

## Psalm 119C

8. That I may live and keep Your word,  
Deal with Your servant graciously.  
Open my eyes to know Your law,  
That all its wonders I may see.

9. I am a stranger here on earth;  
Hide Your commandments not, I pray!  
Your ordinances I desire,  
And ache with yearning every day.

10. The proud, accursed, You have rebuked,  
From Your commandments they have strayed.  
Remove contempt and scorn from me;  
Your testimonies I've obeyed.

11. Princes against me have conspired;  
Your servant ponders Your decrees.  
Your testimonies are my joy,  
They are the ones who counsel me.

# Daily Worship Booklet

3<sup>rd</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> June 2024



God tells us that Ezra read from the book of the Law,  
day after day and the people of God were filled with joy!

## Catechism

*Mrs. M. Braden (ages 4-5):*

Q. 33. *What befell our first parents when they had sinned?*

A. Instead of being holy and happy, they became sinful and miserable.

*Mrs. H. Quigley (ages 6-7) & Mrs. V. van der Meer (age 8):*

Q. 144. *What will become of the righteous?*

A. They shall be taken to heaven.

Q. 145. *What is heaven?*

A. A glorious and happy place, where the righteous shall be forever with the LORD.

*Miss. L. Zuiderveen (ages 9-10):*

Q. 33. *What is justification?*

A. Justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein he pardoneth all our sins, and accepteth us as righteous in His sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith alone.

*Mr. C. van der Meer (ages 11-13)*

Q. 96. *What is the Lord's Supper?*

A. The Lord's Supper is a sacrament, wherein, by giving and receiving bread and wine, according to Christ's appointment, his death is showed forth; and the worthy receivers are, not after a corporal and carnal manner, but by faith, made partakers of his body and blood, with all his benefits, to their spiritual nourishment, and growth in grace.

## Psalm of the Week

Psalm 119C - The words are on page 8.

## Please pray for:

Mon - Andrew & Heather, Caitlin and Catherine Quigley

Tues - Louise Rock

Wed - Brad & Josie, William, Boaz and Abbi-Grace Roy

Thur - Lorna Russell

Frid - Sean Russell

Rev. Dr. Andrew Quigley has written the notes on Nehemiah based on:  
'Doing a great work' by Stan K Evers, 'Be Determined Nehemiah' by Warren W. Wiersbe

***Pray for the Holy Spirit's help as you study God's Word.***

## Friday – Nehemiah 13:1-3 – A foretaste of decline.

The year is 433 BC, and Nehemiah is preparing to leave Jerusalem, having completed twelve years as governor in Judah, and return to Babylon. As he was doing so, did he think to himself, 'Little did I know when I approached King Artaxerxes with the request that I be granted a leave of absence to address the shame that had engulfed the city that I would be here twelve years?'

Now, we come to the last chapter of this book. It's a chapter which deals with what happens in the year/s when Nehemiah is away (it is not easy to determine how long he is away). What transpired when he is in Babylon, as we will see next week, is heartbreaking. It is devastating to read, given all these people have been through and committed to. If it weren't for the last few verses of the chapter, one would be left wishing that the book had ended with chapter 12. It seems they failed to fulfil everything the people promised to do in the covenant. They failed to keep their promise to separate from the people; they opened the door to an enemy, they engaged in marrying those whom they said they wouldn't marry, and they desecrated the sabbath by not only trading but treating it like any other day of the week. As I say, it is hard reading.

*What does this deluge of decline leading to dysfunctionality tell us?*

It tells us that without godly biblical leadership, the people of God are extremely vulnerable. Without courageous men who are prepared to say 'no' when seemingly little fringe issues are questioned and when the people of God want to lead their lives and run the church to suit them and theirs, things can go wrong very quickly.

It tells us that courageous, godly biblical leadership is to be appreciated for the protection it affords from the harm that is always crouching at the door, ready to devour us.

It tells us that we need to be constantly on our guard against the desires of the flesh, the desires of the eyes, and the pride of possessions.

It tells us not to become complacent about our identity in Christ and to perpetually set our minds on things above, not on things of the earth since we have been raised with Christ and are seated in the heavenly realms.

It tells us that doing anything but what God commands in his commandments, statutes, and rules is a road to nowhere – wrong is a road to destruction.

Q1. How long did Nehemiah serve in Jerusalem before returning to Babylon?

Q2. In general, what happened to the people of God while Nehemiah was away?

## Thursday – Nehemiah 12:44-47 – Provision for the priests and Levites.

We have seen the purity required before the celebration for the redemption of the city walls could begin; we have considered the exultant praise that filled the day the people walked along the top of the city walls and created a joyous sound that could be heard far away. Now we come to see the provision Nehemiah will make for the priests, Levites and singers. As we do so, it may seem a bit of a comedown from the soaring exultant heights of verse 43, with its multiple references to rejoicing and joy, to now consider ‘provisions,’ but that’s the reality of all true biblical worship: It must always lead to the practical outworking of godliness.

On the day of this huge celebration, we read that Nehemiah appointed men to oversee and manage the gathering into the storerooms, the contributions, the first fruits and the tithes that the Law required. So, while he is walking north around the top of the wall following the mass choir fully participating in the celebrations, Nehemiah is also walking through in his mind what needs to be done to make sure that the people will fulfil what they’ve said they would in the ‘national’ covenant. This is leadership. While participation in the church’s worship life must be genuine and wholehearted, for the leader, there is no time to stand still and soak up the atmosphere. There must be thought about what lies ahead and the steps that need to be taken to lead the people forward, even when they have committed themselves to do so. Yes, the people might be rejoicing now in verse 44 in how the priest and Levites were ministering, but people are fickle, and God’s people are no different. One day, ‘the priest, the Levite,’ can be a man who can do no wrong; the next, he is a man who has done nothing for my family and me, and I can’t believe I was part of that church.

When the thought was given to the needs of those who serve the bride, whether it was in the days of David and Asaph, in the days of Zerubbabel, or the days of Nehemiah, the church was blessed. When it wasn’t, and there are numerous examples in the Old Testament, the church experienced seasons of struggle and pain. Note, though, that it is the leadership’s responsibility to lead the people to understand the commands of God and the vows they have made. People need to be schooled and then lead into doing what God commands, and ‘the Levites’ must do what they are commanded, along with the blessing that the Lord gives them. It all must work together, and when it does, there is even more rejoicing from God’s blessing.

Q1. What did Nehemiah do in these verses?

Q2. What happens when we do what God commands?

## Monday – Nehemiah 11:25-36 – The rural community

The province of Judah shared boundaries with Samaria in the north and Edom in the south. However, many of the villages named in these verses are beyond Judah’s geographical area. For example, Kiriath-Arba (verse 25), which is another name for Hebron (see Joshua 14:15), was about twenty miles south of Jerusalem, and Beersheba (verse 30) was even further from Jerusalem. Those are villages south of Jerusalem, but the same applies to villages north of the city. For example, the villages mentioned in verses 34 and 35 (including Ono, which you will remember, was where Nehemiah was invited to meet with Sanballat [chapter 6:1-2]), these villages were about thirty miles northwest of Jerusalem. So, we’re considering villages over quite a distance here, which shows that the covenant that had been signed was more of a national than a city covenant.

The other point to note is, and we go back to verse 30 of this chapter, that ‘the priests and Levites were in all the towns of Judah’ meant that the Word of God would be taught in all these villages and communities across the region. What a privilege it is to take up the challenge presented by the Lord Jesus in Matthew 9:38 to pray to the Lord of the harvest to send workers into his harvest. And what a harvest field our nation is, not only in the large urban metropolises but also in the towns and villages dotted across the land from sea to sea. May the Lord give us a burden to take up this prayer, own it personally, and rejoice when he gives us men to train for the task.

## Nehemiah 12:1-26 – Registrars/Lists of priests during different times

The first seven verses catalogue the twenty-two family names of the priests and Levites who had returned from Babylon to Judah with Zerubbabel some ninety years earlier, in 537 BC. The fact that there are not twenty-four leaders’ names as would have been required for temple duties (see 1 Chronicle 24:1-18) is another of those things that could be speculated about, but it shows that not everything is always as nice and neatly sorted as it might be.

Verses 8 and 9 give us the names of the Levitical priests who had returned from exile, whereas verses 10-21 give us the names of those in the next generation. The final list in verses 22-26 is those who were the Levitical family heads in the time of Eliashib, the high priest when Nehemiah was governor (chapter 3:1, 20, 21).

These lists reminded the people that the priesthood had deep roots and wasn’t a recent phenomenon which spoke to the importance of God’s abiding purpose and provision for his people.

Q1. How widespread was the involvement of the priesthood in the nation?

Q2. What does the lists of priests’ names show us?

## Tuesday – Nehemiah 11:27-30 – Joyful dedication of the walls.

### *Purity - verses 27-30*

Yesterday, we saw that every village and town had priests and Levites. Now, these men, along with the singers from the surrounding villages and regions, are asked to come to Jerusalem to celebrate the completion of the city walls. But before the celebration could begin, they had to purify themselves and their fellow Jews from ceremonial uncleanness as well as the gate and the walls. Why? Because they would be seeking the presence of God in their worship and conscious of the holiness of God, they were not going to be either slipshod or casual in doing so. A similar requirement was sought in Ezra 6:20 at the dedication of the temple, and if you want to get a sense of what was involved, read 2 Chronicles 29, where you'll find the account of the temple being purified in Hezekiah's time, about 250 years before this. There, you'll read of the salinity of animals and the sprinkling of blood on utensils, furnishing, and people, symbolizing the shedding of the Saviour's blood that would ultimately be needed to make once for all atonement for sin. Indeed, this should give us some cause for reflection regarding our attitude of heart and mind as we enter freely into the presence of Almighty God through the blood of the Lord Jesus.

### *Praise - verses 27-30*

Nehemiah had done his work; he had prayerfully sought the Lord and researched the city's needs, specifically her walls. He had led the people and faced down opposition from both beyond the walls and within, and the walls and the gates had been restored. The people—well, the vast majority of them—had given themselves wholeheartedly to the task, not just the task of construction but significantly the task of humbly submitting to God and His Word. They had listened and been taught of the Lord their God, confessed and repented their sins, and fasted. They had then entered a covenant with God to separate themselves from the world and its ways by committing not to intermarry, to keep the Sabbath day, and not to neglect the work of the house of God by bringing their tithes to the Levites. Now, with the purification complete, it was time to celebrate. It was to be a day which would see the culmination of Nehemiah's first term as governor of Judah would live long in the memory of God's people. So, the singers are gathered in the city to take a lead role in the events that would unfold. Tomorrow we will see what is done to celebrate the completion of the walls and the restation of the people.

Q1. Why did the priests purify the people? Does that have anything to say about how we prepare to come to worship?

Q2. Who came into the city and why?

## Wednesday – Nehemiah 12:31-43 – What a day!

In verse 31, we read that Nehemiah “brought the leaders of Judah onto the wall and appointed two great choirs that gave thanks.” Along with half the leaders and the people, Ezra followed the first group south through the Dung Gate, from the Fountain Gate to the Water Gate. The other choir went north towards the Tower of Ovens, walking past the Fish Gate, the Towers of Hananel and the Hundred and Sheep Gate to the Gate of the Guard (Inspection Gate of chapter 3:31), where they stopped. Nehemiah and the other half of the people followed this choir as it made its way around the top of the wall.

What an experience this must have been for all these people as they walked on top of this wall; they had invested so much in reconstructing it. And it must have been amazing as the two mass choirs converged with a crescendo of praise on the temple. Thousands of people are participating in this once-in-a-lifetime experience, culminating in the House of God verse 40. Here, a great sacrifice of praise is offered, and there is much rejoicing, all attributed to God, who, according to the words in verse 43, “had made the rejoice with great joy,” including the women and children, and we are told that “the joy of Jerusalem was heard far away.” Look at verse 43 and count the number of times the words rejoice and joy are used. Note who the cause of this transformation is: God. God had turned their mourning into rejoicing, their sadness into wonderful joy, and their songs of grief into exultant praise; such is the power of Almighty God when those called by His name humble themselves and obey his commands. Note that it is all done in accordance with how King David, the man of God, had prescribed, verses 24 and 36. Even on this day of great joy and rejoicing, it is as God has commanded through His servant. And what the result was? The sound was heard far away. I wonder what Sanballat, Tobiah and Geshem the Arab thought if they heard it?

How we must humble ourselves before God and obey His commands that He would lift us up in great rejoicing and praise before Him. That our hearts would be constantly filled with the joy that comes from knowing and obeying our father in heaven, and what a blessing it is that we have been schooled in the truth of how God would have us to worship Him – as he has commanded. That's a schooling we should never be ashamed to own and proclaim. That's schooling; we must always seek to hold, observe, and guard passionately, not to let anyone or anything tell us differently.

Q1. How many choirs were there, and what did they do?

Q2. What privilege do we have in understanding how God is to be worshipped?