

# EXILE AND RETURN Lesson 27

## FIRST DAY

### Read Lesson 26 Notes

## SECOND DAY:

### Read Nehemiah: 11:1-12:26

#### The New Residents of Jerusalem

[11:1] Now the leaders of the people settled in Jerusalem, and the rest of the people cast lots to bring one out of every ten to live in Jerusalem, the holy city, while the remaining nine were to stay in their own towns. [2] The people commended all the men who volunteered to live in Jerusalem.

[3] These are the provincial leaders who settled in Jerusalem (now some Israelites, priests, Levites, temple servants and descendants of Solomon's servants lived in the towns of Judah, each on his own property in the various towns, [4] while other people from both Judah and Benjamin lived in Jerusalem):

From the descendants of Judah:

Athaiah son of Uziah, the son of Zechariah, the son of Amariah, the son of Shephatiah, the son of Mahalalel, a descendant of Perez; [5] and Maaseiah son of Baruch, the son of Col-Hozeh, the son of Hazaiah, the son of Adaiah, the son of Joiarib, the son of Zechariah, a descendant of Shelah. [6] The descendants of Perez who lived in Jerusalem totaled 468 able men.

[7] From the descendants of Benjamin:

Sallu son of Meshullam, the son of Joed, the son of Pedaiiah, the son of Kolaiah, the son of Maaseiah, the son of Ithiel, the son of Jeshaiiah, [8] and his followers, Gabbai and Sallai—928 men. [9] Joel son of Zicri was their chief officer, and Judah son of Hassenuah was over the Second District of the city.

[10] From the priests:

Jedaiah; the son of Joiarib; Jakin; [11] Seraiah son of Hilkiah, the son of Meshullam, the son of Zadok, the son of Meraioth, the son of Ahitub, supervisor in the house of God, [12] and their associates, who carried on work for the temple—822 men; Adaiah son of Jeroham, the son of Pelaliah, the son of Amzi, the son of Zechariah, the son of Pashhur, the son of Malkijah, [13] and his associates, who were heads of families—242 men; Amashsai son of Azarel, the son of Ahzai, the son of Meshillemoth, the son of Immer, [14] and his associates, who were able men—128. Their chief officer was Zabdiel son of Haggadolim.

[15] From the Levites:

Shemaiah son of Hasshub, the son of Azrikam, the son of Hashabiah, the son of Bunni; [16] Shabbethai and Jozabad, two of the heads of the Levites, who had charge of the outside work of the house of God; [17] Mattaniah son of Mica, the son of Zabdi, the son of Asaph, the director who led in thanksgiving and prayer; Bakkukiah, second among his associates; and Abda son of Shammua, the son of Galal, the son of Jeduthun. [18] The Levites in the holy city totaled 284.

[19] The gatekeepers:

Akkub, Talmon and their associates, who kept watch at the gates—172 men.

[20] The rest of the Israelites, with the priests and Levites, were in all the towns of Judah, each on his ancestral property.

[21] The temple servants lived on the hill of Ophel, and Ziha and Gishpa were in charge of them.

[22] The chief officer of the Levites in Jerusalem was Uzzi son of Bani, the son of Hashabiah, the son of Mattaniah, the son of Mica. Uzzi was one of Asaph's descendants, who were the singers responsible for the service of the house of God. [23] The singers were under the king's orders, which regulated their daily activity.

[24] Pethahiah son of Meshezabel, one of the descendants of Zerah son of Judah, was the king's agent in all affairs relating to the people.

[25] As for the villages with their fields, some of the people of Judah lived in Kiriath Arba and its

## EXILE AND RETURN Lesson 27

surrounding settlements, in Dibon and its settlements, in Jekabzeel and its villages, [26] in Jeshua, in Moladah, in Beth Pelet, [27] in Hazar Shual, in Beersheba and its settlements, [28] in Ziklag, in Meconah and its settlements, [29] in En Rimmon, in Zorah, in Jarmuth, [30] Zanoah, Adullam and their villages, in Lachish and its fields, and in Azekah and its settlements. So they were living all the way from Beersheba to the Valley of Hinnom.

[31] The descendants of the Benjamites from Geba lived in Micmash, Aija, Bethel and its settlements, [32] in Anathoth, Nob and Ananiah, [33] in Hazor, Ramah and Gittaim, [34] in Hadid, Zeboim and Neballat, [35] in Lod and Ono, and in the Valley of the Craftsmen.

[36] Some of the divisions of the Levites of Judah settled in Benjamin.

### Nehemiah 12

#### **Priests and Levites**

[12:1] These were the priests and Levites who returned with Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel and with Jeshua:

Seraiah, Jeremiah, Ezra,  
[2] Amariah, Malluch, Hattush,  
[3] Shecaniah, Rehum, Meremoth,  
[4] Iddo, Ginnethon, Abijah,  
[5] Mijamin, Moadiah, Bilgah,  
[6] Shemaiah, Joiarib, Jedaiah,  
[7] Sallu, Amok, Hilkiyah and Jedaiah.

These were the leaders of the priests and their associates in the days of Jeshua.

[8] The Levites were Jeshua, Binnui, Kadmiel, Sherebiah, Judah, and also Mattaniah, who, together with his associates, was in charge of the songs of thanksgiving. [9] Bakbukiah and Unni, their associates, stood opposite them in the services.

[10] Jeshua was the father of Joiakim, Joiakim the father of Eliashib, Eliashib the father of Joiada, [11] Joiada the father of Jonathan, and Jonathan the father of Jaddua.

[12] In the days of Joiakim, these were the heads of the priestly families:

of Seraiah's family, Meraiah;  
of Jeremiah's, Hananiah;  
[13] of Ezra's, Meshullam;  
of Amariah's, Jehohanan;  
[14] of Malluch's, Jonathan;  
of Shecaniah's, Joseph;  
[15] of Harim's, Adna;  
of Meremoth's, Helkai;  
[16] of Iddo's, Zechariah;  
of Ginnethon's, Meshullam;  
[17] of Abijah's, Zicri;  
of Miniamin's and of Moadiah's, Piltai;  
[18] of Bilgah's, Shammua;  
of Shemaiah's, Jehonathan;  
[19] of Joiarib's, Mattenai;  
of Jedaiah's, Uzzi;  
[20] of Sallu's, Kallai;  
of Amok's, Eber;  
[21] of Hilkiyah's, Hashabiah;  
of Jedaiah's, Nethanel.

[22] The family heads of the Levites in the days of Eliashib, Joiada, Johanan and Jaddua, as well as those of the priests, were recorded in the reign of Darius the Persian. [23] The family heads among the descendants of Levi up to the time of Johanan son of Eliashib were recorded in the book of the annals. [24] And the leaders of the Levites were Hashabiah, Sherebiah, Jeshua son of Kadmiel, and their associates, who stood opposite them to give praise and thanksgiving, one section responding to the other, as prescribed by David the man of God.

[25] Mattaniah, Bakbukiah, Obadiah, Meshullam, Talmon and Akkub were gatekeepers who guarded the storerooms at the gates. [26] They served in the days of Joiakim son of Jeshua, the son of Jozadak, and in the days of Nehemiah the governor and of Ezra the priest and scribe.

### **Question 3a**

**Numbers 26:55;** [55] Be sure that the land is distributed by lot. What each group inherits will be according to the names for its ancestral tribe.

**1 Samuel 10:20-21;** [20] When Samuel brought all the tribes of Israel near, the tribe of Benjamin was chosen. [21] Then he brought forward the tribe of Benjamin, clan by clan, and Matri's clan was chosen. Finally Saul son of Kish was chosen. But when they looked for him, he was not to be found.

## EXILE AND RETURN Lesson 27

### Question 3b

**Galatians 4:26-28;** [26] But the Jerusalem that is above is free, and she is our mother. [27] For it is written:

“Be glad, O barren woman,  
who bears no children;  
break forth and cry aloud,  
you who have no labor pains;  
because more are the children of the desolate woman  
than of her who has a husband.”

[28] Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise.

**Hebrews 12:22-24;** [22] But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, [23] to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the judge of all men, to the spirits of righteous men made perfect, [24] to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

### **Revelation 3:12, 21:2, 10;**

[12] Him who overcomes I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. Never again will he leave it. I will write on him the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from my God; and I will also write on him my new name.

[2] I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.

[10] And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God.

### THIRD Day:

### **Read Nehemiah 12:27-47**

#### **Dedication of the Wall of Jerusalem**

[27] At the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem, the Levites were sought out from where they lived and were brought to Jerusalem to celebrate joyfully the dedication with songs of thanksgiving and with the music of cymbals, harps and lyres. [28] The singers also were brought together from the region around Jerusalem—from the villages of the Netophathites, [29] from Beth Gilgal, and from the area of Geba and Azmaveth, for the singers had built villages for themselves around Jerusalem. [30] When the priests and Levites had purified themselves ceremonially, they purified the people, the gates and the wall.

[31] I had the leaders of Judah go up on top of the wall. I also assigned two large choirs to give thanks. One was to proceed on top of the wall to the right, toward the Dung Gate. [32] Hoshaiah and half the leaders of Judah followed them, [33] along with Azariah, Ezra, Meshullam, [34] Judah, Benjamin, Shemaiah, Jeremiah, [35] as well as some priests with trumpets, and also Zechariah son of Jonathan, the son of Shemaiah, the son of Mattaniah, the son of Micaiah, the son of Zaccur, the son of Asaph, [36] and his associates—Shemaiah, Azarel, Milalai, Gilalai, Maai, Nethanel, Judah and Hanani—with musical instruments [prescribed by] David the man of God. Ezra the scribe led the procession. [37] At the Fountain Gate they continued directly up the steps of the City of David on the ascent to the wall and passed above the house of David to the Water Gate on the east.

[38] The second choir proceeded in the opposite direction. I followed them on top of the wall, together with half the people—past the Tower of the Ovens to the Broad Wall, [39] over the Gate of Ephraim, the Jeshanah Gate, the Fish Gate, the Tower of Hananel and the Tower of the Hundred, as far as the Sheep Gate. At the Gate of the Guard they stopped.

[40] The two choirs that gave thanks then took their places in the house of God; so did I, together with half the officials, [41] as well as the priests—Eliakim, Maaseiah, Miniamin, Micaiah, Elioenai, Zechariah and Hananiah with their trumpets— [42] and also Maaseiah, Shemaiah, Eleazar, Uzzi,

## EXILE AND RETURN Lesson 27

Jehohanan, Malkijah, Elam and Ezer. The choirs sang under the direction of Jezrahiah. [43] And on that day they offered great sacrifices, rejoicing because God had given them great joy. The women and children also rejoiced. The sound of rejoicing in Jerusalem could be heard far away.

[44] At that time men were appointed to be in charge of the storerooms for the contributions, firstfruits and tithes. From the fields around the towns they were to bring into the storerooms the portions required by the Law for the priests and the Levites, for Judah was pleased with the ministering priests and Levites.

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

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

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

### Question 7

**Psalm 90:16-17;** [16] Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children.

[17] And let the beauty of the LORD our God be upon us: and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it.

**Ephesians 2:8-10;** [8] For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God:

[9] Not of works, lest any man should boast.

[10] For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

## **FOURTH DAY**

### **Read Nehemiah 13:1-14**

#### **Nehemiah's Final Reforms**

[13:1] On that day the Book of Moses was read aloud in the hearing of the people and there it was found written that no Ammonite or Moabite should ever be admitted into the assembly of God, [2] because they had not met the Israelites with food and water but had hired Balaam to call a curse down on them. (Our God, however, turned the curse into a blessing.) [3] When the people heard this law, they excluded from Israel all who were of foreign descent.

[4] Before this, Eliashib the priest had been put in charge of the storerooms of the house of our God. He was closely associated with Tobiah, [5] and he had provided him with a large room formerly used to store the grain offerings and incense and temple articles, and also the tithes of grain, new wine and oil prescribed for the Levites, singers and gatekeepers, as well as the contributions for the priests.

[6] But while all this was going on, I was not in Jerusalem, for in the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes king of Babylon I had returned to the king. Some time later I asked his permission [7] and came back to Jerusalem. Here I learned about the evil thing Eliashib had done in providing Tobiah a room in the courts of the house of God. [8] I was greatly displeased and threw all Tobiah's household goods out of the room. [9] I gave orders to purify the rooms, and then I put back into them the equipment of the house of God, with the grain offerings and the incense.

[10] I also learned that the portions assigned to the Levites had not been given to them, and that all the Levites and singers responsible for the service had gone back to their own fields. [11] So I rebuked the officials and asked them, "Why is the house of God neglected?" Then I called them together and stationed them at their posts.

[12] All Judah brought the tithes of grain, new wine and oil into the storerooms. [13] I put Shelemiah the priest, Zadok the scribe, and a Levite named Pedaiah in charge of the storerooms and made Hanan son of

## EXILE AND RETURN Lesson 27

Zaccur, the son of Mattaniah, their assistant, because these men were considered trustworthy. They were made responsible for distributing the supplies to their brothers.

[14] Remember me for this, O my God, and do not blot out what I have so faithfully done for the house of my God and its services.

### Question 10

**Genesis 4:6-7;** [6] And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen?

[7] If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee *shall be* his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.

**Luke 22:31;** [31] And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired *to have* you, that he may sift *you* as wheat:

**Ephesians 2:1-3;** [2:1] And you *hath he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins;

[2] Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

[3] Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

**2 Timothy 2:25-26;** [25] In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;

[26] And *that* they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.

## **FIFTH DAY**

### **Read Nehemiah 13:15-31**

[15] In those days I saw men of Judah treading winepresses on the Sabbath and bringing in grain and loading it on donkeys, together with wine, grapes, figs and all other kinds of loads. And they were bringing all this into Jerusalem on the Sabbath. Therefore I warned them against selling food on that day. [16] Men from Tyre who lived in Jerusalem were bringing in fish and all kinds of merchandise and selling them in Jerusalem on the Sabbath to the people of Judah. [17] I rebuked the nobles of Judah and said to them, “What is this wicked thing you are doing—desecrating the Sabbath day? [18] Didn’t your forefathers do the same things, so that our God brought all this calamity upon us and upon this city? Now you are stirring up more wrath against Israel by desecrating the Sabbath.”

[19] When evening shadows fell on the gates of Jerusalem before the Sabbath, I ordered the doors to be shut and not opened until the Sabbath was over. I stationed some of my own men at the gates so that no load could be brought in on the Sabbath day. [20] Once or twice the merchants and sellers of all kinds of goods spent the night outside Jerusalem. [21] But I warned them and said, “Why do you spend the night by the wall? If you do this again, I will lay hands on you.” From that time on they no longer came on the Sabbath. [22] Then I commanded the Levites to purify themselves and go and guard the gates in order to keep the Sabbath day holy.

Remember me for this also, O my God, and show mercy to me according to your great love.

[23] Moreover, in those days I saw men of Judah who had married women from Ashdod, Ammon and Moab. [24] Half of their children spoke the language of Ashdod or the language of one of the other peoples, and did not know how to speak the language of Judah. [25] I rebuked them and called curses down on them. I beat some of the men and pulled out their hair. I made them take an oath in God’s name and said: “You are not to give your daughters in marriage to their sons, nor are you to take their daughters in marriage for your sons or for yourselves. [26] Was it not because of marriages like these that Solomon king of Israel sinned? Among the many nations there was no king like him. He was loved by his God, and

## EXILE AND RETURN Lesson 27

God made him king over all Israel, but even he was led into sin by foreign women. [27] Must we hear now that you too are doing all this terrible wickedness and are being unfaithful to our God by marrying foreign women?"

[28] One of the sons of Joiada son of Eliashib the high priest was son-in-law to Sanballat the Horonite. And I drove him away from me.

[29] Remember them, O my God, because they defiled the priestly office and the covenant of the priesthood and of the Levites.

[30] So I purified the priests and the Levites of everything foreign, and assigned them duties, each to his own task. [31] I also made provision for contributions of wood at designated times, and for the firstfruits.

Remember me with favor, O my God.

### Question 12

**Exodus 20:8-11;** [8] Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.

[9] Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work:

[10] But the seventh day *is* the sabbath of the LORD thy God: *in it* thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that *is* within thy gates:

[11] For *in* six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them *is*, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

**Nehemiah 10:31;** [31] And *if* the people of the land bring ware or any victuals on the sabbath day to sell, *that* we would not buy it of them on the sabbath, or on the holy day: and *that* we would leave the seventh year, and the exaction of every debt.

### Question 13

**John 2:13-17;** [13] And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem,

[14] And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting:

[15] And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables;

[16] And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise.

[17] And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.

## **SIXTH DAY:**

### **Review Nehemiah 11-13**

#### **Nehemiah 11**

##### **The New Residents of Jerusalem**

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## EXILE AND RETURN Lesson 27

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[25] As for the villages with their fields, some of the people of Judah lived in Kiriath Arba and its surrounding settlements, in Dibon and its settlements, in Jekabzeel and its villages, [26] in Jeshua, in Moladah, in Beth Pelet, [27] in Hazar Shual, in Beersheba and its settlements, [28] in Ziklag, in Meconah and its settlements, [29] in En Rimmon, in Zorah, in Jarmuth, [30] Zanoah, Adullam and their villages, in Lachish and its fields, and in Azekah and its settlements. So they were living all the way from Beersheba to the Valley of Hinnom.

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## EXILE AND RETURN Lesson 27

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[10] Jeshua was the father of Joiakim, Joiakim the father of Eliashib, Eliashib the father of Joiada, [11] Joiada the father of Jonathan, and Jonathan the father of Jaddua.

[12] In the days of Joiakim, these were the heads of the priestly families:

of Seraiah's family, Meraiah;  
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[25] Mattaniah, Bakbukiah, Obadiah, Meshullam, Talmon and Akkub were gatekeepers who guarded the storerooms at the gates. [26] They served in the days of Joiakim son of Jeshua, the son of Jozadak, and in the days of Nehemiah the governor and of Ezra the priest and scribe.

### Dedication of the Wall of Jerusalem

[27] At the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem, the Levites were sought out from where they lived and were brought to Jerusalem to celebrate joyfully the dedication with songs of thanksgiving and with the music of cymbals, harps and lyres. [28] The singers also were brought together from the region around Jerusalem—from the villages of the Netophathites, [29] from Beth Gilgal, and from the area of Geba and Azmaveth, for the singers had built villages for themselves around Jerusalem. [30] When the priests and Levites had purified themselves ceremonially, they purified the people, the gates and the wall.

[31] I had the leaders of Judah go up on top of the wall. I also assigned two large choirs to give thanks. One was to proceed on top of the wall to the right, toward the Dung Gate. [32] Hoshaiah and half the leaders of Judah followed them, [33] along with Azariah, Ezra, Meshullam, [34] Judah, Benjamin, Shemaiah, Jeremiah, [35] as well as some priests with trumpets, and also Zechariah son of Jonathan, the son of Shemaiah, the son of Mattaniah, the son of Micaiah, the son of Zaccur, the son of Asaph, [36] and his associates—Shemaiah, Azarel, Milalai, Gilalai, Maai, Nethanel, Judah and Hanani—with musical instruments [prescribed by] David the man of God. Ezra the scribe led the procession. [37] At the Fountain Gate they continued directly up the steps of the City of David on the ascent to the wall and passed above the house of David to the Water Gate on the east.

[38] The second choir proceeded in the opposite direction. I followed them on top of the wall, together with half the people—past the Tower of the Ovens to the Broad Wall, [39] over the Gate of Ephraim, the Jeshanah Gate, the Fish Gate, the Tower of Hananel and the Tower of the Hundred, as far as the Sheep Gate. At the Gate of the Guard they stopped.



## EXILE AND RETURN Lesson 27

[40] The two choirs that gave thanks then took their places in the house of God; so did I, together with half the officials, [41] as well as the priests—Eliakim, Maaseiah, Miniamin, Micaiah, Elioenai, Zechariah and Hananiah with their trumpets— [42] and also Maaseiah, Shemaiah, Eleazar, Uzzi, Jehohanan, Malkijah, Elam and Ezer. The choirs sang under the direction of Jezrahiah. [43] And on that day they offered great sacrifices, rejoicing because God had given them great joy. The women and children also rejoiced. The sound of rejoicing in Jerusalem could be heard far away.

[44] At that time men were appointed to be in charge of the storerooms for the contributions, firstfruits and tithes. From the fields around the towns they were to bring into the storerooms the portions required by the Law for the priests and the Levites, for Judah was pleased with the ministering priests and Levites.

### Nehemiah 13

#### **Nehemiah's Final Reforms**

[13:1] On that day the Book of Moses was read aloud in the hearing of the people and there it was found written that no Ammonite or Moabite should ever be admitted into the assembly of God, [2] because they had not met the Israelites with food and water but had hired Balaam to call a curse down on them. (Our God, however, turned the curse into a blessing.) [3] When the people heard this law, they excluded from Israel all who were of foreign descent.

[4] Before this, Eliashib the priest had been put in charge of the storerooms of the house of our God. He was closely associated with Tobiah, [5] and he had provided him with a large room formerly used to store the grain offerings and incense and temple articles, and also the tithes of grain, new wine and oil prescribed for the Levites, singers and gatekeepers, as well as the contributions for the priests.

[6] But while all this was going on, I was not in Jerusalem, for in the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes king of Babylon I had returned to the king. Some time later I asked his permission [7] and came back to Jerusalem. Here I learned about the evil thing Eliashib had done in providing Tobiah a room in the courts of the house of God. [8] I was greatly displeased and threw all Tobiah's household goods out of the room. [9] I gave orders to purify the rooms, and then I put back into them the equipment of the

house of God, with the grain offerings and the incense.

[10] I also learned that the portions assigned to the Levites had not been given to them, and that all the Levites and singers responsible for the service had gone back to their own fields. [11] So I rebuked the officials and asked them, "Why is the house of God neglected?" Then I called them together and stationed them at their posts.

[12] All Judah brought the tithes of grain, new wine and oil into the storerooms. [13] I put Shelemiah the priest, Zadok the scribe, and a Levite named Pedaiah in charge of the storerooms and made Hanan son of Zaccur, the son of Mattaniah, their assistant, because these men were considered trustworthy. They were made responsible for distributing the supplies to their brothers.

[14] Remember me for this, O my God, and do not blot out what I have so faithfully done for the house of my God and its services.

[15] In those days I saw men in Judah treading winepresses on the Sabbath and bringing in grain and loading it on donkeys, together with wine, grapes, figs and all other kinds of loads. And they were bringing all this into Jerusalem on the Sabbath. Therefore I warned them against selling food on that day. [16] Men from Tyre who lived in Jerusalem were bringing in fish and all kinds of merchandise and selling them in Jerusalem on the Sabbath to the people of Judah. [17] I rebuked the nobles of Judah and said to them, "What is this wicked thing you are doing—desecrating the Sabbath day? [18] Didn't your forefathers do the same things, so that our God brought all this calamity upon us and upon this city? Now you are stirring up more wrath against Israel by desecrating the Sabbath."

[19] When evening shadows fell on the gates of Jerusalem before the Sabbath, I ordered the doors to be shut and not opened until the Sabbath was over. I stationed some of my own men at the gates so that no load could be brought in on the Sabbath day. [20] Once or twice the merchants and sellers of all kinds of goods spent the night outside Jerusalem. [21] But I warned them and said, "Why do you spend the night by the wall? If you do this again, I will lay hands on you." From that time on they no longer came on the Sabbath. [22] Then I commanded the Levites to

## EXILE AND RETURN Lesson 27

purify themselves and go and guard the gates in order to keep the Sabbath day holy.

Remember me for this also, O my God, and show mercy to me according to your great love.

[23] Moreover, in those days I saw men of Judah who had married women from Ashdod, Ammon and Moab. [24] Half of their children spoke the language of Ashdod or the language of one of the other peoples, and did not know how to speak the language of Judah. [25] I rebuked them and called curses down on them. I beat some of the men and pulled out their hair. I made them take an oath in God's name and said: "You are not to give your daughters in marriage to their sons, nor are you to take their daughters in marriage for your sons or for yourselves. [26] Was it not because of marriages like these that Solomon king of Israel sinned? Among the many nations there was no king like him. He was loved by his God, and God made him king over all Israel, but even he was led into sin by foreign women. [27] Must we hear now that you too are doing all this terrible wickedness and are being unfaithful to our God by marrying foreign women?"

[28] One of the sons of Joiada son of Eliashib the high priest was son-in-law to Sanballat the Horonite. And I drove him away from me.

[29] Remember them, O my God, because they defiled the priestly office and the covenant of the priesthood and of the Levites.

[30] So I purified the priests and the Levites of everything foreign, and assigned them duties, each to his own task. [31] I also made provision for contributions of wood at designated times, and for the firstfruits.

Remember me with favor, O my God.

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