*I prayed to the God of heaven,* to direct my thoughts and words, and to incline the king's heart to grant my request.

### [Ne 2:5](#)

*If it please the king:* my request, whatsoever it is, I humbly and wholly submit it to the king's good pleasure, being resolved to acquiesce in it.

*If thy servant have found favour in thy sight:* I pretend no merit, but am a humble suppliant for thy grace and favour, whereof having received some tokens, I am thereby imboldened to make this further request.

### [Ne 2:6](#)

*The queen also sitting by him;* which is here noted, partly as an unusual thing; for commonly the kings of Persia dined alone, and their queens seldom dined with them, as historians note; and peradventure because the queen expressed some kindness to him, and promoted his request with the king.

*When wilt thou return?* this question showed the king's respect and affection to him, and that he was not willing to want his attendance longer than was necessary.

*I set him a time;* either that twelve years mentioned [Ne 5:14](#); [13:6](#), or rather a far shorter time; for which cause, among others, he built the walls with such despatch, even in fifty-two days, [Ne 6:15](#); and probably not very long after that returned to the king, by whom he was sent a second time with more ample commission, and for the king's service, and the government of that part of his dominions.

### [Ne 2:7](#)

That they may safely conduct me through their several territories.

[Ne 2:8](#)

*The king's forest*; the forest of Libanus, famous for pleasure, and for plenty of choice trees.

*Which appertained to the house*, to wit, of the king's palace, which was adjoining to the house of God. Or, *of the tower or fence belonging to the house of God*, to wit, for the gates of the courts of the temple; for though the temple was built, the courts and other buildings belonging to the temple might yet be unfinished.

*The house that I shall enter into*; wherewith I may build a house in which I may dwell whilst I am there, and which I may dispose of as I see fit.

[Ne 2:9-10](#)

*Sanballat the Horonite*; so called, either from his family, or from the place of his birth or rule, which is supposed to be Horonaim, an eminent city of Moab, [Isa 15:5](#); [Jer 48:3](#).

*Tobiah the servant*; so called probably from his servile original or condition, from which he was advanced to his present power and dignity; which also may be mentioned as one reason why he now carried himself so insolently and perversely towards the Jews, it being usual for persons suddenly raised from a mean to a high estate so to demean themselves.

[Ne 2:11](#)

Resting myself after my long journey, and inquiring into the state of the city.

[Ne 2:12](#)

*I arose in the night*; concealing both his intentions and actions as far and as long as he could, as knowing that the life of his business lay in secrecy and expedition.

*Neither was there any beast with me*, to prevent noise, and the notice of what I did.

[Ne 2:13](#)

*I went out by night*; the footmen which accompanied him directing and leading him in the way. his design was to go round about the city, to observe the compass and condition of the walls and gates, that he might make sufficient provisions for the work.

*By the gate of the valley*; of which see [Ne 3:13](#).

*Before the dragon well*; a fountain of water so called, either from some figure of a dragon or serpent which was by it; or from some living dragon which abode there when the city was desolate; for dragons delight to be in desolate places, and nigh to springs of water, as divers have observed.

*To the dung-port*; through which they used to carry the dung out of the city.

### [Ne 2:14](#)

*The gate of the fountain*, i.e. which led to the fountain, to wit, of Siloah or Gibon.

*The king's pool*; that which king Hezekiah had made: of which see [2Ch 32:3](#), [30](#).

*There was no place for the beast to pass*; the way being obstructed with heaps of rubbish.

### [Ne 2:15](#)

*By the brook of Kidron*; of which [See Comment on 2Sa 15:23](#). And so returned; having gone round about the city.

### [Ne 2:16](#)

Or, *were to do*, or *should do*, i.e. whom he intended to employ in the work here following, of building the walls.

### [Ne 2:17-19](#)

*Geshem the Arabian*; either the king's lieutenant in Arabia, as Tobiah was among the Ammonites, and Sanballat among the Moabites; or rather, an Arabian by his birth. And it seems probable that both he, and Sanballat, and Tobiah were chief men or governors among the Samaritans, or in their army. See [Ne 4:1-3](#).

*Will ye rebel against the king?* do you design to fortify the city against the king.

### [Ne 2:20](#)

*Ye have no portion nor right*; you have no authority over us, nor interest in our church, or state, or city, but are mere aliens from the commonwealth of Israel. We disown and detest that mongrel worship and religion which you have set up. We desire not your favour, or friendship, or help in this matter. And you have nothing to do to inquire into or meddle with our concerns, or to hinder us in our present undertaking.

*Nor memorial*; no testimony, or monument, either of your relation to us by birth or religion, or of your kindness to us or to this place. But we have many memorials of your malice and enmity against us.

## Chapter 3

*The names of the several families that builded; their order wherein, and the proportion how much, they builded.*

### [Ne 3:1](#)

*Eliashib the high priest*; grandchild of Joshua, the first high priest after their return from Babylon.

*Rose up*; began the work.

*They builded the sheep-gate;* which was next to the temple; so called, either from the sheep-market, or the sheep-pool of Bethesda, [Joh 5:2](#), where the sheep were washed, and then brought to the temple to be sacrificed.

*They sanctified it;* or, *they prepared or repaired it;* for so the word sometimes signifies. But our translation seems best, both because that use of the word is most common, and because this is spoken only of this gate, which being built by the priests, and nighest to the temple, and with a special eye to the service of the temple, for which both men and things were most commonly brought in this way, and being also the first part of the building, might be in a peculiar manner *sanctified* by solemn prayer and sacrifice, whereby it was dedicated to God's service; and this either as it was considered in itself, or with respect to the rest of the building, of which this was the beginning, and in a manner the first-fruits, and therefore in the sanctification of it the whole lump and building was sanctified. And seeing the whole city is oft called the *holy city*, it is not strange if the walls and gates of it be also holy, and said to be *sanctified*, and especially this gate. Compare [De 20:5](#).

*The tower of Meah,* or, *of a hundred;* so called, either because it was a hundred cubits high, or so far distant from the sheep-gate.

#### [Ne 3:2](#)

*The men of Jericho;* the posterity of the ancient inhabitants of Jericho. See [Ezr 2:34](#).

#### [Ne 3:3](#)

*The fish-gate;* of which mention is made [2Ch 33:14](#); [Ne 12:39](#); [Zep 1:10](#); so called, either from the fish-market, which was near it; or because the fish was brought in by it from the sea, [Ne 13:16](#); this gate being north-westward from Jerusalem.

*The locks thereof, and the bars thereof;* this is either here related by anticipation, the whole work being here mentioned together, though this part was not done till afterwards, [Ne 6:1](#); [7:1](#); or this was done to some of the gates, but not to all; and therefore this is said to be done more completely and universally afterwards.

#### [Ne 3:4](#)

*Repaired,* to wit, the demolished or decayed wall, there being no gate in this part. And so in the rest which follow.

#### [Ne 3:5](#)

i.e. Did not submit to it, would not further it, either through pride, or sloth and carelessness, or covetousness, or secret compliance with the enemies of the Jews.

*To the work of their Lord;* either, 1. Of Nehemiah, who was their lord and governor, and had given a general command for the carrying on of this work. Or, 2. Of God, whom they owned for their Lord, whose work this was, partly because it had proceeded thus far by God's singular providence and blessing; and partly because it was done for the defence of the city, and people, and temple of God. And therefore they are branded to all posterity for the neglect of so great and pious a work.

### [Ne 3:6-7](#)

i.e. Unto the place where the governor of the country on this side the river Euphrates, for and under the Persian kings, sometimes had a palace or throne, to which all persons living in the adjacent parts were to resort for judgment.

### [Ne 3:8](#)

It is not said *they repaired*, as was said of the rest, but they *fortified* it, either because this part of the wall was less demolished than the other, and therefore they needed not to repair it, but only to make it stronger by some additions; or to note their extraordinary care and diligence, that they would not only repair it, and restore it to its former state, but make it stronger than ever it was; which also might be fit to be done in that part of the city. Others render it *they left*, as this word commonly signifies; and so the meaning is, They omitted the building of that part of the wall, because it remained standing; this being that space of four hundred cubits which was pulled down by Joash king of Israel, and rebuilt by Uzziah, who made it so strong, that the Chaldeans could not pull it down without more trouble than they thought fit to employ about it. But this chapter gives us an account of what they did in the building, not of what they did not, but left as they found it.

### [Ne 3:9](#)

As Rome was anciently divided into several quarters or regions, so was Jerusalem, and especially this was divided into two parts, whereof one was in the tribe of Benjamin, and nearest to the temple; the other in the tribe of Judah, and more remote from it; which accordingly had two several rulers, this man and the other, [Ne 3:12](#), but both under the chief governor of the city.

### [Ne 3:10](#)

*Over against his house*; that part of the wall which was next to him, which his own interest obliged him to do with care.

### [Ne 3:11-12](#)

*Of the half part of Jerusalem*, i.e. of the other half, &c.: [See Comment on Ne 3:9](#).

*He and his daughters*; who were either heiresses, or rich widows, and caused part to be done at their charges.

### [Ne 3:13-14](#)

*Beth-haccerem*; a town or territory, the government whereof was divided between two persons.

### [Ne 3:15](#)

*The wall of the pool of Siloah*; that part of the wall which was directly against that pool.

### [Ne 3:16](#)

*Over against the sepulchres of David*, i.e. the place which David appointed for his own sepulchres, and the sepulchres of his successors the kings of Israel and Judah.

*The pool that was made*, to wit, by Hezekiah, [2Ki 20:20](#); whereby it is distinguished from that pool which was natural.

*The house of the mighty; or, of the valiant*; which possibly was formerly appointed for the receipt of those chief captains that should attend upon the king, their courses, or of some other valiant commanders who should upon occasion resort to Jerusalem.

### [Ne 3:17-19](#)

*To the armory*; either to the house of the forest of Lebanon, which was their armory from Solomon's days, [Isa 22:8](#); or to some other place, which either before or since that time had been used as another and less armory for common occasions.

*At the turning of the wall; or, at the corner; or, which is in the corner.*

### [Ne 3:20](#)

*Earnestly repaired*; did his work with eminent diligence and fervency; which is here noted to his commendation.

*From the turning of the wall, or, from the corner*, as [Ne 3:19](#). Unto the door of the house; unto that part of the wall which was over against or next to this door.

### [Ne 3:21](#)

Therefore the door was not in the middle of the house, as now they commonly are, but at one end of it.

### [Ne 3:22](#)

Either of the plains of Jordan; or *of the plain country round about Jerusalem*, its it is called, [Ne 12:28](#). And they are thus called, because they, or their parents, either were born, or now did or formerly had dwelt, in those parks; whence they came to Jerusalem, when the service of the temple required it.

### [Ne 3:23-25](#)

*Over against the turning of the wall*; in a part of the wall, which jutted out as the tower here following did, and therefore was opposite to or over against that turning.

*And the tower, or, even the tower. Out from the king's high house*; either from the royal palace; or from some other smaller house which the king formerly built there, either for prospect or for defence.

By the court of the prison; a place oft mentioned; of which see [Jer 32:2](#); [38:6](#), [13](#).

### [Ne 3:26](#)

*Dwelt in Ophel*, or, *who dwelt in Ophel*; for this seems to be only a description of the persons, whose work follows.

*The water-gate*; so called because by that gate water was brought in, either by the people for the use of that part of the city, or rather by these Nethinims, who were Gibeonites, for the uses of the temple, for which they were *drawers of water*, [Jos 9:21](#).

### [Ne 3:27](#)

*The Tekoites*; the same spoken of before, [Ne 3:5](#), who having despatched their first share sooner than their brethren had done theirs, freely offered their help to supply the defects of others, who, as it seems, neglected that part of the work which had been committed to them. And this their double diligence is noted, both for the greater shame of their nobles, who would not do ally part of it, [Ne 3:5](#), and for their own greater honour, who were so far from being corrupted by the bad example of their nobles, that they were rather quickened and inflamed to greater zeal and industry in this public and pious work.

### [Ne 3:28](#)

*The horse gate*; not that belonging to the king's palace, [2Ch 23:15](#), but one of the gates of the city so called; either because nigh unto that were many stables for horses, or because the horses commonly went out that way to their watering-place.

### [Ne 3:29-32](#)

To wit, of the city, or of the temple; which being the chief gate, was committed to his particular care and custody.

## Chapter 4

*The enemies scoff, and are angry, [Ne 4:1-3](#). Nehemiah prayeth against them and continueth the work, [Ne 4:4-6](#). Understanding the wrath and design of their enemies, he setteth a watch, [Ne 4:7-12](#). He armeth and encourageth the labourers, [Ne 4:3-18](#); and giveth military precepts, [Ne 4:9-23](#).*

### [Ne 4:1](#)

Pretending contempt in his words when he had grief in his heart.

### [Ne 4:2](#)

*Before his brethren*; [Ne 4:3](#), and *Geshem*, [Ne 2:19](#), and others, whom he calls *his brethren*, because of their conjunction with him in office and interest.

*The army of Samaria*; whom he designed hereby to incense against them, or at least to understand their minds herein.

*Will they make an end in a day?* do they intend to begin and finish the work, and keep the feast of dedication by sacrifice, all in one day? for if they spend any long time about it, they cannot think that we, and the rest of their neighbours, will suffer them to do it. Thus he persuaded himself and his companions that their attempt was ridiculous; and this mistake kept him from giving them any disturbance till it was too late. So God infatuated him to his own grief and shame, and to the advantage of his people.

*Will they revive the stones out of the heaps of the rubbish?* will they pick up their broken stones out of the ruins, and patch them together? for other materials they want.

*Which are burned,* i.e. which stones were burned, and broken, or consumed to powder, to wit, by the Chaldeans when they took the city. [See Comment on Ne 1:3.](#)

#### [Ne 4:3](#)

He mentions the foxes, because they were very numerous in those parts, and because in the late desolations the foxes did walk in the mount and city of Zion, [La 5:18](#), wherewith he seems to upbraid them.

*He shall even break down their stone wall:* it is so low, that a fox can easily get to the top of it; and so weak, and done so hastily and carelessly, that the least thrust will tumble it down.

#### [Ne 4:4](#)

*Turn their reproach upon their own head;* let them be really as contemptible as they represent us to be. This, and the following requests, may seem harsh, but they were both just, as being directed against such malicious, inveterate, and implacable enemies to God and to his people, and necessary for the vindication and defence of God's honour, and worship, and people.

*Give them for a prey in the land of captivity;* let them be removed from our neighbourhood, and carried into captivity; and there let them find no favour, but further severity. Or, *give them for a prey* to their enemies, and let these carry them into *the land of captivity.*

#### [Ne 4:5](#)

*Let not their sin be blotted out from before thee;* let their wickedness be in thy sight, so as to bring down deserved judgments it. upon them, that either they may be convinced and reformed, or others may be warned by their example. God is said to cover or hide sin when he forbears to punish.

*They have provoked thee to anger before the builders,* i.e. they have not only provoked us builders, but thee also. Or, *they have provoked or derided the builders to their face,* i.e. openly and impudently, in contempt of God, and of this work, which is done by his direction and encouragement.

#### [Ne 4:6](#)

*Unto the half thereof;* either, 1. In length; Or rather, 2. In height; for the whole circumference of the wall was distributed among the builders, who also had carried on the work, beginning

at the sheep-gate, and ending there also, as appears from [Ne 3:1, 32](#); and *the walls of Jerusalem* are said to *be made up*, here, [Ne 4:7](#).

#### [Ne 4:7](#)

*That the breaches began to be stopped*, i.e. that the breaches which the Chaldeans had made and left in the walls were well-nigh stopped up.

#### [Ne 4:8-10](#)

*And Judah said*, i.e. the Jews now dwelling in Judah, to wit, some of them, being partly terrified by their enemies, and partly wearied with hard and continual labours.

*There is much rubbish*; more than we are able suddenly to remove.

*We are not able to build the wall*; being forced to spend our time in removing the rubbish, and other works imposed upon us; and therefore we must desist at least for a season.

#### [Ne 4:11](#)

We will come secretly and unexpectedly upon them so as they shall neither foresee their danger, nor be able to prevent it.

#### [Ne 4:12](#)

*Which dwelt by them, or, among them*; whereby they came to the knowledge of their counsels.

*Ten times*, i.e. very often. A certain number for an uncertain.

*They will be upon you*, i.e. they will invade you every way, by which we can come to you, or you to us; and therefore do you keep watches on every side. But these words may be otherwise rendered thus, *On all parts where you shall be quiet, or at rest*, (i.e. secure; for the Hebrew *schub* signifies not only to return, but also to be quiet, or at ease, as Hebricians know,) they will be upon us, i.e. upon our people, and city Jerusalem, where you are. And they rather say *upon us* than *upon you*, to manifest their affection to them, and conjunction with them, and that they looked upon themselves as members of the same body and church with them, and took what was designed or done against them, as if it were against themselves, and therefore gave them this friendly notice. Or the place may be rendered thus, *They told this* (to wit, the enemy's intentions) *to us ten times, coming from all places where they dwelt, or rested*, (Heb. *you rested*; the second person being put for the third, as it is both in the Hebrew language, as [Ge 10:19, 30; 25:18](#), and in the Hebrew text, [Ps 22:9](#), and in other languages and authors; of which see my Latin Synopsis upon [Ge 10:19](#); and that it is so here we have the consent of the LXX. and Arabic, and of some modern and accurate interpreters, who render it by a verb of the third person,) *about us*; whence they came purposely to inform and warn us. Or thus, *They told this to us ten times from all places whence they did return to us*: which phrase of returning to us, i.e. to Jerusalem, suits very well with those persons who came up with their brethren from Babylon to Jerusalem, and went thence into several parts of the country to dwell where they thought meet, and returned now, and at other times, as they had occasion, to their brethren at Jerusalem.

### [Ne 4:13](#)

*In the lower places behind the wall;* to stand by and within the walls where they were lowest, and not yet raised to their due height, and therefore most liable to the enemy's assault.

*On the higher places;* upon the tops of the walls where they were finished, and the towers which were built here and there upon the wall; whence they might shoot arrows or throw stones against their enemies, when they made their approaches.

### [Ne 4:14-15](#)

Our enemies being frustrated in their hopes, which were wholly built upon the secrecy and suddenness of their attempt, we knowing this, returned to our business.

### [Ne 4:16](#)

*From that time forth,* lest our enemies should repeat their enterprise.

*The half of my servants;* of my domestic servants, and of my guards, who should have attended upon my own person.

*The spears, the shields, and the bows, and the habergeons,* i.e. all their weapons; they stood in their arms prepared for battle.

*The rulers were behind all;* partly to encourage them in their work, and sometimes to assist with their own hands; and partly to direct and command them in case of an assault.

*The house of Judah,* i.e. the Jews who were upon the wall.

### [Ne 4:17](#)

This is not to be taken properly, for they could never have done their work with one hand; and the next verse tells us the sword was not in their hands, but by their sides: but figuratively; this being a proverbial speech, such as is frequent amongst the Latins, as when they say of a man pretending kindness with evil design, *he carries bread in one hand, and a stone in another.*

### [Ne 4:18](#)

*To call the people together,* when and where it was fit and necessary.

### [Ne 4:19-22](#)

*Within Jerusalem;* not in the suburbs, or adjoining villages, as probably many of them did, returning thence to their work in the morning.

### [Ne 4:23](#)

*None of us put off our clothes; neither by day, nor by night, as the manner is when we go to bed; they constantly kept themselves in a readiness for fighting.*

*Saving that every one put them off for washing; when they were to wash and cleanse themselves from some natural or moral impurity, which might befall them or their garments.*

## Chapter 5

*The people complain of their brethren, by reason of their debts, mortgages, and bondage, [Ne 5:1-5](#). Nehemiah rebuketh the usurers, and causeth them to make a covenant of restitution, [Ne 5:6-13](#). He forbeareth his own allowance, and keepeth hospitality, [Ne 5:14-17](#). The quantity of his preparations, and his prayer, [Ne 5:18-19](#).*

### [Ne 5:1](#)

To wit, the great and rich who had oppressed their brethren.

### [Ne 5:2](#)

*We, our sons, and our daughters, are many; which is in itself a blessing, but to us is turned into a curse.*

*We take up corn for them, i.e. we are forced by our and their necessities to take up corn, to wit, upon their own unreasonable terms, as is here implied, and plainly expressed in the following relation. Others, *Let us take up, &c.*, i.e. seeing we do the public work, let provision be made for us and our children out of the public stock. But this is no petition, but a complaint, as will appear.*

### [Ne 5:3](#)

Which might easily happen, both from the multitude of the people now in and near Jerusalem, and from their building work, which wholly took them up, and kept them from taking care of their own families, and from the expectation and dread of their enemies' invasion, which hindered them from going abroad to fetch in provision, and the people round about from bringing it in to them; or from divers other causes.

### [Ne 5:4](#)

*The kings tribute was laid upon them all. See [Ezr 4:13](#); [7:24](#)*

### [Ne 5:5](#)

*Our flesh is as the flesh of our brethren; we are of the same nature, and nation, and religion with them although they treat us as if we were beasts or heathens, forgetting both humanity and God's law, [De 15:7](#).*

*We bring into bondage; we are compelled to sell them for our subsistence.*

*Our sons and our daughters;* which was an evidence of their great necessity, because their daughters were more tender, and weak, and unfit for bond-service, and more exposed to injuries, than their sons.

*Neither is it in our power to redeem them;* which we are allowed to do, [Ex 21:7](#), but have not wherewith to do it.

#### [Ne 5:6-7](#)

*Ye exact usury every one of his brother;* which was against the plain and positive law of God, [De 23:19-20](#); especially in this time of public calamity and dearth.

*I set a great assembly against them;* I called a public congregation, both of the rulers and people, the greatest part whereof were free from this guilt, and therefore mere impartial judges of the matter, and represented it to them, that the offenders might be convinced, and reform this abuse; if not for fear of God, or love of their brethren, yet at least for the public shame, and the cries of the poor.

#### [Ne 5:8](#)

*We after our ability have redeemed our brethren the Jews, which were sold unto the heathen:* I, and my, brethren, and predecessors, have used our utmost interest and power, both with the kings of Persia, that our brethren might be redeemed from that bondage into which God had sold them for their sins; and with particular persons in Babylon and Persia, and the adjacent parts, whose bond-slaves the Jews were, and who would not part with them without a price, which we paid for them.

*Will ye even sell your brethren?* or shall they be sold unto us? do you expect that we should pay you a price for them, as we did to the Babylonians? or must we use as much importunity to solicit you for their redemption as we did to their enemies?

#### [Ne 5:9](#)

*It is not good,* i. e. it is a very bad and wicked thing; as this same phrase is used, [Pr 16:29](#); [17:26](#); [18:5](#); [19:2](#). A common figure, called *meiosis*, where more is understood than is expressed.

*Because of the reproach of the heathen our enemies;* who are round about you, and observe all your actions, and will loath and reproach both you for such barbarous usage of your brethren, and religion for your sakes; which, if you have any love or respect either to God or to yourselves, you will prevent.

#### [Ne 5:10](#)

*My brethren,* to wit, in office; those who are employed with me in the government of this people.

*My servants;* in my name, and for my use.

*Might exact of them money and corn*, as a just recompence for our pains and care for the public good, to which we wholly devote ourselves, even to the neglect of all our private concerns. But I will not rigorously exact, but do freely remit my own right, which, in those circumstances, it is my duty to do; and therefore you also ought to do so, seeing I lay no burden upon you but what I am willing to bear a part of upon my own shoulders.

#### [Ne 5:11](#)

*Also the hundredth part of the money*; also require not; which is to be supplied out of the next verse, where it is expressed in their answer to and grant of this desire. *The hundredth part*; which they required every month for the use of their monies or goods, according to the custom then used, and afterwards by the Romans.

#### [Ne 5:12](#)

*We will restore them*, to wit, the lands and houses.

*Will require nothing of them*, for the hundredth part.

*I called the priests*; either, 1. As delinquents in that kind; or rather as witnesses, that the oath being taken before the priests, who acted in God's name and stead, the oath might make the more deep and durable impression upon their consciences. See [Nu 5:19](#); [1Ki 1:8](#), [31-32](#).

*Took an oath of them*; not of the priests last mentioned, for it doth not appear that any of them were guilty, and it is absurd to think that they only were guilty of this extortion, as they must be, if this them belongs to them only; but of all the persons who were before charged with this crime, [Ne 5:3-4](#), whether priests or others, as is evident from the text, and from the nature of the thing.

#### [Ne 5:13](#)

*I shook my lap*, i.e. the lap or extreme parts of my garment, which I first folded together, and then shook it, and scattered it asunder. This was a form of swearing then in use.

*From his labour*, i.e. from enjoying what he hath got by his labour.

#### [Ne 5:14](#)

*Twelve years*; not that he continued so long together at Jerusalem, of which see [Ne 2:6](#); but that he so long governed Jerusalem by himself when he was present, and in his absence by a deputy.

*I and my brethren*; either my fellow officers, or they whom I left in my stead, who as they were to do any work, so might have required my rights.

*The bread of the governor*, i.e. that allowance which by the laws of God and nations, and of the king of Persia, the governors might require for the maintenance of their own dignity and office, and of the public service.

### [Ne 5:15](#)

*The former governors;* not Ezra, who was no governor, but only a priest sent to teach them, and to rectify church abuses; nor Zerubbabel; but others between him and Nehemiah, whom he forbears to name, because he designed not to disgrace any person, but only to reform the abuses.

*Beside forty shekels of silver;* which they required of the people for every day to defray their other expenses.

*Their servants bare rule over the people,* i.e. ruled them with rigour and cruelty; which fault of the servants is charged upon their masters; the former governors, because they did not restrain nor punish them.

*Because of the fear of God;* because I feared to break God's commands, or to incur his displeasure, by such immoderate and unseasonable oppressions of the people. This he speaks not to commend himself, but rather to diminish his praise, and to show that this was no heroical action, nor work of supererogation, to be admired rather than imitated; but only his duty in that case, which for his own sake he durst not decline; and consequently that it was their duty also now to relinquish even those rights which in other times and conditions they might lawfully require.

### [Ne 5:16](#)

*In the work of this wall;* overseeing, directing, and encouraging the workmen, which was my whole business; and this at my own cost.

*Neither bought we any land of our poor brethren,* whose necessities gave me abundant opportunity of enriching myself with good bargains. But I durst not build my house upon other men's ruins.

### [Ne 5:17](#)

*An hundred and fifty of the Jews and rulers;* not only Jews of the inferior sort, for whom meaner provisions might suffice, but also their rulers, such as there were in many places, for whom better provision was fit; who resorted to him upon all occasions, either to pour out their complaints, as here they did; or to give him notice of the enemy's designs; or to receive his orders and directions.

### [Ne 5:18](#)

But bore it out of my own estate; which was very considerable, his office in the Persian court being a place of very great profit as well as honour, and that profit no doubt continued to him in this his absence from the king. From this great and daily expense, it seems more than probable that Nehemiah did not continue here for twelve years together, as some would think, or at least that he did not this all that time, but only during the great and present exigencies and distresses of the Jews, which ceased in good part after the walls were built, and the hearts of all the Jews revived, and their enemies dispirited thereby.

### [Ne 5:19](#)

As I have done thy people good for thy sake, so do me good for thine own sake; for thou art pleased, and hast promised graciously to reward us according to our works, and to mete to men the same measure which they mete to others.

## Chapter 6

*Sanballat and Tobiah, sending to Nehemiah to meet them, intend to do him mischief, [Ne 6:1-2](#). Nehemiah's answer, [Ne 6:3](#). They charge him with rebellion, [Ne 6:4-7](#). His answer to it, [Ne 6:8-9](#). Shemaiah's false prophecies to discourage Nehemiah, [Ne 6:10](#). His reply, [Ne 6:11-14](#). The work is finished to the terror of the enemies, [Ne 7:15-16](#). Secret correspondence between the nobles of Judah and Tobiah, [Ne 6:17-18](#).*

### [Ne 6:1](#)

*I had not set up the doors; not all of them. [See Comment on Ne 3:1](#).*

### [Ne 6:2](#)

*Let us meet together; to consult about the common service of our master the king of Persia, or to make a friendly accommodation.*

*Ono; a city in the tribe of Benjamin; of which see [Ne 11:35](#); [1Ch 8:12](#).*

### [Ne 6:3](#)

*I am doing a great work: he tells them one, but not the only, nor the principal, reason of his refusal, because his coming might cause the work to cease, not only by the neglect of it during his absence, but by his death, which they by this means might compass, though he thought it not fit to express so much to them.*

### [Ne 6:4-5](#)

Thereby bidding open defiance to him, as before he had used secret practices; and intimating that he would do that by manifest force, which he had intended to do by sudden surprise.

### [Ne 6:6](#)

*Among the heathen; the neighbouring people, whom you proudly and disdainfully call heathens or Gentiles. Gashmu, called Geshem, [Ne 6:1](#); who affirmed it and would prove it. According to these words, i.e. according to these reports; or, that thou mayst justify and verify these rumours. Others, according to these things, i.e. when these things which thou art now doing shall be finished. But the first sense seems most agreeable to the use of the same words in the next verse.*

### [Ne 6:7](#)

*There is a king in Judah; we have now a king of our own nation, and are free from the bondage of a foreign yoke. Let us take counsel together, that we may impartially examine the*

matter, that either thy innocency may be cleared, and false accusations may be prevented; or if thou art guilty, the king may be informed.

### [Ne 6:8-9](#)

*They all made us afraid*, i.e. they endeavoured to do so, and actually did terrify some persons.

### [Ne 6:10](#)

*Shemaiah the son of Delaiah*; probably one of the chief of the priests, [1Ch 24:26](#).

*Who was shut up* in his chamber adjoining to the temple, upon pretence of singular devotion, sequestration from the world, and special acquaintance and much communion with God in his retirements, after the manner of the prophets; and withal upon pretence of certain knowledge, which he had by the Spirit of God and of prophecy, concerning their approaching danger, from which they could be safe no where but in the temple, which the very heathens owned for a sanctuary, which they might not violate.

*Let us meet together in the house of God, within the temple*; for the danger is so near, that we cannot safely tarry here so long as to consult what to do in this juncture. His design herein was, partly, to discourage and disgrace Nehemiah, and thereby to strike a dread into all the people, and give a speedy and full stop to the work; partly, to prepare the way for the enemies to assault and take the city, whilst Nehemiah was shut up, and unable to give them any opposition; partly, to justify their accusation of Nehemiah to the king by his flight upon it; and partly, that there, by the help of other priests, who were conscious of his plot, he might either destroy him, or secure his person, till the city by some of his accomplices were betrayed into the enemy's hands.

### [Ne 6:11](#)

*Should such a man as I flee*; I the chief governor, upon whose presence, and counsel, and conduct the very life and being of the whole city and nation in a great measure depends; I who have professed such resolution, and courage, and confidence in God; I who have had such eminent experience of God's gracious and powerful assistances, of his calling me to this employment, and carrying me through it when our danger was greater than now it is. Shall I now dishonour God and religion, and betray the people and city of God by my cowardice? God forbid. This is not the counsel of God, nor of a friend; but a plot of mine enemies, as it here follows.

*Who is there, that, being as I am, would go into the temple to save his life?* as if I had an evil cause or conscience; as if I were a malefactor, who fled thither for refuge; as if I durst not trust God with my preservation except I went into the temple, which it is not lawful for me, being no priest, to do.

### [Ne 6:12](#)

*I perceived*; partly, by considering the sinful nature and pernicious consequence of this counsel; partly, by the suggestion of God's Spirit, whose counsel and help I sought in this matter; and partly, by the event, which discovered that there was no such danger from the approach of the enemy as was pretended.

### [Ne 6:13](#)

*That I should do so, and sin, by going into a place forbidden to me, and that in such a time and manner, and upon such an occasion; which would have been both sinful and shameful: [See Comment on Ne 6:11](#).*

*That they might reproach me as a coward, and conscious of my own guilt, that so they might make me contemptible and odious, both to my own people, and to the king of Persia.*

### [Ne 6:14](#)

*The prophetess Noadiah; one that falsely pretended to the Spirit of prophecy, to deceive and destroy Nehemiah. He prays to God to remember and punish these false prophets, because he was not yet in a capacity to do it, having such powerful enemies round about him, and so many rich and potent Jews highly discontented for their great loss by his means, [Ne 5:1-19](#).*

### [Ne 6:15](#)

*The month Elul; answering part to our August and part to September.*

*In fifty and two days; to be computed, either, 1. From the time of Sanballat's sending this letter to him; Or, 2. As most judge, from the beginning of the work; which though a great thing, yet it is not at all incredible, considering, 1. That the walls and gates were not wholly pulled down by the Chaldeans; for to what purpose should they make that waste of time and labour? 2. That where the walls were thrown down, yet the materials remained, which they now used. 3. That in the building of the walls they minded not curiosity, but only strength and safety. 4. The great numbers of the builders, and the prudent distribution of the work among them, and their admirable zeal and diligence in the work. 5. That there want not parallel instances even in heathen authors; for both Curtius and Arrian report, that Alexander the Great built the walls of new Alexandria, which contained above seven miles in length, within twenty days' space. 6. That there was an eminent hand of God in carrying on this work, which their very enemies here acknowledge.*

### [Ne 6:16](#)

*In their own eyes, i.e. in their opinion, or themselves being judges; for though ordinarily men are very prone to judge partially, and still to flatter themselves with vain hopes and fancies, yet this case was so clear and remarkable, that they began to despair. Now they saw that all was lost, that their designs were broken, and that their mischief was now likely to fall upon their own heads. *They perceived*, by that admirable courage, and constancy, and quickness wherewith this work was managed, notwithstanding all their difficulties and discouragements.*

*That this work was wrought of our God; that it was the work of that mighty God of Israel, whom they had great reason to fear; and withal they took it for an ill omen to them, and a sure presage that God would still watch over that city and people, and crush those who should oppose or disturb them. Corresponding with him against Nehemiah, and against their own city and nation.*

### [Ne 6:17](#)

Corresponding with him against Nehemiah, and against their own city and nation.

### [Ne 6:18-19](#)

*Sworn unto him*, to be true to him in the prosecution of his wicked designs.

*His son had taken the daughter of Meshullam*: this is noted to show the mischief of such unequal and forbidden marriages, and how reasonable and necessary Ezra's action was in the dissolution of them.

## Chapter 7

*Nehemiah committeth the charge of Jerusalem to Hanani and Hananiah*, [Ne 7:1-2](#). *His advice to them*, [Ne 7:3-4](#). *He finds out a register of the genealogy of them that came at first out of Babylon*, [Ne 7:5-65](#). *The whole number of them*, [Ne 7:66-67](#). *Their substance*, [Ne 7:68-69](#). *Their offerings*, [Ne 7:70-73](#).

### [Ne 7:1](#)

i.e. When I had taken order that the Levites should be summoned from all places to celebrate the dedication of the wall, as it was done, [Ne 12:27](#).

### [Ne 7:2](#)

*Hanani*; of whom see [Ne 1:2](#).

*The ruler of the palace*, i.e. of Nehemiah's court; justly so called, because he lived in great splendour, and like a viceroy, though it was wholly at his own charge.

*Charge over Jerusalem*, to preserve its peace and safety, and to take particular care of the shutting the gates of the city.

*He was a faithful man*, to wit, Hananiah last mentioned; for it was needless to say any thing in commendation of Hanani, who had shown his piety and zeal for God and his country, in taking a tedious journey from Jerusalem to Shushan, to inform Nehemiah of the sad estate of Jerusalem, and to implore his helping hand to relieve it, [Ne 1:1-11](#).

*A faithful man*; he chose not magistrates and officers out of any partial or carnal respects to his own kindred, or acquaintance, or favourites, but from true piety and prudence, such as were fittest for and would be most faithful in their employments.

*And feared God*: this is added as the ground and reason, both why he was faithful, and why Nehemiah put such trust and confidence in him, because he knew that the fear of God would keep him from yielding to those temptations to perfidiousness which he was likely to meet with when Nehemiah was gone, and against which a man destitute of God's fear hath no sufficient fence.

*Above many*; more than most men did; or, above the common pitch of piety.

### [Ne 7:3](#)

*Until the sun be hot*, i.e. till it be clear and broad day; when enemies approaching may be discovered, and the people of the city will be ready for the defence in case of an assault.

*While they stand by*, i.e. the watches appointed to that end, as is manifest from the following words.

*Every one to be over against his house*, i.e. every one in his turn keeping watch with others in that watching-place which is next to his house.

### [Ne 7:4](#)

i.e. Not all, nor completely built; but only some slight buildings of boards or stones were made for the present use of the generality of the people.

### [Ne 7:5](#)

*God put into mine heart*: this action, though merely prudential, he doth not ascribe to himself, or his own wit, but to the gift and grace of God directing and inclining him to it.

*To gather together the nobles, and the rulers, and the people* not only for the particular end here mentioned, but for divers other weighty purposes and matters, of which the following chapters treat.

*That they might be reckoned by genealogy*; that so it might appear to what families each person belonged, and where their ancient habitations lay, which for a great number of them were in the city, the replenishing of which was now his design.

*Them which came up at the first*, to wit, with Zerubbabel, as it follows, [Ne 7:7](#). But this following catalogue differs in some particulars from that [Ezr 2:1-70](#), of which see the notes there.

### [Ne 7:6-73](#)

*The Tirshatha*, i.e. the governor, to wit, Nehemiah. So it is no wonder that the number of the monies, and other things here contributed, differ from that [Ezr 2:1-70](#), because this is another collection; that was made in Zerubbabel's time, and this in Ezra's.

## Chapter 8

*Ezra bringeth and expoundeth the law of Moses, and blesseth God with the people*, [Ne 8:1-8](#). *Nehemiah and Ezra comfort the people*, [Ne 8:9-12](#). *The people's forwardness to hear and to be instructed in the law*, [Ne 8:13-15](#). *They make themselves booths*, [Ne 8:16-17](#); and *keep the feast seven days*, [Ne 8:18](#).

### [Ne 8:1](#)

*The street that was before the water-gate*; of which [See Comment on Ne 3:26](#).

### [Ne 8:2](#)

*Ezra the priest* came twelve or thirteen years before Nehemiah to Jerusalem; and either tarried there, or went back to Babylon, being forced to do so by the king's command, or indispensable occasions, and then returned again with Nehemiah.

*All that could hear with understanding*, i.e. and such children as were come to years of understanding.

### [Ne 8:3-4](#)

Partly to declare their consent and concurrence with Ezra in what-he said and did; and partly that they, or some of them, might bear a part in the work.

### [Ne 8:5](#)

Either in reverence to God's word, of which see [Nu 11:32](#); [Jdg 3:20](#); or that they might hear his words the more distinctly: or rather, because they observed that Ezra composed himself to prayer or thanksgiving; which is here generally declared, but doubtless was more particularly and largely expressed in that assembly, as appears by their answering *Amen, Amen*, to his prayer.

### [Ne 8:6-7](#)

*Caused the people to understand the law*; as well the words, which being Hebrew, now needed to be translated into the Chaldee or Syriac language, which was now and henceforth the common language of that people, who together with their religion had also in a great part lost their language; as also the sense and meaning of them; they expounded the mind and will of God in what they read, and applied it to the people's present condition, as they saw fit, as the manner of the prophets generally was. And hence the people were so deeply affected with it.

*The people stood in their place*, i.e. in their several places and stations into which the company seems to have been distributed for conveniency of hearing; it not being likely that so vast a congregation could distinctly hear one man's voice. Or, *by their stations*, i.e. by the several stations of the Levites and persons last named; who seem to have had several scaffolds, by comparing this with [Ne 9:4](#), upon which they stood, as Ezra did upon his pulpit, [Ne 8:4](#).

### [Ne 8:8](#)

*They read*, to wit, Ezra and his companions successively or severally.

*Gave the sense*; i.e. the meaning of the Hebrew words, which they expounded in the common language.

*Caused them to understand the reading*, i.e. that which they read, to wit, the Holy Scripture; the action being put for the object, as vision is oft put for the thing seen, and hearing for the thing heard, and fear for the thing feared. So they gave them both a translation of the Hebrew words into the Chaldee, and an exposition of the things contained in them, and of the duty

incumbent upon the people by virtue of them, the declaration whereof was a great part of the priest's work, [Mal 2:7](#).

#### [Ne 8:9](#)

*This day is holy unto the Lord your God*, to wit, as a day of feasting and thanksgiving to God, and rejoicing in his mercies; for otherwise even fasting days were holy to God in the general, though not in the sense here meant.

*All the people wept*, out of a deep sense of their great guilt, and of their extreme danger by reason of it.

#### [Ne 8:10](#)

*Eat the fat, and drink the sweet*; feast before the Lord, as the duty of the day obligeth you to do.

*Send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared*; for the relief of your poor brethren, who else must mourn whilst you rejoice. See of this duty and practice [De 16:11, 14](#); [Es 9:19](#).

*This day is holy unto our Lord*; being the feast of trumpets, [Lev 23:24](#), and the beginning of this joyful month, wherein so many days of feasting and thanksgiving were to be observed.

*The joy of the Lord is your strength*, i.e. rejoicing in God in the manner prescribed in his word, or serving him with cheerfulness and thankfulness, which is your duty always, but now especially, will give you that strength both of mind and body which you greatly need, both to perform all the duties required of you, and to endure and oppose all the crafty counsels and malicious designs of your enemies against you; whereas this dejection of mind, and excessive grief, if you indulge it, will both offend God, and damp your spirits, and weaken your very bodies, and make you unfit for God's service, or for your own necessary occasions, and so an easy prey to your enemies.

#### [Ne 8:11](#)

*The Levites stilled all the people*; whose passions being once raised, could not suddenly be composed.

*Hold your peace*; cease from weeping and mournful cries, and turn your lamentations into thanksgivings.

#### [Ne 8:12](#)

Because they now knew God's mind, and their own duty, which they were resolved to practise; which gave them ground of hope and trust in God's mercy, and consequently of great and just joy.

### [Ne 8:13](#)

Choosing rather to confess their ignorance for their edification, than vainly to pretend to more knowledge than they had; wherein they show both true humility and serious godliness, that they were more careful to learn and practise their duty, than to preserve their reputation with the people.

*Even to understand the words of the law;* that they might more exactly understand the meaning of some things which they had heard before, and so instruct the people in them.

### [Ne 8:14](#)

*They found,* upon Ezra's information, and their discourse with him.

### [Ne 8:15](#)

*And that they should publish,* i.e. and they found this also written, which is to be supplied out of the former verse, that they should, &c., which, though it be not particularly required, so as is expressed in the words here following, yet in the general is required by virtue of that precept, [Lev 23:4](#); [Nu 10:10](#). And according to this translation, it must be understood in the close of this verse, that they did accordingly publish and proclaim, &c. But these words may be rendered, *which* (as this Hebrew word is rendered here, [Ne 8:14](#), and most commonly) *also* (so the particle *vau* is used, [Isa 6:1](#); [Jer 1:3](#)) *they did publish*, &c. For so they did, as is evident and acknowledged; and it seems fit that so much should be expressed; and these words being particular and proper to this special occasion, seem to intimate that this is rather an historical relation of what they now did, than a declaration of that which the law required them to do, which was but in very general terms, and not so exact and particular as this following precept is said to be. *Unto the mount;* the Mount of Olives, which was next Jerusalem, and stored with olive branches, and probably with the rest here mentioned; for these trees may seem to have been planted hereabouts principally for the use of this capital city in this very feast, which, though long neglected, should have been celebrated once every year. And therefore this place seems to be here designed as the most eminent place, but with a usual synecdoche, this place being put for any place nearest to the several cities of Judah, where these branches were to be procured.

*Branches of thick trees;* of which [See Comment on Lev 23:34](#); [See Comment on De 16:13](#).

### [Ne 8:16](#)

*Booths upon the roof of his house;* for the houses there were made flat; of which [See Comment on De 22:8](#).

*In their courts,* belonging to their own houses; for these might be any where in the open air.

*In the street of the gate of Ephraim;* that gate of the city which led to the tribe of Ephraim.

### [Ne 8:17](#)

*For since the days of Jeshua,* or, *surely* since the days, as the Hebrew *chi* is oft used, as hath been noted before. For the following words seem not so much to give a reason of what was

last said or done concerning their dwelling in booths, as to contain the holy writer's reflection upon the present celebration of this feast.

*Had not the children of Israel done so; either, 1. So as to the matter or substance of the thing. So it implies that all this while the feast of tabernacles was not observed; which seems altogether improbable, considering how expressly this was commanded to be celebrated, [Lev 23:1-44](#), &c, and what excellent kings, and priests, and prophets there had been within that time, such as were persons of great understanding, and most expert and studious in God's word, and therefore could not be ignorant of so plain a duty; and withal so thoroughly pious, and careful, and zealous for God, and the observation of his law and worship, and some of them commended for their universal obedience to all God's commands; and therefore would not be guilty of so gross a neglect. Besides, that this feast was observed is sufficiently implied in [1Ki 8:2, 65](#); [2Ch 7:9](#), and is particularly expressed [Ezr 3:4](#). Or rather, 2. So, as to the manner and circumstances. They never kept this feast so joyfully, as the next words declare, having not only the same causes of rejoicing which they formerly had, but some special causes to increase their joy, to wit, the remembrance of their stupendous deliverance, both out of the land of their captivity, and out of the hands of their wicked and malicious neighbours ever since their return, and especially now when they were new building the walls of Jerusalem: they never kept it so solemnly and religiously; for whereas at other times only the first and last day of that feast were celebrated with a holy convocation, [Lev 23:35-36](#); [Joh 7:37](#), now there was a holy convocation, and the people assembled, and attended upon the reading of the law, every day of this feast, as is noted in the next verse.*

### [Ne 8:18](#)

*He read in the book of the law of God; which was commanded to be done at this feast, [De 31:10-12](#), though not enjoined to be done every day, as now out of a singular zeal they did.*

## Chapter 9

*The solemn fast and repentance of the people, [Ne 9:1-2](#); and the manner of it, [Ne 9:3](#). The Levites confess and bless God for his goodness to them and their fathers, [Ne 9:4-8](#), in Egypt, [Ne 9:9-10](#); in their journey out of it, [Ne 9:11-12](#); upon Mount Sinai, [Ne 9:13-14](#); in their journey towards Canaan, [Ne 9:15-18](#); in the wilderness, [Ne 9:19-21](#); in driving out the nations before them, [Ne 9:22-26](#); in hearing their prayer when in trouble, and saving them, [Ne 9:27-31](#). They confess their sins, [Ne 9:32-37](#); and seal a covenant, [Ne 9:38](#).*

### [Ne 9:1](#)

*In the twenty and fourth day of this month; the next day but one after the feast of tabernacles, which begun on the 14th day, and ended on the 22nd day, [Lev 23:1-44](#); for their consciences having then been fully awakened by the law read to them, and their hearts being full of grief for their great sins, which they were not allowed to express in that time of public joy and triumph; now when that was past, they resume their former thoughts and passions, and recalling their sins to mind, set apart a day for solemn fasting and humiliation.*

### [Ne 9:2](#)

*From all strangers; from all familiar and unnecessary society with the heathens, and particularly from those strange women whom some of them had married. For though Ezra had done this formerly, [Ezr 10:1-44](#), as far as he had knowledge of the persons faulty, and*

power to redress their faults, yet, it seems, there were some criminals, who were either without his knowledge, or out of his power; or these were some new delinquents, that since that time had fallen into the same error, and showed the truth of their repentance by the forsaking of their beloved sins and dearest relations. See again [Ne 13:3](#).

*The iniquities of their fathers;* which they confess partly as one cause of their present sufferings; and partly because they by their practices had justified their fathers' sins, and made them their own.

### [Ne 9:3](#)

*Read in the book of the law;* so as they did before, giving them the sense of what they read; of which [See Comment on Ne 8:7](#), [See Comment on Ne 8:8](#).

*One fourth part of the day,* to wit, for three hours; for there were accounted twelve hours in their day, [Joh 11:9](#). Probably they began after the morning sacrifice, at which divers religious people used to be present, but now they were all assembled together upon this great occasion; and they continued their work from that time till the evening sacrifice, with which they closed the work of the day.

*Another fourth part they confessed,* both God's mercies, as appears from the matter of the following prayer, and their own sins, as is expressed [Ne 9:2](#), this day being chiefly set apart for that work.

*Worshipped the Lord their God;* partly by the acknowledgment and adoration of his wonderful mercy in forgiving their sins, and saving them from the deserved judgments, which they either felt or feared, and giving them his law, and the knowledge thereof; and partly by imploring his further grace and mercy to them.

### [Ne 9:4](#)

*Upon the stairs, of the Levites,* or, upon the scaffold, &c., i.e. upon such stairs, or rather scaffolds, or pulpits, as the Levites used to stand upon when they taught the people. But you must not think that all the persons here named stood in one place, and uttered the following words together, which would have caused great confusion in their speeches, by which means but few of the people could have distinctly heard or understood them; but that they stood upon several pulpits, each of them either teaching of that part of the congregation which was allotted to him, or praying or blessing God with them.

*Cried with a loud voice;* thereby testifying their deep sense of their sins and miseries, and their fervent and importunate desire of God's mercy.

### [Ne 9:5](#)

*Then the Levites said* all the following words. Either therefore they all used the same words, being composed and agreed upon by Ezra and themselves; or they all prayed in the same manner, and to the same purpose, having agreed among themselves concerning the matter of their confessions and prayers. And these are the words which one of them used; and it is implied that the rest of their prayers were of the same nature.

*For ever and ever; from day to day, as long as you live, and to all eternity.*

**[Ne 9:6](#)**

*The host of heaven; either, 1. The stars, which after their manner worship and praise God, as all the creatures do after their manner, of which see [Ps 148:1-14](#); Or rather, 2. The angels, who are so called, as [1Ki 22:19](#); [Lu 2:13](#), who do worship God truly and properly. And it is most usual and reasonable to understand all words properly, where there is no need of a figurative interpretation. And if this were understood of metaphorical and objective worshipping of God, there seems to be no reason to appropriate that to the *host of heaven*, to wit, the stars, seeing the hosts of sea and earth do in that sense worship God no less than the stars do, namely, in giving angels and men matter and occasion of worshipping and praising of God.*

**[Ne 9:7](#)**

*Didst choose Abram out of the midst of all his nation and family. When thou didst pass by and neglect the rest of them, suffering them to walk on in their idolatrous and destructive courses; thou didst choose and single out him to serve and glorify thee, to be father of all the faithful, the progenitor of the Messias, and the person in whom, not we only, but all nations, should be blessed, and to enjoy thee to all eternity.*

**[Ne 9:8](#)**

*Foundest his heart faithful before thee; when thou madest that admirable trial of his faith and obedience, in requiring him to offer up his only son Isaac, thou didst find out and discover his faithfulness, which was well known to thee before, and also was wrought in him by thy grace.*

**[Ne 9:9-10](#)**

*They dealt proudly against them; treating thy people with great scorn and contempt, like slaves and beasts.*

**[Ne 9:11](#)**

*Into the mighty waters, i.e. the deep waters, such as these were, into which, when a stone is thrown, there is no hopes of seeing it again.*

**[Ne 9:12-13](#)**

*True laws; not such laws as some of the heathen laws were, which taught them falsehood, superstition, idolatry, and other errors; but such as discover the truth, and the true mind and will of God, and the true and only way to life.*

*Good statutes; both in themselves, and to us also, being useful to teach, and comfort, and save us.*

#### [Ne 9:14](#)

*Thy holy sabbath;* that holy and blessed sabbath day which thou didst bless and sanctify to Adam in Paradise, [Ge 2:3](#), commanding him, and in him all his posterity, to observe it, which yet almost all people and nations have quite forgotten, yea, so far as to mock at them, [La 1:7](#), thou didst graciously reveal unto thy people, reviving that ancient law by another particular law about it given to us in the wilderness.

#### [Ne 9:15-16](#)

Notwithstanding all these singular and wonderful mercies; which he hitherto recounted to aggravate their sins, which he now comes to confess, and to lead them to a sincere and ingenuous grief and repentance for their sins, not only for the mischief which they brought upon themselves, but for the injury and indignity which they offered to God.

*Dealt proudly*, i.e. sinned presumptuously, and with contempt of God, as scorning to submit their wills to God's.

#### [Ne 9:17](#)

*Refused to obey;* persisted in their disobedience after many admonitions, and invitations to repentance.

*Appointed a captain*, i.e. designed, purposed, and resolved to do so, [Nu 14:4](#), and therefore they are said to do so, as Abraham is said to have offered up Isaac, [Heb 11:17](#), because he intended and attempted to do it.

#### [Ne 9:18-19](#)

*Thou forsookest them not in the wilderness;* where, if thou hadst left them without thy conduct and comfort, they had been utterly lost and undone.

#### [Ne 9:20](#)

*Thou gavest also thy good spirit;* which thou didst graciously and plentifully impart unto Moses, and then unto the seventy elders, [Nu 11:17](#), [25-26](#), to the end that they might be able to direct and govern thy people wisely, and in thy fear.

#### [Ne 9:21-22](#)

*Into corners, or, into a corner.* But the singular number is very commonly put for the plural. This is understood, either, 1. Of the Israelites, to whom God divided by lot the *kingdoms and nations* last mentioned, and gave them all *the corners, or sides, or quarters* (for all these the word signifies) of their land. Or rather, 2. Of the heathen nations, whom God in a great measure destroyed, and the remainders of them *he dispersed into corners*; that whereas before the Israelites came they had large habitations and dominions, now they were cooped up into corners, some of them into one town or city, and some into another, in the several corners of their land, as indeed we find them afterward; whilst thee Israelites dwelt in a large

place, and had the possession of their whole land, some few and small parcels excepted. Compare [De 32:26](#), where the like phrase is used in the same sense.

### [Ne 9:23-25](#)

i.e. In all these comforts and blessings, which by thy great goodness they obtained and enjoyed.

### [Ne 9:26](#)

*Cast thy law behind their backs*, i.e. neglected and despised thy laws, would not regard nor observe them; whereas they should have had them continually before their eyes, to direct and govern them. Compare [Ps 50:17](#); [Eze 23:35](#).

### [Ne 9:27-29](#)

*Which if a man do, he shall live in them*; of which see on [Lev 18:5](#); [Eze 20:11](#); [Ro 10:5](#); [Ga 3:12](#).

*Withdrew the shoulder, and hardened their neck*, i.e. would not submit to thy yoke, like stubborn oxen.

### [Ne 9:30](#)

*Didst thou forbear them*, i.e. thou didst delay to bring upon them those judgments which thou hadst threatened, and they had deserved, and didst wait for their repentance.

*By thy spirit in thy prophets*; by thy prophets, who shake to them by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, whom therefore they should have obeyed.

*Yet would they not give ear*, i.e. would not obey them, nor would they vouchsafe so much as to hear them.

### [Ne 9:31-32](#)

*Covenant and mercy*, i.e. covenanted mercy, or thy covenant of mercy and peace. Or, he adds *mercy*, because the covenant in itself was not a sufficient ground of hope, because they having so basely broken it, God was discharged from keeping it, and therefore they fly to God's free and rich mercy for relief.

*Let not all the trouble seem little before thee*; do not thou account it small and insufficient for our punishment, and that it is fit to continue and increase it.

*Since the time of the kings of Assyria*, strictly and properly so called; for from them was the beginning of all the calamities, both of Judah and of Israel, as appears from [2Ki 15:19](#); [18:13](#). Or, the kings of Babylon, so called, [2Ch 33:11](#).

### [Ne 9:33-35](#)

*Which thou gavest before them, i.e. which thou didst lay open to their view and possession, removing their enemies and all impediments out of the way.*

### [Ne 9:36](#)

In that land wherein heretofore, under thee, and by thy favour, we were rightful lords and owners.

### [Ne 9:37](#)

We plough, and sow, and labour, and thou givest thy blessing to our endeavours; and yet in a great measure this is not for ourselves, as formerly it was, but for our kings, to whom we pay great and heavy tributes for these things; of which see [Ezr 6:8](#); [7:24](#). They have dominion over our bodies, and over our cattle; pressing or forcing both us and our beasts to go and do what they please.

### [Ne 9:38](#)

*Because of all this; because all this misery lies upon us for our sins, we do heartily repent of them, and resolve to forsake them. Or, we faithfully promise and engage ourselves to future obedience.*

## Chapter 10

*The names of those that sealed the covenant, [Ne 10:1-27](#). The rest of the people cleave to them: the covenant, [Ne 10:28-39](#).*

### [Ne 10:1](#)

*Those that sealed, both in their own names, and in the name of all the rest. It may seem strange that Ezra doth not appear among them. But that might be because he was prevented, either by death, or by some sickness, or other extraordinary impediment, for which we have this presumption, that whereas Ezra appears, and preacheth, and prayeth with Jeshua and Bani, &c., before the feast of tabernacles, [Ne 8:4](#), &c., we have no mention of him [Ne 9:1-38](#), but the whole work of that solemn fast day was managed by them alone, without any mention of Ezra, whose name would not have been omitted, if he had been then present. It is true, we meet with Ezra after this, at the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem, [Ne 12:36](#), and therefore he was then freed from this impediment, whatsoever it was; but thence it appears that he was not dead. *Nehemiah, the Tirshatha*: this is added to distinguish him from others of that name, whereof we have one, [Ne 3:16](#).*

### [Ne 10:2-14](#)

*The chief of the people, i.e. their elders, or representatives, acting in the stead and by the appointment of all the rest; for it had been troublesome and unnecessary for every one of the people to seal.*

### [Ne 10:15-28](#)

*The rest of the people*; those who did not write and seal with their own hands, but only by their deputies above-mentioned.

### [Ne 10:29](#)

*They clave to their brethren*; they owned and ratified what the others had done in their names, declaring their assent to it by their words, or by the lifting up of their hands, as the manner was.

*Into an oath*, i.e. an oath bound with a curse or imprecation upon themselves, in case they violated it.

### [Ne 10:30](#)

*We would not give our daughters*, to wit, in marriage. Having sworn obedience to God's laws in the general, they now do so to some particulars, wherein they had lately transgressed, or were most prone to transgress.

### [Ne 10:31](#)

*That we would leave the seventh year*, i.e. leave the land at rest from ploughing or tilling it in that year, according to God's command, [Ex 23:10-11](#); [Lev 25:4](#).

*The exaction of every debt*, Heb. *hand*: *debts* are called *hands*, because they are commonly contracted or confirmed by a bill under the hand of the debtor.

### [Ne 10:32](#)

*To charge ourselves*, i.e. every particular head or person among us; which they had warrant to do, both from the nature of the thing, because this was necessary to be done for the upholding of God's worship, and from the warrant of former examples in the like case, [2Ch 24:5](#).

### [Ne 10:33](#)

Formerly *the shew-bread*, and *the continual meat-offering*, and *the continual burnt-offering*, were provided out of the treasuries of the temple, [1Ch 26:20](#); and when those failed, out of the king's treasure, [2Ch 31:3](#). But now, both these failing, provision is here made for them another way.

*For the holy things*, i.e. for the sacrifices, all which were holy.

*The sin-offerings*; which are particularly mentioned, as most necessary and suitable to their present state, which was exceeding sinful, and therefore miserable, and calling aloud for atoning sacrifices.

[Ne 10:34](#)

*We cast the lots*, to determine the time and order in which each of them should take the care of the business.

*For the wood-offering*; for the wood, which was to be spent in great quantity, being used in every sacrifice, and formerly had been supplied out of the temple's treasures, or by the king; which could not now be done.

*Into the house of our God*, i.e. into the place appointed to receive it in the buildings adjoining or belonging to the temple.

*After the houses of our fathers*, i. e. according to our several families, which were to take the charge of it by course.

[Ne 10:35](#)

*The first-fruits of our ground*, i.e. of the fruits of our ground. All the particulars of the first-fruits are exactly and distinctly mentioned, that none might pretend ignorance when they withheld any part of the priests' dues; which at that time especially the people were very prone to do, through poverty, or covetousness, or profaneness; and that the priests' rights might be firmly assured to them.

[Ne 10:36-37](#)

i.e. The tithes of all the fruits of the ground belonging to our several cities.

[Ne 10:38](#)

*The priest the son of Aaron*, i.e. some priest or priests appointed to this work, that so neither the people might wrong the Levites, nor the Levites defraud the priests of their dues.

*The Levites shall bring up at their own charges, Into the treasure-house*, to wit, of the temple; where it was laid up for the use of the priests.

[Ne 10:39](#)

*Unto the chambers, where are the vessels of the sanctuary*; where other things belonging to the temple are laid up, and therefore these things also shall be put there.

*And the priests that minister, and the porters, and the singers*, i.e. where also are the priests and others that minister in their courses, for whose use these provisions are made.

*We will not forsake the house of our God*, i.e. we do here solemnly declare and engage ourselves that we will take care, from time to time, that the house and service of God be not neglected or forsaken for want of necessary provisions to support it.

## Chapter 11

*The rulers and the tenth man chosen by lot dwell at Jerusalem, [Ne 11:1-2](#). A catalogue of their names, numbers, and families, [Ne 11:3-19](#). The residue of the people dwell in other cities, [Ne 11:20-36](#).*

### [Ne 11:1](#)

*The rulers of the people dwelt at Jerusalem, which their very office in some sort obliged them to do. To bring one of ten to dwell in Jerusalem; that the buildings of the city might be completed, and the honour and safety of it better provided for.*

### [Ne 11:2](#)

Because they denied themselves, and their own safety and profit, for the public good; for this city was the butt of all the malicious plots of their enemies; and for the present it was rather chargeable than beneficial to its inhabitants; whereas the country did more easily and certainly afford them supplies.

### [Ne 11:3](#)

*The chief of the province, i.e. of Judea, which was now made a province.*

*To wit, Israel, i.e. the generality of the people of Israel, whether of Judah, or Benjamin, or any other tribe; as appears by this general enumeration of all the inhabitants of the land, in which either the people of Judah and Benjamin are included under the title of Israel, or they are not here mentioned; which is absurd to think, because they made up the greatest number of them. And these he calls *Israel* rather than Judah, partly because there were many of the other tribes now joined and incorporated with them; and partly because none of the tribes of Israel, except Judah and Benjamin, dwelt in Jerusalem, as appears from the sequel.*

### [Ne 11:4](#)

*The children of Judah and of Benjamin; for to these two tribes this city anciently and most properly belonged, although some also of other tribes dwelt in it; of which, and other things relating to this catalogue, see [1Ch 9:3](#), &c.*

*Athaiah, and his family and relations with him, and under him as their head, as appears from [Ne 11:6](#).*

### [Ne 11:5-6](#)

Such were most proper for this place and time, because of its many enemies round about it.

### [Ne 11:7-8](#)

So here were more of Benjamin than of Judah, because the city did chiefly and most properly belong to that tribe, as hath been noted before.

[Ne 11:9-11](#)

*One of the chief priests*; who ruled with and under the high priest: see [Nu 3:32](#); [1Ch 9:11](#); [2Ch 19:11](#); [31:13](#).

[Ne 11:12-14](#)

i.e. Of a person then or lately eminent in valour, or worth, or dignity. Or, *of Gedolim, or Hagedolim*, a man so called.

[Ne 11:15-16](#)

i.e. For those things belonging to the temple and its service, which were to be done without it, or abroad in the country, as for the gathering in of the voluntary contributions, or other necessary provisions, out of the several parts of the land. See [1Ch 26:29](#).

[Ne 11:17](#)

*In prayer*, i.e. in the public and solemn prayers and praises which were constantly joined with the morning and evening sacrifice, at which the singers were present, and praised God with a psalm or hymn, which this man began.

[Ne 11:18-22](#)

i.e. Were to take care at Jerusalem for the supply of such things as were necessary for the temple and the service of God, from time to time, whilst others minded the outward business, [Ne 11:16](#). And this office was very proper for them, both as they were Levites, to whose care those things belonged; and as they were singers, who were not to come to Jerusalem by turns, as other Levites, and as the priests did, but were constantly to reside there, and therefore were more capable of minding this business. Besides, their employment was not so frequent nor so great as some others were, and therefore they had more leisure for it.

[Ne 11:23](#)

*For*; or, *therefore*; for the following words contain either a reason why they were set over that business, or a recompence for it, or a provision that they might diligently attend to it.

*The king's commandment*; either, 1. David's, who made this constitution. Or rather, 2. The kings of Persia, who is called simply *the king* in the next verse also; who took this care at the request and by the direction of Ezra or Nehemiah. Or this might be Nehemiah's command, which is called the *king's command*, because it was done by the king's deputy, or a commissioner whom the king empowered to do what he saw fit for the house and service of God, commanding all the people to obey him therein; as he had formerly done to Ezra, [Ezr 7:18](#), [20](#), [23](#).

[Ne 11:24](#)

*At the king's hand*, or, *on the king's part*, to determine civil causes and controversies between man and man by the laws of that kingdom, which peradventure he understood better than

Nehemiah, and therefore was appointed for this work, but still under Nehemiah. Or, *according to the king's appointment, as the hand is used, as [Nu 4:49](#), and elsewhere.*

*In all matters concerning the people; either in civil differences between them, or in things between the king and people; as in matters of tribute, or grievances, &c., wherein this man possibly was chief justiciary under Nehemiah.*

### [Ne 11:25](#)

*Kirjath-arba: this and most of the other places here named had been destroyed by the Chaldeans; but the Jews now repaired the best of the ruined houses, and by degrees rebuilt others.*

### [Ne 11:26-35](#)

Or, *in the valley, &c.* Or this is another place called *Ge-haharasim*.

### [Ne 11:36](#)

Or, *for the Levites* (to wit, those of them who were not settled in Jerusalem) there were divisions, i.e. places appointed for them, and distributed among them.

## Chapter 12

*The priests, [Ne 12:1-7](#), and Levites which came up with Zerubbabel, [Ne 12:8-9](#). The succession of high priests, [Ne 12:10-21](#). Certain chief Levites, [Ne 12:22-26](#). The manner of dedicating the wall, [Ne 12:27-43](#). The offices of priests and Levites, [Ne 12:44](#); of singers and porters, [Ne 12:45-47](#).*

### [Ne 12:1](#)

*The priests, i.e. the chief of the priests, as they are called here, [Ne 12:7](#), to wit, the heads of those twenty-four courses which David appointed by Divine direction, [1Ch 24:1-31](#). And whereas there are twenty-four, and here but twenty-two, and [Ne 12:12](#), &c. only twenty, the reason of this difference may possibly be this, because two of the twenty-four courses were extinct in Babylon, or at least none of them was then returned; and two of the persons here named, [Ne 12:2](#), [5](#), to wit, Hattush and Mandish, may be omitted in the account of the posterity of these persons, [Ne 12:12](#), &c., because they had no posterity. Possibly these were not the same courses which David had appointed, but others which Zerubbabel and Joshua had constituted in imitation of that order as far as they could.*

*Ezra: either this was another Ezra, or if it were the same mentioned [Ezr 7:1-28](#), he lived to a great age; which may well be supposed, considering his great sobriety, and abstinence from those evil practices which shorten men's lives, and his great piety, to which God promised long life, and withal the special providence of God confirming him so long in such a season wherein the church of God did greatly need his help and counsel.*

### [Ne 12:2](#)

In the repetition of Malluch's and some other men's names hereafter, [Ne 12:14](#), &c., there are some small variations, which are very frequent in that language.

### [Ne 12:3-7](#)

*Of their brethren*, i.e. of the priests, who were their brethren.

### [Ne 12:8-9](#)

i.e. In the places where they were appointed to stand, and wait, and perform their office, one standing over against another, as it is explained, [Ne 12:24](#), ward over against ward; for the Hebrew word is the same there and here. Others, *according to their turns*, or *courses*, of which see [1Ch 25:9](#).

### [Ne 12:10](#)

Here follows a catalogue of the Jewish high priests; which was the more necessary, because their times were now to be measured, not by the years of their kings, as formerly, but by their high priests.

*Eliashib*; of whom see [Ne 3:1](#); [13:4-5](#).

### [Ne 12:11](#)

Generally supposed to be the same man who was high priest in the days of Alexander the Great, as Josephus mentions; whence a great difficulty ariseth, how Nehemiah could mention this man, who seems not to have been high priest till many years after Nehemiah's death. But it seems not necessary that this *Jaddua* should be the same person, for he might be the father of that *Jaddua*, both being called by the same name; or, if he were the same, the blessing of a very long life might be given to this great and excellent governor, as it was to Ezra, that famous scribe, as was noted on [Ne 12:1](#), and that for the very same reason. He might also live to see Jaddua, though not to see him high priest, which might be many years after. Or this passage might be put into this book by some sacred or inspired penman, there being some, though but few, such passages in the foregoing books of Scripture, which were added by succeeding men of God in after-times.

### [Ne 12:12](#)

As their fathers were priests in the days of Joshua, so in the days of Joiakim, the son of Joshua, the sons of those persons executed the priesthood in their fathers' steads, some of their fathers probably being yet living, and many of them now dead.

### [Ne 12:13-22](#)

*Either Darius Codomanus*, and then what was said concerning Jaddua, [Ne 12:11](#), must be in part repeated and applied here: or *Darius Nothus*; and so this Jaddua might be father to him who was in the days of Darius Codomanus, and of Alexander the Great.

[Ne 12:23](#)

*In the book of the chronicles*, i.e. in the public annals or registers, in which the genealogies of the several families were set down by the Jews with great exactness, as all persons agree.

[Ne 12:24-25](#)

To wit, of the temple, their watching-place being close by the thresholds of the gates, as it now is.

[Ne 12:26-27](#)

*At the dedication of the wall*; and of the gates, which are mentioned [Ne 12:30](#); and of the city itself within the gates; which is here dedicated to God, and to his honour and service, not only upon a general account, by which we ought to devote ourselves, and all that is ours, to God; but upon a more special ground, because this was a place which God himself had chosen, and sanctified by his temple and gracious presence, and therefore did of right belong to him; whence it is oft called *the holy city*, as hath been observed before. And they restored it to God by this dedication, withal imploring the presence, and favour, and blessing of God to this city by solemn prayers, and praises, and sacrifices, wherewith this dedication was accompanied. See [De 20:5](#); [1Ki 8:63](#); [Ezr 6:17](#); [Ps 30:1](#).

*Out of all their places*, to which they were now retired after that great and general assembly, [Ne 8:1-18](#); [9:1-38](#); [10:1-39](#).

[Ne 12:28-29](#)

That they might be near at hand for the service of God, and of his house.

[Ne 12:30](#)

Partly by sprinkling the water of purification upon them, by which the tabernacle and sacred utensils were purified, [Nu 8:1-26](#); and partly by solemn prayers and sacrifices.

[Ne 12:31](#)

*The princes of Judah*, and half of the people with them, as it is expressed afterwards, [Ne 12:38](#).

*Upon the wall*; for the wall was broad and strong, and so ordered that men might conveniently walk upon it, as at this day it is in many cities.

*On the right hand*; towards the south and east.

[Ne 12:32-33](#)

*Ezra*; not the scribe, as is evident from [Ne 12:36](#), but another *Ezra*.

[Ne 12:34-37](#)

*The stairs of the city of David; by which they went up to the hill of Zion, and city of David.*

[Ne 12:38](#)

*Over against them, to wit, on the other side of the city, northward and eastward.*

*The broad wall; which they made thicker and stronger than the rest of the wall, for some special reason.*

[Ne 12:39](#)

Waiting, as also their brethren did, that they might go together in due order into God's house, there to perfect the solemnity.

[Ne 12:40](#)

*In the house of God, i.e. in the courts of the temple.*

*I, and the half of the rulers with me; and Ezra, and the other half with him, as appears by comparing this with [Ne 12:31](#), [36](#).*

[Ne 12:41-43](#)

Either their loud voices and instruments were heard to a great distance, or the fame of it was spread far and near.

[Ne 12:44](#)

*For the offerings; such as they had lately engaged themselves to give, or other voluntary or prescribed offerings.*

*The portions of the law, i.e. the foresaid first-fruits, and tithes, and other things which God by his law appointed for them.*

*Judah rejoiced for the priests and for the Levites that waited; partly for the eminent gifts and graces which they observed in many of them; and partly for the great benefit which they had now received by their ministry; and therefore for the competent provision which hereby was made for them, that so they might wholly wait upon their office to the people's edification and comfort.*

[Ne 12:45](#)

*The ward of their God, i.e. that ward, or charge, or business which God had prescribed to them.*

*And the ward of the purification; and in particular the charge of purification, i.e. of taking care that no unclean person or thing might enter into the house or courts of the Lord; which*

care did certainly belong to the porters, as is expressed, [2Ch 23:19](#), and at this time, and in some sort, as it seems to the singers, who, besides their proper employment, *were also over the business of the house of God*, as is affirmed, [Ne 11:22](#); which being a general expression, may well comprehend, if it doth not principally design this, that they should take care to keep the house of God free from all pollution. And possibly as the porters were to take care that no unclean thing might enter there, so if it should through their inadvertency enter in, the singers were to remove it.

#### [Ne 12:46](#)

*David, and Asaph, and Heman, and Jeduthun*, [1Ch 25:1](#); but Asaph only is mentioned here, as the most eminent and useful in that work.

*There were chief of the singers*; there were some overseers, whose office it was to see that the singers were fit for and diligent in their work; and therefore they took care of it at this time.

#### [Ne 12:47](#)

*They sanctified holy things*, i.e. they sequestered or set apart the first-fruits and tithes from their own share, and devoted them to the use of the Levites, to whom they belonged. And so did the Levites by the tithes of the tithes. Thus they all conscientiously paid their dues to God, or his assigns, and did not profane, those things which God had sanctified, nor take them to their own common use, as divers ungodly or covetous persons had formerly used to do when they had opportunity.

### Chapter 13

*Upon the reading of the law separation is made between Israel and the mixed multitude*, [Ne 13:1-3](#). *Nehemiah, at his return to Jerusalem, causeth the chambers to be cleansed*. [Ne 13:4-9](#). *He restoreth and reformeth the offices of the priests and Levites in the house of God*, [Ne 13:10-14](#); and seeing the violation of the sabbath, he contendeth with the nobles of Judah, [Ne 13:15-18](#). *He shutteth the gates, and setteth a watch at them*, [Ne 13:19-22](#). *The punishment of marrying with strange wives*, [Ne 13:23-28](#). *Nehemiah's prayer*, [Ne 13:29-31](#).

#### [Ne 13:1](#)

*On that day*; not now presently after the dedication of the wall, and gates, and city, but upon a certain day, as that phrase is very commonly used in Scripture without any relation to the time or things mentioned next before it, to wit, when Nehemiah was returned again from the Persian court to Jerusalem, from which he had been absent for some considerable time, in which some errors and abuses had crept in, which now he endeavours to remove.

*In the audience of the people*; partly because it was not only the priests', but also the people's, duty to study and understand God's law and their own duty; and partly that the people hearing that this was the express mind and will of the great God, might the more willingly yield to the following duties, some of which were attended with difficulty, and required self-denial.

*Should not come into the congregation of God*, i.e. not be incorporated into the commonwealth of Israel, nor be joined with any Israelite in marriage relation, as appears from [Ne 13:3](#); that practice being a plain comment upon this law. But of this and the next verse, [See Comment on De 23:3](#), [See Comment on De 23:4](#).

### [Ne 13:2-3](#)

i.e. All the heathenish people with whom they had contracted alliances. See [Ne 9:2](#); [Ezr 10:3](#).

### [Ne 13:4](#)

*Eliashib the priest*; the high priest, [Ne 3:1](#), or some other priest so called, there being divers Eliashibs in or about this time, [Ezr 10:6](#), [24](#), [27](#), [36](#), though the first seems most probable, by comparing this verse with [Ne 13:28](#), and with [Ne 12:10-11](#).

*The oversight of the chamber*, i.e. of the chambers, as appears from the following verse, and from [Ne 13:9](#), where it is called *chambers*, and from the nature of the thing, the high priest having the chief power over the house of God, and all the chambers belonging to it. The singular number for the plural.

*Allied unto Tobiah*, the Ammonite, and a violent enemy to God's people. So this is noted as a great blemish to Eliashib, and as the cause of his other miscarriage, noted [Ne 13:5](#).

### [Ne 13:5](#)

*He had prepared for him a great chamber*; by removing the things which were in it, and uniting divers small chambers into one, and furnishing it for the use of Tobiah when he came to Jerusalem; whom he seems to have lodged there that he might have more free and secret communication with him, this being in a place where the people might not come.

### [Ne 13:6](#)

*All this time was not I at Jerusalem*; and Eliashib took the occasion of my absence to do these things, supposing that I would no more return thither.

*Came I unto the king*, to wit, from Jerusalem; where he had been once and again.

*After certain days*, Heb. *in the end of days*, or *of a year*, as that word oft signifies.

### [Ne 13:7-8](#)

*It grieved me sore*, that so sacred a place should be polluted by one who in many respects ought not to have come there, being no priest, a stranger, an Ammonite, and one of the worst of that people; and that all this should be done by the permission and order of the high priest, who by his office should have punished and reformed these things in others.

### [Ne 13:9](#)

*They cleansed the chambers*, by such means and rites as were then usual in such cases. See [Nu 19:9](#).

[Ne 13:10](#)

*The portions of the Levites had not been given them;* which might be either, 1. From this corrupt high priest Eliashib, who took their portions, as he did the sacred chambers, to his own use, or employed them for the entertainment of Tobiah, and his other great allies. Or. 2. From the people, who either out of covetousness reserved them to themselves, contrary to their own solemn agreement and covenant, [Ne 10:37](#); or were so offended at Eliashib's horrid and manifest abuse of sacred things, that they abhorred the offering and service of God, as others did upon a like occasion, [1Sa 2:17](#), and therefore neglected to bring in their tithes, &c., which they knew would be perverted to bad uses.

*Were fled every one to his field;* to his possession in the country, being forced to do so for a livelihood.

[Ne 13:11](#)

I sharply reproved those priests to whom the management of these things was committed, for neglect of their duty, and breach of their late solemn promise.

*Why is the house of God forsaken?* you have not only injured men in withholding their dues, but you have occasioned the neglect of God's house and service.

*I gathered them together* to Jerusalem, from their several country possessions, in which they were dispersed.

*Set them in their place;* restored them to the exercise of their office.

[Ne 13:12](#)

Partly out of the respect which they had to Nehemiah, and to his command; and partly because they saw they would be applied to their proper uses, and not abused, as they had been.

[Ne 13:13](#)

*Zadok the scribe;* the ecclesiastical scribe, who was to keep the accounts of the receipts and disbursements.

*They were counted faithful;* by common fame, and the consent of those who knew them. Such he now sought out the more diligently, because he had late experience of the perfidiousness of the former trustees.

*To distribute unto their brethren,* according to their several families, as the law had prescribed.

[Ne 13:14](#)

*Concerning this:* what I have done with an upright heart for thy house and service be pleased graciously to accept, and remember for my good, according to thy promise.

[Ne 13:15](#)

I protested against the action, and admonished them to forbear it.

[Ne 13:16](#)

*Which brought fish*, which they might take in the sea near Joppa, or bring from Tyre to Joppa by sea, and thence to Jerusalem, which was but a small journey.

*In Jerusalem*, the holy city, where God's house and presence was, and where the great judicatories of the nation were. So this is added as an aggravation of their sin, that this was done with manifest contempt both to God and men.

[Ne 13:17](#)

*The nobles of Judah*, i.e. their chief men and rulers; whom he chargeth with this sin, because though others did it, it was by their countenance or connivance, and they should and might have punished and restrained it.

[Ne 13:18](#)

*All this evil upon us*; which you so well and sadly remember, that I need not tell you the particulars.

[Ne 13:19](#)

*When the gates of Jerusalem began to be dark*; which was about sun-setting, by reason of the mountains which were round about and near Jerusalem, [Ps 125:2](#).

*Some of my servants set I at the gates*, out of a diffidence in those to whom the keeping of the gates was committed.

[Ne 13:20-21](#)

*I will lay hands on you*; I will punish you, and seize your goods. For this was a temptation to covetous or needy Jews, that lived in or near the city, to steal opportunities of buying their commodities, which then they might do with more advantage.

[Ne 13:22](#)

*That they should cleanse themselves*; partly because the work they were now set upon, though common in its nature, yet was holy in design of it, and had respect unto the sabbath; and partly because the day in which they were to do this was the sabbath day, for the observation whereof they were obliged to prepare and purify themselves.

*Keep the gates*; either, 1. The gates of the temple. But a particular command was superfluous in that case, because it was their constant work and charge to do this, both sabbath days and every day. Or rather, 2. The gates of the city; for of them he spake last, [Ne 13:19](#); and not daring to trust the common porters of these gates, not being able always to employ his men in

that work, he committeth the charge of them for the present season, and upon the sabbath days, to the Levites, to whom the care of sanctifying the sabbath did properly belong.

*According to the greatness of thy mercy;* whereby he intimates, that though he mentioned his good works as things wherewith God was well pleased, and which he had promised to reward, yet he neither did nor durst trust to their merit or his own worthiness; but when he had done all, he judged himself an unprofitable servant, and one that needed God's infinite mercy and indulgence to pardon all his sins, and particularly those infirmities and corruptions which adhered to his good deeds.

#### [Ne 13:23-24](#)

Which their mothers instilled into them, together with their principles and manners.

#### [Ne 13:25](#)

*Cursed them,* i.e. caused them to be excommunicated and cast out of the society and privileges of God's people. This and the following punishments were justly inflicted upon them, because this transgression was contrary both to a very plain and express law of God, and also to their own late solemn covenants and promises, of which see [Ezr 10:1-44](#); [Ne 10:30](#).

*Smote certain of them,* i.e. I caused to be beaten with stripes, according to the law, [De 25:2](#), those whose faults were most aggravated by their quality or other circumstances; to whom he added this punishment over and besides the former.

*Plucked off their hair, or, shaved them.* The hair was an ornament and ensign of liberty among the eastern nations; and baldness was a disgrace and token of slavery and sorrow. See [Isa 3:24](#); [15:2](#); [Jer 48:37](#); [Eze 29:18](#).

#### [Ne 13:26-27](#)

*Shall we then hearken unto you?* shall we justify our action by permitting or not punishing it? God forbid.

#### [Ne 13:28](#)

*Joiada;* said by Josephus to be that Manasses who by Sanballat's interest procured liberty to build the Samaritan temple in Mount Gerizim; to which those priests who had married strange wives, or been otherwise criminal, betook themselves, and with or after them others of the people in the same or like circumstances.

*I chased him from me,* i.e. from my presence and court, and from the city and temple, and all the privileges of the priesthood, and from the whole congregation and church of Israel, whereof I am a member.

[Ne 13:29](#)

That covenant made between me and his progenitors for themselves and their posterity, whereby I promised to give them *an everlasting priesthood*, [Nu 25:12-13](#), and they covenanted with me that they would faithfully and holily execute that sacred function according to the rules which I gave them, whereby, among other things, they were enjoined to keep themselves pure from all unlawful marriages, and from all other things which might pollute them or the priesthood.

[Ne 13:30-31](#)

*For the wood-offering and the first-fruits*; and particularly I took care for these things, because they had been lately neglected.