

The walls of Jerusalem have been built in an astonishing short time (Nehemiah 7:1), the doors hung in the gates of the city (Nehemiah 7:3), and the walls of the city are soon to be dedicated (Nehemiah 12:27), **but the question is who is going to live in the city.** We have been told that ‘the city was large and great: but the **people were few therein**, and the houses *were* not builded’ (Nehemiah 7:4). We read the first two verses. **Nehemiah 11:1-2** *And the rulers of the people lived at Jerusalem. And the rest of the people cast lots, to bring one of every ten to live in Jerusalem, the holy city, and nine parts in other cities. [2] And the people blessed all the men who willingly offered themselves to live at Jerusalem.*

The Rulers of the people lived at Jerusalem. *but few of the people dwelt there*; to this is joined the next sentence: ‘*And the rest of the people cast lots.*’ For the city to be populated. The walls of Jerusalem were repaired and rebuilt now it was necessary for it to be fully inhabited by God’s people so that the city could be properly defended. That the temple duties could be properly administered.

Jerusalem is now called here *the holy city* (Neh 11:1), it is to be a a city cleansed of all defilement, it was now seen as their first priority in order to fulfil the promises of the prophets. There was an urgency- **AWAKE AWAKE.** *Isaiah 52:1 Awake! Awake! Put on your strength, Zion; put on your beautiful robes, O Jerusalem, the holy city. For never again shall come to you uncircumcised and unclean ones.*

Jerusalem a Holy City because the temple was there, and that was the place God had chosen to put his name. **Because of this, you would think, the holy seed would all have chosen, and longed to dwell there;** but, on the contrary, it seems many didn’t want to live there. It seems they gave **reasons why they would prefer to live outside the city.**

Let us look at some of the reasons. Why the Jews hesitated to come back to the New Jerusalem.

1. Because a greater strictness, or standard of behaviour and Loyalty. **Holiness was expected of the inhabitants of Jerusalem.** Therefore, many they were not willing to commit and come up.

we could say that in this chapter we have a wonderful picture of how God would work in later times in establishing a people for Himself, for He has appointed another ‘holy city’, a heavenly city, a new Jerusalem. That city too started off unpopulated. But God has populated it by **choosing out** a remnant for Himself. It includes priests (intercessors), Levites (teachers), Singers, Gate-keepers who watch for those who enter, (humble servants), and ordinary men

and women to defend the city, but all of them are chosen by God. **Ephesians 1:4** *according as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,*

An application for us today -Just as there were those who didn't care for being holy themselves, who saw it as a burden, and shy away from dwelling in a holy city. In the same way this mindset affects many even today they do not want to dwell in the '*New Jerusalem*' or be committed to the House of God. They see **consecration as a heavy burden**. Which indicates they have **not seen and understood the Love of Jesus Christ**. For if they had understood and grasped how much Jesus had done for them, they would give themselves in sacrificial service from a grateful heart. We LOVE Him because He first loved us. Love makes us fervent and zealous for obedience and yieldedness, and willingness to do all we can. LOVE gives us the desire to want to be near to Him. **But those who don't grasp the richness, and depth of salvation are seldom interested in dwelling as citizens of the 'new Jerusalem'** or living to the standard of holiness.

They are more interested in enjoying life upon this earth, more interested in their old ways. I read a line from **Thomas Boston** '*They are content with the vanity of this world, content with the things men value and esteem.*' another way of saying it is they have set their hearts consumed with temporal things and neglect Spiritual things. It's not any permanent help to run after other things. One can hold fast to the world as tight as possible but there will come a day when they have to let go. It is foolishness to make other things our most important goal. **No God must be first, nothing else in His place**. We make nothing more important than Him. *Their sorrows shall be multiplied who run after another god. Psalm 16:4. Rather Because of gratitude in our hearts We say, Lord Your face will I seek, Your face, O Jehovah, I will seek Sng 1:4 Draw me, we will run after You. The King has brought me into his chambers; we will be glad and rejoice in You, we will remember Your love more than wine; the upright love You.*

2. Because Jerusalem, of all places, was most hated by the heathen, their **neighbours showed hostility and anger** during the building of the wall we see the unending attempts of the enemy to attack them and stop them, we see they were on constant alert, in danger and had to keep weapon in hand at all times. These who were hesitant to come back didn't want the attacks the persecution and trouble, they didn't want the fight to keep many enemies out of the Holy City.

All that some could see was that they might get attacked, they did not even think or consider God's promises, their focus was only upon the seen, the natural. They couldn't perceive that God was watching over Jerusalem with special care, to protect it and make it a peaceful and quiet home.

Jerusalem, a quiet home, A tabernacle that will not be taken down; Not one of its stakes will ever be removed, Nor will any of its cords be broken. Isa 33:20;

They couldn't see the value that *There is a river whose streams shall make glad the city of God, The holy place of the tabernacle of the Most High. Psalm 46:4, -*

They couldn't understand and see *'God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved; God shall help her, just at the break of dawn.'* Psa 46:5.

In a way they were blinded like Elisha's servant *2 Kings 6:15 And when the servant of the man of God arose early and went out, there was an army, surrounding the city with horses and chariots. And his servant said to him, "Alas, my master! What shall we do?"*

Then Elisha prayed *2 Kings 6:17 And Elisha prayed, and said, "LORD, I pray, open his eyes that he may see." Then the LORD opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw. And behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.*

The ones that were courageous and bold must have had their eyes opened. In the same way today, It's the same with us - *God in His grace opens our eyes to see and behold the beauty and what a treasure salvation is. Without our eyes being opened we shy away we see no reason to come to Him. What is such an assurance to consider is that Before even the foundation of the world. Christ chose us. those whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain, from the foundation of the world.* He chose to open our eyes, to soften our hearts, to redeem us and make us His own dear Children.

3. Because it was **more for their worldly advantage** to dwell in the country where they could farm and grow produce. Jerusalem was no trading city, and therefore there was no money to be got there by merchandise, as there was in the country by corn and cattle.

An application for us. *All seek their own, not the things that are Jesus Christ's, Php 2:21.* It is a general and just complaint that most people prefer their own wealth, credit, pleasure, ease, and safety, before the glory of God and the public good. **People were slow to dwell at Jerusalem.** We saw how they had covenanted together and whole heartedly with sincerity signed and agreed to the covenant. They had expressed their willingness to separate from the pagan people round about **and to put the Lord first in the covenant they had signed,** and here was the first practical test of their sincerity.

The City of Jerusalem was replenished even with all the problems, and hesitation from the people. But how did it happen.

1. **The rulers dwelt there**, Neh 11:1. Nehemiah was the first to sign and commit to the covenant showing a real affection to the house of God, zeal for the public good, and of faith, and holy courage, and self-denial, to dwell there at this time, the rulers would be examples to all the others. **Their living there would draw and encourage others to dwell there as well.** The mighty men are magnetic. They will attract many others by their example and their Zeal will encourage many to do likewise.
2. There were some that **willingly offered themselves** to dwell at Jerusalem, gladly foregoing their own secular interest for the sake of the public welfare, Nehemiah 11:2 And the people blessed all the men who willingly offered themselves to dwell at Jerusalem.

It is written of them, to their honour, that when others were afraid of difficulty, loss, and danger, these volunteers sought *the good of Jerusalem, because of the house of the Lord their God. Those will prosper that thus love Zion, Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: "May they prosper who love you. Psa 122:6.*

It is said, **the people blessed them.** They praised them; they prayed for them; they praised God for them. Many that do not have courage to go themselves for the public good, will still give a good word to those that do. **God and man will bless those** that are public blessings, which should encourage us to be zealous in doing good.

3. **Even then there was still room**, *the city was not populated, but needed to be, What was the use of having walls and gates and no people to protect the city, No people to perform the temple duties. So, by the casting of Lots. (a system which, under priestly direction, was believed to reveal God's will).* All the people recognized that those selected were selected by the Lord. This would prevent any strife. Also this selection would serve as a great encouragement to those selected, great satisfaction and assurance.

All those **who came to Jerusalem** were counted worthy of double honour - the Holy Ghost caused their names to be thus honourably recorded. Oh! it is most valuable indeed to be recorded among the servants of the Lord.

Just as they stepped forward, even now, even today it requires much grace to step forward in the cause of Jesus, and declare **ourselves to be volunteers** in his cause. **It was seen as special dedication to God.** It was no soft, or easy

option. It meant an upheaval in their lives and a new beginning. **But they had a desire to be the founders of the new Jerusalem, with all its glowing promise.**

In the next verses - we are now given a roll-call of those involved. Their names would pass down through the generations. All kinds of people - Often we think only Preachers are needed for Gods work. Rather there is a role for all people. The list includes **laymen** (3–9), **priests** (10–14), **Levites** (15–18), and **gatekeepers** (19). **Rulers or leaders** of the House of God. v11 And Shabbethai and Jozabad, of the chief of the Levites, *were over* **the outward business of the house of God.** v16 The building and temple furniture. Then there were those who began the thanksgiving in Prayer. v17. Then the gatekeepers v19.

They all had their specific task. We read of those who take care of the **the outward concerns of the church,** v16 the serving of its tables, are as necessary in their place as those who take care of *its inward concerns*, who give themselves to the word and prayer.

In the same way we too will be called 'blessed' if our names are written down in **the Lamb's Book of Life,** as potential dwellers in the *New Jerusalem*, for that city really will be holy.

We note in **Neh 11:25.** In the villages – all over the countryside in the rural districts. We read on v30 the children of Benjamin with the city of Gerba 10 Km from Jerusalem, a city on the top of a hill. as their capital. Those in the city of Mikmash (meaning Hidden). **Wherever the people were spread out. All kinds of people were required in the Holy City.** Its interesting to read the names of the cities listed from v 32- v35 and see what they mean. Ill mention just a few. **Nob** means *High place*.v32. **Hazor** = "castle"v33 **Neballat** = "hidden folly" v35 those from the valley of Lod and ono – which has the meaning '*vigorous*' it was the valley of craftsman. We could add vigorous craftsman, strong craftsman, energetic craftsman. **People selected from all these places.**

It is a type or shadow – a picture how God collects to Himself a church from among many peoples, **by the word of the gospel,** that the heavenly Jerusalem will be filled.

He shall do it- yet we are instructed *Mark 16:15 And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.* Preach the gospel - To the High place- to the low place. To the villages and go the cities, to the little houses to the great castles. To those who are consumed by hidden folly.

The Gospel must be proclaimed. It's the only instrument that can make known the mystery that was hidden. We preach the Gospel that people may know The redeemer. The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation. When people understand – when the mystery is revealed they stand strong they are not easily moved. They are children of God dwelling and members of the Holy City.

Our work Like Nehemiah is to see the new Jerusalem populated with many. People from every tribe and nation and tongue. People from every area of life.

How we ask, ...that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel. Ephesians 6:19

How we ask , ... Luke 14:23 Then the master said to the servant, 'Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, **that my house may be filled.**