| James R. Hughes

>> A Study Guide on the Life of Nehemiah

Nehemiah the Church Builder
Instructor's Guide

Version: 1.0 – 2006-12-30 (updated 2019-09-03; Bible References Index updated 2024-01)

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION **8**

DISCOVERY PROCEEDINGS (NEH 1.1-4) **9**

DELIVERANCE'S PRAYER (NEH 1.5-11) **12**

Praise—Names and Attributes of God (Neh 1.5) **12**

Petitions—Hear My Cry and Prayer! (Neh 1.6a, 11a) **13**

Penitence—Confession of Sin (Neh 1.6b, 7) **14**

Promises—Appealing to the Promises of God (Neh 1.8, 9) **16**

Purpose—Giving God a Reason for the Appeal (Neh 1.10) **17**

Providence—Personal Appeal for Help (Neh 1.11b) **18**

Summary of Nehemiah's Prayer **19**

DIVINE PROVIDENCE (NEH 2.1-9) **20**

DETAILED PREPARATION (NEH 2.11-16) **23**

DETERMINED PEOPLE I (NEH 2.17-18) **24**

DEVIL'S PROMOTERS I (NEH 2.10, 19, 20) **26**

DILIGENT PARTIES (NEH 3.1-32) **27**

DEVIL'S PROMOTERS II (NEH 4.1-23) **30**

Petty Troublemakers (Neh 4.1) **30**

Psychological Threats (Neh 4.2-3, 10-12) **31**

Prayer Time (Neh 4.4-5) **33**

Physical Threats (Neh 4.6-8) **35**

Prepared Teamwork (Neh 4.9, 13-14, 20, 16-23) **37**

Perseverance Triumphs (Neh 4.15, 21-23) **39**

DESTITUTE'S PROTECTOR (NEH 5.1-19) **40**

The Complaint (Neh 5.1-5) **40**

© James R. Hughes, 2006

The Charge (Neh 5.6-7) **44**

The Confrontation (Neh 5.7-11) **45**

The Cure (Neh 5.11) **49**

The Consequences (Neh 5.8c, 12-13) **51**

The Challenge (Neh 5.14-19) **52**

DEVIL'S PROMOTERS III (NEH 6.1-14, 17-19) **54**

Introduction **54**

Intrigue (Neh 6.1-4) **56**

Innuendo (Neh 6.5-9) **59**

Intimidation (Neh 6.10-14) **63**

Insinuation (Neh 6.17-19) **68**

DISPATCHED PROJECT (NEH 6.15, 16) **69**

DELEGATED PROGRAM (NEH 7.1-3) **71**

Introduction **71**

Present Priority (Neh 7.1-3) **72**

Public Piety (Neh 7.1) **73**

Public Polity (Neh 7.2) **75**

Police Protection (Neh 7.2) **77**

Prescribed Program (Neh 7.2-3) **77**

Summary **78**

DELIVERED PEOPLE (NEH 7.4-73A) **79**

Spacious City (Neh 7.4) **79**

Systematic Census (Neh 7.5) **80**

Scribed Catalogue (Neh 7.5-62) **83**

Separated Community (Neh 7.61-65) **89**

Summary Count (Neh 7.66-69) **91**

Special Contribution (Neh 7.70-72) **91**

© James R. Hughes, 2006

Settled Country (Neh 7.73a) **93**

DECLARED PRECEPTS (NEH 7.73B-8.18) 93

Reading (Neh 7.73b-8.8) – Intellectual Response to the Word **94**
Place (Neh 7.73b-8.1) 94
Pentateuch (Neh 8.1-6) 95
Proclamation (Neh 8.7, 8) 99

Rejoicing (Neh 8.9-12) – Emotional Response to the Word **102**
Fellowship Feast (Neh 8.10-12) 104

Responding (Neh 8.13-18) – Volitional Response to the Word **105**
Elders' Discovery (Neh 8.13-15) 105
Energetic Dispersion (Neh 8.15-17a) 107
Earnest Devotion (Neh 8.17b, 18) 107

DEBASED PENITENTS (NEH 9.1-37) 110

Repentance (Neh 9.1-5a) **110**
Place (Neh 9.1) 110
Penitence (Neh 9.1-3) 111
Partition (Neh 9.2) 112
Proclamation and Praise (Neh 9.3-5a) 113

Reflection (Neh 9.5b-37) **115**
Structure 115
Similarities 116
Sections 117
Consecration (Neh 9.5b) 118
Creation (Neh 9.6) 119
Covenant (Neh 9.7, 8) 122
Control (Neh 9.9-12) 126
Compassion (Neh 9.9, 12) 127
Omnipotence (Neh 9.10, 11) 127
Justice (Neh 9.10, 11, 33) 128
Revelation (Neh 9.12) 129
Commands (Neh 9.13-14) 130
Compassion (Neh 9.15-21) 132
Provision (Neh 9.15) 132
Provocation (Neh 9.16-18) 133
Providence (Neh 9.19-21) 134
Conquest (Neh 9.22-25) 135
Challenge (Neh 9.26-28) 136
Captivity (Neh 9.29-31) 140
Confession (Neh 9.32-35) 141
Cry (Neh 9.36-37) 145
Specifics 146
Summary 147

Response (Neh 9.38-10.39) **150**
Covenantal Response (Neh 9.38-10.39) 150
Committing Regime (Neh 9.38-10.39) 151
Prepared 152
Papered (Neh 9.38) 153
Pressed (Neh 9.38; Neh 10.1) 154
Personal (Neh 10.1-27) 156

© James R. Hughes, 2006

Public (Neh 10.28-29) 158
Priorities (Neh 10.29-39) 161
Subservience to God's Law (29) 162
Separation from Pagans (30) 162
Sabbath Keeping (31) 163
Supplying the Poor (31) 164
Sacred Service (32-39) 164
Summary Promise (39) 166
Practiced 167

DISPERSED POPULATION (NEH 11.1-36) 168

Context 168

Challenge (Neh 11.1) 169

Conscription (Neh 11.1) 171

Commendation (Neh 11.2) 173

Census (Neh 11.3-19) 173

Community (Neh 11.3, 20-36) 177

Cities (Neh 11.1, 18) 182

DEDICATION PRAISE (NEH 12.1-47) 182

Priestly Periods (Neh 12.1-26) 183
Return from Babylon (Neh 12.1-9) 183
Persian Monarchy (Neh 12.10, 11) 184
Reflection Back to the Days of Joiakim (Neh 12.12-21) 187
Priests and Levite Leaders at the Time of Ezra and Nehemiah (Neh 12.22-26) 187

Personnel Procurement (Neh 12.8, 9, 27-29) 190

Prophetic Prescription (Neh 12.24, 36) 192

Praise Procession (Neh 12.9, 24, 26-28, 30-42) 194

People's Participation (Neh 12.27, 43) 199
Great Sacrifices 199
Great Rejoicing 200
Grateful Families 201

Primary Purpose (Neh 12.27, 30) 201

Priestly Provisions (Neh 12.44-47) 202

DIRECTED PURIFICATION (NEH 13.1-31) 204

Setting (Neh 13.1, 4, 6, 7, 23) 206

Separation (Neh 13.1-3, 23-24) 207

© James R. Hughes, 2006

Scouring (Neh 13.4-9) 210

Strategy (Neh 13.25-30) 212
Pronounced 212
Punished 213
Promise 216
Precedent 217
Pleaded 218
Purged 218
Purified 220
Prayed/Prophesied 221

Support (Neh 13.10-14, 31) 221

Sabbath (Neh 13.15-22) 223
Commercial Activity (15, 16) 224
Covenant Accountability (Neh 13.17, 18) 225
Civil Administration (Neh 13.19-22) 227
Consummate Authority 229

Supplication (Neh 13.14, 22, 31) 230

CONCLUSION 231

The *Life* of Nehemiah – Nehemiah the Man 231

The *Lessons* of Nehemiah – What Nehemiah's Activities and Actions Teach Us 232

The *Likeness* of Nehemiah – Nehemiah as a Type of Christ 234

The *Legacy* of Nehemiah – What Nehemiah Accomplished 234

APPENDIX A – IMPRECATORY PRAYER 236

APPENDIX B – USE OF THE 'SWORD' FOR PROTECTION AND JUST WAR THEORY 238

Questions for Discussion 238

Outline of Pacifist View 238

Outline of Just War Theory 239

Application to Personal Self Defence 240

APPENDIX C – USURY AND CHARGING INTEREST ON LOANS 242

APPENDIX D – LAWFUL OATHS AND VOWS 244

APPENDIX E – THE ROLE OF THE CIVIL MAGISTRATE WITH RESPECT TO THE CHURCH (CONSIDERATIONS) 246

© James R. Hughes, 2006

APPENDIX F – RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CHURCH AND STATE (CONSIDERATIONS) **250**

APPENDIX G – THE GOD-ORDAINED ROLE FOR GOVERNMENT **259**

APPENDIX H – THE LAW OF GOD, THE STANDARD FOR NATIONAL LAWS ... **261**

APPENDIX I – IS REQUIRING CHURCH MEMBERSHIP BIBLICAL? **264**

APPENDIX J – TITHING *VS* FREE-WILL OFFERINGS **271**

APPENDIX K – PRAYER POSTURE **273**

APPENDIX L – PREACHING AND TEACHING **274**

APPENDIX M – THE CHURCH'S RESPONSE TO POVERTY **279**

APPENDIX N – FASTING **284**

APPENDIX O – REPENTANCE IN SACKCLOTH AND ASHES **286**

APPENDIX P – REVIVALS **288**

APPENDIX Q – THE 'PROBLEM OF EVIL' **298**

APPENDIX R – SELECTED ASPECTS OF BIBLICAL COVENANT MAKING **299**

APPENDIX S – THE ON-GOING ROLE OF PUBLIC COVENANTING **304**

APPENDIX T – CASTING LOTS (CONSIDERATIONS) **310**

APPENDIX U – THE CONCEPT OF CITY IN THE BIBLE **312**

BIBLE REFERENCES INDEX **315**

© James R. Hughes, 2006

Introduction

1. What attributes or characteristics make a good leader?
   1.1. We are considering this question first in a civil-government context, but the attributes or characteristics also apply in the military, business, and church.
   1.2. Possible answers [Discuss]:
      1.2.1. Godliness ... Sincere belief conditioning and guiding all action. Respectable, balanced (1 Tim 3.2-3).
      1.2.2. Principled ... Stand for what is right, not blow in wind, change policy direction daily.
      1.2.3. Vision ... Have goals, plan, ability to set direction.
      1.2.4. Knowledge and skill ... Know what tasks need to be performed, and know about human nature.
      1.2.5. Communication ... Not only able to formulate a vision but also able to communicate it well. Teach excite, motivate, disciple, and guide.
      1.2.6. Management ... In the best sense of the term, able to plan the work of others and delegate, follow-up, evaluate, and reward.
      1.2.7. Tenacity ... Ability to carry out a plan even under adverse circumstances (set-backs, rejection, challenges).
   1.3. We will consider a set of historical circumstances with a discouraged people in captivity and a city in ruin. We will consider a leader who brings them back from destruction and desolation. We will consider Nehemiah and his trademark attribute:
      1.3.1. Faithfulness … It is the trademark of this man (Prov 20.6). Faithfulness, and specifically faithfulness to God, is the key attribute of true leadership that is missing today in the church, state, and business.

2. Who was Nehemiah? What did he do as cup bearer for King Artaxerxes? (Neh 1.11)
   2.1. Wine taster—to drink wine before the king did and thus ensure that someone had not doped the wine.
   2.2. A slave. He was among the children of those who had been taken captive from Jerusalem/Judah.
      2.2.1. Since he was from among the captives, he was from a family of some significance in their previous life in Judah. Those who were taken captive were not the poor farmers and labourers. They were left behind. The educated and leaders of the community were the ones taken captive.
      2.2.2. The dangerous job of wine tasting would generally not be given to one of the king's own countrymen.
   2.3. A trusted slave (Neh 2.1).
      2.3.1. Otherwise he could have doped the wine himself.
      2.3.2. He was close to the king.
      2.3.3. Xerxes, the father of Artaxerxes was killed in bed by one of his own servants.
      2.3.4. This tells us something about the character of Nehemiah. He was trustworthy.
      2.3.5. In a pagan culture he displayed an important godly (Christian) attribute while working for a pagan employer.
   2.4. But he was more than a mere slave. He was close to the king and so may have acted in some way as an advisor.

3. What does Nehemiah become later? Why is this a surprise?
   3.1. Governor of Judah.
   3.2. We are surprised that later Nehemiah becomes governor of Judah because we don't expect a wine steward/taster to become a governor. He would have, however, picked up training working beside the king that would have given him many of the qualifications of a governor

4. What are other examples where God intervened and raised up individuals from obscure circumstances to become very important in the history of pagan nations?
   4.1. Joseph, Esther, Daniel.

5. What lessons can we derive from the example of Nehemiah?
   5.1. Christians serving in civil government, even under pagan/wicked governments, can be used by God. to save lives, provide moral influence, and advance God's kingdom.
   5.2. God is the one who gives men their gifts and skills.
   5.3. It is important to maintain a strong Christian witness in whatever settings God places us.
   5.4. We need to pray that God will raise up and preserve those in positions of responsibility in Government.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

6. What is happening elsewhere in and around Jerusalem, and in the rest of the world at this time?
   6.1. In Judah and the near Middle East:
      6.1.1. Chronology
         6.1.1.1. Cyrus 538 BC
         6.1.1.2. Return under Sheshbazzar 537 BC (Ezra 1.8, 11; Ezra 5.14, 16)
         6.1.1.3. Work on Temple begins 536 BC; halted for about 10 years
         6.1.1.4. Temple completed 520-516 BC, during the reign of Darius
         6.1.1.5. Ezra departs Babylon and goes to Jerusalem 458 BC
         6.1.1.6. Nehemiah approaches Artaxerxes I and goes to Jerusalem 444/445 BC (20th year)
         6.1.1.7. Nehemiah returns to Jerusalem around 430 BC (433 BC was the 32nd year of Artaxerxes).
      6.1.2. Malachi [440-430 BC], the last OT writing prophet, was probably the prophet during the events recorded in Nehemiah 13.1-31.
      6.1.3. Aramaic replacing (Old) Hebrew as the common language in Judah
      6.1.4. The Persian Empire included Phrygia (Turkey) and Armenia to near the Caucasus Mts., parts of Macedonia/Thrace, Egypt, all of what are today Israel, Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan (almost to the Indus river).
      6.1.5. Alexander the Great (c 323 BC) added the rest of Greece and Libya, to the Caucasus Mts. (e.g., Georgia, Azerbaijan), and extended the territory further east to cross the Indus river (about the boundary of modern Pakistan) and north to the Aral Sea (Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan).
      6.1.6. [Note: Maps showing the extent of kingdoms during this historical period vary.]
   6.2. In the rest of the world:
      6.2.1. Thirty year truce (445-415 BC) between Athans and Sparta; Sparta uses chemical weapons (WMD) made of charcoal, sulfur, and pitch.
      6.2.2. Golden age of Athens: Pericles elected Athenian general (443 BC) for 15 years,), funeral oration (431 BC); Herodotus the historian (b 485 BC, d 424 BC); Socrates teaching in Athens (b 470 BC, d 399 BC); Hippocrates Greek physician b 460 BC; Sophocles "Antigone" (443 BC); Euripides "Medea" (431 BC); Aristophanes (b 450 BC); Acropolis rebuilt (448 BC to 433 BC); Parthenon completed and dedicated (438 BC).
      6.2.3. Marble temple of Apollo at Delphi (c 478 BC); Temple of Zeus at Olympia (c 460 BC),
      6.2.4. Roman law codified in the "twelve tables" (450 BC); plebeians given right to share in making laws; plebian revolt (439).
      6.2.5. The Indian empire is founded with Magadha the "cradle of Buddhism" (Buddha b 550 BC, d 480 BC).
      6.2.6. Confucius in China (b 551 BC, d 479 BC); feudal states decline, Chou dynasty founded.
      6.2.7. Marseilles flourishes as western Europe's portal to Greek and Etruscan civilization.
      6.2.8. Celtic settlements in the British Isles.

Discovery Proceedings (Neh 1.1-4)

1. How does Nehemiah open his account (Neh 1.1)?
   1.1. By telling us that these are his words and therefore that he is the author of this account.

2. In modern terms, what might we call this account?
   2.1. These are the memoirs of Nehemiah.
   2.2. As governor of Judah he gives us an account of his work. It may be that he recorded his work after his retirement.
   2.3. The account appears to be a combination of a diary with a series of interjected 'appendices' (e.g., chapters 3, 7, 10).
   2.4. [Note: We will consider the dates when these events occurred when we address chapter 2.1 and 2.2.]

3. Was Nehemiah boasting when he published this account?
   3.1. Many godly men have produced memoirs and kept diaries over the years. We must be careful not to think that Nehemiah published this account for his own glory, especially in light of the refrain we hear often in the book (e.g., Neh 5.19).
   3.2. It may be that Nehemiah was asked to publish this account by his brother Hanani, one of his friends, or possibly by Ezra. Ezra was likely the one who compiled 1 and 2 Chronicles, completed the final editing of the Psalter, and probably brought together most of the canon of OT Scriptures in its final form. He may have asked for a first-hand account of how the city of Jerusalem was rebuilt.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

4. Where are these words of Nehemiah recorded? Why is this significant?
   4.1. In the Bible, the OT Scriptures. 2 Timothy 3.16, 17 this tell us that Scripture is:
      4.1.1. God's revelation about himself.
      4.1.2. God breathed. As we study the memoirs of Nehemiah we must remember that the words recorded here were provided under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.
      4.1.3. Instructive. All scripture is instructive, and profitable for equipping us in godliness. The words were recorded not only for the instruction of the Jews, but also for our instruction.
   4.2. We will learn from Nehemiah how leaders should act before God, and how the state and the church should be operated in a God-honouring cooperative way.
      4.2.1. We cannot assume that every historical account in the Bible is to be emulated.
      4.2.2. Often God records wicked actions. We can learn from these wicked actions that God brings judgment on sinners, but we cannot follow those examples.
      4.2.3. However, in this case, since we are dealing with an example of a faithful man, whose account is recorded for our instruction, we can learn lessons from his actions.

5. What did Nehemiah want to know? What was his primary concern?
   5.1. His concern was about both the people who had been left behind and those who had returned from the exile with Zerubbabel, and later with Ezra, and for the welfare of the city of Jerusalem.
   5.2. The OT Jerusalem is a type for the Church. Much of what we will learn as we study this book is how leaders (and members) in the Church are to function.
   5.3. Put in modern terms—His concern for the people and the institution. He wanted to know how individuals were faring and how the Church was prospering.
   5.4. Do we have a concern for the welfare of those in the Church outside our immediate context?

6. How did Nehemiah learn about the state of Judah and Jerusalem?
   6.1. He asked questions.
   6.2. He got a first hand report from someone he could trust.
   6.3. He listened to the account of the situation in Jerusalem.
   6.4. We probably could all make a confession that we have not shown as much concern for the broader Church as we should have.
   6.5. *Discussion*: How can we become informed? How should we listen?

7. What did Nehemiah learn?
   7.1. The exiles that had returned were in great trouble and distress. There was opposition from enemies (compare, Ezra 4.1-24), problems with sexual sin in their midst (compare, Ezra 10.1-44), and problems with materialism (compare, Hag 1.4ff).
   7.2. The walls were broken down, and the gates burned (2 Kin 25.10; 586 BC) and not able to be repaired (compare, Ezra 4.21, 23).

8. Why was it important that the city have walls? What is the spiritual equivalent for the Church?
   8.1. Not so much for protection in a military context, but rather for general safety of the population from marauders. Cities are full of wealth and it is easy for marauders to take plunder if there are no walls.
   8.2. We should also be distressed over the lack of strength in the Church today. The walls have fallen down (unfaithful pastors and elders, weak preaching, false doctrine and worship, and little church discipline) and are no longer protecting the people. As a result there is a cavalier attitude to keeping God's commands, materialism reigns, and the people are in distress.

9. What was Nehemiah's response? What can we learn from his response?
   9.1. He **mourned** with weeping, prayer and fasting.
      9.1.1. We probably wonder why God is not reviving his Church. Could it be because we don't have the spirit of Nehemiah who went into great mourning over the state of the City of the Great King?
      9.1.2. Without pointing the finger at anyone, we need to ask: When was the last time we mourned for the state of the Church to the extent that we were willing to petition God with prayer and fasting for days?
      9.1.3. In contrast we are desensitized to the needs of those in the broader Church, even to the needs of those in our own congregation. We can start at home with our own congregation and broaden our

© James R. Hughes, 2006

concern and outlook to the greater Church. Every day we should be praying for the prosperity of Zion.

9.2. He **fasted**.

9.2.1. The only regular fast appointed by God in the OT was the Day of Atonement (Lev 16.29-31; Lev 23.27-32). It appears that four other fasts were added around the time of the Jewish captivity in Babylon (see, Zech 7.1-7; Zech 8.19).

9.2.2. Occasional fasts were proclaimed for various reasons (e.g., Neh 9.1; Est 4.16; Dan 9.3; Dan 10.3), and individuals often fasted to "afflict the soul" in repentance, to suppress their personal will, to facilitate grieving, or to obtain guidance and help from God. Fasting sometimes included total abstinence from all food and other proper pleasures, and at other times it meant a restriction of food intake (e.g., a small amount of bread and water) as in Daniel 10.3.

9.2.3. Jesus assumed that his followers would fast (Mt 6.16-18). The Apostles showed by their example that fasting is proper at special times (e.g., Acts 13.2-3; Acts 14.23). Proper fasting is one of the neglected aspects of worship in our hedonistic age.

9.2.4. We probably all need to think seriously about how we should apply fasting in our lives.

9.2.4.1. Jesus says that the guests of the bridegroom don't fast (mourn) while he is with them. He implies that while he is present with his people it is like the time of a wedding week. A wedding is a joyous occasion—a time for feasting, not for fasting.

9.2.4.2. So when should we fast? In one sense Christ is always with us (e.g., Mt 28.20). But there are times when we drift away from Christ. It is when we are far from him that we should be humbled with real fasting and confession of our sins.

9.2.4.3. [For more detail, see: *Appendix N – Fasting*.]

9.3. He **prayed** [we will look at his prayer in the next section].

9.3.1. Note however, that he did not stop with Prayer, as we will see. We must start with prayer, but as we are able, we are not to stop with prayer. Much of book of Nehemiah deals with Nehemiah's prayer-fortified action for the Kingdom.

10. What are examples of other instances where Jerusalem is considered in this way (with mourning and weeping)?

10.1. Every prophetic book except Haggai (in particular Lamentations) and many of the Psalms (e.g., Ps 79.1-13; Ps 80.1-19; Ps 119.1-176; Ps 136.1-26; Ps 137.1-9) include laments over the city.

10.2. Jesus mourned over Jerusalem (Lk 13.34, 35; Lk 19.41-44).

10.3. Jerusalem for the NT Christian is the Church. It is the body of the saints for which we are to pray (Heb 12.22; Rev 3.12; Rev 21.2, 10).

11. In the Bible, what other city is mourned over when it is destroyed? Are we to weep/mourn over this city?

11.1. Babylon in (Is 21.1-17, esp. vs 9; Jer 51.8; Rev 18.1-24).

11.2. No, because it is full of sin.

11.2.1. But Jerusalem has also sinned.

11.2.2. The difference is of kind and degree.

11.2.3. Jerusalem (the Church) is the Bride of Christ, it may be stained and impure at times, but it is not rotten at the core. The city of this world is polluted to the very core. We are to rejoice at the destruction of Babylon and weep over the (temporary) condition of Jerusalem. As we will see, from Nehemiah's prayer, we are to pray for its renewal.

12. What was the nature of Nehemiah's response? What characterized it?

12.1. It was a spiritual response, not a worldly response.

12.2. It was directed first to God before he took worldly action.

12.2.1. It is God who restores the Church not men (Zech 4.6).

12.2.2. God uses men, but they are the instruments.

12.2.3. Revival and reformation comes from God.

13. What lessons can we derive from this section?

13.1. The importance in having an 'ear to the ground' and listening to the times (1 Chron 12.32).

13.2. Those who can be useful in the service for the Church can come from many walks in life. We should never discount our backgrounds and say that we are not able to serve.

13.3. We should show concern for the broader Church. We are, generally, far too insular and parochial.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

13.4. We should begin, and continue to balance, our service with our approach to God in prayer. Doing is to be prefaced and under-girded with the true source of power and motivation—the power of Holy Spirit.

Deliverance's Prayer (Neh 1.5-11)

1. What is the structure of Nehemiah's prayer? Provide an outline.
   1.1. Praise (names and attributes of God) (5)
   1.2. Petition 1 (to hear his cry and prayer) (6a)
   1.3. Penitence (confession of sin) (6b, 7)
   1.4. Promises (appealing to the promises of God) (8, 9)
   1.5. Purpose (giving God a reason/purpose for the appeal) (10)
   1.6. Petition 2 (11a)
   1.7. Providence (personal appeal for help) (11b)

2. What elements of Nehemiah's prayer do we find in the prayer that Jesus taught his disciples (Mt 6.9-13; Lk 11.2-4)?
   2.1. Names and attributes of God, including his abode in heaven (1)
   2.2. Furtherance of Kingdom (4)
   2.3. God's will on Earth (5)
   2.4. Daily bread (7)
   2.5. Forgiveness of Sin (3)
   2.6. Lead not into temptation (?)

   The only part of Nehemiah's prayer not in the Lord's Prayer is the appeal to be heard (Neh 1.2 and Neh 1.6). Let us look at the sections of Nehemiah's Prayer in more detail.

   Note: What we have recorded here is probably only one of the many prayers that Nehemiah offered to the Lord over a 4-5 month period. This may be the first or last of his prayers. This is the theme of his prayer during the time from when he first heard the news until he was asked by the king about his unhappiness.

Praise—Names and Attributes of God (Neh 1.5)

1. By what names and attributes does Nehemiah call upon God?
   1.1. LORD, God/Jehovah, Elohim. Significant contexts for the different uses:
      1.1.1. Genesis 1.1ff – God (Elohim) as the creator of the universe, hint of plurality of person (Trinity).
      1.1.2. Exodus 3.14 – LORD (Jehovah) is the personal name of God. The I AM, based on the form of the verb to be. The one who exists and is self-existent (first used in Gen 2.4, 5).
      1.1.3. First occurrence of the names used together is in Gen 9.26. There are hundreds of occurrences.

2. Why did Jesus teach his disciples, and us, to start our prayers with a reference to God in Heaven?
   2.1. Of heaven (also in Neh 1.4) the abode of God. The God in the highest. The God above all god's. Not just a god of the rivers or streams (compare, 1 Ki 20.23), but the God above all (Gen 24.3, 7; Dt 4.39 [in]; Joshua 2.11 [in]; 2 Chron 36.23; Ezra 1.2; Dan 2.19, 28 [in], 37, 44; Rev 11.13; Rev 16.11. See also Luke 2.14).
   2.2. In a pagan culture we should refer to God as the God of Heaven.

3. With what two attributes does Nehemiah describe God?
   3.1. Awesome God. The idea here is the one who is awe inspiring, the one before whom the angels bow (Rev 4.8, 11; Ps 68.35).
   3.2. Who keeps his covenant of love (NIV); NKJV has covenant *and* mercy, LXX/Vulgate covenant *and* love, Calvin: "covenant of mercy" (*Institutes* 3.17.6).
      3.2.1. "Covenant of" appears 58 times; covenant of priesthood (2), salt (2), and peace (v. 3; Num 25.12; Is 54.10; Ezk 34.25), rest are … Lord, … God, or … LORD.
      3.2.2. Notice the use of the same expression "covenant of/and love" in Nehemiah 9.32, which is also a prayer of confession.
      3.2.3. Covenant of/and love occurs a total of seven times in the OT. The other occurrences beside the two in Nehemiah are: Deuteronomy 7.9, 12; 1 Ki 8.23; 2 Chronicles 6.14; Dan 9.4.
      3.2.4. Appears to be the covenant made with Abraham (Dt 7.7-12; forefathers/patriarchs 8, 12; covenant of/and love 9, 12; notice also use of 'affection'/'love' 7, 8).

© James R. Hughes, 2006

4. What commands is Nehemiah thinking of?
   4.1. With those who love and obey his/your commands (see, also 9).
   4.2. The covenant was made with Abraham but the formal edition of the Law had yet been given. But applied in this context (Dt 7.11) he is probably thinking of the Moral Law which was known to the patriarchs and ingrained in man's nature (notice Gen 17.1). But he could also be referring to the specific commands given to Abraham in the context of the Covenant (Gen 17.9, 10) with circumcision as the sign of obedience to the moral commands of God.
   4.3. Notice the similarities in another recorded prayer in Daniel 9.4: Lord (but not Jehovah), God, awesome, confession of sin, and emphasis on obedience.

5. What lessons can we derive from this section?
   5.1. We find a theology (theo-logy, the word/logic of God, the study of God) in this passage:
      5.1.1. God the self-existent (I AM)
      5.1.2. God the creator (Elohim)
      5.1.3. God the all powerful (great)
      5.1.4. God the one full of awe (awesome)
      5.1.5. God the one over all gods (in heaven)
      5.1.6. God who is personal (his personal name, Jehovah)
      5.1.7. God who makes covenants and keeps them faithfully
      5.1.8. God who makes laws and governs his creatures.
   5.2. We learn how we should approach God in prayer. How should we approach him?
      5.2.1. With praise, and adoration.
      5.2.2. One way to worship God in prayer is to come to him with respect for his names and attributes.
      5.2.3. This is not to be forced or artificial. We should not use a string of his names with no meaning behind them.
      5.2.4. Rather we can pray with the attributes offered up in the context of our prayer. For example, if we are praying for the conversion of a friend we can pray to 'God the merciful one'. If we are asking God to give us good leaders we can pray to the 'Sovereign King of kings'.

Petitions—Hear My Cry and Prayer! (Neh 1.6a, 11a)

1. The two petitions in his prayer are very similar. What are some of the differences we notice between them?
   1.1. Ears and eyes in first, ear in the second.
   1.2. Prayer of servant and servants in second.
   1.3. Mention of praying day and night in first.
   1.4. Mention of praying for the people of Israel in first.
   1.5. Mention of those who are appealing as those who revere the name of God, in the second.

2. Is there any significance in these differences? Why does he pray essentially the same petition twice?
   2.1. The emphasis is clear: he wants to drive home his point. It is not vain repetition or babbling, but repetition for effect (Mt 6.7, 8)
   2.2. Jesus gives us an example of this type of praying in the Garden of Gethsemane (Mt 26.39, 42).
   2.3. Jesus teaches us that we are to pray this way for things that we hold especially dear (Lk 18.7).

3. What more do we learn about God from Nehemiah's petition?
   Additional attributes of God we can add to our list that we developed from a consideration of the first part of the prayer, include:
   3.1. Ears and eyes. This is using anthropomorphic (forms from man) terms to describe God. A God who has eyes and ears is not a distant God. He is one who is hearing and seeing what is going on in his creation. But he is more than a silent observer. He is the one to whom man can raise his petitions. This adds to our understanding of God's personality. It makes it clear that communication between God and man is possible and not one way (God to man in revelation). It can be bi-directional (man to God in prayer). This can be expanded on. For example, if God can hear us, then he must *want* to hear us. This indicates by indirection that he is compassionate.
   3.2. Special grace for his people. Nehemiah appeals on the basis of his being a servant of God. This implies that there is a class of people who are God's servants and a class who are not. We can extend the definition of the class from our knowledge of the rest of the Bible and define this class as those who are

© James R. Hughes, 2006

part of his family and his children by adoption. This again points us in the direction of God who is compassionate.

3.3. We can add two additional attributes of God to our list:
  3.3.1. God the communicator (who communicates with men, bi-directionally)
  3.3.2. God the compassionate and merciful (who selects people for himself from the lost mass of humanity).

4. What lessons can we derive from this section?
  4.1. We pray to a God who hears. I think about this when I am praying in a meeting or room in which non-Christians are present. I remind myself that what I am doing is not just a superstitious action or a form of psychological self-encouragement. In a situation like this, I emphasize the fact that there is a God who hears. There really is a God to whom we can and must pray and who hears what we say when we approach him in sincerity. We should pause before we start to pray and remember this. Look with the eye of faith into Heaven and engage God with your prayer.
  4.2. Repetition in prayer is valid when it is balanced and sincere.

Penitence—Confession of Sin (Neh 1.6b, 7)

1. What do you notice about Nehemiah's confession?
  1.1. He confesses the corporate sin of the nation.
  1.2. His confession of corporate sin is made a personal confession. He feels personally responsible and guilty for the sins of Israel.

2. Why might it be a surprise that he confesses in this way?
  2.1. The Jews have already paid the penalty of exile for their sin (70 years) and the order of Cyrus to let the people return (Ezra 1.1ff) has been issued.
  2.2. Nehemiah, or his father, were likely not personally guilty of blatant idolatry.
  2.3. This shows that he was truly a man of God, filled with righteous indignation against the sins that took his people into captivity, and careful to personally avoided them. He was righteous in heart and life.

3. What particular sin is he confessing?
  3.1. He could be focusing on the nearer sin of the temple and walls not being rebuilt as quickly as they should have been due to the problems with materialism (e.g., Hag 1.4ff).
  3.2. But it is more likely that he is considering the larger corporate sins of idolatry and disobedience which led his nation into captivity.

4. How serious did he consider this sin?
  4.1. He considers the sin that is being confessed to be very wicked.
  4.2. 'Very' is a repetition of the word wicked: 'to act wickedly, we acted wickedly'. This is a way to emphasize something in Hebrew. Whereas in English we use adjectives, in Hebrew you can repeat the word. Our English translations provide a dynamic equivalent, not a literal, translation of the idea or the idiom (compare, Ex 26.33; Holy of Holies). It is this form of emphasis that may also be in Isaiah 6.3 (compare, Rev 4.8, although the Greek has adjectives, John is writing from a Hebrew mind-set and has a number of Hebrew idioms in his writings), which is probably to be understood as compounding the idea of holiness. God is not only the very holy God. He is the very, very holy God, or the holiest of the holy. This passage may provide a veiled reference to the Trinity as the "thrice holy God". However, if so, it is likely a secondary idea. The primary idea is to be derived from the Hebrew idiomatic form of emphasis.

5. What are *contemporary* examples of this prayer of confession which could be similar?
  5.1. Some might suggest examples like: the US apologizing to the Indians for broken treaties, or a national day of mourning over slavery; or Canada apologizing to the Japanese-Canadians for the way they were treated during WW II, or NZ apologizing to the Maori for hanging its chief over 130 years ago. The difficulty with these examples is that they seem contrived. In each case the behaviour at the time was probably wrong (we may need to evaluate the circumstances) and the people involved were probably mistreated by a callous nation, but, there seems to be something different from Nehemiah's confession. The sin that is being confessed in these examples is against man, and there is, generally, no reference to God and the fact that these sins were primarily wrong because they were crimes against the image bearer of God, and thus an affront against God. Another thing that we have to question is why these confessions

© James R. Hughes, 2006

are being made now when we are living in one of the most morally depraved times in the history of mankind, and yet more godly ages did not think that it was necessary to dig up the past and make confession.

5.2. If these examples aren't comparable, what are examples which are? What are examples where we should be confessing the sin of our nation against God? We should think in the context of God's laws (the Ten Commandments) and in terms of personal and national idolatry. Our nation allows/encourages: false religions (1st-2nd), shopping and entertainment on the Sabbath (4th), young offenders to get away with murder (5th), abortion (6th), no-fault divorce, homosexual partnerships, etc. (7th), gambling, unfair taxation (8th), gambling (10th). This is the kind of idolatry that is afflicting our nation. These are as bad, and possibly worse, than the idolatry which took Israel into captivity.

5.3. We should be disappointed in ourselves as individuals, our congregations, and the Church for the lack of concern for fighting these things. We have a lack of concern, a lack of example, a lack of prayer, and a lack of confession.

5.4. Why do we not confess corporate sins as Nehemiah does?

6. What, beside his nation, could he have had in mind when he used the expression "we Israelites"?
   6.1. He could have been referring to the Church (i.e., the religious community). Israel at that time was corporately both a nation and the church).
   6.2. He could have been thinking of ways the religious community had failed God:
      6.2.1. Permitted or condoned idolatry or other forms of blatant sin and not follow through on Church discipline (Judges 17-18; Rev 2.14-15, 20).
      6.2.2. Shepherds fleecing the flock and living off the tithes but not teaching or helping the people (1 Sam 2.12-17; Ezk 34.7-10; 2 Pt 2.1, 10, 13-15; Jude 12-13).
      6.2.3. Teaching lies, for example, crying peace when there is no peace. Teaching the wrong way to obtain salvation, encouraging a works-based way of salvation (Jer 6.13-15; Jer 25.34-38; Jude 4).

7. How are we responsible for the sins of the Church, which we must confess?
   7.1. Lax in prayer, and reading of Scriptures.
   7.2. Guilty of 'will worship'.
   7.3. Thinking we can of appeal to a works-righteousness for reward.
   7.4. Forgetting to be thankful to God for all the blessings he has given us.
   7.5. In all these ways, and others, we are just as guilty as a heretic.
   7.6. To the extent that we are like this, to that extent the Church is weakened. Thus we need to pray Nehemiah's prayer earnestly.

8. Against what standard does Nehemiah measure the sin of his nation and the Church?
   8.1. The commands, decrees/statutes and laws/ordinances given or commanded by God through his servant Moses.
   8.2. Psalm 119.1-176 uses many different terms to classify the Law, and seems to use them interchangeably. It may not be wise to try to read too much into Nehemiah's use of the three terms.
   8.3. The use of three terms may emphasize the completeness of God's law. Much like Jesus (Mt 22.37; compare Dt 6.5 and Mk 12.30) and Paul (Eph 5.19; Col 3.16) use multiple terms to express completeness.
   8.4. Nehemiah may be, thus, including all of the Law. We are not to be selective, picking and choosing what we will keep (James 2.10).

9. To whom does this standard apply? Only to the Jewish nation, Christians, or all people?
   9.1. Some argue that the Law of God in the OT applies only to Jews because of the distinctive character of the relationship between God and Israel.
   9.2. In fact God's Law is universal and applies to all men, everywhere:
      9.2.1. God's Law applied to Adam and his descendants. The old world was judged according to it (Gen 6.5).
      9.2.2. The Patriarchs (pre-Jewish, pre-Ten Commandments) knew the demands of God. (e.g., Gen 18.16-19)
      9.2.3. God's Law was applied to the nations around Israel. They were held accountable to obey it [e.g., Nineveh commanded to obey, nations like Maob judged by God according to his standards, Nehemiah enforces (e.g., Neh 13.15-22), John the Baptist rebuked Herod for adultery].
      9.2.4. God will judge the world, all men, according to his standards.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

9.2.5. A most pernicious lie that the Church has accepted is that law is neutral, or that it is derived from social contract, or we must permit a pluralism of Laws to prevail. Christians have been duped into accepting Satan's view that God's Law does not apply to all men.

9.3. Fundamentals that we must insist on with vigilance in our culture: God as creator, God as author of moral standards, God as sovereign over life and death. This is the standard that leads people to consider Christ as Lord and saviour.

9.3.1. The Church's confession must be that we have failed to demand these three standards in every instance.

9.4. As far as Nehemiah is concerned, sin is disobeying or not conforming to God's law in any way. "Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God."

10. What are some of the implications of Nehemiah's confession of sin as defined relative to God's law?
    10.1. He knew the seriousness of man's condition, his nation's condition, and the condition of his own heart.
    10.2. It is not a light matter to sin against the moral agent of the universe. He knew that this was the most serious thing man can do. It is more serious than polluting, wasting money, wasting talents [although there is sin in all three], voting incorrectly, making a mistake on an investment, failing an exam ... The most grievous thing we can ever do is sin against God.
    10.3. It tells us of the great sincerity of Nehemiah. It sets the tone for the rest of what Nehemiah tells us about himself and his work (James 5.16).
    10.4. He knew his God and trusted in him fully.

11. What does his prayer tell us about the God to whom he addressed his confession?
    11.1. God is a God who forgives sin.
    11.2. If he confesses his sin without knowing that he can be forgiven, then Nehemiah is of all men, most miserable. There is no hope for us either. If God will not hear the confession of men, what hope is there for us?

12. What lessons can we derive from this section?
    12.1. Reminds us that God is the standard. Morality and standards for ethics are derived from God and his word.
    12.2. Prayer is to incorporate confession of sin (also in the prayer the Lord taught his disciples) and acknowledgement of God as the lawgiver.
    12.3. We are not to confess just personal sin, but also the corporate sin of our nation and the Church.
    12.4. We learn about another of God's attributes: The God who hears confession and forgives sin.
    12.5. Our prayer should be based on a sincere desire to keep the Law of God or it is hypocrisy!

Promises—Appealing to the Promises of God (Neh 1.8, 9)

1. Why does Nehemiah use the word remember?
    1.1. He is reminding God of what he has said.
    1.2. Remember: a favourite word of Nehemiah that occurs 10 times (Neh 4.14; Neh 5.19; Neh 6.14; Neh 9.17; Neh 13.14, 22, 29, 31).

2. What are the specific promises that he appeals to in this prayer?
    2.1. Promise to Moses (Dt 30.1-5). Note: the promise in Deuteronomy is in the context of an assumed dispersion (Diaspora). Similar to the promise that God made to Abraham (Gen 15.13-16) about the slavery in Egypt. In the midst of the curse there is hope—a promise of restoration.
    2.2. Nehemiah is pleading for a hearing based on the Prayer of Solomon at the dedication of the temple; 1 King 8.33-34 "bring them back to the land", 46–49 "takes them captive". His prayer is heard (1 Ki 9.3), and with God showing his glory in the Temple (1 Kings 8.10), it is evident that Solomon's request has become a promise.
    2.3. Nehemiah could also be appealing to the promise given through Jeremiah (Jer 29.10-14). After 70 years, they will pray (v 12) and God will bring them back from exile (v 14). Notice that this was in a letter to the Exiles to give them encouragement (see, also Is 11.12; Jer 23.23; Ezk 20.34, 41).
    2.4. Notice that none of these promises is specific about rebuilding of the Temple or the city walls. Rather, they speak of the gathering together of the Diaspora.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

2.5. Nehemiah appeals on the basis of the place where God puts his name (Dt 12.4, 5); the Tabernacle and then the Temple (1 Kings 8.29). The name of God is no longer on a place (temple built with hands) but on the Church: Eph 3.15; 1 Pt 4.16; Rev 3.12 (name of God, and city).

3. What warrant do we have for asking God to remember his promises?
   3.1. This example given by Nehemiah.
   3.2. Assurance that God will keep his promises and hear the prayers of his people: Josh 23.14, 15; Ps 91.15; Zech 13.9; 2 Pt 3.9, 13
   3.3. Examples of promises kept: 2 Sam 7.25-26; 1 Ki 8.15, 20; Ps 119.140; Is 44.28; Is 45.1, 13; 2 Chron 36.22-23.
   3.4. Jesus tells us that if we ask in his name we will be heard: Jn 14.13-14; Jn 15.16; Jn 16.23-24
   3.5. Warnings about doubting: Ps 106.24; Rom 4.20

4. What lessons can we derive from this section?
   4.1. We are now the scattered Diaspora. James 1.1 is primarily to Jewish believers, but also to the Church (Israel of God Gal 6.16). We are being gathered together from the four winds to make up the new Temple of God (1 Pt 2.5, 10).
   4.2. We can call on the promises of God. We can ask God to remember his promises and be faithful to them. And we can expect him to be faithful to them.

Purpose—Giving God a Reason for the Appeal (Neh 1.10)

1. What is the reason that Nehemiah gives for why God should answer his prayer?
   1.1. Because these people ('they') are God's servants and his people.

2. On what basis does he make this appeal, or give a reason to God?
   2.1. He claims a right based on a special status for Israel, the captive Jews, and Jerusalem. Because these people are God's chosen people. Chosen in the context of the Covenant.
      2.1.1. Covenant made with Abraham.
      2.1.2. Covenant made with Moses.
      2.1.3. It is on the basis of the eternal Covenant of Love (or Grace) as it is offered repeatedly to men, but particularly on the Abrahamic (the more generic), and the Mosaic (the more specific) manifestations of it. The Davidic covenant (e.g., eternal royal reign) is not excluded but not particularly in view.
   2.2. He appears to be modeling his appeal on a similar appeal which was made in Israel's history. Consider Deuteronomy 9.7-29. The NIV labels this section *The Golden Calf*. Moses is rehearsing for the people the situation that led to the creation of the calf and God's response to it. God was prepared to wipe out the people (Dt 9.13, 14) and make a nation from Moses (Num 14.12). This of course would not have worked because the promise through Jacob (blessing Judah) and through Baalam (a star to come out of Judah) made it clear that the Messiah would come through Judah. But it does show the degree of God's anger. Then the people upset God even more at Kadesh Barnea (Num 14.1-12) when they were afraid to go up and take Canaan as God had commanded.
      2.2.1. Moses prays on behalf of the people and pleads with God to save his people.:
         2.2.1.1. (v 26) The nation you redeemed
         2.2.1.2. (v 27) The larger covenantal context
         2.2.1.3. (v 28) Blemish on the name and power of God to save (Num 14.13-16)
         2.2.1.4. (v 29) Your people.
      2.2.2. The parallels in Nehemiah's prayer:
         2.2.2.1. Nation you redeemed, and
         2.2.2.2. Your servants (people).
      2.2.3. It seems to be clear that Nehemiah is modeling his prayer on the recollection of Moses given in Deuteronomy. Remember that Deuteronomy is specifically the Book of the Covenant.

3. How can we apply this petition of Nehemiah's prayer in the Church context?
   3.1. If we understand Nehemiah's concern for Jerusalem to have a larger application in terms of the Church of Jesus Christ, then we can apply this prayer in at least the following ways:
      3.1.1. We can appeal to God on behalf of the Church based on the Covenant promise. God's promise to Abraham was that he would save many people and bring them into the Church.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

3.1.2. We should/must pray for the Church because it is the Church that God has redeemed—brought out of spiritual Egypt.
3.1.3. We can remind God that when the Church comes to harm and it is wracked by splits and tensions, or when he writes off one congregation or another, it gives the world an opportunity to claim that God is not able to complete his work. When we pray "your kingdom come" we pray that God will build his Church and show the world that he is the almighty over all.
3.1.4. It is for the glory of God when Jerusalem is re-built. We need to have a prayer of revival and restoration constantly on our lips, and in God's ears (Mt 9.35-38).

Providence—Personal Appeal for Help (Neh 1.11b)

1. What does the last part of the prayer include?
   1.1. Nehemiah's personal appeal for help. An appeal for God to providentially watch over him.
   1.2. His specific requests are for:
      1.2.1. Success.
      1.2.2. Favour in the presence of the Artaxerxes.

2. What was the success he was looking for?
   2.1. We are not told yet (i.e., in chapter 1), but we can look ahead to see what it is that he is thinking about. See 2.1-5.
   2.2. Notice the response of Nehemiah is almost instantaneous (3, 5). This seems to make it clear that Nehemiah had carefully formulated what he was going to ask for. He may have done this in consultation with his brother (Neh 1.2), with Ezra, or with some of the leaders of the Jewish community in Susa. The success he sought was that the king would grant his request and let him go to Jerusalem and re-build the walls.

3. What was the favour that he was looking for?
   3.1. In one sense the same as the success, i.e., that the king would let him go and rebuild the wall.
   3.2. There is more. Nehemiah uses a word which seems to indicate that he is concerned about his approach to the king. Not the word for love, kindness, faithfulness; but rather the word for compassion, pity, mercy (compassion: 1 Ki 3.26; 2 Chron 30.9; Neh 9.19, 27, 28; Ps 51.1; Ps 77.9; Is 54.7; mercy: Gen 43.14; Dt 13.17; 2 Sam 24.14).
   3.3. The idea being communicated here is undeserved favour—mercy is not getting what we deserve, in contrast to grace which is getting what we don't deserve.
   3.4. In this context Nehemiah deserved nothing before the king, since he was a slave.
   3.5. Later we will note that Nehemiah was sad (Neh 2.1) in the presence of the king (compare, Esther 4.11). From the context of Eastern kings, a person could not approach or in anyway disrupt the life of the king without being summoned. Nehemiah deserved death from the viewpoint of the king, but was granted what he did not deserve—mercy or favour.

4. What in verse 11 tells us that Nehemiah expected his prayer to be answered?
   4.1. He was among those who delight in revering the name of God. We delight in revering the name of God through: worship, obedience, love, service.
   4.2. He had a strong desire to please God. He was not self-willed but had a purposeful discipline for the cause of Christ's kingdom.
   4.3. He had a zeal for the glory of God, his name, his Church, his people.
   4.4. God is not interested in lukewarm 'Christians'. He is looking for those who are zealous for his cause. (Examples: Num 25.10-13; Jn 2.17).
   4.5. God will hear the prayer of his people, the ones who desire to honour him.

5. Looking ahead (Neh 2.4, 6) what was the outcome of his prayer?
   5.1. It was answered.

6. What lessons can we derive from this section?
   6.1. Nehemiah's prayer teaches us that it is proper to pray specifically; to ask for something very specific. Too much of prayer seems to be generalities. The prayer Jesus taught his disciples also has specifics (food for the day, not led into temptation, forgive sin). Paul prayed to have his 'thorn in the flesh'

© James R. Hughes, 2006

removed. However, balance is needed. We are not to pray only about personal needs. Nehemiah prays for success for himself for a greater cause.

6.2. Prayer is answered. Sometimes prayer is answered very specifically, exactly as we ask. Of course not all prayers are answered in this way. Sometimes the answer is 'no' or 'other' and sometimes our prayer is conditioned by wrong motives and it cannot be said that the prayer is truly in the name of Jesus.

Summary of Nehemiah's Prayer

- General lessons about the structure of prayer and its subjects:
  - Nehemiah's prayer can serve as a Model.
  - Six key components of prayer?
    1. Praise (names and attributes of God) (5)
    2. Petition 1(to hear his cry and prayer) (6a, 11a)
    3. Penitence (confession of sin) (6b, 7)
    4. Promises (appealing to the promises of God) (8, 9)
    5. Purpose (giving God a reason/purpose for the appeal) (10)
    6. Providence (personal appeal for help) (11b)
  - Similar elements in Nehemiah's prayer as we find in the prayer that Jesus taught his disciples (Mt 6.9-13; Lk 11.2-4).
    - Names and attributes of God, including his abode in heaven (1)
    - Furtherance of Kingdom (4)
    - God's will on Earth (5)
    - Daily bread (7)
    - Forgiveness of Sin (3)
    - Lead not into temptation (?)

    The only part of Nehemiah's prayer not in Lord's Prayer is items 2 and 6 the appeal to be heard.
  - A good model for prayer is to pray from Heaven to earth; from neighbour to self. Start with God and his honour and move to a large scope on this earth and then toward self.

- Principles for prayer
  - Reverent adoration. Praise, worship, honour. Declare the glory of God in prayer.
  - Pray a theology (literally theo-logy, the word/logic of God, the study of God):
    - God the self-existent (I AM)
    - God the creator (Elohim)
    - God the all powerful (great)
    - God the one full of awe (awesome)
    - God the one over all gods (in heaven)
    - God who is personal (his personal name: Jehovah)
    - God who makes covenants and keeps them, faithful
    - God who makes laws and governs his creatures
    - God who hears, answers, and forgives.
  - Sincere Repetition.
    - Valid when it is balanced and sincere.
  - Honest Confession
    - Confess God as the standard bearer. Morality and standards for ethics are derived from God and his word.
    - Confess sin against that standard.
    - Confess not just personal sin, but also the corporate sin of our nation and the Church.
  - Appeal to the Promises of God
    - Ask God to remember his promises. Expect him to be faithful to them.
    - Base the appeal on the Covenant.
    - Pray for the Church, scattered, to be (re-)built through: revival and growth.
  - Specific Personal Petitions
    - Pray specifically. Not in generalities.
    - With a motive to glorify the name of Jesus.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

Divine Providence (Neh 2.1-9)

1. How long was it before Nehemiah presented his case to the king? (compare, with Neh 1.1)
   1.1. He presented his case in the month of Nisan.
   1.2. When he first heard of the situation in Jerusalem it was the month of Kislev.
   1.3. Kislev was about Nov-Dec, Nisan was about March April, therefore a period of 4-5 months had gone by.

2. Why had Nehemiah not presented his case sooner?
   2.1. The king (Artaxerxes I, 464-424 BC) could have been away (for example in Babylon) whereas Nehemiah was in Susa (Neh 1.1). A distance of about 400kms.
   2.2. Nehemiah may have been looking for the correct time to present his case. For example when the Queen (6) (who was possibly the Queen mother [wife of Xerxes] a very influential woman, or possibly his wife), was present and the king would be in a generous mood.
   2.3. There may be hints in the text which may supply a reason:
      2.3.1. He mentions that he brought wine before the king, but if he was cup-bearer for the king he should have been doing this regularly. It may be that he tells us this because it is the first time he has done it in awhile.
      2.3.2. Xenophon (427c-355 BC) a Greek general (heading a Greek mercenary army, fought with Cyrus [Younger – 2nd] as he seized the Persian throne from his older brother Artaxerxes) and a historian/philosopher mentions that wine tasters/cup bearers were confidants and advisors to their kings. It seems unlikely that Nehemiah could have kept his unhappiness invisible for four months. It is likely that the king noticed it when Nehemiah appeared in his presence for the first time after Nehemiah had heard the news from Jerusalem.
   2.4. We can conclude that the king was probably away from Susa, and on his return Nehemiah was prepared to present his case to him.

3. What was the first thing that the king said to Nehemiah?
   3.1. He asked him why he was sad, when not ill. Nehemiah would likely not have been working (especially not serving the king his wine) if he had been ill.
   3.2. Nehemiah was distressed with a deep trouble to the depth of his being. This kind of distress over a four to five month period would have permeated his being. His eyes were probably sunken, he may have lost weight from his anguish, and he may not have been as well groomed as usual. The changes would have been markedly visible to Artaxerxes.
   3.3. The king may have been showing a genuine interest in Nehemiah's situation. Nehemiah, as the cup bearer and wine taster for the king, would also have been a trusted confidant and advisor. He was more than just a simple slave. He was among the most trusted advisers, and in a sense a friend to the king (although there was still the master-slave relationship, and king-subject relationship).

4. What was Nehemiah's reaction to the king's question? Does he display a lack of faith?
   4.1. He tells us that he was very afraid. He was well prepared, but he was still afraid.
   4.2. His was a natural human reaction to an unexpected circumstance. It is not an indication of a lack of trust or faith in God.
   4.3. Nehemiah was probably not expecting such an immediate opportunity to present his case. But he had prayed over the matter diligently, and he was looking for God to give him an opening. He was prepared to go through the door that God opened.

5. What are the steps in Nehemiah's response to the king? Comment on the significance of each step.
   5.1. He answers the king with respect. (3)
      5.1.1. He used the common term for greeting a royal personage. We don't sing God Save the Queen in Canada much any more but it has similar refrain. A similar expression is used in Psalm 72.17 (referring to Solomon and the greater son of David—Christ).
      5.1.2. This response indicates that he was respectful. He understood the 5th Commandment which teaches that we are to honour those in authority over us. Regardless of what we think of the person as an individual who is in an office, we are to show respect for the person as the office-holder. Note: Jesus before the Sanhedrin (Mt 26.62-64) and Paul in a similar situation (Acts 23.1-5).
   5.2. He explains the reason for his sadness. (3)
      5.2.1. Notice what is missing in his response: He specifically does not mention the name of Jerusalem. In fact he doesn't mention it in any part of his request to the king.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

5.2.2. The closest he comes to mentioning it: "the city in Judah where my fathers are buried" (5).
5.2.3. He probably avoided mentioning Jerusalem because it was known as a city of rebellion and trouble as far as the kings of Assyrians, Babylon and Medes and Persians were concerned (Ezra 4.18, 19). Artaxerxes was the very king to whom a letter had been written, and who had stopped the re-building of the city before (Ezra 4.21). It would have been a very dangerous suggestion that the walls of a rebellious city be rebuilt and effectively re-fortified. Jerusalem had in fact a long history of revolt, rebellion, and sedition as the letter suggested (2 Ki 18.7 [701 BC]; 2 Ki 24.1, 20 [600 and 589 BC]).
5.2.4. This explains his anguish and sad face and would elicit a positive response from the king. Mention of a city where the fathers/ancestors were buried would appeal to the attitude prevalent among eastern peoples to venerate their ancestors. Will Durant: "... ancestor-worship was so well adapted to promote social authority and continuity, conservatism and order, that it soon spread to every [?] religion of the earth. It flourished in Egypt, Greece and Rome, and survives vigorously in China and Japan today; many peoples worship ancestors but no god."[1] Zoroastrianism adopted by Darius (524-486 BC) contained elements of ancestor worship: "holy immortal ones."
5.2.5. Nehemiah does something similar to what Paul does, for example in Acts 17.16, 22-23, 28 and Jesus does a number of times (e.g., Lk 13.1-5; his illustrations: Jn 4.35 at Sychar using the fields; Lk 20.24 with a coin that had the religious symbol on one side and the state head on the other). He finds a 'common ground' to gain interest, show relevance. This is a useful apologetic approach. Remember! Nehemiah is a Church builder. We can learn from and apply, what he is doing on behalf of Jerusalem—on behalf of spiritual Jerusalem, the Church of God.

5.3. He hears the king's question: "What is it you want?" (4)
5.3.1. The king treated Nehemiah as more than a slave. He offered to provide him with a boon.

5.4. He reacts with a private 'spontaneous prayer' before he answers. (4)
5.4.1. Nehemiah lived close to God, knowing that God was beside him. He immediately prayed to God, because he knew that God was present, in control, and able to help. He was a man living with one foot in heaven and one on the earth.
5.4.2. Nehemiah prays (some longer, some spontaneous) in Neh 1.4; Neh 2.4; Neh 4.4, 9; Neh 5.19; Neh 6.9, 14; Neh 9.5-37; Neh 13.14, 22, 29, 30. We could say that Nehemiah's life was permeated with prayer.
5.4.3. We have instruction to apply a similar approach to prayer in our lives (Lk 18.1; Eph 6.18; 1 Thess 5.17).

5.5. He responds to the king's request. (5)
5.5.1. Note: Nehemiah still does not mention the city's name and he continues to appeal on the basis of it being the city of his ancestors.
5.5.2. This time he gets to the point and asks for permission to go and rebuild it.
5.5.3. In the boldness of God he stands before a king (Lk 21.12-19).

5.6. He listens to the king's second question. (6)
5.6.1. The king wanted to know how long the journey would be and when he would return.
5.6.2. Nehemiah tells us that he set a time, but does not tell us how long it was for.
5.6.3. It is possible that he said that he would be away for only a short period, but it is more likely he spoke in terms of many months or a year.
5.6.4. It took 52 days to rebuild the walls, plus the effort to put in place the gates (Neh 6.15). Since he wanted to go and rebuild the city walls, specifically, he probably knew it would take a number of months. He may have asked for half a year or a year. It is likely that the king extended his stay by making him the permanent governor of Judah.
5.6.5. His actual appointment appears to have been 12 years (compare, 2.1 and 5.14), not including his second term (Neh 13.6-7).

5.7. He goes further and asks for specific support (Neh 2.6b-8a).
5.7.1. Letters to the governors of the territories (Trans-Euphrates: from the perspective of Susa and Babylon Aram, Phoenicia, and Palestine [also Egypt]) he will passing through, asking for safe conduct. This involves also the provision of food and accommodation for his journey. It is not just a request to protect him from being molested.
5.7.2. Letters to have Asaph the king's forest keepers supply him with timbers for the city gates. The word used here is *pardes*. It is used three times in the OT (forest: *vs* 8, orchard: SS 4.13, parks: Eccl 2.5). This ancient Iranian (Persian) word (meaning an enclosed garden, or garden with a wall)

[1] *The Story of Civilization,* Vol 1.63.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

has come through the OT (Aramaic) into the NT (Lk 23.43; 2 Cor 12.4; Rev 2.7) and into English as 'paradise. We should not think of a large collection of huge trees, but rather a cultured garden. The word 'forest' might be too laden with meaning in English and we might miss the subtly of the OT meaning. Possibly 'plantation' would be better. During the middle ages kings had parks with oaks which were kept for the purposes of replacing the beams in the roofs of buildings. It was standard practice to plant trees in a park and designate the park as part of the estate so that trees would mature with the building and be ready to replace the beams when the time came for repair. This park was likely an oak plantation near Jerusalem: one possibility is a garden planted by Solomon 10km south of Jerusalem, a second possibility is the oak forest in Bashan. Compare: 2 Sam 18.6, 8-9 apparently a forest in Gilead (see, 2 Sam 17.24, 26) on the east side of the Jordan across from Jericho. See also: 'oaks of Bashan' in Is 2.13; Ezk 27.6; Zech 11.2. This place was close to Jerusalem and could provide good wood for gates.

5.8. We can summarize Nehemiah request as a request for:
  5.8.1. Sabbatical.
  5.8.2. Safety
  5.8.3. Supplies

6. What did Nehemiah display in his request?
  6.1. Boldness in spelling out his request.
  6.2. Preparation—it is clear that he had done his research (see, also later in this chapter when he inspects the walls). He had thought out the contingencies and had a well formulated plan. He did not leave the work of God to 'chance' but planned and prepared for when God would provide the opportunity.
  6.3. A willingness to use his abilities in the service of God. Willing to put aside personal ambition. He saw that his purpose was to serve his Creator and Lord. The claims of eternity were more important than a few years of temporal glory in the empire's capital.

7. How did King respond?
  7.1. He agreed to meet all of Nehemiah's requests.
  7.2. He went beyond and supplied Nehemiah with an escort of soldiers and cavalry.
  7.3. He made him governor. Nehemiah did not ask to be made Governor, but only to rebuild the city.

8. What was the reason the king give all these things to Nehemiah?
  8.1. God is in control of the king's heart (Dan 2.21; Dan 5.23; Prov 21.1).
  8.2. Nehemiah was a faithful man. The king granted Nehemiah's request because he had already proven himself to be trustworthy and capable. It appears that God and the king rewarded him for his faithfulness. (Prov 22.29). God was doing more than Nehemiah could have hoped for.

9. What lessons can we derive from this section?
  9.1. The importance of planning and careful preparation. There is an attitude among some in the Church that planning is not something that Christians should do who are being led by the Holy Spirit. Planning and preparation are not contrary to the working of the Holy Spirit. They are a means that the Holy Spirit uses to further his work. Work in the Church is to be planned, well organized, and thought through. But we must be open to leading of Holy Spirit. We prepare, God opens doors. [For more on the topic of planning, see the notes on the lessons for Nehemiah 2.11-16.]
  9.2. Deal with situations with tact. Think about the best way to make our point.
  9.3. Pray with expectation for God to open doors.
  9.4. Take bold steps. William Carey preached a missionary sermon May 31, 1792: "expect great things from God and attempt great things for God" London Missionary Society and India.
  9.5. Remember, believe, and trust that nothing is out of control. Nothing is too big or too difficult for God. God is not weak against the most mighty of men! God can intervene in the most difficult situations:
    9.5.1. Heidelberg Catechism Q 27 "Providence is the almighty and ever present power of God by which he upholds, as with his hand, heaven and earth and all creatures, and so rules them that leaf and blade, rain and drought, fruitful and lean years, food and drink, health and sickness, prosperity and poverty – all things, in fact, come to us not by chance but from the his fatherly hand."
    9.5.2. Westminster Shorter Catechism Q11: "God's providence is his completely holy, wise, and powerful preserving and governing every creature and every action."
    9.5.3. Eph 3.20, 21.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

Detailed Preparation (Neh 2.11-16)

1. On arriving in Jerusalem, what did Nehemiah do? (11)
   1.1. He stayed in Jerusalem three days before taking any action.

2. Why did he not immediately go into action and organize the re-building of the walls?
   2.1. He might have been:
      2.1.1. Resting.
      2.1.2. Establishing himself as the governor by becoming settled and making sure that people knew his role.
      2.1.3. Getting to know the officials in the city—understand the power structures in place, who the influencers were.
      2.1.4. Planning in detail his course of action.
      2.1.5. Praying. Knowing Nehemiah's character it seems reasonable to conclude that he spent time praying.
   2.2. Notice that he did not rush. He was deliberate in his actions. An extra few days would not make any difference to the immediate situation, but could make a lot of difference in how things went in the long term.
   2.3. Also notice that he established himself. A ministry must be personal and hands-on. Luther in Wartberg felt isolated, and itched to get out and be involved. Suburban churches cannot have effective urban ministries through commuters who go home to the quiet suburbs at night. Missionaries can't work from thousands of kms away. We are not all called to work in every situation, but those who are called to work in a particular venue need to be present.

3. After establishing himself what did he do? (12-15)
   3.1. He began the physical investigation of the walls
   3.2. He investigated part of the walls:
      3.2.1. He only went part way around the southern portion of the walls, not the northern portion where the Temple was re-built. He might have covered 25% of the walled area.
      3.2.2. It seems that he was thorough in his work, but only to the extent required for action.
      3.2.3. There are two extremes that people can go to when preparing for action: 1) rushing in with no preparation, or 2) over preparing through 'analysis paralysis'. Nehemiah did not seem to have difficulty with either. He was a man of action, but he was not precipitous.

4. What does he tell us that he did not do? Why? (16)
   4.1. He did not tell anyone what he was doing, nor did he announce his purpose in advance.
   4.2. He conducted a private investigation, with a few trusted men.
   4.3. He kept his propose quiet:
      4.3.1. This is more of his preparation. He wanted to understand the situation before he unveiled his plans. This way people could not begin to ridicule or criticize without him being able to give a factual response.
      4.3.2. Because he wanted to be able to answer objections, by having a clear strategy and definition of the steps to carry out.
      4.3.3. To be skeptical would not be difficult. The walls were broken down and gates burned (2 Kin 25.10, 586 BC) and not able to be repaired (Ezra 4.21, 23).
      4.3.4. It is likely that many plans of good men, and good leaders have failed because they have announced them too early. This has given their enemies, and those who by nature resist change, a chance to come up with counter arguments and build support among the skeptical.
      4.3.5. Enemies come quickly (10, 19, 20). Notice in Ezra 4.4-5 the use of hired agitators and lobbyists. They may not be 'hired' in churches, but you find agitators who are skeptical of any form of change and who cannot believe that God will work through different means.

5. What lessons can we derive from this section?
   5.1. We can compare the situation to that of the Church today:
      5.1.1. We should also be distressed over the lack of strength in the Church today.
      5.1.2. The walls have been torn down by false doctrine and false worship (walls fallen can no longer protect the people), and cavalier attitudes to keeping God's commands along with materialism.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

5.1.3. This is, to some extent, the situation in every part of the church in every period of history. There is always somewhere where the walls are crumbling and need repair. Until eternity, lessons from Nehemiah will always be important for us.

5.2. We can apply Nehemiah's example of planning and preparation to the church context:

5.2.1. Planning and preparation are not contrary to the working of the Holy Spirit. They are a means that the Holy Spirit uses to further his work. Work in the church is to be planned, well organized, and thought through. But it is to be lead by Holy Spirit. We prepare, God opens doors. For example Paul planned a mission work (2 Cor 1.15-17) and the Holy Spirit sent him to Macedonia (Acts 16.6-10). David prepared plans for building the temple (1 Chron 28.2-3).

5.2.2. Calvin in his sermon on Deuteronomy 6.15-19 said that he would be testing God if he did not plan and prepare his messages. It is presumptuous to not use the means God has put at our disposal.

5.2.3. Some examples of Biblical references to planning:

5.2.3.1. Ps 20.4 make plans succeed versus Ps 140.8 where plans of wicked foiled.

5.2.3.2. Ps 33.10, 11 God's plans compared with the plans of the nations.

5.2.3.3. Is 30.1 Comparison between plans of Godly with those of the wicked (Is 32.7-8).

5.2.3.4. Plans of righteous just (Prov 12.5).

5.2.3.5. Note Paul (2 Cor 1.17) did not plan in a worldly manner.

5.2.3.6. Planning in the will of God (James 4.13-15; Prov 16.3).

5.3. Keys of leadership (not exhaustive) can be derived from this passage:

5.3.1. Planning and work scope definition: obtain a clear understanding of what the task is; what its size and scope are; the parameters, limits, and time frames (long, mid short); how to realistically achieve goals.

5.3.2. Be prepared to answer objections: have a clear strategy and definition of the steps to carry the people forward.

Determined People I (Neh 2.17-18)

1. What does Nehemiah do, after he has completed his analysis and preparation?
   1.1. He informs the people in Jerusalem of his plans.
   1.2. He likely had already informed the nobles and officials (v 16).

2. What is the means he uses to communicate his vision?
   2.1. He gives a speech.
   2.2. Discuss why he used this means of communicating.
   2.3. Discuss famous speeches throughout history that have motivated people:
      2.3.1. Examples: Socrates' defence, Jesus *Sermon on Mount*, Paul in Athens, Urban II calling for the First Crusade (Nov 27, 1059), Luther at Worms, Lincoln at Gettysburg (Nov 18, 1863), Martin Luther King Jr (Aug 28, 1963), Winston Churchill's 'Blood, Sweat and Tears' (May 13, 1940).

3. What are some features of this speech that have elements of motivation?
   3.1. His personal identification ("we" "us"), as a form of 'common ground' or a starting point.
   3.2. A summary of the state of affairs (stating the obvious, but also summing it up), as something that should not be, showing the people that they should not be satisfied with the status quo. He said: "you see the trouble"—you personally.
   3.3. A challenge to change things ("let us rebuild").
   3.4. A vision. Not just a criticism of the state of affairs. But a single-minded, single-focused vision for what can be if the challenge is taken up.
   3.5. The evidence for how the vision can be made to work (18). He uses:
      3.5.1. A personal example of the power of God.
      3.5.2. A psychological moment. He told them first what to do, then explained how God had changed the king's heart to reverse previous policy, so that they could see that it would be possible to move forward.
   3.6. We can summarize this approach with PROVE: Partnership, Record, Objective, Vision, Evidence.

4. There is something missing from this speech which should be missing from any motivational speech. What is missing?
   4.1. Consider Luke 9.5. Also consider Acts 18.5, 6. Something in common is missing in all three of these examples.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

4.2. Another way to see the contrast is to compare Nehemiah's behaviour when dealing with the men of Tyre in Nehemiah 13.19-21.
4.3. The element missing from Nehemiah's motivational speech, that should be missing from any motivational speech, is coercion.
4.3.1. Because he wanted the will of the people to be behind what they were doing.
4.3.2. Behaviour is to be (en)forced when obedience to 'negative' laws, applicable to all people, is required. For example we have to enforce laws to restrain people from doing wrong to one another. However, obedience to 'positive' laws applicable to those who act in love should be unforced behaviour. We cannot *force* people to do good to one another.
4.3.3. Our governments need to learn the distinction between these two kinds of behaviour. They try to enact laws of compassion (equal opportunity, equality of outcome, etc.). It will never work, because people cannot be forced to be good. They can only be forced or restrained, from doing bad.
4.3.4. The Gospel is never enforced by the sword. Islam may be propagated by the sword, cults may have coercion associated with them, but Christianity presents truth for acceptance or rejection by the individual. This points to the fact that it takes the converting work of the Holy Spirit to make people 'good'. It takes the enforcement of God's laws by the civil magistrate to keep people from being bad, but that never makes them good in their hearts.

5. What relevance does this speech have for the Church today?
5.1. We have been applying the work of Nehemiah to the work of building the spiritual City of Jerusalem (the Church) in our day.
5.2. Preaching (a form of speech) is God's chosen instrument for the advance of his kingdom. Effective preaching is more than just informing, it is motivating. Preaching is to be more than just communicating information, it is aimed at changing hearts and wills (through the power of the Holy Spirit).
5.3. Effective preaching will have the same elements as Nehemiah's speech.
5.4. Effective preaching will call people to repent and obey. But it ends with persuasion and evidence. It rests on the Holy Spirit to convict and apply. [Church censure deals with lack of obedience to the 'negative' prohibitions.]
5.5. Consider Acts 17.22-31 as an example of a sermon applying the motivational factors found in Nehemiah's speech:
5.5.1. P (Partnership) – 22, 23 "I see, I walked, I found, I proclaim"
5.5.2. R (Record) – 23-26 Religious, objects of worship ("your objects")
5.5.3. O (Objective) – 30 repent
5.5.4. V (Vision) – 27 men seek God
5.5.5. E (Evidence) – 28, 29 God's being; 31 punishment.

6. Although there are elements in his speech which can be found in all great, or effective, speeches. There is something in his speech, which is not found in many/most other speeches unless they are in the context of preaching. What is that element?
6.1. He appeals on the basis of God's purposes:
6.1.1. By the nature of the work—building Jerusalem. The work of the kingdom is always more important than anything else. In fact all that we do should ultimately be furthering God's kingdom in one way or another. When we consciously bring glory to God we are declaring his kingship over all sectors of life (family, church, society, state).
6.1.2. By his appeal to God's Providence—he showed that God's hand was on the work by providing for him in his appeal to the king and providing the necessities for the journey and the work of the rebuilding (e.g., the wood from the forest).
6.2. This provides us with clear guidelines for moving forward in whatever work we are proposing to undertake. If the work is truly for the furtherance of the kingdom of God, and God's providences are showing us that he is supporting this direction, then this will be a course of action that will be blessed by him. How he will bless it will not always be clear, and the form of blessing may at times surprise us. But, nevertheless, we can be encouraged that the particular course of action is within his special will and that it is a course of action that we can pursue.
6.3. We need to remember this when we face discouragements of one kind or another. We see these discouragements come upon the Jews when they deal with Sanballat and their other enemies. When our work is consistent with the special will of God, we can take encouragement and press on when hardships come our way.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

7. What was the response of the people to his speech?
   7.1. It was twofold:
      7.1.1. They responded that they would act.
      7.1.2. They in fact acted. The response was more than just one of verbal commitment. It was one of action.
   7.2. Many motivational speeches are effective only for the moment, and therefore are not really effective. Motivational speeches, and preaching as a particular type, are intended to change belief *and* behavior. It is not enough to have people say "that was interesting." Nehemiah's speech changed their belief about the situation so that they would respond positively to the vision that they could rebuild the wall. It also changed their behaviour so that they acted in response to their changed belief.

8. What are we told about the work that they began? Why?
   8.1. It was a good work.
   8.2. Notice that this appears to be the only time that the work is designated as a 'good' work. [Compare Neh 2.16; Neh 3.1, 5; Neh 4.11, 15, 16, 17, 19, 21; Neh 5.16; Neh 6.3, 9, 16; Neh 7.70, 71; Neh 10.37; (these in a different context 11.12, 16). In all of these one Hebrew word (translated: work, duties, tasks, business, craft) is used, except in 3.5 and 10.37 where a different word is used (translated: work, labour, service, ministry) and 3.1 (translated: arose, set about, built, etc.)].
   8.3. In Nehemiah 2.18 the word used in Hebrew has literal translation of: 'this good' or 'this good thing' the word 'work' is supplied (correctly) in the translations.
   8.4. What made this work, activity 'good'? Possibly because it was more than an ordinary work, or possibly because it was in terms of the fact that this work was dedicated directly to the work of the Church.

9. What lessons can we derive from this section?
   9.1. When people of God are presented with good evidence, a plan of action with hope for success, and a good cause, they will respond.
   9.2. It is important for leadership in a congregation to place a challenge in front of the congregation which has these attributes: P R O V E.

Devil's Promoters I (Neh 2.10, 19, 20)

1. Who do we find attacking the plan of the Jews (10, 19)?
   1.1. Sanballat from Horonaim (Is 15.5; Jer 48.3, 5, 34) a Moabite whose name means 'Sin (the moon god) gives life', governor of Samaria from 407 BC (according to Elephantine Papyri). It appears that he was of primarily Moabite ancestry (Neh 2.20), from a people of syncretistic worship of God (2 Ki 17.33), and aligned with Jews through marriage (Neh 13.28).
   1.2. Tobiah an Ammonite, governor under Persia, whose name in Hebrew, means 'God is good', possibly of mixed Jewish /Ammonite ancestry (his son was given a Jewish name (Neh 6.18) and he had many Jewish friends (Neh 6.17ff; Neh 13.4). It appears that he was closely aligned with the Jewish nobles through his own (Neh 6.18; note Arah: 7.10; Ezra 2.5) and his son's marriage (Neh 6.18; note Meshullam: 3.4, 30) and may have had some under oath to him (Neh 6.18) through business or marriage connections. He apparently had a residence in Jerusalem in the temple precincts (Neh 13.5).
   1.3. Geshem an Arab. According to extra-Biblical inscriptions he was a tribal 'king' over Bedouin traders in N Arabia. Persia cultivated relationships with the Arabs, thus his letter (Neh 6.6) would not go unheeded.
   1.4. Both Moabites and Ammonites descended from Lot. They refused to help Israel, and were excluded from Israel (Dt 23.3-6; Neh 13.1). Balak king of Moab tried to curse Israel (Num 22-24). Israel was often at war with Moab during the time of Judges and Kings. These nations are viewed as signs of judgment (e.g., Moab: Is 15-16; Jer 9.26; Jer 25.21; Jer 27.3; Ezk 25.8-11; Amos 2.1-3; Zeph 2.8-11). Solomon worshipped the God of Ammon (Molech)
   1.5. Locations: Ammon E-NE of the Dead Sea, Moab E of the Dead Sea, Arabs E-SE of the Dead Sea.

2. What was their reaction to the plan and work of the Jews? Why?
   2.1. They were disturbed (10). Someone had come to promote the welfare of the Israelites. What specifically disturbed them?
      2.1.1. Another governor (Neh 5.14) who would be over them. No one likes to have his authority diminished unless he is blessed with great wisdom from God (e.g., John the Baptist; Jn 3.30).
      2.1.2. The people of God would be strengthened and their well-being promoted.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

2.1.3. As the people of God are strengthened what happens? The gospel goes forward and there are changes in society and sin and oppression are put down. However, men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil (Jn 3.19). These enemies wanted to see their evil luxuries and power continued.

2.2. They acted in spite through ridicule (19). Why?

2.2.1. Because the opponents of Christianity cannot challenge it on rational grounds.

2.2.2. What are examples of scoffing against God and his laws in the Bible? (Gen 3.4, 5; Gen 16.4; Gen 21.9; Acts 26.24; 2 Pt 3.3; Jude 18).

2.2.3. What are examples in our current day? TV shows make fun of Christians. "Political Correctness" claims to be tolerant, except when it comes to Christianity which states that there are absolutes.

2.2.4. Unbelievers can only challenge Christianity with either force or farce.

2.2.5. What is God's reaction? (Ps 2.1-6: LORD in turn scoffs at them and rebukes them).

3. How did Nehemiah silence the opposition at this time?

3.1. He invoked the power and providence of God (20):

3.1.1. "God of Heaven"—the ruler over the universe (Neh l 1.5). God is ruler over all men; not Chemosh or Molech (2 Ki 23.13).

3.1.2. "Will give us success". Nehemiah referred to the providence of God in his speech to the people (18). He knew that God promised to help his people, and the providences of God were indicating that he was going to help at this time. He knew that he could have confidence that God would prevail over the wicked intentions of men.

3.2. He exercised a form of discipline. "you have no share" He cut off the immoral persons.

3.2.1. There are many examples of this in the Bible; a few: Gen 4.11-14; Gen 21.8; Dt 13.5; Dt 17.7; Dt 19.19; Judges 20.13; Rom 16.17-18; 1 Cor 5.12, 13; Rev 2.20.

3.2.2. Later Nehemiah has to take the same kind of action a second time (Neh 13.4-9, 28).

4. What lessons can we derive from this section?

4.1. Nominal 'Christians' can sometimes be our worst enemies. The world will often ignore Christians until we suggest that God's laws apply to them. Otherwise Christianity is tolerated as something quaint and okay for you to do in your own home. But nominal 'Christians' in the Church will be antagonistic to the position that the Bible is above tradition or the will of man. Reformation cleans the church, revival cleans society. It is unlikely that there can be revival without reformation. Reformation ➔ revival ➔ changes in society. Nehemiah was a reformer. We need to pray for reformers and reformation.

4.2. The Work of the Church belongs to the people of God, to professing believers (members), not to anyone within its doors. The leaders in the Church are to exercise discipline when trouble makers disrupt or hinder the advance of the work. There is nothing loving about being tolerant of those who hinder the progress of the kingdom (for any reason: pride, selfish motives, or a false adherence to traditions).

4.3. Christianity cannot be challenged on rational grounds. It is the only religion that is rational, and defensible rationally. We can use the 'Impossibility of the Contrary' argument popularized by CS Lewis and presented by Van Til as part of his presuppositional apologetics. All other religions and ethical systems are full of logical inconsistencies.

4.4. The world cannot defend its views of 'morality' (e.g., abortion, homosexuality) rationally. Men need to appeal to absolutes or there can be no morality of any kind. Men scoff at absolutes. With their views about evolution, socialism, etc. men ignore the fact that there is no valid evidence to support their claims. They don't need or want evidence. They accept their views on faith. Irrational/blind faith is a false religion.

4.5. We should expect to see irrational behaviour from opponents of Christianity in the world and in the Church. They cannot defend their positions rationally so will use force or farce. If we know this, then we can realize that they have no hope. This helps us to understand that they are on the defensive.

4.6. Christianity will never fail. The Church will never fail. Christ will never fail. 2, 500 years ago enemies of Christ stood up to oppose the Jews. This example of opposition rather than discouraging us should encourage us. Where are Sanballat. Tobiah. and Geshem today? Their memory (other than in Bible's account, and in a few inscriptions) has been wiped from the earth. Their names are not written in the Lamb's Book of Life. What did they gain? What did they lose? (Mt 16.26) Glory belongs to our eternal King.

Diligent Parties (Neh 3.1-32)

© James R. Hughes, 2006

1. Why does God list all the places and people we find in this chapter? Why did scribes faithfully copy this section of the Bible for generations?
   1.1. This chapter provides a lot of information about the route of the wall. Many of the locations along the wall have significance elsewhere in the Bible (e.g., Tower Hundred, Tower Hananel, Fish Gate, Tower of Ovens, Valley Gate, Fountain Gate, King's Garden, tombs of David, House of the Heros, upper palace, Water Gate, Horse Gate, East Gate). We could look at these interesting sites and the history of them, but we are not archaeologists trying to reconstruct the outline of the city walls from the time of Nehemiah, so we need to understand the reasons the Holy Spirit provided this passage for us.
   1.2. There are also the names of many people mentioned. A few have significance elsewhere in the account of Nehemiah. But most of the names are only recorded here. In spite of the fact that we might have difficulty reading the names, we will find that there are a number of lessons that we can derive from this passage of Scripture.
   1.3. The names of locations and the people's names place the events of Nehemiah in a real space-time situation. The Bible is historical. It is not intended to be a history book, but when it is recording history it is accurate. You can pick up this account and walk the remains of the city wall in Jerusalem about 2, 500 years later. The accuracy of this account gives us a promise of accuracy with respect to other accounts in Scripture. [Compare Luke 1.1 and Acts and apply this to Genesis 1-11.]
   1.4. This account is a Memorial of Zion. We can consider similar examples such as names of donors on an edifice:
      1.4.1. Many buildings are named after a person, or there is a listing of those who contributed to its construction. Or the list of names are often scribed in a book and the book is put on display in the lobby.
      1.4.2. Names on the wall of a university or in a stained glass window in memorial hall, chapel, of those who contributed or did great service (e.g., killed in war [see *Chariots of Fire*]).
      1.4.3. We may not know any of these people, but they are memorialized in history.
      1.4.4. It was a great honour to have one's name associated with the (re-)building of Jerusalem. Just like it is an honour to have one's name recorded in the birth records of the city (Ps 87.4; Rev 3.12).
   1.5. This account reminds us that God is keeping a record in his books in heaven (a record of all things: Rev 20.12). All the work of building the Church is known to God.
   1.6. This account teaches us that God cares for the city. Other indications, in scripture, that God cares very much for the city of Jerusalem, Zion, include the following examples, taken just from the Book of Psalms:
      1.6.1. The dwelling-place of God: Ps 2.6; Ps 9.11; Ps 50.2; Ps 74.2; Ps 76.2; Ps 99.2; Ps 110.2; Ps 132.13; Ps 135.21
      1.6.2. The pleasure of God to build walls: Ps 51.18; Ps 102.16; Ps 147.2
      1.6.3. The place where God's name is praised: Ps 102.21; Ps 147.12
      1.6.4. The place God wants us to show off as his citadel: Ps 48.12-13
      1.6.5. The place God loves: Ps 78.68; Ps 87.2; Ps 129.5 (haters turned to shame)
      1.6.6. The place that is a source of blessing: Ps 128.5; Ps 134.3
      1.6.7. The abode of God's people: Ps 84.7; Ps 126.1.
   1.7. Why does he care for the city? It is a metaphor for the Church, the body of believers. Zion is equated with the Church (Mt 21.5; Rom 9.33; Heb 12.22; 1 Pt 2.6). Therefore, it is no surprise that God records those who work hard to (re-)build the walls.

2. What different locations did the people working on the wall come from?
   2.1. Jericho (2), Tekoa south of Bethlehem (5, 27), Gibeon (NW from Jerusalem) and Mizpah (NW Jerusalem), Meronoth (near Gibeon?) (7), Zanoah (W of Jerusalem) (13) Beth Hacceram (14); Beth Zur (16); Keilah (17, 18).
   2.2. Who were these people? Presumably those who had come back with Ezra from the exile but who were living in the surrounding areas. See Ezra 2.70; Nehemiah 11.1-2. Josephus in the Antiquities says: "But Nehemiah, seeing that the city had a small population, urged the priests and Levites to leave the countryside and move to the city and remain there, for he had prepared houses for them at his own expense."

3. What different occupations did the people have?
   3.1. Priests (Neh 3.1, 22, 28); goldsmiths (Neh 3.8, 31, 32); perfume makers (Neh 3.8), see 1 Sam 8.13; Levites (Neh 3.17); temple servants (Neh 3.26); guards (Neh 3.29); merchants (Neh 3.32); rulers of half-districts or districts (Neh 3.9, 12, 14-19).

© James R. Hughes, 2006

3.2. Other than the merchants, what might all of the other occupations be associated with? They all might have been roles associated with the work of the Temple (at least part of the time).
3.3. For example, the perfume makers could have been sellers of general perfumes but could also have been the ones who made incense for the Temple.

4. What is peculiar about the occupations listed? What is missing from the list?
4.1. Common occupations such as farmers, stone masons, carpenters are missing.

5. What is common to all the occupations listed as compared with those not listed?
5.1. They are generally occupations of urban life and crafts which require a significant investment and therefore are likely associated with higher incomes.
5.2. It seems that the people working on the wall were the ones who were wealthy and had influence and who could contribute financial resources and time. The poor people were probably too busy trying to make 'ends-meet' (see, Neh 5.1-13).

6. What is significant about the number of references to rulers in this list?
6.1. The leaders did not avoid doing work. In fact, since they are mentioned so often seems to indicate that they were taking the lead and setting an example for the rest.

7. What special group of workers stands out from all the others?
7.1. Daughters (12).
7.2. This is the only mention of women being involved in the work.
7.3. This seems to indicate that there was no reason that they could not have been. There may have been others.
7.4. They may have been mentioned specifically because Shallum did not have any sons. Each family was expected to contribute and possibly this was the only way that Shallum could do his share of the work.

8. What are some examples of how all can share in the work of a congregation?
8.1. Building the Church means growing it intensively and extensively, through:
8.1.1. Evangelism. We all should participate in evangelism in one way or another. We don't all have to participate in every aspect. But we are not really building the Church if we don't.
8.1.2. Working on programs in the Church: Tape ministry, ministry of hospitality, writing ... many skills, many ways. We should be looking at what talents we have and be putting them to use for the work of the Church. Sometimes, we are called to do things beyond our current skill set (just as perfume makers were hoisting stones).
8.1.3. Counseling and teaching others: Titus 2.4; Heb 3.13 with 10.25; Gal 6.2.
8.2. Everyone is to be involved, not just as 'prayer-partners' since all are to be prayer partners, but in the work of building, as they are capable. [See Nehemiah 4.9: prayer and action].

9. What do we find in 5 and 27 that is uniquely significant?
9.1. The nobles of Tekoa didn't do any of the work, so the men of Tekoa had to do double duty (27).
9.2. It may be that they did not want to get their hands dirty, or in some way felt that the work was beneath them.
9.3. This may be pointed out so that we realize that the work was a labour of selfless giving on the part of those who did the work. The lack of involvement of the nobles of Tekoa is to their shame, and it also stands as a permanent witness to those who gave of their resources.
9.4. Leaders in the Church are to set an example through selfless giving of both their resources and time. Those (leaders and people) who put their hands to any task needing to be done are the builders of the Church.
9.5. Note: We are not told that Nehemiah did any of the construction of the wall. This probably does not mean that he felt that the work was beneath him. He may have worked on the wall but did not want to tell us about his role, or he was too busy organizing the workers (see, Neh 4.16, 23). In contrast the nobles of Tekoa appear to have sat on the sidelines and did not contribute in any way.

10. What indicates that the organization of the labourers was thought through and planned carefully?
10.1. Divisions into territories north (Neh 3.1-7), west (Neh 3.8-13), south (Neh 3.14), east (Neh 3.15-32).
10.2. The account is laid out in an orderly fashion around the walls, in counter clockwise direction.
10.3. The number of groups which had to be organized [41 or 42], from many locales.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

10.4. The people worked opposite their houses (Neh 3.10, 23, 28-30). This indicates that people repaired a section of the wall nearest their homes, which was convenient and more likely to encourage diligence since they would work hard to protect their own homes.

11. What indications do we have that the work was considered something special?
    11.1. It was a good work (Neh 2.18).
    11.2. It started with the priests (1).
    11.3. It was a executed with zeal (Neh 3.20; NIV).
    11.4. We are privileged to be given work for the Church. It is a great honour to be engaged in God's work that is of eternal worth (1 Cor 10.31; Rev 7.15). The walls of Jerusalem may crumble, but the spiritual victories go on into eternity.

12. What lessons can we derive from this section?
    12.1. The work of the church is a community work under leadership (elders/pastors). All members are to become involved in one aspect or another of the work.
    12.2. This supports the idea of "every member ministry." See Eph 4.11-13.
    12.3. This speaks against a 'professional class' that does all the work of the Church. It is wrong to think that ministry is the work of the clergy. The nobles and people could have collected money for the rebuilding of the walls and hired professional stone masons, but instead they all did their share of the work.
        12.3.1. The work, in many cases, may not have been perfect. But participation is better than perfection.
    12.4. Diversity in the midst of unity ("next to him, them" 20+ times). Geographic and social diversity in the congregation (Eph 4.16; 1 Cor 12.14, 18-20). Their work may have appeared to be a "hodge-podge" but they would have had a collective pride in it.
        12.4.1. The need for organization and delegation of responsibility along with accountability. Organization is required to find useful skills in the congregation and appropriate roles for everyone.
        12.4.2. We are not to be involved in aimless activity in the Church, with everyone doing his own thing. All are to work together for a common cause and vision as put together by the leaders of the Church (1 Cor 14.33, 40). We are to work together in worship (Col 2.5), but also in other aspects of the Church (e.g., evangelism Lk 10.1; church government 1 Cor 12.28-30; 1 Tim 3.1-13; Titus 1.5-9)
        12.4.3. Some people in the Church argue against organization as they say it does not leave room for the Spirit to act. Trust in organization is wrong. But organization itself is not.
        12.4.4. J. I. Packer: "Neither the most powerful preaching nor the most exuberant display of spiritual manifestations will build up the local church without the organizational wisdom that sets goals and devises means to ends. The preaching pastors who have left behind them the most virile and mature churches have been those whose pulpit work was linked with good organizing, done by others if not themselves. Check it out: you will find that it is so."

Devil's Promoters II (Neh 4.1-23)

Petty Troublemakers (Neh 4.1)

1. Who are the enemies of the people of God (the Jews) that caused troubles previously? (Neh 2.10, 19, 20)
    1.1. Recall that the attempt of Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem failed when they tried to stop the work of reconstruction before it began. [Refer to *Devil's Promoters I* for background on Sanballat and Tobiah.]
    1.2. Once the construction of the wall is underway they (at least Sanballat and Tobiah) returned to harass the Jews and to try to stop their work.
    1.3. We will consider the tactics they used, how Nehemiah responded, and what his response can teach us in about how to counteract the schemes of the wicked.

2. What was Sanballat's reaction when he heard that the Jews were rebuilding the wall? How does if compare with his previous reaction (Neh 2.10)?
    2.1. He became angry, incensed.
    2.2. Previously he was disturbed. Now he is angry that wall is going up.

3. Why is he angry?
    3.1. Because his position was threatened.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

3.2. There is, however, more than just concern that his governorship will be threatened by a new power structure. There is likely a more basic motive. It is that he did not get his way. People often deal with disappointment that they did not get their way with anger. With a child we often see him throwing a temper tantrum. What is the mechanism that adults often use when they don't get their way? They find a way to get even.

4. Which of the Ten Commandments is (are) being broken by Sanballat with this behaviour?
   4.1. It may not appear to be immediately obvious. We have to think a bit on the basis of principles, and examples.
   4.2. We know that this kind of anger is wrong: 2 Cor 12.20; Eph 4.26 (Ps 4.4), 31 (grieves the Holy Spirit); Col 3.8.
   4.3. So, which of the Ten Commandments does anger breach?
      4.3.1. We could think that it breaks the 10th , "You shall not Covet." It is true that his covetousness led to his anger, but that is not really the command that is broken.
      4.3.2. Reflect on Eph 4.25-29 (anger, stealing, unwholesome talk). This may point to the fact that anger falls under the sin of murder.
      4.3.3. The Larger Catechism Q136: "What are the sins forbidden in the sixth commandment?" A: " … sinful anger …"
      4.3.4. See Mt 5.21, 22 where Jesus classes anger with murder.

5. How does Sanballat direct his anger?
   5.1. Two ways: Psychological Threats and Physical Threats.
   5.2. We will look at these and see how Nehemiah responds to each.

Psychological Threats (Neh 4.2-3, 10-12)

1. What was the form and structure of Sanballat's ridicule? (2)
   1.1. The form consists of questions. A series of five questions.

2. Where else do we see examples of this form of ridicule, in the Bible, in the form of questions?
   2.1. Satan uses the same form when he ridicules God and his word in front of Eve (Gen 3.1-5).
   2.2. Satan questions Job's veracity (Job 1.9).
   2.3. Satan questions Jesus' position in the temptation using "if" (Mt 4.1-11).
   2.4. Sennacherib's threat on Jerusalem (2 Ki 18.17-22, 26) is deliberate intimidation and psychological warfare intended to break the resistance of the residents of Jerusalem.
   2.5. Ridicule of Jesus on Cross (Lk 23.35-37).

3. Why is this form of intimidation so often effective?
   3.1. Questions cause one to wonder if a person's position is as secure as he thought.
   3.2. Questions put a person on the defensive.
   3.3. In contrast statements made boldly, as an affront allow, an attacked person to question the alternate position.

4. How did Jesus deal with confrontational questions that were put to him?
   4.1. He responded with questions (e.g., Mark 11.27-33).

5. Before whom does Sanballat conduct this ridicule? Why?
   5.1. Tobiah, his associates, and the army of Samaria.
   5.2. Why does he do this?
      5.2.1. Makes him feel 'tough' and confident before those who are his friends. You know how it is with bullies, they are more prepared to be bullies with their supporters around.
      5.2.2. Makes the force of his threat seem more intimidating.

6. What does Tobiah do to 'assist' Sanballat with his ridicule? (2)
   6.1. He joined in with his own reinforcing ridicule. "Monkey see, monkey do."
   6.2. From the perspective of the Jews, it would seem to be somewhat more intimidating that another governor of a surrounding area would join in the attack. Two enemies are more intimidating than one. Two people casting doubt on something makes us more willing to question it ourselves. We can be influenced.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

7. What were the specific questions that Sanballat asked? How is each of these questions used to cast doubt? (2)
   7.1. Note: There is an element of truth in each of these questions.
   7.2. What are those feeble Jews doing?
      7.2.1. Poor people with no resources.
      7.2.2. It is true that the Jews were not strong financially nor numerically. We can see this from the resources that they brought back (e.g., in Ezra 2.64-67; Neh 7.66-69).
   7.3. Will they restore the wall?
      7.3.1. Weak people, the task is too big for them.
      7.3.2. Sanballat and Tobiah had the rule in the surrounding territories. The Jews were not an independent people. Nehemiah was an appointed governor from outside the region. So in this respect, the Jews did not have much political power.
      7.3.3. Nevertheless, Sanballat and Tobiah would have been concerned if they re-fortified the city.
   7.4. Will they offer sacrifices?
      7.4.1. Superstitious appeals to a god.
      7.4.2. Here is a ridicule of the Jewish system of worship. The previous two questions were ridicule of Jews as a people.
      7.4.3. From a pagan perspective the Jewish system of worship did seem to be ridiculous:
         7.4.3.1. No visible sign of God, whereas the pagan religions had idols.
         7.4.3.2. Sacrifices for sin, whereas in pagan systems, generally, there was no sacrifice for sin, but rather sacrifices as payment for a blessing.
   7.5. Will they finish in a day?
      7.5.1. They don't have the guts/stamina to carry it through.
      7.5.2. The Jews had been in captivity for 70 years. They probably lived in ghetto-like circumstances in their cities of exile. They had no power. This would appear to have broken their spirit and have oppressed them
   7.6. Can they bring the stones back to life from those heaps of rubble—burned as they are?
      7.6.1. The physical construction materials that they had available were not the best. Much of the stone from the previous walls would have been damaged by fire and would have become weak and less useful for construction.
   7.7. The ridicule is aimed at exactly the apparent weaknesses and doubts of the Jews.

8. How does Tobiah reinforce Sanballat's questions? (3)
   8.1. His ridicule is not in the form of ridicule but rather it is in the form of an answer to Sanballat's questions.
   8.2. What specifically does he say? "A fox (jackal) climbing on the wall would destroy the wall."
   8.3. This would not happen. But it reinforces the doubt.

9. How do the people react to all these psychological threats? (10-11)
   9.1. The people of Judah say:
      9.1.1. "The strength of the labourers is giving out." The work was very different from what they were used to (recall that their occupations did not consist of manual labour).
      9.1.2. "A lot of rubble that can't be used to build." A lot of energy was required to clean away the burned (calcified limestone) stone that doubled the workload.
      9.1.3. "We will sneak up on them and kill them and end this work." They reply with their enemy's threats.
   9.2. What is going on here? They are showing:
      9.2.1. The initial exhilaration for the project has worn off.
      9.2.2. They were faced with hard work and only half way through the project.
      9.2.3. Personal discouragement can drain away enthusiasm for the work.
      9.2.4. Doubt has crept in among the people, even though the threats are mostly idle, they are unnerving.

10. How is the doubt spread? (12)
   10.1. The other Jews from the tribal lands nearby join in the chorus of doubt. They said that the enemies would attack. "Where ever you turn they will attack us."
   10.2. We will look at the physical threat later, but we should consider this added psychological threat at this time.
   10.3. It does not help to have your supposed friends joining in the ridicule and doubt with your enemies.
   10.4. How did they spread this doubt?

© James R. Hughes, 2006

10.4.1. They repeated it ten times over. As if emphasis would make it any more real. Nehemiah would have been somewhat perturbed with them.
10.4.2. Note the "told us." They didn't come and report this to Nehemiah, they spread the news among the people. There are always those who will spread gossip and fear, and do it in a form which is below the surface and not open.
10.4.3. Note the 'you' and 'us'. They brought themselves into the situation. They were more concerned about their own circumstances than about the people who were being threatened or about the rebuilding of the city.

10.5. Where is 'encouraging one another in the Lord'? The poor people in the outlying areas who are not working on the wall are concerned about their welfare. They are saying, in effect: 'Don't fight your spiritual battles in my backyard [NIMBY]. I don't want to get involved.'

11. What lessons can we derive from this section?
    11.1. As we've seen before, non-Christians have only two means of fighting against the Church: force or farce. We should not be surprised when they use verbal intimidation tactics.
        11.1.1. It is hard to stand up to teasing. We don't like to be teased for our Christian faith.
        11.1.2. Worse, are questions that are more subtle and cast doubt. Watch for the use of questions to cast doubt.
        11.1.3. Watch for attempts to destroy the morale of the Church with a fear of failure.
    11.2. Unbelievers are generally only tough when together.
        11.2.1. False religious and philosophical systems have no hope of survival except in numbers.
        11.2.2. Christianity, in contrast, will survive even if only one person is right.
        11.2.3. All men are liars but God is true (Ps 116.11; Ps 63.11).
        11.2.4. Consider Athanasius standing against the 'world'.
    11.3. Naysayers in the Church join in the ridicule. There are always going to be people who will cast doubt on the work of the Church and will find something 'valid' in the threats of the world.
    11.4. We are dealing with spiritual warfare. The real enemy is Satan (Eph 6.16).
    11.5. Our success does not depend on human resources.
        11.5.1. The Jews were very weak from a human standpoint.
        11.5.2. We are not to look to the human resources for our success.
        11.5.3. Ultimately the work is God's and it will be prospered.
    11.6. Questions can be used as an effective form of apologetics, because they can lead people to doubt their foundation. We can use questions, not in the form of intimidation or ridicule, to lead unbelievers to question the philosophical presuppositions of what they believe.

Prayer Time (Neh 4.4-5)

1. What was Nehemiah's reaction to the psychological threat? (Neh 4.4-5)
    1.1. He prayed and the people re-doubled their efforts.

2. How did he not respond?
    2.1. He did not respond in kind.
    2.2. Nor did he even challenge the words.

3. What does this tell us about the character of Nehemiah?
    3.1. Nehemiah was godly, patient, and wise about where the real battle was.
    3.2. Discussion: Why did he act this way and did not, for example, invoke his power as governor?

4. What form did Nehemiah's prayer take? (Neh 4.4-5)
    4.1. It is an imprecatory prayer.
    4.2. [See: *Appendix A – Imprecatory Prayer*, for more detail on this subject.]
    4.3. Notice there is a special consideration. This was public ridicule of a corporate work rather than a personal affront. Nehemiah was acting in the capacity of a civil magistrate and covenant head.

5. What specifically does he request in his prayer? (Neh 4.4)
    5.1. "Hear us, O our God, for we are despised."
    5.2. "Turn their insults (reproach) back on their own heads."
    5.3. "Give them over as plunder in a land of captivity."

© James R. Hughes, 2006

5.4. "Do not cover up their guilt (iniquity) or blot out their sins from your sight."
5.5. "For they have thrown down insults (provoked you, see NIV footnote) in the face of the builders."

6. What is the order of progression that we find in these statements?
   6.1. The structure is:
      6.1.1. Appeal
      6.1.2. Imprecation 1
      6.1.3. Imprecation 2, escalating
      6.1.4. Imprecation 3, escalating
      6.1.5. Reason.

7. How does he begin his prayer?
   7.1. He starts with an appeal to God, a personal prayer hearing God, a God who has a special people.

8. Why can he open his prayer in this way?
   8.1. He has a right to call God to remember his promises to the patriarchs ('covenant of love', Neh 1.5) because God has said that he will always be with his people and hear their prayers.

9. Can all men pray prayers in this way?
   9.1. A believer has a right to call on God to hear because God has said that he will always hear the prayers of his people (see: 2 Chron 6.39 with 2 Chron 7.1). God's presence shows the acceptance of his request (Ps 3.4; Ps 4.3; Ps 17.6; Ps 18.6; Ps 55.17; Ps 86.7; Is 30.19; Is 58.9; Jer 33.3; Mt 7.7; 1 Jn 5.14).
   9.2. Pagans, unbelievers, and infidels have no right to expect, and cannot expect, God to hear their prayers because they have claimed that they do not know God.
      9.2.1. False prayer: "God if you are there …" God does not hear this kind of prayer. God only hears the prayer of a true heart.
      9.2.2. True prayer is offered in the name of Christ, and with the help of the Holy Spirit. The prayer of an unbeliever cannot meet either of these conditions.
      9.2.3. The prayer taught by Jesus to his disciples opens with "our father". Unbelievers cannot call God their father in the personal sense (Ps 18.40, 41; Ps 66.17, 18; Prov 1.22-28; Prov 15.8, 9, 29; Prov 28.9; Is 1.15; Jn 9.31; James 1.6; James 4.3).

10. What may be the subtle implication of his opening petition? What might he be implying by calling God 'our/his God'?
    10.1. Nehemiah may be alluding to the fact that the men who are ridiculing are not part of God's people (see, Neh 2.20).

11. What does he ask for specifically in the second petition? What is its nature?
    11.1. The specific request relates to the current situation (the insults) and asks that they come back on them (see: Ps 7.16; Prov 26.27; Eccl 10.8).
    11.2. He asks for reciprocity (Dt 19.20-21)—punishment that fits the crime. Not arbitrary. God's way: retribution, restitution, recompense (compensation of at least equal value)
    11.3. Nehemiah doesn't respond with slander and ridicule in kind, but he asks God to find a way to make the ridicule come back on them.
    11.4. It is a mild request; that they receive no more than what has come on the Jews.
       11.4.1. How do we reconcile this with 'turning the other cheek'?
       11.4.2. Nehemiah did not take action into his own hands. He bore the reproach and did not retaliate. By doing this, he in fact turned the other cheek.
       11.4.3. Instead of dealing with matters on his own, he asked God to deal with them.
       11.4.4. He was heaping coals of fire on the heads of his enemies (Prov 25.21-22; Rom 12.20/Dt 32.35; notice the context is that of not taking vengeance, but leaving it for God).
    11.5. It is important to see that this is the proper Christian course of action. The world says "Get even," Christian says, "Leave it to God, he will repay." We do not ask him to repay out of personal bitterness or revenge, but rather for his glory. Evil has been done, and in God's time and way, it will/must be repaid.
    11.6. How did this happen? Where are the *walls* of Moab and Ammon? They are long gone. In fact none of their cities are even inhabited today. See Zeph 2.8-11, note v 8 'insults,' 'taunts,' 'threats'; v 10 'insulting,' 'mocking'.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

12. What does he ask for in the third petition?
    12.1. He moves to a broader imprecation, Ps 59.5 (notice the sins of slander [v 10] and lies [v 12]). He asks that they receive a punishment similar to, or equivalent to, that which the Jews received for their idolatry and impiety.
    12.2. What is the implication of this? The slanders of Sanballat and Tobiah are idolatrous and blasphemous. They deny God and his people ('feeble Jews') and that God has a special place for his people and his city (the place he loves and in which he made known his name), the power of God, and the efficacy of his worship (e.g., the slur against the sacrifice).
    12.3. He is appealing to the God to defend his glory. Ps 58.10, 11; Ps 94.1-5.

13. What does he ask for in the fourth petition?
    13.1. He asks for the ultimate imprecation, an eternal curse.
    13.2. He asks that God not erase, ignore, forget, or cover up their guilt/sins (opposite of Ps 51.1).
    13.3. What is the converse, if God does not do these things what does he do? What is Nehemiah asking for?
        13.3.1. He asks that they be blotted out of the book of life. Ps 69.22-28 (v 21 of Christ).
        13.3.2. Positive (Phil 4.3; Rev 3.5).
        13.3.3. Negative (Rev 13.8; Rev 20.12, 15).
        13.3.4. He is asking that they be assigned to Hell [see Paul's statement in Gal 1.8, 9].

14. Why are there three petitions of imprecation? Why does he ask three times?
    14.1. A three-fold curse is brought down on them.
    14.2. A three-fold curse because God is a three-fold holy God (Is 6.3; Rev 4.8). God's holiness and glory have been blasphemed by these wicked men.
    14.3. Three represents completeness.

15. How does he conclude his prayer?
    15.1. He concludes with the reason. His purpose is to show why his imprecations are justified.
    15.2. To insult the builders is to insult God. Some translations add "you"; Hebrew: "they insult/provoke/offend in presence of/before face of ones building." Just like murder is wrong because it is an assault against the image bearer of God, so insulting those who are building his Church is an affront to God.

16. What lessons can we learn from this prayer of Nehemiah?
    16.1. Sometimes it is not worth responding to the nonsense of the world. It just gives them the chance to think that they should be taken seriously. A word of defence before slanderers is like casting pearls before swine.
        16.1.1. It may be best for Christians to ignore Psychological warfare. It is best countered by Prayer.
        16.1.2. Spurgeon on Psalm 120.1, 2: "Silence to man and prayer to God are the best cures for the evil of slander."
    16.2. It is appropriate for us to pray prayers in the imprecatory form when the enemies of God continue to abuse his character, name, worship, and people.
        16.2.1. But we are not personally to seek revenge. We are to request God's judgment in his time and in his way.
        16.2.2. We must be very careful to look for balance. We must restrain our desire for personal revenge and yet ask God to judge our, and his, enemies as his justice demands (e.g., Jer 18.20, 23).
        16.2.3. Vengeance belongs to God. It is for him to turn insults back on the heads of our enemies. And he will! (Ps 94.1-5)

Physical Threats (Neh 4.6-8)

1. What was the outcome of the psychological threats? (6)
    1.1. They were not successful, the wall continued to go up.

2. Why are we told the height of the wall?
    2.1. So that we understand that the first challenge was overcome—half its height. The half-way point of any challenge (e.g., digging, building, walking, saving, etc.) is a major milestone to be celebrated.
    2.2. So that we understand the context of what comes next from their enemies.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

3. What is the reaction of the enemies of the Jews? (7)
   3.1. They become very angry.

4. How does their reaction, this time, compare with their reaction at first? (compare, 7 with 1) Why?
   4.1. 'very'
   4.2. Why was this? Because the building had gone ahead and the gaps were being closed.
   4.3. What is the underlying reason for their anger?
      4.3.1. That the ways of the Jews was being prospered.
      4.3.2. But even more, because they had not been listened to, and they were being ignored.
      4.3.3. It makes a person who is obsessed with power very upset when his power is flouted through contemptuous disregard.

5. What did the enemies do in response to the 'discovery' that the work was going forward? (8)
   5.1. They assembled in a plot.
   5.2. What are some other examples in Scripture? Joseph's brothers. Jews against Jeremiah. Jews re killing Jesus. Jews re killing Paul.

6. Who were the parties that plotted together? What does this indicate?
   6.1. Sanballat (Moabite) and Tobiah (Ammonites), the Arabs (Geshem), men of Ashdod (Azotus in NT).
      6.1.1. How does this compare with 4.1 and 4.3 and 2.19?
      6.1.2. There are more groups involved with this plot.
      6.1.3. What does this indicate?
      6.1.4. It seems to show that the 'threat' of the re-building of Jerusalem was starting to grow and other groups become antagonists.

7. What was it, specifically, that they planned to do, to deal with this 'rebellion'?
   7.1. Fight against Jerusalem and stir up trouble against it.
   7.2. To use a physical means of force, since psychological means did not work.

8. What lessons can we derive from this section?
   8.1. Enemies of the Church have only two options for dealing with the truth of Christianity, and trying to suppress it. They can try *farce* and ridicule. But when this does not work, and they begin to feel threatened by the growth of Christianity and the demands it is placing on them, they will use *force* to try to stop it. We should not be surprised when we see this happening. For example,
      8.1.1. Evolutionists initially used ridicule to undermine the doctrine of creation. But when evidence started to mount which supported unique creation of the kinds and went against the theory of evolution, they brought in the force of the courts and the civil magistrate (the power of the sword) to stop the teaching of biblical creation in schools.
      8.1.2. The same thing happened with the promulgation of homosexuality. At first proponents of homosexual practices ridiculed 'close-minded-bigots'. When that did not work their next step was to use the force of law to make Christians 'respect' their 'alternate life-style'. Since that is not working, we can expect that they will use forceful means such as beatings and imprisonment, unless God intervenes with a more severe judgment than that which they are already under.
   8.2. We will see some strange alliances, at times, which will organize to fight against Christ, Christianity, and the Church.
      8.2.1. Just as Sanballat and others organized in their plot against the Jews. Organizations which might normally not get along or be aligned will find a common cause in their hatred of Christ and will plot against Christians and the Church.
      8.2.2. For example you might see Hindus and Sikhs, or skinheads and homosexuals, uniting against the Church.
      8.2.3. It seems unlikely at this point, but if/when Christianity grows to 'half its height' we will see many organizations banding together against their common threat.
      8.2.4. We should be forewarned by the lessons of history and Scripture as recorded here. This is given for our instruction and warning.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

Prepared Teamwork (Neh 4.9, 13-14, 20, 16-23)

1. What was Nehemiah's, and the people's, reaction to the physical threat? (9)
   1.1. He *prayed* again, and
   1.2. He *posted* a guard.

2. What else did he do to bolster their confidence? (Neh 4.14, 20, 16, 23)
   2.1. He gave words of encouragement, *provoked* to perseverance.
   2.2. He *participated* in physical hardships.

3. What similarity is there between his reaction to the psychological and to the physical threat? What is the difference?
   3.1. In both cases he prayed.
   3.2. In this case he prepared to meet the physical threat with a counter measure.

4. What was the nature of the guard? (Neh 4.9, 13, 14)
   4.1. Posted day and night. Attack by night was less likely, because of the potential danger to the attackers. Most war in the past was fought in daylight. But Nehemiah was not taking any chances. It was effective for discouraging enemies.
   4.2. In the unsecured areas (lowest, most vulnerable points of the wall). He placed resources strategically. This seems pretty obvious, but nevertheless it shows that he was using his resources to their maximum potential.
   4.3. He turned the city into an armed camp. This show of strength would encourage the people. A show of armaments is often as effective as the actual deployment and discourages the need for actual use. Witness the 'cold war' and the escalation of armaments between the antagonists.
   4.4. He posted guards by families. Thus there would be a greater commitment to protecting their families who would not be anonymous individuals but their loved ones.

5. What did he do after he had posted the guard? (Neh 4.14)
   5.1. Conducted an investigation to make sure that everything was secure.
   5.2. He gave a speech of encouragement.
   5.3. He used physical preparation to meet the physical threat of the enemy.

6. What else did he use to prepare the people? (Neh 4.9, 14, 16, 23)
   6.1. He used encouragement, which consisted of: Prayer (Neh 4.9), a speech of encouragement (Neh 4.14), and sharing of the hardships (Neh 4.16, 23).
   6.2. Prayer. We are not told what he prayed, but we noted that when he prayed earlier (Neh 4.4-5) there was a lot of similarity between his prayer and what we find in the Psalms. It is possible that he prayed with words from the Psalms, such as: Psalms 17.13ff; Ps 91.7-10; Ps 94.1-5, 13-15; Ps 121.1-8; Ps 125.1, 2.

7. What are the essential messages of his speech of encouragement? (Neh 4.14)
   7.1. "Don't be afraid."
      7.1.1. Gen 3.10 fear begins, fear of unknown, enemies, disaster and consequences, sickness and poverty, God and judgment, death. Causes of fear: sin, guilt, doubt.
      7.1.2. He emphasized the importance of not being afraid. Gen 15.1 provides the first instance with God speaking to Abram. "Don't be afraid" Moses to Israel and Joshua Dt 3.22; Dt 20.3; Dt 31.6, 8; God to Joshua 8.1; Joshua 10.8; Joshua to Israel Joshua 10.25; Jesus to his disciples Jn 14.27; Jn 16.33; God to Paul Acts 18.9; Acts 27.24; Ps 3.6; Ps 23.4; Ps 27.1, 2; Ps 91.5. There are many other places in the Bible.
      7.1.3. Can we always say this, i.e., that God will look after us? Yes ... but ...
         7.1.3.1. We are not to tempt/test God by doing something stupid or sinful (Mt 4.5-7).
         7.1.3.2. We are to trust God to fulfill his greater purposes. Sometimes he won't protect us in this life, but that does not mean that he has abandoned us or forgotten us (Dan 3.16-18; Ps 16.10; Mt 10.28-31).
      7.1.4. What is the antidote to fear of the world? A true fear of God will dispel the fear of man and death (Ex 18.21; Ex 20.20; Dt 10.12-13; Ps 31.19; Ps 33.8, 18; Ps 34.9, 11; Ps 61.5; Ps 111.10; Prov 1.7; Eccl 12.13).
   7.2. "Remember the Lord" What does he mean by this? What were they to remember?

© James R. Hughes, 2006

7.2.1. Common word in Nehemiah (10) Neh 1.8; Neh 5.19; Neh 6.14; Neh 9.17; Neh 13.14, 22, 29, 31. On a per-verse basis more than in any other book of the Bible (Dt [16]; Ps [28]; Jer [10]; Ezk [9]; Is [6])
7.2.2. Remember who God is: his power, sovereignty, vengeance against sin.
7.2.3. Another reminder that God was with them and would fight for them (20)
7.2.4. The Jews still were possessors of the land. The Captivity was a temporary phase, and they were promised that their land would be restored to them.
7.2.5. Remember God's promises. Heb 13.5 (from Dt 31.6).

7.3. "Be prepared to fight for your brothers"
7.3.1. Like Churchill giving the Brits encouragement to defend their homeland (the story is told that he opened his Bible to Dt 9.1 and this gave him a sense of mission).
7.3.2. Be prepared, a time might come; to fight, this is serious; for your brothers, this is personal.
7.3.3. More than just national pride, they were defending the true religion.

7.4. Summary:
7.4.1. He shared his heart belief that God would watch over them.
7.4.2. He encouraged them to trust God.
7.4.3. He encouraged them by preparation. However, the grounds of courage are not in our preparation or in our own strength, but in our Lord. But this does not mean that we are not to prepare. It is tempting God to assume that he will take care of you when you do not take any course of action to prepare. A person who is trained to run can compete in a race, a person who is not trained will not be able to run.

8. What else did he do to encourage the people? (Neh 4.16-23)
8.1. He shared the hardships with them.
8.2. In what ways did he share their hardship?
8.2.1. His men shared in the work.
8.2.2. He and his men worked with the citizens of the city. His own men (soldiers) were used to guard and some helped with the work.
8.2.3. The officers were at the point of most threat to give encouragement and strength.

8.3. What was Nehemiah's involvement?
8.3.1. He did not sit back and relax. He worked as hard as anyone (18-20) The trumpeters were with Nehemiah because the people were spread throughout the entire city. He gave them a particular signal, like the air-raid sirens during the WW II. The sound of a trumpet could probably be heard from anywhere within the city boundaries. This was part of his plan for meeting a sudden attack.
8.3.2. He did not change his clothes at night (21-23). He didn't get into his pajamas, but was ready for war. Heb: "we did not take off our garments ... each he went (to) the water"
8.3.3. Josephus *Antiquities*: Nehemiah "himself made the round of the city by night, never tiring either through work or lack of food and sleep, neither of which he took for pleasure but as a necessity."

8.4. [See: *Appendix B – Use of the 'Sword' for Protection and Just War Theory*, for a discussion on Nehemiah's use of armaments to protect the builders and its applicability to our situation today.]

9. What lessons can we derive from this section?
9.1. Physical self defence is proper in the right context.
9.1.1. We should not spiritualize all aspects of OT battles.
9.1.2. However, the self defence argument is not based on the Church being holy and called to consume wicked nations. It is based on the principle of the civil magistrate within his jurisdiction protecting those under his care. At the family level and individual level this seems also to apply.
9.1.3. Self defence is not a call to revenge, offensive physical aggression.
9.1.4. There is to be a balance here. Suffering for the cause of truth is commendable.
9.1.5. Where to draw the line is difficult. The principles of a Just War may be applicable.
9.1.6. This is a difficult area in which to draw clear conclusions and present definitive guidelines. Christians need to work together without being judgmental of one another in this area.

9.2. Prayer and action go together. The Divine and human work together. We have seen this before with Nehemiah. Man is not a puppet but rather an instrument in the work of God. There is a coordination between God's sovereignty and man's responsibility.
9.3. Nehemiah is an example for us who are involved in building the Church today.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

9.3.1. The Church is engaged in a Holy War but our war is no longer that of conquering the nations of Canaan by sword of metal, but conquering the nations of the earth with the sword of the spirit (Eph 6.10-18).
9.3.2. The people themselves were vigilant (Neh 4.17, 18); with weapon in one hand as they carried supplies, or at their side while they worked.
9.3.3. Applied in the Church context, this seems to imply that we are to do two kinds of work: 1) carry out the work of the gospel, but also 2) be on the defensive against enemies and false doctrine.
9.3.4. We are to balance preaching and teaching, these are the sword and trowel (Mt 4.23; Mt 9.35): *evangelizo* (preach) and *didasko* (teach). [See *Appendix L – Preaching and Teaching*, for more detail on this subject.]
9.3.5. Nehemiah is an example and type for us of character: vigilance, investigation, sharing in the work. In contrast to him, we are lax and undedicated.
9.4. Importance of words of encouragement.
9.4.1. We all need (constant) encouragement for every task that we undertake. God knows that he is dealing with sin-stained human nature that need to be lifted up from slipping on the muddy track on the way to Zion.
9.4.2. We need to be encouraged and to see that we are not alone in our endeavour. It is not a sin to need or to give encouragement.
9.4.3. Leaders are to encourage those starting out and continuing (1 Thess 5.14; 2 Tim 4.2; Titus 2.15).
9.4.4. We are to encourage one another in the Church (1 Thess 4.18; 1 Thess 5.11; Heb 3.13; Heb 10.25).

Perseverance Triumphs (Neh 4.15, 21-23)

1. What was the result of taking preventative action? (15)
1.1. The nations around them heard that attacking would not be easy and it permitted the people in the city to resume their work on the wall.
1.1.1. Once the plans of their enemies were revealed, they lost their courage. Secrecy is part of a successful plot of evil (see: Acts 23.12-35 [16[).
1.1.2. Once the enemies saw the preparation of the Jews, they lost their courage. It would be more difficult to carry out their plans if there was the possibility of them being thwarted.
1.2. Prevention is NOT the cure for all problems. But it is helpful in many situations. For example: financial prevention (saving, budgeting, insurance), health prevention (eating right, taking vitamins), industrial prevention (safety equipment, fences, design of equipment to prevent catastrophic failures), physical prevention (gates, fences, locks), etc.

2. What are some examples of how we can apply Nehemiah's prevention in the Church context?
2.1. Statements of faith, Bible reading, prayer, mutual encouragement, study of history, being aware of the forms that unbelief takes in our day (not fighting yesterday's battles). Consider Eph 6.10-18.

3. To whom did they attribute their safety?
3.1. God.
3.2. We must always remember that all of our human efforts are nothing without God's over-riding providence. But the fact that God is in control and is protecting, does not excuse us from taking care (e.g., Dt 6.16; Mt 4.7).

4. What was the response of the people once the plans of their enemies were thwarted?
4.1. They all returned to their work (Neh 4.15).
4.2. They worked all the harder all day long (Neh 4.21).
4.3. They were diligent. The workforce stayed in the city (Neh 4.22).
They remained vigilant with weapons at hand, prepared with their clothing on (Neh 4.21, 22, 23).

5. What lessons can we derive from this section (and general lessons from the whole chapter)?
5.1. Nehemiah was a 'William Carey' of his day who: "attempted great things for God and expected great things from God."
5.2. It is very difficult to keep up the work in the face of challenges.
5.2.1. The work of the Church is largely based on the efforts of volunteers and is difficult to sustain year after year.
5.2.2. Burn-out is a sign of our age.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

5.2.3. But so are laziness, unbelief, procrastination, cynicism, self-absorption, in-fighting, fence-sitting . These are the rubble that must be constantly cleared away if the walls of the Church are to go up.
5.2.4. A key lesson is to keep perspective, and keep going.

5.3. We must remember that we persevere in the grace of God (Rom 5.2; 2 Cor 1.21, 24). It is God's work and ultimately the work of building the Church is not dependent on human efforts (Mt 16.18). We should be encouraged, as was Nehemiah, that it is God's work and that he will not let it fail (Neh 4.4, 9, 15, 20).

5.4. The task of leadership is hard. It is important, however, that leaders in the Church not show discouragement publicly but always display trust and faith in God's over-riding working.

5.5. Watch out for nay-sayers in the Church (Neh 4.10) who say: "These are dark times." "The spirit isn't working." "There isn't much we can do in the face of such strong political lobbies."
5.5.1. It required a lot of energy, discipline and effort for the wall to be brought to "half its height," but it went up.
5.5.2. We must always look at the 'half' that is done and not the half that is yet to be done.
5.5.3. God is working in his Church. From our vantage point the work is on-going, and we will always seem to be working, but *half* the work is done! We are on the winning side. The success of the war is already assured by the victory of Jesus over death, the grave, and Satan. We must always take the view that the work is 'downhill' from here, because the hardest part is done. It will still require a lot of effort, energy and commitment. But the amount of work we have to do is nothing compared with what others have had to do who have gone before us: Christ, the Apostles, the martyrs, the Reformers, the Puritans, the Covenanters, the missionaries …

5.6. We can sum-up chapter 4 with three words: effort, enthusiasm, encouragement.

5.7. We are not at the end yet, the wall is not completed yet. There are two more major challenges to be faced:
5.7.1. A famine and a case of poverty and the injustice that went with this.
5.7.2. A challenge to Nehemiah's leadership.

5.8. But the wall is going to be built, the job is going to be finished. Nehemiah is going to carry through the work to the end. The work isn't complete yet, but still Nehemiah can say with Paul: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing." (2 Tim 4.7-8)
5.8.1. 'Good fight': proper goals and means, work of the Church and the Gospel.
5.8.2. 'Finished the race': all the way to the end, never gave up, persevered.
5.8.3. 'Kept the Faith': believed, trusted, and held to the foundations of truth, The Faith.

Destitute's Protector (Neh 5.1-19)

The Complaint (Neh 5.1-5)

1. Who raised the outcry? Who specifically?
   1.1. "The men and their wives."
   1.2. Who? The builders? The city dwellers? Dwellers around the city (since those who mortgaged their fields are mentioned)?
   1.3. We saw earlier (chapter 3) that most of the builders were from the merchant and guild classes. We noticed also that some of those who contributed to the work were from the city and some from the outlying areas; and some were leaders of their communities.
   1.4. It isn't clear that the people in chapter 5 are only the people of the city or only those building the walls. It may be that the complainants included those who were poor around the city.
   1.5. If it was the city dwellers predominantly, and those who were wealthy, then the situation of their being in poverty is very surprising.
   1.6. Regardless of who exactly was in poverty, this was a problem that had to be solved as it was distracting the people from the work of building the wall.

2. Why were they poor? What was the specific situation contributing to their poverty? (3)
   2.1. The material (underlying) cause of their poverty was a famine. But this was not the immediate cause, the immediate cause was the injustice of the nobles.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

3. How long did it take to rebuild the walls? (see, Nehemiah 6.15) How could a famine develop in that short a period?
   3.1. Fifty two days, plus the effort to put in place the gates.
   3.2. It may be that the economic hardships from building the walls and not concentrating on other business, compounded by the famine and escalating prices, contributed to the hardship.
   3.3. Or, it may be that the harvest failed that year. Notice that we are told the month in which the work was completed (Neh 6.15). It was on Oct 2, 444/445 that the wall was finished. This means that the harvest should have been brought in during the August-September time-frame. During that time the wall was under construction.
   3.4. It may be that the famine was endemic and had been going on for a year or more and those who were poor could not afford to buy food (brought in from outside the region) at high prices.

4. What contributed to the situation, and compounded the hardship? (Neh 5.1-2, 8-9, 10).
   4.1. Beside enduring the famine, they were ridiculed, tired and frightened. These are not ideal circumstances under which to work.
   4.2. Being hungry and in poverty certainly does not add encouragement. There were tensions associated with building the wall. Tempers became short. Injustice was being perpetrated.

5. Who joined the men in the compliant? (1) What does this indicate?
   5.1. The women.
   5.2. This indicates that the situation was so serious that they accompanied their husbands. Normally business was conducted by men at the city gates where a form of municipal court operated (Gen 23.10; Gen 34.20, 24; Dt 21.19; Dt 22.15; Dt 25.7; Ruth 4.1, 11; Ps 127.5; Prov 24.7; Prov 31.23).
   5.3. When the women got involved it brought with it a sense of urgency and emphasized the degree of the problem. Consider today organizations such as MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Driving). When wives and mothers get involved, it is a very clear sign that something serious is going on.

6. Against whom did they raise this outcry? (1) Who specifically were these? (7)
   6.1. "Jewish brothers."
   6.2. The nobles and officials. Possibly some of those who were involved with rebuilding the wall, but possibly not (some stood aside, 3.5). If so, it seems strange that they would oppress the very ones that they were working with. It is a bit difficult to know who are the oppressed and the oppressors in connection with the builders of the wall.

7. What was the urgency of this problem? Why did Nehemiah have to deal with it at this point?
   7.1. Notice where it occurs in the sequence of events: Chapter 3 the building begins, 4.6 the wall is at the halfway point, 4 the opposition to rebuilding, 6.1-14 more opposition to rebuilding, 6.15-19 the completion of the wall
   7.2. Nehemiah had to deal with the problem because of the social injustice, but even more so because unless the problem was solved the building of the wall could not continue (it was hindering and distracting the work).
   7.3. There were bigger problems below the surface.

8. What is famine usually/often a sign of in the Bible? What was its purpose at this time?
   8.1. A sign of God's judgment (Is 51.19; Jer 14.13-18; 2 Sam 21.1; 1 Ki 18.2; 2 Ki 4.38; Acts 11.28).
   8.2. But there may be another reason, beside judgment, why famines were sent by God. See for example the famines at the time of Abraham (Gen 12.10), Isaac (Gen 26.1), Jacob/Joseph (Gen 41.27, 54), Ruth (Ruth 1.1).
   8.3. Haggai 1.5-11 seems to give us similar circumstances about 80 years before this time (529 BC, Nehemiah was in 444 BC or 445 BC). The temple was being rebuilt and there seemed to be a time of economic hardship (Neh 1.5, 6, 10-11). The challenge was to remind the people that their first responsibility was to the work of eternal things and not to place their temporal well-being before the spiritual/eternal (Mal 3.10).
   8.4. It may be that God uses famine to test the faithfulness of his people.
   8.5. It seems, from the above examples, that at key points in redemptive history God sends challenges to test the faithfulness of his people (famines, the test of sacrifice of Isaac, temptation of Jesus, Annanias and Saphira, etc.) This is a strategic point in the history of redemption, the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem, so God sends a challenge to test their faithfulness.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

9. Why did this trial arise?
   9.1. Although the famine was a work of God's providence, Satan used it as an opportunity to try to derail the work of reconstruction.
   9.2. We can probably see this famine at the time of Nehemiah as being both a direct judgment from God and a challenge to test the faithfulness of God's people.
      9.2.1. Whom was the judgment against? Builders? Nobles? It seems that God may have sent this famine to rebuke the unfaithfulness of the nobles who were contributing to the hardship of their brothers. Often the poor suffer for the sins of the rich or of leaders.
      9.2.2. It may also be that this famine was sent as a test. In the midst of their hardship the people were tested further by God. Job faces a series of tests. See also Habakkuk 1.1-11.
      9.2.3. Does this seem harsh? God is developing character and proving to the world that he is sovereign and that his providential care for his people will see them through all hardships.
   9.3. Reasonable conclusion: This famine was sent by God as a two-fold challenge: 1) to encourage the people to be dependent on him alone, and 2) to reinforce the importance of justice in social affairs. The second reason is a key point, as we can learn much from how Nehemiah handles the injustice for the execution of social justice today. We will consider the application of Nehemiah's handling of the situation later.

10. What were the specific complaints of the people? (2-4)
   10.1. Many children and the need to have grain to stay alive (2)
   10.2. Mortgaging fields and vineyards to get grain (3)
      10.2.1. The average family needed about 1-2 liters of grain per person per day.
      10.2.2. Compare the steps in Gen 47.13-26: money (14, 15); livestock (15-17); land (18-20); person (21)
   10.3. Had to borrow money to pay the king's tax on fields and vineyards (4)
      10.3.1. King's tax – Persian kings and satraps collected taxes that were a heavy burden.
      10.3.2. The provincial taxes paid for satraps palaces, harems, and hunting parks (*paradise*).
      10.3.3. A fixed tax was also sent to the central administration. For example India sent 4,680 talents of gold per year, Assyria and Babylon 1,000, Egypt 700, the four satrapies of Asia Minor 1,760. Daniel 6.1 [~550 BC] refers to 120 Satrapies under Darius/Cyrus II. Annual revenues to the central administration were more than 14,000 talents per year. In today's terms the money (gold) tax alone would be around ~$5 billion (1 talent approximately 30kg, an ounce of gold is about .03 kg, 14,000 * 30 / .03 * $400).
      10.3.4. In addition there were taxes on produce, goods, and slaves.
      10.3.5. When Alexander the Great conquered the Persian Empire he found a lot of gold in Susa (Persepolis?) in the royal treasuries. Darius III had carried off 8,000 talents, but there was still an estimated 50-000-180,000 talents left (from $20B-$60 billion; the US national gold reserve is about $70 billion).
      10.3.6. The tax that other (previous) governors had exacted (15) was 40 shekels (half kilo) of silver, plus food and wine. This sounds like a head tax and not graduated relative to income.
      10.3.7. Money was being coined about the 7th cent. BC. Coins were based on weight. The oldest known coins were made in Lydia around 561 BC. Coinage was introduced into Persia by Darius I (521-486 BC), 50-75 years before the events of Nehemiah. It appears that it took 2 drachmas (Greek) to make up a half-shekel (Mt 17.24, 27). A denarius (Roman) is roughly equivalent to a drachma. A denarius appears to be the wage for a day for a hired worker/labourer (Mt 20.1-16). So, it would have been about 160 day's worth of a labourer's work that was taxed. This tax was a heavy burden.
   10.4. Having to subject our sons and daughters to slavery. Even though they are of the same flesh and blood, our sons are as good as theirs.
   10.5. Some of our daughters are already enslaved.
      10.5.1. In the Middle East people would borrow money using themselves or family member as collateral. If interest on the loan or the principle could not be repaid the collateral was taken as slaves or the family members were sold by the debt holder into slavery to pay the terms of the loan. An Israelite could serve his creditor as a "hired worker" (Lev 25.39-40) and be released on the seventh year (Dt 15.12-18) unless he chose to stay voluntarily (Ps 40.6 with Ex 21.6; Dt 15.17).[2]

[2] NIV Study Bible.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

10.6. Powerless because fields and vineyards belong to others.

11. What is a common theme running through the complaints?
    11.1. They deal with a "class struggle."
    11.2. Those with capital were oppressing those without it. Rich oppressing the poor.
    11.3. Marx would have had a real treat dealing with this situation.
    11.4. It could be interesting to compare how Marx and those influenced by him (communists and socialists) would have dealt with these complaints and how Nehemiah actually dealt with them.

12. How does this threat against the rebuilding of the wall compare with those in chapters 4 and 6?
    12.1. In chapter 4 we considered the attacks from the enemies of the Church. Satan used these men through psychological tactics and the threat of physical abuse. We saw that the people became discouraged. It was through strong leadership that people overcame the challenge.
    12.2. In this chapter (5) we find the threats coming primarily from within the Church (fellow Jews). The nobles who want to get rich at the expense of their brothers. This second attack was an internally based threat to the Jews in the city.
    12.3. In the next chapter (6) there are additional external attacks on the work of the rebuilding. It is not until the end of the chapter (Neh 6.15 and following) that the wall is brought to completion. We will see that the attacks in chapter 6 are largely attacks directed against Nehemiah, the leader.

13. Why is it significant that there are three major threats or attacks against the re-building of the wall?
    13.1. We are confronted with a three-point attack made up of two external attacks surrounding and internal attack.
    13.2. Satan uses different means, e.g., intimidation, incrimination, intrigue/innuendo. Satan tries out various ways to get at the people and to stop the building of the wall.
    13.3. Note: Job also faced three rounds of attack: Job 1.6-22; Job 2.1-13 and following, made up of external physical disasters, personal physical disasters, psychological challenges. These are very similar to the ones in Nehemiah (famine, challenge to his leadership, and the psychological threats) but in a different order.
    13.4. Abraham faced three attacks: with Abimelech (Gen 20.1-18), Hagar, Sacrifice of Isaac.
    13.5. Jesus in the wilderness faced three attacks in the form of temptations (Mt 4.1-11). One addressed his hunger, another his fear, and a third his loneliness. Succumbing to the first temptation would provide pleasure, the second power, and the third popularity.
    13.6. These three attacks indicate that something significant is happening in Jerusalem. The book of Nehemiah has a didactic purpose. God is setting up the situation to drive home a lesson. We need to see that we are not encountering an ordinary famine (if there is such a thing). We are dealing with a great spiritual battle raging in the heavens and throughout the ages. This is the same battle that Satan has been waging since the Garden.

14. What lessons can we derive from this section?
    14.1. We should expect trials to come in this life (Jn 16.33; Acts 14.22; 2 Tim 3.12) because the world hates Christ and his people (Jn 15.18-2). If they persecuted him, they will persecute us. The reasons:
        14.1.1. The world hates God and anything that reminds them of God.
        14.1.2. The life of Christians is a challenge to the word in sin (Jn 16.8-11).
        14.1.3. Christians are a reminder of God's judgment. Men do not want to deal with death and what follows.
        14.1.4. Christians are chosen. Men do not want God's sovereign choice. They want to earn salvation (if that were possible!).
        14.1.5. Christians take a stand for fundamentals and insist that: God is the creator, the author of moral standards and sovereign over life and death.
        14.1.6. You need to do nothing but be a Christian and you will be hated by the world.
    14.2. Additional trials and hardships will be sent by God in the midst of our on-going challenges to test our faithfulness. It seems that often one problem will pile on top of another ("kicked while down"). We need to see the over-riding hand of Providence.
    14.3. We see Nehemiah coping with the trials by faith and wisdom. He sets an example for us: the Church is weak without trials and confrontation. The challenge for us is to watch with vigilance the wiles of our culture and to walk faithfully before our God. The important thing to consider is not that we have trials,

© James R. Hughes, 2006

but rather how we deal with the trials. Let us see how Nehemiah applies Biblical principles to dealing with the problems which confronted him.

The Charge (Neh 5.6-7)

1. What was Nehemiah's reaction on hearing these complaints? (6) Was this a proper reaction?
   1.1. Anger.
   1.2. When we considered Sanballat's anger (Neh 4.1, 7) we noted that it was a sin that breached the 6th Commandment. According to Matthew 5.21, 22 Jesus classes anger with murder.
   1.3. What is the difference between Sanballat's and Nehemiah's anger? In the first case it is because he did not get his own way, in the second, it is because God's way was being spurned.
   1.4. There is a type of anger which is not sinful. What do we call this? Righteous anger.
   1.5. How do we know that there is such a thing as righteous anger, and that all anger is not sinful?
      1.5.1. Paul tells us there is a kind of anger which does not have to result in sin (Eph 4.26). The larger Catechism Q136: "What are the sins forbidden in the sixth commandment?" A: " … sinful anger"
      1.5.2. God seems to make a distinction between anger based on a right cause and that which is not (e.g., Jonah 4.4, 9).
      1.5.3. God is angry with sin and with sinners. So, it seems that when we follow the example of God, we can be angry with sin and sinners, as long as this does not become an excuse for us to be vengeful or an excuse for practicing other sins. God (Lev 10.6; Num 11.10; Num 22.22; Dt 1.34, 37; Heb 3.17; Ps 78.21.
      1.5.4. Examples: Moses: Ex 16.20; Lev 10.16; Num 16.15. Jesus when he turned out the money changers: Mk 11.15-18.

2. What did Nehemiah do before he confronted the perpetrators of the injustice? (7)
   2.1. He pondered the complaints in his mind.
   2.2. What else did he do (knowing the person and character of Nehemiah)?
      2.2.1. He probably prayed about it (Neh 1.5-11; Neh 4.4, Neh 5.19; Neh 9.1-38).
      2.2.2. He probably searched out (Neh 1.2; Neh 2.12-15) the causes of the injustice and the validity of the claim.
      2.2.3. He would have been discreet and would not have dealt with the subject until he had his facts correct, then he would speak (e.g., Neh 2.17).

3. How did he handle his anger?
   3.1. He did not fly off in anger but allowed his anger to become a constructive force to right a social injustice and moral wrong.
   3.2. Notice that he didn't avoid dealing with the problem.
   3.3. He acted quickly since the problem was not going to go away.

4. What was the cause of his anger? Why was his anger justified? (7)
   4.1. Exacting usury/interest from their own countrymen.
   4.2. He was not rebuking them for lending, he was rebuking them for exacting usury.
   4.3. Verse 7 should to be understood as 'lending at usury' since 'exacting' (NIV, NKJV) is a translation of the same word that is translated 'lending' in verse 10. It is the presence of the word *usury* that changes the meaning and the intensity.

5. Is it wrong to charge someone interest on a loan? When does interest become usury?
   5.1. There appears to be a difference between justified interest (e.g., a rich person borrowing money to get richer) and usury.
      5.1.1. Interest is not wrong in itself.
      5.1.2. Interest may be excessive if it is charged under the wrong circumstances, exceeds a certain amount (e.g., 10% per year), or causes harm to our brother, even when it doesn't exceed a threshold.
   5.2. [See: *Appendix C – Usury and Charging Interest on Loans*, for more detail on this subject.]

6. Who specifically was the complaint against? (7)
   6.1. Against the nobles and officials, i.e., the rich.
      6.1.1. "Class struggle." Those with capital oppressing those without it. Rich oppressing the poor.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

6.1.2. The rich get richer and the poor get poorer in a time of economic hardship (e.g., the famine) because the rich take advantage of the poor.

7. What does the Bible have to say about rich oppressors?
   7.1. James 5.1-6; Prov 18.23; Prov 22.7; Paul: commands rich do good (1 Tim 6.17, 18).
   7.2. What is the underlying problem? Their dependence on possessions. They have a false confidence (Prov 18.11; Ps 49.6; Jer 9.23) in their possessions and think that they can buy health, friends, influence, and happiness. So, because they depend on their possessions and not on God, they become selfish about their goods. That is often all that they have that gives them meaning, and they grab for more.
   7.3. Cautions:
      7.3.1. Having said that, we must realize that the problems of the rich are primarily problems that they have with their Creator. The natural tendency of men is to envy the rich (e.g., Ps 73.3) and to use the power of government to take away the money of the rich. We need to leave the rich and their problems (selfishness, covetousness, cheating, oppression, etc.) to God and not try to 'solve' them in our own ways.
      7.3.2. It is important for us not to be more 'holy' than God. There is a tendency for us to try to create more laws than God does (and ignore the laws he gives us!). So, we find in communism and socialism a way of dealing with the rich by taking away their property, or not let them get rich by taxing them heavily and to re-distribute their wealth to the poor. This is not dealing with the cause of the selfishness of the rich or the oppression they cause; it is dealing only with the symptoms. This is why it is very important for us to see how Nehemiah deals with the problem of the selfishness of the rich.
      7.3.3. It is also important for us to see that it is easy to create common enemies. It is easy to blame the rich for all that ails our culture. French libertines and Lenin used this enemy to bring about revolution. We must realize that the real problem isn't wealth but sin. Envy is just as bad as a dependence on wealth.
      7.3.4. We must also see that at the heart of these problems we will find Satan using the famine as a means of provoking the people and trying to undermine the work of God.

8. What lessons can we derive from Nehemiah's willingness to confront the nobles and officials?
   8.1. Righteous anger is proper when men sin and the work of God is being hindered by Satan.
      8.1.1. We need to be careful about how we react, by not flying off the handle but thinking through a response.
   8.2. The need for courage to face powerful men and denounce their sins.
      8.2.1. Nehemiah was not a respecter of persons and challenged whoever had sinned (Job 34.19; Lev 19.15; James 2.1-7).
      8.2.2. The Church and civil courts should not play favourites with the well-to-do or prestigious (politicians, professors, celebrities, rich, etc.)
   8.3. There appears to be a difference between justified interest (e.g., a rich person borrowing money to get richer) and usury.

9. What are areas of injustice where we need to constructively work out a response?
   9.1. Abortion, Sabbath breaking, injustice in the courts (e.g., men given 18 months community service for rape), idolatry and paganism, homosexuality gaining public acceptance, gambling, favoritism in a Church, false doctrine being allowed to exist in the Church ...
   9.2. Do we get angry with these sins, or are we complacent? Do we say there is nothing we can do? Do we say that God will deal with the sin so we don't need to?

The Confrontation (Neh 5.7-11)

1. How did Nehemiah deal with the men accused of charging usury/interest? (7, 8)
   1.1. It appears that he first confronted the men privately (7b) then he called a public meeting (7c).
      1.1.1. He deals with the issue according to the Biblical manner for discipline Mt 18.15-20. He first confronted them privately with their sin.
      1.1.2. Did he take the confrontation/charge public because the nobles wouldn't listen to him? Probably not. When he discussed it with them they probably agreed that there was a problem and that they would face the public challenge/disgrace to ensure that the matter was visibly dealt with. It seems

© James R. Hughes, 2006

that the nobles were convicted that they had been doing wrong and were really willing to correct the wrong.

1.2. He called a large meeting.

1.2.1. He dealt with a grievance/sin in a public manner so that justice would be visible. Someone has said that "justice must not only be done, it must be seen to be done." It is important that visible/public problems/sins be dealt with visibly/publicly.

1.3. History provides examples of disrespectable behaviour on the part of leaders.

1.3.1. For example, Suetonius (Gaius Suetonius Tranquillus) in *The Lives of the Twelve Caesars* about the emperors of Rome, describes the incredible wickedness of Nero. It is amazing how he could hide behind the purple and commit crimes that Roman Law would have dealt with in other cases.

1.3.2. Kings (e.g., John, Henry VIII), Popes in the 14th and 15th century.

1.3.3. A civilization, culture, nation ... is in desperate straits when leaders place themselves above the laws of the land and above the Law of God.

1.4. Discuss current examples that show how important it is to have public displays of justice when there is public sin. Consider, for example:

1.4.1. Recent abuses of the US jury system where juries have been picked for their politically correct views.

1.4.2. Men in positions of leadership committing grievous sins that were dealt with (e.g., President Clinton's sexual escapades and lying).

2. What were the ways he appealed to the nobles, or charged them, to confront them with their sin? (8-11)

2.1. Appealed to them on the basis of Jewish history. (8)

2.1.1. An Israelite could serve his creditor as a "hired worker" (Lev 25.39-40) and be released in the seventh year (Dt 15.12-18).

2.1.2. Selling children or relatives into slavery with foreigners was wrong (Ex 21.7-8).

2.1.3. People in captivity had (apparently) done wrong by selling their children or others to the Gentiles. It may have been the result of being in very difficult financial straits. The problem is that they would have been given to service in an irreligious or anti-'Christian' environment.

2.1.4. The Jews had "as far as possible, bought back our Jewish brothers who were sold to the Gentiles." We are not given a further indication in the Bible of where/when this was done.

2.2. Accused them of creating a bad situation for their brothers. He accused them of making it necessary for the people to redeem their relatives from the Gentiles. (8) "Now you are selling your brothers, only for them to be sold back to us."

2.2.1. This seems to imply that some of the people had borrowed money not only from the Jewish nobles but also from the Gentiles around them.

2.2.2. Application: Christians should not do anything that could place fellow Christians in a situation where they will be required to do something that will displease the Lord. For example, we should not make it necessary for Christians to work on Lord's Day.

2.3. Reminded them that they were breaking God's law. He showed that they did not have a "fear of the LORD." (9) Specifically, he pointed out that:

2.3.1. Oppression of the poor is contempt for God (Prov 14.31; Prov 19.17; Mt 25.40; James 5.1-6).

2.3.2. Why? Because God made both rich and the poor persons. Both are created in the image of God (Job 31.13-15; Prov 22.2).

2.3.3. They were not showing a fear of the LORD.

2.4. Appealed to them on the basis of causing God and his people to be a reproach [disgrace, blame, discredit]. (9)

2.4.1. What would become a reproach? 1) God's name; 2) God's nation, the Jews as God's people.

2.4.2. [Compare with: 1 Peter 2.12, 15; Num 14.13-16.]

2.4.3. Discuss examples/applications of how we should avoid doing things that would bring a reproach on the name of Christ or his Church, such as:

2.4.3.1. Being unkind/unloving to members of the household of faith brings a reproach. Christians by their love for one another, and their patience with one another, show that they are disciples of Jesus (Jn 13.35).

2.4.3.2. Much of the denominational splits and problems in congregations are the result of pride and an unforgiving sprit. The world sees this (Jn 17.20-21; Col 3.12-14).

2.4.3.3. Blatant outward sins that even the world despises. We must live self-controlled and pure lives. (1 Tim 4.14; 1 Tim 6.1; Titus 2.3-8 [5, 8])

2.5. Told them what the proper course of action was. (10)

© James R. Hughes, 2006

3. What was the proper course of action they were to take? (10)
   3.1. We come to, what appears to be, a difficult section to interpret. Compare different renderings:
      3.1.1. "I also, *with [and]* my brethren and my servants, am lending them money and grain. **Please [pray you]**, let us stop this usury!" (NKJV, KJV)
      3.1.2. "And likewise I, my brothers and my servants, are lending them money and grain. **Please**, let us leave off this usury." (NASV)
      3.1.3. I and my brothers and my men are also lending the people money and grain. **But** let the exacting of usury **stop!** (NIV)
      3.1.4. "… let us leave off, this demanding in return/exaction" (LXX)
      3.1.5. Hebrew: "and even I, brothers of me, and men of me are ones lending to them money and grain let *us* **stop now!** the usury the this."
   3.2. What differences do you notice?
      3.2.1. NKJV/NASV insert 'please' which is not in the original (note that it is not in italics) and make Nehemiah's words into a request, whereas the NIV, LXX, and the Hebrew have his statement as an imperative command. The command form is consistent with verse 11.
      3.2.2. NIV uses the word 'but' to set up a contrast between the two sentences. This can be supported by the LXX if the καὶ is translated as 'but'.
      3.2.3. NKJV, NASV, and Hebrew have, in essence, the words "let us stop charging usury" whereas the NIV translates it as "let this charging of usury stop." The 'us' (the corporate identification) is missing in the NIV.
      3.2.4. Overall none of the English translations provides a literal translation (but this does not mean that they are inaccurate!). If we follow the LXX we might translate the statement as follows: "I and my brothers and my men are also lending the people money and grain. But let us stop the exacting of usury!"
   3.3. How are we to understand this statement of Nehemiah?
      3.3.1. Were he and his men also guilty of charging usury?
      3.3.2. Is Nehemiah saying that he leant money but did not charge usury, whereas the others did?
      3.3.3. If Nehemiah did lend money and "demand in return" or charge usury, then why was he so angry with the nobles and does not confess his sins.
      3.3.4. Why does he use the words "let us"?
   3.4. It seems that we can conclude that Nehemiah did not charge usury. He sets up a contrast 'but' (as the NIV translates it). He says that he leant money but did not charge usury. He is setting himself up as an example to the nobles. This is consistent with:
      3.4.1. What we know of his character thus far. He came to sacrificially help the people of Jerusalem, not to oppress them.
      3.4.2. He pointed out that what he had done what was right. He had loaned money to the poor people.
      3.4.3. He is presented to us, throughout this book, as a righteous man without visible fault who asks God to remember him for his actions on behalf of the Church (see, Neh 5.19) and as an example for us.
      3.4.4. There is no confession of sin on Nehemiah's part. This would be totally inconsistent with his character and example (Neh 1.6, 7). He would have been on his knees in confession, and probably would have told us about it, if he had been doing wrong by charging usury/interest.
      3.4.5. He probably would have approached the nobles quite differently if he had been guilty of the same sin. He would not have been angry with them as much as calling them to repent along with himself. He is truly appalled, with righteous indignation, over the behaviour of the nobles. It would have been hypocrisy if he had approached them in such a way and he himself was guilty of the same charge.
      3.4.6. He provides us with an example later on (Neh 5.14-19) to show that he was a generous giver of good things and not one who would take advantage of someone, especially a poor person, who was building the wall.
   3.5. Why, then, does he use the word 'us' when he commands the nobles to stop charging usury?
      3.5.1. He could just be using a colloquial expression much like we have today. A parent or teacher might say to a bunch of kids who are roughhousing: "Come on guys let's stop this, eh?" The "let's" is "let us" whereas the adult isn't in fact involved.
      3.5.2. Or he could be using a form of the 'royal we.'
      3.5.3. However, it may be that Nehemiah is identifying with the people as he did in (Neh 1.6, 7). He identifies with the people in two senses:

© James R. Hughes, 2006

3.5.3.1. He is part of the nation; when one sins the whole body sins. We have seen previously that his confession of corporate sin became a personal confession. He feels personally responsible and guilty for the sins of Israel. Nehemiah takes the organic union (body) concept very seriously.
3.5.3.2. He is the leader of the nation. When a person in the body sins, the corporate leaders are accountable and responsible. He understands the corporate relationship through federal representation. Nehemiah takes corporate covenant relationships very seriously.

4. What behaviour is required from the nobles (as shown by his example)? (10)
   4.1. He had done well by lending the poor money. He had loaned freely (Dt 15.7-11).
   4.2. He and his men had loaned money and grain but had not taken usury/interest. They had followed the model given in the Law. The Jews were to lend to their brothers but not to take interest:
      4.2.1. Ex 22.25 – If they loaned money to someone who was needy, they were not to be like a moneylender and charge him interest. It was only okay to lend money and to be repaid the principle.
      4.2.2. Dt 15.6; Dt 23.19-20 – They could charge a foreigner interest but not a brother.
      4.2.3. Lev 25.35-37 – if one of their countrymen became poor they weren't to charge him interest.
   4.3. What had he not done?
      4.3.1. Become rich at the expense of the poor. He had not collected interest from his brothers (see: Ps 119.36; Prov 28.8; Jer 22.13-17; Ezk 18.8, 17).
      4.3.2. He had not expected repayment. The lender was not to expect repayment (Dt 15.7-11), or to expect to receive anything back. Although the obligation was on the borrower to repay (Lk 6.34-35). Jesus quotes verse 11 (Mt 26.11) in the context of kindness and generosity.

5. What else did he command them to do to rectify the situation? (11)
   5.1. He told them to give back the property that they had taken.
   5.2. They were to restore the property they had unjustly taken. This exemplifies the principle of restitution given in the Bible.
   5.3. He used the Biblical model of restoration to ensure that the poor were not further harmed.
   5.4. He may have applied the Jubilee model to the collateral for the loans (Dt 15.1, 9; Lev 25.10-13, 47-54). This controlled the accumulation of land property at the expense of the poor. The land belonged to the LORD (v 23) and was on loan to the people.
      5.4.1. The Jubilee Year in the OT was not government-enforced asset equalization or income redistribution. Only the rural land (and associated farm buildings) was returned to owners every fifty years. There was no equalizing of money or other property assets, nor of houses within walled cities.
      5.4.2. Aside: Independence Bell or Liberty Bell (design based on "Great Tom" of Westminster) that was hung in the State House in Philadelphia, Sept 1, 1752, has words from Lev 25.10: "Proclaim Liberty throughout all the Land unto all the Inhabitants Thereof." It cracked on first ring. It was re-cast in Philadelphia by Pass and Stow. It was rung a number of times for important occasions (e.g., Feb. 1761 in honor of King George III ascending the throne; Sept 26, 1777 Penn. assembly). It was hidden in the basement of Zion Reformed Church, and put back June 27, 1778. On July 8, 1835 it is reported to have cracked when it was rung for death of John Marshall, chief justice. It was repaired. Its final ring was for Washington's birthday (1846) when it cracked beyond repair. In 1976 it was put on display in case on the mall near Independence Hall.

6. What lessons can we derive from this section?
   6.1. We are shown how to confront people in the Church with respect to their sin:
      6.1.1. Show the damage it causes to others.
      6.1.2. Point out where their behaviour has broken the Law of God and call for a fear of the LORD.
      6.1.3. Show people how their behaviour can bring a reproach on the name and people of God. It is especially important that we be a good witness to those outside the Church.
   6.2. We are not to do things that would place fellow Christians in a situation where they will be dependent on non-Christians or be required to do something that will displease the Lord. For example, we are not to make it necessary for others to work on the Lord's Day.
   6.3. The importance of careful attention to quick discipline:
      6.3.1. He dealt with the problem immediately.
      6.3.2. He dealt with the perpetrators in private, first.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

6.3.3. He dealt with a public issue in public so that justice can be seen to be done.

The Cure (Neh 5.11)

1. What is the Biblical model for providing justice in the case of theft?
   1.1. The Biblical principle for punishing theft is, in general, a double re-payment (Ex 22.4, 7, 9) of the value of the goods stolen. An exception appears to be if the goods were disposed of, then a five-fold (for the most valuable items) or fourfold (e.g., Ex 22.1) repayment is required. Notice that Zacchaeus (Lk 19.8) offers to repay to the fourfold restoration/recompense. Jesus implicitly endorses Zacchaeus' actions.
   1.2. *Lex Talionis*, also known by the concept "the punishment is to fit the crime" (Ex 21.24, 25; Lev 24.17-22) is a law that is to be applied to foreigners as well as Jews. It clearly was not a Jewish ceremonial law (although there are some ceremonial laws which have the same provision). In Matthew 5.38 Jesus endorses *lex talionis* by expounding on the underlying meaning of the command and warning against personal vindictiveness (Mt 7.2; also Jer 50.29; Ob 15; Hab 2.8).
   1.3. The punishment fits the crime in that it consists of, at minimum, a two-fold re-payment that includes restoration plus recompense.
      1.3.1. Restoration brings the situation back to normalcy or harmony by restoring the object that the thief removed to its owner.
      1.3.2. The punishment matches the crime by replicating the effect of the crime. The person who took someone's possession unjustly must therefore return what he took and pay, in general, an equal amount to its value as recompense.

2. How is the principle of restoration/recompense applied by Nehemiah in this situation? (11)
   2.1. He treats their theft, via usury, as both a moral and a legal problem. It is not just a moral problem that needs to be confessed. It is a legal problem that needs to be dealt with judicially.
   2.2. Do we find the principle of double-payment in verse 11?
      2.2.1. Returning the land and the interest is the restoration.
      2.2.2. Where is the recompense portion? It is found in the fact that money or food was given to the poor and the rich cannot get it back. Presumably the amount of money or food was more or less equal to the value of the land. So the nobles end up paying double.
   2.3. Aside: The punishment of Jesus exemplifies this restoration/recompense model; or restoration and punishment.
      2.3.1. His perfect life restores God's honor—restoration.
      2.3.2. On the cross, in his death, he bore the punishment—recompense.

3. What means did Nehemiah use to deal with the problem of injustice being perpetrated by his countrymen?
   3.1. He used judicial means that were according to God's laws and the principles of justice.
   3.2. Note the use of 'restore.' Nehemiah's approach is to use restitution.

4. How does his approach contrast to what we find in much of 'justice' today?
   4.1. Often punishment does not suit the crime (e.g., absurdly high tort awards, absurdly lenient criminal sentences).
   4.2. We often don't see the principle of restitution (restoration and recompense) applied today. Punishment does not provide for restitution. Victims of crimes are often left without either restoration or recompense. How did this situation arise?
      4.2.1. Jewish (OT) laws are not unique. Roman laws and early Anglo-Saxon laws incorporated the concept that offenders were responsible for repaying their victims.
      4.2.2. Henry I introduced the concept of the crown being the victim in criminal cases. The offence of the criminal was against his (the king's) person, even if committed in some remote part of his kingdom.
      4.2.3. This has evolved into crimes against the state, and a person's having to pay his 'debt to society'.
      4.2.4. It is true that some crimes are against the collective representation of the people (e.g. treason) but we must guard against using the term 'paid his debt to society' without taking into account the debt owed to the injured party.
         4.2.4.1. For example: Alan Eagleson was fined $1M and put in jail for 18 months (he served six). The money from the fine was put into a trust to repay those he bilked, but the NHL hockey players retirement fund and individuals that he swindled were not given enough

© James R. Hughes, 2006

to cover their losses. His punishment did not equal what he had stolen from the players. There was neither restoration nor true recompense.

4.3. There are many today who claim that we cannot use the biblical principles of punishment in our complex 21st century society. It is hard to understand:
  4.3.1. How our current system of punishment, that does not consider the victim, and does not seem to offer punishment to match the degree of the crime, has anything to offer which is better than the Biblical model.
  4.3.2. Why this Biblical model cannot be applied today.
  4.3.3. What legitimate arguments those who despise the Bible's model can present for why we should consider our current model superior to that given by God.

5. How did Nehemiah *not* deal with the problem of the poor?
  5.1. He did not put them on the dole.
    5.1.1. Note that he also did not give them the food they needed, he loaned them money to buy food, but he did not charge usury/interest (10).
    5.1.2. He expected repayment of the principal on principle but, as we noted, he would not have demanded repayment on an individual level.
    5.1.3. He gave them a 'hand-up' not a 'hand-out'.
  5.2. He did not show favoritism to the rich. He used principles of justice based on God's model to ensure that justice was done (Ex 23.3; Lev 19.15; Prov 24.23; Prov 31.8, 9).
  5.3. He did not impose a tax on the rich.
    5.3.1. He did not use the power of the state (his governorship) to enforce a scheme of income-redistribution (15).
    5.3.2. Instead he dealt with the social injustice when it broke God's law. He encouraged cheerful and un-coerced giving (Neh 5.14-18 by example; 2 Cor 9.7).
  5.4. Nehemiah was not a socialist, but he was a philanthropist. He did not use the power of the government to equalize incomes. But he did use the power of the state to correct an injustice and he showed a personal social conscious (see, subsequent section covering verses 14-19).

6. How did Nehemiah's actions differ from what Joseph did in Egypt? (Gen 47.13-26)
  6.1. The purpose of this question is to help us consider how to interpret and apply the Bible in our modern context.
  6.2. Joseph did not lend the people money.
  6.3. He bought the people into slavery (and possibly concentrated them in cities, see Gen 47.21; NIV footnote).
  6.4. He gave his family special treatment (Gen 47.11, 12 food and property; Gen 47.27 acquired property).
  6.5. Was what Joseph did right or wrong? Is it a model for civil magistrates to follow?
    6.5.1. Some people try to interpret Joseph's actions as a model for how a just economy should be set up. Instead of private land ownership they interpret this as a form of land rationalization, and argue that governments should follow this model with some form of communism, socialism, or feudalism. Notice that the people and the land were owned by Pharaoh (Gen 47.23) and that Joseph instituted a 20% tax on the produce (Gen 47.24).
  6.6. Some differences between Nehemiah and Joseph that we should keep in mind.
    6.6.1. What Joseph did may have been a punishment on Egypt. They had seven years of warning and did not take it. They could have been personally saving for the future, but did not. Human behaviour is often to live for the moment and ignore the future. The consequence is that those who don't plan for the future become slaves to those who do.
    6.6.2. Nehemiah is presented as a model in a Christian context, Joseph operated in a pagan context. Nehemiah's objective is for equity and justice. Joseph's objective (in God's over-ridding providence) may have been to bring Egypt into servitude to weaken it. This may actually be a form of judgment on the nation. Notice Gen 47.26 "to this day." Compare the plagues (Ex 7.14-11.10); people plundering the Egyptians (Ex 3.21, 22; Ex 11.2, 3; Ex 12.35-36). The nation was clearly under judgment by God.
    6.6.3. Jacob and his family were fed on the best of the land but the natives of the land were starving. The world will go into slavery to the king of this world (Satan) and be handed over by Christ (Joseph as a type), (Mt 10.28-31; Mt 25.41). The people of God will live on the best things (Is 25.6; Is 65.13; Ps 34.10; Rev 19.9).

© James R. Hughes, 2006

7. What lessons can we derive from this section?
   7.1. It may surprise you that we can learn a lot about justice and punishment from this one verse. Nehemiah shows us, by example, how to deal with the crime of theft. Man's nature hasn't changed. Theft hasn't changed. God's law with respect to theft hasn't changed. So, how to deal with theft hasn't changed. It would be good for us, and our governments, to heed this lesson from Nehemiah. It is important to note both what he did and what he did not do. We can then take his example of justice, extrapolate the Biblical principles upon which it is based, and determine what God's general requirements are for providing justice when dealing with theft.
   7.2. The importance of using judicial means, and moral suasion to ensure equity and fairness rather than forced income redistribution.
   7.3. We must take care not to make a section of historical narrative (e.g., 'holy war') into a normative example unless there are indications that it is being presented to us as a model for Christian behaviour.

The Consequences (Neh 5.8c, 12-13)

1. What was the people's reaction to the accusations? (Neh 5.8c, 12, 13)
   1.1. *Silenced* – They remained silent before the accusations and did not try to respond in self-defence because they knew that they had nothing to say (8c).
      1.1.1. They knew that they were guilty. The remained in silence before Nehemiah, the Law and the august majesty of God.
      1.1.2. [For a consideration of total attention, silence, listening, and not questioning, compare: Lev 10.3; Ps 107.42; Jn 8.7-10; Rom 3.19; Rev 8.1.]
      1.1.3. The Law holds all men accountable. All before the judgment seat of God will be silent. They will have no excuses. On that day no one will question God. He will ask: "Why did you not honour my holy law?"
   1.2. *Agreed* – They agreed to do what Nehemiah had told them was required by the Law of God, and by justice.
      1.2.1. They agreed to give back what they had taken and to stop charging usury/interest. (12).
   1.3. *Vowed* – Nehemiah had them show the seriousness of their words:
      1.3.1. He made them take an oath in the context of the priests. (12) We have here an example of oath-taking as holy ordinance in the context of a judicial setting.
      1.3.2. Should this questions arise: "Is it okay for us to take an oath today?", refer to: *Appendix D – Lawful Oaths and Vows*.
   1.4. *Confirmed* – How did they confirm their oath and their understanding of their obligations to God?
      1.4.1. With an "amen" (13). (See, Neh 8.6; Dt 27.15-26; 1 Chron 16.36; Ps 106.48).
      1.4.2. 'amen' is a solemn formula by which a hearer accepts the validity of an oath and joins himself to it with a firm word of acceptance."
   1.5. *Praised* – Then they praised God, they worshiped. (13)
      1.5.1. They knew that this vow was before God.
      1.5.2. In our case our courts are also before God.
      1.5.3. We are not told how they praised. But one possibility is that they sang Psalm 116.14.
   1.6. *Obeyed* – They did what they had promised and gave back the goods and usury/interest. (13)
      1.6.1. They kept their word.

2. How did Nehemiah ratify the oath? (13)
   2.1. He shook out the fold of his robe.
   2.2. This is a symbol of the solemn nature of oath-taking (compare, Lk 9.5; Acts 13.51; Acts 18.6), showing the solemnity of the occasion.
   2.3. It symbolized a curse to be brought on them if they did not do what they said they would.
   2.4. They would be judged severely if they did not keep their oath.
   2.5. This shows how serious it is to take an oath, and how important it is to keep one's oaths.
   2.6. [Compare the use of another symbol that God himself used to ratify the oath he made with Abraham (Gen 15.9-21).]

3. What lessons can we derive from this section?
   3.1. The institution of government (law making bodies or judicial bodies) is under the authority of God (Rom 13.1-7). Judicial actions of governments, in particular, are under the authority of God.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

3.1.1. Court proceedings are actions undertaken before God. The taking of vows is an action calling God as witness.
3.1.2. It is invalid to say that government should be independent of religion. The government is to act on behalf of God, under God, and according to God's laws. Judgments are to be made according to God's laws.
3.1.3. It is invalid to say that these events apply purely to a Jewish nation. Nehemiah was a representative of the Persian Empire, a very heathen state, he did what was right with respect to God's laws because they are universal. A Christian civil magistrate or judge should act in accordance with God's laws.

3.2. The example of humility and obedience on the part of the people (rich, nobles, officials) who had sinned shows us that we and our leaders must be willing to be subject to the hand of a judicial judgment enacted according to the laws of God.
3.2.1. Are we willing to be subject to those in authority over us, in church and civil courts?
3.2.2. Are we willing to accept the decisions of a church court and act in obedience?
3.2.3. In our independent age it is often easy for us to be rebels when it comes to submitting to those in authority over us.

The Challenge (Neh 5.14-19)

1. When do the events described in these verses occur? (14)
1.1. Nehemiah served as governor (during his first term) over a twelve-year period:
1.1.1. From twentieth year (see, also Neh 2.1; April 444/445 BC) to the thirty second year (April 1, 433 BC to April 19, 432 BC) of the reign of King Artaxerxes.
1.1.2. Nehemiah (apparently) returned for another period as governor later (Neh 13.6, 7).
1.2. How long did he originally think he might have been in Jerusalem?
1.2.1. Nehemiah tells us that he set a time, but does not tell us how long it was (Neh 2.6.).
1.2.2. It took 52 days (Neh 6.15) to rebuild the walls, plus the effort to put in place the gates. Since he wanted to go rebuild the city walls specifically he probably knew it would take a few months. Possibly he asked for half a year.
1.2.3. It is possible that he said that he would be away for only a short period.
1.2.4. It is possible that the king extended his stay by making him the permanent governor.

2. Why are we told about Nehemiah's generosity?
2.1. Not because Nehemiah was boasting. He was a true servant of his nation. It is possible that Nehemiah was encouraged to write down these events (as part of Scripture) by his friend Ezra who was putting together the final collection of the manuscripts for the OT (under the guidance of the HS).
2.2. To show that he was not an unjust judge. He had a right to ask the nobles and leaders to be generous because he set an example for them. He had a right to demand that those under his jurisdiction behave correctly. There were no double standards with him. Other examples include: Samuel: (1 Sam 12.1-5) and Paul (2 Tim 4.6-8).
2.3. To set and example for all leaders. Leaders are servants of the people who are not to lord it over their subjects. This is consistent with one of the overall purposes of the book of Nehemiah. The two-fold purpose of the book is to show: God ruling, man fulfilling; God a sovereign, man a servant; God directing, man delivering. We find in Nehemiah, a balance between: God's sovereignty and man's responsibility.

3. What did he say that he did not do? (14-16)
3.1. Eat any of the food allotted to the governor. (15)
3.1.1. This means that he did not take the allotment in kind from the territories under his jurisdiction.
3.1.2. This seems to be a parallel to verse 15 where he did not tax the people (money or food or wine).
3.2. Place a heavy tax on the people. (15)
3.2.1. The tax that other (previous) governors had exacted was 40 shekels (half kilo) of silver, plus food and wine.
3.2.2. This sounds like a head tax. It is not graduated relative to income like God's tithe. [Refer to the notes on Neh 5.2-4, for more information about the use of coins at this time.]
3.2.3. Provincial governors in the Persian Empire had a 'right' to tax the people in addition to the central administration. Nehemiah did not add a burden on top of the amount remitted to the central

© James R. Hughes, 2006

administration (4). He did not tax the people so that he could set an example of how the people should behave toward one another.

3.2.4. What are other examples of God's leaders not taking advantage of the natural rights that they had in order to be of service for the people of God/the Church?

3.2.4.1. Jesus (Phil 2.6-8).

3.2.4.2. Paul (1 Cor 9.1-23 [verses 1, 12, 15, 23]; 2 Thess 3.7-9).

3.2.4.3. Notice that Both Jesus and Paul are set before us examples. Paul explicitly tells us to follow his example.

3.2.4.4. Based on this we can interpret Nehemiah's actions as example-setting, even though he does not explicitly tell us to follow his example.

3.3. Lord it over the people himself or through his assistants. (15)

3.3.1. It is very difficult for leaders not to take advantage of their positions to get their own way in many things.

3.3.2. In a church setting you may have seen people who use their office as a means of lording it over others rather than serving. It is despicable when this happens. It is usually not for money in a church setting, but for control and power—not the breadth of power which a country's dictator has or a boss of a large corporation, but still the sense of power which comes from getting people to submit to their wills.

3.3.3. Similarly, it is also difficult for their assistants not to abuse their association with the leader. People given a little power (e.g., working for a governor) often find ways to abuse their positions of authority. In a work setting we see 'lackeys' use their position to threaten people into doing things and have seen them use their position to get around policies of the company.

3.3.4. This type of behaviour is evil in political, business, and Church settings. The Bible speaks clearly about the evil (Ezk 34.4-6; Mt 20.25-28; 2 Cor 1.23, 24; 1 Pt 5.2, 3).

3.4. Acquire land (16). He did not take advantage of the poverty of the people to enrich himself.

4. What did he do instead of taking advantage of his position and of the people's hardship (16, 17)?

4.1. He worked on the wall (Neh 4.21-23; Neh 5.16), showing a model of service and dedication. Many people in authority positions will not get their hands dirty with 'real' work.

4.2. He provided food for many people.

4.2.1. A governor in the Mesopotamian valley was expected to entertain lavishly:

4.2.2. What are some other examples in the Bible of this pattern:

4.2.2.1. Joseph with brothers (Gen 43.31-34)

4.2.2.2. Ark brought to Jerusalem (2 Sam 6.19)

4.2.2.3. Solomon's daily provisions (1 Ki 4.22-23)

4.2.2.4. Belshazzar (Dan 5.1-4)

4.2.2.5. Feast in Esther (Neh 1.5)

4.2.2.6. [Text found at Nimrud in has Ashurnasirpal II King of Assyria (884-859) feeding 69, 574 guests at a banquet for 10 days (NIV Study Bible).]

4.2.3. We are not told the total number of people who ate at his table, although it included the 150 "Jews and officials" (17). The amount of food listed (18) has been estimated as being enough to feed around 700 people. Conservatively this would work out to an expense in today's terms of at least $30M during his time as governor (700 * $10 = $7,000 * 365 = $2.5M/year * 12 = $30M).

4.2.4. Notice that Nehemiah says explicitly (18) that in spite of serving this food, apparently for 12 years, he never paid for it out of money that he could have levied from the people. How did he pay for all this food? Possibly:

4.2.4.1. Out of the allowance given him by King of Persia. He made other parts of the empire support the Jews.

4.2.4.2. Out of his own wealth. However, it is difficult to understand how, as a wine taster or even as an advisor to the king, he could have accumulated that kind of wealth.

5. Why did he not act like many others who are put in positions of power or authority?

5.1. Out of (fear) reverence for God (15). In Leviticus 25.36, notice the juxtaposition of the instruction not to charge interest and the fear of God.

5.2. Out of a love for the people of God (Neh 1.4).

5.3. Out of a desire to see the kingdom of God advanced (19).

© James R. Hughes, 2006

6. What can we learn from Nehemiah's example of not taking advantage of the people and of sharing his table with those who served with him?
   6.1. The importance of leaders setting a good example to those around them.
   6.2. A position of leadership is to be one of service, not gaining comfort, wealth, or power (Titus 1.7, 11; 1 Tim 3.3, 8).
   6.3. He showed that leaders have to be ready to accept situations where they will give up their rights to serve. They need to focus on responsibilities *vs* rights.
   6.4. True ministers of God, civil magistrates, will ease the burden of the poor by justice, and not lay burdens upon them.
   6.5. True ministers of God are generous as they have been blessed by God. Nehemiah put aside his personal ambitions and used what God had given him, in terms of material prosperity and power, for the service of the Church.
   6.6. Nehemiah's goal, which should be the goal of all who serve in positions of leadership, was to serve to the glory of God, and the furtherance of his kingdom.

7. How do we see these principles of leadership exhibited by Jesus, the great shepherd and leader of his people?
   7.1. Perfect life (1 Pt 2.22); service through healing and teaching (Mt 4.23), washing feet (Jn 13.1-20).
   7.2. Living in inadequate settings (no place to lay head Mt 8.20), eating when able, not acquiring many supplies.
   7.3. Gave up the rights of heaven to save (Phil 2.6-8).
   7.4. Eased the burden of the poor (Is 58.6-7 [Mt 25.34-40]; Is 61.1-3 [Mt 11.5]; Mt 11.28-30)
   7.5. Calls us to a feast (Is 25.6; Rev 19.9)
   7.6. Doing God's will and furthering the work of the kingdom (Heb 10.7).
   7.7. Discussion: What are some examples of how Christians might waive their rights today for the cause of the Gospel and the welfare of the Church?

8. For what does Nehemiah appeal to God to remember him? (19)
   8.1. His work in judging faithfully.
   8.2. His kindness in giving.
   8.3. Remember a key word in the book of Nehemiah (Neh 1.8; Neh 4.14; Neh 5.19; Neh 6.14; Neh 13.14, 22, 29, 31).

9. Why does he ask God to remember him?
   9.1. It is useful to compare the other similar appeals: Neh 13.14, 22, 31.
   9.2. Is his motive to earn a reward from his actions?
      9.2.1. In Nehemiah 13.14 he mentions his faithfulness in serving.
      9.2.2. In Nehemiah 13.22 he references God's mercy.
   9.3. Is he in some way suggesting that he can earn his salvation?
      9.3.1. It might be useful to look at 2 Sam 22.21; 2 Ki 20.3; Heb 6.10 and 2 Tim 4.6-8 for similar statements of faithfulness.
      9.3.2. God will reward those who, in his grace, have served him faithfully, in a covenantal context.
      9.3.3. Paul indicates that through persevering to the end he expects that God will remember him
      9.3.4. Notice that in the NT cases there is mention of God being just. Nehemiah has completed an exercise in justice and he is reminding God that he has promised to act justly and reward his people for their faithfulness.
   9.4. Nehemiah is calling on God to remember his promises. He is not suggesting that he deserves anything, but rather that God who is gracious will be faithful to his promises.
   9.5. Nehemiah, in appealing to God's faithfulness through the word 'remember' is declaring God's gracious kindness. He praises God by declaring that God is faithful to his promises.
   9.6. We are not to seek rewards for our works. But, we can expect God to remember us and take us into glory when we remain faithful to him. The works that we perform on God's behalf are the sign that we are faithful (e.g., Mt 25.34-40).

Devil's Promoters III (Neh 6.1-14, 17-19)

Introduction

1. When did the Devil's Promoters first appear and when do they re-appear on the scene? (1)

© James R. Hughes, 2006

1.1. These men appeared in the account previously:
1.1.1. In Nehemiah 2.10, 19, 20 we read of their attempts to stop the work before it began.
1.1.2. In Nehemiah 4.1-3, 7-8 we read of their attempts to stop the work while it was in progress.
1.2. Refer to Devil's Promoters I for background on Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem.
1.3. Here we read of their attempts to stop the work on the wall as it neared completion, but the gates were not yet set in place.

2. What were the strategies they used previously to undermine and stop the work?
2.1. Ridicule (Neh 2.19).
2.2. Physical threats (Neh 4.1-14)

3. How did Nehemiah overcome their threats at that time?
3.1. Prayer
3.2. Encouragement
3.3. Teamwork

4. Why do they now reappear?
4.1. They were likely starting to get quite concerned about the advances the Jews were making on re-building the wall and the perceived a potential threat to their domains.
4.2. At this point the walls were complete, no gaps were left, but the city gates (or doors in the gate openings) had not yet been put in place.
4.3. It is probably significant that their threat reappears at this point in the re-construction of the wall, because:
4.3.1. The city was still not protected and the work was not complete.
4.3.2. There was still considerable work to do to make and hang the heavy gates. Equipment would have been required for raising the doors on their hinges.
4.3.3. It is necessary to keep up the initiative to the very end. The people had to continue to persevere and be vigilant.

5. What devices does Satan, through these men, use in this next attempt to undermine the work of Nehemiah, the Church, and Christ?
5.1. Intrigue (1-4)
5.2. Innuendo/Incrimination (5-9)
5.3. Intimidation (10-14)
5.4. Insinuation (17-19).

6. What do you notice about the nature of all of these attacks?
6.1. Their object of attack was Nehemiah—to remove him from the work or discredit his leadership.
6.2. Their attacks are more subtle—honey is sweet but sticky. They try to appeal to his cooperative nature and his religious attitudes. But they are setting a trap.
6.3. They are psychological. Much of Satan's tactics revolve around the mind, spirit, will, and heart. Sometimes the attacks (e.g., temptations) are obvious but most of the time they are subtle and are caused by our own minds leading us astray (James 1.14). We are dragged/drawn away by evil desires in our minds/hearts when tempted.

7. How do we know that these men are the Devil's Promoters, from the context of verse 1?
7.1. Notice the use of the term "our enemies."
7.2. With their complex psychological war on the Jews we could think of these men as the 'godfathers' of a Judean Mafia.

8. What lessons can we take from these introductory considerations?
8.1. The tactics that Satan uses most often revolve around the mind, spirit, will, heart. Sometimes he uses actual physical abuse and torture (e.g., Heb 11.33-38), but usually the attacks of Satan are not physical (compare, James 1.2-18, trials that include riches as temptation) but ridicule, fear, doubt, intimidation, name calling, etc. It is with the mind and heart that we believe and love Jesus. Satan wants to undermine the mind so that we begin to doubt and no longer believe, and the heart so that we don't trust and instead fear. This is why the primary instrument of counteracting Satan is prayer (see, Neh 6.9, 14). Court cases, protests, vows of allegiance, publications (web sites, advertising, books, etc.), political parties, debates,

© James R. Hughes, 2006

and, yes, preaching and evangelism all have their place in the work of God. But the primary means of counteracting Satan is prayer (Eph 5.18). God, through, Christ will have the victory and we are to pray that his kingdom will be victorious. Ultimately it is not our battle, it is Christ's and we have to pray.

8.2. The enemies of the Church use these techniques because the opponents of Christianity cannot challenge it on rational grounds. They can only oppose it by farce or force.

8.2.1. What are some examples of scoffing against God and his laws in the Bible? Gen 3.4, 5; Gen 16.4; Gen 21.9; Acts 26.24, 25; 2 Pt 3.3-5; Jude 18.

8.2.2. What are some examples in the current day? TV makes fun of Christians. "Political Correctness" claims to be tolerant, except when it comes to Christianity which states that there are absolutes. PC has to challenge Christianity with either force or some form of psychological threat—force or farce.

8.3. We need to recall that this is just one small skirmish in a great spiritual battle between Satan and Christ. It is one instance of the war that has been raging since the Creation (Fall) and will rage until the Consummation (Eph 6.12; Rom 8.38; 1 Cor 15.25).

8.4. Vigilance and perseverance are required to the very end.

8.4.1. Stand firm under temptation (1 Cor 10.13).

8.4.2. Stand against evil in the spiritual armour (Eph 6.11-14).

8.4.3. Be steadfast in the work of the Lord (1 Cor 15.58). How do we stand? Through self? No, through Christ and the armour of God. It is God who makes us stand firm (2 Cor 1.21) by faith through grace (Rom 5.2; 2 Cor 1.24).

8.4.4. It is necessary to persevere to the end (1 Cor 9.24; 2 Tim 4.7; Heb 12.1-3). The battle for us is never over until we reach glory.

Intrigue (Neh 6.1-4)

Intrigue = Cheat, trick, entangle, to arouse the interest, desire, or curiosity. (Webster's).

1. What did the Devil's Promoters ask Nehemiah to do? (2)

1.1. To meet him on the plain of Ono

1.1.1. Oldest recorded mention of Ono is in lists of Thothmes III (1503-1450 BC), the Pharaoh of the oppression. His son, Amenhotep II (1450-1425) was probably the Pharaoh at time of exodus (1446 BC).

1.1.2. The Benjamites rebuilt it after the conquest of Canaan (1 Chron 8.12); and re-occupied it after the Exile (Ezra 2.33; Neh 11.33-35).

1.2. Where was Ono relative to Jerusalem?

1.2.1. Near Lydda/Lod (on the way to Joppa and the coast) NW Jerusalem about 40kms. It is possible that it was not in the Judean (Yahud) territory under Persian rule but in Ashdod, at the westernmost edge of area resettled by the returning Jews (Neh 7.37).

2. What is significant about this location? Why did they select it?

2.1. Possibly to give the appearance of neutrality, in a neutral territory. The three antagonists were generally from the N, SE and South.

2.2. But, it also may be that Sanballat, who is called a Horonite (i.e., from Horonium), could have been from Lower Beth-horon which is NW of Jerusalem (almost) about the halfway point on the road between Jerusaelm and Ono/Joppa. It is well into the Persian territory of Yahud, and South of Samaria. But if Sanballat was from there, he could have had family there and could have been hoping, as governor of Samaria, that he would be able to enlarge his territory if Nehemiah was out of the way.

2.3. The enemies of the Jews could have used this location as a station for an ambush.

3. What did they want Nehemiah to think was their reason for calling the meeting?

3.1. That it was an attempt to work with Nehemiah.

3.2. They would be going out of their way to have a meeting. This would make it seem that they were willing to come to some compromise.

4. What, however, was their real reason for calling the meeting?

4.1. To get Nehemiah out of the city where he would have had supporters, away from witnesses.

4.2. Compare: Gen 4.8; 2 Sam 3.27; 2 Sam 20.9-10.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

5. How many times did they ask him to come down and meet with them? Why? (4, 5)
   5.1. Five times. Four the same way, or if different we aren't told. But the fifth request was given with an added twist, the open letter (we'll consider the letter separately)
   5.2. Why were they so persistent?
      5.2.1. Because he kept answering that he would not go.
      5.2.2. Because they wanted desperately to discredit him.
      5.2.3. They were trying to wear him down. Sometimes an effective technique to wear down someone is to keep asking. If someone asks often enough a person may give in (e.g., persistent widow, Lk 18.2-5) just to shut up the requestor. An effective technique is to put a twist on the ask each time, such as a brief explanation of how little the request is, or how this is the only time a request will be made, with the promise of something in return, or with an appeal to flattery.
   5.3. What are similar examples in Scripture of persistent requests or challenges being used in an attempt to wear down someone?
      5.3.1. Balak asking Balaam three times. He gave in. (Num 22.4, 5, 13, 15).
      5.3.2. Delilah with Samson. He gave in. (Judges 16.6, 10-11, 15-16).
      5.3.3. Temptation of Jesus three times. He continued steadfast. (Mt 4.1-11).

6. How did Nehemiah know that the intention of their scheme was to harm him?
   6.1. Although it is possible that he had a source of intelligence like a spy network, it isn't necessary to suppose this when there are other more obvious ways that he probably had to discern their motives.
   6.2. If they really had wanted to work with him they would have come to his territory.
   6.3. Their insistence on a meeting and not being willing to accept his answer would have made him suspicious. If they really were out to cooperate, they would have accepted his answer and said something like: "Okay, we'll wait until you finish the work and then we can meet to see how we can work together going forward." They would have had to wait only a few weeks.
   6.4. He may have suspected their motives by thinking of the logic of the situation. Why would they want him to go a day's journey away from Jerusalem? So that he could not oversee the work, so that it would flounder. Also, he would be away from his supporters and friends and a positive show of strength (the armed Jews), in an area where he would be outnumbered by enemies.
   6.5. He used discernment. He knew that they were enemies and that their words could not be taken at face value. Nothing in their actions would have changed from previously that would have indicated that they should be trusted. There had been no evidence that they had changed from being enemies.
      6.5.1. Once burned twice shy. Proverbial common sense.
      6.5.2. He considered Biblical wisdom: Ps 37.12; Prov 14.15; Prov 26.24-26.

7. What was Nehemiah's response? (3)
   7.1. He told them he couldn't go down to meet them. He gave them a straight answer and told them 'no'.
   7.2. He did not have to give them any reasons, but he did give these as well. He gave them his 'no' answer with valid reasons, that were unassailable.
      7.2.1. He told them that he was too busy (carrying out the project). He still had to supervise the installation of the doors in ten gates: Sheep (Neh 3.1); Fish (Neh 3.3), Jeshanah (Neh 3.6), Valley (Neh 3.13), Dung (Neh 3.14), Fountain (Neh 3.15), Water (Neh 3.26), Horse (Neh 3.28), East (Neh 3.29), Inspection (Neh 3.31).
      7.2.2. He told them that he could not leave or the work would stop. It was his constant 'pressure' (encouragement) (Neh 4.14), protection (Neh 4.16-18) and prayer (e.g., Neh 4.4, 5) as a leader that was sustaining the tired (Neh 4.10), frightened (Neh 4.11), hungry/poor (Neh 5.2) people.
      7.2.3. He told them that the project he was working on was very important (a "great/good project/work"). Recall 2.18 "good work." What made this work 'good' and 'great'? It was more than an ordinary project, as it was dedicated directly to the work of the Church.
   7.3. He answered with a question.
      7.3.1. This is an effective technique used by Jesus to turn away his enemies or to challenge others to serious thought (Mt 21.24, John's baptism; Mt 22.15-22, paying taxes to Caesar; Lk 10.26, to the expert in the Law; Lk 18.19, to the rich young ruler).
      7.3.2. It is also an effective technique for drawing out the real motives of one's enemies or antagonists (e.g., Jesus with the people asking about John or paying taxes to Caser).

8. What does Nehemiah's answer tell about his character (beside the fact that he was discerning)?

© James R. Hughes, 2006

8.1. It shows us that he was single-minded in his devotion to the task that he had set out to complete. He was not willing to let anything that was not truly important distract him from the work. He knew how to distinguish between the urgent and the important.
8.2. Notice from chapter 5, that his single-minded devotion is not blind to the needs around him. He had a social conscious. We will see this again when we study the second half of the book (chapter 7 and following). But he was not prepared to get involved in 'international' peace summits while there was important domestic work to be accomplished.

9. What did he *not* do?
   9.1. He did not tell them to get lost, ignore them, or tell them that they were just out to attack him.
   9.2. He did not attack their assumed motives. Since they had not revealed them it was better for him patiently to wait until *they* revealed their true motives.
   9.3. He did not want to put them on the defensive. He chose a method that would demonstrate whether or not his enemies were sincere. If they were, they would accept his answer and suggest a postponement to a more convenient time. He gave them an opportunity to prove their motives sincere, if they really wanted to make peace.
   9.4. A gentle answer turns away wrath or avoids a confrontation (Prov 15.1). Often we want to respond in anger to an issue or question. It is often wise to 'sit' on an answer and reflect on it before 'flaming off'.
   9.5. He answered in a way that his enemies could not accuse him of being unreasonable.

10. Was it right for Nehemiah to refuse to attend the peace summit? (e.g., Mt 5.42)
    10.1. He was not to make treaties with the nations (Ex 34.12, 15; Dt 7.2).
    10.2. He had to strike a balance. He had to weigh the pros and cons of the situation and do what he believed, before God, was right in that circumstance.
    10.3. There are many situations—we face them constantly in our lives—where we are confronted by decisions. We must use a means of decision making that is based on something like the following:
       10.3.1. Is it lawful? Use the Bible as the first basis for this, then the subordinate laws of men.
       10.3.2. Will Jesus' name be praised through a particular course of action? (e.g., 1 Cor 10.31)
       10.3.3. Will the cause of the Church be advanced? (e.g., Mt 6.10)
       10.3.4. Is it of benefit to others? (e.g., Rom 14.19-21).
       10.3.5. Is if for my own benefit? (e.g., 1 Cor 6.12, 19) Context 9, 13-20 not everything is permissible. Will I ...
          10.3.5.1. Be drawn closer to God?
          10.3.5.2. Become enslaved?
          10.3.5.3. Grow in my mind or become a 'vegetable'?
          10.3.5.4. Become healthier in my body or let it deteriorate?
          10.3.5.5. Simplify my life or make it more complicated?
          10.3.5.6. Grow in self discipline?
    10.4. There are many demands that people will place on us in this life. We can never meet every expectation. We must have priorities. Therefore we must have a proper motive (to please God) and a focused vision for what is important for the advance of God's kingdom.

11. What are some examples of false reconciliation or peace initiatives that we must avoid?
    11.1. Participation in a multi-faith 'prayer' breakfast.
    11.2. Mergers/cooperation between churches when there is not agreement in the fundamentals of the faith.
    11.3. [Note: The extreme edges are easy to define. The middle area where differences can be permitted is harder. Where can we have diversity within unity?]

12. What Lessons can we take from this first personal attack (intrigue) on Nehemiah?
    12.1. Satan will use the same subtle tactic with us to distract us from the work of the Church. We must be aware of this and be on our guard. He would love to have us sucked into compromises with the enemies of Christianity.
    12.2. We need to maintain a single-minded focus on what is important, not just on the expedient or urgent, in all areas of our lives. Certainly in the Church we all must not get caught up with the urgent or the routine and lose sight of the mission of the Church (Mt 28.16-20).
    12.3. Leaders in Church and State need the kind of discernment that Nehemiah displayed. They need to be on guard against plots and schemes of enemies. In the Church? Sadly, yes! There will always be people

© James R. Hughes, 2006

whose personal objectives are to gain power or influence or be in the 'know'. There are many Church 'politicians'.

12.4. Be as wise as serpents, as harmless as doves (Mt 10.16).
12.5. Stand firm (1 Cor 15.58).
12.6. We must learn to say: "Oh no!" when invited to a summit of temptation or distraction on the plains of Ono.

Innuendo (Neh 6.5-9)

Innuendo = A veiled or equivocal reflection on character or reputation, slander. (Webster's)

1. When the request to have Nehemiah meet with them on the plain of Ono did not work, what was the next ploy/tactic that Sanballat and Geshem used in their attempt to discredit Nehemiah? (5)
   1.1. Along with the request for the meeting, Sanballat (note he was the ringleader previously; Neh 4.1) sent another message that was in the form of an unsealed letter.
   1.2. Since Nehemiah mentions that it was unsealed it appears that this was not the normal practice; which was probably one of:
      1.2.1. Rolled papyrus or leather sheet, sealed with a clay bulla with a seal impression (lead during the middle ages), sometimes hanging off ceremonial documents on the cord tied around the document..
      1.2.2. Letters sent to chiefs and governors in the east were folded, put in silk bags, and then sealed.

2. Why was the letter sent unsealed?
   2.1. To insult Nehemiah. He was being treated without the respect that would normally be due to someone of his position. It would be similar today if someone were to go before a judge and say in the courtroom: "Hi, George!" and then sit down on the bench beside him. He would be thrown out for contempt of court, even if he were a good personal friend of the judge.
   2.2. To leave the source of the rumor unknown. If he sealed it, the source would be credited to them.
   2.3. They were engineering a leak. They figured that others around the messenger would read the letter out of curiosity. They hoped that the contents of the letter would become public knowledge. They wanted rumors to be spread around. This is real easy to do. We see how rumors get around all the time at work or in the congregation. Sometimes they become so twisted that they end up being the opposite of the truth when they make a full circle.

3. What were the false accusations contained in the letter? (6-7)
   3.1. Nehemiah and the Jews are plotting a revolt, and that is the reason for rebuilding the walls.
      3.1.1. There is a *hint* that something like this could be true.
      3.1.2. The Jews had been essentially a free nation from the time of the Exodus until the Captivity and they did not take kindly to being a subject people.
      3.1.3. Later under the rule of the Seleucids, and after Antiochus had sacrificed a pig in the temple, the Jews did revolt. The leader of this revolt was Mattathias Maccabeus, a priest, and his five sons. The revolt lasted for 24 years (166-142 BC) and the Jews were independent until the Romans took control in 63 BC.
      3.1.4. The Jews had a strong streak of independence (e.g., Jn 8.33).
   3.2. Nehemiah is setting himself up to be the king.
      3.2.1. There is a *hint* that something like this could happen. It is possible that some well-meaning religious leaders in Judah had interpreted Nehemiah's presence and work as a fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies regarding the coming Messiah, and were prepared to declare Nehemiah king.
      3.2.2. Nehemiah was likely from the tribe of Judah since he returned to that territory. Nehemiah could also have been from the kingly line as he had a position of influence in the Persian court.
      3.2.3. The sacrificial system of worship in the Temple had been restored (Ezra 3.4-8). There had also been a descendant of David among the returning exiles. Zerubbabel was the grandson of King Jehoiachin (Ezra 3.2; Hag 1.1; Mt 1.12). Zerubbabel returned with the main party under Sheshbazzar in 537 BC, and laid the foundations of the Temple (Ezra 3.8-13). In Haggai 1.1; Hag 2.2 Zerubbabel is called 'governor'. Now, at this later, time the temple and the city wall were complete, all that was needed was a king to bring back Jerusalem to a state of independence.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

Nehemiah as governor with power and control, could have been perceived as having aspirations to a coronation or of putting a descendant of David on the throne.

3.3. Nehemiah has appointed prophets to make the proclamation declaring him a king in Jerusalem.
  3.3.1. This is similar to criers in Rome running before the litter of an important person (e.g., "Make way for the noble Lucius.").
  3.3.2. Biblical examples, consider Haman declaring Mordecai (Esther 6.7-11); Absalom's (2 Sam 15.10); David and Solomon when Adonijah set himself up as king (1 Ki 1:32-35).
  3.3.3. Also, think of Jesus entering Jerusalem (Mt 21.6-9).

4. What were the means Sanballat used to frighten Nehemiah?
  4.1. He started with a rumor.
    4.1.1. There was no substance to the rumor. Even though he says that it is reported, he started the report.
    4.1.2. What is it called when a person says something about another that is not true in an attempt to hurt him? It is slander. Consider what the Bible says about slander:
      4.1.2.1. The source of slander: Mt 15.19; 1 Pt 2.1.
      4.1.2.2. A holy man does not slander his neighbour: Ps 15.3; Prov 10.18; 2 Cor 12.20; Eph 4.31; Titus 3.2; James 4.11.
      4.1.2.3. Slander by enemies: Ps 31.9-13; Ps 119.23; Jer 9.3-6.
      4.1.2.4. Disaster will come on those who slander, and the godly will be vindicated: Ps 54.5; Ps 59.10.
      4.1.2.5. We are to endure under slander: Mt 5.11.
  4.2. He pretended that there was a witness to corroborate the misinformation contained in the rumor. He claimed that Geshem said that the report was true. [Persia maintained relationships with the Arabs.] Sanballat is basically saying that since this claimed verbal corroboration was from an 'important' person it should not go unheeded. Geshem could have been lying, but he was put forth as a witness. From Nehemiah's perspective he could have said that this corroboration was not given by two witnesses (e.g., Dt 19.15) as required in the Law. But even so, Sanballat could have manufactured an additional false witness, just as false witnesses were raised against Jesus (Mt 26.60, 61).
  4.3. He pretended that he was concerned about Nehemiah's interests (7). The letter is designed to give the impression that his reason for calling for the conference was to protect him. This is a pressure tactic. Satan does the same thing to the woman in the Garden, he pretends that he is interested in her well-being and that God is trying to keep information from them, whereas he, Satan, will help them get this important information.
  4.4. He sent the letter unsealed so that Nehemiah would know that the rumor was likely already spreading among the people and might get back to the king. If the report got back to the king it would be considered a sign of treason.
    4.4.1. Emperors and kings guarded jealously their 'absolute' rights.
    4.4.2. Kings would act quickly to put down any attempt to usurp their power.
    4.4.3. Notice how people used the power of this threat to attack Jesus: Jn 19.12; Mt 2.1-13.
    4.4.4. Sanballat was like a child who tells his playmates "I'm telling!" when he doesn't get his way.
  4.5. He made false accusations that had a shadow of credibility [we considered these above].

5. Why were these claims of Sanballat obviously false?
  5.1. Nehemiah had told the Persian king that he was rebuilding the walls of his fathers' city (Neh 2.5). The king knew exactly what he was doing and why he was gone to Jerusalem. There was nothing secret about his rebuilding project. It is not as if the project of building the wall would have raised concerns in the royal court. Even though Sanballat and the others were concerned about the wall being re-built, the king was not.
  5.2. Nehemiah was a faithful servant of the Persian King. A wine taster is a trusted servant. The very fact that the king had let him, a member of a nation that had been taken into slavery, go and rebuild the wall was an indication that the king trusted him.
  5.3. Letters had already been written to stop the work of rebuilding the temple. At first the work had been stopped (Ezra 4.11-22), then it had gone ahead again with the full knowledge of the king (Ezra 5.1-6.13).
  5.4. A weak people like the Jews could not have resisted the might of the Persian armies for even a few minutes. The Jews were much weaker at the time of Nehemiah than at the time of the last kings of Judah before the captivity. Recall the earlier claim of Sanballat that the Jews were feeble (Neh 4.2). They were weak. The number who returned was 42,360 (Neh 7.66). By comparison the Persian army which attacked

© James R. Hughes, 2006

Greece in 480 BC (about 25 years before the wall was rebuilt) consisted of 100,000 to 150,000 men. Revolt would have been suicidal.

5.5. The people were not trained soldiers (Neh 4.21). It was hard enough for them to muster the guard for the city while they were building the walls. They would not have been able to defend against an army.

5.6. Nehemiah had demonstrated by his gracious behaviour (chapter 5) that he was a servant to the people and not trying to lord it over them.

6. How did Nehemiah respond to the false letter?

6.1. He sent a reply (8). At times an answer is not required, at other times it is (Prov 26.4, 5).

6.1.1. When is one not required? When answering would reinforce the stupidity of the argument or point. When using the same foolishness as the basis for the argument. For example to engage in a debate about abortion; a consideration of 'rights' is the wrong place to start. You have automatically conceded the position and accepted the premise of the other side, that human rights are essential. Or to engage in a debate about evolution and accept the view that the Bible must be held accountable to the 'facts' of science. You have lost the debate by allowing the unbeliever a measure of objectivity and credibility. Jesus gives an example of not answering a fool according to his folly when he did not answer the Sadducees according to their attempt to trip him up with respect to the resurrection (Mt 22.23-33). He didn't play their 'game' discussing with them about the woman who had had seven husbands.

6.1.2. When is one required? When not answering would leave doubt about the untruthfulness of a false argument or point. For example: when Christians don't challenge the culture on topics such as evolution, capital punishment, abortion, Sunday shopping, they have given up the battle field and the enemy assumes that he is right. Jesus gives and example of answering a fool according to his folly when he answered the high priest (Mk 14.61, 62) about his identity.

6.2. He made sure that the false charges were countered with an absolute denial. "Nothing like this is happening." (compare, Paul: Acts 24:12, 13; Acts 25.7, 10) He didn't need to make a vow; his 'no' was a 'no' (Mt 5.37). When the truth is being stated, it is only necessary to state it. In fact as soon as someone starts getting excited about confirming the truth, people think that he is insincere or his truthfulness is to be questioned.

6.3. He responded to the false charges with a true counter charge: "made up out of his head/heart."

6.3.1. In what way did Nehemiah call Sanballat a liar?

6.3.2. Not with an outright charge/accusation.

6.3.3. He used a more tactful way—a euphemism. In stating truth about someone, one can still cushion the truth so that it doesn't have to be aggressive or overly confrontational. For example: instead of saying: "that dress is ugly" you could say something like "the dress doesn't really suite you."

7. What other means did Nehemiah use to counter the false accusations of Sanballat and Geshem? (9)

7.1. He may have sent a copy of Sanballat's letter and his own response to the Persian King to assure him that nothing of the kind was going on. But we are not told that he did. Instead we are told that he turns for support to a higher king: the King of kings!

7.2. He prayed. We have previously seen the importance of prayer in Nehemiah's life. At important junctures (e.g., decisions or difficult situations), we find him in prayer (Neh 1.5-11; Neh 4.4, Neh 5.19; Neh 9.1-38).

7.2.1. Nehemiah most likely did not only pray at difficult times. He undoubtedly prayed all the time. This is why he considers God so close to him and can turn to him when the times are difficult.

7.2.2. The NIV supplies "but I prayed." ["O God" is supplied in the NKJV] Some translators suggest that this is not a prayer, but instead a resolution: "Now therefore I will strengthen my hands." This requires more addition to the text, and is not in character for Nehemiah.

7.2.3. What was the substance of his prayer?

7.2.3.1. He asked that his hands, or resolve, would be strengthened.

7.2.3.2. He used a Biblical model of appealing to God for help (Ps 6.4; Ps 17.14; Ps 22.5; Ps 59.2; Ps 71:1, 2).

7.2.3.3. He accepted Biblical promises (Is 35.3, 4; Heb 12.12; Is 41.10).

7.2.3.4. He accepted God as the source of strengthening (Ps 68.35; Eph 3.16; Phil 4.13; 1 Pt 5.10).

8. What does Nehemiah's response tell us about his character?

© James R. Hughes, 2006

8.1. He believed that the evidence of his character (e.g., chapters 2-4 leading by example; 4 sharing the hardship; 5 exercising justice; 5 showing generosity) would provide a measure of his truthfulness.
8.2. He had a bold and absolute trust in God.
8.2.1. God works all for the good of his people (Rom 8.28). Even if he ends our lives (Job 13.15) we are to have absolute trust (Dan 3.17, 18). We are, therefore, more than conquerors (Rom 8.37) and can have total assurance (Rom 8.38-39; 2 Tim 1.12).
8.3. He believed that God was providentially governing and would bring to nothing the false accusations of Sanballat. And even if he did not at that time, he would ultimately. We must always remember this. When we see homosexuals walking hand in hand down the courtroom steps, God is not ignoring their belligerent disregard for his Laws. He has not abandoned his people, he has not given up on the Church or his cause. He is storing up wrath and he will triumph.

9. What were the basic objectives or motives of Sanaballat in sending this letter? (9)
9.1. Discredit Nehemiah:
9.1.1. Pressure Nehemiah into caving in, to discredit him.
9.1.2. To get Nehemiah out of the way.
9.1.3. Sanballat reasoned that if he cast doubt on the leader, the people might begin to doubt his leadership and desert the work or organize a coup.
9.2. Frighten Nehemiah and the people (compare, 2 Chron 32.18) with scare tactics and fear-mongering.
9.2.1. To get Nehemiah to respond out of fear. Reactions under fear can be irrational.
9.2.2. Fear can debilitate an army, a company, a team, a congregation.
9.3. Stop the work on the wall.
9.3.1. His approach was to undermine Nehemiah's leadership and to frighten the people for one purpose, to bring to an end the work on the wall.

10. What is a primary objective of Satan and non-Christians (with the attack of Sanballat on Nehemiah as an example to provide context for the question)?
10.1. Their greatest desire is to stop the work of the Church of Jesus Christ. They try to undermine the leaders, who Jesus has appointed as overseers, and try to frighten the congregation so that the walls of the spiritual Jerusalem will not be built.
10.2. It might be hard for us, at times, to see this motive. We see most people seeking pleasure or an accumulation of wealth. Others are out to gain power in one form or another. We see some who appear to care for the welfare of their fellow men. We don't seem to see a lot of people constantly trying to destroy the Church openly, at least in North America (but the attacks are becoming more blatant).
10.3. How, then, do they carry out their work of attempting to destroy of the Church (keeping in mind what we have studied about the letter of Sanballat)?
10.3.1. False accusations, about:
10.3.1.1. Christians' behaviour. For example, in Nero's day, the Romans claimed that Christians ate donkey heads, drank blood, cast spells, etc. This is why Paul says: 1 Tim 3.2; Titus 2.8; and Peter says: 1 Pt 2.12.
10.3.1.2. Christians' views: stuffy, narrow-minded, irrational. Often today the primary means of attack is not to refer to objectionable behaviour, but rather to make snide comments that claim that Christian's lack intelligence, or that they are closed minded and intolerant.
10.3.1.3. A leader's character. Untrue accusations hurt and are very hard to combat. They leave a permanent stain on the person's character and there is forever some doubt in the minds of many people about the leader's character.
10.3.2. Setting up temptations, through a prospect of:
10.3.2.1. Unity. At times churches and individuals compromise (not the same as accommodate, but where to draw the line is often difficult) truth or principles for the sake of a supposed unity.
10.3.2.2. Power or wealth. Many Christian leaders have been destroyed by the prospect of power or wealth.

11. What, from the example of Nehemiah, is the correct means for a Christian to counter false charges?
11.1. Challenge the false charges with the facts. Consider Jesus (Jn 8.46; Jn 18.33-37) and Paul (Acts 21.40-22.21; Acts 23.1-8).
11.2. Pray (Ps 50.15; Lk 18.1; Lk 21.36; Eph 6.18; 1 Thess 5.17; 2 Thess 3.2, 3; James 5.13) in all circumstances and at all times, but especially when you have needs.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

11.2.1. Prayer is dramatically undervalued by Christians today.
11.2.2. We would think it a great privilege to speak with a person who is famous or with a person we love, but we do not consider it such a great thing to be able to speak with God in prayer. It is a burden to us. We don't get the idea from Nehemiah's life that he found it difficult to pray.
11.2.3. We should consider it both a privilege and a relief that in difficulties we can turn to God.

Intimidation (Neh 6.10-14)

Intimidation = To make timid or fearful, frighten, to compel or deter by or as if by threats. (Webster's)

1. Why was Shemaiah shut in at his home? (10)
   1.1. [Note: The translation in the NKJV "who was a secret informer" is different from the NIV: "who was shut in at his home", KJV: "who was shut up", ESV: "confined to his home," Hebrew: "being shut in".]
   1.2. We are not told the reason that he gave for being shut in. However he was pretending (12) to be shut in to get Nehemiah to come to him. Some possibilities include the following:
      1.2.1. He was giving a physical object lesson (e.g., 1 Ki 22.11; Is 20.2-4; Jer 27.2-7; Jer 28.10-11; Ezk 4.1-17; Ezk 12.3-11; Acts 21.11). It is implied that he took the title 'prophet' for himself, e.g., 'prophesied' (12) and 'rest of the prophets' (14). It could have been that a message went out that the prophet was performing an object lesson about the city by shutting himself in his house. It would be like people today who go on a hunger strike or take over an office (e.g., the office of the president of a university or a bank president) to make a point in protest. Nehemiah would have visited him to gain an understanding of what he was protesting. He would have gone to inquire of the purpose of the object lesson. If this was a protest action, what was he protesting? Was he pretending that he also was under oppression by Sanballat, et al, and hiding from fear? Was he pretending while in cahoots?
      1.2.2. He was pretending to be sick to get Nehemiah to come to him. As a prophet in the community, the civil leader would have felt an obligation to visit and give his regards. The schemers would have known that Nehemiah was a gracious man and would have felt a brotherly obligation to visit a sick man. Possibly he had been away from Nehemiah's table for a few days (Neh 5.17) and Nehemiah heard he was 'sick' and went to visit him.
      1.2.3. It could have been some form of ceremonial uncleanness (e.g., Jer 36.5). Given that he apparently had access to the Temple (10) he could have been among the priests (as well as being a prophet, or at least claiming to be a prophet). He could have sent word to Nehemiah and said that he was unable to visit his house (for meals) because he was shut in, and asked him to come see him. This is unlikely because there is no OT law requiring a person to shut himself in. Also would Nehemiah have visited someone who was ritually, or ceremonially unclean, when normally his uncleanness would have ended by evening?
   1.3. It is not clear what exactly the reason was.

2. Why would Nehemiah have gone to Shemaiah without knowing the reason?
   2.1. Nehemiah, as a gracious individual, would have visited a person who was shut in.
   2.2. He may have gone with some degree of curiosity.
   2.3. He may have gone at the specific request of Shemaiah.
   2.4. Given that Shemaiah was among those with access to the Temple, and presumably among the priests, it may be that Nehemiah trusted him. It is unlikely that Nehemiah would have gone privately to someone's home that he did not trust.
   2.5. It could also be that Nehemiah respected Shemaiah's advice. A good choice for Sanballat to 'buy' was a trusted advisor of the governor. So Nehemiah could have gone to see one of his advisors to consult him. Shemaiah was unavailable in the city's administrative area, so Nehemiah went instead to see him. It is possible that Shemaiah knew that Nehemiah would want to consult him and manufactured the circumstances so that he could be alone with Nehemiah to present the 'plan.'

3. What was the suggestion of Shemaiah?
   3.1. To meet in the temple and close the doors. What was the point of this?
      3.1.1. To hide in the temple, supposedly, to protect Nehemiah's life.
      3.1.2. Why did this suggestion have a semblance of reality to it?
         3.1.2.1. Cities of refuge (Ex 21.13-14).
         3.1.2.2. Adonijah seeking asylum at the altar (1 Ki 1.50, 51).

© James R. Hughes, 2006

3.1.3. But why was it also rather silly?
3.1.3.1. Nehemiah hadn't done anything wrong and did not need to seek asylum.
3.1.3.2. Nehemiah couldn't spend the rest of his life locked in the temple trying to hide from his enemies.

4. What was it that made Nehemiah realize that Shemaiah was lying and scheming? (Neh 6.10, 12, 13)
4.1. He was asking Nehemiah to flee/run and hide. Why would a man of God suggest flight when the threat was no more real than those that had confronted Nehemiah twice before?
4.2. How would Shemaiah know that they intended to kill him? He would have had to have been privy to the scheme. How was he in the know, if not involved in it?
4.3. If he had access to the temple he must have been a priest or close to them. Yet he was proposing something that was illegal for a layperson to do (Num 18.7 with 2 Chron 26.16-21).
4.4. It is clear from 13 that it would have been a sin for Nehemiah to have taken the course of action proposed by Shemaiah.
4.5. By proposing a course of action (claiming it was from God) that was contrary to God's word, he made it clear that he was a false prophet (Dt 18.20; Is 8.19, 20).

5. What was the real situation with respect to Shemaiah? (Neh 6.12, 13)
5.1. He was a hired betrayer and a traitor. He was hired by the enemies of the truth.
5.2. Who does this remind us of? Like Judas, who betrayed Jesus or like Balaam who, as a prophet, was hired to bring down the faithful.
5.3. It is appalling to think that a priest could be tempted to betray a godly leader like Nehemiah. But then, this seems like nothing compared with a disciple of Jesus who had been with him for three years agreeing to betray him.

6. What lessons can we take from this temptation?
6.1. Any course of action proposed by anyone, even if a minister of God (Gal 1.8, 9), that is contrary to the word of God is not to be pursued. God will never give a message through one of his messengers that is contrary to his Word (1 Ki 13.16-19).
6.2. Anyone in the Church could be induced to betray others in the Church. This is a warning that everyone has 'his price' and we all have to be careful not to betray the cause of Christ for the sake of gain. The leaders and people can both be lead astray. But there is a special warning here for those who have positions of leadership.
6.2.1. Warnings against false shepherds (Is 56.11; Mic 3.11; 2 Cor 11.13-15).
6.2.2. What godly pastors are not to do (Acts 20.33; 1 Tim 3.3; Titus 1.7; 1 Pt 5.2; 2 Pt 2.3).
6.2.3. With so many warnings it is clear that the problem must be real.
6.3. Pastors and others who are supported by tithes and donations can be tempted by money to be traitors to the cause of Christ. There are certainly instances of abuse on the part of those in high-profile 'ministries' such as the 'TV-evangelists'. Although widely publicized, these cases are relatively rare. So why, then, are there all the warnings in scripture? What are other ways that we can be tempted? Worldly prestige, honour, power, fame ...
6.4. Even a close friend can betray another Christian (Ps 41.9). We have noted that Shemaiah was known to Nehemiah and may have been a personal friend. That is one of the reasons that he would have been effective as an instrument to Sanballat and Tobiah.
6.5. Our enemies can sometimes come from within the Church (e.g., Diotrephes [3 Jn 9]), and we have to be on our guard. We must maintain a balance, always, between trusting our fellow believers and putting the best motive on their actions and intentions, and at the same time being prepared for the possibility of betrayal.

7. What are some ways that these temptations can this be avoided?
7.1. Assess carefully those who are pursing Church offices to make sure that they are not lovers of money (1 Tim 3.3).
7.2. Ensure that we continue to listen to, and heed, the warnings of Scripture.
7.3. Pray for our leaders.
7.4. Ensure that those in Church leadership positions are paid an adequate and fair wage so that the temptation is removed farther from them. This may be only a partial solution since many of the people in the Bible who abused their office may have already been among the more financially secure/stable among the people. Yet they abused the people and their trust of their office for the sake of gain.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

8. Who else may have participated in this conspiracy? (14)
   8.1. The Prophetess Noadiah and some other prophets.
      8.1.1. Prophetesses: Deborah (Judges 4.4); Phillip's daughters (Acts 21.9); possibly Huldah (2 Ki 22.14); who may have received direct revelation from God. Alternatively they may have been wise women (Titus 2.3-5). [Note: We cannot defend the concept of a women filling the office of NT elder/pastor based on the example of female prophets in the OT, since we can't take as normative for the NT church what *even* the male prophets did. Prophecy in the sense of revealing God's communication directly from God has come to an end. The Levites as teachers and expounders of the Law (we will see this in Chapter 8, are actually a closer analogue for NT pastor-teachers than the OT prophets.]
   8.2. Who were the others? The comment here is all we are told about them but we can draw a few ideas from other parts of scripture:
      8.2.1. Teachers of the law, or ones who delivered direct communication from God like Isaiah. Possibly those who dwelt in the Temple or frequented it like Samuel and Anna (Lk 2.36).
      8.2.2. Alternatively they were the ones considered to be the wise counselors of the community. They may not have been those who were given direct communication from God but were learned or generally mature and wise (for example older men or women to whom one went for advice).
      8.2.3. They may not have been in the pay of Sanballat, but they appear to have also wanted to discredit Nehemiah. The context seems to implicate them in the betrayal.

9. Why would these 'prophets' want to discredit and intimidate Nehemiah?
   9.1. Men (and women) sometimes do not want to see the work of God prosper because of *how* it will prosper or *who* apparently will get the credit.
   9.2. They may not have liked what he was doing, or the way he was going about doing it. Possibly they objected to the building of the wall in such haste or the fact that the building of the wall was causing their neighbours to be upset. They may have felt that it was better to cultivate relationships with the other governors rather than antagonize them by 'blundering' ahead with the work. They may have also felt that the hardships associated with building the wall were not necessary. But they forgot the lessons of Haggai 1.3-11. They were blaming Nehemiah when they themselves were to blame.
   9.3. Some people don't like the means that are used in some congregations and, it seems, would actually prefer to see people perish in Hell than to see these means being used. For example, there is often considerable jealousy in many Reformed circles over programs such as Evangelism Explosion, Billy Graham Crusades, Association of Christian Athletes, etc. We will not try to justify or excuse the inconsistencies in some of these organizations, but we need to try hard to remember a few things:
      9.3.1. People are truly being converted. This does not justify the means, but nevertheless God is using the means.
      9.3.2. The Reformed churches as a whole don't do much, on a comparative basis, to reach the lost world. There is a smugness in our theology that often leads to a practical 'hyper-Calvinism.'
      9.3.3. Paul was pleased that Christ is being preached even if the motives were not the best. (Phil 1.8).
      9.3.4. In reality ALL of our actions are tainted by false motives and improper actions.
   9.4. They think that God's grace is reserved for a few and cannot understand why God would work through the particular means that he is using; for example, Jonah when God was working to save the Ninevites.
   9.5. They may not have liked Nehemiah. They may have been among those who were rebuked in chapter 5 and were now holding grudges and were hoping that his work and leadership would fail. He was one of those people who is very goal directed and is good at clearing obstacles to move forward the work at hand. He was a true leader, and many people, who want to have the ascendancy, often do not like those who are true leaders.
   9.6. Others don't like the people who are carrying out the work and they actually are hoping that their work will come to nothing so that they will be brought down. There is much party spirit in the Church. Paul refers to this in 1 Corinthians 1.12. It is important the we remember:
      9.6.1. We are all servants (1 Cor 3.5-9), serving the same Christ.
      9.6.2. There are diversities of gifts and many valid ways of doing things in the Church (1 Cor 12.12ff). We have to respect each person as God has made him, not expecting him to be just like we want him to be; and let God shape him.
      9.6.3. Unless other people in the Church are doing something that is clearly un-biblical we need to leave room for diversity. That does not mean that we necessarily will be able to work with every person, although we should try, since our personalities might not be very compatible. But where we can't

© James R. Hughes, 2006

work directly with a person we should make sure that we leave room for God to work through that person.

9.7. They would rather see the credit given to themselves than see someone else get the credit.

9.7.1. They want to have priority of place in the Church. Out of jealousy they would like to see another person brought down.

9.7.2. Miriam's rebellion (Num 12.1-15) is an example of how people become jealous of the gifts given to others in the Church. The pretext is the second wife of Moses, but the underlying cause is jealousy over the prophetic gift having been given to the 70 elders (Num 11.24-30).

9.7.3. In a similar way Shemaiah and the false prophets may have been envious of Nehemiah. They may have felt that their visibility and priority was being usurped by the presence of this influential godly man. After all, he had only been in Jerusalem a couple of months and was accomplishing so much. They had probably lost some of their prestige. People weren't rushing to them to hear their doom-and-gloom prophecies any more. Instead they were working hard on an ambitious project and seeing things being accomplished under the leadership of Nehemiah.

10. How does Nehemiah respond to the suggestion? (11)

10.1. He responds with two questions and a flat refusal to comply with the request.

10.2. What are the specific questions that Nehemiah asks?

10.2.1. If a man like him should run away?

10.2.2. Should one like him go into the temple to save his life?

10.3. After stating his reasons for why he cannot go to the Temple, he states emphatically that he will not go in. This is the third direct attack on his character and he has withstood it.

11. Why was it important that Nehemiah not waver in his resolution? (13)

11.1. Because he would have committed a sin, and his name would have been discredited.

11.2. We can summarize the impact of his sinning and being given a bad name by considering his use of the expression "man like/such as me." This will point out why it would have been especially serious if he had sinned and if his name had been discredited.

12. What does he mean when he uses the expression: "man like me"? (11)

12.1. **Leader** – if the leader of the project stumbles who will lead the people. There is no question that Nehemiah knew that he was carrying the momentum for the project. If he deserted the project it would discourage the workers whom he had recruited and encouraged. His enemies would have used his desertion as an opportunity to discredit him as a leader.

12.2. One involved with an **important project** – a great and good project (v. 3; also Neh 2.18).

12.2.1. It was more than an ordinary project. It was dedicated directly to the work of the Church.

12.2.2. He could not desert God's work.

12.2.3. It is true that all that we do is under God's providential guidance. But at times there are tasks that we are assigned to us that have a more urgent or more immediate impact on the work of the Church. These we have to be especially careful about. (Prov 20.6)

12.3. **Godly man** – One who is trusting in the Lord (Neh 2.17, 18; Neh 4.14) should not worry about his life (Prov 28.1). He knew that the work he was doing was commissioned by God. His enemies would have used his desertion as an opportunity to discredit him as a man of God.

12.4. **Civil magistrate** – He had just judged the false/wrong behaviour of his peers (Neh 5.1-13). He had told them to obey the law of God. As a civil magistrate he had to be a model of exemplary behaviour. Sins of lay people are wrong. Sins are doubly wrong when committed by people in positions of authority (governors, judges, generals, doctors, pastors) because:

12.4.1. They are held up as models, or examples, before the people.

12.4.2. They set the tone for their entire organization, for example it is clear that the behaviour of a corporation's leader will influence the behaviour of his sub-ordinates.

12.4.3. They are 'ministers' [civic leaders and pastors/elders] of God and accountable to God for their personal behaviour but also for their behaviour as office bearers before him.

13. Was Nehemiah supernatural? How was he able to withstand the pressures of his enemies?

13.1. Nehemiah was not supernatural. He had fears (Neh 2.2) just like other men.

13.2. We all need encouragement for every task that we undertake. God knows that he is dealing with sin stained human nature and encourages us directly or through leaders: God to Abram (Gen 15.1) "Don't be afraid"; Moses to Israel and Joshua (Dt 3.22; Dt 20.3; Dt 31.6, 8); God to Joshua (Josh 8.1; Josh

© James R. Hughes, 2006

10.8); Joshua to Israel (Josh 10.25); Jesus to his disciples (Jn 14.27; Jn 16.33); God to Paul (Acts 18.9; Acts 27.24); Ps 3.6; Ps 23.4; Ps 27.1, 2; Ps 91.5.

13.2.1. We need to be encouraged and to see that we are not alone in our endeavours. It is not a sin to need, or to give, encouragement.

13.2.2. Leaders are to encourage (1 Thess 5.14; 2 Tim 4.2; Titus 2.15).

13.2.3. We are to encourage one another in the Church (1 Thess 4.18; 1 Thess 5.11; Heb 3.13; Heb 10.25).

13.3. He was given strength (9) for the time of need (Prov 28.1; Heb 4.16; Mt 10.19).

13.4. He immediately resolved not to yield to the pressure of temptations. It is important to take a quick stand against evil and in favour of right action so that we don't begin to rationalize and waver. To conquer temptation it is important to act quickly.

13.5. He was more afraid of sinning (by committing a forbidden act by going into the temple) and what might happen (to the work, his reputation, etc.) if he sinned, than he was of what these wicked 'prophets' might do to him.

13.5.1. We are not to fear those who kill body (Mt 10.28-31).

13.5.2. The antidote to fear of the world: a true fear of God will dispel fear of man and death (Ex 18.21; Ex 20.20; Dt 10.12-13; Ps 31.19; Ps 33.8, 18; Ps 34.9, 11; Ps 61.5; Ps 111.10; Prov 1.7; Prov 29.1; Eccl 12.13).

14. What do you notice in verse 13 that is parallel to what we find in verses 2 and 9?

14.1. He understood their motives.

14.2. He was worldly wise and careful. We are to be as wise as serpents, as harmless as doves (Mt 10.16)

15. What lessons can we take from this third attack on Nehemiah?

15.1. The importance of obedience. We are to obey rather than worrying about what men may do to us. Nehemiah was not to flee to the Temple because that would have been a sin. Fleeing persecution may not have been a sin, but going to the Temple would have been. However, in Nehemiah's case, it may have been a sin for him to flee since he was "a man like me."

15.2. [Discussion: Are there situations where it is right to flee? How can we determine if it is right to flee or better to stay and face physical persecution? Possible considerations:

15.2.1. Jesus tells his hearers to flee from Jerusalem when they see the persecution/destruction coming (Mt 24.15-21). Note: Mt 10.21-23; Acts 8.1-4; James 1.1. The people fled persecution and the gospel was preached throughout the world.

15.2.2. The Apostles stayed in Jerusalem when all the other people had fled from the city.

15.2.3. We can consider more recent historical examples such as Knox going to Switzerland to avoid persecution, the Puritans leaving England for the New World, and the Covenanters fleeing from Scotland. But notice that Knox returned when he felt that it was his duty to be in the heat of the trials of his people.

15.2.4. Preservation of life is important, but not absolute. Nevertheless we should not throw away life cavalierly.

15.2.5. What is the likelihood or probability of danger? In Nehemiah's case his enemies had threatened before, and had backed off. Their bluster was primarily posturing. So the probability was less than before that they would actually take his life.

15.2.6. What other responsibilities do we have? For example those who get involved in some activities are more effective if they have no family commitments and limited assets. Paul deals with this idea in 1 Corinthians 7.32-35.

15.2.7. Do we hold an office or a position of authority where we have to be a good example ("a man like me")? There can be no room for the view that the private life of a public figure has no bearing on his public life.]

15.3. The importance of a holy boldness and courage that trusts God to do all things right. We have seen this before in Nehemiah's life (e.g., when we considered his prayer in Neh 6.9)

16. How does Nehemiah conclude his account of the conspiracy, betrayal, and intimidation of Shemaiah and the other prophets (14)?

16.1. He prayed. We have already considered his prayers (Neh 1.5-11; Neh 4.4, 5; Neh 5.19; Neh 6.9).

16.2. He asked God to 'remember', a key word in the book of Nehemiah (used in Neh 1.8; Neh 4.14; Neh 5.19; Neh 6.14; Neh 13.14, 22, 29, 31). In this case he asks God not to forget the wicked acts of his enemies, in (most of) the other instances he asks God to remember his own actions.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

16.3. His prayer is a form of imprecation; a prayer for God to bring justice and vengeance on his enemies. We considered his use of an imprecation previously (Neh 4.4, 5).

Insinuation (Neh 6.17-19)

Insinuation – To introduce (as an idea) gradually or in a subtle, indirect, or covert way (~ doubts into a trusting mind). To impart or communicate with artful or oblique reference (~ an evil one dares not charge openly). To introduce (as oneself) by stealthy, smooth, or artful means. (Webster's)

1. What can we determine about the character of the nobles Nehemiah mentions? (Neh 3.5; Neh 5.7, 12; Neh 6.17; Neh 10.29; Neh 13.17)
   1.1. Lazy and aloof: Neh 3.5. "Nobles of Tekoa would not put their shoulders to the work under their supervisors."
   1.2. Greedy and abusive: 5.7. He accused them of exacting usury from their own countrymen.
   1.3. Greedy and irreverent: Neh 13.17. They were Sabbath breakers.
   1.4. Oath-breakers:
      1.4.1. They were insincere, saying what people wanted to hear at the time, with no intention of keeping their oaths).
      1.4.2. They had vowed to stop exacting usury (Neh 5.12). There is no evidence that they broke this oath, but their later behavior in Neh 6.17 seems to indicate that they were not friendly to the imposition of the strictures on them by Nehemiah.
      1.4.3. They vowed to keep the Law (Neh 10.29), but then in Neh 13.17 we see that they broke this vow by breaking the 4th Commandment.
   1.5. Summary: They were greedy for gain and abusive of those under their authority.
   1.6. [Refer to *Devil's Promoters I* for background on Tobiah.]

2. What did the nobles do? (17, 19)
   2.1. They told Tobiah about what activities Nehemiah was undertaking and what he said. In this they betrayed their governor, leader, nation, people, and God. They were traitors in the same class as Shemaiah (10, 13).
   2.2. They kept telling Nehemiah that Tobiah was a friend of the Jews by reporting the 'good' deeds that Tobiah supposedly had done. (This is the insinuation in the title of this section.). They were sycophants (flatterers, toadies) who hoped to gain favours (Prov 28.4).

3. What did Tobiah do? (19)
   3.1. He tried to use his connections with the Jews as a means to intimidate Nehemiah, by:
      3.1.1. Showing Nehemiah that he knew about all that was going on, even what was said at his dinner table. This would cause Nehemiah to question reliability of his friends and his safety.
      3.1.2. Telling Nehemiah that he had important friends in Jerusalem and would use these connections to undermine his efforts and work.
      3.1.3. Reminding Nehemiah that he had other friends (Sanballat and Geshem) in the neighbouring territories and connections with the Persian king.
   3.2. He made a 'last-gasp' attempt to undermine the governor. But Nehemiah goes on and serves faithfully for 12 years.

4. What lessons can we take from Tobiah's attack on Nehemiah?
   4.1. Men try to curry favours with human leaders. (Prov 19.6; Prov 29.26) Even those in the Christian church want to be seen in the company of governors, kings, and presidents. They would rather maintain these relationships than rebuke the civil leaders and stand firm for the Church and the cause of Christ.
   4.2. The example Tobiah and the nobles, provides a reminder to us that the 'great' men of the world are not always (or often) wise or honest. The truly great man is the one who fears God (Ps 128.1) and seeks his wisdom, not the one with worldly power.
   4.3. We have to be wary of those in the Church who are more interested in power than in godliness. There are many ways 'power' can be sought. The lust for power is found not just in those who want to have positions of authority. It is also found in those who try to manipulate (sometimes very subtlety) the behaviour of others or the direction of a congregation or denomination. It can also be found in those who have a need to know everything that is going on, and want to be the first to know. This can lead to gossip and an unhealthy form of curiosity. These people feel that they have been left out if they have not been

© James R. Hughes, 2006

told the latest events. Another form of 'power lust' is found in those who take control when the responsibility belongs to others. Finally, we also find a lust for power being displayed when a person gets upset when someone else in the congregation does not behave the way he or she thinks the other person should. We have noted before the dangers of enemies from within the Church. They can sometimes be our worst enemies.

4.4. Not to make alliances/treaties with nations around (Dt 23.3-6). Matthew Henry: "A sinful love leads to a sinful league"

4.5. Christians are not to intermarry with those in the world. The Jews were not to give their sons or daughters in marriage to the nations around them, e.g., not to the Moabites (Dt 7.3 not specifically Moabites, but implied by 1 Ki 1.11; Ezra 9.2; Neh 13.1; 2 Cor 6.14).

Dispatched Project (Neh 6.15, 16)

1. How long did the wall-building project take?
   1.1. 52 days elapsed; but 45 days in terms of effort (7 days less for Sabbaths).

2. When was the wall completed?
   2.1. It was on the 25th of Elul (Oct 2nd, 444/445 BC) that the wall was finished.

3. Why are we told the exact date, what is the significance?
   3.1. Anchored in history. We are dealing with a God of historical accuracy, who controls the events of history. See Gen 7.11; Gen 8.13; Lk 1.5; Lk 2.1-3. This account is not myth or legend, but an accurate record of what actually happened.
   3.2. To remind us of how quickly the work progressed, because it was a good work (Neh 2.18) and a great project (Neh 6.3).
   3.3. To remind us that the work of the Church will go forward in spite of opposition. The gates of hell will not be able to stop the progress (Mt 16.18). It was God's work and it moved forward:
      3.3.1. A work that the naysayers (Neh 4.1-3) said could not be done.
      3.3.2. A work that the enemies tried to stop multiple times.
      3.3.3. A work that went forward in spite of the opposition.
   3.4. To remind us that we should have a sense of urgency about the work of the Church. Do we look up from our concerns with the temporal and physical world long enough to consider the work of the Church?
   3.5. The wall was built during the time that the harvest was coming in. There had been a famine during the preceding months (Neh 5.3), but it was during the time that the new harvest was being gathered that the work on the wall was coming to completion. We must be careful not to create allegories from Scripture where they are not supported, but it is seems to be of more than passing interest that God chose the harvest time as the time to build the wall. Just like he chose the high flood period as the time to hold back the waters of the Jordan and declare his supremacy over Baal the 'storm god'.
      3.5.1. Compare Ruth 1.22. Ruth the firstfruits of the Gentiles came to Judah as the harvest was just beginning (famine converted to harvest, engagement to Boaz as the barn is full).
      3.5.2. Compare John 4.34-39. As Jesus is speaking to the disciples, the people from the village are making their way toward him. Jesus knew what was happening and used the coming crowd as an opportunity to continue the training of the Twelve. He directs their attention to the coming harvest. The disciples likely think that he is referring to the nearby grain fields which were ripening and were about ready for harvest. But it appears that Jesus is using a metaphor and is speaking of the people of the village coming out to meet him. They are the living harvest—the result of drinking spiritual water and eating spiritual bread.
      3.5.3. The completion of the wall seems to have occurred 6 days before the Feast:
         3.5.3.1. The Feast of Trumpets (Lev 23.24); October 8th (see, Neh 8.2) the first Sabbath following the completion of the walls. Also Rosh Hashanah "new year" [7th month on one calendar system].
         3.5.3.2. This was followed by the Day of Atonement (10th day).
         3.5.3.3. This was followed by the Feast of Harvest/Ingathering/Booths (Ex 23.16b; Lev 23.33-43; Neh 6.15 with 7.73-8.2) held on the 15-21st.
         3.5.3.4. It is possible that the dedication of the wall (Neh 12.27ff) occurred during the Feast of Ingathering.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

3.5.3.5. Based on Leviticus 23.36 it appears that the feasts (Trumpets and Harvest) began and ended on a Sabbath. If that is the case then the building of the wall ended on what we call Sunday.

3.5.3.6. These factors may indicate that the day for the completion of the wall is a symbol pointing to God's goodness in a new era, and to the ingathering of the nations (see, for example Zech 14.16-19 and its context in 20-21).

3.5.4. It is possible that God is reminding the Jews, and us, in the midst of a famine (material and spiritual) that the work of the Church and the harvest that it brings is the work that should be foremost in our thoughts and energies. [Haggai 1.5-11 seems to give us similar circumstances about 80 years before this time (529 BC). The temple was being rebuilt and there seemed to be a time of economic hardship (Neh 1.5, 6; Neh 10-11). The challenge was to remind the people that their first responsibility was to the work of eternal things and not to place their temporal well-being before the spiritual/eternal (Mal 3.10).]

3.6. We are being reminded that the work of the coming Messiah was to take place in time. The completion of the wall was one more step toward that coming (Dan 9.25). From the decree to rebuild the city to the coming of the Messiah. The city walls have been completed and the time is one concrete step closer to the Messiah's appearance.

4. What factors contributed to the rapid completion and final success? (16)

4.1. "help of our God" It was God's work and God would make it a success. Nothing can thwart the plans of God. God overruled the affairs of men, teaching us that men can't challenge God successfully.

4.2. It was man's work and the dedication of Nehemiah the leader and his willingness to work with, and among, the people made it a success.

4.3. The threats of their enemies, which were intended to weaken them, may have contributed to their fortitude to work continually.

5. What was the impact of the completion of the work on the enemies of the Jews?

5.1. Dismayed: afraid, lost their self-confidence. (compare, Josh 2.11; Josh 5.1)

5.2. May have envied when they saw the prosperity of the godly. The kings of Persia had not allowed them to rebuild the walls of Samaria at this time

5.3. They saw that it was God's work. It was a declaration of God's sovereignty and his majesty. The Heathen saw the Providence of God (Ps 126.2; Acts 5.38-39). God's works of providence are a witness to his power and the coming judgment.

5.4. They may not have understood it, but they were seeing Christ's reign prospering:

5.4.1. SC Q26: How is Christ a king?
A26: As a king, Christ brings us under his power, rules and defends us, and restrains and conquers all his and all our enemies.
[SC Q26: How doth Christ execute the office of a king?
A26: Christ executeth the office of a king, in subduing us to himself, in ruling and defending us, and in restraining and conquering all his and our enemies. (1 Cor 15.25; Ps 110.1)]

6. What summary lessons can we take from the work of Nehemiah as he rebuilds the wall of Jerusalem?

6.1. There are many, we will consider a few (with multi-part sub-lessons!):

6.2. Satan uses many forms of attack against the Church. There are enemies outside and inside. It is important that Christians be as "wise as serpents, and as harmless as doves." (Mt 10.16)

6.2.1. We have seen various forms of attack from the outside being used including psychological (e.g., ridicule Neh 2.10; Neh 4.2ff; causing doubt, insults, intrigue, innuendo, intimidation, insinuation) and physical threats (e.g., Neh 4.12).

6.2.2. We have seen also that members of the Church can sell-out (like Judas) for the things of the world and become enemies of the good work. They may want to have the pre-eminence (like Diotrephes; 3 Jn 9). The prophets and nobles (Neh 6.14, 17-19) were against what Nehemiah was doing and the way he was doing it: and against him as a person.

6.2.3. These attacks will come all along the way of the Christian life: at the start of our work, in the middle as we are progressing, and even at the end when we are very close to completing our life's work. Therefore, the Christian life is a constant struggle against enemies who will try to bring us down.

6.3. Nehemiah has taught us, thus far, the importance of character – faithful leadership in the Church (and State) that:

© James R. Hughes, 2006

6.3.1. Has a vision and zeal for what can be accomplished by God through the efforts of faithful men.
6.3.2. Is empowered by an unmovable faith and trust in God who strengthens the feeble knees and hands (Neh 6.9).
6.3.3. Shares in hardships with the people and is generous.
6.3.4. Is wise and just and careful to keep and enforce the law of God faithfully.
6.3.5. Perseveres to the end— the very end.
6.4. The Church will advance because it is a great and good work—the work of God.
6.4.1. The Church will grow in spite of men and their attempts to undermine and hinder it.
6.4.2. Taking small steps with lots of people participating (chapter 3) day after day is an important ingredient in the progress of the Church. The Church does not advance primarily through the work of superstars but through the efforts of simple folk who are willing to put their shoulder to the work, and to keep at it.
6.4.3. A great amount can be accomplished in a little time if we set about it earnestly and keep it up.
6.4.4. We should be encouraged by the example of Nehemiah when we see the powers and forces of wickedness around us, even in the Church. God will not let his work fall to the ground.
6.5. The work of the Church must come first in our priorities (Hag 1.3-9; Mt 6.33).
6.5.1. If the Church is not built, society cannot be built. There cannot be reformation of the people unless there is reformation of the Church.
6.5.2. The book of Nehemiah is structured in two parts. First the reconstruction of the city (chapters 1-6) then the reconstruction of the community (chapters 7-13); the walls then the welfare.
6.5.3. We must pray for the reconstruction of the Church of Jesus Christ so that we can see the reconstruction of the society in which we live. We must pray for reformation so that we can see revival.

Delegated Program (Neh 7.1-3)

Introduction

1. What do we discover about the structure of the book of Nehemiah as we begin to study chapter 7?
1.1. The book of Nehemiah consists of two major parts. The first part deals with the reconstruction of the city (chapters 1-6); the second part with the reconstruction of the community (chapters 7-13).
1.2. In the first half of the book of Nehemiah we looked at Nehemiah's request to the king that he be permitted to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the walls and the city. At this point, he has completed the rebuilding of the walls. We found that the challenges that faced Nehemiah are the same challenges that face the Church in every generation. We were able to use the work of rebuilding the walls as a metaphor, or example, for the work of building the Church and derive lessons for our own generation.
1.3. We also saw that his original request was that he be permitted to take a leave of absence for (probably) 3-6 months. We find that his appointment was for 12 years (compare, 2.1 with 5.14) from 445 BC to 433 BC or 432 BC.
1.4. We now will follow Nehemiah as he moves from being a leader with the skills of a visionary and an 'entrepreneur' or motivator, to a leader with the skills of a manager who works to maintain the order, discipline and on-going welfare of the community. We move from growth to governance, from the walls to the welfare of the worshipers.
1.5. In the second part of the book we will consider the following:
1.5.1. Delegated Program (Neh 7.1-3)
1.5.2. Delivered People (Neh 7.4-73a)
1.5.3. Declared Precepts (Neh 7.73b-8.18)
1.5.4. Debased Penitents (Neh 9.1-37)
1.5.5. Dispersed Population (Neh 11.1-36)
1.5.6. Dedication Praise (Neh 12.1-47)
1.5.7. Directed Purification (Neh 13.1-31).

2. What was Nehemiah's new project? How can this be applied in a Church context?
2.1. To bring into existence a mature, functioning, community that could move forward with the next generation.
2.2. For the work of the Church, we can liken this to moving from the work of starting or founding a new congregation into a sustaining and self-replicating mode for the congregation.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

3. What can we learn from the two-part structure of the book of Nehemiah?
   3.1. The work of the Church is never done in this world's era.
   3.2. The work won't be completed until Christ comes to bring his Church home (Jn 14.18).
   3.3. In the Church:
      3.3.1. One project leads to another.
      3.3.2. There is always more work to be done.
      3.3.3. We move from one challenge to the next.
      3.3.4. We can never, in this life, sit back and conclude that the work is done.
   3.4. For us, as individuals, our work is completed when we are taken to Glory:
      3.4.1. Jesus at his death said: "it is finished"—the suffering, the struggle to obey in the face of temptation, the weariness, and his temporal work on earth.
      3.4.2. Paul at his death: "I have fought the food fight, I have finished the race" (2 Tim 4.7).
   3.5. In one word, we have seen, and will continue to see, that Nehemiah is a model of *perseverance*.

Present Priority (Neh 7.1-3)

1. What did Nehemiah do immediately after the work of rebuilding the walls was completed?
   1.1. He moved to put in place programs that would ensure the viability of the city around which he has just completed the construction of the walls.

2. What specific programs did he initiate?
   2.1. Re-established the worship liturgy (1).
   2.2. Re-established civil government (2, 3) including:
      2.2.1. Administrative/Judicial/Legislative functions
      2.2.2. Police/Military command
      2.2.3. A Citizen Militia.
   2.3. Re-established the routine of daily life (3).
   2.4. We will consider each of these three programs in summary form as they are given here, and then we will address them in detail as we progress through the remainder of the book.

3. What was his objective in implementing these programs?
   3.1. To establish routine and discipline
   3.2. To establish a 'maintenance' mode for the completed project (the rebuilt city).

4. What do these initiatives tell us about Nehemiah?
   4.1. He was a man with a long-term vision. It was not enough for him to re-build the wall and then walk away and return to the comfort of the palace.
   4.2. He was a man of paced and focused action. He moved quickly to the next logical initiative. He considered immediate action imperative if he was going to see the hard work of the last 52 days established and strengthened.

5. Why is it important to move quickly into a 'maintenance' mode after the completion of a great project?
   5.1. So that the people do not experience a 'let-down'.
   5.2. After the excitement of building the wall in 52 days their energies would be quickly dissipated and if a challenge from their enemies came along they would be more susceptible to discouragement.
   5.3. In the world of business and government we see examples of this:
      5.3.1. After NASA had successfully put a man on the moon they lost direction for awhile. Their efforts with the space shuttle only re-focused when they directed their energy to a new project e.g., the space station.
      5.3.2. The building of Skydome in Toronto was a great project but its management did not apply the same energy after its completion and the facility was underutilized and unprofitable.
      5.3.3. The US Interstate program was a major capital works effort in the 50s through the 80s but one thing that seems to have been forgotten was that the physical infrastructure would decay over time. There has not been enough money put into maintenance since the building was completed and there are a lot of aging roadbeds and bridges.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

5.3.4. Many times governments and businesses fund capital initiatives but forget to fund the operational costs. They can get a great 'splash' with lots of publicity from the capital program, but get nothing but headaches from having to approve year-after-year the operational expenses.

5.3.5. Businesses often do the same thing in a different way. They create new initiatives (e.g., 'quality' programs and new HR programs). They make a great deal about the launch of these programs and then do not follow through on the hard work of implementation.

5.4. In a church context, churches can create programs (e.g., building programs) that consume a lot of energy and accomplish 'great' things. But when it comes to maintenance activities interest seems to wane. Christians and churches are subject to fads and the latest trends. For example, it is easier to get people to start a hospice than to come out week after week to serve food to the hungry. It is easier to get people to support one-time conferences than to get steady support for Sunday School programs. People will rush out to help a Billy Graham crusade but weekly campus ministries go wanting for supporters. Steady, continuous dedication to initiatives is hard to maintain.

5.5. We could use the building programs of the Medieval universities as a model for how Church programs should be structured. For example, when a patron donated money to build a new hall for a University he would also donate a forest of young oak trees. 100+ years later the mature trees would be used to provide new beams for the repair of the roof and the excess timber could be sold to supply money to pay the wages of the maintenance workers.

5.6. Nehemiah shows the foresight of a great planner and management leader. He does not leave Jerusalem once he has finished the initial task; rather he puts in place the infrastructure to maintain the city.

Public Piety (Neh 7.1)

1. What was his first initiative after re-building the walls? (1)
   1.1. To re-establish the worship liturgy and order.
   1.2. [Note: more information about the re-establishment of church order is given in chapters 8-10 and 12. We will consider only a summary based on what we are told here in verse 1.]

2. What parts of the liturgy/order are mentioned here? And, which are not?
   2.1. The following are mentioned: Gate-keepers (porters), singers (Levite choir), and Levites (to perform the support duties and probably to play musical instruments)
      2.1.1. This allocation of work was based on the divisions made by David (1 Chron 23.1-6, 28-32; see also 1 Chron 25.1-26.32) rather than those made by Moses (Lev 8-10; 1 Chron 23.26). See also, Nehemiah 12.36.
      2.1.2. The gatekeepers were probably Levites (see, 1 Chron 26.1-19) who guarded the entrance to the Temple, rather than the gatekeepers to the city (v 3).
   2.2. The priests who performed the sacrifices are not mentioned.
      2.2.1. The specific liturgy associated with the actual sacrifice may already have been established when the temple was completed by the first exiles to return (Ezra 6.16-22).

3. What questions does this action of Nehemiah raise?
   3.1. Why did Nehemiah, the Civil Magistrate, re-introduce the liturgy/order and not Ezra?
   3.2. What is the role of the Civil Magistrate, in the work of the Church? What is the proper 'wall of separation' between the two institutions?
   3.3. What exactly, with respect to the liturgy, did Nehemiah re-introduce? What relevance does it have for us?

4. Why did Nehemiah re-introduce the liturgy/order and not Ezra (compare, chapter 8 and also Ezra 3.8)?
   4.1. What Nehemiah did was similar to what other civil leaders (e.g., Moses [Ex 25-30; Lev 1-9], David [1 Chron 22-25], Solomon [2 Chron 2-7], Joash [2 Chron 24.1-16, esp. 5], Hezekiah [2 Chron 29.1-31.21; 2 Chron 31.2], Josiah [2 Chron 34.8-13, esp. 12, 13; 2 Chron 35.1-19, esp. 2-5]) before him had done.
      4.1.1. This is not the first time that a re-organization of the Levites was required. The work of keeping order in the service of the Temple seems to have required fairly regular intervention by the Civil Magistrate.
   4.2. But this may not answer the 'why?' It shows that Nehemiah did what others had done before him, and did not take this authority into his own hands without precedent. But we still need to ask *why* did he do it and not Ezra? Ezra was present (see, chapter 8) in Jerusalem at this time and was a leader in the Church.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

4.3. As a short answer, we can conclude that Nehemiah operated under the principle that the Civil Magistrate has the responsibility to ensure that the Church is functioning correctly. The basic model is one of a mutual responsibility within a separation of powers. Each sphere under Christ has the responsibility to administer within its sphere of authority and to call the other sphere to account as the case may arise.
4.4. [For more information on this topic, see: *Appendix E – The Role of the Civil Magistrate with Respect to the Church – Selected Considerations*.]

5. What exactly, with respect to the liturgy, did Nehemiah reintroduce?
5.1. The full service associated with the Temple (i.e., the offering of singing and music at the time of the sacrifice [2 Chron 29.27-28; Neh 12.44-47]).
5.2. It is significant to note that there is **no** indication that Nehemiah innovated in worship as did civil magistrates who preceded him and followed him (e.g., Uzziah, Charlemagne, Henry VIII, Queen Elizabeth). Nehemiah re-established worship in the form that it had been given by David who was a prophet (Neh 12.44-47).
5.3. Note: in a similar way the Civil Magistrate is not to innovate in law making, nor to usurp to himself duties that are not given to him by God. He is to administer, judge, and protect the commonweal only in a manner that is consistent with the Bible.

6. Why did he reintroduce it at this time?
6.1. The full liturgical service may not have been entirely re-established since Ezra had to find Levites (Ezra 8.15-20) to bring with him to Jerusalem.
6.2. Recall that the Levites had hung up their harps (Ps 137.2), i.e., they did not perform liturgical duties, while in captivity as there was no sacrifice being performed in the Temple, and the Synagogues in Babylon offered bloodless sacrifices of praise (Heb 13.15) of Psalms that were not accompanied by musical instruments.
6.3. Ezra brought the Levites with him in 458 BC, the seventh year of Artaxerxes (Ezra 7.8), and Nehemiah arrived 13 years later in 445 (or 444) BC (Neh 2.1). It is possible that with the situation in Jerusalem (Neh 1.2, 3) the Levitical order had not been fully established even by the time Nehemiah arrived:
6.3.1. The sparseness of the population was not able to support the Levitical service through their tithes (Neh 7.4).
6.3.2. Oppressive taxation, which caused the people to live from day-to-day, also made it difficult for them to support the Levitical service (Neh 5.4, 15; Neh 10.32; Neh 12.44-47; [1/3 *vs* 1/2] may show poverty).
6.3.3. Wall not yet re-built and the people continually worried about their physical safety.
6.4. [For more information on the place of musical instruments in worship, see: *In Spirit and Truth: Worship as God Requires (Understanding and Applying the Regulative Principle of Worship)*.[3]]

7. What are other reasons that Nehemiah re-established the Levitical offices and liturgical order?
7.1. Another aspect of the reappointment and organization of the liturgical work of the Levites was to prepare them for their involvement in the dedication of the wall (Neh 12.27-47).
7.2. There is both an aspect of worship, and the maintenance of public order (gate keepers) involved in the work of the Levites. They were to act as watchmen for the physical precincts of the temple (1 Chron 9.17-27 [esp. 19]; 1 Chron 26.1-19; Neh 11.19).
7.3. There was also a symbolical element of their being watchmen/guards associated with their being the moral watchmen for the community (2 Chron 19.8; Neh 8.7, 9).

8. What lessons can we derive from this section?
8.1. Nehemiah understood the importance of public piety. Our civil magistrates should also be encouraging it. It is important to have a moral conscience operating in society. The Church should be encouraging the civil magistrates to bring Biblical Law and morality into the public forum rather than excising it.
8.1.1. Nehemiah held to the establishment principle, i.e., that the state is to support an established religion (Christianity). Notice he held this view under the authority of a pagan ruler, and executed his understanding of that principle in one of the provinces of that empire.
8.1.2. You cannot have a civilization for long that is founded on man's opinion. If it is not founded on God's Law, it can only operate under man's laws. All other systems of

[3] James R. Hughes, *In Spirit and Truth: Worship as God Requires (Understanding and Applying the Regulative Principle of Worship), 2005;* available at: www.epctoronto.org.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

philosophy, religion, law, etc. depend on one of three possible bases (which are really just forms of one basic principle—that man's will and opinion are supreme):

8.1.2.1. **Absolutism** – "Might makes right." Because a person has the largest weapon, controls the most money, or has control over the military or political system through threats or some other form of compulsion, does not guarantee that there will be justice in the land. In fact, history proves otherwise. Rarely has there been a benevolent dictator. *When reduced to its simplest form, the end is that man's opinion becomes supreme.*

8.1.2.2. **Vote of the majority** – Because most people think something is right or wrong does not make it so (most people today would vote for things that are immoral such as permitting homosexual practices or eliminating laws against adultery, or in favour of gambling). *When reduced to its simplest form, the end is that man's opinion becomes supreme.*

8.1.2.3. **Pluralism/Tolerance** – The view that multiple opinions must be allowed to co-exist in the 'marketplace.' This idea fails when challenged by the clash of two conflicting beliefs that are entirely opposite. One view eventually has to prevail over the other and generally it is the majority's (whether or not it is valid). *When reduced to its simplest form, the end is that man's opinion becomes supreme.*

8.1.3. A key message of Nehemiah 7.1 is that true religion must not be removed from the State. Without true Christian piety pervading the life of a nation, there is no long-term hope for that nation. Nehemiah 7.1, 2 teaches us that a public piety must come before there can be a public polity.

8.2. Nehemiah re-introduced only the elements of the Levitical liturgical order for worship that had been authorized by God and delivered by David.

8.2.1. He held to the Regulative Principle – that nothing is to be *added* to the worship of God without God's express permission, and what is offered to God is only that which he has expressly required.

8.2.2. He did not innovate. He did not apply self-will in the matter of worship.

8.2.3. His example of applying the regulative principle teaches us that we must have a Biblical warrant for what we do in worship.[4]

Public Polity (Neh 7.2)

1. After Nehemiah had established the basis for public piety (the observance of the true religion and the reestablishment of the Church's teaching office), what did he then turned his attention to establishing?
   1.1. The structure for on-going functional civil government.
   1.2. The appointment of public polity.
   1.3. He appointed a chief officer or chief magistrate.

2. Whom did he appoint as the chief magistrate of the city of Jerusalem?
   2.1. His brother Hanani.
   2.2. Hanani may have been the governor of Judea when Nehemiah returned to Susa (Neh 13.6) and until he returned to Jerusalem (Neh 13.7)

3. What other appointment did Nehemiah make?
   3.1. He appointed Hananiah as commander of the citadel. [We will consider the purpose of this appointment later.]
   3.2. There is a possibility that Nehemiah appointed his brother to be the city magistrate (e.g., the mayor) and also the commander of the citadel (see, NIV footnote on verse 2). It is possible that the names Hananiah and Hanani refer to the same individual.
      3.2.1. The literal Hebrew is: "I appointed Hanani brother of me [,] and Hananiah officer/commander of citadel over Jerusalem for he a man of reliability and he feared God greatly."
      3.2.2. The Greek LXX uses an identical name for both individuals
      3.2.3. The Latin Vulgate follows the Hebrew with two slightly different names for the two individuals:
      3.2.4. The KJV (1769) makes an explicit interpretation and distinguishes between the two by marking the role of Hananiah as a parenthetical comment through the use of commas: "That I gave my brother

[4] James R. Hughes, *In Spirit and Truth: Worship as God Requires (Understanding and Applying the Regulative Principle of Worship),* 2005; available at: www.epctoronto.org.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

Hanani, and Hananiah the ruler of the palace, charge over Jerusalem: for he was a faithful man, and feared God above many."

3.2.5. The NIV follows the tradition of the KJV, Vulgate, and takes one position (that of two separate individuals) in the main text and accentuates it by using the words "along with" to translate "and;" and puts the alternate reading (that of one individual) in the footnote by translating the word "and" as "that is." By adding the footnote it helps to clarify a rather confusing reading, and shows us that there are two possible ways to read/interpret the text.

3.2.6. If there is only one individual, or two, really does not matter too much since the functions that are being described both relate to those of the civil magistrate.

4. Why did he appoint his own brother? (2)
   4.1. Being the brother of Nehemiah may indicate that he also was a godly man. The words at the end of verse 2 provide an explicit statement that he was a man of integrity and one who feared God more than most men do.
   4.2. He was a man who cared about the city (Neh 1.2-3). Hanani had made a difficult trip to inform Nehemiah of the situation in Jerusalem. It was his report that had initiated the work of rebuilding the wall.
   4.3. He was from Judea and probably from Jerusalem. If so, he was a local inhabitant. It made sense in the circumstances of a depleted population to appoint someone who had already made his home there.

5. Did Nehemiah have other choices, beside his own brother?
   5.1. There were probably some in Jerusalem from those who had come back from the captivity with Zerubbabel and Joshua and with Ezra (Neh 2.16; Neh 4.14, 19; Neh 7.5; Neh 10.29) who feared God. But Nehemiah selected men who were the most outstanding in serious godliness. [Note: the references to the nobles in Nehemiah are not always flattering (see, Neh 3.5; Neh 5.7, 12; Neh 6.17; Neh 13.17)]
   5.2. There were two local administrators already in the city who each had responsibility over half the city and who might have had their authority increased to be responsible for the entire city (Neh 3.9, 12).
      5.2.1. The appointment of one of them might have caused problems since each had responsibility for half the city and it might have been an unwise move to elevate one over the other.
      5.2.2. Therefore the appointment of Hanani might have been a 'politically' wise move.
   5.3. Was this a patronage appointment or nepotism?
      5.3.1. It was not in the character of Nehemiah to show favoritism, especially to members of his own family. Instead Nehemiah appears to have been very concerned about doing right before God (Neh 5.14-19).

6. What principles was Nehemiah operating under when he appointed these men?
   6.1. Delegation
      6.1.1. Delegation is not an invention of modern business gurus. It is a Biblical principle, God delegated the work of 'running' the world to a subordinate sovereign—man (Gen 1.2, 28; Gen 2.19, 20).
      6.1.2. What Biblical example might Nehemiah have been following, besides following practical considerations?
         6.1.2.1. The example of Moses' appointing the lower-court judges to administer the day-to-day or routine cases, with himself (under God) acting as the appeal judge (Ex 18.17-26).
         6.1.2.2. NT examples:
            6.1.2.2.1. Jesus sent out disciples in pairs. He also appointed the 12 Apostles as the foundation for the NT Church and delegated the responsibility to them for the initial work of founding the Church throughout much of the Mediterranean world.
            6.1.2.2.2. The appointment of the seven deacons (Acts 6.1-6).
            6.1.2.2.3. Paul's instruction to Timothy to appoint competent leadership in order to maintain watchfulness (2 Tim 2.2).
   6.2. Appointment of Godly Civil Magistrates
      6.2.1. What does Nehemiah tell us was the primary criteria by which he judged Hananiah?
         6.2.1.1. He was a man of integrity and one who feared God more than most men do.
         6.2.1.2. He doesn't tell us if Hananiah understood military tactics, was an able administrator, or was able to lead men. Although, knowing what we do about Nehemiah, we can assume that these factors also had a bearing in his selection of the man.
         6.2.1.3. The primary factor that Nehemiah mentions as the attribute of most value is the 'fear of God.'

© James R. Hughes, 2006

6.2.1.4. A man who fears God is one who considers his awe and acknowledges his greatness (sovereignty over all of life).

6.2.2. [For more information on this topic, see: *Appendix F – Relationship Between Church and State (Considerations)*.]

7. What lessons can we derive from this section?
   7.1. The work and leadership in State and Church is a shared responsibility. Delegation is essential.
      7.1.1. It is vital that we see that there is never to be a one-man ministry (in State or Church). A lot of people need to learn this; more so it seems in the Church.
      7.1.2. It has been observed that a church/congregation will plateau at the skill level of its leader if it is a one-man ministry.
   7.2. We must strive for the appointment/election of leaders (in the State and Church) that are godly.
      7.2.1. Regardless of how they are appointed (e.g., appointed by a more senior government official, or elected by the populous) the objective should be to have leaders that 'fear God.'
      7.2.2. In the Civil arena, magistrates are to be ministers of God (Rom 13.1-7). It might help us always to have Rom 13.4; Ex 18.21; Dt 1.13-18; 2 Chron 19.5-7 in front of our eyes. The Civil Magistrate is expected to serve God. He is not our servant, but God's.
      7.2.3. Society and the Church will only flourish when those who are in charge excel in virtue and are known for both godliness and honesty.

Police Protection (Neh 7.2)

1. What was Hananiah's appointed role?
   1.1. To be governor of the citadel or fortress (Neh 2.8) and responsible for the army/guard for the city.
   1.2. This citadel was north of the temple buildings (compare, Acts 21.37; the fortress of Antonia).
   1.3. It probably housed a royal garrison, the commander of which was in the service of the Persian king (e.g., Neh 4.16).
   1.4. In general, to provide police protection for the city.

2. Was Hananiah's appointed role consistent with the God-defined role for civil magistrates (Rom 13.1-7)?
   2.1. Nehemiah appointed a man who would govern (administer according to God's law) and exercise justice in the courts.
   2.2. He appointed a man who would protect the citizens (wield the sword) from those who were enemies of the good order that Nehemiah was establishing.
   2.3. [For more information on this topic, see: *Appendix G – The God-Ordained Role for Government*.]

Prescribed Program (Neh 7.2-3)

1. What programs does Nehemiah prescribe after he has established a government for the city?
   1.1. He put in place a restriction about the opening and shutting of the city gates.
   1.2. He established a citizen militia.

2. Why did he establish a citizen militia?
   2.1. Because of the enemies around the city.
   2.2. The enemies of the Jews did not suddenly go away the day after the wall was complete and the doors were placed in the gates.
   2.3. We 'met' these enemies as the Devil's Promoters I, II, III (Neh 2.10, 19, 20; Neh 4.1-23; Neh 6.1-14, 17-19).

3. What were the duties of the citizen militia that he established?
   3.1. To serve as guards at their posts.
      3.1.1. The posts were probably the gates and the towers along the walls.
   3.2. To serve near their houses.
      3.2.1. For practical reasons, it seems to make sense that people serving as guards should not have to go further than necessary.
      3.2.2. As we saw when we looked at 4.9, 13, 14, the people would have a commitment to protecting their own families. Their work would not be for anonymous individuals but rather for their loved ones.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

4. What were the details of the program he instituted for the gates of the city? Why?
   4.1. The gates were to remain shut during the night. They were to be shut at sundown, and opened after sunrise.
   4.2. What might we find a bit peculiar about the specific directives of his program?
      4.2.1. The gates were not to be opened at sunrise (as was/is the custom in other walled cities) but later in the morning after the sun had been up for awhile.
   4.3. What was his purpose for establishing this rule regarding the city gates?
      4.3.1. To protect the city. It seems that the ruling, that the gates were not to be opened until mid-morning when the watchmen were already at their posts, provided additional protection from a surprise attack when the gates were first opened and the majority of the inhabitants were not yet active. Similarly, the provision that the gates were to be closed before the departure of the watch ensured that a surprise attack could not occur near the end of the day when everyone was tired.
      4.3.2. To establish a routine for daily life.
      4.3.3. To establish a separateness, and an identity for the inhabitants of the city and to distinguish them from the surrounding nations.
      4.3.4. To make it possible for him to give further provisions with respect to the Sabbath (Neh 13.15-19). It would have been difficult for Nehemiah to enforce a strict policy about commercial activity on the Sabbath if the gates of the city were always open.

5. What lessons can we derive from this section?
   5.1. The appointment of these programs was important since:
      5.1.1. It introduced a sense of discipline into the community:
         5.1.1.1. A basic requirement for a functioning community is the rhythm of daily life. War, storms, pestilence, famine, etc. can cause the rhythm to be broken.
         5.1.1.2. Living in chaos, where nothing runs on time and no systems work as expected, is very disorienting.
         5.1.1.3. The sooner order can be restored the quicker daily life can be resumed (Jer 29.4-7; Rom 12.18; 1 Thess 5.13, 14).
      5.1.2. It kept the people involved in their community. It wasn't enough for them to build the wall and then all depart for their homes. It was important that they stay involved in the work of the city.
         5.1.2.1. When a large flood or snowstorm occurs, people step up to help one another in their community. Afterwards, the effects of the community working together wears off and people go back to living as isolated family units. [The worst and the best can be brought out be major events like a storm. Selfishness and short tempers are often seen as people struggle to get home in a storm. Yet the same people can lend a hand shoveling out the driveway of an elderly person on their street.]
   5.2. Nehemiah's posting of the citizen militia teaches us:
      5.2.1. The importance of constant vigilance and self-control in the Church (1 Pt 5.8; Eph 6.12). The enemy can attack from many directions. We live in a morally volatile and dangerous culture. We must remain vigilant at all times.
      5.2.2. C. S. Lewis in the *Screwtape Letters* shows how Satan tries to find a hole of casualness and lack of control. For example: 'My Dear Wormwood, I hope my last letter has convinced you that the trough of dullness or "dryness" through which your patient is going at present will not, of itself, give you his soul, but needs to be properly exploited. What forms the exploitation should take I will now consider. In the first place I have always found that the Trough periods of the human undulation provide excellent opportunity for all sensual temptations ...'
   5.3. The importance of every member (citizen) being involved in the work of vigilantly watching over the welfare of the City of God. It is too easy to leave the job to Elders or Pastors and to assume that they will keep the church pure. We all have a responsibility to pray for the Church and to ensure that what is being taught in the Church is consistent with the Scriptures (Acts 17.11).
   5.4. Not to place our hope in the things of this world (Ps 127.1; Rev 21.25). The gates of the eternal city of Jerusalem will never be shut. The fact that Nehemiah had to have the gates shut in the temporal, earthly Jerusalem reminds us that there is no security in this realm and that we are to be looking "forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God." (Heb 11.10)

Summary

1. What lessons have we learned from Nehemiah's appointments and programs? (Neh 7.1-3)

© James R. Hughes, 2006

1.1. To provide a city administration and guards. All functioning societies need to have some form of governance and policing, regardless of how it initially is created (e.g., imposed or voted in).
   1.1.1. It is necessary to create a self perpetuating organization for the maintenance of civil order. After more than 70 years of chaos in the territory, law and order had to be re-established.
   1.1.2. Possibly, so he could return to his position in Susa and resume his appointed duties (to have a 'Christian' influence in a pagan culture).
1.2. It is important to move quickly into a 'maintenance' mode after the completion of a great project so that the people do not experience a 'let-down' and will stay involved in the work.
   1.2.1. It is necessary to reinstate community rhythm, based on God's laws. Life has to resume a routine once an extraordinary project had been completed (1 Cor 14.33).
   1.2.2. A basic requirement for a functioning community is the rhythm of daily life.
   1.2.3. The people must be kept involved in the work of the community (Church). It isn't enough for them to be involved in a 'one-off' project and then they can all go home.
   1.2.4. The work and leadership in State and Church is a shared responsibility. Delegation is essential. A one-man ministry (in State or Church) can have only limited success. The importance of every member (citizen) being involved in the work of vigilantly watching over the welfare of the City of God is shown by the appointment of the citizen militia.
1.3. Nehemiah held to the establishment principle, i.e., that the state is to support the true religion and to oppose the outward observance of false religion.
   1.3.1. Notice that he held this view in the midst of an extensive pagan empire, and executed his understanding of that principle in one of the provinces of that empire.
   1.3.2. Public piety in any society is essential. Our civil magistrates should be encouraging it. It is important to have a moral conscience operating in society. The Church should be encouraging the civil magistrates to bring Biblical Law and morality into the public forum rather than excising it.
   1.3.3. Neh 7.1, 2 teaches us that piety comes before polity.
   1.3.4. We must appoint/elect leaders (in the State and Church) that are godly. The Civil Magistrate is expected to serve God. He is not our servant, but God's. Society and the Church will only flourish when those who are in charge excel in virtue and are known for both godliness and honesty.
1.4. The civil magistrate is to perform the duties assigned by God, and not to usurp to himself the functions of the other God-ordained institutions (the family and the Church). The duties of the State are to rule/govern, administer justice, and protect the people from enemies inside and outside.
1.5. Nehemiah re-introduced into worship only the elements of worship that had been authorized by God.
   1.5.1. He held to the Regulative Principle.
   1.5.2. He did not innovate. He did not apply self-will in the matter of worship.
1.6. Nehemiah's posting of the citizen militia teaches us the importance of constant vigilance and self-control in the Church (1 Pt 5.8; Eph 6.12). An enemy can attack from many directions. We live in a morally volatile and dangerous culture. We must remain vigilant at all times.
1.7. We are not to place our hope in the things of this world (Ps 127.1; Rev 21.25). The gates of the eternal city of Jerusalem will never be shut. The fact that Nehemiah had to have the gates shut in the temporal, earthly Jerusalem reminds us that there is no security in this realm and that we are to be looking "forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God." (Heb 11.10).

Delivered People (Neh 7.4-73a)

We now move our consideration from the establishment of infrastructure of the city and community (the rites, rhythms, routine) to filling of the city.

Spacious City (Neh 7.4)

1. How big was the city?
   1.1. "large and spacious"
   1.2. Nehemiah 2.13-15 and 3 (the list of city gates) provides an indication of where the walls were at the time of Nehemiah. Archaeologists are able to place, approximately, the walls in the old city. Historical atlases show the outline of the city.
   1.3. The walled area of the city, at the time of Nehemiah, was probably around 25 hectares (about 50 football fields).
   1.4. After the time of Nehemiah until the time of Herod the Great (and time of the birth of Jesus) the city walls were extended so that the city was 3-4 times larger.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

2. Why were there so few people living in the city?
   2.1. The city was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar in 587 BC (Jer 52.12-13).
   2.2. The statement in verse 4 does not mean that there were no houses or inhabitants at all. The city had been re-inhabited for 90 years. Rather it was sparsely inhabited. Few people wanted to live in it.
   2.3. Many cities of this era were destroyed and have never been re-built (e.g., Ur, Nineveh, Babylon, Susa). The sites of destroyed cities were often abandoned when the historic reason for their being founded in their location no longer had relevance:
      2.3.1. Trade routes changed because of politics.
      2.3.2. Water supplies became polluted or dried up.
      2.3.3. The surrounding soil became too saline from constant evaporation and could not supply enough food to support the city.
      2.3.4. Canals became clogged/silted and there was not a government infrastructure to maintain them.
      2.3.5. A harbour silted up and ships could no longer reach the docks.
      2.3.6. A mine or quarry was exhausted.
      2.3.7. Treaties, alliance, and enemies changed; changing the need for fortifications.
      2.3.8. Not a place where people would re-inhabit when the primary reason no longer existed.

3. What was the reason that Jerusalem was founded where it was?
   3.1. From earliest history it was a religious site (Gen 14.18 [see Ps 76.2]; Ps 22.2; 1 Chron 21.18-30; 2 Chron 3.1-2).
   3.2. It was a fortress with very limited access on three sides, on the route down to the Jordan at the time of the Jebusites.
   3.3. It is possible (likely) that Jerusalem would have been deserted entirely and would be a 'tell' or ruin today if it had not been for the work of Nehemiah. Water supplies in the city were always a problem.

4. Why was Jerusalem re-inhabited?
   4.1. The main reason it was re-inhabited is because it was the place where God chose to make his name known among his people, in the Temple. It was the holy city and he would not leave it deserted.
   4.2. God would not let his enemies gloat. He punished the city but did not destroy it completely as he did the pagan cities that despised him (e.g., Babylon).
      4.2.1. Compare Moses' plea (Num 14.10-20).
   4.3. To show how forgiving God is (Num 14.18).
   4.4. To fulfill his promise that the city would be re-populated (Zech 8.3-11).
      4.4.1. Compare Zech 8.8 "bring them back" with Neh 7.6.
   4.5. Because Nehemiah instituted the disciplines of public life in the community and it was safe for people to return and dwell in the city.
      4.5.1. Compare Zechariah 8.10 "no safety," with Nehemiah 7.1, 3

Systematic Census (Neh 7.5)

1. What was Nehemiah's next action after re-establishing Public Piety, Public Polity, and Police Protection?
   1.1. To conduct a census of the people who had returned and who were living in the land.
   1.2. Registering people by families is another way of saying that he was going to conduct a census (see, Lk 2.1-5; 'to register' in 5).
   1.3. It was to be a census of more than just those who had returned, because the common people were not taken into captivity (2 Ki 25.11-12; Jer 52.27-30).

2. What other censuses in the Bible had an important bearing on the history of redemption?
   2.1. The sons of Jacob going into Egypt (Gen 46.8-27). Although this is not called a census, it serves the same purpose. And it lays the foundation for showing the work of God. He demonstrates what he can do from a single man, from a man to ... a tribe ... to a nation ... to the entire world (e.g., Acts 2.8).
   2.2. The people of Israel leaving Egypt and entering the Promised Land (Num 1.1-54 and Num 26.1-65).
      2.2.1. Compare Numbers 1.46 [603,550[with Num 26.51 [601,730].
      2.2.2. These two censuses show God's faithfulness. Even though an entire generation died out and was not allowed to enter the Promised Land, God replaced it in its entirety.
      2.2.3. There are some who try to dismiss this census either by saying that it was a later census (e.g., the one taken by David) extrapolated into the exodus, or that the term 'thousand' should be interpreted

© James R. Hughes, 2006

as ‘tent group.’ With a tent group having about 10 men, which would give 400-500 men for a total number like 45,000. Men do not want to accept God’s word at face-value and trust that he could perform amazing miracles to keep such a great number of people alive throughout the entire wilderness journey.

2.3. The census of Israel and Judah during David’s reign (2 Sam 24.1-9; 1 Chron 21.1-6).

2.3.1. In this census 2 Samuel 24.9 reports 800,000 + 500,000 = 1,300,000 men eligible for military duty as ‘fighting men’. But 1 Chronicles 21.1-6 reports a total 1,100,000 and records the number in Judah as 470,000. The difference in the number of fighting men in Judah could be due to rounding on the part of one of the records. The difference in the total could also be due to the inclusion/exclusion of the Levites and Benjamites (1 Chron 21.6).

2.4. Two Roman censuses are mentioned in the NT.

2.4.1. Luke 2.1 refers to the one that Caesar Augustus commissioned at the time of Jesus’ birth that made it necessary for Mary and Joseph to return to their ancestral tribal land (Judea instead of Galilee). This action brought the fulfillment of the prophecy that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem.

2.4.2. Acts 5.37 records the other, but it is only used as a time-marker and does not have a direct bearing on the history of redemption.

2.5. What is another important census mentioned in the NT?

2.5.1. We find one other census mentioned in the NT and it is important that we consider it to provide context for the activity of Nehemiah.

2.5.2. We find a reference to this in Revelation 7.4-8. When we consider this census with the account of the opening of the books (Rev 20.12) we see that the entire population of Heaven is enrolled in the *Book of Life*.

3. What is the primary purpose of censuses, from the world’s perspective *vs* God’s perspective?

3.1. There are a number of purposes from the world’s perspective (some are classical reasons, some are more modern):

3.1.1. Taxation levies (funds for public works, policing, military campaigns, etc.).

3.1.2. Army levies (levy of people to serve).

3.1.3. Voter allocation.

3.1.4. Socio-economic analysis (a more recent use of censuses to provide information for economic development and resource allocation).

3.2. God’s ordaining Biblical censuses appears to have primarily a spiritual meaning:

3.2.1. Exodus 30.11-16 – A ransom of atonement money was to be paid into the work of the Tabernacle.

3.2.1.1. We are not told specifically how often this census was taken, but there is a hint in the preceding section (verse 10) that it was annual. Since the blood of the atonement was annual, and the rules regarding the census immediately follow, it seems that the collection of atonement money (verses 15, 16) was also to be annual. Later evidence in Nehemiah 10.32 makes reference to an annual tax. [We will consider this tax in more detail when we reach chapter 10 in our study. For the moment, note that it was an annual taxation.]

3.2.1.2. It was in the form of a poll or head tax, and taught that all people were counted as equal before the Law. Every male, after reaching the age of 20 was to register for military service and pay the half shekel (Num 1.3). A ½ shekel of silver weighed 5-6 grams. A Canadian Loonie weighs the same.

3.2.1.3. The purpose was not to fund the work of the Levites. Their work was funded by the tithes.

3.2.1.4. It was given as a means of encouragement (Dt 10.22) since it showed God’s preserving faithfulness.

3.2.1.5. It served as an object lesson that taught that all the people in the Kingdom/Church had to be redeemed from sin and the ways of the world. They had to “cross over” (Ex 30.13).

3.2.2. 2 Ki 12.4 – This passage probably refers to the same annual census since no specific census is described elsewhere.

3.2.3. Jesus and Peter pay the half shekel (two drachma/denarius) tax (approximately 2-days’ wages) as part of the annual registration or census (Mt 17.24-27).

4. Why did Nehemiah conduct the census?

4.1. God put it in his heart? (compare, Neh 2.12)

© James R. Hughes, 2006

4.2. Because the city was empty, and the census would be used as a means of repopulating it. He needed the census as a means of determining who was eligible to live in the city (see, Neh 11.1). Nehemiah's efforts were not a bureaucratic device, nor for vanity, but to encourage repopulation of the urban sector.
4.3. Nehemiah knew that the life of the city was essential for the life of the whole territory. A strong city would provide administration and protection.
4.4. It could be that Nehemiah was reinstituting the Temple tax and the annual census of registration in order to re-establish the discipline that was required (see, Neh 10.32).
4.5. To teach a number of spiritual lessons. [We will consider these shortly.]

5. Who did Nehemiah include in the census? (5) Why?
5.1. The nobles, officials, and common people.
5.2. Why are we told this, why is it important that we know who was included in the census?
5.2.1. The city had to be repopulated with a cross-section of people. Just as the nation of Israel was made up of all kinds of people, and not just those with money or influence, so the city had to be populated with a cross-section of the people.
5.2.2. In any properly functioning society there must be a mixture of people with different skills, gifts, and resources.
5.2.3. This approach does not support socialism or communism, but instead it reinforces the fact that God is the one who creates people with differences. All men are in fact not created equal (contrary to the *Declaration of Independence*; of course they were speaking in terms of rights, and not abilities). But men from all classes are needed to create a proper functioning society.

6. What did Nehemiah do that was different from what might have been done by other leaders at this time?
6.1. Other governors at the time of Nehemiah, and for many centuries after him, would have ignored the common people. A census for taxation or military purposes would have been taken among the nobles, those with land, or the freemen of the society. The common people (slaves or serfs) would have been viewed as essentially non-persons. [See, 2 Ki 24.15-16; 2 Ki 25.11-12 as possible examples.]
6.2. True, Biblical, egalitarianism is based on the principle that all men are accountable and responsible before God and that all have an opportunity to contribute to the well being of the commonweal. This egalitarianism is not the same as the view that all people have a right to have the same social or economic privileges or the idea that men and woman are identical.

7. What formed the basis of the census that Nehemiah took? (5) Why?
7.1. Family units. He based his census on descent from the sons of Jacob, the tribes of Israel.
7.2. He did not use a geographic criterion as we would today (e.g., all the people living south of a river, etc.).
7.3. He took a Covenantal perspective built around the family unit. He understood the importance of family units in God's plan of redemption. God continues to work with and through families today (e.g., Mk 5.19; Acts 2.39; Acts 10.2; Acts 16.33, 34; Eph 3.15; 1 Tim 5.8, 16).
7.4. The foundation of a strong society is strong families.
7.4.1. First families and then nations (Mt 28.19). There is too much emphasis today on individuals in culture, society, and the Church.
7.4.2. For example: "God draws people, not countries, into His kingdom ..."[5] Tell that to the 17th century Covenanters and see if they would agree!
7.5. We should follow Nehemiah's example. What are some practical ways we can apply this model in our congregation?
7.5.1. It is great to see families worshiping together in church. This should be encouraged. [We will consider this further when we study chapter 8.]
7.5.2. It is not wrong to have events for children, youth, singles, women, men, etc. But should also have family events (family night for games, etc.).
7.5.3. Home visitation is 'family' visitation.
7.5.4. Baptism as a family event. For example, we could invite up to the front, the previously baptized children along with the parents when a baby is being baptized. It is not conventional but it could be covenantal.

[5] Timothy Lamer, "Babylon, USA," *World*, March 13, 1999.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

Scribed Catalogue (Neh 7.5-62)

1. As Nehemiah began his census what did he find? (5)
   1.1. The genealogical record of those who had been the first to return from the captivity in Babylon.
   1.2. It is essentially the same as the record in Ezra 2.1-70. But that does not mean that he copied it from Ezra. It is more likely that both Ezra and Nehemiah copied the genealogy from a record that was kept in the temple.
   1.3. Who were these "first to return?"
      1.3.1. The people who returned with Zerubbabel and Joshua in 538 BC (Ezra 1.1), not with Ezra.
         1.3.1.1. Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, a descendant of king Jehoiachin (1 Chron 3.17), was made leader of the returning exiles and royal governor under Cyrus.
         1.3.1.2. Joshua [Jeshua] son of Jehozadak (Hag 1.1) and grandson of Seraiah (1 Chron 6.14-15), the high priest who was put to death by Nebuchadnezzar at Riblah (2 Ki 25.18, 21), was the first high priest of the restored community.
         1.3.1.3. Ezra returned about 80 years later in 458 BC (Ezra 7.1-28), 12 or 13 years before Nehemiah went to Jerusalem.

2. What is missing in Nehemiah 7.4-73? (Consider verse 5 and compare it with chapter 11.)
   2.1. In Nehemiah 7.5-73 we don't have the results of the census that Nehemiah took.
   2.2. We don't know exactly how many people he found in his census but we get a hint from chapter 11 (based on 10%).
   2.3. The record that we are given in Nehemiah 7.5-73 is essentially the same as that found in Ezra 2.1-70. It is not the record of Nehemiah's census, but rather of one that was taken about 90 years before.
   2.4. Why did Nehemiah record the census of ~90 years before and not the one of his day?
      2.4.1. For comparative purposes, to show the people how God had prospered them.

3. What are the facts listed in the preamble of the genealogical record? (6) Why are they recorded?
   3.1. The people who returned from the captivity were those of the 'province.'
      3.1.1. Which province is being spoken of?
      3.1.2. Judah (see, also Ezra 2.1; Ezra 5.8 [Aramaic word]).
   3.2. The people who returned were those who had been taken captive.
      3.2.1. This may mean, literally, the very old (70+) along with their families, or it may mean the children of those who were transported to Babylon.
      3.2.2. The fact that it says they returned to their own towns may point to the older generation. But it could also mean that they returned to their ancestral towns.
   3.3. The people returned to their own towns in Judah.
      3.3.1. Why would they return to their own towns?
      3.3.2. Each tribe had been allocated a specific piece of territory (Josh 15-19) that was to remain in the family 'forever' (Num 36.8, 9).
   3.4. What is the significance of these facts?
      3.4.1. God was faithful to his promise to restore his people to their land (Is 44.28; Is 45.1, 13 written ~ 700 BC; Dan 9.2 written 538/539 BC; Darius the Mede is probably the throne name for Cyrus).
      3.4.2. The promise of the coming Messiah from the land still had to be fulfilled (Micah 5.2 [c 700 BC, ~150 years before the return from captivity]).
      3.4.3. It was necessary to return the tribe of Judah to its territory so that Joseph the father of Jesus, of the tribe of Judah, would return to his own ancestral home during the census (Lk 2.4).
      3.4.4. These facts teach us important spiritual lessons:
         3.4.4.1. God does not forget his people.
         3.4.4.2. God will restore his people after he disciplines them.

4. How many men are listed in the preamble to the genealogical record? (7) Why might it be significant?
   4.1. Zerubbabel and Jeshua (Joshua) and ten other men [9 in Ezra] for a total of twelve.
   4.2. What might be the significance of this number?
      4.2.1. It is possible that Nehemiah lists the equivalent of the 12 leaders of the 12 tribes.
      4.2.2. It is likely that these were not descended from the 12 ancestral tribes, but that this was a symbol, as most of the men were likely descended from Judah.
      4.2.3. This may be intended to represent the new community as the successors of the twelve tribes of Israel.
         4.2.3.1. Compare with the end of verse 7, the title for the list "the men of Israel"

© James R. Hughes, 2006

4.2.3.2. Note also the twelve offerings (Ezra 6.17; Ezra 8.35).

4.3. Of the ten names listed, some appear elsewhere Seraiah (Neh 10.30); Bigvai (Neh 7.19; Ezra 8.14); Rehum (Ezra 4.8, 9, 17, 23; Neh 3.17; Neh 10.25; Neh 12.3); Baanah (Neh 10.28). Nothing helps in the identification of their ancestral tribes.

5. What is noteworthy about the use of the phrases "men of Israel?" (7) and "men of Bethlehem" (26)

5.1. Note that in the list of names (Neh 7.8-62), all are apparently masculine. Note also the statement in verse 66 about the total count of the company.

5.2. It could be that men (heads of clans) are listed and their families (with women and children) are included in the total counts.

5.2.1. If this is the case, then the 'whole company' in verse 66 would include women and children.

5.2.2. This seems to make sense when considered with the list of servants and animals (Neh 7.67-69).

5.2.3. The numbers seem to be relatively low if there were around 40,000 families, but not so low if there were fewer than 10,000 families.

5.2.4. It may be that God records the number of servants and animals to remind the people of their relative poverty when they started out so that they would remember to thank him when he gave prosperity.

5.3. However, the list and counts *may* include only men.

5.3.1. If the list of names and the head-count includes only men, then we need to also include also the women and children and the entire company could be 250,000 people. This is a larger number of people than most would at first think possible.

5.3.2. One piece of evidence in favour of this view is that the other censuses in the Bible only counted adult males.

5.3.3. Another piece of evidence in favour of this view is that the headings, Priests (39), Levites (43), [temple] Singers (44) [but note 67], Gatekeepers (45), Temple Servants (46), appear to be referring to only males, since only males could hold these jobs. It seems that their families are not included in the head-count since each heading appears to be listing those in the class rather than the class and their families.

5.3.4. If this interpretation is correct, it may indicate that the other parts of the list include only men also.

5.4. Regardless, only men are *mentioned* in the genealogical account. What is the significance of this?

5.4.1. It reminds us that God deals with mankind in a representative manner—in sin (in Adam) and in salvation (in Christ), and also in his dealings with us as covenantal families.

5.4.2. It points to the fact that God deals with covenant heads or representatives.

5.4.3. It reminds us that God has established the male head of a family to be its representative.

5.4.4. Contrary to the popular opinion of our age, it is not *necessary* in God's society for women to be represented as individuals distinct from their father, husband or brother.

5.4.4.1. In God's society, households seem to have more relevance than individuals in social organization.

5.4.4.2. This is an inflammatory statement and concept to most people in today's society in which we have been highly influenced by 'woman's rights' movements.

5.4.4.3. Consider the 'franchise' as one example. A lot is made about enlightened cultures that 'finally' gave women the vote. Why does a family need two votes? If the husband and wife both vote the same way all this does is inflate the vote count by two. If the husband and wife vote against each other all it does is cancel their votes. What is accomplished in either case other than the perception that there are additional 'rights'?

5.4.4.4. It is possible that we need to reinstitute the place of family units, represented by male heads. In doing this we might see major changes in our culture for the better. At least, we would see an end of much of the dogma spouted by feminists.

6. What is the structure of the genealogical record of the returning exiles? Why might it be significant?

6.1. Structure:

6.1.1. People: men of Israel by *person* (8-24/25), by *location* (25/26-38)

6.1.1.1. Verses 8 to 25 (or 24) appear to include tribes named for their leaders.

6.1.1.2. Verse 26 (or 25) to 38 appears to include people from geographic locations. Most of these towns were in the vicinity of Jerusalem including: Gibeon (Neh 7.25; Josh 9.3), Bethlehem (Neh 7.26; Ruth 1.2), Netophah (Neh 7.26; 2 Sam 23.28), Anathoth (Neh 7.27; Josh 21.18; Jer 1.1); and Kiriath-Jearim, Kephirah, and Beeroth, towns around Gibeon (Neh 7.29; Josh 9.17).

© James R. Hughes, 2006

6.1.2. Priests, Levites, Singers, Gatekeepers, 39-56
6.1.3. Nethinim, or temple servants, and servants of Solomon 57-60
6.1.4. Others 61-65
6.1.5. Sum 66-69.

6.2. It may be that the people who could trace their ancestry by family-line were treated first since the family connection was most significant.
6.3. Then came those who could trace their ancestry only to a general mixed Jewish population from a location (broad marriage across tribes, or had lost their ancestral connection while still in Palestine).
6.4. The next group was the Levites since in the censuses in Num 1.1-54 and Num 26.1-65 they were counted after the other tribes.
6.5. Then, the servants, who may not have been Jews but rather Gibeonites, were listed.
6.5.1. The Gibeonites were made slaves under a treaty of peace (Joshua 9.21, 23) to bring water and wood for the cooking stoves and fires for burnt offerings in the Tabernacle and Temple.
6.5.2. Notice that the tabernacle was first at Shiloh (Josh 18.1) about 20 kms NE of Gibeon, then at Nob (1 Sam 21.1-6) near Jerusalem, then moved to Gibeon (1 Chron 16.39; 2 Chron 1.3-5) until the time of Solomon when he took the items into the temple in Jerusalem (Gibeon is nearby).
6.5.3. In Nehemiah 3.7, men from Gibeon helped re-build the wall of Jerusalem. If these were men descended from the original Gibeonites, then they still considered themselves under the authority of Israel over 1000 years later, and after the captivity. If only men would honour treaties in a similar way today!
6.6. Then, were listed the descendants of the servants of Solomon (1 Ki 9.20-22).
6.7. Finally, there was a 'mixed multitude' of people who could not show their ancestry
6.8. When starting a new Israel reclaiming the Promised Land, the people followed the order of the old Israel claiming the Promised Land for the first time.

7. What key lessons did Nehemiah's census teach the people of Judah?
7.1. It showed them that they had experienced God's blessing and encouraged them.
7.1.1. When Nehemiah found the record of the census at the time of the return he was looking at the account from ~90 years before.
7.1.2. When he conducted the census in his day, he found that the population had grown.
7.1.3. How much had it grown?
7.1.3.1. It is not possible to determine which of the clans in Nehemiah 7-8-25 would have had ancestors from Judah and Benjamin (Neh 7.7 refers to the men of Israel) in order to compare them to the corresponding count from Nehemiah 11.4-9 (of which 10% or 1,396 moved to the city). However, the we can derive a rough order-of-magnitude estimate by comparing the sections that are parallel:

Group	Count in Neh 7.5-60	10%	Count in Neh 11.1-34	Growth
Priests (Neh 7.39-42)	4, 289	429	822	Almost 2X
Levites & Singers (Neh 7.43-44)	222	22	284	About 13X
Gatekeepers	138	14	172	About 12X

7.1.3.2. However, we cannot take these as absolute indicators of grown since it is possible that more of the Levites and gatekeepers traced their roots to Jerusalem and moved there (i.e., not just 10% of them).
7.1.3.3. If we use the increase in the number of priests as representative. It is possible that the population had doubled in total.
7.1.3.4. It seems reasonable to assume that in about a century, the population had (at least) doubled and therefore the people could rejoice at how God had provided for them through difficult times.

7.2. To teach them the necessity of preserving the spiritual purity of the community.
7.2.1. This was not just a simple count of heads.
7.2.2. By registering the residents Nehemiah was able to determine who should serve in various capacities and thus preserve the purity of the nation. (Ps 87.5, 6).
7.3. To give them a sense of history.
7.3.1. An historical identity and link with their great past.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

7.3.2. This connection with their history helped them understand their present situation and to see their future obligations (i.e., to pass on the cause to another generation).

Before we conclude our consideration of the genealogical record in Nehemiah 7.5-73, we should consider some of the problems we encounter, and lessons we can derive, from comparing the list in Nehemiah with the parallel one found in Ezra 2.1-70. [This list is also contained in Esdras 5.7-45 in the Apocrypha.]

8. Compare, for example, Nehemiah 7.13 with Ezra 2.8; and Nehemiah 7.15 with Ezra 2.10; etc. What do you notice?
   8.1. In many of the cases the numbers given for the head-counts are different. In some cases the names appear to be different.
   8.2. There is some variation in the names and their order, for example:
      8.2.1. Bani (Ezra 2.10) in Ezra is Binnui (Neh 7.15) in Nehemiah; Jorah (Ezra 2.18)/Harif (Neh 7.24); Gibbar (Ezra 2.20)/Gibeon (Neh 7.25).
      8.2.2. Men of Bethlehem and Netophah reported separately in Ezra (Ezra 2.21, 22) and combined in Nehemiah (Neh 7.26) with the same total.
      8.2.3. There is only one name in the list in Ezra (Magbish, Ezra 2.30) that does not appear in the list in Nehemiah (Neh 7.33, 34).
      8.2.4. Otherwise the lists of names are the same, if we accept the variations in the spelling and usage of names (e.g., Jim/James; Bill/William; middle *vs* first; proper *vs* diminutive; etc.). Example: Jorah is close to sound for "harvest-rain" and Harif is close to the sound for "harvest."
   8.3. With respect to the numbers, 14 of the 33 in Ezra differ in Nehemiah. One of the 33, Magbish, is missing entirely.
   8.4. The names/number in Nehemiah 7.39-42 are identical to those in Ezra.
   8.5. In all three texts (Nehemiah, Ezra, Esdras) the sum-total is 42,360 (Neh 7.66), yet if you summed up the numbers you would find the following: 29,818 in Ezra]; 31,089 in Nehemiah; and 30,143 in Esdras.
   8.6. The lists of Levites, singers, gatekeeper (Nehemiah 7.43-45) have essentially the same names, but different numbers.
   8.7. In the list of temple servants no numbers are given in either case, the lists of names do vary somewhat.

9. What are we to make of these differences, how are we to explain them?
   9.1. We can attempt to explain these differences, as some have, by suggesting that:
      9.1.1. One or the other list includes only men from Judah and Benjamin whereas all the Israelites are included in the other.
      9.1.2. Only those over the age of 12 are in one list, and all regardless of age are in the other, since Esdras 5.41 says "and all Israel from twelve years old and upwards ..."
      9.1.3. The account in Ezra gives the count from 90 years before, and the account in Nehemiah gives the count from the census of Nehemiah using the same family names.
      9.1.4. However, the lists do not differ consistently in a manner that would support any of these conclusions.
   9.2. The only suggestion that appears to satisfactorily explain the differences is copying errors. For example, there appears to have been copying problems:
      9.2.1. The "other" in Nehemiah 7.33 may be a copying problem since the "other" appeared in the next term (34) with Elam and the Magbish is missing. It appears that the copyist may have let his eye slip and missed a line.
      9.2.2. A scribe, copying Nehemiah 7.67 might have inadvertently picked up the 245 in verse 68, in reference to mules, and inserted that number for the 200 singers. He then might have mistakenly omitted verse 68 (cf. NIV margin).
      9.2.3. Keil & Delitzsch, in their commentary say: "These differences are undoubtedly owing to mere clerical error, and attempts to reconcile them in other ways cannot be justified."
      9.2.4. A few other examples from the OT that show that copying problems *may* have occurred in other places than in Ezra 2.1-70 and Nehemiah 7.5-65:
         9.2.4.1. Jer 52.12 with 2 Ki 25.8. One must be wrong. We don't know which.
         9.2.4.2. 2 Chron 36.9 with 2 Ki 24.8.
         9.2.4.3. 2 Sam 21.19 with 1 Chron 20.5.
   9.3. A skeptic could, of course, say: "Since there are these errors here, how can we trust the Word elsewhere, or anywhere? Maybe the Bible is full of errors?"

© James R. Hughes, 2006

9.3.1. We have heard that the Masorete copyists took great care in their copying. Possibly they did, but the scribes before them seem not to have been quite as careful.
9.3.2. Do copying errors bring into question the reliability of the Bible? How can we say that the Bible is without error, infallible?
9.3.3. We may not like the explanation that there were copying errors through the centuries, but we have to live with the reality and the difficulties this presents. Since the copying errors are present we have to deal with the problem of copying errors in the Bible's manuscripts.

9.4. Why did God permit these copying errors to appear in the Bible? What lessons can we learn from them?

9.4.1. Avoid placing faith in a particular text – There have been a number of people, especially, over the past 50-75 years who have put their 'faith' in a particular printed edition of the text of the Bible or in a manuscript family.

9.4.1.1. Let us conduct a thought experiment for a moment ... Let's suppose that someday a crew of workers is repairing the Dome of the Rock and digs beside the foundations and discovers a chest containing a very old manuscript of the OT. Let's suppose that it is about 2,500 years old. Let's suppose further that it solves the problem of Ezra 2.1-70 and Nehemiah 7.5-65. Let's suppose that its sub-numbers do not support entirely the reading in Ezra or Nehemiah, but sum exactly to the total in verse 66. I think that most people would accept the corrections and emendations and be happy that now a problem has been removed from the Bible and skeptics can be silenced. This thought experiment teaches us not to place our faith in a particular textual variant because we don't know what God will do with respect to providing new evidence to support the accuracy of his word, as he did with the discovery of the Dead See Scrolls.

9.4.1.2. A few examples of copying problems that have been corrected with comparisons with older manuscripts/versions of the Bible:

- Judges 18.30
  - NKJV: "Jonathan the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh ..."
  - LXX (some), Vulgate: "Jonathan the son of Gershom, the son of Moses ... [Ex 2.22]"
  - Hebrew: "flying Nun". Apparently a zealous scribe introduced a Nun to turn the consonants of Moses into Manasseh (the rest is handled with pointing).
- Is 7.14
  - NKJV: "and [she] shall call him ..."
  - DSS: "and *they* shall call him ..." (Note : Mt 1.23 'they' from LXX)
- Is 14.4
  - NKJV: "the golden city ceased" meaning of Hebrew word in Masoretic Text is uncertain
  - DSS: "his *fury* has ceased" (also LXX, Syriac)
- Is 21.8
  - NKJV: "lion"
  - DSS: "lookout" (also Syriac)
- Is 33.8
  - NKJV: "cities"
  - DSS: "witnesses"
- Is 37.25
  - NKJV: "I have dug and drunk water"
  - DSS: "I have dug and drunk water in foreign lands" (compare, 2 Kin 19.24)
- Is 45.2
  - NKJV: "make the crooked places straight" (meaning of Hebrew word in Masoretic Text is uncertain)
  - DSS: "level the mountains" (also LXX)
- Is 49.24
  - NKJV: "of the righteous delivered?" (hard to understand the sense)
  - DSS: "rescued from the fierce?" (also LXX, Syriac, Vulgate; cf v 25 "terrible/fierce"

9.4.1.3. These examples from the OT illustrate why we must be very careful not to be absolute in our belief that a particular manuscript family (i.e., the Masoretic Text) is without error.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

9.4.1.4. This should serve as a warning to those who claim that either a particular NT manuscript family (e.g., the Byzantium), or a particular text (e.g., Erasmus' third edition of the NT printed in 1550 by Robert Estienne [a. k. a. Stephanus] referred to as the "text now received by all ..." [in GB, but not on the continent] in the later revised edition printed by the Elzevir brothers in 1633 [the 'received' text on the continent]) is the only accurate Greek version of the NT.

9.4.1.5. Warfield in *The Westminster Assembly and its Work*: "The autographs of Scripture, as immediately inspired, were in the highest sense the very Word of God and trustworthy. ... God's providential care has preserved to the Church through every vicissitude, these inspired and infallible Scriptures, diffused indeed, in the multitude of copies, but safe and accessible."

9.4.1.6. God-fearing scholars with a great reverence for the word of God must do their best to come as close to the original autographs as possible through a diligent comparison of the multitude of manuscript copies.

9.4.2. Avoid Bibliolatry – We worship God, and believe in Jesus Christ. We must not worship the Bible or put our faith in the Bible. Although the Bible is God's true word for mankind and God has preserved it in amazing ways, we must not worship the Bible, but God.

9.4.3. Faith and not sight is required for salvation (Jn 20.29) – God deliberately has left this ambiguity in his word (not in areas that would affect teachings relating to salvation or to morality) to teach us that we must trust him. There are many 'problems' and 'paradoxes' that we are confronted with in the Bible: three persons, one God; Jesus as God-man; sovereignty of God and man's responsibility for sin; the 'problem' of evil, how a good God can allow bad things; etc. We are to live by faith and not sight and trust God to the very end.

10. What are some of the lessons we can learn from the execution of the census by Nehemiah and his discovery of the genealogical record of the original returnees from the captivity?

10.1. The Church of Jesus is made up of all kinds of people (5).

10.1.1.1 Corinthians 12.12-30. There are leaders (as in verse 28) but not all have this appointment (verses 29-30). Nevertheless, all have a role to perform in the Church.

10.1.2. All the community, including the servants (67), was part of the census count. So it is in the Church, everyone counts.

10.1.3. It is very easy for people, especially leaders, in the Church to forget this and to begin to cater to those with power and influence. They need to heed the lesson of Nehemiah 7.5 "to assemble the nobles, the officials and the common people" and to include them all in the count of those who will move forward the work of the City of God.

10.2. The genealogical record serves as an object lesson that teaches us that all the people in the Kingdom/Church have to be redeemed from sin and the ways of the world. They have to be part of the people that can trace their heritage to their spiritual father (God).

10.3. God delights in knowing his people. The counting of them and the listing of their names is a form of knowing them (compare, Gen 2.19, 20; Ps 147.4; Is 62.2; Is 65.15; Rev 2.17).

10.3.1. The repetition [since it is also in Ezra 2.1-70] of the genealogical account tells us that God is pleased to number his people.

10.3.2. He knows those who are his and takes particular notice of each one (Lk 10.20; Heb 12.23; Rev 21.27; Mal 3.16, 17).

10.3.3. He knows each one by name and cares for them personally (Jn 10.3).

10.4. God encourages his people by showing them that his purpose is to redeem a large number of people (Dt 10.22) until he has filled heaven (Rev 7.9) with all that he plans to save.

10.5. Preserving a pure family in the Church is an important role of the leaders. (Neh 7.64-65; Is 4.3)

10.5.1. This census, and others in the Bible, is like a membership role in the Church.

10.5.2. Elders have the responsibility of safeguarding, to the best of their knowledge, the list of those who make up the role and those who do not.

10.5.3. Just as the genealogies identify the authentic Jews, so a membership role in a congregation identifies the authentic members of the visible Church. [Note: this does not mean that they are necessarily true believers in their hearts, anymore than all bearing the sign of the Covenant in the OT were true believers.]

10.6. We are to see our connection with those who have gone before us. The genealogical accounts here and elsewhere in the Bible remind us that the Church does not consist only of those in our congregation, denomination, or present age (Heb 12.1).

© James R. Hughes, 2006

10.6.1. We need a sense of history and need to understand ourselves in the context of the great sweep of the continuity of the Church from age to age.
10.6.2. Connecting with the faithful generations of the past helps us to understand our present, and see our future, obligations (i.e., to pass on the cause to another generation).
10.6.3. We come to understand ourselves as being part of the Lord's great work throughout history.
10.6.4. Without a sense of history we become short-sighted, introspective, and self-centred.
10.7. There is a Messianic purpose in the genealogical accounts in the Bible. They remind us of the importance that God placed on being able to show the ancestry of his son (Mt 1.1-17; Lk 3.23-37).
10.7.1. The faithfulness of the Jews in keeping the genealogies until the coming of the Messiah was required, in the Providence of God, as a means of authenticating Jesus as the ancestor of David and the rightful heir to the throne.

Separated Community (Neh 7.61-65)

1. Where did some of the people who returned from the captivity come from? (61)
   1.1. Tel Melah ('mound of salt'; see Judges 9.45); Tel Harsha ('forest hill'), etc. possibly cities along the Kebar river (Ezk 1.1) that had been previously destroyed and then resettled by the deported Jews.
   1.2. These people may have been from the earlier re-location at the time of the deportation of the Northern Kingdom.

2. What could these people not find?
   2.1. Some of the people who returned from the captivity to Judah were not able to produce genealogical records showing their descent.

3. What other group of people could not find their genealogical records? (Neh 7.3-64)
   3.1. Some of the priests, those specifically descended from three individuals (Hobaiah, Hakkoz and Barzillai).
   3.2. It is possible that during the deportation their records were destroyed or they had not been faithful in keeping them up to date.

4. Why was it important that they find their genealogical records?
   4.1. It would show that they were part of a proud heritage (Rom 9.4-5), and a separated people (Ex 19.6; Dt 7.6; Dt 14.2; Dt 26.19).
   4.2. It would prove that they were Jews and would have access to the Jewish ordinances (Ex 12.48-49; Acts 21.28).
   4.3. A genealogy would determine who could inherit land (Num 36.7, 9).
   4.4. A genealogy could determine the rules for intermarriage (Dt 7.3; Josh 23.12; Ezra 9.1, 2).
   4.5. Only those descended from Levi could be part of the priesthood (Num 3.10; Num 16.1-7), could eat the priestly food (Lev 24.5-9; Mk 2.26); and be supported by the tithes (Lev 18.21, 24, 26; Heb 7.5).

5. What did the governor do to the priests who could not find their genealogical records?
   5.1. The 'Tirshatha', was the secular, civil governor (compare, Neh 7.70; Neh 8.9; Neh 10.2; Neh 12.26.).
   5.2. At this time (90 years before Nehemiah) it may have been Zerubbabel (Neh 7.7; Ezra 3.2; Ezra 5.2; Hag 1.1).
   5.3. He excluded those who could not find their records from serving as priests. Specifically from:
      5.3.1. The priesthood because they were treated as unclean.
      5.3.2. Eating the sacred food.
      5.3.3. [We won't consider, at this time, why the secular authority (Zerubbabel) was excluding the priests, and not the religious authority (Joshua). We considered the role of the state relative to the Church previously in the section entitled *Public Piety*.}

6. Until when were these people to be excluded from the priestly ordinances?
   6.1. Until there was a priest ministering with the Urim and Thummim to give a final decision.
      6.1.1. There was no ark of the Covenant (it was probably destroyed with the destruction of the temple under Nebuchadnezzar) or temple (it hadn't yet been re-built since the time of its destruction, and it would be 13 years before it was re-built).
      6.1.2. There was probably a hope that God would manifest himself again through the Urim and Thummim.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

6.1.3. Rabbis (e.g., Bustorf, Vitringa) indicate that the Urim and Thummim were never used after the captivity.
6.1.4. Thus the excluded people may never have been able to rejoin the ranks of the priests.
6.2. What were the Urim and Thummim?
6.2.1. Apparently stones thrown out of a pouch on the priest's breast piece that were used (like casting lots) for making decisions.
6.2.2. [For additional information on the Urim and Thummim, see: *Appendix T – Casting Lots (Considerations)*]

7. Why did the governor exclude from the priesthood the men who could not find their genealogical records?
7.1. They could not show that they were descended from Aaron.
7.2. They were considered to be unclean.
7.2.1. What does this mean?
7.2.2. They were symbolically unholy. This does not mean that they were any more sinners than their fellow countrymen. They would still have been able to partake of the Passover.
7.3. This may sound harsh, but it teaches that we are to have a great respect for the holiness of God.
7.4. It showed that the commands of God about the priesthood were important.

8. What analogy can we derive from this action?
8.1. The priests were set aside to God as a symbol of his people who he was saving from the world.
8.2. In the NT economy all believers are called 'priests' (1 Pt 2.5, 9) and are to: reflect God's holiness (1 Pt 1.15; Heb 7.26; Heb 10.10); offer spiritual sacrifices of praise (Rom 12.1; Phil 4.18; Heb 13.15, 16; 1 Pt 2.5); intercede with God on behalf of men (1 Tim 2.1); and represent God before men (2 Cor 5.20; 2 Cor 6.1).
8.3. There is to be a distinction between those who are in the Church and those who are not (e.g., Mal 3.16-18).
8.4. Just as it was required that those in the OT priesthood show their credentials for inclusion in the priesthood and to partake of the holy food, so it is in the NT economy. Those who are in the Church are to have proper credentials to be part of the covenant community and to participate in the Lord's Supper. Those who fail to produce the required credentials are to be excluded.
8.5. This implies that maintaining a church membership roll is a valid application of the requirements for membership in the OT priesthood. [For more information on this topic, see: *Appendix I – Is Requiring Church Membership Biblical?*]

9. What lessons can we derive from this section?
9.1. The missing records at the time of the census serve as an object lesson that teaches us that all the people in the Kingdom/Church have to be redeemed from sin and the ways of the world. They have to be part of the holy people that can trace their heritage to their spiritual father—God. (Ps 87.6; Mal 3.16-18).
9.2. Some priests failed the birthright test. Likewise, some people, who claim to be in the Church, will fail the entrance criteria to heaven (Mt 7.21-23). Birthright is not derived by will of flesh, but from God. (Jn 1.13). So you cannot fail the entrance 'exam' to heaven because you didn't study. Entrance to heaven isn't based on your works, it is based on your birth—having been born again in Christ (Jn 3.7). There will be many on the judgment day who will try to prove that they are children of God but will fail. There will even be some among them who have preached the gospel (Mt 7.21).
9.3. Preserving a pure Covenant-family in the Church is an important role of the leaders (Is 4.3).
9.4. The census is like a membership roll in the Church. Just as the genealogies identified the authentic Jews, so a membership roll in a congregation identifies the 'authentic' members of the visible Church; members of the covenant community.
9.4.1. In the NT economy all believers are called priests'
9.4.2. Just as it was required that those in the OT priesthood show their credentials for inclusion in the priesthood and to partake of the holy food, so it is in the NT economy. Those who are in the Church are to have proper credentials to be part of the covenant community and to participate in the Lord's Supper. Those who fail to produce the required credentials are to be excluded.
9.4.3. The leaders (Elders) have the responsibility of safeguarding to the best of their knowledge those who make up the roll and those who do not, as Nehemiah did in his day.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

Summary Count (Neh 7.66-69)

1. Who returned with the Jews?
   1.1. 7,337 male and female servants returned with their masters.
      1.1.1. This tells us that they were probably treated with kindness by their masters and found their future with the Jews in a political/economic "backwater" to be more optimistic than among the worshippers of false gods in the heart of the empire (Eph 6.5-9; Heb 11.24-26).
      1.1.2. Christian employers should show such kindness and fairness so that their employees will want to work for them.
   1.2. 200 (see, Ezra 2.65) male and female singers accompanied the Jews.
      1.2.1. Who were these people? How do they differ from those mentioned in 44?
      1.2.2. All the temple singers were males. The OT temple choir was composed of males only (1 Chron 15.16).
      1.2.3. It is possible that these singers were either entertainers (e.g., Eccl 2.8) or singers hired to mourn (2 Chron 35.25; Mt 11.17). Maimonides: The poorest husband was expected to provide at least two flautists and one mourning woman for the funeral of his wife (*Misnayot* 4).

2. Why did Nehemiah include the totals?
   2.1. A standard part of a census. Totals are part of a meaningful count; otherwise we are overwhelmed by details.
   2.2. To show the people that they had experienced God's blessing and to encourage them. As we noted previously, the population has probably doubled since the return of the people about 90 years before.
   2.3. A reminder that in God's eyes, everyone in the community has importance. God's house is made up of rich and poor, free and slave (menservants and maidservants). Even the animals have importance in God's plan (e.g., Gen 1.26; Dt 5.14; Dt 25.4; Prov 12.10). They are protected from abuse by the covenant made with man; with man as a sub-sovereign (vassal) under God.

3. Why do the totals differ from the sums?
   3.1. If you summed up the numbers you would find the following: 29,818 in Ezra; 31,089 in Nehemiah; and 30,143 in Esdras; but this is not what we find in the totals (42,360, a difference of 11,271 in Nehemiah).
   3.2. Is the problem that they didn't have computers and Excel in their day?
   3.3. It could be that only men (heads of clans) are listed but their descendants (men, women and children) are included in the 'whole company' in verse 66. This however seems to give an unreasonably disproportionate number of men to women.
   3.4. Possibly, the total includes Jews from the northern tribes who might have joined the remnant in Judah and Benjamin (compare, Ezra 1.5; Neh 7.6).
   3.5. Possibly, the total includes the priests who could not find their genealogical records (verses 63-64).
   3.6. It is possible that names were dropped from the detailed list (but the fact that there is close correspondence with the passage in Ezra 2.1-70 may indicate that names have not been excluded).
   3.7. We have to leave this apparent discrepancy as a 'problem' for which we probably won't be given an explanation in this life.
      3.7.1. For some, this causes doubt in the veracity of God.
      3.7.2. In contrast, it should remind us that we are finite, not knowing everything, and that our belief in God rests ultimately on a trust that God has everything worked out and that we don't have to know everything.

Special Contribution (Neh 7.70-72)

1. Compare Ezra 2.69 and Nehemiah 7.70-72. What do you notice?
   1.1. The contributions mentioned in Ezra 2.69 look significantly different from those in Nehemiah 7.70-72.

	Ezra 2.69.	Nehemiah 7.70-72.			
Object	**Heads of Families**	**Governor**	**Heads of Families**	**Other People**	**Total**
Gold drachmas	61,000	1,000	20,000	20,000	41,000
Silver minas	5,000		2,200	2,000	4,200
Bowls/Basins		50			50
Priestly Garments	100	530		67	597

   1.2. What explanations can we give for why there are these differences?

© James R. Hughes, 2006

1.2.1. A different measurement system was in use 90 years before. Possibly, Nehemiah is giving the record in his different measurement system. However, the measurement system differences do not seem to explain the differences when the count of priestly garments and the bowls are not based on weights and measures.
1.2.2. It is possible that Nehemiah gives a more detailed account. But in this case, we would expect the numbers in Nehemiah to be the same as or larger, not smaller, than the numbers in Ezra.
1.2.3. Scribal, or copying, errors might explain the difference. There is a hint of a manuscript problem in the number 530 (composed of two numbers in the wrong order: 30 followed by 500, whereas compound numbers generally give the larger number first; this may mean that a word or words were dropped). However, it is not easy to determine what kind of copying error (e.g., a line missed, or a number picked up from a different line) could account for the differences.
1.2.4. Alternatively, the writer shifts the account to the time of Nehemiah, 90 years later than the account of the census that was from the time of Zerubbabel. The term 'governor' in verse 70 appears to refer to the same individual who is mentioned in verse 65. However, it may be that the former one is Zerubbabel, and the latter one is Nehemiah himself (the account does refer to Nehemiah in the 3rd person: Neh 8.9). At some point between 7.69 and 8.1 the account switches back from 90 years previously to the current time. 7.73 may refer to the time of Nehemiah.

1.3. It is not easy to determine which the correct explanation is. The best explanation *may* be that Nehemiah 7.70 is the transition point, and Nehemiah has switched the account back to his own time.
1.3.1. Note that Nehemiah 7.73 flows into Nehemiah 8.1 in a similar way that Ezra 3.1 flows into 3.2
1.3.2. It appears that Nehemiah is structuring a deliberate parallel between the events of 90 years before and his current time.
1.3.3. Because of this parallelism, it may be that Nehemiah uses the donations in his own day as the means of bridging the two accounts.

1.4. It could be that Nehemiah was re-instituting the Temple tax associated with the annual census of registration in order to re-establish the discipline that was required. Nehemiah 10.32 makes reference to the annual tax, but places the tax at 1/3 of a shekel instead of half a shekel. It may be due to hardship that the tax was temporarily reduced.
1.4.1. [Refer to the notes on Nehemiah 10.33 for more information about the Temple tax.]
1.4.2. However, the temple tax was mandatory, and the total amount of silver donated was 4,200 minas (~2.5 tonnes), the annual wage of over 3,000 laborers or roughly $60M (3,000*$20,000) worth of silver in today's terms. In the Mesopotamian system, there were 60 shekels in a mina. This means that the people donated enough silver for the temple tax for over 1,000,000 adult males, over 25 times what they would have had to donate for the Temple tax (based on 42,360 males [if we understand the count in v 66 as referring only to males]). This does not include the gold (41,000 drachmas, possibly the Persian *daric*) which amounted to about 350 kgms of gold worth roughly $3.4M.
1.4.3. The donations were probably much larger than the Temple tax. Therefore, it is quite likely that the people gave free-will offerings for the work of the Temple. It appears that Nehemiah records the donations of his time to show how generous the people were. He is looking back 90 years and showing that the people of his day, fewer in number, contributed almost as much as did the people of Zerubbabel's day. Nehemiah and the people are making a new beginning.
1.4.4. Nehemiah is 'boasting' about the strength of the restored covenant community; even in the midst of their poverty they gave generously.

1.5. The contribution of the governor, whether it was Nehemiah's or Zerubbabel's, sets an example of generosity for the people. If this was contributed by Nehemiah and the nobles of his day, the contribution shows a significant sacrifice as they have just come through a period of famine and have just repaid the poor (Neh 5.1-13) and now are contributing a lot.
1.6. [For a considerations of tithing *vs* free-will offerings see: *Appendix J – Tithing vs Free-Will Offerings*.]

2. What lessons can we derive from this section?
2.1. There is a difference between tithes and free-will offerings; a difference between what God requires of us and what we can give as an act of worship. Both please him, but free-will offerings are an additional means by which we can show our love for God.
2.2. Generous contributions are necessary to revive or restore the work of the Lord after periods of decline.
2.3. Those in leadership positions in the Church must not use their positions for personal gain (1 Tim 3.3; 1 Pt 5.2). Rather, like Nehemiah, they should set an example of generosity in the work of God.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

Settled Country (Neh 7.73a)

1. What settlement of the towns of Judah is Nehemiah referring to? Compare with Ezra 2.70.
   1.1. Note: Nethinim in NKJV is translated "temple servants" in the NIV. Literally "those who are donated" from "gifts." The NKJV follows the LXX and the Vulgate and transliterates the passage and does not translate it.
      1.1.1. Identified by some as the Gibeonites who tricked Joshua (Josh 9.1-27). When their ruse was discovered it was decreed (Josh 9.27) that they serve as wood cutters and water carriers for the community and altar. Others identified them as the remnant of the Canaanites appointed by Solomon (1 Ki 9.20, 21; Ezra 2.58). Others view them as the descendants of the captives taken at the close of the war against the Midianites. 320 Midianite captives (one out of every fifty) were given to the Levites, and 32 to the priests (Numbers 31.40, 42, 47). They may have been from all three groups.
      1.1.2. Ezra 8.20 mentions them as being assistants to the Levites. The Mishnah indicates that they could marry priests, Levites, or Israelites. This indicates that they had been assimilated into Israel by the time of Nehemiah and were no longer recognizable as a distinct ethnic group.
      1.1.3. Ezra noted that there were few servants for the Temple. He arranged for a fresh supply to come from Casiphia (Ezra 8.17, 20).
      1.1.4. At the time of Ezra/Nehemiah they were free from taxes (Ezra 7.24).
      1.1.5. It appears that when they were on duty in Jerusalem they had special quarters in the Ophel district near the Temple (Neh 3.26, 31; Neh 11.21) since they also lived in towns beyond Jerusalem (Ezra 2.70; Neh 7.73).
      1.1.6. They were responsible for maintenance and cleaning of the temple, cooking, and transporting water and wood.
   1.2. Nehemiah 7.73a could refer to either the settlement at the time of Zerubbabel and Joshua or the settlement at the time of Nehemiah about 90 years latter.
      1.2.1. Most people might interpret this part of the verse as referring to the period 90 years before; because it is essentially identical to the passage in Ezra (the only difference of note is the reversal of the order of the singers and gatekeepers).
      1.2.2. They would argue that at the time of Nehemiah the people were already settled in the Towns of Judah and he was selecting people from these outlying settlements (Neh 11.1) to live in the rebuilt Jerusalem.
      1.2.3. However, there is reference in Neh 7.73b to settlement, and the use of the 7th month places this account in 444/445 BC at the time of Nehemiah and the reading of the law. Ezra 3.1 refers to 537 BC.
      1.2.4. It could be the case that 73a refers to a *re*settlement of Judah as the result of the (unrecorded) census at Nehemiah's time (Neh 7.4). It is from these people that Nehemiah took his census that is never recorded.
   1.3. Either Nehemiah's account from his own day resumes in Neh 7.73b or it resumes earlier. It is possible, as pointed out earlier (when we considered verses 70-72, *Special Contribution*) that it resumes as early as verse 70, and Nehemiah uses the structure of the older account to tie into his own day.
   1.4. Assuming that 73b is from the time of Nehemiah, what does this settlement of the towns refer to? Possibly:
      1.4.1. After completing the great project of rebuilding the wall, the people returned to their own towns.
      1.4.2. After the census, Nehemiah reallocated lands according to the ancestral tribes.
   1.5. Consistent with what we learned in Nehemiah 7.1-3, Nehemiah moved quickly to establish order to ensure the viability of the city and its hinterland. He re-instated a community rhythm, based on God's laws. Life resumed a routine once the extraordinary project had been completed.

2. What lessons can we derive from this (partial) verse?
   2.1. It is important to move quickly into a 'maintenance' mode after the completion of a great project so that the people do not experience a 'let-down' and will stay involved in the work.
   2.2. A basic requirement for a functioning community is the rhythm of daily life.
   2.3. Only after Nehemiah had established the community disciplines, and had re-populated Jerusalem, did he send the people home.

Declared Precepts (Neh 7.73b-8.18)

© James R. Hughes, 2006

Reading (Neh 7.73b-8.8) – Intellectual Response to the Word

Place (Neh 7.73b-8.1)

1. When did these events occur? (Neh 7.73b; Neh 8.2)
   1.1. First day of the 7th month (Tishri/Ethanim): October 8, 444/445 BC.
      1.1.1. Compare 6.15, 25th Elul (6th month): October 2, 444/445 BC.
      1.1.2. The exactness of the dates reminds us that we are dealing with the only history-grounded religion. It is very important to remember that when the Bible presents accounts of God's dealings with creation, starting with Genesis 1.1, it does so from a factually historical perspective. Compare for example Luke 2.1-3.
      1.1.3. 7th month on religious/sacred calendar, 1st on the civil.
      1.1.4. The events recorded about the establishment of order and polity and the census of chapter 7 took six days, after the time the wall was completed.
   1.2. During the autumn (early rains begin), the time for plowing.
   1.3. Feasts during the seventh month:
      1.3.1. Trumpets, 1st (Lev 23.23-25; Num 29.1-6), New Year's Day (Rosh Hashanah) on the civil calendar. A day of joy and thanksgiving (for the blessings of the past harvest), on a day of rest, commemorated with trumpet blasts and sacrifices. Traditional liturgy commemorated the binding of Isaac (see, Genesis 22.1-24). In the synagogue service the *shofar*, a wind instrument made of ram's horn, was used to represent the horn of the animal sacrificed in Isaac's stead, is blown.
      1.3.2. Day of Atonement, 10th (Lev 16.1-34; Lev 23.26-32; Num 29.7-11; Rom 3.24-26; Heb 9.7; Heb 10.3, 19-22). A day of rest, fasting, and sacrifices to atone for the sins of the priests and the people. Also a purification of the holy places (e.g., Tabernacle).
      1.3.3. [Note both Trumpets and the Day of Atonement were sabbaths, days of rest (Lev 23.24, 32□). These references to other sabbaths that are not the weekly (one-day-in-seven) Sabbath, help provide an explanation for the reference to sabbath in Colossians 2.16 (the use of the 'new moon celebration' helps to define how to interpret the passage). Therefore in Colossians 2.17 Paul refers to them as shadows.]
      1.3.4. Tabernacles (Booths)/Ingathering, 15-21st (Ex 23.16; Lev 23.33-36, 39-44; Num 29.12-34; Dt 16.13-15; Zech 14.16-19; Jn 7.2, 37). A week of celebration. Living in booths reminded the people of their journey from Egypt to Canaan. The feast was a thanksgiving festival primarily to thank God for the bounty of the Promised Land.
   1.4. After everyone had settled in their towns.
   1.5. These events recall the previous work under Joshua and Zerubbabel (Ezra 3.1-6) when the reconstruction of the altar was undertaken and the offering of sacrifices restored. Nehemiah is undoubtedly aware of the symmetry and symbols associated with their current activities, about 90 years later.

2. Who are the senior civil and religious leaders in Judea at this time? (Neh 8.1, 9)
   2.1. Ezra and Nehemiah were contemporaries (note also Neh 12.33, 36).
   2.2. What was Ezra's primary purpose for being in Jerusalem?
      2.2.1. To teach God's Law and to ensure that it was administered correctly (Ezra 7.6, 10-12, 14, 25-26).
   2.3. Why is Ezra not mentioned earlier in the account, e.g., when the enemies tried to get Nehemiah to go into the temple (Neh 5.10-13)?
      2.3.1. This account (Neh 8.1-18) is the first reference to Ezra teaching the law since his arrival in 458 BC.
      2.3.2. It is not clear what he was doing during the preceding 14-year period. It is possible that he was not in Jerusalem. He may have led a contingent of captives to Jerusalem and then returned to Babylon for a period of time. There is evidence that Nehemiah did this (Neh 5.14; Neh 13.6).
      2.3.3. However, it is more likely that Ezra was reading and teaching the law during this time so that the people were tuned to its regular exposition. It is possible that during the building of the wall he had had to put aside the regular exposition of the Scriptures and thus after the 52-day interlude the people were eager to resume the study of the Law (Neh 8.1, 2).
      2.3.4. But since it is not stated what he was doing, we must trust that the Holy Spirit selected the material for inclusion in Scripture that will best be of value for building up the Church. The Bible is not a history book, and does not have to record all the events, or even all the key events, from a particular period. It records historical narrative, but with the purpose of progressive revelation about God's redemptive purposes. This reminds us that whenever we read the Bible we should

© James R. Hughes, 2006

always be thinking in terms of the redemptive message that is being communicated in what is recorded.

2.3.5. To this point, Nehemiah was focused on the reconstruction of the city. Now that he has begun his program of reconstruction of the community (*Public Piety*, *Public Polity*, *Police Protection*), he can now re-introduce the regular discipline of instruction in the Word.

2.3.5.1. Nehemiah appointed Ezra to teach the law.

2.3.5.2. Until this point Nehemiah has been the focal point of the community reconstruction, and has been leading in everything.

2.3.5.3. But when it came to teaching the Law he called on a better qualified man. He did not try to do an expert's job (James 3.1). This simple example reminds of the importance of filling the office of Elder (Pastor/Teacher) with those who are properly educated and qualified; especially with those who are qualified to teach (1 Tim 3.2; 1 Tim 5.17; 2 Tim 2.2, 24).

2.3.5.4. Ezra, the priest, was especially gifted by God as a priest and scribe to be an expounder of the law (Dt 17.8-11; 2 Chron 15.3).

2.4. We see here the Church and the State working together for the advance of God's kingdom. In the rebuilding of the Temple (e.g., Hag 1.12; Zech 4.14) we see a similar co-operation.

3. What did all the people do? (Neh 8.1)

3.1. Assembled. They came together as one man, with one purpose in the square before the Water Gate.

3.1.1. The Water Gate was located in the SE corner of the city over-looking the Kidron Valley, near the Pool of Siloam (at the time of Jesus).

3.1.2. This square must have been larger than the court of the temple, or they would probably have used it instead.

3.1.2.1. This means that it was at least the area of six football fields.

3.1.2.2. The space may have been normally used by merchants, since squares for commercial use were often located near city gates (e.g., 2 Chron 32.6).

3.1.2.3. It may also have been a larger space at this time, than in the past, or than it would be later, because of the destruction of Jerusalem. It is possible that this area had been wasted under Nebuchadnezzar, and the remains of the buildings had been used in the reconstruction of the city wall.

3.1.3. Was this assembly spontaneous?

3.1.3.1. Probably not, since a platform was built for the occasion (Neh 8.4).

3.1.3.2. It is probable that Nehemiah had appointed the day for the assembly when he had sent the people home and that they were now returning for the feasts of the month.

3.2. Told Ezra to bring out the book of the Law of Moses

3.2.1. This seems to indicate a desire on the part of the people to hear from God.

3.2.2. It may be that after the arrival of Ezra, about 14 years before, he began to teach the people consistently and they had become responsive to the word of God. When he had arrived, the spiritual condition of the people seemed to be at a low point (Ezra 9.1-4; Ezra 10.2, 10).

3.2.3. It is also possible that during the construction of the wall, the regular instruction had been suspended (except on the Sabbath) and the people were now eager to have it reinstated.

3.2.4. From where did he bring the book?

3.2.4.1. Probably from the Temple. A master copy of the scrolls was kept in a vault in the Temple.

3.2.4.2. Also a copy of the Book of Deuteronomy was kept beside the Ark (Dt 31.24-26). But it is unlikely that that copy was brought out for reading as the Priest was only to go into the inner sanctuary once per year. Ezra would not have been able to bring out that copy.

Pentateuch (Neh 8.1-6)

1. What book did the people ask Ezra to bring out? (Neh 8.1, 2)

1.1. Book of the Law of Moses.

1.2. What specifically was this book?

1.2.1. It may have been the entire Pentateuch, the five books of Moses. In the Hebrew scriptures it is called the "writings/book of the Law of Moses".

1.2.2. It may have been the book of Deuteronomy (Dt 28.58-61).

1.2.2.1. Notice in Deuteronomy 28.61 that the book of Deuteronomy is specifically referred to as the Book of the Law (also in Dt 29.21; Dt 30.10; Dt 31.26).

© James R. Hughes, 2006

1.2.2.2. The book of Deuteronomy is the covenant treaty document between God, the Great King, and his nation of priest-kings (Israel/Church).

2. Who was in the assembly? (Neh 8.2, 3)
   2.1. Men and women and all who were able to understand.
   2.2. Who does this include?
      2.2.1. Children.
      2.2.2. How old? What 'able to understand' means we are not told. It may be that there was a degree of discretion in how old the children were. But children can understand more than we at times give them credit for, and they can understand at an earlier age than we may think, therefore it probably included children as young as three years of age.
   2.3. Does this teach us anything about attendance at the worship services?
      2.3.1. The concept of a separate church service for children may be inappropriate.
      2.3.2. By derivation from the example, we can suggest that it is a good practice when we include the children in the public assembly of God's people for worship.
      2.3.3. Of course, this passage is historical, and not directive. However, it is wise that we consider the example of not only the Apostles but also that of godly men such as Ezra.
      2.3.4. In addition we have a directive in Deuteronomy 31.12.
   2.4. In Exodus 23.17 the men of the Israelite community are to appear together for the festivals, including the Feast of Tabernacles/Ingathering (Ex 23.14-17). We note in this account in Nehemiah 8.1-18 that their entire families were in attendance. We may be seeing a shift in the way worship was conducted. In the earliest forms it was dominated by males as covenant heads. In the Synagogue, women were in attendance (as noted by the presence of seating areas for women). In the NT we see an emphasis on inclusiveness (Mt 14.21; Mt 15.38; Gal 3.28; Mt 19.13-15).
   2.5. Note that the comment about who was included was repeated twice. It seems to be an important message that all were in attendance. God is making certain that we don't miss it (compare, Gen 41.32).

3. What did Ezra do with the Book of the Law? Why? (3)
   3.1. He read from it publicly.
   3.2. Why did he read it in this way?
      3.2.1. It was commanded by the LORD to be read by Israel every seven years [at minimum] (Dt 31.10-13). Notice that the reference is to the Feast of Tabernacles (Dt 31.10), which we noted was one of the festivals at the time Ezra read the Law.
      3.2.2. God wants his word read out loud, publicly (1 Tim 4.13).
   3.3. The Church has emphasized reading the Bible completely through in a public manner.
      3.3.1. It was the practice of the Jews to read through the OT on a regular basis. (2 Ki 23.2; Lk 4.16-21; Acts 13.15; Acts 15.21)
      3.3.2. The early church and the church of the middle ages seem to have followed this same practice.
      3.3.3. The Puritans believed that the Bible should be read from the pulpit. For example:

      ***The Directory for the Public Worship of God*—Of Public Reading of the Holy Scriptures**

      "READING of the word in the congregation, being part of the public worship of God, (wherein we acknowledge our dependence upon him, and subjection to him,) and one mean sanctified by him for the edifying of his people, is to be performed by the pastors and teachers. All the canonical books of the Old and New Testament (but none of those which are commonly called Apocrypha) shall be publicly read in the vulgar tongue, out of the best allowed translation, distinctly, that all may hear and understand. How large a portion shall be read at once, is left to the wisdom of the minister; but it is convenient, that ordinarily one chapter of each Testament be read at every meeting; and sometimes more, where the chapters be short, or the coherence of matter requires it. It is requisite that all the canonical books be read over in order, that the people may be better acquainted with the whole body of the scriptures; and ordinarily, where the reading in either Testament ends on one Lord's day, it is to begin the next. We commend also the more frequent reading of such scriptures as he that reads shall think best for edification of his hearers, as the book of Psalms, and such like. …"

4. What lessons can we derive from Ezra's reading of the Law?
   4.1. The book of the law is not to be confined to scholarly studies. It is not an academic book for faculties of English or seminaries; it is to be read in the congregation of the people of God.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

4.2. Since we now have printed Bibles does this mean we should no longer read it in a public manner? It is not sufficient or proper to say that in the past, few people could read or that there were few copies of the Bible available and that is why it was to be read publicly. God intended for his word to be read out-loud. It is designed for oral reading, and is very effective and powerful when read well, out loud.
4.3. Not only is the Bible to be brought before the congregation and read to them it is also to be read to the nation.
4.4. The Bible is to be read to the people in their own language [not a scholarly or 'sacred' language].
4.5. It is important for us to make the Bible (and the Ten Commandments in particular) visible in the civic arena through the regular reading of it. A significant factor in the weakness of the Church is the way it ignores the entire Bible and particularly the Law of God today.
4.6. We need to consider if we should have a systematic program of reading the Bible from our pulpits.
4.7. We need to consider ways in which the Bible can be read on radio and TV. You can find the Bible read online at: http://www.audio-bible.com (KJV), http://www.ibs.org/niv/audio.php (NIV), http://www.gnpcb.org/esv/options/ (ESV).

5. How long did the reading/study of the law continue? (Neh 8.3)
5.1. From dawn to noon, for five or six hours.
5.2. Was this continuous reading? Apparently not, since there was instruction (Neh 8.7) and prayer (Neh 8.6).
***The Directory for the Public Worship of God*—Of Public Reading of the Holy Scriptures.**
"When the minister who reads shall judge it necessary to expound any part of what is read, let it not be done until the whole chapter or psalm be ended; and regard is always to be had unto the time, that neither preaching, nor other ordinances be straitened, or rendered tedious. Which rule is to be observed in all other public performances."
5.3. Possibly they conducted a worship service along the lines of a synagogue worship service (reading, preaching, prayer). See the notes on 8.7, 8 with reference to the Synagogue.
5.4. Notice that the people listened attentively. We have trouble listening to a 40-45 minute explanation of the scriptures.
5.5. Today we are saturated with Bibles yet there is less public reading and personal study of the Bible than at any time since the end of the Middle Ages when Bibles were not widely available. There are many Bibles and translations available, many Bible study guides and aids, yet the levels of Biblical understanding are at an all time low since 1500.
5.6. What can we do to increase our appetite for the word of God?
5.6.1. Pray
5.6.2. Conduct disciplined reading
5.6.3. Read various translations
5.6.4. Follow daily study guides
5.6.5. Attend Bible studies, particularly those that work through entire books (instead of topical studies)
5.6.6. Encourage good exegetical preaching.

6. What were the particulars associated with the reading of the Law? (Neh 8.3-6)
6.1. Ezra stood on a high wooden platform (Neh 8.4).
6.1.1. So that he could be seen (Neh 8.5).
6.1.2. This may be where we get the concept of pulpits. Until recent times pulpits in churches were much higher than what we find in modern church buildings.
6.1.3. Jesus also stood in the synagogue when he read the Word (Lk 4.16, 20).
6.1.4. In contrast, Jesus and the Rabbis sat when they taught (e.g., Mt 5.1; Mk 4.1; Mk 9.35; Lk 5.3; Jn 8.2).
6.1.5. Was Ezra's standing to read the word a sign of reverence for the word?
6.1.5.1. There may be some people who would argue that the person reading the word must stand. However we must be careful not to make a particular example into a rule.
6.1.5.2. If we make it a rule that the reader must stand when the Bible is read in a public forum, then we must also insist that the people stand while it is being read (Neh 8.5).
6.1.5.3. Conversely we should then also make it a rule that the preacher/teacher should sit during the preaching since we have examples of this in the NT.
6.1.6. The platform was specifically constructed for the occasion. This appears to indicate that this type of gathering for reading of the Law was not a regular or ordinary event. It may have been the seven-year reading that God required (Dt 31.10). As we noted previously this reading of Law was associated with the feasts).

© James R. Hughes, 2006

6.2. There were 13 others with him; 6 on the right, 7 on the left.
  6.2.1. Who were these men? Possibly priests, scribes, leaders, elders (compare, Neh 9.4 in NASV).
  6.2.2. Are they mentioned elsewhere in the account? Bible? Possibly: e.g., a) priests Malkijah Neh 10.3; Meshullam (1) Neh 10.7 Hilkiah Neh 11.11; Neh 12.7; Zechariah Neh 12.35, 41; b) leaders Anaiah Neh 10.22; Maaseiah Neh 10.25; Hashum Neh 10.18; Meshullam (2) Neh 10.20; c) Levites Pedaiah Neh 13.13.
  6.2.3. The difficulty of determining who they were is compounded by the use of only their personal names (without surnames) and the re-use of those names elsewhere (e.g., Meshullam Neh 10.7, 20).
  6.2.4. How did they differ from those mentioned in v 7? Possibly the ones with him on the platform were not all Levites.
  6.2.5. Why were they on the platform with him? It is possible that they took turns reading. But would they all have been priests or at least Levites? Or they may have been there to add authority and significance (a show of force, much like those who signed the agreement [Chapter 10], much like when a president is sworn into office there will be a large number of 5-star generals, senators, etc. with him on the platform.
  6.2.6. Is there any significance to the number [14 including Ezra]. Probably not. Although it does indicate that the platform was truly a platform and not a small pulpit.
6.3. When Ezra opened the book the people stood.
  6.3.1. Why? It seems to indicate that they had a reverence for the word of God. In previous days it was customary to stand up in the presence of those who were elders (Lev 19.32). This idea may have been derived from a practice such at that displayed by the people when Ezra opened the scroll.
  6.3.2. Did they stand during the entire reading of the Law? It is possible. However, as they stood, Ezra seems to have entered into a prayer of praise, then after saying 'amen', they got down on their knees and rested their foreheads on the ground. The passage does not actually state that they remained standing during the reading of the Law.
  6.3.3. In Eastern Orthodox traditions it is customary for the people to stand not only during the reading but through much, or all, of the service.
  6.3.4. What might be a comparable show of relevance for us? Clearly the example shows us how godly people worshiped God. In addition we believe that Ezra had special authority with respect to worship (e.g., assembling the OT canon, including the Psalter; and possibly establishing the Synagogue form of worship). But given that it is an historical record and not a section giving us commands about worship we can only say that it provides an example of how we can honour God during worship. It would be inappropriate to say that this is the *only* way to honour God, even though standing is a way of honouring God. And we should not to make it a rule.
6.4. As Ezra praised the LORD, the great God, all the people lifted their hands and said "Amen! Amen!"
  6.4.1. There are two actions specifically: lifting the hands and saying 'amen' audibly. (1 Tim 2.8; Dt 27.15-26; 1 Chron 16.36; Rev 7.11, 12).
  6.4.2. There was prayer before the reading of the Bible. One example of Puritan worship liturgy consisted of the following:
    1. A Confession of sins
    2. A Prayer for pardon
    3. A metrical Psalm
    4. A Prayer for illumination
    5. Scripture Reading
    6. Sermon
    7. (Baptisms and publications of Banns)
    8. Long Prayer and Lord's Prayer
    9. Apostles' Creed (recited by the Minister)
    10. A metrical Psalm
    11. The Blessing (Aaronic or Apostolic)[6]
  6.4.3. These actions accompany the praise/prayer of Ezra. It may have been a prayer of consecration before he began to read. It showed a particular assent on the part of the people to the reading of the Law.

[6] Davis Horton, *The Worship of the English Puritans*, p. 119.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

6.4.4. These two activities are practices that one often finds in Pentecostal churches or among certain ethnic congregations. Traditional Reformed Presbyterians do not seem to participate in these activities much.

6.4.5. The Puritans took this verse (6) along with 1 Corinthians 14.14-16 as the basis for being against responsive prayer in liturgy. They declared the necessity for the pastor to pray audibly with the people to follow silently and declare their asset with a vocal *amen*.[7] A sermon preached in London (October 1682) at a Morning Exercise [practice sessions where the least experienced to the most experienced would preach on a passage for about ½ an hour each] of the Nonconformist Ministers has as its subject: 'Whether it be expedient and how the Congregation may say *Amen* in public Worship.' The text was Nehemiah 8.6. The doctrine taught was 'that it is a lawful and laudable practice for people at the conclusion of public prayer or praising God to pronounce an *Amen*.' Then follows a series of seven definitions and uses of *Amen*.[8]

6.4.6. What can we learn from this historical example at the time of Ezra/Nehemiah?

6.4.6.1. Should we raise our hands, and say 'amen' audibly' when the Pastor prays?

6.4.6.2. At minimum, we must be very careful not to frown on the use of raised hands and audible *amens* because we are not used to them.

6.4.6.3. We must not be influenced by peer pressure in either direction to accept or reject this kind of visible affirmation of God's praise. Otherwise we can have emotions without content or constrain legitimate shows of emotion.

6.4.6.4. The key seems to be: we need to be relaxed enough to permit variations in worship within the normative standard that God has defined. [As we look at the next format for worship we see again, the importance of permitting freedom within form; variety within standards; diversity within unity.]

6.5. The people bowed down and worshipped the LORD with their faces to the ground.

6.5.1. Does this mean that we should pray with our faces to the ground?

6.5.2. [See: *Appendix K – Prayer Posture*, for more detail on this subject.]

6.6. The people applied themselves to the reading of the Book of the Law:

6.6.1. They listened attentively with understanding (3).

6.6.2. The period of the reading/study, from daybreak to noon (3), indicates that they worked hard to understand and learn.

6.6.3. What is another period in Biblical history when the people applied themselves in the same way? Apostolic Church in Jerusalem (Acts 2.42).

7. What can we learn from this example of reading the Law that could enhance our attentiveness, reverence and understanding during worship?

7.1. A variety of readers helps to vary the listening experience for the hearers.

7.2. Prayer before reading the word helps us be put into the right mental frame to receive instruction from God.

7.3. It takes work to learn how to listen to the word of God as it is read. We must listen attentively.

Proclamation (Neh 8.7, 8)

1. What accompanied the reading of the Law? (Neh 8.7, 8)

1.1. Instruction related to what was being read.

2. Who instructed the people?

2.1. Thirteen Levites. They are a different group of men than those in verse 4.

2.1.1. Jeshua [9.4, 5; **10.9**; a very common name, see: Neh 12.1, 24], Bani [9.4, 5; **10.13, 14;** *11.22*], Sherebiah [9.4, 5; **10.12**; 12.8, 24], Jamin [none], Akkub [*11.19*; 12.25], Shabbethai [*11.16*], Hodiah [9.5; **10.10, 13, 18**], Maaseiah [**10.25**; *11.5*, *7*; 12.41, 42], Kelita [**10.10**], Azariah [**10.2**; 12.33], Jozabad [*11.16*], Hanan **[10.10, 22, 26**; 13.13], Pelaiah [**10.10**].

2.1.2. These may be the same ones mentioned in chapter 9 who were witnesses to the confession of sins: Jeshua [9.4, 5], Bani [9.4, 5], Sherebiah [9.4, 5], Hadiah [9.5].

2.1.3. These may be the same ones who sealed the binding agreement [chapter 10]: Jeshua [**10.9**], Bani [**10.13, 14]**, Sherebiah [**10.12**], Hodiah [**10.10, 13, 18**], Maaseiah [**10.25**], Kelita [**10.10**], Azariah [**10.2**], Hanan **[10.10, 22, 26**], Pelaiah [**10.10**].

---

[7] Davis Horton, *The Worship of the English Puritans*, p. 52.

[8] Davis Horton, *The Worship of the English Puritans*, pp. 199-200.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

2.1.4. These may have been among the new inhabitants of Jerusalem [chapter 11]: Bani [*11.22*], Akkub [*11.19*], Shabbethai [*11.16*], Maaseiah [*11.5, 7*], Jozabad [*11.16*].
2.1.5. These may be those who were called to serve as Priests and Levites at the time of Nehemiah [chapter 12]: Jeshua [12.24, 25], Sherebiah [12.24], Akkub [12.25], Maaseiah [12.41, 42], Azariah [12.33]. [From 12.22-25 appear to be from the time of Nehemiah.]
2.1.6. Hanan may be mentioned in Nehemiah 13.13 as trustworthy.
2.1.7. Jamin is not mentioned anywhere else in Nehemiah (although he might have gone by a different name elsewhere).
2.2. They were not on the platform but apparently were among the people.
2.3. Is there any significance to the number 13? Probably not. Although it does seem that it is more than a coincidence that there were 13 on the platform with Ezra and 13 in the crowd.
2.4. The Levites were charged with teaching the law (Lev 10.8-11; 2 Chron 15.3; 2 Chron 17.7-9; Mal 2.7).

3. How did the Levites instruct the large crowd?
3.1. If the list of names (Nehemiah 7.5-65) and the head-count includes only men, then we need also to account for the women and children, and the entire company could have been 250,000 people. This is a larger number of people than most would at first consider. However it is likely that the number was closer to 30,000 – 50,000 (Neh 7.66-67).
3.2. Nehemiah did not explain exactly how Ezra and the Levites read and explained the word.
3.3. Some suggest that the reading was in Hebrew, but many of the people (because they had lived among the nations) only knew Aramaic and it was necessary for the reading to be paraphrased by the teachers.
3.3.1. If this were the case, then this could represent the beginning of the Aramaic Targum (translation). See NIV footnote on Neh 8.8.
3.3.2. There may have been translation into Aramaic, however, this would not have required the number of Levites mentioned. Ezra could just as easily have read the Hebrew and then immediately paraphrased it in Aramaic (as was done later in Jewish history). This would have been similar to what some priests/preachers did in the Middle Ages: after they had read from the Latin, they would paraphrase it into the vernacular of the particular people they were reading to.
3.4. It may be that the thirteen Levites read and taught groups scattered throughout the square. Much like Sunday School classes were spread throughout the large sanctuary in a Korean Presbyterian church in Seoul. Or they moved among the people explaining to smaller groups.
3.5. Possibly Ezra, or one of the other readers, read a section of the Book of the Law in the presence of all the people (Neh 8.3). Then, at appropriate points in the text the Levites re-read (Neh 8.8) the passage, a smaller portion at a time and explained it.

4. What may this religious exercise be the pre-cursor of? Of what does this historical example seem to give us a model?
4.1. This example may give us a warrant for small-groups (smaller groups) within the context of the larger assembly.
4.2. It also seems to show that a shared teaching ministry within an assembly is a valid concept.
4.2.1. "Where there are more ministers in a congregation than one, and they of different gifts, each may more especially apply himself to doctrine or exhortation, according to the gift wherein he most excelleth, and as they shall agree between themselves."[9]
4.3. This religious exercise occurred on a sabbath, and likely *the* Sabbath.
4.3.1. Periodically the feast of Trumpets would fall on the Sabbath day.
4.3.2. The work of building the wall ended on the 25th Elul (Oct. 2, 444/445 BC), since they worked on that day it was not a Sabbath.
4.3.3. Somewhere during the next 7 days until the 1st day 7th month (Tishri/Ethanim; Oct. 8, 444/445 BC) a Sabbath must have occurred.
4.3.4. If they finished the work on a Sunday (Oct. 2nd), the following Saturday (Oct. 8th) would have been the Sabbath. It is therefore possible, and quite likely, that the Sabbath and the Feast of Trumpets fell on the same day; and thus Nehemiah called a special assembly in Jerusalem
4.4. It may provide a model for regular Sabbath worship; with prayer, worship, and preaching/teaching, tithing/offerings (Neh 8.12), and probably Psalm singing (Neh 8.12); since it seems that singing accompanied celebrations with great joy (Ps 9.2; Ps 68.4; Ps 71.23; Ps 81.1; Ps 95.1; Is 30.29).

[9] "Of the Preaching of the Word" (Westminster Standards: *The Directory for the Public Worship of God*).

© James R. Hughes, 2006

4.5. This religious exercise was performed in an assembly not directly associated with the temple and therefore did not follow the ceremonial forms. It is therefore possible, that we have in this example, the beginnings of the formal Synagogue,[10] and thus the precursor of the NT church worship assembly.
4.5.1. Neither the OT nor the NT give us any explicit information about the origin of the Synagogue. Extra-biblical sources such as the Apocrypha do not provide any help. But apparently the assembly in synagogues was an old practice (Acts 15.21).
4.5.2. Psalm 74.8 may provide the only direct OT reference. But these places of worship may have been illegitimate.
4.5.3. Some also see 2 Ki 4.23; Ezekiel 11.16; Ezk 14.1 as references to a synagogue-like meeting.
4.5.4. The general opinion of many historians is that during the Captivity, when worship in Jerusalem at the Temple was not possible, the Jews assembled for worship, instruction, prayer, and psalm singing. If this was the case, then the actual origin of the Synagogues pre-dated Ezra. It may be that Ezra, acting in the prophetic office, is the one who provided the formalizing structure for the new form of worship.
4.5.5. A question is raised, however, by this activity: by whose authority did they organize this form of worship? If it was formally created under the authority of Ezra and Nehemiah we have an example of a new worship order being established by the combined religious and civil authorities (much as Moses/Aaron and David/Solomon/Priests did in previous eras, and the new king/priest [a second Melchizedek] did in the NT era). We know that Jesus by his practice endorsed Synagogue worship.

5. What form did the Levites' instruction take?
5.1. Was it reading, translating or teaching/preaching?
5.2. The reading may have been in repetitive form (i.e., lined-out), like an amplification system
5.3. Some people argue that all the instructors did was translate the reading from Hebrew into Aramaic (a Targum) akin to moving from Chaucer's English to modern English. They argue that the readers did not add any explanation to the reading. This view was held as part of Rabbinic tradition. There is no evidence that the people were unable to understand Hebrew (the OT books of this time were written in Hebrew) even though they may have also understood Aramaic. Nor is there any evidence of translations into Aramaic at the time of Nehemiah. The earliest such manuscripts (from Qumran) are about 300 years after the time of Nehemiah. Others argue that the instructors provided expository teaching (or preaching) around the Word that was read.
5.4. All uses of the Hebrew word are: explained (expounded), make clear/decide [Lev 24.12; Num 15.34], divided, translated [Ezra 4.18].
5.5. A comparison of translations *doesn't* help to clarify the matter.
5.5.1. NKJV: [7] Also … the Levites, helped the people to understand the Law; and the people stood in their place. [8] So they read distinctly from the book, in the Law of God; and they gave the sense, and helped them to understand the reading.[11]
RSV: [7] Also … the Levites, helped the people to understand the law, while the people remained in their places. [8] And they read from the book, from the law of God, clearly; and they gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading.[12]
NRSV: [7] Also … the Levites, helped the people to understand the law, while the people remained in their places. [8] So they read from the book, from the law of God, with *interpretation*. They gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading.[13]
NASB: [7] Also … *and* the Levites, explained the law to the people while the people remained in their place. [8] And they read from the book, from the law of God, *translating [explaining]* to give the sense so that they understood the reading.[14]
NIV: [7] The Levites … instructed the people in the Law while the people were standing there. [8] They read from the Book of the Law of God, *making it clear [translating] and giving the meaning* so that the people could understand what was being read.[15]
5.5.2. Neh 8.9 tells us that they were "instructing" (NIV) or they "taught" (NKJV). This statement from the immediate context tells us how to interpret the preceding.

---

[10] Bannerman, D. Douglas. *The Scripture Doctrine of the Church, Historically and Exegetically Considered*, (Edinburgh, Scotland: T&T Clark, 1887), pp 124-125.
11*The Holy Bible, New King James Version*, (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc.) 1982.
12*The Revised Standard Version*, (New York: Oxford University Press, Inc.) 1973, 1977.
13*The New Revised Standard Version*, (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers) 1989.
14*The New American Standard Bible*, (La Habra, California: The Lockman Foundation) 1977.
15*The New International Version*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House) 1984.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

5.5.3. When they gave the meaning, or gave the sense of what was read, it appears that they explained what was meant, and how it applied to those hearing the word. Compare Acts 8.30, 31.

5.6. [See: *Appendix L – Preaching and Teaching*, for more detail on this subject.]

Rejoicing (Neh 8.9-12) – Emotional Response to the Word

1. What do you notice about verses 9 and 10 that is different from all other verses (except Neh 1.1) that we have studied to this point in the book?
   1.1. Compare verses Neh 1.1, 4; Neh 2.11; etc.
   1.2. Nehemiah is referred to in the third person (as he is in Neh 10.1; Neh 12.26, 47).
   1.3. When we looked at Nehemiah 1.1 we considered the significance of Nehemiah's opening statements and his role as the author of the account (refer to the notes on that verse for more information).

2. Was the account in Nehemiah 8.1-18 written by someone other than Nehemiah?
   2.1. Notice that the other likely author; Ezra, who probably compiled 1&2 Chronicles, edited the Psalter into the form we know it, and assembled the bulk of the OT canon, is also mentioned in the third person in this passage (Neh 8.1).
   2.2. It is possible that a third person recorded the events in chapter and later in Nehemiah; and Ezra included them in the compiled book.
   2.3. However, it is just as likely that the author referred to himself in the third person.
      2.3.1. Note for example how John refers to himself in this way, although not by name (Jn 13.23; Jn 19.26; Jn 20.2; Jn 21.7, 20). We know he was the author from Jn 21.24.
      2.3.2. Also Matthew refers to himself by name (Mt 9.9, 10; Mt 10.3).
      2.3.3. Sometimes the Psalm writers refer to themselves in the third person (e.g., Ps 19.11, 13).

3. What were the people's emotional responses to the word? (Neh 8.9-12)
   3.1. The result of hearing the Book of the Law read and hearing teaching from it, elicited two emotional responses:
      3.1.1. The people wept and grieved. (9, 10, 11).
      3.1.2. The people rejoiced. (10, 12).

4. Why did the people weep and grieve? (9)
   4.1. A response to the words of the Law that showed them the reality of their sin and their failure to live up to its standards. (Rom 3.20; Rom 7.7-12)
      4.1.1. The Law (the Bible) speaks against disobedience with curses, judgment and death for all who do not follow it (from beginning to end: Gen 2.17; Rev 22.18, 19).
   4.2. What specific parts of the Book of Deuteronomy (or the Pentateuch) would have struck them and caused them to be weak and grieve?
      4.2.1. The people's rebellion (Dt 1.26-46)
      4.2.2. Ten Commandments (Dt 5.1-21)
      4.2.3. Curses (Dt 27.9-26; Dt 28.15-68).

5. What did the weeping show?
   5.1. Weeping expressed the sorrow the people felt for failing to observe the Law's demands.
   5.2. Even God, in Jesus, weeps because of sin, and its consequences (Jn 11.35). Sin grieves God.
   5.3. Weeping over sin is rare, especially today. People don't see the seriousness of God's Law and of their sin. People don't see how important it is to obey God. There is a great casualness toward God and his Law.

6. What does their reaction to the Law tell us about these people?
   6.1. They took the Bible literally and seriously.
      6.1.1. A big problem in the Church today is that people do not take the Bible seriously. They interpret away, and rationalize, the commands of God. (e.g., Amy Grant's divorce and re-marriage to Vince Gill.)
   6.2. What will it take to reach our generation? Yes, the Law should be preached in the Church. But there must be a balance. A continual diet of the Law will discourage people. That is why Nehemiah encourages the people (Neh 8.10-12)—there is an antidote to the curses. What is needed is to find a way to get the Law in front of the *world*. The world is doing everything it can to excise and expunge God's commands.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

6.3. The source of spiritual revival is first found in an understanding of sin.
6.3.1. This is especially important among those who claim to be God's people. We won't see revival in society until the Church takes the law of God seriously: Sabbath keeping, control of covetousness in a materialistic age, tongue control, and love and forgiveness.

7. Why did the people rejoice? (10-12)
7.1. They were instructed to stop weeping, grieving and mourning by Nehemiah and the others (9). How many times did it take Nehemiah (and the others) to get them to stop weeping and grieving? Three times:
7.1.1. "do not mourn or weep" (9)
7.1.2. "do not grieve/sorrow" (10)
7.1.3. "do not grieve" (11).
7.2. Nehemiah assured them that the "Joy of the LORD was their strength." (10)
7.2.1. Examples: Dt 16.15 (blessing of God in harvest); Ps 19.8 (precepts); Ps 28.7 (strength and shield); Ps 92.4 (works of his hands); Ps 95.1 (Rock of our salvation); Ps 126.2, 3 (great things done for us); Is 35.10 and Is 51.11 (being ransomed); Is 51.3 (comfort); Jer 33.11 (his enduring love/mercy).
7.2.2. "We shall count it to have been a successful morning if the people of God are made to rejoice in the Lord, and especially if those who have been bowed down and burdened in soul shall receive the oil of joy for mourning. It is no mean thing to comfort the Lord's mourners; it is a work specially dear to the Spirit of God, and, therefore, not to be lightly esteemed. Holy sorrow is precious before God, and is no bar to godly joy. Let it be carefully noted … that abounding mourning is no reason why there should not speedily be seen an equally abundant joy…"[16]
7.2.3. "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." (Mt 5.4)
7.3. The Levites calmed them by telling them that the day was sacred. (11)
7.3.1. Why should this day be a day in which they should not grieve?
7.3.2. Because it was sacred … it had been set apart by God for his own purposes.
7.3.2.1. It was a sabbath (Lev 23.24) and should be a day of rest and rejoicing because it pointed to the resurrection (Ps 118.24).
7.3.2.2. It was the New Year; it may have been intended for the day to be a day of holy rejoicing. The Book of the Law (Dt 16.13-15) told them that they were to be joyful at the feast of Tabernacles which followed. It may have been the same for the feast of Trumpets.
7.3.2.3. Note Psalm 81.16 appears to be a Psalm for the New Year (3). It speaks of joy (1, 6) and of feasting (10, 16).
7.4. Because of what had been explained to them, they now understood the words that had been read (made known) to them (12).
7.4.1. What did they understand?
7.4.1.1. The point seems to be that they understood the Gospel.
7.4.1.2. They understood that there was forgiveness of sins
7.4.2. The more we study the Bible and attend the teaching of it, the more we will come to understand what it tells us about the work of God. Then, the more assured, and full of conviction and joy we should become.
7.4.3. Discouragement and depression over the guilt of sin come from ignorance. When we understand what God has done in Christ for us, we no longer will grieve, but will rejoice.
7.4.4. The basis for Christian joy is to believe and understand what God says in His Word and act upon it. True joy is not a feeling that will pass, but the result of believing and understanding what God says in his word.

8. What specific parts of Deuteronomy (or the Pentateuch) would have given them hope?
8.1. God's providential care of his people (e.g., Dt 1.19-3.20).
8.2. God's fulfillment of his promises (e.g., Dt 9.1-6).
8.3. The feasts and sacrifices that pointed to redemption (e.g., Dt 16.1-17).
8.4. The blessings for obedience (e.g., Dt 28.1-14).

9. What lessons can we derive from this section?

[16] "The Joy of the Lord, the Strength of His People" (Sermon 1027, Lord's Day Morning, December 31st, [it may be that he preached it as a New Year's message; this would have been appropriate given that these verses in Nehemiah are dealing with the New Year's feast] 1871, by C. H. Spurgeon, At the Metropolitan Tabernacle, Newington.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

9.1. We are to rejoice in the salvation that we have been provided. Christians, of all people, should be the happiest people in the world because they are filled with peace from/with God.
  9.1.1. We must repent of sin, and be done with it.
  9.1.2. A morbid introspectiveness on their sins and weaknesses is not what Christians should have.
  9.1.3. Rather, we are to center our lives on Jesus and his strength,. (Eccl 3.4).
  9.1.4. There is "[n]othing intrinsically magical or necessarily spiritual about tears (people cry, some very easily, at all sorts of things)." J. I. Packer.
  9.1.5. Christians are not to be a somber and morbid people; they are to rejoice in their deliverance from sin.
9.2. This religious exercise occurred on a sabbath, and possibly *the* Sabbath.
  9.2.1. It may provide a model for regular Sunday worship; with prayer, and preaching/teaching, tithing/offerings (Neh 8.12), and probably Psalm singing (Neh 8.12).
  9.2.2. This religious exercise was performed in an assembly not directly associated with the temple's ceremonial form of worship. Therefore, we may have in this example the beginnings of the formal Synagogue, and thus the precursor of the NT church worship assembly.
  9.2.3. The Sabbath is to be a day of rejoicing, not a gloomy day. To the extent that we are caught-up with the things of the world, to that extent we will find the Sabbath a burden. To the extent that we understand what Christ has done for us on the cross and the rest in salvation and peace he has procured for us, we will rejoice on the Sabbath.
9.3. Preaching is to 'destroy' *and* 'build up.'
  9.3.1. The order of presentation is to be: Law *and* then Gospel.
    9.3.1.1. Destroy our dependence on self, and self righteousness.
    9.3.1.2. Build us up in dependence on Christ and the faith that he has given us to believe.
  9.3.2. Both must be present. We must never leave one downcast. There is always hope in the Bible. Consider how often the Psalmist seems to be in a depressed state but he always comes out of his depression: e.g., Ps 42.1-11 followed by Ps 43.4; Ps 73.17.
  9.3.3. Notice that the solution is found in the sanctuary of God, among God's people; not in private introspection. Private introspection is for examination and identification of sin, involvement in group-based worship is for encouragement (1 Thess 5.11; Heb 10.25).
    9.3.3.1. A big mistake that many people make is to stay away from the worship assembly of God's people when they are depressed or mourning.

Fellowship Feast (Neh 8.10-12)

1. What did Nehemiah tell the people to do? (Neh 8.10, 12)
  1.1. Go have a feast; enjoy good/choice (symbolized by fat) food and sweet drinks.
  1.2. Send portions of their food to those who have nothing prepared.

2. Why did he tell them to go have a feast?
  2.1. Practically, it is hard to be sad and despondent when enjoying good food. Often people eat when depressed because it makes them feel better.
  2.2. Feasting is a *sign of fellowship*, hospitality, covenantal relationship, and joy in God's kingdom: Gen 18.5-8 (entertaining the three visitors); Ex 12.17 (Passover); Lev 23.34 (Feast of Tabernacles); Num 28.26-31 (Feast of Weeks); Acts 2.42-47 (fellowship of the early church).
  2.3. Feasting was a reminder that God provided for the people an abundance of good things, and was a *promise of **material** blessing*, i.e., a promise that he would provide even more ("for the joy of the LORD is your strength") (Dt 16.13-15).
  2.4. Feasting in the Church/worship context *points to a **spiritual** blessing* (a feast) in Christ (Ps 36.5-9; Mt 8.11 [many will come and sit at the feast of Abraham]; Mt 22.2-14; Lk 14.15-24 [the Kingdom of Heaven is like a wedding banquet]; Lk 15.23, 24 [rejoicing over the return of the lost son]; Jn 6.25-40 [35; Jesus the Bread of Life]).
  2.5. The feast associated with the festival of Trumpets reminded the people of God that their God had *promised an **eternal** kingdom* in which he would provide for their every need (Is 25.6-8 [feast in Heaven where there will be no more tears]; Rev 19.9 [wedding supper of the lamb]).

3. How can we, in the NT context, participate in the same experiences?
  3.1. The Lord's Supper is a feast of fellowship (communion), covenantal relationship (cup of the New covenant [1 Cor 11.25]) as well as memorial (remembrance [1 Cor 11.26]).

© James R. Hughes, 2006

3.2. Fellowship lunches which we hold together, are a sign of God's goodness to us and a promise of more blessings from his hand (material, spiritual, eternal).

4. What does the reference "send portions/some to those who have/for whom nothing (is) prepared" mean? (10, 12)
   4.1. It appears that they were to give portions of their prepared food to others who had assembled and who did not have any food with them.
   4.2. Why were they unprepared?
      4.2.1. We are not told the reason in this passage. However, we can probably discern the reason by comparing Scripture with Scripture.
   4.3. Who were the people that should have received the food handouts; the ones with whom the people were to share?
      4.3.1. Would Nehemiah have suggested sharing food with rich people who were too cheap to purchase their own or too stingy to have their slaves/servants prepare their food? Unlikely; especially after he had rebuked the rich a few weeks before for having cheated and oppressed their poorer neighbours (Neh 5.6-8).
      4.3.2. Would Nehemiah have suggested sharing food with able-bodied men or women who were able to prepare their own but were too lazy to do so? Unlikely; especially after he had been so careful to have everyone (of all the social and economic classes) over the last two months contribute actively to the work of building the city wall (Neh 3.1-32).
      4.3.3. Would Nehemiah have suggested sharing food with those who were truly poor, and so poor that they were not able to provide food for the feast? Likely; since he has already shown that he will defend the poor against those who are oppressing them (Neh 5.1-5).
      4.3.4. Possibly he includes those who for some reason forgot to bring food with them when they traveled to Jerusalem. Although, negligence may fall into the same category as being able-bodied and lazy.
      4.3.5. So we can probably narrow down the recipients of the food to those who were the deserving poor.
   4.4. What other passages of Scripture can we use to help us determine who might be the recipients of the food handouts?
      4.4.1. Dt 16.9-12: Feast of Weeks to include the aliens, fatherless, widows.
      4.4.2. Lk 14.13, 14: when giving a banquet invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind.
      4.4.3. Acts 2.42-47; Acts 4.32-35: sharing their possessions with those who had need, in the context of religious fellowship.
      4.4.4. [See: *Appendix M – The Church's Response to Poverty*, for more detail on this subject.]

5. Why are we to practice this kind of hospitality?
   5.1. Job 31.16-20: Caring for the fatherless and widows, by providing food, is evidence of righteous faith.
   5.2. Dt 14.28, 29; Dt 26.12, 13: The tithe was for the Levites (who had no allotment or inheritance of their own) and the aliens, the fatherless and the widows. We owe a portion of our worldly goods to God as a tribute; this shows that we are subjects of the great King.
   5.3. Is 58.6-10; James 1.27: True religion is to care for the widows and orphans. Our response to God's generosity in forgiving us, is a responsive giving on our part.
   5.4. Mt 14.14-21: Jesus fed the crowd who had come to him from the food that was brought by others. Jesus set an example for us.
   5.5. Rom 12.13; 1 Tim 3.2; 1 Tim 5.10; Titus 1.8; Heb 13.2: Being hospitable is expected of those who have been translated from the kingdom of darkness into the Kingdom of Light. God's goodness to us should make us generous to others
   5.6. 1 Cor 11.20 (To wait for others, or eat at home.) When we share with others it teaches us not to debauch, and when we share with others in the fellowship it teaches us not to be selfish. This helps us to remember that all the good things we have are from the LORD (our strength; 10) and not something we have brought about by our own selves.

Responding (Neh 8.13-18) – Volitional Response to the Word

Elders' Discovery (Neh 8.13-15)

1. What day was it?
   1.1. The second day of the month, the day after the Feast. Oct 9, 444/445 BC.
   1.2. One week after the completion of the wall.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

2. What happened on the day after the Feast of Trumpets? (13)
   2.1. The heads of families, the priests and the Levites gathered around Ezra the Scribe.
      2.1.1. It appears that the elders of the community came together. It was equivalent to a town council meeting, a parliament, or a General Assembly in a Presbyterian denomination.
      2.1.2. Only a portion of the men attended. Not all the men and not the women or children.
   2.2. What were the rest of the people doing?
      2.2.1. They probably went home and to their places of work. Economic requirements called them to other duties.
      2.2.2. This was not the (a) Sabbath, so they were not all expected to be in attendance at the assembly, even though the Law of God was being read.
   2.3. Ezra read from the Law.

3. What did Ezra read? (13)
   3.1. We are told that it was the Law.
   3.2. In this case the term is not "Book of the Law" as it is in verses 2 and 18. Rather the term used is just "Law."
   3.3. What did Ezra actually read? What hint do we have in verse 14 that tells us what portion of the Pentateuch they included in their reading?
      3.3.1. Probably the other books of the Pentateuch; specifically Leviticus which gives most of the civil statutes for the governance of the community.
      3.3.2. They read about the requirements for the Feast of Tabernacles. Although the feast is mentioned in Deuteronomy (Dt 16.13-15), Exodus and Numbers, the instructions about living in booths (made of tree branches) is found only in Leviticus (Lev 23.33-36a, 39-43 [42, 43]).

4. Why did Ezra read the Law to the Elders? (13)
   4.1. In this case he was laying the foundation for civil society. He had completed the reconstruction of the city, and was now undertaking the reconstruction of the community. He was reminding the rulers of the community that their judgments (and local statutes) were to be consistent with the Law of God.
   4.2. [See: *Appendix H – The Law of God, the Standard for National Laws*, for more detail on this subject.]

5. What was the attitude of the elders as they came to Ezra and the reading of the Law on the day after the feast of Trumpets? (13, 15)
   5.1. They gave attention to the words of the Law so that they could understand it.
   5.2. They didn't come to argue with Ezra; they came to learn more about what God's Word said to them.
   5.3. They accepted the Law of God and did not judge it. What hints do we have of this?
      5.3.1. They were attentive, not argumentative.
      5.3.2. What was written (as it was written) was sufficient for them. Two simple messages sum up the Christian religion: "Jesus loves me." and "The Bible tells me so." This 'naïve' view of reality is viewed with skepticism by many. It is called 'fundamentalism' with scorn. But simple faith like that of child (Mk 10.15) is what we need.
      5.3.3. We are to take God at his word, literally, without questioning (James 4.11).
      5.3.4. Many in the Church today are unwilling to take God at his word and find 1,001 ways of explaining away his revelation and obedience to his commands, for example: Six days of creation, Flood, genealogies in Genesis; Ten Commandments; Role of women in Church, etc.

6. What did they find in the Law that they were to do? (14-15)
   6.1. To live in booths during the Feast of Tabernacles (feast of 7th month). [We will consider the reason for this when we look at verse 17.]
   6.2. That the Feast and its accompanying requirements (e.g., the living in booths) were to be proclaimed throughout the Israelite territory. God's word is to be applied to all men.
   6.3. They were to collect branches out of which they were to make their booths.
   6.4. This 'discovery' reminds us that when we search the scriptures we will find things written in them which we may have forgotten, or need to be reminded of, and which are required of us in order to show our love for God and our neighbours.
      6.4.1. Thus the importance of regular reading of God's word using a daily disciplined approach.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

Energetic Dispersion (Neh 8.15-17a)

1. What kinds of branches did the people bring back? (15, 16)
   1.1. They brought back branches of olive trees, wild olive or oil trees, myrtles, palms, and shade/leafy trees.
      1.1.1. Olive: Grows well in ME. Often the only tree of any size. Can grow for many centuries. Symbol of peace (Gen 8.11) since it takes about 30 years to mature and needs a peaceful environment. Berries of the olive ripen in early fall and are usually harvested in November.
      1.1.2. Oil trees: Possibly wild olives, but some feel that this cannot be because the wild olive tree did not give very much wood (1 Ki 6.23, 31-33) because it was so gnarly. Possibly a resinous tree.
      1.1.3. Trees that gave strong branches and lots of leaves for making booths.

2. From where did they get the branches? (15)
   2.1. From around Jerusalem. But there were not many trees in the Jerusalem area, and those that were (e.g., on Mt. of Olives) were largely olive and fig trees.
   2.2. From a practical consideration the large crowd (anywhere from 30,000-250,000 [see the consideration of Neh 7.66-67]) would have had a pretty devastating effect on the vegetation around Jerusalem (probably at least 120,000 branches, possibly a half-million) if they all went out into the immediate vicinity to collect the branches. Since they were not to destroy trees (Dt 20.19, 20), they must have gone further a-field than just the immediate vicinity around Jerusalem. [Note: the booths may have been symbolical. There may have been only a few branches over tents. But even with a few branches in each booth, they would have required a lot of branches for the entire assembly.]
   2.3. The passage seems to give us a hint: "throughout their towns" and "the hill country." They probably lived in the towns in the Judean hills (such as where Bethlehem is located).
   2.4. They had two weeks between the Feast of Trumpets and the Feast of Tabernacles, so they would have gone home and brought the branches back, from the trees around their towns, with them when they returned to Jerusalem.

3. What was the purpose of the branches? (15-17)
   3.1. To build booths: the Feast of Booths or Feast of Tabernacles consisted of living in a temporary, portable dwelling.

4. What was the purpose of building the booths? (15-17)
   4.1. To remind them of their dwelling in tents (temporary dwellings) in the wilderness during the 40 years of wandering. (Lev 23.43)
   4.2. A key purpose of the Feast of Tabernacles was to remind them that they were pilgrims in this life and this was not their eternal abode. [More below.]

5. Where did they set up the booths?
   5.1. In the square near the Water Gate
      5.1.1. [From more information on this square, see the notes on Neh 8.1.]
      5.1.2. It is the square where the reading of the law (Neh 8.1-8) occurred at the Feast of Trumpets.
   5.2. In the square near the Gate of Ephraim
      5.2.1. Located in the NW corner of the city. This would have been the gate that led to the road that went to the territory of Ephraim (NW of Jerusalem)
      5.2.2. Apparently this gate also went under the name Jeshanah Gate (Neh 3.6).
   5.3. In the (outer) temple courts. Inner and outer courts: 1 Ki 6.36 with 7.12; two courts: 2 Ki 21.5; 2 Ki 23.12; 2 Chron 4.9; 2 Chron 33.5; different courts at the time of Jesus (Gentiles, women, inner). The preceding verses apply to the temple built by Solomon. But we know that the 2nd temple, built at the time of Zerubbabel, was similar as it served as the foundation for the temple that Herod worked on for many years and was the Temple that Jesus visited.
   5.4. They filled all the open spaces in the city with their booths.
   5.5. They lived outside in their booths. Even those who normally lived in Jerusalem would have lived in the booths for the week of the Feast.

Earnest Devotion (Neh 8.17b, 18)

1. What Feast were they celebrating? Why?
   1.1. The Feast of Tabernacles or Booths, Ingathering (Sukkoth). (Lev 23.34-44; Dt 16.13-15).
      1.1.1. It seems that the people went to their homes for about two weeks and re-assembled on the 15th to celebrate the feast.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

1.1.2. Nothing is said about their celebration of the Day of Atonement that occurred on the 10th day of the month.

1.2. This feast was one of the three major pilgrimage feasts (along with Passover and Weeks), where everyone assembled in Jerusalem (Ex 23.16; Dt 16.16-17).

1.3. It was celebrated from the 15th-22nd of Tishri (Ethanim), the 7th month (Sept-Oct) of the religious calendar (1st month of the civil calendar; [the 1st of the month was the civil New Year's Day; the 10th of the month was the Day of Atonement])

1.4. Sacrifices were offered on the seven days of the feast (Num 29.13-39).

1.5. On the 8th day one bull and one ram and seven lambs were offered (Num 29.36).

1.6. It appears to be the feast mentioned in John 7.2, 10.

1.7. It appears that it was celebrated at the dedication of Solomon's Temple (1 Ki 8.2, 65; 2 Chron 5.3; 2 Chron 7.8-10).

1.8. What was the purpose of this feast/festival?

1.8.1. It was a thanksgiving festival to celebrate the Fall harvest (ingathering) (Dt 16.14).

1.8.2. It was the feast at which the law was to be read every seven years (Dt 31.10-11).

1.8.3. A distinctive ritual of the feast was the requirement to 'live in booths' to remember God's protection of Israel during the wilderness wanderings (Lev 23.39-43; Rev 7.15).

1.8.4. The booths also reminded them that they were pilgrims on earth and their permanent dwelling was not in the city of man but in the City of God; this world was not their eternal abode.

2. What does this feast/festival point to?

2.1. Points to Christ's 'tabernacling' among us (Jn 1.14); with no permanent abode (Mt 8.20).

2.2. As the last great festival of the religious calendar, it points to the gathering up of the year's worship. [Purim was added after the time of Moses. But it may not have been a specifically religious festival, since it was not held at the Temple.]

2.3. From this we get a promise of the in-gathering of the Gentile nations (Zech 14.16; Jn 4.35-38 [Fall of 27 AD]) as a great outpouring of worship to God. Jonathan Edwards refers to the Feast of Tabernacles as a sign for the spiritual feast of souls in a revival.[17] It is interesting that this feast was celebrated at the time of a revival (Neh 9.1-38).

2.4. Note: the ceremony of water-pouring, associated with this festival in post-exilic times (not prescribed in the Pentateuch) recognized that God gave the rain that was necessary to produce a fruitful harvest (see, Zech 14.17). In this ceremony a procession, lead by a priest, went down to the pool of Siloam. There he filled a golden pitcher with water, and returned to pour out the water beside the altar. At that point the choir began to sing the Great Hallel (Psalms 113-118).

2.4.1. Jesus refers to himself as the living water Jn 4.10-14 (Fall of 27 AD); Jn 7.2-53 (esp. 7.37, 38; Fall of 29 AD). In particular, he does this on the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles.

2.4.2. However, we should not by this understand that Jesus is comparing himself to the water poured out at the Feast. He did not endorse this non-Biblical, non-prescribed, human addition to the ceremony of the Feast. Rather, Jesus rejected the traditions of men (e.g., ritual hand-washings Mt 15.2-9).

2.4.3. His reference to water is more likely to the water form the rock (Ex 17.6; Num 20.7-11), just as the reference to bread in John 6.1-15 points back to the manna and the reference to light in Jn 8.12 probably refers to the pillar of fire (Ex 13.21-22).

2.4.4. Jesus is not endorsing the water pouring tradition; he is condemning it by referring to water that was not wasted but actually quenched thirst like that provided at Meribah. He chose to make this statement on the 8th and final day of the Feast because it was on this day that no water was poured out by the priests. He was telling them that they have just wasted their time in presenting false worship with a water pouring ceremony, when what they should have been doing was coming to the one, himself, who alone can give them the true life-giving water. What he does here is similar to the way God challenges the false god's of the Egyptians with the plagues, and challenges Baal, the god of the storm, by having the Jews cross the Jordan at peak flood-time.

3. How does this feast/festival apply to us? Should we celebrate it? Or a festival like it?

3.1. The outward ceremonial system is wrapped up in Christ and is now realized (replaced) with mostly spiritual equivalents.

3.2. The 8th day of the Feast of Tabernacles is equivalent to the 8th day of the NT economy, which is the Lord's Day.

[17] Jonathan Edwards, "Some Thoughts Concerning the Present Revival of Religion in New England," *Works*, Vol 1, Banner of Truth, (p. 383).

© James R. Hughes, 2006

3.3. Jesus arose on the 8th day and since then the Christian Sabbath has been the spiritual equivalent for the Feast of Tabernacles.
3.4. Since the feast/festival points to the truth that Israel's life rested upon redemption by God, we see in the Sabbath the ultimate act of forgiveness of sin in Christ's conquering death.
3.5. We celebrate the spiritual equivalent of the Feast of Tabernacles every Sunday when we assemble to worship. We are reminded in the sanctuary worship that we:
3.5.1. Are part of God's kingdom;
3.5.2. Are pilgrims passing through this life, with a temporary abode on earth;
3.5.3. Have many blessings to be thankful for; and
3.5.4. Are part of the great assembly of God that includes both Jews and Gentiles.

4. How was the feast/festival celebrated? (17b)
4.1. With great joy. "And their joy was very great."
4.2. What does Nehemiah mean when he says that the Israelites had: "not done so" (NKJV) "not celebrated it like this" (NIV)?
4.2.1. Clearly it does not mean that they had not celebrated it at all. Since there are other examples in the OT of its celebration at the time of Solomon (2 Chron 8.12, 13), (undoubtedly) at the time of Hezekiah (2 Chron 31.3; compare Dt 16.16), at the reconstruction of the Temple (Ezra 3.4), and at the time of the return from exile (Zech 14.16).
4.2.2. A literal translation is: "not they did from the days of Joshua son of Nun thus (like this), sons of Israel, until the day the this." So a good translation is: "they had not celebrated it from the days of Joshua son of Nun like this, the sons of Israel, until that day" or, as the NIV translation has it: "From the days of Joshua son of Nun until that day, the Israelites had not celebrated it like this."
4.3. We are not to understand this to mean that at previous times (e.g., at the times of Solomon, Hezekiah, Josiah, Ezra) there were fewer people, less rejoicing, less true faith, or less of a spiritual attitude. Nehemiah appears to be using hyperbole to emphasize the degree of joy in their celebration. It is a form of expression similar to what we find in 2 Chronicles 30.26; 2 Chron 35.18. We can see an example of this each time we sing Psalms (Ps 33.3; Ps 40.3; Ps 96.1; Ps 98.1; Ps 144.9; Ps 149.1) that are not new compositions to us. Rather our approach to worship is fresh and full of enthusiastic joy, and is therefore 'new' every time we sing.

5. What was the reason for their celebration of the feast with very great joy and gladness?
5.1. The goodness of God in protecting them during the construction of the wall (God's providence).
5.2. The hope of protection and provision as symbolized by his provision in their wilderness wanderings (God's mercy).
5.3. The provision from God in the recent harvest (God's love).
5.4. The hope of (temporal and spiritual) harvests to come (God's promises).
5.5. Their understanding of their guilt and release from guilt through the gospel that they had encountered in their study of Deuteronomy (God's provision of salvation from sin).

6. What did Ezra do every day during the feast? Why? (18)
6.1. He read from the Book of the Law, because it was prescribed by God (Dt 31.10-13).
6.2. The leaders of the people were serious about their commitment to God and were aware that it is important to keep God's Law before the people.
6.3. The people were serious about their position in God's Covenant Community and were aware that God had given them direction for their faith and life in his Word.

7. What does their action teach us?
7.1. If these people, who had an incomplete revelation from God, took regular reading of the Law seriously, shouldn't we take regular reading of the complete Word of God seriously?
7.2. They were instructed to read it every day during a feast, once every seven years. We have a fuller grace. We should read it more often. We considered previously, when we studied verse 8, the importance of reading the Word. We cannot emphasize enough how important it is for anyone who wants to be seriously in touch with God's will for his life to be involved in a regular (daily) reading program of God's Word. One aspect of this regular program should be to read the Bible through in a year. However, there may be other ways of reading it consistently which involve more, or less, reading and more contemplation/meditation on the Word guided by prayer.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

7.3. The more we understand of the Scriptures, the more we will come to see their depth, and the more we will want to understand them better.

8. What days and associated actions are mentioned? (18)
   8.1. Eight days (compare: Lev 23.34-42; Num 29.12-39).
   8.2. What did they do on the 8th day?
      8.2.1. They held a solemn/sacred assembly in accordance with the regulation.
      8.2.2. We are not told specifically what they did on that day. But there was undoubtedly more reading of the Word, instruction form the Word, prayer, singing of Psalms, sacrifices, and likely a fast (Num 29.35-39; Jn 7.37-39).
   8.3. What did they do on the day *after* the 8th day? (18)
      8.3.1. Apparently they did not end the Feast of Tabernacles as was usually done, but stayed for an additional day of fasting and prayer.
      8.3.2. Wouldn't it be amazing if we could get together and pray even for a few minutes longer than normal, let alone for an extra whole day!

9. What else do we notice about their attitude from this verse? (18)
   9.1. "in accordance with the regulation"
   9.2. We see that they took God's commands seriously (Num 29.40).
   9.3. Their obedience in ceremonial matters should teach us to take his Law seriously, not only in ceremonial matters, but in all areas of life. If the Church was serious about God's Law it would have much more of an impact on the world.

Debased Penitents (Neh 9.1-37)

Repentance (Neh 9.1-5a)

1. What were the actions that they performed on this particular day?
   1.1. Fasted, wore sackcloth, and put dust/ashes on their heads (1)
   1.2. Separated themselves from foreigners (2).
   1.3. Confessed their sins (2, 3) for a quarter of a day (3 hours).
   1.4. Worshiped God (3) along with their confession of sin.
   1.5. Listened to the reading of the Law (3) for a quarter of the day (3 hours).
   1.6. Were led in prayer by the Levites (5-37).

2. What may have been happening on this day? What term might be used to describe the assembly on this day?
   2.1. A revival meeting.

Place (Neh 9.1)

1. When did these event occur?
   1.1. On the 24th day of the (same) month (Tishri, Ethanim [the 1st of the month was the civil New Year's Day; the 7th month in the religious calendar]); Oct 31st 444/445 BC.
      1.1.1. As we noted when we began considering chapter 8, the exactness of the dates in the book of Nehemiah remind us that we are dealing with history, and with the *only* history-grounded religion.
   1.2. The wall was finished on Oct 2nd 444/445 BC. So, the events occurring in chapter 9 are about a month after the completion of the re-building of the wall around Jerusalem. The people have just completed celebrating a series of feasts/festivals:
      1.2.1. The Feast of Trumpets was held on the 1st day of the month; Oct 8th.
      1.2.2. The Day of Atonement on the 10th day of the month; Oct 17th; but the observance of it is not mentioned in Nehemiah.
      1.2.3. The Feast of Tabernacles was held from the 15th-22nd; Oct 22nd-29th.

2. Who came together for this additional assembly?
   2.1. The Israelites. This implies that the assembly consisted of a wider group than had assembled on the day after the Feast of Trumpets (Neh 8.13); that assembly included only the leaders (heads of families and priests).

© James R. Hughes, 2006

2.2. It is not clear why this assembly was held when they had had already a series of assemblies, including the Day of Atonement for the confession of sin. The annual cycle of religious festivals ended with the thanksgiving festival (the Feast of Trumpets) and would not start again until Passover.

3. What may we surmise is the reason this assembly was held?
   3.1. Apparently this assembly was not called by Ezra/Nehemiah as they had called the Feast of Tabernacles. This may imply that it was held at the encouragement of the people, rather than of their leaders.
   3.2. Possibly the people had been so moved by the Feast of Tabernacles that they felt compelled to continue their worship and study; and confess their sins. Given the lack of commitment to spiritual matters in the Church today it is hard to imagine this kind of interest in attending a worship assembly. We have trouble getting people to come out to the stated services, let alone having them ask for more than the regularly scheduled services!

4. Where did they assemble?
   4.1. The stairs (lit., 'ascent').
   4.2. These may have led to some part of the temple complex, or it may be a reference to the stairs leading to the platform mentioned in Nehemiah 8.4. If it was the former, then they assembled in the courts of the temple. However, if the crowd was large, they probably met in the same square by the water gate as is mentioned in Nehemiah 8.1.

5. How long did they stand?
   5.1. Apparently for 6 hours (Neh 9.2, 3, 5); two quarter days (or half the 12 hours of light).
   5.2. Compare with 8.7.
   5.3. It appears that they varied the aspects of worship. There was reading followed by prayer. As they read the word they were furnished with matters for prayer.

Penitence (Neh 9.1-3)

1. What action did they take to show that they were truly penitent?
   1.1. They fasted, wore sackcloth, and put dust/ashes on their heads
   1.2. How are we to apply their example of fasting as part of confession and worship?
      1.2.1. Confession through prayer.
      1.2.2. Singing penitential Psalms.
      1.2.3. Private fasting as an act of worship.
   1.3. [For more detail, see: *Appendix N – Fasting* and *Appendix O – Repentance in Sackcloth and Ashes*]

2. Along with fasting, wearing sackcloth, and separating themselves from foreigners what did they do? (2-3)
   2.1. They confessed their sins.
   2.2. How much time did the people spend confessing their sin? (v 2, 3)
      2.2.1. A quarter of the day—3 hours.
   2.3. What was included in this confession?
      2.3.1. Their own sins and the wickedness of their fathers.

3. How did they confess their sins? What form did their confession take?
   3.1. Before we answer that question we need to consider what types of confession there could possibly be. What are the possible types? (These are not discrete, but rather, on a continuum.)
      3.1.1. *Private*: This is where a person confesses his sins to God in the privacy of his own heart and through private prayer. What kinds of sins might this include? Sins of the heart (e.g., hate, lust, envy) (Ps 32.5; Ps 38.18; Ps 51.1-6; Prov 28.13, 14).
      3.1.2. *Personal*: This is where a person confesses his sins to God and others. What kinds of sins might this include? Sins that hurt our family members, friends, neighbours, fellow believers, or work/school associates (e.g., lying, harsh words, fits of anger, stealing someone's possessions) (Num 5.5-7; James 5.16).
      3.1.3. *Public*: This is where a person confesses his personal sins to God, others, and the civic community or Church community. What kinds of sins might this include? Sins that hurt our nation or covenanted community (e.g., theft of money in public trust, adultery, perjury, idolatry) (Lev 5.1-4, 5; 1 Ki 8.35; Mt 3.6/Mk 1.5; Acts 19.17-19).
      3.1.4. *Pastoral*: This is where an elder in the Church leads us in prayers confessing the collective sins of our nation or covenanted community. What kinds of sins might this include? Sins that distance our

© James R. Hughes, 2006

nation or congregation/denomination/Church from God. (e.g., Sabbath breaking, unjust aggression in war, supporting abortion or other overt sins in our nation, faulty doctrinal positions, idolatry) (Lev 16.21; 1 Sam 7.2-6).

3.1.5. *Paternal*: This is where a leader (in church or nation) confesses the sins of the organization over which he *exercises authority*. This is similar to Pastoral confession, but it appears that this confession is offered on behalf of the organizational entity. (Ezra 10.1; Neh 1.5, 6; Dan 9.3, 4, 20 [note v 3: sackcloth and ashes]).

3.1.6. *Priestly*: This is where a person confesses his sins to a priest. We point this out because it is a form that would be included in the answer given by about 1/6th of earth's population. But we don't find this model in Scripture. The closest we come to support for this is in Matthew 3.6/Mark 1.5. However in these passages it is more likely that John told those coming to him to confess their sins to God and then he baptized them.

3.2. What kind of confession are the people engaged in, in Nehemiah 9.1-5?

3.2.1. It does not appear that what is being spoken of is one person confessing his personal sins to another person.

3.2.2. It seems that this type of confession may have been in the category of *pastoral*.

3.3. What in the chapter helps us understand the type of confessed of sins they were engaged in?

3.3.1. The fact that the Levites (Neh 9.4, 5) and probably Ezra specifically, led the people in public confession.

4. How do we apply this public confession of sin today?

4.1. There ought to be times of confession in our public worship of God lead by the pastor/elders when they lead the congregation in prayer.

4.2. We may have entire times set aside for prayers of confession, such as:

4.2.1. A prayer meeting evening.

4.2.2. A specially called day of confession. For example *The Directory for the Publick Worship of God*, in "AN APPENDIX, Touching Days and Places for Publick Worship", says: "Nevertheless, it is lawful and necessary, upon special emergent occasions, to separate a day or days for publick fasting or thanksgiving, as the several eminent and extraordinary dispensations of God's providence shall administer cause and opportunity to his people."

Partition (Neh 9.2)

1. What does the writer mean when he tells us that "[t]hose of Israelite descent had separated from foreigners"? (2)

1.1. Is Nehemiah referring to the events in Ezra 10.1-44; i.e., is he reflecting back on the time when they had previously separated from foreigners? Ezra 10.9-17.

1.1.1. Notice the location of these events (Neh 10.9); either in the temple courts or the square at the Water Gate (Neh 8.1; Neh 9.4).

1.1.2. What religious leader was present at the time of this separation from foreign wives who was also present at the public confession of sin on the 24th day of Tishri/Ethanim; Oct 31st 444/445 BC? Ezra was present at both events.

1.1.3. The events recorded in Ezra 10.1-44 probably occurred in December (rainy season) of 458 BC; ~14 years before the events in Nehemiah (Ezra began his journey from Babylon in April of 458).

1.2. Is Nehemiah referring to a second separation from foreign wives?

1.2.1. Had they fallen into the same sin again and married wives from the surrounding nations?

1.2.2. Were they re-enacting the events of 14 years before.

1.3. Is Nehemiah referring to a more *general* separation?

1.3.1. For example Nehemiah 10.28, 30, 31 speaks of a separation from the neighbouring people.

1.3.2. The separation in Ezra 10.1-44 apparently refers to foreign wives that they had brought with them from Babylon.

1.3.3. If this is a more general separation he is referring to, then it is one of generally removing themselves from dealings with Gentiles, except on a most cursory level.

1.3.4. It is possible that the separation practice of the Pharisees developed at this time. Although the Pharisees may not have formed into a distinct sect within Judaism at this time, the roots may have been laid at this time. The term Pharisee seems to have been borrowed from the Aramaic word for 'separated ones' which is equivalent to the Hebrew word for 'separated' (see, Dan 5.28 which has a close parallel). Although the term came to mean separation from everything that conveyed moral or ceremonial impurity, it could have started with the separation from Gentiles.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

1.4. Is Nehemiah referring to a more *specific* separation?
1.4.1. The context seems to apply to those who were entering into the covenant (Neh 9.38-10.39), and were likely all circumcised Jews.
1.4.2. In this case, it may be that the Jews actually moved to a separate area in the worship. This may be the time when the Court of the Gentiles first originated. [For more information on the multiple courts in the Temple, refer to the notes on Nehemiah 13.1-3.]

2. What are we to understand as the application of this separation from foreigners? (2)
2.1. Separation from foreigners can be traced back to the time of the Exodus (e.g., Ex 34.11-16; Dt 7.1-6).
2.2. What was the purpose of this separation? Notice the religious/spiritual context in Ex 34.1-35.
2.2.1. The point of the physical separation was so that the people of God would remain un-polluted from the religious exercises of the people around them.
2.2.2. [Syncretism has infected the Church in all ages. For example Gregory the great in the context of Augustine's mission to the Anglo-Saxons said: "I have decided after long deliberation about the English people, namely that the idol temples of that race should by no means be destroyed, but only the idols in them. Take holy water and sprinkle it in these shrines, build altars and place relics in them."]
2.2.3. It was to keep them from being tempted by idolatry.
2.2.4. It was also to symbolize that they were a people set apart, chosen, elected by God (Dt 14.2; Dt 28.9-11).
2.2.5. It symbolized, in general, that they were to be holy to the Lord and separate from sin (Ex 22.31; Eph 5.3; Col 3.12, 13).

3. How are we to apply this separation of holiness today?
3.1. Since there is no longer a separate nation belonging exclusively to God (i.e., since the Church consists of spiritual, not physical, Israel), the separation is not along national lines. Nor is it along physical lines such as circumcision, clothing, economic standing, ethnic background, or skin colour.
3.2. The separation is defined in spiritual terms; between those who profess faith in Jesus Christ and those who do not.
3.3. The separation is to be applied in marriage, fellowship in the Church, and close business relationships (1 Cor 7.39; 2 Cor 6.14-18; 1 Cor 5.11, 12).
3.4. This does not mean that we are not to associate with unbelievers in any way (1 Cor 5.9-12; 1 Cor 10.27).
3.5. The essential message of separation is that if we are covenanted to God (see, Neh 9.38ff) we are not to be covenanted (yoked) with sin, "for what do righteousness and wickedness have in common?"

Proclamation and Praise (Neh 9.3-5a)

1. What is meant by the reference to reading from the Book of the Law? (3)
1.1. We considered the meaning of 'Book of Law' when we considered Nehemiah 7.73b-8.8.

2. What did they do when worshiping the LORD their God? (3)
2.1. Since prayer is mentioned separately, it probably means that they sang Psalms.
2.2. There are a number of penitential Psalms that would have been useful for supporting their confession of sin. Examples: 32, 51, 106, 130, 139.
2.3. In addition there are Psalms that would have been useful for accompanying the reading of the Law. Examples: History: 78, 105, 106, 136; Law: 19, 119.
2.4. And, there are Psalms that would have been useful for accompanying the prayer recorded in Nehemiah 9.5-37. Examples: Creation: 8, 19; Conquest: 135, 136; Compassion: 57, 89, 91.
2.5. Note: the final version of the Psalter was probably being prepared at this time.
2.5.1. Ezra was probably the final editor of the Psalter.
2.5.2. Many of the Psalms would have been sung during the period of the captivity and during the return from exile. But there probably would have been some of the Psalms that had been misplaced for years or even generations. And, there were probably some new Psalms composed at this time, or a few years before, to round out the history of Israel and the experience of the people of God (e.g., Ps 126.1-6).
2.5.3. There would have been great excitement around the publication of the Psalter in the same way as there would have been excitement around the completion of the city wall. What better way is there to provide for corporate rejoicing than singing the Psalms? James 5.13 (the NKJV provides a better than the NIV or ESV, in this instance).

© James R. Hughes, 2006

2.5.4. In a way, the publication of the Psalter would have been the spiritual equivalent of the physical wall. What better way is there to provide corporate protection for God's people than to sing the Psalms? The Psalms educate in God's providence, strengthen and encourage the discouraged and weary, unite the congregation, thrill the soul and heart, and magnify the eternal and awesome Creator. They are a wall around the Church and God's people. The first breech in the wall of doctrinal security occurs when the Psalms are supplanted. The walls begin to crumble and pretty soon, the cannon balls of: 'little Bible reading'; hymnody, Arminianism, and evolution are able to get through. The saints then must flee to a city whose builder is God (Heb 11.10).

3. Who lead the activities of the revival assembly?
   3.1. Eleven different Levites are mentioned.
      3.1.1. Eight in v 4 [unique in v 4 Bunni, Kenani]
      3.1.2. Five may have been found in the book previously in v 5 (although there could have been multiple pairs of Levites with the same name; note Bani in v 4) [Jeshua, Bani, Kadmiel, Shebaniah, Sherebiah]
      3.1.3. Three additional ones are mentioned in v 5 [Hashabneiah, Hodiah, Pethahiah]).
      3.1.4. Some of these Levites were probably also mentioned in Neh 8.7 (e.g., Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Hodiah).
      3.1.5. Pethahiah may also be mentioned in Neh 11.24.

4. Why is it significant that these Levites are mentioned by name?
   4.1. Why does the Holy Spirit include these names as part of Scripture? Why should we care about a list of long-dead Levites?
   4.2. We are reminded that we are considering real events. The Bible presents historically accurate events. It is not intended to be a history book, but when it is recording history, it is accurate.
   4.3. We are reminded that God is keeping a record of his people, in his books in heaven (records of all things; Rev 20.12). All work done in God's Church is known to God.
   4.4. We are taught that God cares for each individual in his Church. Each person in God's household is given a name by God (Rev 2.17). If God names the stars (Ps 147.4) individually, how much more the saints? Although every individual true worshipper on that day is known to God, the officers in the Church were singled out. This does not mean that they were more important as individuals. But it does show:
      4.4.1. The role/office is important and the individual filling the role is to be honoured because of the role/office (Acts 23.1-5). This principle is often lost sight of today, and people do not like to give honour where honour is due (Mt 22.21; Rom 13.7). But, on the other hand the individual filling the role is not to assume the honour to himself, especially when first assuming the role. A pastor speaking in the pulpit fills a role and a judge in a court another. But when the pastor is attending a legal court session in a non-official capacity he is not to be afforded honour (e.g., he is not above the Law), nor is a judge who is a member of a congregation to be treated with deference because of his role in the courts (James 2.2-7). There is a serious problem when people let their roles/titles go to their heads.
      4.4.2. That God deals with the Church covenantally just as he does with families. The elders in the Church (in this case the Levites) represent the congregation of the people. When they are mentioned the implication is that all who are under their pastoral care are also included.

5. What did they tell the people to do?
   5.1. "Stand up and praise the LORD your God, who is from everlasting to everlasting."
   5.2. We noted that in Nehemiah's day the people showed respect for God by standing when his word was read (Neh 8.5) and, here, when prayer was offered. As we noted when we considered Nehemiah 8.5, we find in Scripture a number of different postures for prayer (including standing, sitting, kneeling, and bowing).
   5.3. It is appropriate to honour God by standing when we pray. But we must not extrapolate from the fact that it is a good thing to the idea that it is the only way to honour God. It is a logical and ethical mistake to draw such a conclusion. For illustration purposes: if milk is good for you, that doesn't mean that beans are not. You cannot draw that conclusion from the statement. So even though standing to pray is a good thing, it is not the only good or honourable way to pray.

6. Who actually lead or conducted the prayer?

© James R. Hughes, 2006

6.1. It may have been Ezra who led (see, Neh 8.6) the prayer. The prayer (Neh 9.5b-37) may have been spontaneous and recorded by a scribe present at the assembly or be a recorded summary of the topics of the prayer.
6.2. Alternatively, it is possible that it was a prayer composed for the occasion in advance and read as a prayer. It could also be that these are 'notes' that served as an outline to guide his prayer. The strong structural elements of the prayer point to a deliberate composition.
6.3. Since multiple leaders are mentioned it is most likely that they all participated. It could have been recited by the Levites, as:
6.3.1. Parts in turn (e.g., 1 Cor 14.31); each participating in one of two aspects of prayer: petition (4) and praise (5).
6.3.2. All together as a choir.
6.3.3. In eight smaller assemblies of the people spread throughout the meeting area (see, Neh 8.7).
6.4. A likely scenario is that it was composed in advance (by Ezra or Nehemiah), and given to the Levites—the elders—who officiated at the assembly, as an outline for the substance of the prayer they were to offer.
6.4.1. It is likely that we don't have recorded here, the full account of the specific prayers offered since the recorded prayer would only take a few minutes, not a major portion of a day (3).
6.4.2. It may have been that the Levites prayed throughout the assembly or each Levite took a turn at leading the assembly in prayer.

7. What should the reading of the Law (as in chapter 8) engender in us?
7.1. A humble spirit of contrition (i.e., what fasting symbolizes and strengthens) (1).
7.2. Repentance and confession (2).
7.3. A willingness to walk away from un-holy alliances (science, business, sports, entertainment, social relationships, political …) (2).
7.4. A desire to spend more time in the Word of God (Neh 8.18; Neh 9.3).
7.5. An eagerness and willingness to pray and praise (2, 3).
7.6. A revival, defined as: a) an act or instance of reviving; b) renewed attention or interest in something; c) a period of renewed religious interest; d) revitalization; e) to bring back to life, restore consciousness, activity.
7.7. [For more on revivals, see: *Appendix P – Revivals*]

Reflection (Neh 9.5b-37)

Structure

1. What are different ways we could structure of this prayer?
1.1. The material in Nehemiah 9.5b-10.39 appears to contain the components of the covenantal form used in the ancient Near East: preamble (Neh 9.5b-6), historical prologue (Neh 9.7-37), ratification of the covenant (Neh 9.38-10.29), and covenant stipulations (Neh 10.30-39).
1.2. Williamson's commentary[18] divides the prayer following an historical retrospective as follows: [19]

Neh 9:6	Creation
Neh 9:7-8	Abraham
Neh 9:9-11	Exodus
Neh 9:12-21	Wilderness period
Neh 9:22-31	The land

1.3. Blenkinsopp' commentary[20] breaks up the units in largely the same way:

Neh 9:6	Creation
Neh 9:7-8	Ancestors
Neh 9:9-11	Exodus
Neh 9:12-21	Wilderness

[18] H. G. M. Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*. Word Biblical Commentary 16 (Waco, TX: Word, 1985) p. 308.
[19] The following three outlines are from a paper entitled: *Nehemiah 9-10: Structure and Significance* by Tamara Cohn Eskenazi of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion (Los Angeles, CA).
[20] J. Blenkinsopp, *Ezra-Nehemiah*. Old Testament Library (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1988) 303-307.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

Neh 9:22-25	Conquest
Neh 9:26-31	Rebellion
Neh 9:32-37	Final Petition

1.4. Duggan[21] proposes the following (which he further divides into subunits):

A.	God and Israel throughout the past (Neh 9:6-31)			
		1.	Neh 9:6-8	YHWH's foundational activity
		2.	Neh 9:9-21	The wilderness period
		3.	Neh 9:22-31	The occupation and subsequent life in the land
B.	God and Israel in the present (Neh 9:32-37)			

1.5. Other ways that we could structure the prayer are as follows:

Structure Outline 1	**Structure Outline 2**	**Structure Outline 3**
Reflection (Neh 9.5b-31)	Adoration (Neh 9.5b-6)	Consecration (Neh 9.5b)
Request (Neh 9.32-37)	Appreciation (Neh 9.7-31)	Creation (Neh 9.6)
	Acknowledgement (Neh 9.32-35)	Covenant (Neh 9.7, 8)
	Appeal (Neh 9.36-37)	Control (Neh 9.9-12)
		Commands (Neh 9.13-14)
		Compassion (Neh 9.15-21)
		Conquest (Neh 9.22-25)
		Challenge (Neh 9.26-28)
		Captivity (Neh 9.29-31)
		Confession (Neh 9.32-35)
		Cry (Neh 9.36-37)

Similarities

1. What portions of Scripture are similar in structure/content?
   1.1. Joshua 24.2b-13
      1.1.1. Joshua started with Abraham, Nehemiah started with Creation. The account covers the plagues and the miracles God worked to bring the people into the Promised Land. The common theme running through the account is the conflict between the false gods of the nations around them and the true God.
   1.2. Psalm 78.1-72; Psalm 105.1-45; Psalm 106.1-48.
      1.2.1. Psalm 78.1-72 reminds the people of how often they rebelled in spite of God's mercy; starts with the signs in Egypt and exodus, covers the rebellion in the wilderness and during the time of the judges, and reminds the people that they are like their fathers.
      1.2.2. Psalm 105.1-45 starts with the covenant made with Abraham, covers the period of the captivity in Egypt, plagues, exodus, provisions in the wilderness, giving of the law. The emphasis is on calling the people to worship God who cared for them.

[21] Michael Will Duggan, *An Exegetical, Literary, Theological, and Intertextual Study of the Covenant Renewal in Ezra-Nehemiah (Neh 7:72b-10:39*. Ph. Dissertation. Catholic University of America, 1996, pp. 258-260.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

1.2.3. Psalm 106.1-48 recounts their history of rebellion from the time of the exodus through their possession of the land of Canaan, calls upon God to forgive their sin.

1.3. Jeremiah 32.17-25

1.3.1. Opens with God as the creator (17), extols God's name (18), recounts God's miraculous works in bringing his people from Egypt to Canaan, and calls upon God to continue in his mercy.

1.4. Acts 7.2-50

1.4.1. Stephen recounted the history of Israel from the time of Abraham. He covered the enactment of the covenant with Abraham, the journey to Egypt and the time of captivity, and the raising up of their deliverer Moses. He covers very briefly the plagues and the exodus, and continues with their rebellion against Moses and God (the golden calf) in the wilderness. He then speaks of God's provision of the tabernacle. His purpose is to introduce to them Jesus who is both the second Moses and the living tabernacle.

Sections

1. Why did Nehemiah (or Ezra) choose to include these portions of Israel's history?

1.1. To remind the people that because of their nation's disobedience in the face of repeated warnings and God's acts of mercy, they were punished by the Assyrians and Babylonians.

1.1.1. God punishes (chastises) his people

1.1.2. God continues to be merciful much longer than we deserve (30)

1.1.3. God restores (31).

1.2. To remind God of how he had saved them repeatedly when they returned to him from their sin and ask him to do so again (32).

1.3. It may be that the prayer sets up a parallel to God's redemptive plan in the salvation of mankind. We could stretch the analogy too much, but the prayer seems to cover the basics of redemptive history as follows:

1.3.1. *Consecration* (Neh 9.5b) – "In the beginning God …" life and redemptive history starts with God.

1.3.2. *Creation* (Neh 9.6) – "In the beginning God … created …" We are all God's creatures, whether we believe it or not.

1.3.3. *Covenant* (Neh 9.7, 8) – God made a covenant with Adam, Noah, and Abraham. It is he who comes to man with the covenantal model: God is sovereign, man must obey, if man obeys he will receive the blessings of the covenant, if he rebels against the covenant he will be punished with the curses of the covenant.

1.3.4. *Control* (Neh 9.9-12) – God controls the events of history and redeems his people out of the sinful world (out of the Egyptian captivity) and leads them toward heaven. It is an express action of God that redeems his people. Both the world and their own attitudes would drag them back if it were not for the work of the Holy Spirit.

1.3.5. *Commands* (Neh 9.13-14) – God gives his Law through his holy people (the Jewish nation and the Church), and proclaims it through his prophets (in the NT this is through pastor-elders). His Law is a special blessing to the believer because it teaches him how he may please God. It also confronts the world with its sin and reminds those in the world that they are covenant breakers. Notice that the key sign of their being covenant breakers is their rebellion against the Sabbath.

1.3.6. *Compassion* (Neh 9.15-21) – Even though we have been saved, and declared righteous, we continue with the remnants of sin throughout the course of our earthy life. Even while God is compassionate and continually provides for his people we always seem to find ways to rebel against him. But God continually responds with his providential care and provision.

1.3.7. *Conquest* (Neh 9.22-25) – We are told to conquer sin in our lives (Rom 6.1-14) much like the Israelites were told to conquer Canaan. The world is supposed to be subdued to and for Christ through the work of Christians, i.e., through the application of the Cultural Mandate (Gen 1.28).

1.3.8. *Challenge* (Neh 9.26-28) But we don't do it as we are called to do and become tempted by all the 'trinkets' and 'baubles' of the world and find ways to continue cultivating the remnants of sin. God disciplines us to bring us back from our sins.

1.3.9. *Captivity* (Neh 9.29-31) – Some Christians go through a period of rebellion that leads them into the spiritual equivalent of the Babylonian captivity. This period of captivity can be extreme, and is used by God to wake them up from their rebellion.

1.3.9.1. What are some examples that appear to be at the extreme end of the Christian's rebellious experience?

1.3.9.2. Abraham's 'love-affair' with Egypt.

1.3.9.3. David's adultery with Bathsheba and the subsequent murder of Uriah.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

1.3.9.4. Solomon's syncretism.
1.3.9.5. Peter's denial.
1.3.10. *Confession* (Neh 9.32-35) – All true Christians come again to repentance. They return to the Lord. Their souls are revived in the way of love and obedience.
1.3.11. *Cry* (Neh 9.36-37) – In the end, all true Christians turn to the Lord, their only hope for eternity.
1.4. Just as the author of this prayer recounted the spiritual 'milestones' along the nation's journey, so we can reflect back on the landmarks.
1.4.1. What are some examples, from the Bible or from Christian history, of individuals reflecting on the 'milestones' in their spiritual journey? 1) The Apostle Paul recounted a number of times his conversion. 2) Augustine's *Confessions*. It would be a useful spiritual exercise for us to review the events that show God's gracious compassion throughout our lives.
1.5. This outline of the prayer could serve as the basis for guiding our prayers. If nothing else, it should cause us to fall on our knees in amazement at what God has done in saving us and providing for us.
1.6. We will now look at each section in the prayer and consider some of the lessons we can take from them.

Consecration (Neh 9.5b)

1. How does the prayer open?
1.1. Praise for the name of God; desire to see it exalted (Ps 99.3; Ps 145.1; Is 24.15; Is 25.1).
1.2. The name of God is used as an equivalent for God himself (Ps 5.11; Ps 74.7).
1.2.1. 'your name' referring to God ~100X.
1.2.2. God often is said to act for the sake of his name (Ezk 20.9, 14, 22, 44).
1.2.3. His name is eternal because he is eternal (Ex 3.15).
1.2.4. His works make a name for him (1 Sam 12.21; Neh 9.10).
1.2.5. His name is the means by which he makes himself known; he makes his name dwell among his people (Dt 12.5, 11, 21; Dt 16.2, 6; 2 Sam 7.13).
1.2.6. God reveals his glory by verbalizing his name (Ex 33.18-34.8).
1.2.7. We are to believe in (Jn 3.18; 1 Jn 3.23) and be justified in (1 Cor 6.11) the name of God. The name *Jesus* is the summary of all that he is and has done. As such it is the ground of secure possession of all the implied blessings.
1.2.8. God's name is what keeps his people (Jn 17.11; Prov 18.10) and gives them power (Acts 3.16; Acts 4.12).
1.2.9. His name is the ground of a Christian's prayer (Ps 25.11; Jn 16.23-24). We pray in the name of Jesus Christ (Jn 14.13, 14; Jn 15.16; Jn 16.23, 24).
1.2.10. His name is the basis of the covenantal sacrament of union with God—we are baptized into the name of God, either in terms of the divine nature as the Trinity (Mt 28.19) or in terms of the mediation of Jesus (Acts 2.38).
1.2.11. Every one should bow at the name of God (Ps 138.2; Phil 2.9-11).
1.2.12. God's name is holy (Lev 20.3; Ps 30.4 [~20X]). Thus it is important that it not be blasphemed (Ex 20.7).
1.3. Other prayers use the expression 'name of God':
1.3.1. Nehemiah used the same expression in a previous prayer (Neh 1.11).
1.3.2. Daniel opens his prayer in a similar way (Dan 2.20).
1.3.3. Similar to opening of prayer Jesus taught his disciples (Mt 6.9).

2. With what invocation does the prayer open? What does this mean?
2.1. God is exalted above all blessing and praise.
2.2. What does this mean?
2.2.1. It means that God is more excellent than *anything* else, including the praise that is offered to him.
2.2.2. Even the best words of praise of the angels falls infinitely short of what God deserves.
2.2.3. Words alone cannot express his excellence. Our words, no matter how sincere and honest they are, cannot begin to praise him as he deserves.
2.2.4. This reminds us that we are not to bring inferior words into his presence as praise. If the words of angels cannot praise him adequately how can the words of sinful men?
2.2.5. The best praise that we can offer to God is the praise that he himself has composed—the Psalms. They alone can express his excellence.

3. What are the implications of the invocation?
3.1. Since God excels all praise, he is most excellent.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

3.1.1. What, in particular, is excellent?
3.1.2. The primary attributes that seem to sum up all the excellencies of God are his unique glory and holiness (these two seem to overlap): 1) Set apart, 2) without moral blemish. [Josh 24.19; Ps 99.9].
3.2. God alone is worthy of praise.
3.2.1. We will address the topic of his worthiness to be praised when we consider v 6.

4. How can we follow this example and pray in the name of God?
4.1. By using his titles: Father, Lord, God, Sovereign, etc.
4.2. By referring to him by name: Jehovah, God, Jesus.
4.3. By referring to him by his attributes: Gracious One, Merciful One, Compassionate One …
4.4. By asking him to exalt/hallow/make holy his own name.

Creation (Neh 9.6)

1. What does this verse add about the name of God?
1.1. The previous verse mentions the *name* of God, this verse uses his personal name.
1.2. The patriarchs seem to have known God only by titles (e.g. Gen 14.22; Gen 16.13; Gen 17.1). It appears that the title *Yahweh* was initially unexplained.
1.3. With the introduction of the personal name of God to Moses (Ex 3.15), the indirect relationship expressed by titles (e.g., 'your honour') becomes a personal relationship. God has given his people the liberty and privilege to call him by name.

2. This verse gives four additional attributes of God, what are they?
2.1. Independent self-existence
2.2. Creativity
2.3. Sovereign Providence
2.4. Worthiness to be worshiped.

3. What shows God's independent self-existence?
3.1. Notice that the author uses LORD (Jehovah). Heb: "You (are) he LORD alone …"
3.2. From: "I am" (Ex 3.13, 14); "I" implies personality and self-consciousness.
3.3. The significance of *Yahweh* was revealed to Moses (Ex 3.15). *Yahweh* is either a simple indicative or a causative indicative of the verb 'to be'. It means either 'he is alive' or 'he brings into being'.
3.4. The expression 'I am who I am' (Ex 13.14) is a formula expressing the sovereignty of God in the revelation of himself and in his absolute control over the universe.
3.5. The Bible never gives a proof for the existence of God. You cannot find a proof text to show that God exists. The existence of God is the single most important presupposition we can make in theology, philosophy, and life. The existence of God is accepted on faith, but this faith is both rational and supported by reliable information (the self-revelation of God).

4. How is God praised as creator?
4.1. First among God's praiseworthy works/deeds is his creation of the universe.
4.2. Note: Matthew 6.9 has two parts, name of God and heaven (above creation) in the same way as the opening of this prayer identifies these two aspects of God: his name and his being above creation.
4.3. The work of creation differentiates God from creation. Creation is not God, or an aspect or dimension of God. Most of the ancient philosophies and religions (e.g., Hinduism, and Platonism) were pantheistic in some way and assumed that the created realm was just an extension of God. The creation of the universe makes it distinctly separate from God. It cannot exist without God, but he can exist without it. It cannot be a mere extension of his being or it would always have existed.
4.4. Is there any significance to the list of created things?
4.4.1. It hints at the days of creation. It indicates an acceptance of the uniqueness of each day's creation.
4.4.2. It implies a rejection of evolution in which matter randomly transforms into the variety of objects in the universe and into living matter.
4.5. Note also the use of the term "highest heavens". A distinction is made between the 'heavens' and the 'heaven of the heavens'. Almost an identical construct is used in Deuteronomy 10.14. Other instances of this expression are found in: 2 Chron 2.6; 2 Chron 6.18; Ps 115.16; Ps 148.4. In Hebrew the way to emphasize something, or to use a superlative, is often accomplished by repeating a word: holy of holies (Ex 26.33, 34; Heb 9.3); song of songs (Song 1.1). Jesus used this model when he said: 'amen, amen'

© James R. Hughes, 2006

translated as 'most assuredly' by the NKJV' and as "I tell you the truth" by the NIV; 'verily verily' by the KJV.

5. What is meant by the expression: "you give life to everything"?
   5.1. In the NKJV: "You preserve them all." Heb: "and you giving life (making become/alive) all of them". The participle can probably take more than one translation: "make alive, let live, revive, make live again, preserve …" depending on the context.
   5.2. What does this passage mean? What is "all them" or "all things" that are alive? If we take it in the sense of preservation then God controls the operations of the material universe whether animate or inanimate. If we take it in the sense of "making alive" then it would apply to all things that are alive.
   5.3. What is life? John D. Morris (son of Henry M. Morris who wrote *The Genesis Flood* with John Whitcomb) says: 'By way of explanation, plants are biologically alive, but have no "breath of life" (Genesis 1.30; Gen 2.7). Furthermore, "The life of the flesh is in the blood." (Leviticus 17.11). Plants have no consciousness, no breath, no blood, thus are not "living" in the Biblical sense of living. They were created specifically to nourish "living" things. Their biological "death" (and perhaps also that of many of the "lesser" forms of life technically classed as animals) does not constitute the death of a Biblically living breathing, blood-filled creature."[22] This is a valid distinction that helps explain how there could be no death before the fall of man into sin, and yet there were biological processes (e. g., digestion of food). By definition, plant digestion or leaf decay is not death but is part of a cycle that is similar to the hydrologic cycle. We would not speak of clouds dying when they give off rain.
   5.4. God is the life giver (Gen 1.30; Gen 2.7; Acts 17.25) and sustainer (Acts 17.28; Col 1.17).
   5.5. God is actively and effectively administering his decrees in the preservation and government or his creatures (Is 46.10), not chance or fate:
      5.5.1. Universe at large: Ps 103.19; Eph 1.11; and natural physical realm: Ps 104.15, 21.
      5.5.2. Affairs of nations: Ps 22.28; Ps 66.7; including disaster in a city Amos 3.6
      5.5.3. Individual lives: Ps 139.16; Ps 75.6, 7; Prov 16.33; Mt 10.30.
      5.5.4. In special ways for his people: Ps 5.12; Ps 121.3, 4; Rom 8.28; Phil 4.19; Ps 65.2.
      5.5.5. In punishing the wicked: Ps 7.12, 13; Ps 11.6.
      5.5.6. "All things" includes rolling dice (Prov 16.33), falling sparrows (Mt 10.29), failing sight (Ex 4.11), financial loss (1 Sam 2.7), the decisions of kings (Prov 21.1), the sickness of children (2 Sam 12.15), the suffering and slaughter of saints (1 Pt 4.19; Ps 44.11), the completion of travel (James 4.15), repentance (2 Tim 2.25), faith (Phil 1.29), holiness (Phil 3.12-13), spiritual growth (Heb 6.1-3), life and death (1 Sam 2.6), and the crucifixion of Christ (Acts 4.27-28).[23]
      5.5.7. [See: *Appendix Q – 'The Problem of Evil'*, for more detail on this subject.]

6. Why is God worthy of worship?
   6.1. Because of his (taken from Neh 9.5, 6) holiness (Ps 99.5, 9; Rev 15.4); creativity (Jonah 1.9; Rev 4.11); uniqueness (Mt 4.10; Ps 83.18), and providence (Ps 103.22; Ps 139.14).
   6.2. Other reasons include his: sovereignty (Ps 145.1, 2), law-giving (Ps 111.10), saving work (Ps 96.2), and kindness/goodness/love (Ps 28.6; Ps 106.1; Ps 135.3).
   6.3. He alone is worthy of worship (Acts 10.25, 26; Rev 19.10; Rev 22.8, 9; Mt 28.9, 17; Jn 11.32).
   6.4. Who in particular worships God in this case?
      6.4.1. The multitudes of heaven (Ps 89.5-7; Rev 7.9-12). The fact that the host of heaven worship him reflects his uniqueness.
   6.5. From the example prayer Jesus taught his disciples (Mt 6.10), the same worship should be offered on earth (Ps 100.1-3).
   6.6. How would you respond to someone who says that "If God is good he shouldn't expect worship." or "Isn't it selfish to expect creatures to praise/honour him?"
      6.6.1. Do you think it is proper to honour a person for a life-time of spectacular achievement? For example was it wrong to honour Wayne Gretzky when he retired from hockey. Or would it be wrong to award a great war-hero a medal of honour, or to have a ceremony to honour someone who rescued ten children from a burning school.
      6.6.2. The more good a person does, the more we believe that that person is worthy of some form of honour.

---

[22] *The Young Earth*, p. 130.

[23] John Piper, "Judgment Calls: Governor of all—God was sovereign over Sept. 11, and so we have hope," *World*, Oct. 6, 2001, Volume 16, Number 38.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

6.6.3. Who is the person of most good and who does the most good? God. Therefore God is worthy of the most honour.
6.6.4. But we don't think it is good for a person to *expect* to be honoured; God expects, in fact demands, to be honoured and worshiped.
6.6.4.1. Why is this not selfish?
6.6.4.2. Since God is the highest good, and the highest good should be honoured, it is proper to expect/demand that the highest good to be honoured.
6.6.4.3. God cannot give his glory and honour to another because to do so would deny his absolute goodness.

7. What specific, key, doctrine does this verse assume to be true about God's work?
7.1. If you ask for a list of key, foundational doctrines, people will mention: one God, Trinity, deity of Christ, virgin conception, substitutionary atonement, resurrection. People rarely mention creation. Yet there is more direct teaching in scripture about creation than any other doctrine. It is a fundamental doctrine. If God is not the creator, as he says he is, he is not God. Much of the Church today has swallowed Deism and the 'Baals' of modern materialistic naturalism, so do not see the overriding importance of the doctrine of creation.
7.2. Throughout the Bible creation is assumed as literal fact. For example: Ex 20.11; Ex 31.17; Dt 4.32; Ps 102.25 [Heb 1.10]; Ps 104.1-9; Mt 13.35; Mt 19.4; Mt 25.34; Mk 10.6; Mk 13.19; Jn 1.3; Jn 17.24; Rom 1.20; Eph 1.4; Eph 3.9; Col 1.16, 17; Heb 4.3; Heb 9.26; Heb 11.3; 2 Pt 3.4, 5; Rev 4.11; Rev 17.8.
7.3. Why is it important that we assume creation, and start with God the creator? Many key doctrines in the Bible are built on the fact that God is the creator:
7.3.1. Defense that he is the true God (Job 38-41 [38.4]; Is 40.12, 28; Is 41.20; Is 45.11-13).
7.3.2. Indicates God's transcendence (Gen 14.19, 22; Ps 113.4-6; Jn 17.24).
7.3.3. Reason for his sovereign reign over the universe, world, and affairs of men; the universe is God's possessions to do with as he wills (Gen 6.7; Ps 89.11; Is 45.11-13; Jer 51.15, 16; Heb 4.13).
7.3.4. Witness to the fact that he is a God of revelation; i.e., he reveals himself (Is 45.18-19; Zech 12.1-2; Eph 3.9).
7.3.5. Proof that all men know that God exists, there is universal knowledge of him, and all are accountable to him (Rom 1.18-20, 25).
7.3.6. Evidence of Christ's divinity and authority. Only God can create. Christ is God as evidenced by the fact that he is the Creator (Col 1.16). Being the creator is the basis for his authority (Col 1.15, 16).
7.3.7. Foundation for worship. God is worthy of universal praise from all mankind because he is creator (Neh 9.6; Ps 148.5; Jer 32.16, 17; Rev 4.11; Rev 14.7).
7.3.8. Basis for fear and reverence on the part of men (Ps 33.6-10 [8]).
7.3.9. Basis of the Covenant of Redemption (Is 42.5-7; Is 43.1-7 [1, 7]).
7.3.10. Reason that he can bring about a new spiritual creation (2 Cor 5.17; Eph 2.8-10; Col 3.10). He created the physical and spiritual realm, he can re-create the spiritual.
7.3.11. Evidence of true faith (Heb 11.3).
7.3.12. Foundation for Law.
7.3.12.1. Specifically the Sabbath, in the context of the Ten Commandments (Ex 20.11).
7.3.12.2. We owe obedience/allegiance to him because he is the Creator (Dt 32.5, 6; Mal 2.10; Acts 17.24, 30).
7.3.13. His trustworthiness; i.e., the one we can trust (1 Pt 4.19).
7.3.14. The provider of all good things. It is expected that he will care for people because he is their creator (Gen 14.19, 20; Is 27.11).
7.3.15. The reason that God can tell what will happen in the future (Is 45.1, 7, 11-13).
7.3.16. Reason that he can act as the eternal judge (Acts 17.24, 31; Rev 10.5-7).
7.3.17. Foundation for the new creation (Is 65.17, 18; Rom 8.19-22). He can re-create the physical, because he created it in the first place.
7.4. Spiritual renewal includes accepting God as the creator, as he teaches about himself in the Bible—not abstractly or with imprecision; but with specific detail. As long as many in the Church compromise with evolution and, so-called science, the Church will remain weak. Compromise of this kind is a form of syncretism. It is no different form cooperating with the other 'great' religions of the world; treating them as if they have a place before God, and in some way have an equal standing as Christianity. The Church will only be strong when it stands unequivocally for the doctrine of creation and does not compromise in any way with the religion of materialistic naturalism.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

Covenant (Neh 9.7, 8)

1. What attributes of God are mentioned in verses 7 and 8?
   1.1. Election/Predestination (chose Abram)
   1.2. Love (named him Abraham—gave him a new name)
   1.3. Covenant-maker (we will consider, later, God as the covenant-keeper when we look at 32)
   1.4. Promise-keeper
   1.5. Righteousness
   1.6. Sovereign ownership and governance over the nations.

2. Why did God choose Abram and make a covenant with him? (7)
   2.1. When we address this question, we are dealing with the doctrine of election.
   2.2. Election applies to: 1) individuals unto salvation (2 Pt 1.10); 2) individuals to a specific office, e.g., priests, kings, prophets, apostles (Dt 18.5; 1 Sam 10.24; Jer 1.5; Jn 6.70/Acts 9.15); 3) nations (Dt 4.37; Dt 7.7-11).
   2.3. With respect to individuals election, in salvation, is:
      2.3.1. Applied to a subset of humanity (Mt 22.4; Rom 11.5).
      2.3.2. To show God's power (1 Cor 1.27-29).
      2.3.3. Eternally and unchangeably decreed (Jer 1.5; Eph 1.4; Ps 33.11).
      2.3.4. Based on God's love and foreknowledge (Eph 1.5; 1 Pt 1.2).
      2.3.5. Based on God's free will and good pleasure, founded on divine wisdom (Eph 1.5).
         2.3.5.1. The implication is that it is unconditional, not based on anything in the individual chosen, such as foreseen good works (Dt 7.7; Rom 9.11; 2 Tim 1.9; 1 Pt 1.2).
      2.3.6. For God's praise (Eph 1.6).
      2.3.7. Efficacious or effective, i.e., it accomplishes what it plans (Jn 10.28; Rom 8.29, 30).

      SC Q20. Did God leave all mankind to perish in the estate of sin and misery?
      A20. God having, out of his mere good pleasure, from all eternity, elected some to everlasting life, did enter into a covenant of grace, to deliver them out of the estate of sin and misery, and to bring them into an estate of salvation by a Redeemer.

      LCQ13: What has God especially decreed concerning angels and men?
      A13: God, by an eternal and immutable decree, out of his mere love, for the praise of his glorious grace, to be manifested in due time, has elected some angels to glory; and in Christ has chosen some men to eternal life, and the means thereof: and also, according to his sovereign power, and the unsearchable counsel of his own will (whereby he extends or withholds favor as he pleases), has passed by and foreordained the rest to dishonor and wrath, to be for their sin inflicted, to the praise of the glory of his justice.

      WCF CHAPTER III, Of God's Eternal Decree
      VI. As God hath appointed the elect unto glory, so hath He, by the eternal and most free purpose of His will, foreordained all the means thereunto. Wherefore they who are elected, being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ, are effectually called unto faith in Christ by His Spirit working in due season, are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by His power through faith unto salvation. Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only.

3. How do we reconcile the doctrine of election/predestination (7) with the statement: "You found his heart faithful to you" (8)?
   3.1. Notice the order in the passage: choice (election/predestination) → calling (brought out; Is 51.2; Heb 11.8) → adopted him (gave him a new name) → found his heart faithful (faith exercised and repentance) → made a covenant.
   3.2. Consider the sequence in Romans 8.29, 30: foreknowledge (election) → predestination → calling → adoption (predestined to … firstborn among many brothers) → justified → glorification.
   3.3. It was not Abram's faithful heart that was the final (or first) cause of the covenant. It was God's election of Abram. The covenant was based on God's electing grace, not on Abram's heart.
   3.4. The state of Abram's heart is mentioned as the evidence of his having been elected.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

3.5. What we find here is similar to what we find in Gen 15.6 “Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness.” The belief of Abram was itself a gift of God. Nevertheless because he had the gift of faith he evidenced faith and this faith was credited as righteousness. In other words, God found his heart faithful (Eph 2.8-10).
3.6. We must keep a proper perspective. Abram was not a perfect man, nor did he keep all the obligations of the covenant perfectly.
3.6.1. How do we know this? Examples of Abraham’s love affair with Egypt (pursuing the *Egyptian Option*) (Gen 12.10-20); Gen 16.1; Gen 21.9; Gen 25.12; compare Gal 4.24, 25.
3.6.2. A heart that is faithful to God is one that has as its primary animating force, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit; that struggles to overcome sin, and strives to please God. But there will always be struggles in the life of the covenant recipient (Rom 7.7-25).
3.7. Another way to consider the matter is to maintain a balance between God’s sovereignty and man’s responsibility. God sovereignly elects and plants faith, man responsibly responds by exercising faith and continuously repenting (Ps 32.5; Ps 51.1-4; 1 Jn 1.8-10).

4. What is a covenant?
4.1. There are various definitions of covenant including: treaty, pact, agreement, standing contract. These various usages depend on the context.
4.1.1. A covenant may be a formal *mutual agreement* or treaty between two parties with each assuming some obligation. Examples: individuals, e.g., Laban and Jacob (Gen 31.44-54) or David and Jonathan (1 Sam 18.3; 1 Sam 23.18); king and people, e.g., David and the people (2 Sam 5.3); between states/nations, e.g., Abraham and the Amorites (Gen 14.13), Solomon and Hiram (1 Ki 5.12); husband and wife (Mal 2.14; Ezk 16.8).
4.1.2. A covenant may also be *imposed* by a greater power upon a lesser one (suzerain-vassal treaties) where the greater power demands loyalty and obligates itself to the protection of the lesser one, e.g., Israel and the Gibeonites (Josh 9.1-27) and the request by Jabesh-gilead of the king of Ammon (1 Sam 11.1-2).
4.2. The definition given by O. Palmer Robertson in his book *The Christ of the Covenants* in terms of God’s relationship with his people is: “A covenant is a bond in blood sovereignly administered.” He then dissects the definition with respect to the three parts: bond, in blood, sovereignly administered. We can consider it in terms of:
4.2.1. A bond with conditions, promises, curses, and oaths
4.2.2. In blood, with cutting
4.2.3. Sovereignly administered with no bargaining, bartering or contracting. “The sovereign Lord of heaven and earth dictates the terms of the covenant.”
4.3. Covenantal enactment often consists of: a preamble, imposition (law and sanctions), ratification (oath), and sign.
4.4. There are many other things that could be considered (signs or seals; federal representation; sub-classes within the covenant between God and man: creation (works), life, redemption, grace, old and new; enactments: Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Christ; mediators; unity/diversity across the enactments, etc.).

5. Why does Nehemiah or Ezra mention the covenant made with Abram? (7, 8)
5.1. This is the only reference to Abram/Abraham in the book of Nehemiah.
5.1.1. Where else does Nehemiah use the term ‘covenant’? Neh 1.5; Neh 9.32; Neh 13.29.
5.2. It was the first covenant of selection. The covenants made with Adam and Noah were universal in nature; they affected all mankind. Whereas the covenant made with Abram applied to his descendants in the land of Canaan. (Gen 15.4-21 [18]; Gen 17.9; 1 Ki 8.53 [note the appeal is in the context of a prayer]).
5.3. The Covenant made with Moses is focused on Law with the accompanying obligations, blessings, and curses. All explicit references to Moses in Nehemiah are in the context of the Law (Neh 1.7, 8; Neh 8.1, 14; Neh 9.14; Neh 10.29; Neh 13.1]. It is not on the basis of Covenant of Law (and obedience to Law) that Nehemiah/Ezra would likely appeal, since the people had been punished for breaking God’s Law.
5.4. The Covenant made with David is focused on worship and the dynastic line. Nehemiah refers to David’s rules for worship in chapter 12 (Neh 12.24, 36, 45) but not to the Davidic Covenant, as do Isaiah (Is 55.3) and Jeremiah (Jer 33.21). It is probably not on the basis of this covenant that Nehemiah (or Ezra) would appeal, since at this point he is not dealing with the re-establishment of the Davidic dynasty. Although Zerubbabel had returned from the captivity, the focus of Nehemiah is on the city of God (Neh 1.3). And, in general the Jews did not seem to consider the dynastic line of David to be so important after the

© James R. Hughes, 2006

Captivity. They did not strive to re-establish the monarchy, they were ruled by Edomites at the time of Christ, were waiting for an eschatological kingdom in the Messiah, and seemed surprised when the Messiah came in the line of David.

5.5. The covenant with Abram is the first (temporal) covenant that applies specifically to the land, nation, and city.

5.6. It may be that he is claiming special status for Israel, the returned captive Jews, and Jerusalem. Nehemiah appealed on this basis in his prayer recorded in chapter 1 (10).

6. What relevance does the covenant made with Abram have for us in the NT context?

6.1. It was true that the nation of Israel (through Jacob) had a special and specific relationship with God in the covenant with Abraham.

6.2. However, Abraham was not a Jew. Abraham's direct descendants included Ishmaelites (Gen 16.15) and Midianites (Gen 25.2, 4), who were clearly not Jews. Arabs consider themselves to be descendants of Ishmael (and therefore of Abraham) and certainly do not consider themselves to be Jews! Some Arabs may be descendants of Isaac's son Esau (Edomites), and are certainly not Jews.

6.3. The Jews believed that they were in a special relationship with God because they claimed Abraham as their father (Jn 8.39). Jesus replied that their father was the Devil (Jn 8.44). In perpetual covenant terms, Abraham is the father of the faithful and not the father of a physical seed in a physical nation (Mt 8.11, 12; Rom 2.28, 29; Rom 9.6).

6.4. It is a mistake to say that the covenant made with Abraham can be the basis for Jewish national continuity in God's household. The Abrahamic Covenant was, and is, a spiritual covenant that applied to those who placed their hope in the coming Messiah, and who now place their hope in the Christ who has come.

6.5. The Abrahamic Covenant is not, ultimately, a promise for the physical nation of Israel—it is a promise for the spiritual seed of Abraham (Rom 4.13-17; Gal 3.7-9).

6.5.1. Since the promises of God announced in the OT have reached their universal fulfillment in Christ they now encompass believers in all nations. It is a mistake to look for God to continue any of the particular Jewish aspects of the OT or of Israel's nationhood.

6.5.2. This does not imply that there is no longer a people, a temple and a land. There is still a flesh-and-blood Israel, but it is made up of spiritual Israel and not a particular group of people identified today as Jews; it is the Church (Gal 6.16). There is still a visible temple, but it is no longer found in a single location (Jerusalem); it is the people of God (1 Cor 3.16; 1 Pt 2.4) from all nations throughout history. There is still a physical land for the people of God; it is the entire earth that the godly will inherit (Mt 5.5) with the New Jerusalem at its centre (Rev 21.2). The Church stands in the place of OT Israel and carries out its mission to the world.

6.6. The covenant made with Abraham, when understood correctly, is broader than the covenants made with the OT Jews under Moses or David. However, the covenants made with Moses and David ('Jewish' covenants) are bracketed by the Abrahamic Covenant and New Covenant both of which apply to a spiritual people, not to a physical nation. Since the various covenants (i.e., Abrahamic, Mosaic, Davidic, New) are forms of the one Covenant of Grace, then the Mosaic and Davidic Covenants are also to be understood ultimately as spiritual, and not national, covenants.

LC30: Does God leave all mankind to perish in the estate of sin and misery?
A30: God does not leave all men to perish in the estate of sin and misery, into which they fell by the breach of the first covenant, commonly called the covenant of works; but of his mere love and mercy delivers his elect out of it, and brings them into an estate of salvation by the second covenant, commonly called the covenant of grace.

7. Besides making a covenant with Abram, what did God do with him? (v 7)

7.1. He gave him a new name. Abraham *vs* Abram. Gen 17.5; Abram means *exalted father*; Abraham means *father of many*.

7.2. What is the significance of changing Abram's name to Abraham?

7.2.1. It is a sign of the fulfillment of the covenant (Gen 17.2, 4, 6).

7.2.2. It follows the principle that names have meaning. For example when Simon was renamed Peter it was a sign of his future role as part of the foundation of the NT church.

7.2.2.1. Status (Gen 3.20).

7.2.2.2. Occasion (Gen 4.1; Mt 1.23 with Is 7.14).

7.2.2.3. Event (Gen 10.25).

7.2.2.4. Circumstance (Gen 18.12; Gen 21.3-7; 1 Sam 1.20; Mt 1.21).

© James R. Hughes, 2006

7.2.2.5. Prediction or fulfillment (Is 8.1-4; Mt 1.23 with Is 7.14)
7.2.2.6. Precatory (expressing a wish): Ezekiel ('May God strengthen!'); Isaiah ('May Yah[weh] save!').
7.2.3. It is a sign of God's ownership. Compare with Genesis 2.19, 20. Changing another's name displayed the power of the changer and the allegiance owed by the one whose name was changed.
7.2.3.1. What are other instances where the name of one of God's people was changed by God/Christ: Sarai, to Sarah (Gen 17.15); Jacob/Israel (Gen 32.28); Simon/Cephas/Peter (Jn 1.42); James and John/Boanerges (Mk 3.17).
7.2.3.2. Changed by a human authority: Hoshea to Joshua (Num 13.16); Eliakim to Jehoiakim (2 Ki 23.34); Mattaniah to Zedekiah (2 Ki 24.17); Daniel to Belteshazzar (Dan 1.6, 7).
7.2.4. It is a sign of God's **love** for his saved people. (Rev 2.17; Rev 3.12, compare Is 62.2)
7.3. What is the new name that we are given when we become part of God's household?
7.3.1. We are given a new surname (like Boanerges). It is the name 'Christian' (Acts 11.26); We are 'Jim Christian' etc. meaning that we belong to the household of Christ.
7.3.2. Collectively and individually the people of God are 'called by his name' (2 Chron 7.14; Is 43.7; Jer 14.9; Jer 15.16; Am 9.12).

8. Why did the author of the prayer provide a list of the nations that the Israelites disposed? (v 8)
8.1. Compare:
8.1.1. Gen 15.18-20, which speaks of 10 nations that signify completeness, all six listed in Neh 9.8 are included in Gen 15.1-21. (The LXX has Χετταίους, whereas the Hebrew has Hittites, another name for the Hittites per the usage in Gen 15.20; Ex 3.8, 17; 2 Ki 7.6; 2 Chron 1.17)
8.1.2. Ex 3.8; Josh 9.1; Josh 11.3, Hivites *vs* Girgashites.
8.1.3. Dt 7.1, all seven listed in Neh 9.8 and Ex 3.8.
8.1.4. Josh 24.11 same list except for Hivites in Joshua, not in Nehemiah.
8.1.5. Ezra 9.1 no Girgashites, but Moabites, Ammonites, and Egyptians added.
8.1.6. It may be that from the perspective of Nehemiah's day some of the smaller nations were subsumed under the larger nations. The nations listed in Gen 15.19-20:
8.1.6.1. Kenizzites [only occurs in Gen 15.19]; not in Neh
8.1.6.2. Kadmonites [only occurs in Gen 15.19]; not in Neh
8.1.6.3. Girgashites (7X) only one that is mentioned infrequently that is in the list in Nehemiah.
8.1.6.4. Kenites (9X) NOT in Neh
8.1.6.5. Rephaites (10X) NOT in Neh
8.1.6.6. Perizzites (23X)
8.1.6.7. Jebusites (33X)
8.1.6.8. Hittites (36X)
8.1.6.9. Canaanites (54X)
8.1.6.10. Amorites (76X)
8.2. Why didn't he just say: "they took over the land of Canaan" or "He gave them the land of Canaan"?
8.2.1. Possible reasons:
8.2.1.1. He is tying the return from the captivity to the covenant promise made to Abram (Gen 15.1-21) by listing (some of) the nations.
8.2.1.2. By being specific he is making the connection explicit. It is not clear however why he listed only six of the ten nations.
8.3. What does the fact that the nations are given to Abram teach us?
8.3.1. God's sovereign ownership and governance over the nations which he can give to whomever he wills (Ps 22.28; Jer 18.5-10; Dan 4.17).
8.3.2. This reminds us that the nations of the earth belong to Christ. Christ is ruler of the nations: Gen 49.10; Ps 2.8; Ps 22.27, 28; Ps 72.8-11.
8.3.3. Because the nations of the earth belong to Christ, they belong to the Church. The Church will posses the nations of the earth, not through conquering with a sword, through the message of the Gospel. The Church is not composed of a single nation but of all nations on earth (Jer 3.17; Zech 2.11; Mt 28.19; Rom 15.9-12; Rev 7.9).
8.3.4. Christians are Abraham's descendants so they possess the land of Israel.
8.3.4.1. But Christians do not 'own' the land of Israel.
8.3.4.2. How then is the promise to Abram fulfilled? Christians own the whole world.
8.3.4.3. In this context how can we understand Jesus' statement in Mt 5.5: the meek will inherit the earth? It may be that he is not speaking only of an eschatological fulfillment through

© James R. Hughes, 2006

the saints reigning with Christ (1 Cor 6.2; Rev 20.6), but also to the fact that the saints together will possess all nations. There will be Christians in every nation, Christians will posses the gates of their enemies (Gen 24.60).

9. What promise is referred to as having been kept? Why was the promise kept? (8)
   9.1. From the preceding context it seems to be the giving the land of Canaan to the Israelites (Gen 15.18-20).
   9.2. From the larger context it could include the promise of the return from captivity (Is 10.21; Is 51.11; Jer 29.10-11; Jer 30.18; Dan 9.2).
   9.3. Why was the promise kept?
      9.3.1. Because God is righteous.
      9.3.2. It is God's fidelity to his covenant promise, not man's 'faithfulness' that is the basis of the fulfillment of the Covenant promise.
      9.3.3. God would not be righteous if he failed to keep the obligations he placed upon himself in a legally binding covenant—to provide the land to Abraham's descendants, and to preserve a remnant.
   9.4. What is the meaning of the statement: "God is (you are) righteous."
      9.4.1. As lawgiver his laws are based on equity and holiness (Ps 119.75, 137).
      9.4.2. His judgments are based on fact and justice (Jer 12.1, 2; Ps 7.9, 11; Tim 4.8).
      9.4.3. He is full of compassion within the context of judgment (Ps 116.5; Ps 129.4; Is 41.10; Dan 9.16 [notice reference to the city]).
   9.5. What are some of the promises that we can look forward to seeing fulfilled?
      9.5.1. Heirs of Abraham (Gal 3.29; Gal 4.28; Eph 3.6).
      9.5.2. Gift of the Holy Spirit to us and our descendants (Acts 2.38; Eph 1.13; 2 Pt 1.4).
      9.5.3. Inheritance of the world (Rom 4.13-16).
      9.5.4. Eternal life (2 Tim 1.1; Titus 1.1, 2; Heb 9.15; James 1.12 ["crown which is life;" life itself is the crown]; 1 Jn 2.25).
      9.5.5. Rest (Heb 4.1).
      9.5.6. New Heaven and Earth (2 Pt 3.13).
      9.5.7. An eternal kingdom (James 2.5).
   9.6. What is the basis of the promises of God?
      9.6.1. Made in Christ (Luke 1.69-73 [notice the appeal to the promise/covenant with Abraham]; Eph 3.6; 2 Tim 1.1).
      9.6.2. Obtained through faith (Rom 4.13-16; Heb 6.12, 15; Heb 11.33).
      9.6.3. Accessed through prayer (Gen 32.9, 12; 1 Chron 17.23, 26).
      9.6.4. Applied through perseverance (James 1.12; Heb 10.36).
   9.7. Who are the recipients of God's promises?
      9.7.1. The saints (Acts 2.39; James 2.5).
   9.8. It is important that we keep in mind that God will fulfill all his promises (2 Cor 1.20; Heb 6.12; Heb 10.35).

10. How does the Covenant made with Abram relate to us?
   10.1. We are the spiritual seed of Abraham. The promise made to Abram was for all his spiritual seed. So we can apply the lessons of this section to the Church and specifically to ourselves in:
      10.1.1. Election/Predestination—God chose Abram and he chose us. We can rest in the assurance of knowing that his choices cannot be overthrown.
      10.1.2. Love—God named him Abraham and gave him a new name and placed his seal of ownership on him. As we have noted, we are given new names also when we join the Household of Faith.
      10.1.3. Covenant-maker—God makes covenants that are unbreakable and irrevocable. Even if we sin and are covenant breakers, he will never break his covenant (Lev 26.42; Judges 2.1; Ps 89.34). We are heirs of an even better covenant (Heb 7.22; Heb 12.24) that has Jesus as its mediator and is founded on better promises (Heb 8.6).
      10.1.4. Promise-keeper—His righteous nature requires him to keep his promises. There is not a single promise God has made that he has not kept or will not keep.
      10.1.5. Sovereign ownership and governance over the nations of the earth—The Church will posses the nations of the earth.

Control (Neh 9.9-12)

1. What attributes of God are mentioned in verses 9-12?
   1.1. Compassion (verses 9, 12)

© James R. Hughes, 2006

1.2. Omnipotence (verses 10, 11)
1.3. Justice (verses 10, 11)
1.4. Revelation (verse 12)

2. What of historical significance is missed out in the prayer that we might have thought the author would have included? Why?
   2.1. Notice that the prayer jumps over about 500 years of history; from the time of Abraham to the time of Moses.
   2.2. He skips over the days of Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph; i.e., the origin of the Jewish people is skipped over.
      2.2.1. He doesn't say how the people came to be in distress in Egypt.
      2.2.2. Other outlines of history in the Bible include this period: (e.g., Acts 7.8-18; Heb 11.17-22)
   2.3. Other key periods in the history of Israel are barely mentioned in this prayer, which are they?
      2.3.1. The period of the monarchy from Saul/David to the Captivity. The only indication that the approximately 500-year period even existed is in verses 32 and 34.
      2.3.2. There is also only a brief allusion to the period of the theocracy (Judges—Joshua to Samuel—also approximately 500 years) found in verse 28.
   2.4. What might be the reason he skips over these periods of Jewish history (besides to keep the prayer from getting too long)?
      2.4.1. He *may be* focusing on the land of Canaan to which the captives have returned, and the temporal loci associated with entry and exit from the land.
      2.4.2. [For more on this topic, refer to the notes for verse 15].

Compassion (Neh 9.9, 12)

1. How does the account in verse 9 & 12 show God's compassion?
   1.1. He remembered his people in captivity in Egypt and led them from that captivity: (Gen 15.13, 14, 16; Ex 3.7-9; Ex 12.31ff).
   1.2. This prayer makes specific reference to God's compassion (19, 27, 28)
   1.3. Synonyms for compassion: mercy (Ex 33.19; Zech 7.9; James 5.11), tender mercy (NKJV: Col 3.12), tender hearted (NKJV: 1 Pt 3.8), pity (Ezk 16.5), sympathy (NIV: 1 Pt 3.8), gracious (NKJV: Ex 22.27; Joel 2.13), forgiving (Eph 4.32).

2. What are representative, key, acts in Biblical history (the history of redemption) that demonstrate God's compassion?
   2.1. We could consider specific actions of God's preserving the lives of his people or providing for them such as sending the manna, bringing his people out of captivity, raising the widow's son, etc. etc. But in fact all actions of God toward his people are saturated with love and compassion (Rom 8.28). So instead we can think of three *defining* acts of God in the history of redemption that provide an overall umbrella for all of God's compassionate actions:
      2.1.1. Not destroying man after he had sinned, and promising a redeemer (Gen 3.15)
      2.1.2. Sending Jesus to be the atoning sacrifice (Rom 5.8)
      2.1.3. The resurrection of the saints to be with Christ forever (Jn 11.25; Rom 6.5; Phil 3.10, 11).
   2.2. God's compassion is:
      2.2.1. Based on his will (Ex 33.19)
      2.2.2. Equated with his love (Ps 51.1)
      2.2.3. A turning from his anger (Dt 13.17; Ps 77.9; Is 60.10; Jonah 3.9)
      2.2.4. Applied in some cases through his general grace (Ps 145.9; Mt 9.36; Mt 14.14; Mt 15.32)
      2.2.5. The source of forgiveness, restoration, protection, and provision for his people (Dt 30.3; Neh 9.19, 27, 28; Ps 103.4; Ps 119.77; Is 49.13; Is 54.7; Jer 12.15)
      2.2.6. The result of repentance and fear of the LORD (repentance is an instrumental cause) (2 Chron 30.9; Ps 103.13)
      2.2.7. Administered in the context of his self-imposed Covenantal obligations (2 Ki 13.23).

Omnipotence (Neh 9.10, 11)

1. How does this account demonstrate that God is omnipotent?
   1.1. It shows his control over man and nature through miracles exercised against the arrogance of the Egyptians.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

1.2. It speaks of his making a name for himself. His name is 'The Almighty' (333X): 'LORD Almighty' (262X OT), 'Lord Almighty' (3X NT), 'LORD God Almighty' (21X OT), 'Lord God Almighty' (5X all in Rev), 'God Almighty (11X).

2. What is omnipotence?
   2.1. We should think first in terms of God as the absolutely first, highest, and final cause. Nothing in him is derived.
   2.2. It means that he can do anything (Job 9.12; Ps 115.3; Mt 19.26; Lk 1.37).
   2.3. Of course, this is limited by God's own person and nature. He cannot deny himself (2 Tim 2.13), annihilate himself since he is everlasting (Dt 33.27), sin against his own moral standards (e.g., lie Num 23.19; Heb 6.18; James 1.13), or change (1 Sam 15.29; James 1.17).
   2.4. We really cannot get our minds around what omnipotence means. We think of God as a super-man. We really don't understand how amazing and beyond comprehension is his power.
   2.5. Jesus, as the Mediator-King, has all authority in heaven and earth (Jn 13.3) and is therefore the all-powerful one (Is 9.6).

3. What are representative, key, acts in Biblical history that demonstrate God's omnipotence?
   3.1. We can list many from the miracles in Egypt to the miracles performed by Jesus, but there are better *defining* acts that show that God is sovereign over the universe, life, and death, these are: creation (Jer 32.17), the resurrection (Rom 1.4), spiritual re-creation—bringing back to life a soul that is dead in sin (Rom 1.16), and the restoration of all things when Christ returns (2 Pt 3.11-13).

Justice (Neh 9.10, 11, 33)

1. What is God's justice?
   1.1. An objective and strict application of his Law and its penal sanctions.
   1.2. God requires punishment for every breach of his righteous standards of holiness; he distributes rewards for the maintenance of his standards.

2. There are two aspects to God's justice. What are they?
   2.1. *Retributive*: As an expression of his wrath against sin, every sin requires that it be called to account (Dt 32.34, 35; Rom 1.32; 2 Thess 1.8, 9).
   2.2. *Remunerative*: In response to obedience to his law, God will reward all his people (Dt 7.12, 13; Ps 58.11; Rom 2.7).
      2.2.1. Remunerative justice is not given to us for anything that we *can* do, or *have* done, or *will* do, in ourselves.
      2.2.2. On what basis are rewards given? What evidence can we provide?
      2.2.3. Rewards are given to God's people, based on Christ's righteousness that is attributed to us (Rom 3.22; 1 Cor 1.30; Phil 3.9).
   2.3. What is the fulcrum on which both God's retributive and remunerative justice rests?
      2.3.1. Christ's work. Those who reject Jesus and his work on the cross will be punished. Those who have been saved by Jesus will be rewarded (Mt 25.31-46).
   2.4. When we think of the justice of God we most often think of judgment and the punishment of the wicked.

3. What are representative, key, acts in Biblical history that demonstrate God's justice?
   3.1. As in the review of God's compassion, we could look at specific acts of judgment such as God's punishment of Cain or Lamech, the Flood, the destruction of the nations in Canaan, or the punishment of Korah and Ananias and Sapphira, etc. But instead we can think of three *defining* acts of God's justice:
      3.1.1. The judgment of Adam and Eve (and all mankind) after he/they had sinned in the Garden (Gen 3.14-19)
      3.1.2. The judgment of sin in the crucifixion of Christ on the cross.
      3.1.3. The final judgment at the last day (Heb 9.27; Heb 10.27; 2 Pt 2.9; 2 Pt 3.7).
   3.2. Note: there are many in the Church today who try to pit God's justice in the OT against his justice in the NT. They have come to the conclusion that God was more 'cruel' in the past and that now he is now more loving. They also view the penal sanctions of the OT as being inhumane. Without an exhaustive analysis of this topic, we can respond:
      3.2.1. The NT is clear that the penal sanctions of the OT were just (Heb 2.2).
      3.2.2. The NT continues examples of OT penal sanctions (e.g., Acts 5.1-11).

© James R. Hughes, 2006

3.2.3. The NT teaches that criminal actions deserves God's wrath (Rom 1.32) and are to be punished by the civil magistrate (Rom 12.17-13.7), and will be punished ultimately by God (Mt 25.41; Jude 7).
3.2.4. Jesus Christ was put to death for our sins. This indicates: 1) that God endorses capital punishment; 2) ultimately any sin we commit is a capital crime (i.e., worthy of death) in God's eyes. There would be no salvation if there were no capital punishment.

4. What is shown in this account about God's justice and compassion? (9-12)
   4.1. We see that in one act (e.g., rescuing his people from Egypt) God displays both his justice and compassion.
   4.2. God's justice and compassion are balanced and work in perfect harmony.
   4.3. Both justice and compassion are necessary; God is not God, if he is not both at the same time.
   4.4. What does this balance tell us about God's work in redemptive history?
      4.4.1. He saves some, but not all. If he punished all, his compassion (love) would not be demonstrated. If he saved all, his justice (judgment) would not be demonstrated.
      4.4.2. Note: someone might argue since God's justice was exercised in the death of Christ, and since the death of Jesus was sufficient to cover all sins, God does not *need* to send anyone to Hell. However, the fact that he does send some to Hell (Mt 25.31-46 [46]) indicates that it is necessary since God only does what is necessary.

Revelation (Neh 9.12)

1. How does this account demonstrate that God is a God of revelation?
   1.1. In what ways does God reveal himself?
      1.1.1. General (in the sense that it is available generally to a all people)
         1.1.1.1. Natural—through the created order (Ps 19.1-4; Acts 14.17)
         1.1.1.2. Innate—knowledge of God built into man (Rom 1.19, 20) and reinforced by natural revelation
         1.1.1.3. Scripture—written knowledge about God (Rom 16.26; 2 Pt 1.21; 2 Tim 3.16, 17; Heb 1.1)
         1.1.1.4. Christ—the living Word (Jn 1.4, 5 [living Word]; Col 1.15 [image of the invisible God]; Heb 1.1, 2); of course in this instance his physical presence was limited to a particular generation in a particular locale.
      1.1.2. Special (in the sense that it is limited to a few people)
         1.1.2.1. Indwelling by the HS—God makes himself known in a saving way when he implants faith in us (Ps 25.14; 2 Tim 1.14; Heb 6.4)
         1.1.2.2. Direct—either as part of the inscripturation process or as visions, direct conversation, signs, etc. before Scripture was completed (Dan 2.28; Ezk 44.2; Acts 9.4, 5; Heb 1.1).
   1.2. God gave them direction through the pillar of cloud and fire (Ex 13.21-22; Ex 40.33-38) to guide them. See also Nehemiah 9.19.
   1.3. Into what class of revelation does this cloud and pillar of fire fall? Special/Direct. It was a special sign given to the Israelites to give them immediate direction for their lives.

2. Why did God communicate his direction with a cloud and pillar of fire? What do they symbolize?
   2.1. In Canaanite and other pagan religions pillars were identified with deities. The Israelites were forbidden to make pillars (for religious purposes—not as memorials or as supports to hold up buildings), and were to destroy all they found (Ex 23.24 [pillars]; Dt 7.5 [Asherah poles]; Dt 16.22; Lev 26.1).
   2.2. Pillars were erected as memorials (Gen 28.18-22 [Jacob's stone at Bethel after his dream]; Gen 35.13-15 [another stone at Bethel]; 20 [gravestone]; Josh 24.26-27 [witness to covenant; possibly the Ten Commandments were inscribed on the pillar; even if not, like the rainbow, baptism, or a wedding ring {none of which have eyes or ears} they remind us (and God) of our covenant vows and are visible reminders that we are to keep our vows]; 2 Sam 18.18 [Absalom's pillar to himself]).
   2.3. Pillars are also symbols of strength or support:
      2.3.1. Supporting (metaphorically) the earth (Ps 75.3) or the heavens (Job 26.11).
      2.3.2. Supported the 'house' of wisdom (Prov 9.1).
      2.3.3. Paul described the reputations of James, Cephas, and John as those reputed to be pillars (Gal 2.9).
      2.3.4. The church is the pillar and foundation of truth (1 Tim 3.15).
      2.3.5. This appears to indicate the significance of victorious Christians being called pillars in the temple of God (Rev 3.12).

© James R. Hughes, 2006

2.4. Based on these considerations we can probably conclude that the pillar (cloud/fire) that God provided for the Israelites was intended to:
  2.4.1. Point to the true God, it was a pillar that symbolized God's presence, but was not manmade. This is similar to the use of natural (uncut) stone in making an altar (Ex 20.25; Josh 8.31).
  2.4.2. Remind them (as a memorial) of God's miraculous actions in rescuing them from Egypt through the plagues and crossing of the Red Sea.
  2.4.3. Act as a symbol of God's omnipotent strength that was watching over them (Ex 14.19-20).

3. Why didn't God just give Moses a map with a dated itinerary of the route they were to take; or each time they were to move on, give him verbal instructions?
  3.1. God often uses mediate means (Is 38.21 [poultice of figs]; Mk 7.33 [Jesus put his fingers in the man's ears and spit]; Mk 8.23 [spit on blind man's eyes]; Jn 9.6 [mud made with saliva on man's eyes]) to accomplish his ends.
  3.2. God uses mediate means to accommodate himself to frail creatures who often look for signs.
  3.3. God uses mediate means to teach us a spiritual lesson about the means of salvation. It is not *our* faith that saves us. It is God's work and willingness that save us. Our faith (given to us) is the *instrument* (we are saved *through* faith) for applying the healing; much like saliva was used by Jesus to heal a blind man.
  3.4. God uses mediate means to test our faith. A specific map with a dated itinerary would not engender trust in the people, since they would not have to learn to rely on God every day. We have to learn to take each day as it comes, trusting that God will lead us through this life.
    3.4.1. Lesson: This teaches us that prayer does not invalidate God's sovereignty, rather it is the ordained instrument.
    3.4.2. Lesson: This is, in many respects, similar to the situation we have with the Bible. The Bible is not a map with a dated itinerary. It is a pillar of cloud and fire. It gives us explicit direction, but it does not spell out exactly where and when we are to move. God could have chosen to communicate himself in a systematic form such as a catechism or confession or text book, but rather chose to communicate himself largely through narrative and poetry. The Bible by its very nature, teaches us to trust and wait upon God.
  3.5. We will consider further the revelation of God in next section when we look at the Law. However, before we leave this consideration we should note that miraculous signs are not sufficient to save.
    3.5.1. The people were given direct special revelation from God, yet many of them did not believe God and fell by the wayside in their unbelief.
    3.5.2. Seeing, or being the recipient of, miracles is NOT sufficient to bring people to saving faith. Men won't believe the Bible unless the Holy Spirit changes their hearts. Jesus' parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus (Lk 16.19-31) is the definitive statement against the claim for the supremacy of experiential evidence (Lk 16.30, 31): "Even if someone from the dead goes to them they will not repent." Men will twist all of their experiential evidence to fit their presuppositions.[24]
    3.5.3. To the unconverted man, miracles will prove nothing, or anything they want them to, including that God isn't really there, because the impossible is nothing more than improbable.
    3.5.4. Even if miracles were to happen today, and people admitted that they were miracles, that would not cause them to turn to Christ. Consider the reaction of the Sanhedrin in Acts 4.13-17, after Peter had healed the crippled beggar. They admitted that a miracle had happened, but they continued to reject Jesus as the Messiah.
    3.5.5. The evidence of miracles is intended primarily to confirm the messenger of God, and only occasionally brings people to faith. 'Faith healers' today do not appear to understand the lessons of Scripture about the place of the miraculous.

Commands (Neh 9.13-14)

1. Into what class(es) does the revelation mentioned in these verses fall?
  1.1. Classes: General: Natural, Innate, Scripture, Christ; Special: Indwelling by the Holy Spirit, Direct.
  1.2. The revelation mentioned in verse 13 falls into two classes: Direct and Scripture. The revelation was given in a miraculous way to the people directly through Moses. Then it was incorporated into Scripture (in Exodus, Leviticus and Deuteronomy) where it is available universally.

2. How many different words are used for 'law' in this passage? How many are used in the entire prayer?

[24] See, for example, Chapter 6, "Anomaly and the Emergence of Scientific Discoveries," in: Thomas S. Khun, *Structure of Scientific Revolutions.* University of Chicago Press: 1970.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

2.1. Regulations, laws, decrees, commands (NIV, 13); the last three are repeated (14).
2.1.1. Regulations (NKJV: ordinances) 424X: mostly justice (94) and laws (83); sometimes just judgments, ordinances, etc. The term can mean legal verdict that leads to a fixed pattern of the legal community. From this meaning ('a legal verdict of a judge') comes the idea of the 'rule of law' or case law which becomes normative for future judgments.
2.1.2. Laws 223X: mostly laws (184X); sometimes regulations, instructions, teachings, etc. In the majority of cases the term is used for commandments in the vetitive ('you shall not do this'), imperative ('do this') and jussive ('you shall do this').
2.1.3. Decrees (NKJV: statutes) (129X): mostly decrees (83); sometimes statutes, limits, ordinances, laws, etc. The term is used in a great variety of ways and has the underlying meaning of 'established'.
2.1.4. Commands (184X): mostly commands (159); sometimes orders, prescriptions, rules, laws, etc. Specific commands and decrees (that are written or verbally declared).
2.2. These four words seem to be used as synonyms to one another, and there are additional words that are not used in this prayer that also seem to be synonyms.
2.2.1. In Psalm 119.1-176, for example, these four words are used approximately 20X each; although there is some fluidity in their use with 'laws' translated as 'regulations', etc.
2.3. The idea of these four words seems to be similar to what we have today in terms of constitution, criminal code, parliamentary laws, case law, by-laws, regulations, policies …
2.4. In general there seems to be a gradation:
2.4.1. Law (the body of law, a collective, law in general; Dt 4.8)
2.4.2. Commands/Decrees (general and specific commands in the imperative)
2.4.3. Regulations (case laws given by example or developed by legal precedent)
2.4.4. But this is distinction is neither definitive nor absolute.
2.5. Why are all these words used in this passage?
2.5.1. It is a way of covering the whole, by listing the parts. Jesus and Paul do this (e.g., Mt 22.37/Mk 12.30/Lk 10.27 [quoting Dt 6.5]; 1 Thess 5.23).
2.5.2. It seems that the author of the prayer wanted to be inclusive—to include all the different kinds of laws that God enacted so that we know that it is all the law that is under consideration.

3. Where does the law come from?
3.1. In one sense, it comes from Moses (14). The law came through Moses. (Num 36.13; Neh 8.14; Neh 10.29; Jn 1.17, "command(ed/s) through Moses").
3.2. In another sense, it comes through (from) Israel.
3.2.1. God gave his laws to the nation of Israel (Dt 4.7, 8; Ps 147.19, 20; Rom 3.1, 2; Rom 9.4).
3.2.2. From them the laws were to go out to the entire world (Dt 4.6; Josh 8.34, 35; Zech 8.20-23; Mal 3.12; Mt 28.18-20).
3.2.3. Notice: that the law and the Exodus are tied together (Ex 20.1ff) and in turn they are tied to the covenant (Lev 26.14-17; Dt 7.12; Heb 8.10).
3.3. In another sense, it comes from Mount Sinai. (Ex 34.32; Lev 27.34). All explicit references to Moses in Nehemiah are in the context of the Law (Neh 1.7, 8; (Neh 8.1, 14; (Neh 9.14; (Neh 10.29; (Neh 13.1).
3.4. Ultimately, law comes form God: "You came down … you gave them" ("Book of the Law of God" Josh 24.26; "Law of God" Neh 8.8, 18; (Neh 10.28, 29; "Law of the LORD/Lord" 22X, e.g., Ex 13.9; "God's law" 4X Rom 7.22, 25; Rom 8.7; 1 Cor 9.21)
3.4.1. Notice the use of the expression "you came down". Where do we find similar constructs that speak of God looking or coming down from heaven?
3.4.1.1. Gen 11.5 at the tower of Babel
3.4.1.2. Ex 34.4 with the delivery of the Ten Commandments (this is what Neh 9.13 speaks of)
3.4.1.3. Num 11.25 where God's Spirit is being placed on Moses
3.4.1.4. Num 12.5 where God comes in a pillar of cloud to confront Aaron and Miriam.
3.4.2. What is a common theme in these passages except for Num 11.25 (and to an extent it applies even in that verse)? The holiness of God (his hatred of sin, his holy law) is displayed.

4. What specific law does the author of this prayer single out? Why?
4.1. The law of the Sabbath.
4.1.1. Note: we will deal with the Sabbath briefly when we consider 10.31, and in detail when we get to chapter 13.15-22 when we will look at its application in the context of a pagan nation. For the moment, we will only note a few aspects of the Sabbath as derived from the context of this prayer.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

4.2. Why does he mention the Sabbath specifically in this prayer?
  4.2.1. It may be because the land was given a Sabbath rest while the people were in captivity (2 Chron 36.21). Their punishment was because they neglected the Sabbath year law of Lev 25.1-7 [4] (Ex 23.10). However, this law deals with a fallow year, not with the weekly Sabbath.
  4.2.2. It may be because the key sign of their being covenant breakers was their rebellion against the Sabbath (Ex 31.16, 17; Is 56.4-8 [6]).
  4.2.3. It also may be because the Sabbath was considered to be the 'weightiest' of the commands. How does he qualify the Sabbath?
    4.2.3.1. With the word 'holy'. This may show that the Sabbath has a special place in the Law, and among the Ten Commandments.
    4.2.3.2. Holiness is God's supreme attribute. This is the only attribute that weighs in with a three-fold emphasis (Is 6.3; Rev 4.8).
    4.2.3.3. The Sabbath was blessed (set apart/sanctified/made holy) on the last day of creation (Gen 2.3; Ex 20.11).
    4.2.3.4. The Sabbath was declared to be holy by God (Ex 16.23; Ex 31.14) and is to be kept holy (Ex 20.8; Is 58.13; Jer 17.22, 24, 27).

Compassion (Neh 9.15-21)

This section surrounds a time of rebellion on the part of the Israelites' with God's compassion. God's mercy is a reminder and remedy to rebellion; a reminder (17 "remember the miracles") as they *look* back and a remedy (20 "good Spirit to instruct them") as he *leads* them back.

Provision (Neh 9.15)

1. What are the signs of God's compassion in mercy (15)?
  1.1. God gave them bread (manna) and water; the necessities of physical life.
    1.1.1. In the historical account the physical food (Ex 16.31) and water (Ex 15.22-25, 27) are provided before the giving of the Law (Ex 20.1-17). In this prayer the giving of the law (spiritual food) precedes the giving of physical food.
    1.1.2. What might be the significance of the order presented in the prayer?
    1.1.3. Abraham Maslow synthesized research related to human motivation and suggested a hierarchy of human needs. He suggested that each lower need must be met before a person's attention/desires moves to the next higher level. Once each of these needs has been satisfied, if a deficiency arises, the individual will act to remove the deficiency. The levels are (in general):
      1.1.3.1. Physiological: to satisfy hunger, thirst, bodily comforts, etc.;
      1.1.3.2. Safety/Security: to be out of danger;
      1.1.3.3. Belongingness and Love: to affiliate with others, to be accepted;
      1.1.3.4. Esteem: to achieve, to be competent so as to gain approval and recognition;
      1.1.3.5. Cognitive: to know, to understand, and explore;
      1.1.3.6. Aesthetic: to seek and create symmetry, order, and beauty;
      1.1.3.7. Self-actualization: to find self-fulfilment and realize one's potential; and
      1.1.3.8. Transcendence: to help others find self-fulfilment and realize their potential.
    1.1.4. There is a kernel of truth in what he says. For example, it is clear that most people do not care to learn how a fountain works when they are thirsty, etc.
    1.1.5. This prayer however reverses the order and reminds us that man does not live ultimately by bread and water but by the word of God (Dt 8.3; Mt 4.4 [notice that Jesus' was hungry before he faced the temptation]). The really important need for man is not to be fed with physical food and water but to believe in God as the law-giver and to obey him.
  1.2. He provided them with a dwelling place—the land.
    1.2.1. Within the temporal realm, once food and water is available, the land satisfied the next level of need: safety/security.

2. What was special about the land, according to the context of this verse?
  2.1. It had been promised to them with an oath (compare, Ex 6.8; Num 14.30).
    2.1.1. The oath was accompanied by a sign: the uplifted hand; raised hand.
    2.1.2. We use this same sign today in our courts when the judge says: "raise your right hand …".
  2.2. The emphasis on the 'the land' seems to be a key structural component of this prayer. The temporal loci associated with entry and exit from the land appear to serve as the focal points around which the prayer is structured:

© James R. Hughes, 2006

2.3. Abraham was given the land. Moses brought them to the land. They lost the land when they went into captivity. Now they were back in the land.
2.4. The land is referred to in this prayer, in the following verses: 8 land given to Abram; 15 the land to be possessed; 23 entrance into the land; 24, 25 possession and settling of the land; 35 losing the land because of disobedience; 36 re-entry to the land, but as slaves.
2.5. The Abrahamic covenant (7, 8) is the first (only) temporal covenant that applies specifically to the land.
2.5.1. When God gave them the land of Canaan, they disposed the other nations.
2.5.2. Christians, as Abraham's descendants, possess the land of 'Israel'. But Christians do not own the physical land of Israel. Through the 'eyes' of the NT we understand that the 'land' is now the whole earth. It is the possession of the Church. We understand Jesus' statement in Mt 5.5: the meek will inherit the earth to mean (at least) two things:
2.5.2.1. An eschatological possession when the saints reign with Christ (1 Cor 6.2; Rev 20.6).
2.5.2.2. A temporal possession as Christians take possession of every nation for Christ (Mt 28.19, 20). Christians will posses the gates of their enemies (Gen 24.60).

Provocation (Neh 9.16-18)

1. How did the people react to God's compassionate mercy? What characterized their response to God? (16)
1.1. They were arrogant/proud (Neh 9.16, 29) and (hard)stiff-necked (Neh 9.16, 17, 19 [19X}) [both the NKJV and NIV use 'stiff-necked' in 13 verses e.g., Ex 32.9; Ex 33.3, 5; in the remaining six the NKJV uses 'hard' as it does in the three instances in the chapter].
1.2. What does it mean for someone to be *stiff-necked*?
1.2.1. The idea is of someone who lifts his nose in the air with disdain and refuses to acknowledge God's goodness. Paul refers to the type of person in Rom 1.30.
1.3. What, in particular, is the sinful attitude of someone who is arrogant (proud) and stiff-necked?
1.3.1. Self-absorbed, concern only for himself, no real concern for others
1.3.2. Self-aggrandized, acting as if he us greater or better than others
1.3.3. Self-applauding, expressing an approval of himself
1.3.4. Self-centered, expecting others to cater to his needs and wants
1.3.5. Self-directed, a law unto himself (not guided or compelled by any outside force)
1.3.6. Self-justifying and self-righteous, assuring himself that he is okay
1.3.7. Self-sufficient, (believing) he has no need for support from others
1.3.8. Self-willed, determined to get and do exactly what he wants.
1.4. But what are they really like, especially in God's eyes?
1.4.1. It is self-evident, they are: self-deceived, self-deluded, self-destructing and self-destroying.

2. What are the particular sins of these self-filled people that the prayer mentions? (Neh 9.16-18)
2.1. There seems to be four particular sins that are mentioned
2.1.1. Disobedience to God's commands and refusal to listen (Neh 9.16, 17).
2.1.2. Failure to remember God's providences (as expressed in miracles) (Neh 9.17).
2.1.3. Rebellion against God's appointed leader (Ex 32.1; Num 14.4: questioning Moses' leadership) (17).
2.1.4. Idolatry in making the golden calf (Ex 32.4) and the blasphemy of calling the lump of molten metal 'gods'. (Neh 9.18)
2.2. Pride manifests itself in: disobedience to God, forgetfulness of God, rebellion against God's appointed authority, and idolatry before God. Notice that Paul includes all of these in his account of the self-deceived man who rejects God in Romans 1.18-32:
2.2.1. Disobedience: wicked, evil, greed, and depravity (Rom 1.29).
2.2.2. Failure to remember God's providences: not retaining the knowledge of God (Rom 1.28), not thankful (Rom 1.21).
2.2.3. Rebellion against God's appointed leader: disobedient to parents (Rom 1.30).
2.2.4. Idolatry: exchanging the glory of the immortal God for images (Rom 1.23, 25).
2.3. We can order these classes of sin into a progression: pride → disobedience → forgetfulness → rebellion → idolatry. When men think more highly of themselves than they should, they break God's commands; at first their consciences are affected, but very quickly they forget God and they compound their sins by, in particular, rebelling against him and his regents' authority. In the end they set up themselves (in the form of self-made idols) as their own standard.

3. What do we find embedded in the midst of the account of their rebellion? (Neh 9.17c)

© James R. Hughes, 2006

3.1. A recounting of God's attributes of mercy:
3.2. He is forgiving (ready to pardon), gracious, compassionate (merciful), slow to anger, abounding in kindness (love), unwilling to forsake (desert) his people.
3.3. There does not appear to be such an exhaustive list anywhere else in the Bible.
3.4. Compare: Ex 34.6, 7; Num 14.18, 19; Ps 86.5, 15; Ps 103.8-10; Ps 145.8, 9; Joel 2.13; Jonah 4.2; Micah 7.18, 19; Eph 1.6, 7.
3.5. This is an example of God providing a promise of blessing in the midst of a curse. The first instance is in Genesis 3.15. We find other examples in God's provision for Noah in the midst of the Flood (Gen 7.1); gifts given to Abram even though he had lied to Abimelech (Gen 20.14); quails in the midst of the nation's rebellion (Num 11.31-33); the second commandment's provision for rest (Ex 20.4-6). None of these examples excuse the sin, but they show how forgiving God is, in spite of our sins.
3.6. It is very difficult for us to get our minds around how truly gracious and merciful God is.
3.6.1. The words "But you are a forgiving God, gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love." are almost nothing more than words to us. We really don't understand what it means to be forgiven and in the presence of a merciful God.
3.6.2. The reason is that we are still very much like the Israelites: proud, disobedient, forgetful …
3.6.3. We have not been offended in anyway close to what God has been offended, yet we are slow to forgive and vindictive, and hold grudges a long time (sometimes taking them to the grave).
3.6.4. Jesus says we are to forgive continually (70X7 or 77 times; Mt 18.22). We don't follow his instructions and rationalize why, in each particular instance, we can make exceptions.
3.6.5. If we were punished for any and every sin we commit, we could not exist. God continues to forgive even when we don't remember to confess our sins and ask for forgiveness.

4. God will not forsake his people (see, also 19a). What is the truth about God that is taught in this statement often called?
4.1. "Perseverance of the saints." See: Dt 31.6 [Heb 13.5]; 1 Ki 8.57; Ps 106.43-46; Jn 14.17; Rom 8.35-39.
4.2. The reference in the account in Nehemiah applies to God's keeping his people while they are in this spatial/temporal realm (19-21).
4.3. But, ultimately it applies to God's keeping his people (the elect) by bringing them safely to eternity in Heaven. They can never fall from the state of grace, and will be brought to glory (Jn 10.27-29; Phil 1.6; 2 Thess 3.3; 2 Tim 1.12).
4.4. The context of the rebellion of the Israelites as mentioned in the prayer in Nehemiah 9.1-38 makes it clear that our perseverance is not dependent on our actions, but on God's mercy.
4.5. What is a by-product of the "perseverance of the saints"?
4.5.1. Often unbelievers benefit from God's care for his people (e.g., 18.16ff). God preserves the life and well-being of unbelievers to provide for his elect.

Providence (Neh 9.19-21)

1. What additional aspects of God's providence are mentioned in these verses that we have not considered thus far?
1.1. We notice that similar provisions are found here (Neh 9.19-21) as were mentioned in verses 12 (19: pillar of cloud and fire) and 15 (20: manna and water).
1.2. The provision of the Spirit.
1.3. The provision of indestructible clothing.
1.3.1. Kevlar doesn't last as long as the provision of God.
1.3.2. What does this provision teach?
1.3.2.1. To humble them and us. To remind us that everything good ultimately comes from God (Mt 7.11; James 1.17).
1.3.2.2. That we are to depend on God for all of our sustenance (Mt 6.25-27; Lk 22.35).
1.3.2.3. To obey his commands (Dt 8.1-4).
1.3.2.4. It may point to the robes of righteousness that Christ provides (Rev 7.13, 14) which are indestructible.
1.4. The provision of continuing health (their feet did not become swollen).
1.4.1. Ultimately our health is from God (Prov 3.7, 8); it is a direct blessing of being obedient to God (Dt 7.12-**15**). This does not mean that Christians will never get sick, but in general they will lead more wholesome lives than those who indulge in sin and will be protected from many/most of the pestilential diseases (e.g., AIDS).

© James R. Hughes, 2006

1.4.2. This reminds us that every breath we take and all our lives are under the direct providence of God (Acts 17.28; Job 12.10; Col 1.17; Heb 1.3).
1.4.3. Ultimately it points to eternal life in Christ (Lk 20.38; Jn 11.25).

2. What does the contrast between "your" and "Spirit" tell us?
2.1. That the Spirit is distinct from the one being addressed. This implies that the Spirit is an independent person from the LORD (Neh 9.5, 6, 7)—in this case the Father to who prayer is addressed (Mt 6.9).

3. What additional evidence shows that the Spirit is a person? (Neh 9.20)
3.1. He was given/sent to instruct the people. An impersonal force does not instruct anyone in anything.
3.2. What in the text indicates that the translators of the Bible assume (correctly) that the person is the Holy Spirit?
3.2.1. The use of the capital 's' on 'Spirit'.

4. What hint of the Trinity is found here? (Neh 9.19, 20)
4.1. The Father is 'your', the Holy Spirit is mentioned explicitly, and the Son is mentioned in typological form as the pillar of cloud and fire (Ex 14.19; Is 52.12; Lk 21.27; Acts 1.9).
4.2. This statement is an OT prelude to what Jesus mentions in the discourse in the upper room when he instituted the Lord's Supper (Jn 14.26; Jn 15.26).
4.2.1. During the first six centuries of the NT church there was a long drawn-out debate about what is called the Procession of the Holy Spirit; whether he proceeded from the Father alone or also from the Son.
4.2.2. Augustine, in particular, was concerned about Arianism and subordinationism (of the Son) and wanted to ensure that the statement of the Trinity affirmed that the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son—'double procession'.
4.2.3. As far as the Western Church is concerned this matter was finally settled by the Synod of Toledo (in 589). The Eastern Church does not list the council as one of the seven ecumenical councils and rejects the conclusions. At this Synod the Latin version of the Constantinopolitan Creed (381) was changed to read: "*Credimus in Spiritum Sanctum qui a Patre Filioque procedit*" ("We believe in the Holy Spirit, who proceeds from the Father and the Son"). This is what is called the '*filioque*' (and the son) (Rom 8.9; Gal 4.6).
4.2.4. The procession of the Holy Spirit is considered to be his personal property.

5. What is a way that we can apply these provisions to the spiritual life?
5.1. We are guided by the Pillar (God's Word) through this life. He sends his Holy Spirit to be with us (Jn 14.26; Jn 15.26) and we are now clothed in the indestructible garments of Christ's righteousness, and our feet will not become weary (we will persevere) as we travel on to glory (Is 40.30, 31).

Conquest (Neh 9.22-25)

1. What are the specific things in these verses that God did for his people?
1.1. In spite of their rebellion, God brought them through the wilderness to the edge of the Promised Land—and then into the Promised Land under Joshua.
1.2. Gave them kingdoms and nations (22)
1.2.1. Allotted to them even the remotest frontiers (NIV); divided them into districts (NKJV): Heb.: "and you allotted them for remote frontier".
1.2.2. This included the trans-Jordan kingdoms of Sihon (Heshbon) and Og (Bashan) [Num 21.21-35].
1.2.3. The possession of the land of 'Israel' and the surrounding lands is a type for the possession of the whole earth by the Church. We understand Jesus' statement in Mt 5.5: the meek will inherit the earth to mean (at least) two things:
1.2.3.1. A temporal possession as Christians take possession of every nation for Christ (Mt 28.19, 20). Christians will posses the gates of their enemies (Gen 24.60).
1.2.3.2. An eschatological possession when the saints reign with Christ (1 Cor 6.2; Rev 20.6).
1.3. Increased their numbers as the stars (23)
1.3.1. Being numbered as the stars is: a covenantal promise to Abram (Gen 22.17; Gen 26.4); used as a claim for mercy by Moses (Ex 32.13); shown in partial fulfillment (Dt 1.10; Dt 10.22; Heb 11.12); used as a restraint in the midst of sin (1 Chron 27.23); used as a subsequent covenantal promise (Jer 33.22)
1.3.2. Ultimately how is this promise fulfilled? By the Church; made up of all the elect (Rev 7.9).

© James R. Hughes, 2006

1.4. Gave them the Promised Land (Neh 9.23-25) See Dt 6.10-12.
1.4.1. To whom was this promise given? It was first given to Abram (and then to the fathers).
1.4.2. God subdued their enemies (the Canaanites) [Joshua 6.1-27; Joshua 8.1-29; Joshua 10-12]. Notice that God is the one who conquered, not man. Recall the incident when Joshua and Hur held up Moses' arms (Ex 17.10ff).
1.5. Let them deal with their enemies as they wished.
1.5.1. Put them into slavery (Dt 20.10-11), take some as wives (Dt 21.10-14), kill the rest (Dt 20.12-15). These rules applied only to the cities outside of the immediate context of Canaan.
1.5.2. In Canaan, they were to drive out or kill everyone (Ex 23.31-33; Num 33.52; Dt 7.1-6 [**2**]).
1.5.3. The statement 'deal with them as they pleased' may apply to the nations around Canaan rather than to the Canaanites themselves.
1.6. Gave them fertile land and strong/fortified cities with many provisions already available.
1.6.1. They were given all the necessities of life: houses filled with good things, wells already dug, vineyards, olive groves, and fruit trees.
1.6.2. This is an assurance that God will provide all that we need (Mt 6.25-34).
1.6.3. It also tells us that God gives good gifts to his people (Mt 7.11; James 1.17).
1.6.4. Ultimately he gives us spiritual provisions that are more important than the physical ones (Jn 4.10). But his provisions in the physical realm are a token/pledge of what he will do for his people (us) in eternity (Jn 14.2, 3; 1 Cor 2.9; 2 Tim 4.8).
1.7. Let them live full and well nourished lives (25)
1.7.1. They were given *more* than just the necessities of life.

2. What was their immediate response to the provisions from God? (25)
2.1. They reveled/delighted in God's great goodness.
2.2. Lit: "they became fat" (from the root for olive oil). This may have a double meaning:
2.2.1. A sign of blessing and prosperity, or
2.2.2. It can be used as a euphemism for stubbornness and haughtiness, and rebellion (Dt 32.15; Jer 5.28; also Is 6.10 with the same word used for dull/calloused/unreceptive heart).
2.3. Their delight in God and thanksgiving were temporary: see 26 and compare with Deuteronomy 6.11, 12 where they are warned not to forget after they become satisfied. A prophecy of their turning from God once they have the good things of life is given in Deuteronomy 31.20.
2.4. This may be why Jesus says that it is hard for the rich to enter the kingdom of heaven (Mt 19.23). They let their material possessions harden them against their need for God. Today most people in NA are relatively rich (compared with billions of people in the world, and compared with almost everyone in past centuries), so there is a great coldness and hardness because we have grown fat.

3. How are we to apply verses like these (22-25) in the NT Church?
3.1. Not by declaring our nation a theocracy and taking over nearby nations. There is no longer a nation of Israel in the OT sense. As of the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD, God ceased dealing with the nation of Israel as a nation.
3.2. We must see the application in the following ways:
3.2.1. The Church as the NT Israel is to conquer all nations for Christ (Mt 28.19, 20).
3.2.2. The conquest must be in the sense of putting them to death spiritually (dying to self) through the application of the law (e.g., Rom 7.4, 6, 9; Gal 2.19), and putting to death sin (Gal 5.24).
3.2.3. The conquest was a judgment for sin (Dt 9.4, 5). The nations in the land of Canaan had been given a period of time to repent. But if they did not repent, their judgment was pending. God carried out his judgment as per his promise (Gen 15.16). The Church must ask God to judge the nations for their sin (Ps 7.6, 8; Ps 17.13; Ps 96.10, 13; Ps 98.9; 2 Thess 1.6; Rev 6.10) to extend his righteous glory.
3.2.4. The saints must rejoice in God's judgment of the wicked (Ps 58.10, 11; Is 61.2; Rev 18.20).
3.2.5. [Aside: Apply this teaching to the Crusades]

Challenge (Neh 9.26-28)

1. How does verse 25 end? How does verse 26 open? What does this contrast tell us?
1.1. 25; With God's goodness.
1.2. 26: With a "but" or "nevertheless".
1.3. In spite of God's evident goodness, men rebel against him.
1.4. Even when they know God's goodness, men ignore it and go in the opposite direction. (Rom 1.18-21).

© James R. Hughes, 2006

1.5. Men will not be permitted to say in the judgment day: "If only God had revealed himself to me, I would have believed." Or "If God had been nicer to me I would have believed in him."
1.6. This puts the lie to people who say that God must not be good or he wouldn't allow bad things to happen. The fact is that they don't accept him, even when he does good things for them.
1.7. When bad things happen, they are quick to attribute events to God rather than Satan or sin. But they don't acknowledge good from God and are quick to falsely accuse him of being evil.

2. In what ways had they disregarded God's goodness? What is the order in the list of sins?
   2.1. *Disobedient*: Broke God's law. They did what he had commanded should not be done.
   2.2. *Rebelled against God*: Knowing that he was God, they did not care, and deliberately acted contrary to his requirements.
   2.3. *Put God's law behind their backs*: They said that his law had no relevance, and they became a law unto themselves.
   2.4. *Killed his prophets who had admonished (testified against) them*: They did away with anything that reminded them of the true God and his laws.
   2.5. *Committed awful blasphemies (worked great provocations)*: They said that the true God isn't God. They set up false gods and used God's name as slang and a swear word.
   2.6. There is a progression of aggravation; from bad to worse.

3. What relevance does this list of sins have in the context of modern NA or 21st century culture?
   3.1. We have seen the same progression and decay into grievous sin in our society:
      3.1.1. 1st his laws were ignored: e.g., laws about marriage, sexual practices, sanctity of life, the Sabbath.
      3.1.2. 2nd men admitted that there was a God but basically said that he was irrelevant and that it wasn't necessary to admit him a place in government, the courts, business, or the academy.
      3.1.3. 3rd they determined that any reference to him and his laws had to be removed from the public forum. The Ten Commandments could not be displayed publicly ("because there might be other 'standards' in our pluralistic society"), prayer in public civil contexts was outlawed ("because it might offend someone"), and mentioning God or Jesus in a public civil setting became an act of treason against the secular state ("because it was politically incorrect").
      3.1.4. 4th they ridiculed the office of pastor. At least so far, God has not permitted them to imprison and kill pastors in NA. But they mock those who profess the name of Christ and establish means of making religious assemblies difficult (e.g., through zoning laws that make building churches difficult), and at times attack religious institutions. [An example of where things are, and are going: 'An Ontario doctor may lose his medical licence for refusing to prescribe birth control pills to single women. Dr. Stephen Dawson, a family physician at a walk-in medical clinic in Barrie, is facing a professional misconduct charge because four female patients lodged formal complaints with the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario last summer. "When a physician prescribes the birth control pill to an unmarried woman, what he unwittingly does is promote premarital sex," Dr. Dawson said in an interview. "My Christian beliefs and convictions are very strong. I can't sell out to maintain my licence." The College's disciplinary committee alleges Dr. Dawson compromised his patients' mental, moral and physical health by failing to ensure their needs were met after refusing their requests for contraception. … "He's entitled to his beliefs and he is certainly entitled to express his beliefs," said Laura Shanner, who researches reproductive ethics at the University of Alberta's John Dossetor Health Ethics Centre. … "What he is not entitled to do is to deny the standard of care to his patients. He absolutely must refer patients to a practitioner who is able to deal with sexuality and reproductive issues in a non-judgmental and helpful way. "This individual has a responsibility to get out of the business where he's put in the position to have to make those choices. He is not able to deal with a very common question that faces family practitioners. Maybe he should become a pathologist and work with tissue samples and not have to get involved in people's sex lives."'[25]
      3.1.5. 5th they denied the existence of God, claiming that he is nothing more than a means of explaining what is not yet understood by "science" ('the god of the gaps'). Yet they use his name as a punctuation mark.
   3.2. We can conclude that there is nothing new under the sun (Eccl 1.10) and that the contemporary behavior is just like that of ancient Israel. This prayer is totally contemporary. It may appear to be describing events of ~3,500 years ago that happened in a desert near a town called Jerusalem. But it is actually

[25] Mary Vallis, with files from Robert Benzie, "MD under fire for denying birth control—Barrie doctor refuses to prescribe contraceptive pills to single women," *National Post*, February 22, 2002.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

describing the essence of 'natural' (man born in sin) human behavior in all places and in all times. This is the way men behave in all places and all times when they have turned their backs on God.

3.3. It is interesting to see how fuzzy ('woolly') is the thinking of people when it comes to God's law and punishment. They want God to be just, in the end, with the sins of other people, but they want him to ignore their own sin and rebellion. People want sins to be punished, just not their own. Writing computer programs teaches a person how important exactness in logic is. This same exactness should be found in law, science, political science, etc. But sadly, it is often missing—fuzzy thinking reigns. One of the constructs used in computer programming is an IF-THEN-ELSE construct. If *this* condition applies, then do *this*, else do *that*. The logic is unassailable. If it isn't set up right, the computer program does not work. When we read verses 27 and 28, it is as if we are reading an IF-THEN-ELSE statement from a computer program (so/therefore; but)—if they were obedient they would be blessed, but if not and did evil, then God would abandon them. God is entirely and totally consistent in his logic and outworking of his judgment. If we are obedient we will be blessed, if disobedient we will be cursed. There are no exceptions to this rule. (Note: of course I am assuming that: 1) those who obey have been saved by Jesus Christ. Man, as born in sin, can do nothing but disobey God, 2) the judgment may not be immediate, but ultimate).

4. Who were some of the prophets who were killed by the Jews?
   4.1. A number killed by Jezebel (1 Ki 18.4, 13; 1 Ki 19.10); Zechariah son of Jehoiada (2 Chron 24.20, 21; Mt 23.34-37 [35]); Uriah son of Shemaiah from Kiriath Jearim (Jer 26.20-23). The charge against the Jews for killing the prophets is first raised in the Bible here in Nehemiah.
   4.2. Jesus speaks of the Jewish Pharisees through the parable of the tenants who kill the servants and then the heir (Mt 21.32-46). They continued their evil practice when the killed Stephen (Acts 7.52).
   4.3. Ultimately they killed the greatest of God's prophets, Jesus Christ, a prophet: Dt 18.15, 18; Acts 3.22; Heb 1.1-3. He was killed by the Jews (Acts 2.36; Acts 4.10) as well as by the Romans.

5. What was the role of the prophets identified in this verse? (26)
   5.1. Admonish them/testify against them; i.e., to challenge them with respect to their sin and rebellion.
   5.2. To turn/return them. The goal of the admonishment is to turn back the offender so that he/she returns to keeping the covenant obligations.
   5.3. Notice in Lk 1.16, 17 John the Baptist, a prophet, is said to have been given a similar task:
      5.3.1. *Return* – John was sent to call back God's covenant people who had drifted from their spiritual heritage. As a nation they had been called back once before—from the Babylonian captivity where they were being punished for worshiping idols. God gave them a second chance to return to him through John's teaching.
      5.3.2. *Repentance* – In the spirit and power of Elijah, John would fulfill Scripture (Mal 3.1; Mal 4.5-6). As a prophet like Elijah, he was called to preach like Elijah. His message of repentance and personal reformation would challenge king and soldier, rabbi and shepherd, and clear away the legalism of the Pharisees.
      5.3.3. *Restoration* – John was sent to preach this message of unity and restore spiritual communion between the fathers and their children.
      5.3.4. *Readiness* – John was the morning-star of the reformation that prepared a people to meet the Lord. Those who have returned to their God, repented of their sins, been restored to family fellowship, and are striving to obey God, are ready to meet the Anointed One.

6. In what ways are pastors/elders in the NT Church called to the same role?
   6.1. Pastors/elders are to admonish through correction and rebuke as necessary through preaching and teaching (Col 1.28; 2 Tim 4.2 [2-5]; Titus 1.13; Titus 2.15). They are to be appreciated and respected when they admonish (1 Thess 5.12, 13). This is a difficult truth, for most people are very independent and self-willed and do not want to heed the authority of God vested in elders. They say: "Who do they think they are to be telling me what to do?"
   6.2. Pastors/elders are to call back the people from their sins through repentance (Mt 18.15-20; James 5.19-20).
   6.3. Notice that we are to admonish one another as well (Col 3.16) and to call our brother to repentance (Mt 18.15; Lk 17.3); with gentleness (Gal 6.1).

7. What was the means that God used to bring his people back to covenant obedience? (27, 28)
   7.1. He gave them over to the hands of their enemies who oppressed them.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

7.2. How did God hand over his people to the hand of their enemies?
7.2.1. The context of verses 27, 28 seems to be speaking of the period of the Judges. The preceding verses (22-25) dealt with their journey through the wilderness and the conquest of Canaan under Joshua. The following verses (esp. 30, 32, 34) appear to be referring to the time of the kings and the Babylonian captivity.
7.3. How were they handed over during the period of the Judges?
7.3.1. Each time they would drift away from God, he would raise up an enemy who would subject them to tribute and servitude.
7.4. What are some ways that God disciplines his people (the Church; and individual believers) when they are not keeping his covenant requirements (obeying his laws)? They experience difficulties in a number of areas:
7.4.1. Monetary: they are challenged with shortages, for example they don't budget well; the congregation or denomination cannot pay its pastor sufficiently or is unable to support its missionaries.
7.4.2. Physical: health may deteriorate as a direct result of sinful behaviour; congregations dry-up and die.
7.4.3. Relational: marriages breakdown or animosities in families or churches arise.
7.4.4. Psychological: they have a sense of guilt, worry, depression, doubt; expectation of revival is distant.
7.4.5. Spiritual: they are distant from God and experience coldness in prayer; worship becomes a formality; a passion for outreach and growth dies.
7.4.6. NOTE: God does not respond to every sin or every person who sins with a directly correlated punishment. Examples like Nadab and Abihu and Ananias and Saphira are the exception rather than the rule. However, the general results of evil that permeate our culture affect all believers when God's people drift away form him.

8. What, specifically, led to the people departing from God's way? Why? (28)
8.1. Being at rest.
8.2. The word used here is not the word for rest that is at the root of Sabbath, rather it is the word from which the name Noah is derived. It means: settled, such as the ark settling on the mountains, or being satisfied or appeased.
8.3. What is another way we could translate this word that could indicate the meaning? 'Satisfied'. As we noted when considering 25, they became 'fat'.
8.4. What, at root, was the reason they departed from God?
8.4.1. They were complacent.
8.4.2. Complacency is the bane of an urgent spiritual life. It militates against living vibrantly for Christ and vigorously for his cause.

9. What brought about a restoration of God's care and provision for his people? (27, 28)
9.1. His people prayed to him in heaven. The *instrumental* cause is prayer.
9.2. God heard their prayer and raised up deliverers: judges and kings. This was the *material* cause because they and their laws set the tone and pace for their society and nation. They were the 'material' God used to effect restoration.
9.3. His great compassion/abundant mercy. The *efficient* cause is God's mercy. "Out of the recurring cycles of disobedience, foreign oppression, cries of distress, and deliverance … emerges [an] important theme—the covenant faithfulness of the Lord. The amazing patience and long-suffering of God are no better demonstrated than during this unsettled period."[26]
9.4. [The efficient cause is that *by which* something is made; the instrumental cause is that *through which* something is made. The boat-builder is the efficient cause of the boat; his tools are the instrumental cause; the wood out of which the boat is made is the material cause. Note Eph 2.8: "*by* grace, *through* faith".]
9.5. Behind the efficient cause is the *final* cause—the will of God.
9.6. We have already considered God's compassion when we looked at v 17 so will not address it again.

10. How does prayer bring about a restoration of God's care and provision?

[26] Introduction to Judges; *NIV Study Bible*, p. 323.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

10.1. Not through our informing God of our needs while in a state of oppression. God knows our state and condition at all times. In fact, he may have directly inflicted it upon us as a corrective.
10.2. Rather, through the impact it has on *us*:
10.2.1. The prayer of *adoration, praise, and thanksgiving* makes us aware of our relationship to God—he is the sovereign creator who administers his will providentially.
10.2.2. The prayer of *petition* humbles us and makes us dependent on God—we are creatures who are dependent on his provisions.
10.2.3. The prayer of *confession* makes us aware of God's holiness and the depth of our sin.
10.2.4. Our relationship with God is only restored when we bow before God in two senses: 1) we kneel before him as creatures before the creator; 2) we kneel before him as sinners before the Holy One.

11. How does God raise up deliverers today?
11.1. The primary means is through godly leaders. People follow leaders more than they will admit. Leaders are not necessarily politicians or generals in the army. Leaders include academics, editors of media content, and personalities in sports or entertainment. These people lead by example and by instruction or precept. They set the tone for a culture. Similarly, in the Church the leaders include the pastor and elders, but also those who, in one way or another, influence opinion (e.g., through gossip, threats, use of money, etc.).
11.2. We are to pray for those in authority over us in the government/the state (1 Tim 2.1-3). We are to pray that God would raise up leaders in all areas of social life that can direct us in the way of righteousness.

12. How many times did God hear the prayers of his people and restore them? (28)
12.1. Many times; time after time.
12.2. This is similar to what Jesus says in Mt 18.22 about forgiving seventy-seven (or seventy times seven) times.
12.3. God provides an example of how we are to live with respect to our family, church family, neighbours, and work/school mates. There is no excuse for us being hard hearted. [Refer to the notes on verse 17].:
12.4. We must be thankful for the fact that God forgives us time after time! (Ps 103.9-14).

Captivity (Neh 9.29-31)

There are a number of themes found in these verses that we have already considered in our study of earlier parts of this prayer and we won't consider again, including:

- Continual rebellion in spite of warnings [29; 26, 28]
- Stubbornness, pride, and being stiff necked [29; 16, 17]
- Refusing to listen to, heed, or pay attention to God [29, 30; 17]
- Sinning against God's ordinances, judgments, laws [29; 16, 26].
- A call to return to God's law [29; 26]
- God's patience, graciousness and mercy—'slow to anger' and 'compassionate' [30, 31; 17c, 19, 27]
- God's Spirit sent to instruct and admonish [30; 20) through the prophets [30; 26]
- God's not abandoning (utterly consuming or forsaking) his people [31; 19].

However there are two new ideas that are mentioned in this passage that we should consider.

1. What additional information about God's dealing with his people are presented in verses 29 and 30 that we have not encountered before?
1.1. Living by God's law (29) NIV: "… your ordinances, by which a man will live if he obeys them." NKJV: "… your judgments, Which if a man does, he shall live by them."
1.2. Where else do we find this idea in the Bible?
1.2.1. Lev 18.5; Ezk 20.11, 13, 21 (see, also Dt 32.47; Prov 3.1, 2). What do these verses teach? These verses, in their broader covenantal context (blessings and curses), seem to be referring to the fact that if a person keeps God's law he will continue to live (in this world) and live a blessed life. But, if he disobeys them, he will forfeit his life, if not in practice and immediately), then in principle and ultimately.
1.2.2. Luke 10.28; Rom 10.5; Gal 3.12. What do these verses teach? These verses seem to change the meaning slightly to refer to spiritual life—specifically eternal life (Lk 10.25). They seem to be teaching that if a person keeps the law in its entirety he will obtain Heaven.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

1.2.3. The NT interpretation does not really change the meaning of the message given by Moses. Jesus' interpretation of the OT tells us how we are to understand the OT passage. Paul applies the OT passage in the same way that Jesus applies it to the 'expert in the law'.

1.2.4. There is in fact no contradiction. Living in this life and living eternally are both tied together with obedience to God's covenantal requirements.

1.2.4.1. A person is not really alive unless he is obeying the commands of God. If he is not obeying the commands of God, he is dead in sin. He is separated from God and is spiritually dead now, will die physically, and will remain eternally spiritually dead (separated from God). This is the same way that we are to apply the statement of God: "But you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die." (Gen 2.17) Adam died the moment he ate the fruit. He died immediately, spiritually; and died with a delayed sentence, physically; and faced the prospect of eternal death (eternal separation from God) if he did not repent of his sin and believe in the promised redeemer (Gen 3.15).

1.2.4.2. If a person is not alive in Christ he cannot obey God's commands. He is physically and spiritually incapable of doing anything that would please God (i.e., obeying his law) because his heart is totally depraved and full of only wickedness (Gen 6.5; Gen 8.21; Job 15.16; Jer 17.9; Eph 2.1-3; Titus 3.3).

1.2.4.3. A person, who keeps any of the law, is alive in Christ and is living by the law. (Eph 2.3-5, 8-10) No (human) person keeps all of the law perfectly. Even those who have been saved by Christ continue to sin (Rom 7.7-25). But if they are able to obey *any* part of the law of God (i.e., they do it for God/Christ) it is because they are alive in Christ.

1.2.4.4. A person who is alive in Christ will live in this life and eternally. A believer is blessed in this life and forever (Ps 1.1-3).

1.3. The Babylonian Captivity/Exile (30) NKJV: "Therefore You gave them into the hand of the peoples of the lands." NIV: "so you handed them over to the neighboring peoples."

1.3.1. Who were these peoples?

1.3.2. Some of these peoples were very close to them (even living among them) such as the Philistines. They temporarily resisted (and even subjugated them).

1.3.3. However, based on the position of this statement in the prayer (i.e., the last historical event before the appeal for mercy) the 'people of the lands' are the 'neighbouring peoples'. This seems to be referring to the larger context of neighbours beyond the broadest extent of Israel's territory (i.e., the Babylonians).

1.3.4. Babylonian Captivity prophesied: Is 39.6, 7 [~715 BC]; Jer 20.4; Jer 25.2-11.

1.3.5. Babylonian Captivity fulfilled: 2 Ki 24.11-16 [March 16th, 597 BC]; 2 Ki 25.1-21; Jer 52.28-30.

1.3.6. We are told that it was mostly the leaders, teachers, land owners, and wealthy of Judah who were taken into captivity; not every single person who lived in Judah (Jer 39.10).

2. Compare verses 19 and 28 what do we find that appears to be a contradiction? How can we explain it?

2.1. In one case God did not forsake or abandon his people. In another case it appears that he did. In both verses, in the Hebrew, the same word is used. The NIV's translation uses the same word for the translation in both verses.

2.2. How can we explain this apparent contradiction? The same Hebrew word is used again in verse 31. It, along with the account in verse 30, seems to provide the explanation: although God *temporarily* abandons or forsakes his people by handing them over (30) to their enemies, he does not abandon or forsake them entirely. The extra words added by the author of this prayer in 31 (NIV: 'not put and end'; KJV: 'not utterly consume') seem to provide additional definitional context for the word 'abandon'. Any abandonment of his people to enemies was not permanent but temporary, to bring them to correction.

2.3. How can we apply this idea to the Christian life or the life of the Church?

2.3.1. God disciplines his children and uses the times of *apparent* abandonment as a means of bringing his people to repentance (Heb 12.5-12; Rev 3.19).

2.3.2. Although it may *appear* that God has abandoned us (his people), he in fact never abandons them (Ps 60.1; Lam 5.19-21; Rom 8.28-31, 35-39).

Confession (Neh 9.32-35)

1. In this section we are introduced to additional specific attributes of God that were not recorded in the previous sections of the prayer. What are these attributes?

© James R. Hughes, 2006

1.1. [Note we covered God's justices when we looked at verses 10, 11.]
1.2. A God of special relationships
1.3. A Great God
1.4. A God who keeps his covenant of love (covenant and mercy)
1.5. A God who is faithful.

2. What does the expression "our God" teach about God?
   2.1. He is a God of special relationships: "*our* God." This is used only used in 32 in this prayer.
   2.2. He aligns himself with some portions of mankind and not with others.
   2.3. On what basis does he make this alignment? Not on the basis of anything special in the individuals that make up the group or on the basis of anything special in the group as a whole. The basis for his alignment with any portion of mankind is his free good pleasure, will, and choice. It is through his grace and love that he makes the alignment (Dt 7.7-11 [note 9 "your God"]).

3. How does Nehemiah use the expression "our God"? (Neh 4.4, 9, 20; Neh 5.9; Neh 6.16; Neh 10.32-39, and Neh 13.2, 4, 18, 27)
   3.1. It occurs 18X in 17 verses. It is used in the following ways:
      3.1.1. As encouragement for God's people to have trust and faith, because God will defend and protect his people: Neh 4.20; Neh 6.16; Neh 13.2.
      3.1.2. As a reference to God's presence among his people: references to "House of our God" [Neh 10.32, 33, 34, 36, 37, 38, 39; Neh 13.4] and "altar of LORD our God" [Neh 10.34].
      3.1.3. God dealing with them personally because of their sin: Neh 13.18, 27.
      3.1.4. As a reminder that they shouldn't sin because they have a relationship with God: Neh 5.9.
      3.1.5. In prayer when making petitions to God: Neh 4.4, 9. In this latter case what does it remind us of? The prayer Jesus taught his disciples" "Our Father in Heaven."

4. Who are the people that can say: "Our God"?
   4.1. Only those who have trusted in Jesus as their saviour and have repented of their sins can call God, "their God."
   4.2. In the OT this included all those who were aware of their finite creature-hood and sinful status before God and looked for the coming promised Messiah who would pay the debt of their sin. They understood the sacrifices of the old economy could not really pay the debt of their sin but pointed to the one who could. In the new economy it includes those who look back on Christ's sacrificial and atoning death as having been offered in their place.
   4.3. When we consider the expression: "God is our God," how are we to address the following ideas:
      4.3.1. God is our personal possession. God owns us, not the other way around. What makes the relationship between God and his people a personal relationship is not that we choose God, but that he chooses us.
      4.3.2. God is a local deity of a group (tribe, city, nation) of people (c.f.; Gen 31.19; Judges 18.14; 1 Ki 20.23, 28; 2 Chron 32.13-19). Household Gods are idolatry 2 Ki 23.24. God is the only God and the God over all the universe; since he made it (title "Maker Heaven and Earth": Ps 115.15; Ps 124.8; Ps 134.3; Ps 146.6; Acts 17.24; Rev 4.11) and owns it (Ex 9.29; Ps 24.1; Ps 50.12). Note Exodus 19.5 speaks of both personal relationship and God's over-arching ownership of the world.
      4.3.3. "That is just your interpretation of how god is to be understood. For the Moslems or Hindus it is the same god, just in a different form." God is not really God unless he is God as he has revealed himself in the Bible; the Bible teaches what we *must* believe about God. Other religions create gods that are not God. Because they make gods after their own imaginations, the trans-universal God is in fact not their God. Their gods are false gods and they do not know, or have, the true God as their God in a personal way.

5. In what ways is God great, as identified in this prayer? (32)
   5.1. In Nehemiah 9.19 his compassion is called great in the NIV (much/numerous/abundant) [NKJV: 'manifold mercies'] and in Nehemiah 9.27 in the NIV (much/numerous/abundant) [NKJV: abundant mercies].
   5.2. In Nehemiah 9.31 in the NIV and NKJV his mercy is called great (much/numerous/abundant).
   5.3. In Nehemiah 9.25, the NIV and NKJV call his goodness great (same word as used in 32).

© James R. Hughes, 2006

5.4. In Nehemiah 9.35 in the NIV his goodness is called great (much/numerous/abundant). [It appears that the NKJV here translates with a dynamic equivalent rather than in a more literal manner: "many good *things* that You gave them".]
5.5. How is 'great' defined in context?
5.5.1. Through the use of synonyms: mighty and awesome.
5.5.2. It is his might and his awesomeness that make him great.
5.5.3. It appears that the author of this prayer uses different, synonymous, terms not to list all of God's attributes (which would be impossible; God is infinite) but rather to focus on a set of attributes that encompass the whole.
5.5.4. We have noted previously that the use of three terms (Mk 12.30; 1 Thess 5.23; Col 3.16; Mk 12.30) to encompass the entirety of what is being described.
5.6. What is being encompassed by the use of these terms (great, mighty, awesome)?
5.6.1. His omnipotence is being described. We could list other synonyms such as strength power, loftiness.
5.7. To what do these three terms direct our attention?
5.7.1. His covenant.
5.7.2. This seems to be incongruous. We would expect that these terms might be used to direct us to his creative acts or his acts of wonder such as the miracles in Egypt. For example we might expect the author of the prayer to have said: "Oh our God, the great, mighty and awesome God, who spoke and created this world out of nothing in the space of six days …" or "Oh our God, the great, mighty and awesome God, who performed miracles in Egypt and at the Red Sea …"
5.7.3. But we find instead a reference to the covenant.
5.7.4. How do we connect these attributes of God with the covenant? It seems that the connection is through his providential governance of the created world of nature and men. He is working all things for his glory and the good of his covenant people.

6. What similarities do we find in the prayer recorded in Nehemiah 1.1-11; specifically in verse 5?
6.1. Two of the terms are the same as those found in Nehemiah 9.32. They are attributes which connect God with his covenant.

7. What is the Covenant of Love?
7.1. It appears that the covenant being considered is the covenant made with Abraham (8, 12).
7.2. [Note: for additional information on the Covenant of Love, refer to the notes on Nehemiah 1.5.]
7.3. When we looked at verses 7 and 8 in this prayer we noted that the author of this prayer appeals to the covenant made with Abram. We won't consider the details of the covenant made with Abram/Abraham again. However we can note a few key points:
7.3.1. Verses 7 and 8 contain the only references to Abram/Abraham in the book of Nehemiah, so his mention in the context of the covenant appears to be an important one.
7.3.2. The covenant with Abram was a covenant of selection.
7.3.3. This covenant is the first one (only temporal covenant) that applies specifically to the land, nation, and city.

8. How is the author of this prayer using the "covenant of love" as the basis for his appeal in this prayer?
8.1. He is reminding God of his own statement, that the people were his special chosen people (Dt 7.7-12).
8.2. He is reminding God of his promise to fulfill the covenant made with Abraham.
8.2.1. Examples of God remembering his covenant with Abraham as the basis for acting: Ex 2.24; Lev 26.42; 2 Ki 13.23; 1 Chron 16.15-18; Ps 105.8-11; Acts 3.24-26.
8.3. His appeal is based on the eternal Covenant of Love (or Grace) as it is offered repeatedly to mankind, but particularly on the Abrahamic enactment. Specifically, the author of this prayer is claiming special status for Israel, the returned captive Jews who are the inheritors of the land.

9. What attribute of God is mentioned in 33? What is the context?
9.1. God is faithful (only place in the prayer that God is called faithful).
9.2. In what context is God's faithfulness described?
9.2.1. With justice. There are a few other examples in the OT where the two Hebrew words are used together (e.g., Ps 143.1).
9.2.2. Some OT passages do have essentially the same concept (translated the same in NIV): Dt 32.4; Ps 89.14; Ps 111.7; Is 42.3.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

9.3. In the NT the equivalents (righteous and truth) appear together (Eph 5.9; Eph 6.14).
9.4. Similar concepts appear together in English in the NT:
9.4.1. Mt 23.23: (τὴν κρίσιν καὶ τὸ ἔλεος καὶ τὴν πίστιν);
9.4.2. 1 Jn 1.9: (πιστός ἐστιν καὶ δίκαιος);
9.4.3. Rev 19.11 (ιστὸς καὶ ἀληθινός, καὶ ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ κρίνει).
9.5. What is God's faithfulness?
9.5.1. Keeping his covenant of love (32) (Dt 7.9; Ps 25.10).
9.5.2. Associated with his love and compassionate mercy (Ex 34.6; Ps 25.10; Ps 57.3; Ps 86.15).
9.5.3. Surrounding him (Ps 89.8).
9.5.4. Extensive (Ps 36.5), and lasting (Ps 100.5; Ps 117.2; Ps 146.6).
Keeping promises (Ps 145.13 NIV [see footnote].
9.5.5. Rewarding justice (Is 61.8).

10. What is the structure of the confession in this prayer? (Neh 9.32-34)
10.1. Appreciation (praise) of God's attributes and character (32) also (35)
10.2. Appeal to God to consider their hardship (32)
10.3. Acceptance of God's justice in sending the hardship as punishment (33)
10.4. Acknowledgement of their corporate sins (34)
10.5. What do these terms bring to mind that provides a definition of prayer?
10.5.1. *Shorter Catechism* Q98: "What is prayer?" A98: "Prayer is an offering up of our desires unto God for things agreeable to his will, in the name of Christ, with confession of our sins, and thankful acknowledgement of his mercies."
10.5.2. The entire prayer, and this section in particular, includes these aspects of the prayer: offering desires (appeal, 32), to God ("our God"; 32), agreeable to his will (acceptance of his justice, 33), confession of sin (acknowledgement of corporate sin, 34), and thankfulness for his mercies (appreciation of his attributes, 32; also 35).
10.5.3. The only item from the *Shorter Catechism's* answer that is missing is offering up in the name of Christ. In the OT economy a true prayer offered to God was offered in the name/will of Christ, even though the position of Christ in the triune nature was not fully understood. The fullness of the revelation of the Trinity had not been given until the time of the appearance of the Son as the living Word.

11. Who is included in the lists of sinners? (Neh 9.32, 34) Why?
11.1. 'Us': kings, leaders, priests, prophets, fathers, and all your people.
11.2. Why does the prayer list these categories of people (kings, leaders, priests, prophets, fathers)?
11.2.1. Why not shepherds, goldsmiths, camel breeders, and carpenters, etc.?
11.2.2. The point seems to be that the leaders in civil government, church, and family (the three institutions established by God) are singled out.
11.2.3. When the leaders of these institutions fail to keep the covenant in the service of obedience they drag with them the rest of society.
11.2.4. Another reason for listing the leaders is that they represent federally, within the covenant relationship, the people. There is a corporate accountability for sin represented by the covenanted heads of the covenanted communities.

12. What do we find is the nature of the confession of sin in this part of the prayer?
12.1. It accepts total responsibility (the leaders and every individual: "us"). There is no blame casting as we find with Adam and Eve when they are confronted with their sin.
12.2. It accepts the seriousness of sin. There is no rationalizing or minimizing the sin.
12.3. The great contrast to our own society is that sins of every kind are minimized and rationalized. Sin is denied and called 'unsociable behaviour'; which is viewed as disease or the results of an unhealthy childhood. In these rationalizations, an individual is able to project the cause and consequences of his actions on others.
12.4. It is easy for us to say: "Yes but … their sins of idolatry were serious … our own sins are little in comparison …" We must realize that every sin is grievous (James 2.10) and accept responsibility for out actions. And then we must confess our sin.
12.5. This confession also points out the importance of having leaders in both church and state (Ezra and Nehemiah were working together) confess corporately the sins of their nation.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

12.6. What other prayers in the Bible are similar prayers of corporate confession and petition? (Dan 9.4-19 [5, 8, 11, 15]; Judges 10.10-16 [brief]; 1 Sam 7.6 [brief]; Ps 106.6; Jer 14.7-9; Lam [Lam 3.37; Lam 5.16].)

13. How do they accept the punishment that was meted out by God as a result of their sin? (33)
    13.1. They accept it as just. Why?
        13.1.1. Because the judge of all the earth does right (Gen 18.25; Ps 145.17).
        13.1.2. Sin deserves to be punished (Ps 119.75; Heb 2.2).

14. What exacerbates sin and increases the need for confession? (35)
    14.1. Rebelling in the midst of blessing from God.
    14.2. Blessings from God can lead to temptation and complacency (Neh 9.25, 28).
    14.3. We might try to excuse someone who committed a crime out of desperation (Prov 6.30, 31). But there can be no excuse for someone who commits crimes from a position of provision and privilege.
    14.4. The sin of idolatry wells up in every heart but it seems to come to the forefront just when God is being most gracious because it is then that people begin to think that they can provide for themselves.
    14.5. We should not be like the pagans who reject the self-revelation of God and do not give thanks (Rom 1.21-23). Instead we should almost go to the other extreme in thanksgiving so that we will always remember that we are dependent creatures—dependent on the great providential provider.

Cry (Neh 9.36-37)

1. What are the component complaints of their cry?
    1.1. *Slaves*: they under the rule and dominion of foreign kings who own their bodies and cattle. They don't own anything (or very little of their own).
    1.2. *Subjects*: under the hand of foreigners in the land given to our forefathers. They do not govern themselves or don't have a say among those who govern them.
    1.3. *Surcharges*: the good produce (bounty) of the land is going to others. They are taxed oppressively, beyond 'normal' taxation levels.
    1.4. *Subservience*: they are at the whim of others, at their pleasure. They are pawns in others' schemes.
    1.5. *Stricken*: they are in great distress. They are struggling to make it through this life.

2. What is the reason that they are in this distress?
    2.1. The author of this prayer acknowledges that it is because of their sin. This is the only place in the prayer where the actions that led to their oppression are called 'sins'. [Note Neh 9.2]
    2.2. There are four primary Hebrew word-roots that are translated as sin.
    2.3. The particular word used in verse 37 (and 2) is the most common term, and means missing the mark or deviating from the goal. This word does not deal with motivation but concentrates on visible deviation from the moral norm as expressed in God's law.
    2.4. Other terms refer to actions in breach of relationships, such as rebellion; perversion or twisting; straying from the correct path. There are also terms for acting wickedly and doing mischief to others.
    2.5. Is there any significance in the use of this particular term?
        2.5.1. It seems that the author of the prayer used a general term to cover all cases of disregard for God's law.
        2.5.2. With his concern for the various classes of law (Neh 9.13, 14), their not obeying God's commands (16), and "putting God's law behind their backs" (Neh 9.26) it seems appropriate that he chose to use a term for sin that deals with deviation from God's moral standard.

3. What are the sins recounted in this prayer?
    3.1. Rebellion in the wilderness and suggestion of a return to Egyptian slavery (Neh 9.16-17).
    3.2. Idolatry with the golden calf (Neh 9.18).
    3.3. Provoking God with their disobedience once in possession of Canaan, even to the extent of killing the prophets and committing blasphemies (26).
    3.4. Arrogant abuse of God's favour and patience (Neh 9.28, 29).
    3.5. Contempt for the good land God had given them, with no thanksgiving (Neh 9.35).
    3.6. Their sins as a nation covered the spectrum of possible sins:
        3.6.1. They broke both sections of the Ten Commandments; not fulfilling their duties to God or man.
        3.6.2. As we noted when we looked at verse 26 there was a progression of aggravation in each generation—from bad to worse.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

3.7. Reversals occurred when God brought revival and caused the people to fall on their knees in repentance.

4. How can we apply this plaintive cry?
   4.1. Unbelievers are in this situation: slaves to Satan, subjects of his kingdom, paying with their health and wealth to serve Satan, at his whim when tempted, and in spiritual poverty—they are on their way to eternal destruction.
   4.2. However this prayer is written on behalf of believers who have assembled to confess their sins (Neh 9.2). The refrain of rebellion in the face of God's gracious compassion and kindness—disobedience, rebellion, murder, awful blasphemies, evil, arrogance, sinning, being stiff-necked, refusing to listen—points to our own tendencies.
      4.2.1. How is the Church affected with the equivalents? False worship, coveting, hatred of a brother in Christ, rationalization …
      4.2.2. Christians can be, temporarily, enslaved by Satan. When this happens their situation is in many respects the same as that of unbelievers, except that it is not final/eternal but temporal and, thankfully, temporary.
   4.3. What must be our response when we are, temporarily, under the dominion of Satan? We must confess our sins and acknowledge to God that we are in such distress that the only way of escape is through his provision for our safety.
   4.4. The last words of the prayer are poignant: "we are in great distress". There has been no generation in the history of the Church when this could not be said. This prayer is given in the context of revival and renewal. How can we prepare for renewal? How can we be renewed?
      4.4.1. By an awareness of God's greatness and holiness and of the depth of our sin.
      4.4.2. By corporate and personal confession.

Specifics

1. What are some observations we can make about prayer from this exemplar?
   1.1. This is the longest prayer recorded in the Bible. Solomon's prayer in 1 Ki 8.22-53 is slightly shorter (closer in length in Hebrew than in English).
   1.2. The length of this prayer is am example for (elder-led) formal prayers used in public assemblies.
   1.3. It may give us an indication of what prayer should be like in public worship.

2. What is the source for this prayer? Where does the author find the material for inclusion in this prayer?
   2.1. It has been noted that there are over 200 quotations and allusions from the rest of the OT found in this prayer.
   2.2. Tamara Cohn Eskenazi of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion (Los Angeles, CA) in a paper entitled: *Nehemiah 9-10: Structure and Significance*, says "Although certain overarching themes are clear, such as God's compassion, righteousness and generosity, contrasted with Israel's infidelity, the details are intricate. For understandable reasons, very few scholars seem to have had the interest—or stamina—to plow through this large quantity of intricate cross references and allusions in order to discern the numerous subtleties of Nehemiah 9.1-38."
   2.3. The only places we find, what appears to be, a direct quotation from elsewhere in the OT is in verses 17b and 18. They are almost directly quotes from Ex 34.6 and Ex 32.8. It is interesting to note the reversal of the order. Here, God's compassion precedes their sin with the calf.
   2.4. In chapter 2 ("Scripturalization in the Telling of History: Nehemiah-9") in *Praying by the Book*, Judith Newman notes the historical elements found in the prayer in Nehemiah 9.5-37. She argues that the use of traditions in prayer is (e.g., creation, promises to the patriarchs, slavery, exodus, providence in the wilderness, and possession of Canaan) was a means of remembering the past. Thus, the prayer in Nehemiah 9.1-38 contains many allusions to biblical history to remind the hearers of the past. Newman says that the prayer "appropriated biblical language in the retelling of history from creation to the contemporary period of Persian subjugation in early post-exilic Israel"[27]
   2.5. What other prayers in the Bible use a mosaic of scripture references?
      2.5.1. Mary's praise (Luke 1.46-55). Mary, as a young woman, would have had less formal training in the Scriptures than a typical Jewish male. Yet she shows a remarkable understanding of the teachings of the OT as she skilfully weaves her magnificent composition.

[27] Newman, Judith H; *Praying by the Book: The Scripturalization of Prayer in Second Temple Judaism* – SBL Early Judaism and Its Literature 14. Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1999, p. 118.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

3. What does the use of quotations and allusions from the rest of the OT teach us about prayer?
   3.1. This prayer, along with Mary's prayer-psalm, shows us how saturated our minds should be in the Bible, and especially the Psalms.
   3.2. They teach us that it is proper, prudent, and pleasing to use the Bible as our source material for prayer.

4. Who is the author of this prayer?
   4.1. Three primary suggestions come to mind: Ezra, Nehemiah or an unnamed Levite. Or it could have been composed by a committee (e.g., Ezra and Nehemiah working together; or a group of Levites).
   4.2. The prayer certainly has a coherency to it, which gives the impression of its having been composed by a single person, rather than a committee (although it is possible for 'committees' to produce good work (*Westminster Confession of Faith*, Gilbert & Sullivan, Rogers & Hammerstein), it is more usual for a single person to compose a memorable piece of work, even if others offer suggestions.
   4.3. What evidence is given in chapter 9 that could point to the Levites (or one of them) as the author?
      4.3.1. It was voiced by the Levites on the people's behalf (4, 5).
      4.3.2. This prayer could have been the concluding part of the Levites' prayer.
      4.3.3. It could have been composed as a Psalm (by a Levite) for congregational singing. But it is not set out as Psalm in poetic style [e.g., with parallel thoughts] or structured as poetry in the Masoretic text.
      4.3.4. It appears to have been composed as a prayer to be offered on behalf of the people: see uses of 'we' and 'us' in Neh 9.32, 33, 36, 37.
   4.4. What evidence is there that Ezra is the author?
      4.4.1. The LXX has a reference at the beginning of verse 6 that says that Ezra came forward and spoke the words: καὶ εἶπεν Ἔσρας Σὺ εἶ αὐτὸς Κύριος μόνος.
      4.4.2. The Masoretic text does not have this addition. The LXX translators may have inserted this statement as conjecture.
      4.4.3. The prayer actually begins in verse 5 with direct address, and the insertion at the start of verse 6 seems out of place.
      4.4.4. However, it is possible that the LXX translators had access to traditions that we do not know about any longer. Note the similarities in Ezra 9.7 with Nehemiah 9.32, 34, 36; and Ezra 9.13 with Nehemiah 9.33.
   4.5. It could be a prayer of Nehemiah.
      4.5.1. Compare Nehemiah 1.5 with Neh 9.32. Both of these passages are from prayers.
      4.5.2. Of course, the fact that similar phrases are used does not mean it comes from the same author.
      4.5.3. The expression in Neh 1.5 and Neh 9.32 could have been common idiom used in prayer in that day.
      4.5.4. Note that the Ezra is mentioned extensively in chapter 8 (Neh 8.1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 9, 13, 18) and in chapter 12 (Neh 12.1, 26, 33, 36). But he is, apparently, not mentioned in the list of those who signed the covenant (in chapter 10). It is hard to imagine that he would not have signed the covenant, especially after having been so involved in calling the people to repentance earlier (Ezra 9.1-15; Ezra 10.1-44). It may be that Ezra was not present during the events recorded in Nehemiah 9.1-38 and Nehemiah 10.1-39. [See the notes for Neh 10.1-27, under *Personal*, for an alternative explanation of Ezra's presence at the signing of the covenant.]
   4.6. It is probably best to conclude that since the book of Nehemiah is about Nehemiah, his prayers, and his work of reform; that this is an account of one of his prayer.

Summary

1. What is the main theme running throughout this prayer?
   1.1. Adoration of God, his name, attributes, and works in creation and providence.
      1.1.1. His name (10) is representative of his essence and being: 'God' (Neh 9.5, 17, 31, 32); 'LORD' (Neh 9.5, 6); 'LORD God' (Neh 9.7).
      1.1.2. How many times is God referred to in this prayer? He is referred to as 'you' or 'your' 80-90 times (depending on the translation) in every verse of the prayer, except in 18 (which is a continuation of the sentence started in verse Neh 9.17).

2. What are some of the goals of this prayer?
   2.1. Distinguish the holy Creator from unholy sinners, to teach dependence and inspire worship.
   2.2. Reflect, recollect, and recount God's providential work in history.
   2.3. Recount sin to call for confession, repentance, and renewed dedication.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

2.4. Show God's gracious compassion and care for his people through the centuries even when the people are rebellious and disobedient.
2.5. Appeal for forgiveness based on God's creative majesty, faithfulness to his covenant promise, and compassion.

3. What have learned about God from this prayer? What are some of the attributes of God that have been recounted for us in this prayer?
   3.1. He is a God who:
      3.1.1. is Worthy of all praise (Neh 9.5b, 6)
      3.1.2. is Independent self-existent (Neh 9.6)
      3.1.3. is Creative (Neh 9.6)
      3.1.4. Sovereignly rules in providence (Neh 9.6)
      3.1.5. Elects and predestines his people (chose Abram) (Neh 9.7)
      3.1.6. is Love (named him Abraham—gave him a new name) (Neh 9.7)
      3.1.7. makes Covenants (Neh 9.8)
      3.1.8. keeps Promises (Neh 9.8)
      3.1.9. is Righteousness (Neh 9.8)
      3.1.10. Sovereignly owns and governs the nations (Neh 9.8)
      3.1.11. is Compassionate (Neh 9.9, 12)
      3.1.12. is Omnipotent (Neh 9.10, 11)
      3.1.13. is Just (Neh 9.10, 11)
      3.1.14. Revels himself (Neh 9.12)
      3.1.15. is a Law-giver (Neh 9.13)
      3.1.16. Providentially provides (Neh 9.15)
      3.1.17. is Merciful (Neh 9.17c, 19a)
      3.1.18. is a Trinity (Neh 9.19, 20)
      3.1.19. forms special relationships (Neh 9.32)
      3.1.20. is Great (Neh 9.32)
      3.1.21. is Faithful (Neh 9.33)
   3.2. Where else in so few verses [18 verses; Neh 9.5-20, 32, 33] could we get so much doctrine about God as in this prayer?
      3.2.1. Yet in this prayer we are not burdened with the abstract thinking of a systematic theology textbook. The attributes of God are given in a historical context that places God over the space/time realm.
      3.2.2. Prayer *is* worship (adoration, praise) of God and it puts us in our place by reminding us that we are creatures who are fully dependent on him.
   3.3. A key aspect of God's character that is recounted in this prayer is his gracious compassion.
      3.3.1. It is shown repeatedly (e.g., Neh 9.17, 19, 27, 28, 31).
      3.3.2. This is in spite of the sin of his chosen people.
      3.3.3. This provides encouragement for us. It does not provide an excuse for sin; but it does teach us that God will discipline, recall, and save.

4. What are some of the particular instances of God's goodness to Israel recounted in this prayer?
   4.1. Call of Abraham (Neh 9.7) and the covenant God made with him to give the land of Canaan to him (Neh 9.8)
   4.2. Deliverance of Israel out of Egypt (Neh 9.9-11)
   4.3. Guiding the people in the wilderness (Neh 9.12, 19)
   4.4. Delivering the Law through Moses on Mount Sinai (Neh 9.13)
   4.5. Giving them the Sabbath (Neh 9.14) [not the use of 'remember']
   4.6. Provisioning and protecting them in the wilderness (Neh 9.15, 20, 21)
   4.7. Providing his good Spirit to instruct them (Neh 9.20)
   4.8. Giving them the land of Canaan (Neh 9.22-25)
   4.9. His willingness to pardon and save (Neh 9.17b, 27)
   4.10. Providing prophets (Neh 9.26)
   4.11. Being patient with them (Neh 9.30, 31).

5. What can we learn about prayer from studying this prayer?
   5.1. As in Nehemiah's prayer in chapter 1, we find the six key components of prayer:

© James R. Hughes, 2006

1. Praise (names and attributes of God) (throughout the prayer, as we have noted; but esp. Neh 9.5b-7, 15-21)
2. Providence (personal appeal for help) (throughout the prayer, as we have noted; but esp. Neh 9.9-12, 22-31)
3. Promises (appealing to the promises of God) (Neh 9.8)
4. Petition (to hear his cry and prayer) (Neh 9.32-33)
5. Penitence (confession of sin) (Neh 9.34-35)
6. Purpose (giving God a reason/purpose for the appeal) (Neh 9.36, 37).

6. What are some principles for prayer we can derive from this prayer of Nehemiah as a model?
   6.1. Pray a theology (literally theo-logy, the word/logic of God, the study of God):
      6.1.1. God's names and attributes (as he is self-existent; transcendent). (Neh 9.5b-6, 19, 20)
      6.1.2. God's sovereignty (creator) (6)
      6.1.3. God's providence in history and redemption (governor, ruler, judge, saviour). (Neh 9.7, 8, 9-13, 15, 17c, 19a).
   6.2. Pray scripturally.
      6.2.1. This does not refer to praying to the Father, through the Son, by the Spirit; or making sure that what we say in our prayers is theological correct (both of these should be the case).
      6.2.2. Rather we are to pray *using* the content of Scripture.
      6.2.3. We noted that the source material for this prayer of Nehemiah is the rest of the OT. It contains about 200 quotations and allusions woven together. We compared it to the *Magnificat*, Mary's masterful mosaic of Scripture.
      6.2.4. Saturate your minds with the Bible, esp. the Psalms.
      6.2.5. Use God's own words to reflect his glory.
      6.2.6. Proper, prudent, and pleasing prayer uses the Bible as its source material.
   6.3. Confess honestly
      6.3.1. Confess God as the standard bearer. Morality and standards for ethics are derived from God and his word (Neh 9.13, 14).
      6.3.2. Confess sin against that standard (Neh 9.33-35, 37).
      6.3.3. Confess not just personal sin, but also the corporate sin of our nation and the Church (Neh 9.34).
   6.4. Appeal to the Promises of God.
      6.4.1. Appeal on the basis of promises of God. Ask God to remember his promises and be faithful to them. Expect him to be faithful to them (Neh 9.8).
      6.4.2. Base the appeal on the Covenant (Neh 9.8, 32).
      6.4.3. Pray for the Church that is scattered; that it will be (re-)built through revival and growth (Neh 9.36, 37).
   6.5. Be specific.
      6.5.1. Pray specifically, not in generalities (Neh 9.36-37).
      6.5.2. Not to inform God, but to place ourselves at his feet. When we acknowledge our dependence on him; he and we are put in our proper places.
   6.6. Prayer is reverent adoration: praise and petition that declare the glory of God.

7. What are the immediate and broader temporal contexts for this prayer?
   7.1. The immediate temporal context is about a month after the completion of the re-building of the wall around Jerusalem. The people have just completed celebrating a series of feasts/festivals: the Feast of Trumpets, the Day of Atonement, and the Feast of Tabernacles. [See the notes for Nehemiah 9.1] The people are now holding an additional time of corporate worship. Their celebration of the festivals was not just a formality (like it is many times when we drag ourselves to attend church services). They were experiencing a revival of true religion in their midst and were eager and willing to assemble to worship.
   7.2. A broader temporal context is the return from the Babylonian Captivity and the reconstruction of the city and the community.
   7.3. The broadest temporal context is the Covenant with its various administrations. Chapters 9 & 10 are presented to us in the form of a covenantal administration; a re-confirmation of the covenant. (Neh 9.38).
      7.3.1. Revival: Repentance (Neh 9.1-5a), Reflection (Neh 9.5b-31), Request (Neh 9.32-37), Response (Neh 9.38-10.39)
      7.3.2. The material in Nehemiah 9.5b-10.39 follows a covenant form used in the ancient world: preamble (Neh 9.5b-6), historical prologue (Neh 9.7-37), acceptance of the covenant (Neh 9.38-10.29), and stipulations (Neh 10.30-39).

© James R. Hughes, 2006

8. What general lessons can we derive from this prayer?
   8.1. We understand that Nehemiah in Jerusalem is an example for the Church of Jesus Christ.
   8.2. The Church has sinned, but God continues to compassionately care for it. We can appeal to God on behalf of the Church based on the Covenant promise.
   8.3. We should/must pray for the Church because it is the Church that Christ has redeemed—brought out of spiritual Egypt and out of the spiritual Babylonian Captivity to the Promised Land.
   8.4. We can remind God that when the Church comes to harm and it is wracked by sins and tensions, or when he withdraws from one congregation or another that he has promised to keep his Covenant of Love. When we pray "your kingdom come" we pray that God will build his Church and show the world that he is the almighty over all.
   8.5. It is for the glory of God when the spiritual Jerusalem, the Church, is re-built. We need to have a prayer of revival and restoration constantly on our lips, and in God's ears.

Response (Neh 9.38-10.39)

Covenantal Response (Neh 9.38-10.39)

1. After the people had collectively confessed their sins what do we find them doing? (38)
   1.1. Making a covenant or agreement.
   1.2. We will consider the people's response to their recognition of their sin and reflection on it, by considering:
      1.2.1. The peoples' *Covenantal Response* to the word of God read and studied among them; and
      1.2.2. A *Committing Regime*, the program followed by the people that reinforced the covenant making process.

2. What in this section (Nehemiah 9.1-38 and Nehemiah 10.1-39) indicates that this is a covenant?
   2.1. The passage states that they made a covenant? "In view of all this, we are making a binding agreement" (NIV) or "And because of all this, We make a sure covenant" (NKJV). For the moment we will note the expression as it is translated: "cut a sure/binding *covenant/agreement*", and accept that it states that the people made a covenant. We will consider the translation again below.

3. What, in the structure of the passage, indicates that this section is recounting a covenantal enactment?
   3.1. The material in Neh 9.1-10.39 follows a covenant form that is similar to, and consistent with, the form of other covenants found in the ancient Near East.
      3.1.1. Introduction (Neh 9.1-5a)
      3.1.2. Preamble (Neh 9.5b-6)
      3.1.3. Historical prologue (Neh 9.7-37)
      3.1.4. Ratification (Neh 9.38-10.29)
      3.1.5. Stipulations (Neh 10.30-39)
   3.2. For comparative purposes the book of Deuteronomy is structured as a classical covenant in the ancient Near Eastern form:
      3.2.1. Introduction (Dt 1.1-5)
      3.2.2. Preamble (Dt 1.6-4.43)
      3.2.3. Historical Prologue (Dt 4.44-26.19)
      3.2.4. Stipulations (Dt 27-30)
      3.2.5. Ratification (Dt 31-33)
      3.2.6. Leadership Succession (Dt 34.1-12)
   3.3. The covenant in Nehemiah 9.1-38 and Nehemiah 10.1-39 reverses the order of the Ratifications and Stipulations from the form in Deuteronomy. Leadership succession is not found in the section that we are considering. But it may be included in Nehemiah 12.1-26.
   3.4. Based on the structure of this passage, it seems that we are dealing with a covenantal enactment.
   3.5. [For more information on the topic of covenants, see:
      3.5.1. *Appendix R – Selected Aspects of Biblical Covenant Making*, and
      3.5.2. *Appendix S – The On-going Role of Public Covenanting.*]

4. How is the act of covenant making referred to? (38)
   4.1. "making a binding agreement" or "make a sure covenant".

© James R. Hughes, 2006

4.2. How does this differ from what we find elsewhere in the OT as the way a covenant is referred to?
4.3. It is difficult to see the difference in the English, because the translators have (correctly) supplied words to help us understand the meaning of the text.
4.4. The wording differs from that commonly used in the OT, which is: 'cut a covenant'.
4.5. In the verse we are considering (38) the expression is different. It appears to be "cut a truth". The noun is derived from the word for 'faithful' or 'truly', and can be translated literally as "cut a sure" or "cut a binding". We seem to need to add a word to make it clear, so we could translate it as "cut a sure/binding agreement" or "cut a sure/binding covenant." This word is used (in this specific noun form) only in this place and possibly in Nehemiah 11.23, where it can be translated as "royal decree", "prescription", or "regulation".
4.6. [For more information on the topic of 'cutting' a covenant, see: *Appendix R – Selected Aspects of Biblical Covenant Making*.]

5. Why did the people make a covenant at this time?
5.1. *Response to God* – "In view of all this …"
5.1.1. What is the 'all this'?
5.1.2. The immediate context seems to be what is recounted in the prayer in Nehemiah 9.5b-37; i.e., the providences of God.
5.2. *Relationship with* God – By making the covenant they declared that God was their sovereign and that they were his subjects.
5.2.1. The people were overwhelmed by God's providential dealings with them and they responded by re-committing their lives to him.
5.2.2. The broader context may be the events that had preceded the special assembly recounted in Nehemiah 9.1-5a:
5.2.2.1. The rebuilding of the wall (Neh 3.1-32; Neh 6.15-19)
5.2.2.2. The confirmation of their purpose in the face of opposition (Neh 4.1-14; Neh 6.1-14)
5.2.2.3. The administration of justice with respect to the poor (Neh 5.1-13)
5.2.2.4. The celebration of the festivals (Neh 8.1-18).
5.3. *Requirement from God* – God required them to be in a covenantal relationship with himself.
5.3.1. They were under covenant obligations (e.g., Dt 4.23; Is 55.3).
5.3.2. They followed the example of God who made a covenant with his people and required them to make no covenants with the gods of the nations around them (Ex 23.32); they in turn made a covenant with him.
5.4. *Realized by God* – They were fulfilling the prophecies of God concerning the nation when it returned from captivity: to return (Is 44.1-5) and to covenant (Jer 50.4, 5).

Committing Regime (Neh 9.38-10.39)

1. What routine did the people follow that reinforced, and showed, their commitment to the covenant?
1.1. There is nothing in the text that states that they had planned in advance to make a covenant oath or had developed a program to institute a covenant.
1.2. However, it appears that their actions were deliberate and thought through, and not merely spontaneous happenstance. They appear to have followed a program or regime that showed the seriousness of their actions and made their commitment more substantial. What are some hints that this program was thought through in advance?
1.2.1. The structure of the prayer in Nehemiah 9.1-38; it appears to have been composed in advance and was not a spontaneous utterance.
1.2.2. The agreement to put the covenant in writing (Neh 9.38)
1.2.3. The presence of the people in attendance (Neh 10.1-29)
1.2.4. A promised set of actions (Neh 10.30-39)
1.2.5. The pre-determined lot (Neh 10.34).
1.3. From these, apparently, pre-meditated actions, their covenant renewal appears to have been both deliberate and disciplined, and executed with serious consideration and great solemnity. They knew what they were doing, they joined together with mutual consent, and they had a fixed resolution to perform the commitments that they made.
1.4. What was the program they followed? A seven-step program for making promises permanent:
1.4.1. Prepared (i.e., the people met with God before they took action)
1.4.2. Papered (i.e., the commitment was documented in writing)
1.4.3. Pressed (i.e., the commitment was sealed)

© James R. Hughes, 2006

1.4.4. Personal (i.e., each signature of a representative was applied to the paper)
1.4.5. Public (i.e., they were mutual witnesses of one another at a swearing ceremony)
1.4.6. Priorities (i.e., they laid out the actions that they planned to take to fulfill their commitment)
1.4.7. Practiced (i.e., they followed through on their promised actions)

1.5. If we follow this kind of discipline in our lives we will be much less cavalier about making commitments and we will be much more careful about keeping our commitments.

Prepared

1. What actions did they undertake before they made the covenant? (Neh 9.1-38)
   1.1. We have already looked at chapter 9 in detail, so we will only summarize the key points.
   1.2. They undertook the following actions:
      1.2.1. Assembled (Neh 9.1)—they came together as an assembly of God's people. God's work and worship is a corporate activity. The exhortation in Hebrews (Neh 10.25) reminds us that we have an obligation to be together as a congregation. God does not intend for his people to be isolationists but rather 'congregationalists'.
      1.2.2. Fasted, wore sackcloth, and put dust/ashes on their heads (Neh 9.1). They mourned their sin and prepared physically for confession.
      1.2.3. Separated themselves from foreigners (Neh 9.2); the context seems to apply to those who were entering into the covenant (Neh 9.38-10.39) who were likely all circumcised Jews and who moved to a physically separate location thus emphasizing the holy calling as a nation.
      1.2.4. Confessed their sins (Neh 9.2, 3) for a quarter of a day (3 hours). They repented collectively of their personal and corporate sins.
      1.2.5. Worshiped God (Neh 9.3) along with their confession. We noted that this probably means that they sang Psalms, since prayer is mentioned separately.
      1.2.6. They listened to the reading of the Law (Neh 9.3) for a quarter of the day (3 hours).
      1.2.7. They were led in prayer by the Levites (Neh 9.5-37).
   1.3. Before they acted they prepared. What are other examples, in the Bible, of the people of God preparing by seeking God's will before they took a significant action?
      1.3.1. Israel sought the Lord's guidance before attacking the Benjamites (Judges 20.18, 23, 28).
      1.3.2. David and his men used the Urim and Thummim before rescuing the people of Keilah and their own people who had been kidnapped from Ziklag; before returning to Judah; and before preparing to fight the Philistines (1 Sam 23.2, 4, 10-12; 1 Sam 30.7-8; 2 Sam 2.1; 2 Sam 5.19).
      1.3.3. Ezra and the people fasted and prayed before they returned to Jerusalem (Ezra 8.21-23).
      1.3.4. Jesus prayed all night before appointing the twelve Apostles (Lk 6.12-16) and before going to the cross (Mt 26.36-46).
      1.3.5. The eleven prayed before selecting a replacement for Judas (Acts 1.25, 26).
      1.3.6. The elders assembled, worshiped, and fasted before they commissioned Paul and Barnabas for a missionary journey (Acts 13.1-3).
      1.3.7. We are to prepare before the Lord's Supper (1 Cor 11.28).

2. What are extra-biblical historical examples of God's people preparing through worship before they set off on a new venture?
   2.1. "The First Continental Congress of 1774 adopted various rules; and it was proposed that the sessions should be opened every morning with prayer. Objection was made by Jay and Rutledge, the younger members, because there was such a diversity of theological opinions in that body. "I am no bigot," said Samuel Adams. "I can hear a prayer from a man of piety and virtue, who, at the same time, is a friend to his country." Then he moved that the Rev. Jacob Duche, an eloquent Episcopal minister, be "desired to open the Congress with prayer to-morrow morning." This nomination by a straight Puritan of the Congregational school—a man past middle life—removed all objections. The motion was agreed to. The next morning Mr. Duche, after reading the Psalm for the day (the 35th), made an extemporaneous prayer, so "pertinent, affectionate, sublime, and devout," wrote John Adams, that it "filled every bosom present." That Psalm seemed peculiarly appropriate; for an express had just arrived from Israel Putnam of Connecticut with the dreadful rumor of a bombardment of Boston, and the murder of the inhabitants by the soldiery. The bells of Philadelphia were muffled and tolled in token of sorrow; but another messenger soon came with a contradiction of the report."[28]

[28] Benson J. Lossing, *Our Country: a Household History for All Readers*, Vol. 2, 1877.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

2.2. The Westminster Assembly in session, from Baillie's eyewitness observations: "We meet every day of the week, except Saturday. We sit commonly from noon to two or three in the afternoon. The prolocutor, at the beginning and end, has a short prayer."
2.3. In the Canadian Parliament "[a]t the beginning of each sitting of the House, the Speaker takes the chair, the Sergeant-at-Arms lays the Mace (a gold-plated war club, symbol of the House's authority) on the long table in front of the Speaker, and the Speaker reads the daily prayer."[29] Although this prayer is a perfunctory action today, at the point of its origination it indicated that the people who founded this country believed that God must be at the root of a properly functioning civil administration.

3. How should we apply this example of preparation to our own situations?
3.1. As a basic principle we should seek to be in the will of God in all that we do. (Prov 3.5-6; Prov 16.3; Jer 10.23; 1 Cor 10.31; Phil 4.6, 7; Col 3.17)
3.2. We should live in an *attitude* of constant awareness that we are to seek the will of God. However, there are routine aspects of our lives in which we are not expected to be *actively* seeking God's will (e.g., brushing our teeth, putting on our socks, riding the bus to work).
3.3. Anything that is out of the ordinary or which involves a new venture should be consecrated to the Lord with prayer. We might, for instance give short prayers before we acted in specific cases (Neh 2.4).
3.4. Anything that is of great significance should probably be preceded by a time of worship. This may consist of prayer alone, but it may also involve personal fasting or corporate prayer and praise; and may involve a structured worship service. What are some examples of significant ventures where we might put more of an emphasis on ensuring that we are acting in the will of God:
3.4.1. Church: ordination, commissioning a new building, sending out missionaries, marriage …
3.4.2. State: elections, going to war, opening parliament, passing legislation …
3.4.3. Family: marriage, baptisms, at a deathbed, starting at a new school …

Papered (Neh 9.38)

1. What steps did they take to reinforce the binding nature of their covenantal commitment?
1.1. They put the agreement in *writing* (and sealed it).

2. What are examples, in our cultural context, where contractual commitments are documented in written from?
2.1. Constitutions, treaties, civil contracts, marriage certificates, employment agreements …

3. Why was the agreement documented in written form? Why, in general, are contracts written down?
3.1. *Providing Clarity* – Writing out contractual commitments helps to clarify thinking. The spoken word can be clear but it is oriented more to motivation; the written word is more suitable for presenting complex ideas. In meetings, two people can hear different things from a speaker because context, intonation, tone, and body language all contribute to what is heard. It is only when content is written down that there can be less confusion. Of course even when something is written down, that does not guarantee that everyone will understand the communication in the same way—witness for example how different groups of lawyers can read a contract in very different ways, or how different 'scholars' come up with contradictory interpretations of the Bible.
3.2. *Aiding Memory* – Writing provides a lasting memory. We tend, over time, to forget things; writing them down helps us remember. It is true that in the past people worked on memorizing more than they do today and their memories were more developed; but even so, if something isn't written down it can be confused and forgotten.
3.3. *Strengthening Resolve* – Putting a contract in writing helps strengthen resolve. There shouldn't be, but there seems to be something different about saying that you will do something and writing down a promise to do something.
3.4. *Making it Official* – You probably have heard people say "But did you get it in writing?" What they are saying is that if you didn't get the commitment in writing it isn't official. This isn't true. Verbal contracts are binding. For example if I say to you: "I will pay you $10/hour to paint that wall ..." I am expected to pay you for the hours worked. When we ask for it in writing we are saying that we don't trust what people say and that we believe that it is more likely that they will fulfill their obligations if it is in writing. Even written contracts are sometimes ignored.

[29] How Canadians Govern Themselves, What Goes on in Parliament , A Working Day in the Commons; www.parl.gc.ca

© James R. Hughes, 2006

3.5. *Serving as a Witness* – Long lasting objects can serve as witnesses to the vows associated with the covenant. (e.g., stones Gen 31.45-48; Josh 24.27; altar Josh 22.27, 28, 34). This does not mean that the object can speak and condemn. But the presence of the object acts as a reminder to the conscience.

4. How does God set an example for the action the people took in writing down the terms of their contract?
   4.1. He writes down his covenant. We see this in the inscription of the Ten Commandments on stone and the provision of the Bible (the Old and New Covenants) in written form.
   4.2. We can apply each of the above reasons for writing down the covenant to the Bible and note that the word of God is reinforced by its being written down.
   4.3. God would be no less faithful if his word were only verbal. But *our* acceptance of his word is strengthened by his having provided it in written form.

Pressed (Neh 9.38; Neh 10.1)

1. What steps did they take to reinforce the binding nature of their covenantal commitment?
   1.1. They put the agreement in writing and sealed it.

2. Why did they seal it? What is the significance of this action?
   2.1. It is placing their own personal sign on the covenant contract.
   2.2. It is equivalent to signing a document. Today people include their signature on a document instead of using a seal.
   2.3. In OT times, in the ancient near east, most people did not know how to read and write. Most (probably all) the people listed in Nehemiah 10.1-17 were able to write as they are among the teachers and leaders, and Jews, as 'people of the book', took education seriously. Nevertheless they followed the practices of their culture to show their personal commitment to the covenant.

3. How did they seal it?
   3.1. Most likely with their signets.
   3.2. Most signets were made from a semi-precious stone, a carved scarab (e.g., made out of a soft stone similar to what Inuit carvings are made of), or a round hollow tube (e.g., made out of bone) with an engraved name, family crest (symbol), or scene.
      3.2.1. A poor person could purchase an engraved seal made of terracotta, hardened tar, limestone, or even wood.
      3.2.2. The majority of seals were engraved by a seal-cutter who used copper or iron (Jer 17.1) tools, a cutting wheel, and a bow-drill.
      3.2.3. Some seals were bored through so they could take a cord and be worn around the neck (Gen 38.18).
      3.2.4. Some seals were placed in signet rings (Gen 41.42).
      3.2.5. The engraved stones (Ex 28.11-23) in the priest's breastplate were essentially signets.
   3.3. Signets were a sign of prestige and generally the possession of the upper classes.
   3.4. The signet could be pressed into clay (either in a tablet or attached to papyrus) or wax (e.g., like sealing wax).
   3.5. Examples of uses of signet sealing in the Bible:
      3.5.1. Secure against tampering (Mt 27.66; Rev 5.1). A sealed prophecy (Dan 12.9) or book (Is 29.11) was a symbol of something yet to be revealed.
      3.5.2. To demonstrate authority (1 Ki 21.8; Jn 6.27).
      3.5.3. Delegate authority (Gen 41.42; Est 8.8).
      3.5.4. Making a letter private (Neh 6.5) Letters sent to important officials were folded, put in silk bags, and then sealed.
      3.5.5. Sign documents (Is 8.16; Jer 32.10).
      3.5.6. Show ownership (1 Cor 9.2; Eph 1.13).

© James R. Hughes, 2006

Ancient Near Eastern signet.

Old Babylonian contract sealed with seven seals (ANEP #239). [Compare Revelation 5.1, 5; Rev 6.1.]

4. What are other ways that covenants were sealed in the OT economy?
   4.1. Rainbow (Gen 9.12, 13)
   4.2. Setting up stones (Gen 31.45-48; Josh 24.27) or an altar (Josh 22.27, 28, 34)
   4.3. Circumcision (Gen 17.11; Rom 4.11).

5. What are some ways we can apply sealing of a covenant, in our circumstances and situation?
   5.1. Applying our signatures on action plans, committing ourselves to statements of faith, or when joining a congregation.
   5.2. Making personal commitments before God. Consider Jonathan Edwards 70 resolutions.[30] He made these resolutions during the years of 1722-1723 when he was about 20 years of age. He resolved to read them over once per week:
   " 7. Never to do any thing, which I should be afraid to do if it were the last hour of my life.
   14. Never to do any thing out of revenge.
   20. To maintain the strictest temperance in eating and drinking.
   38. Never to utter any thing that is sportive, or matter of laughter, on a Lord's day.

[30] members.aol.com/jonathanedw/Resolutions.html

© James R. Hughes, 2006

56. Never to give over, nor in the least to slacken, my fight with my corruptions, however unsuccessful I may be.
67. After afflictions, to inquire, what I am the better for them, what good I have got by them; and what I might have got by them."

Personal (Neh 10.1-27)

1. Who signed the covenant?
   1.1. Those who signed totalled 84 men.
   1.2. Nehemiah
   1.3. Zedekiah – perhaps Nehemiah's chief official; secretary. [Note: in Heb printed editions[31] there is a mark separating Nehemiah's and Zedekiah's names from the rest. But in the LXX, Zedekiah is called the "son of Seraiah".]
   1.4. Priests (v. 21; or v.22 if Zedekiah is among the priests)
   1.5. Levites (17)
   1.6. Civil Leaders (44).

2. What do we notice about those who signed (sealed the covenant)?
   2.1. The list begins with Nehemiah. He set an example for the rest of the leaders and people by being the first to sign the covenant. Leaders are to lead by example, not just words.
   2.2. Those who taught the people and led them in prayer (Neh 9.4, 5) are among those who placed their seal on the covenant document.
      2.2.1. Only four names that appear in the list in Nehemiah 9.4, 5 are not found in the list of signers.
      2.2.2. The 'Bunni' in Nehemiah 9.4 may be Beninu or Binnui (in 9); and Hashabneiah may be Hashabiah. People in those days could have gone by more than one name, just as I sign anything formal as 'James' but go by 'Jim' in most other settings.
      2.2.3. If so Kenani and Pethahiah may be the only two mentioned in Nehemiah 9.4, 5 who are not explicitly listed as co-signers. These two could have been represented by those who did sign/seal the covenant (they could have been younger members of a family, in which the head sealed the document).
   2.3. Those who signed were of the educated/noble classes: the civil and religious (Levites and . . . priests) leaders. Those in authority over the people stepped forward and became part of the committing ceremony. The majority of the names of those who sealed the covenant are found in other name lists in Ezra and Nehemiah. This appears to indicate that the signers held important positions within the community. They were likely heads of houses or clans.
   2.4. Not only the religious leaders but the civil leaders were present at this covenantal enactment. In a society that is God-fearing, the civil magistrates will endorse the true religion rather than trying to hide behind 'pluralism' (which really is a euphemism for supporting statism and an anti-Christian position).
   2.5. All those who signed were probably leaders (note 29). This means that the leaders signed on behalf of the people.

3. What is the significance of the leaders signing on behalf of the people?
   3.1. This is consistent with the covenantal model in which one, or a few, represent the majority in a 'federal' or representative capacity.
   3.2. Their signing was similar to what the head of company or the head of state (e.g., when the Prime Minister or President signs a treaty, law, declaration, or constitution) would do today.
   3.3. They represented the groups listed in Nehemiah 10.28 people (common folks), priests, Levites, gatekeepers, singers, and Temple servants (Nethinim). The inclusion of these groups in Nehemiah 10.28 shows that the entire community agreed with what had been covenanted and with their leaders representing them.
   3.4. The leaders were directly committed to the covenant and would not expect those under them to bear the burden of obedience if they themselves were unwilling to keep the obligations.
   3.5. From a practical perspective, by having the representatives sign, this eliminated the necessity for thousands of individual signatures.

4. Who do we find missing from this list of signatures?

[31] *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*, (Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft Stuttgart) 1990; and *Hebrew OT*, Norman Henry Snaith (ed.), London, RFBS, 1981).

© James R. Hughes, 2006

4.1. All those who signed were males, no females signed the covenant.
  4.1.1. One could argue that this was because it was a patriarchal society that oppressed women; much like Islamic societies do.
  4.1.2. However, the absence of the signatures has nothing to do with oppression of women. The Biblical model is that the husband/father *represents* the family (1 Pt 3.1-6), clan or tribe.
  4.1.3. This view is very unpopular today (esp. after the suffrage movements of the late 19th and early 20th centuries).
  4.1.4. Those who attempt to argue that women should be included, miss a key point. Not everyone was included (only the leaders), so even many men and all children were excluded. This was not a 'one-person-one-vote' democracy, it was a representative benevolent oligarchy.

4.2. Ezra is not listed.
  4.2.1. He was active in the earlier activities that took place on the "first day of the seventh month" (Neh 8.2). The covenant signing took place on the twenty-fourth day of the same month (Neh 9.1).
  4.2.2. It is unreasonable to think that he was absent from this important event; especially since we encounter him again at the dedication of the wall; which probably occurred within a few days or weeks of the signing of the covenant (Neh 12.1).
  4.2.3. It seems reasonable to conclude that Ezra signed under his father's name or he had the same formal name as his father, i.e., Seraiah and used Ezra as his common name (Ezra 7.1; note also Neh 11.11).
  4.2.4. It is very unlikely that the Seraiah who signed/sealed the covenant would have been the same one from the time of the captivity (2 Chron 34.9; 2 Chron 35.8; Jer 52.24). This Seraiah would have to have been at least 30 (to be a priest) in 597BC whereas the covenant ceremony occurred in 444/445 BC (this would make him around 185 years old!).

5. Why does God list the names of those who signed/sealed the covenant?
5.1. God knows those who are his and gives particular attention to each one (Lk 10.20; Heb 12.23; Rev 21.27; Mal 3.16, 17).
5.2. He knows each one by name and cares for them personally (Jn 10.3).
5.3. God delights in knowing his people. Listing their names is a form of showing that he knows them personally (Gen 2.19, 20; Ps 147.4; Is 62.2; Is 65.15; Rev 2.17).
5.4. To honour those who stand with him in the revival of true religion (Ps 87.5, 6; Prov 10.7; Heb 2.12 with Ps 22.22).

6. What are examples from extra-biblical history where we find a list recording the people who signed a covenant/treaty document?
[Read a few of the names and see if they can determine what covenant document the names are from.]

- JOHN, by the Grace of God, King of England, Lord of Ireland, Duke of Normandy, Aquitaine, and Count of Anjou, to his Archbishops, Bishops, Abbots, Earls, Barons, Justiciaries, Foresters, Sheriffs, Governors, Officers, and to all Bailiffs, and his faithful subjects, greeting. Know ye, that we, in the presence of God, and for the salvation of our soul, and the souls of all our ancestors and heirs, and unto the honour of God and the advancement of Holy Church, and amendment of our Realm, by advice of our venerable Fathers, Stephen, Archbishop of Canterbury, Primate of all England and Cardinal of the Holy Roman Church; Henry, Archbishop of Dublin; William, of London; Peter, of Winchester; Jocelin, of bath and Glastonbury; Hugh, of Lincoln; Walter, of Worcester; William, of Coventry; Benedict, of Rochester -- Bishops: of Master Pandulph, Sub-Deacon and Familiar of our Lord the Pope; Brother Aymeric, Master of the Knights-Templars in England; and of the noble Persons, William Marescall, Earl of Pembroke; William, Earl of Salisbury; William, Earl of Warren; William, Earl of Arundel; Alan de Galloway, Constable of scotland; Warin FitzGerald, Peter FitzHerbert, and Hubert de Burgh, Seneschal of Poitou; Hugh de Neville, Matthew FitzHerbert, Thomas Basset, Alan Basset, Philip of Albiney, Robert de Roppell, John Mareschal, John FitzHugh, and others, our liegemen, have, in the first place, granted to God, and by this our present Charter confirmed, for us and our heirs for ever …[32]

- These being **Witnesses**; Lord B. Archbishop of Canterbury, E. Bishop of London, J. Bishop of Bathe, P. of Winchester, H. of Lincoln, R. of Salisbury, W. of Rochester, W. of Worester, J. of Ely, H. of Hereford, R. of Chichester, W. of Exeter, Bishops; the Abbot of St. Edmunds, the Abbot of St. Albans,

[32] King John, ***Magna Carta***, June 15, 1215.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

the Abbot of Bello, the Abbot of St. Augustines in Canterbury, the Abbot of Evesham, the Abbot of Westminster, the Abbot of Bourgh St. Peter, the Abbot of Reading, the Abbot of Abindon, the Abbot of Malmsbury, the Abbot of Winchcomb, the Abbot of Hyde, the Abbot of Certefey, the Abbot of Sherburn, the Abbot of Cerne, the Abbot of Abbotebir, the Abbot of Middleton, the Abbot of Seleby, the Abbot of Cirencester; H. de Burgh Justice, H. Earl of Chester and Lincoln, W. Earl of Salisbury, W. Earl of Warren, G. de Clare Earl of Gloucester and Hereford, W. de Ferrars Earl of Derby, W. de Mandeville Earl of Essex, H. de Bygod Earl of Norfolk, W. Earl of Albermarle, H. Earl of Hereford, J. Constable of Chester, R. de Ros, R. Fitzwalter, R. de Vyponte, W. de Bruer, R. de Muntefichet, P. Fitzherbert, W. de Aubenie, F. Grefly, F. de Breus, J. de Monemue, J. Fitzallen, H. de Mortimer, W. de Beauchamp, W. de St. John, P. de Mauly, Brian de Lisle, Thomas de Multon, R. de Argenteyn, G. de Nevil, W. de Mauduit, J. de Balun, and others.[33]

- John Adams, Samuel Adams, Josiah Bartlett, Carter Braxton, Charles Carroll, Samuel Chase, Abraham Clark, George Clymer, William Ellery, William Floyd, Benjamin Franklin, Elbridge Gerry, Button Gwinnett, Lyman Hall, John Hancock, Benjamin Harrison, John Hart, Richard Henry Lee, Joseph Hewes, Thomas Heyward, Jr., William Hooper, Stephen Hopkins, Fras. Hopkinson, Samuel Huntington, Thomas Jefferson, Frans. Lewis, Francis Lightfoot Lee, Phil. Livington, Thomas Lynch, Jr., Thomas M'Kean, Arthur Middleton, Lewis Morris, Robert Morris, John Morton, Thomas Nelson, Jr., William Paca, John Penn, George Read, Caesar Rodney, George Ross, Benjamin Rush, Edward Rutledge, Roger Sherman, Jason Smith, Richard Stockton, Thomas Stone, George Taylor, Matthew Thornton, Robert Treat Paine, George Walton, William Whipple, William Williams, James Wilson, Johnothan Witherspoon, Oliver Wolcott, George Wythe.[34]

7. What lessons can we derive from the leaders signing/sealing the covenant document?
   7.1. The concept of federal/covenantal representation is reinforced by this example.
   7.2. Those who are appointed by God to be over us in Church (elders) or State (elected representatives) are to act responsibly before God on behalf of the people whom they represent.
   7.3. Placing our name or seal on a covenant document indicates our willingness to abide by its obligations and places us in the same situation as a person who has sworn an oath to abide by the stipulations.
   7.4. Keeping a list of covenantal participants (e.g., a baptismal registry or a listing of communicant members) is a valid and honoured discipline. Having a free-for-all congregation with no concept of membership records is not consistent with the many examples we see in the Bible of the use of named lists to identify membership in the covenant community (Num 26.1-65; Ps 87.5, 6; Neh 7.5-73; Is 4.3; Ezk 13.9; Lk 10.20; Acts 2.47; Acts 5.14; Rev 13.8).

Public (Neh 10.28-29)

1. Who else, beside those who signed/sealed the covenant, were involved in the covenant making ceremony?
   1.1. Additional officers of the Temple (Church)—priests and Levites.
   1.2. Workers in the Temple (Church)—gatekeepers, singers, temple servants.
      1.2.1. *Gatekeepers*:
         1.2.1.1. These were usually Levites (1 Chron 9.17-27 [18]) who where responsible for guarding the doors/gates (1 Chron 9.19, 23; 2 Chron 23.4; Neh 13.22) and for maintaining the supplies and finances of the Tabernacle/Temple (1 Chron 9.26).
         1.2.1.2. It appears that some others may have been involved with the work (e.g., 1 Chron 9.26 implies non-Levites did some things); especially by the time of Nehemiah there may not have been enough people directly descended from the Levites (compare, 1 Chron 9.22 with Ezra 2.42).
      1.2.2. *Singers*:
         1.2.2.1. There is no reference, in the Bible, to singers or musicians, in a liturgical worship context until the Temple system was introduced by David (under God's direct appointment) at the time the Ark was first brought to Jerusalem, in anticipation of the Temple being constructed (1 Chron 15.16-22).
         1.2.2.2. The only mention of an explicit choir is found in Nehemiah 12.31, 38, 40; but it seems that professional Levite singers sang as choirs (and played musical instruments) to accompany the sacrifices (2 Chron 29.25-30).

[33] King Edward I, ***Magna Carta***, 1297.

[34] *Declaration of Independence*; July 4, 1776.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

1.2.2.3. At the reestablishment of the Temple liturgy after the return from Babylon, descendants of the original Levitical musicians/singers (Ezra 2.41) reassumed responsibility for the music of the liturgy.
1.2.2.4. Congregational singing may have been introduced in the Synagogue, and is a component of the NT Church (Eph 5.19; Col 3.16) as we offer up the spiritual sacrifices (Heb 13.15) of praise as spiritual priests (1 Pt 2.9).
1.2.3. *Temple Servants* (Nethinim):
1.2.3.1. [See the notes on Nehemiah 7.73a for more information on the Temple Servants.]
1.3. All the people who separated themselves from the neighbouring people.

2. What does this 'separation' of the people refer to?
2.1. [See the notes for Nehemiah 9.2.]
2.2. It appears that this separation is referring to families in which the male-head was a circumcised Jew.
2.2.1. This seems to fit with the statement "for the sake of/to the Law of God."
2.2.2. Compare Neh 13.1-3; Lev 20.24.
2.2.3. Certainly it includes no inter-marriage (Neh 13.23ff; Ezra 9.1, 2; Ezra 10.11-19; 2 Cor 6.14-17; 1 Cor 7.39).
2.3. It seems to be dealing with separation in the worshipping community, per Deuteronomy 23.3-6.
2.3.1. Note that Deuteronomy 23.3-6 refers to 10th generation; which is figurative of 'forever'.
2.3.2. How do we apply this in a NT Church context?
2.3.2.1. Are we to create separate worship areas for different nationalities?
2.3.2.2. Are we to create ethnic congregations?
2.3.2.3. Later portions of the OT give us a hint of a change that was to come (e.g., Is 56.6, 7).
2.3.2.4. Ruth seems to be a promise of this change. She was from Moab and her descendants were not excluded. She became David's great-grand mother. Christ has Ruth in his genealogy.
2.3.2.5. Note the passage in Isaiah 56.7 makes reference to the 'house of prayer for all nations'. Jesus refers to this when he clears the court of the Gentiles Mk 11.16, 17.
2.3.2.6. The Deuteronomic command was a call for a separation of holiness. The Isaiah prophecy indicates that the principle is ultimately an application in a spiritual sense (i.e., association in the Church with those who profess Jesus as their saviour) rather than the physical/national realm.
2.3.2.7. Therefore we are to be separate from unbelievers, not a particular national group (2 Cor 6.15-18).

3. Who were included with the circumcised males?
3.1. Entire families.
3.2. The same family members were at the worship assembly earlier (Neh 8.2, 3).
3.3. It is a good example for us that the men not only included their families in the worship but also had them present as witnesses of the swearing to the covenant.

4. Why does God identify these roles and groups of people?
4.1. To show that there was a unity of mind across all the classes and roles of the social structure.
4.2. To remind us that we all have to work together for a single cause within the Church (1 Cor 12.12-31).
4.3. It is very destructive when those who are part of the Church membership, and particularly those who are part of the leadership, are unsupportive of initiatives within the congregation. As long as the initiative is not inconsistent with Biblical morality, everyone should show a united common purpose, even if they personally think that there might be other ways of using their time or of accomplishing the work of Christ.

5. How were the others involved in the covenant swearing ceremony?
5.1. What did they NOT do?
5.1.1. They did not place seals on the covenant document (clay tablet or scroll of papyrus or skin). Even though many of them probably had their own seals.
5.1.2. For practical reasons they could not all sign/seal the document:
5.1.2.1. It would have taken a long time to process them all.
5.1.2.2. The physical document could not have held all the seal marks.
5.2. They made a curse and swore an oath.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

5.2.1. What curse would they likely have made?
5.2.1.1. A curse that called down calamity if they failed to follow through on their agreement (Josh 22.23; Ruth 1.17; 1 Sam 20.13; 2 Sam 3.35; 1 Ki 2.23; Mt 26.63; notice the same oaths were taken with false gods: 1 Ki 19.2; 1 Ki 20.10). This is called a self-maledictory or self-imprecatory oath. God places the equivalent on himself in the incident with the split animals (Gen 15.9-18).
5.2.1.2. The specific curse may refer to one or all of the curses God stated in the Deuteronomic Covenant (Dt 28.15-68).
5.2.1.3. This indicated the serious solemnity before God concerning the covenant they were making.
5.2.1.4. How do people use similar statements today? "May God strike me down, if …"
5.2.2. What might have been the oath they used?
5.2.2.1. "Fear of Isaac" (Gen 31.53).
5.2.2.2. "As surely as the LORD lives" (Judges 8.19).
5.2.2.3. "I swear by the LORD" (2 Sam 19.7).
5.2.2.4. "As surely as the Sovereign LORD lives" (Jer 44.26).
5.2.2.5. "I assure you before God" (Gal 1.20).
5.2.2.6. "I call God as my witness" (2 Cor 1.23; 1 Thess 2.5).
5.2.2.7. "I charge you before the Lord" (1 Thess 5.27).
5.2.3. An equivalent used in the recent past is "so help me God". This is the oath part, the vow part is "I promise to tell the truth …" Although oaths and vows overlap at times.
5.2.4. [See *Appendix D – Lawful Oaths and Vows*, for more detail on the subject of oath taking.]

6. What was the physical action that probably accompanied the oath-taking?
6.1. We are not told explicitly, but based on Biblical example we can surmise what is the physical action that they undertook to seal the oath that they swore.
6.2. Everyone probably raised his or her right hand, much as God raised his hand in oath (Ex 6.8; Num 14.30; Ps 106.26; etc.).
6.3. An ancient mode of appealing to God was by raising the right hand as an oath (Gen 14.22). The Hebrew word for right hand is 'jamin'; we hear the Hebrew word in Benjamin; which means "son of my right hand". This word took on the meaning "oath" in Arabic; as a verb it means "to take an oath".
6.4. This practice of raising the right hand in oath taking persists to our day.

7. What was the underlying motivation for swearing to the covenant?
7.1. For the sake of the Law of God (NKJV "to the Law").
7.1.1. God's Law can be taken as a substitute or proxy for God. The exact form of this substitution is a metonymy: a figure of speech consisting of the use of the name of one thing for that of another of which it is an attribute or with which it is associated. 2 Samuel 7.21 seems to provide a warrant for this association. We could express this in the following statement: God is Law (this does not mean that Law is God).
7.1.2. What are some examples where God's is equated with his attributes?
7.1.2.1. God is … Job 36.5 (mighty); Dan 9.14 (righteous); 1 Cor 10.13 (faithful); Gal 3.20 (one); 2 Thess 1.6 (just); 1 Jn 1.5 (light); 1 Jn 4.8 (love).
7.1.2.2. These are not examples of metonymy, *per se*, but use an attribute as a descriptor.
7.1.3. What are other examples of metonymy used in relation to God:
7.1.3.1. God's name (James 2.7).
7.1.3.2. Heaven (Dan 4.26).
7.1.3.3. Blessed (Mk 14.61).
7.1.3.4. Holy One (1 John 2.20).
7.1.3.5. "Fear of Isaac" (Gen 31.53).
7.2. What are some things we find in the Bible that are done for his God's (name's) sake?
7.2.1. He does …
7.2.1.1. He shows his patience (Is 48.9).
7.2.1.2. He displays his righteousness (Is 42.21).
7.2.1.3. He declares his holiness (Ezk 36.22).
7.2.1.4. He forgives sin (Ps 25.11; Ps 79.9).
7.2.1.5. He rescues his people (Ps 106.8; Ps 109.21; Ps 143.11).
7.2.1.6. He guides his people in the ways of providence (Ps 31.3).

© James R. Hughes, 2006

7.2.1.7. He guides us in the way of righteousness (Ps 23.3).
7.2.1.8. He gives grace (Rom 1.5).
7.2.1.9. He remembers his covenant (Jer 14.21).

7.2.2. We do …

7.2.2.1. Working for the good of the Church (Ps 122.9; 1 Cor 9.23).
7.2.2.2. Giving up the things of this world for the work of the Kingdom (Lk 18.29).
7.2.2.3. Showing hospitality to pastors, teachers, evangelists (3 Jn 7; 3 Jn 8).
7.2.2.4. Being insulted (1 Pt 4.14).
7.2.2.5. Risking life, or even being put to death for the cause of Christ (Acts 15.26; Acts 21.13).

8. What did their participation in the swearing ceremony indicate?
   8.1. They acknowledged that they understood what they were signing.
      8.1.1. There is nothing here that indicates, in any way, that they were pressured into signifying their agreement to the covenant.
      8.1.2. The 'fine print' seems to have been understood by every party.
      8.1.3. There appears to have been time for due consideration and contemplation before they committed.
      8.1.4. This was no hasty agreement like one might hear in an commercial "don't delay, sign up now, prices go up tomorrow …"
      8.1.5. The evidence that these activities were not rushed is provided by the dates. The swearing ceremony occurred on the 24th day of the month (Tishri, Ethanim; Oct 31st, 444/445 BC). The wall had been completed on Oct 2nd. Since the completion of the wall the people have celebrated a series of feasts/festivals in the context of a spiritual revival.
      8.1.6. They had just come through a series of festivals that called for reflection and thanksgiving. They then assembled deliberately for an additional, non-standard meeting of worship to re-affirm their commitment to the Covenant.
   8.2. They were undertaking this covenant renewal and signing because there was real spiritual renewal. This activity was not a formalism in which they were going through the motions as automata. The heads of the families, and their families, were really dedicating themselves to the service of God—they displayed a great reverence for God.
   8.3. They showed family agreement and harmony. The husbands/fathers who signed or swore to the covenant were joined by their wives, and sons and daughters.
   8.4. They were mutual witnesses of one another in the swearing ceremony. They could hold each other accountable for their subsequent actions.

9. What lessons can we derive from this section?
   9.1. Each of us has a responsibility to make a public profession, joining ourselves to the Lord.
      9.1.1. New converts make profession by being publicly baptized into the covenant community.
      9.1.2. Young people growing up with the sign of the covenant on them, make profession by joining with God's people at the Lord's Supper.
      9.1.3. This could be restated as: "Everyone who understands his obligations before God must re-affirm the Covenant with God."
      9.1.4. [See *Appendix S – The On-going Role of Public Covenanting*, for further application.]
   9.2. Every oath that we make has associated with it a conditional curse upon our heads. When we swear an oath we essentially profess a self-malediction (e.g., "By God, if I am lying, let him strike me down.")
   9.3. The use of public oath swearing (e.g., in a law court) seems to be validated by the example of these people.
   9.4. Each of us may be stronger or weaker at any single time (caused by discouragement, illness, sin, temptation, etc.), but together we can stand more firmly in the common covenant we have made (e.g., baptismal vows or attendance at the Lord's Supper). We can call each other to account by mutually encouraging one another (1 Thess 4.18; 1 Thess 5.11; Heb 3.13; Heb 10.25).

Priorities (Neh 10.29-39)

1. What were the priorities that the people agreed to?
   1.1. The agreement of those who signed the covenant was:
      1.1.1. Subservience to God's law (29)
      1.1.2. Separation from pagans (30)
      1.1.3. Sabbath keeping (31)
      1.1.4. Supplying the poor (31)

© James R. Hughes, 2006

1.1.5. Sacred service (32-39)
1.1.6. Summary (39)
1.2. We will consider each of these in a bit more detail.

Subservience to God's Law (29)

1. What Law did they commit to obey?
   1.1. The law given through Moses the servant of God and "commands, regulations/ordinances, and decrees/statutes of the LORD our Lord."

2. What might be the significance of this use of God (*Elohim*), LORD (*Jehovah*), and *Adoni* (Lord); the three primary names of God.?
   2.1. It may be a means of explicitly declaring the true God so that there is no confusion. This is not the god of the pagans, a phantasm, or a figment of someone's over-active imagination. This is the God who created, who rules, and administers, justice.
   2.2. The three-fold usage of God's name may be an application of the means, in Hebrew, for strongly reinforcing an idea (e.g., Is 6.3) or showing inclusive completeness. This is probably exemplified also by the names used for the components of God's Law in the latter part of this verse (compare, Mt 22.37 [quoting Dt 6.5] and 1 Thess 5.23).

3. What words are used to describe God's law?
   3.1. Laws, commands, regulations, and decrees.
   3.2. Where have we seen the same four words used previously?
      3.2.1. Nehemiah 9.13, 14 (the latter three are also used together in 1 Ki 6.12; 1 Ki 8.58; 2 Ki 23.1-3; 2 Chron 34.29-32).
      3.2.2. [See the notes on Nehemiah 9.13, 14 for information on how these terms are used to describe the components of God's law.]

4. What do we find in 2 Ki 23.1-3 (2 Chronicles 34.29-32)?
   4.1. A parallel example.
   4.2. Representatives signing the covenant, and popular participation.
   4.3. A similar agreement to obey the Law of God (Book of the Covenant; either Deuteronomy or the Pentateuch).
   4.4. The use of the same terms for the Law (three of the four same words are used).

5. What does this agreement to keep the Law in the context of a covenant renewal indicate?
   5.1. *Promise*: That promising (with an associated curse and an oath) to keep the law is a key component of covenant renewal.
   5.2. *Process*: That the essential process or means of covenant keeping is through following or keeping God's commands.
   5.3. *Product*: That the outcome of our resolve should be to acknowledge the supremacy of God's Law (**all** of it), and apply the authority of Scripture (God's Law), in all areas of life (personal, family, church, business, government, courts).

Separation from Pagans (30)

1. How did they promise to keep themselves separate from pagans?
   1.1. By promising not to intermarry with them.

2. Why was making this promise important at this time?
   2.1. Many of the people would have either been part of, or witnesses of, the painful separation that Ezra had required to cleanse the population (Ezra 10.1-44) around 458 BC about 14 years before the events of Nehemiah 10.1-17 [444/445 BC].
   2.2. They realized that they did not want to go through such a painful process again, no matter how tempting it might be to marry into the families of the nobles or aristocracy around them.
   2.3. Notice that in Ezra 10.3 the promise not to inter-marry was given in the context of a covenant (making/cutting a covenant).

3. Why was it a problem if the people intermarried with the nations around them?
   3.1. Marriages with the pre-Israelite inhabitants of the land were expressly prohibited by God (Dt 7.1-3).

© James R. Hughes, 2006

3.2. They would be led astray to follow pagan gods (Ex 34.11-16; Dt 7.1-4; Josh 23.12, 13).

4. Were the people faithful to their promise?
   4.1. Apparently not.
   4.2. Nehemiah came back to Jerusalem later (Neh 13.6) and found intermarriage of the kind these people specifically promised not to permit (Neh 13.23-27).
   4.3. They had even gone to the extent of marrying into the family of one of their great enemies Sanballat (Neh 13.28; cf 2.10, 19; Neh 4.1-3, 7; Neh 6.1-14).

5. What is the application of this prohibition?
   5.1. We have to remind each generation of the importance of Christians marrying only Christians (1 Cor 7.39; 2 Cor 6.14-18). Every generation of young people doesn't see why this is so important and what the big deal is. Sadly, many Christian young people become burdened by difficult marriages or, worse, are led into great sin.
   5.2. The reason is the same as in the OT, it is hard to avoid corruption and to live a pure life when Christians co-habit with pagans (1 Cor 15.33).

Sabbath Keeping (31)

1. What principle did the people promise to keep/enforce, as recorded in verse 31?
   1.1. Sabbath-keeping
   1.2. [Note: we will deal with the Sabbath-principle only briefly now, and in more detail when we get to chapter 13.15-22. Then we will look at its application in the context of a pagan nation. For the moment we will only note a few aspects of the Sabbath-principle within the context of the Covenant commitment ceremony.]

2. What aspects/dimensions of the Sabbath-principle are mentioned in verse 31?
   2.1. Observance of the seventh-day Sabbath (and other Sabbaths—holy days)
      2.1.1. Resolving not to carry out commercial activities on that day (Ex 20.8-11).
   2.2. Observance of the Sabbatical Year.
      2.2.1. Resolving not to carry out agricultural activities during that year; by letting the land lie fallow (Ex 23.10-11; Lev 25.2-7, 20-21).
   2.3. With these two components of the Sabbath, all forms of work—farmers, merchants, and craftsmen (rural and city dwellers) were able to participate in the in the Sabbath observances in a meaningful way. For example, farmers would still have to water, feed, and milk their animals on the Sabbath day. But during the Sabbath year they could participate more fully in a Sabbath.

3. Why is this command the only one of the Ten Commandments specifically mentioned in their covenant vows?
   3.1. The Sabbath command is representative of the Ten Commandments. It is at the heart of the Ten Commandments. It also seems to be unique in that it straddles both our duty to God and our duty to our fellow men. The first three commands are specifically related to the worship of God and do not have a direct impact on our fellow men. The latter six commands (at least 5-9) have a direct impact on our fellow men (i.e., they are the summary laws relating to our duty to man); the tenth commandment is unique in that it applies to our inner-man. The fourth commandment straddles our duty to God and man. It has religious elements, but the observance of it also has direct consequences for those around us. To the extent that we keep this command, to that extent we allow our co-labourers (and animals) to rest.
   3.2. It is *the* command of trust. In Nehemiah 10.31 the people promise to rest from economic activities for a day pre week, and agricultural activities for a year out of every seven. We have to believe strongly that God will take care of us before we will willingly cease from these activities. The average merchant today, for example, feels that he will only be successful if he opens on Sundays. A typical farmer today has to be very confident to leave a seventh of his fields unplowed (unless he is receiving government subsidies!). He would view it as giving up a seventh of his potential income.
   3.3. This command has a clear, visible, positive component to it. When men don't work on the Sabbath it is clear what they are *not* doing. Everyone expects his neighbours not to murder others, rape his wife, or steal his plasma TV. In contrast when Christians (devote Jews, in the OT economy) keep the Sabbath command in a pagan culture, their witness to God's law is positively seen.
   3.4. The Sabbath is a symbol of the Covenant (Ex 31.15-17); keeping the Sabbath is therefore a sign of Covenant obedience (Is 56.6).

© James R. Hughes, 2006

3.5. The Sabbath is a symbol of holiness (Gen 2.3; Ex 20.11) or separation. They had just promised (30) to be separate from the nations around them. So it is fitting that the command of separation be the one that they emphasized in their promise to be faithful to the Covenant.
3.6. The Sabbath is holy. [See notes on Neh 9.14.]
3.7. It may be that this command was singled out because they wished to explicitly correct their nation's clear covenant breaking in their rebellion against the Sabbath (Ex 31.16, 17; Is 56.4-8 [6]).
3.8. They were very aware that their forefathers sinned by not keeping the Sabbath. They were punished because they neglected the Sabbath day and probably the Sabbath year law (Lev 25.1-7 [4]; Ex 23.10). The land was given a Sabbath rest while the people were in captivity (2 Chron 36.21). Because they were so aware of the sin of Sabbath breaking they emphasized Sabbath keeping in their promise to be obedient to God's Law.

4. What lessons can we derive from this section?
4.1. Although we haven't considered the doctrinal arguments for keeping the Sabbath in the NT economy, we can see that there is a strong connection between Sabbath-keeping and covenant-keeping. This should encourage us to be faithful in our observance of the Sabbath. If we want to be faithful to the Covenant, then we will keep all of God's commands; but in particular we will be especially careful to keep that one command that is the sign/symbol of the Covenant—the Sabbath.

Supplying the Poor (31)

1. What else did they commit to do along with observing the Sabbath?
1.1. To cancel all debts.
1.2. This is an extension of the Sabbath principle (a form of sabbatical or Jubilee) (Dt 15.1-8).
1.3. There are different views about what this might have included:
1.3.1. Payment of the portion of the debt due could not be demanded in the seventh year. During the seventh year when the land was to lie fallow an Israelite debtor (most were farmers) would not have income from which to make debt payment. After the seventh year payments would resume. Calvin takes this position in his sermons on Deuteronomy (sermon #93).
1.3.2. The loan was to be completely eliminated. This view could be considered more generous and appears to be supported better by Deuteronomy 15.9-11. This provision may have been put in place to help limit the amount of poverty.
1.3.3. A compromise position could be that the debtors were legally off the hook, but expected to repay the lender if able.
1.3.4. In any case, the intent of the Jubilee was not to allow a *wealthy* borrower to skip off with someone else's resources but to provide a means of helping the poor.

2. Why did they commit to this action?
2.1. The people took the Mosaic corpus of laws seriously and agreed to recommit themselves to following the law.
2.2. Within the past few months they had just come through a period of famine (Neh 5.1-13). The latest harvest had probably been blessed and they had been able to go into the harvest festivals with rejoicing. But they were still acutely aware of the abuses of the poor by the rich.
2.3. They also had had to help out some poor who had not yet recovered from the famine (Neh 8.10, 11).
2.4. They were in the midst of a religious revival and they realized that caring for others who are truly needy is a key part of true religion; they were to care for aliens, widows and orphans—the deserving poor (Dt 26.12, 13; Job 31.16-20; Is 58.6-10). [See: *Appendix M – The Church's Response to Poverty*, for more detail on this subject.]
2.5. They understood the connection between keeping the Sabbath laws and caring for the poor (Ex 23.10, 11; compare: Ex 20.10).

Sacred Service (32-39)

1. What type of commitment is made in these verses?
1.1. They agreed to provide for the work of the worship of God.
1.2. They had done much, recently, for their secular well-being (e.g., re-building the wall; obtaining justice after the famine, providing food for the poor).
1.3. Now they were making sure that the ministry in the temple was properly supplied.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

1.4. Haggai had accused those who had returned form the captivity of not being concerned about the work of the Temple (Hag 1.2-11). The people of Nehemiah's day, about 75 years later, did not want to be disobedient to God and suffer the consequences (e.g., famine; Hag 1.10, 11; Neh 5.1-13).

2. What are the specific commitments they make?
   2.1. *To pay the temple tax for the maintenance of the Temple* (33).
      2.1.1. What was the temple tax?
         2.1.1.1. Every male, after reaching the age of 20, was to register for military service and pay the half shekel (Num 1.3; Ex 30.11-16).
         2.1.1.2. It was in the form of a poll or head tax.
         2.1.1.3. Jesus and Peter paid the half-shekel (two drachma/denarius) tax (approximately 2-days' wages) as part of the annual registration or census (Mt 17.24-27). Pompey fixed the rate of exchange of a tetradrachma from Antioch and Tyre at 4 denarii (c. 65 BC), and Josephus refers to the same rate for the Tyrian coin in his day.
         2.1.1.4. The amount of money that was collected each year depended on the population. If it is assume that at the time of Nehemiah there were about 50,000 adult males (see, Neh 11.1-36); 10% would indicate about 30,000, and others probably volunteered in the community, they would have donated the equivalent of about $6-8M per year (50,000 males * $25K/300 daily wage *2 days). Silver is relatively cheaper today than it was in Babylonian times.
      2.1.2. What was the temple tax used for?
         2.1.2.1. *Not* to fund the work of the Levites. This work was funded by the tithes. (Neh 10.37, 38; Num 18.21, 24-32)
         2.1.2.2. To pay for the bread placed before the LORD (Ex 35.13) and for regular offerings for daily, weekly, monthly, and annual festivals; and to carrying out other duties and maintenance of the temple (i.e., to pay the operating costs, but not the salaries).
      2.1.3. Why did the people agree to pay a *third* of a shekel annually; compared with Ex 30.13 that speaks of a *half* shekel.
         2.1.3.1. It may be due to hardship that the tax was temporarily reduced.
         2.1.3.2. Alternatively the system of weights and measures may have been different.
            2.1.3.2.1. Note in Exodus 30.13 reference is made to a "sanctuary shekel".
            2.1.3.2.2. Israelite "light system" (the one referred to in Ex 30.13; Ex 38.25 *vs* 2 Sam 14.26; Gen 23.15): a shekel weighed ~11.4 grams.
            2.1.3.2.3. Israelite "heavy system": a shekel weighed ~12.5 grams.
            2.1.3.2.4. Babylonian "light" system: a shekel weighed ~8.75 grams.
            2.1.3.2.5. Babylonian "heavy" system: a shekel weighed ~16.74 grams.
            2.1.3.2.6. It is possible that 1/3 of the Babylonian "heavy" shekel (~5.58 grams) was considered equivalent to ½ the Israelite "light" or "sanctuary" shekel (~5.7).
            2.1.3.2.7. A Tiberius Caesar silver denarius from 14-37 AD weighed 3.0 grams, thus the need for two coins, per Mt 17.24-27.
            2.1.3.2.8. For comparative reference: a Canadian $1 Loonie weighs 7 grams, a quarter weighs 5.05 grams[35].
      2.1.4. What did the temple tax teach?
         2.1.4.1. That all people were counted as equal before the Law.
         2.1.4.2. It provided encouragement since when the men were counted it showed God's preserving faithfulness from year to year.
         2.1.4.3. It served as an object lesson that taught that all the people in the Kingdom/Church had to be redeemed from sin and the ways of the world. They had to "cross over" (Ex 30.13).
         2.1.4.4. Paying the temple tax is similar to becoming a member of a congregation in the visible Church.
         2.1.4.5. Administratively, it provided a form of annual census.
   2.2. *To contribute gifts in kind for the maintenance of the Temple* (34).
      2.2.1. What did they say that they would bring?
         2.2.1.1. Wood.
      2.2.2. Why did the people have to bring the wood?

[35] Royal Canadian Mint Act, Schedule Part 2: Circulation Coins (Section 2 para 6.4 through para 6.6).

© James R. Hughes, 2006

2.2.2.1. The lot fell on them; i.e., it was their turn (month). [We won't consider the use of casting lots to determine the allocation and roles at this time. We will consider it when we look at Neh 11.1].
2.2.2.2. Wood was needed for the fire on the altar of burnt offering, which was to burn continually (Lev 6.12-13).
2.2.2.3. It was the responsibility of the Temple Servants (Nethinim) to supply the wood for the fires of the temple (Josh 9.27). But there were probably so few of them left (Ezra 2.58; Ezra 8.17-20; Neh 7.60) after the captivity that it became necessary for others to participate in this provision.
2.2.2.4. Bringing of the wood to the temple became a festival day (around the 15th of August): "Popular festival in Judea during the time of the Second Temple … the maidens of Jerusalem, rich and poor, without exception, dressed in white, went out to dance in the vineyards with the young men, asking them to make their choice of a partner for life. … all the people, the priests as well as the Levites, took part in the wood-offering."[36]
2.2.2.5. Josephus makes reference to this festival: "Now the next day [14th Lous/Ab] was the festival of Xylophory; upon which the custom was for every one to bring wood for the altar (that there might never be a want of fuel for that fire which was unquenchable and always burning). Upon that day they excluded the opposite party from the observation of this part of religion."[37]

2.3. *To provide a portion from their increase for the support of the work of the Levites in the Temple* [35-39].
2.3.1. What specific items did they commit to supply?
2.3.1.1. Firstfruits of their crops and fruit trees
2.3.1.2. Firstborn of their sons, cattle, herds and flocks
2.3.1.3. A first portion of their ground meal, grain, new wine and oil
2.3.1.4. Tithe of their crops
2.3.2. What was the guiding principle under which they supplied these items?
2.3.2.1. From the Law [36]
2.3.2.2. Giving the firstfruits of their crops (Ex 23.19; Lev 19.23; Dt 26.1-3)
2.3.2.3. Presenting firstborn (Num 18.14-19; Dt 12.6)
2.3.2.4. Paying annual tithes (Lev 27.30).
2.3.3. How often did they agree to bring these items to the temple?
2.3.3.1. Yearly [35]
2.3.4. What were the specific uses to which the items were to be applied?
2.3.4.1. For the house of the LORD [35].
2.3.4.2. To fill the storerooms of the house of our God [37].
2.3.4.3. For the priests ministering in the house [36, 37].
2.3.4.4. For the Levites [37[including gatekeepers and the singers [39].
2.3.5. What additional principles related to tithing are mentioned? [38, 39[
2.3.5.1. "A priest descended from Aaron is to accompany the Levites when they receive the tithes" [38] What could be the reasons for this? This was probably *not* because the Levites were untrustworthy. Rather, the priests represented the people to/before God. Having a priest present at the receipt of the contributions reminded the people that their offering was directed to God and his work.
2.3.5.2. The Levites were to tithe on what they received [38, 39] (Num 18.26; Ezk 44.30). Their tithe was to provide for the priests' needs.

3. What relevance does their commitment to provide contributions for the work of the Temple have for us in the NT age in the 21st century?
3.1. It reminds us that the work of the church is to be funded out of the contributions supplied by the members of the assembly, through tithes and offerings.
3.2. [For a considerations of tithing *vs* free-will offerings see: *Appendix J – Tithing vs Free-Will Offerings*.]

Summary Promise (39)

---

[36] Kaufmann Kohler, "Ab, Fifteenth Day of," *Jewish Encyclopedia*, www.JewishEncyclopeida.com.

[37] Flavius Josephus, *The Wars of The Jews - or The History of The Destruction of Jerusalem*; "Book II, Containing the Interval of Sixty-Nine Years. From the Death of Herod Till Vespasian was Sent to Subdue the Jews by Nero", Chapter 17: "How The War Of The Jews With The Romans Began, And Concerning Manahem"; para. 6.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

1. What lesson can we learn from the people's response? (29-39)
   1.1. Although these people were economically stretched because of the famine (Neh 5.3) and from paying high taxes to the Persian empire (Neh 5.4), they were willing to forgo the apparent benefits of:
      1.1.1. Marrying into foreign money (intermarriage with unbelievers),
      1.1.2. Carrying out commercial activities seven days a week,
      1.1.3. Withholding tithes until they were more prosperous, and
      1.1.4. Continuing to collect on debts until they had more resources.
      Their covenant commitments were costly and self-denying.
   1.2. From their example, we learn that:
      1.2.1. We must not let the love of money become our guide for behaviour (1 Tim 6.10); e.g., with respect to partnerships and alliances and business operations.
      1.2.2. We need to pay our tithes and not use high taxes as an excuse (Mt 22.21).
      1.2.3. We need to be fair to the poor and (applying Biblical guidelines) support them through works of charity and freewill offerings (James 1.27).

2. What is their concluding promise?
   2.1. They would not neglect the house of God.
   2.2. What could this summary promise encompass or include?
      2.2.1. *Time*—keeping the Sabbath holy and attending the stated assemblies such as the festivals.
      2.2.2. *Material Possessions*—giving tithes and free-will offerings from their increase to support the work of the temple (church).
      2.2.3. *Life*—promising in holiness and separation to obey the commands of God.
      2.2.4. *Worship*—they would not go after false gods in idolatry (e.g., by worshiping on the high places) and bring syncretistic elements of human invention into the worship of God.
      2.2.5. *Priorities*—they would not let their work as farmers, shepherds, craftsmen or merchants consume them so that they forgot the work of the temple. They would not neglect the Temple as their fathers had.
         2.2.5.1. Joash (2 Ki 12.5ff) and Josiah (2 Ki 22.5ff) had to provide for the repair of the Temple. Josiah restored the Temple which had fallen into disrepair and had suffered major damage during Athaliah's reign (2 Chron 24.7).
         2.2.5.2. Josiah restored the Temple that had fallen into disrepair and had been desecrated by Manasseh who had built pagan altars and images in it (2 Ki 21.4-5, 7).
      2.2.6. [For a fuller consideration of the scope of our offerings to God, refer to *The Principle of the Portion*.[38]]
   2.3. In other words, they promised to commit every aspect of their being to the God and his house.
      2.3.1. They committed to making the work of the house of God their priority in life.
      2.3.2. Under Nehemiah's (and Ezra's) leadership they placed a priority on spiritual matters. These were more important than the restoration of the city's walls.

3. What is the application or relevance of this promise for us?
   3.1. Keeping the Lord's Day holy (Ex 20.8).
   3.2. Being at the stated assemblies (Heb 10.25).
   3.3. Supporting the work of the church financially (1 Cor 16.2).
   3.4. Putting God first in everything (1 Cor 10.31; Col 3.23; 1 Pt 4.11).
   3.5. Worshiping in Spirit and truth (Jn 4.24).
   3.6. Giving ones' life to obedience so as not to bring ill-repute on the Christ or his Church (1 Tim 6.1; Titus 2.5, 8, 10; 1 Pt 2.12; 1 Pt 3.16).

Practiced

1. How did they follow through on their promised actions? (Neh 11.1, 2)
   1.1. They immediately followed their covenant confirmation by implementing specific changes in the life of their community and in (at least some of) their personal lives.
   1.2. This is shown by their expressed willingness to participate in a lottery of relocation (Neh 11.1), and by (some) agreeing voluntarily to relocate to Jerusalem (Neh 11.2).

2. Was their commitment sincere?

[38] Available at: www.epctoronto.org.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

2.1. Their commitment may have been honest and sincere at the time.
2.2. But it was not followed through as thoroughly as it should have been. Later Nehemiah had to clean up things, since they:
2.2.1. Did not pay the temple tax and tithes to support the work of the Temple and of the Levites (Neh 13.10, 31 compared with 10.32-39).
2.2.2. Neglected the house of God (Neh 13.11 compared with 10.39).
2.2.3. Were carrying out commercial activity on the Sabbath (Neh 13.15-22 compared with 10.31).
2.2.4. Were intermarrying with pagans (Neh 13.23-28 compared with 10.30).

3. What are some lessons that we can take from their failure to continue fulfilling their covenant commitments?
3.1. Making vows in public is not sufficient to ensure that a person or group of people (congregation) will carry out their vows. We often see people today break their wedding vows, business contracts, election promises, etc.
3.2. We need to exhort and encourage one another to keep our commitments (Heb 3.12, 13; Heb 10.24, 25).
3.3. We must realize how easy it is to fall away, and stay focused on our obligations and vigilant in keeping them (Prov 4.14, 15; 1 Cor 10.12; 1 Cor 16.13; 1 Pt 4.7; 1 Pt 5.8).
3.4. We need to ask God to help us persevere to the end (Mt 6.13; Mt 26.41).

Dispersed Population (Neh 11.1-36)

Context

1. What is the *larger* historical context for the events in Nehemiah 11.1-36? Why did the city need to be resettled?
1.1. The city had been destroyed. It was once an impressive city with magnificent monuments (e.g., Temple, king's palace, walls)
1.2. What were the circumstances of its destruction?
1.2.1. Because of the people's sin and rebellion, God's patience finally ran out.
1.2.2. After a siege of about a year and half, Nebuchadnezzar had his commander, Nebuzaradan, execute the destruction of the city in 586 or 587 BC (2 Ki 25.2-4, 8-10; Jer 52.12-13).
1.2.3. The city was left destroyed and desolate, and its physical infrastructure deteriorated during the period of the captivity.
1.3. The city was large and spacious, with few people living in it, because it had not yet been re-built.
1.3.1. The statement in Nehemiah 7.4 does not mean that there were no houses or inhabitants at all. The city had been re-inhabited for 90 years. Rather it was sparsely inhabited. Few people wanted to live in it.
1.3.2. Nehemiah 2.13-15 and Nehemiah 3.1-32 (e.g., the listing of the city gates) provides an indication of where the walls were at this time. Archaeologists are able to find the approximate walls in the old city and historical atlases show the outline of the city.
1.3.3. The walled area at the time of Nehemiah was probably around 25 hectares (about 50 football fields).
1.3.4. After the time of Nehemiah, until the time of Herod the Great (and the time of the birth of Jesus), the city walls were extended so that the city was 3-4 times larger.

2. Why were there few people living in the city?
2.1. Because, until the time of Nehemiah, the wall had not been re-built. The city was under an interdict.
2.2. Many cities of this era were destroyed and have never been re-built (e.g., Ur, Nineveh, Babylon, Susa). The locations of destroyed cities were abandoned when the historic reasons for their having been founded in those locations no longer had relevance:
2.2.1. Trade routes changed because of politics.
2.2.2. Water supplies changed or dried up.
2.2.3. The surrounding soil became too saline from constant evaporation and could not supply enough food to support the city.
2.2.4. Canals became clogged/silted and there was not a government infrastructure to maintain them.
2.2.5. A harbour silted up and ships could no longer reach the docks.
2.2.6. A mine or quarry was exhausted.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

2.3. From a human/natural perspective there was no strong reason for locating a city where Jerusalem was, other than for defense.
2.4. It is possible (likely) that Jerusalem would have been deserted entirely and would be a 'tell' or ruin today if it had not been for the work of Nehemiah.

3. What was the reason that Jerusalem was founded where it was?
3.1. Historically, it was a religious place (Gen 14.18 [see Ps 76.2]; Gen 22.2; 1 Chron 21.18-30; 2 Chron 3.1-2).
3.2. A fortress with very limited access on three sides, on the route down to the Jordan, at the time of the Jebusites.

4. Why was Jerusalem re-inhabited?
4.1. The main reason it was re-inhabited is because it was the place where God chose to make his name known among his people (in the Temple). It was the holy city and he would not leave it deserted.
4.2. God would not let his enemies gloat. He punished the city but did not destroy it completely as he did the pagan cities that despised him (e.g., Babylon). Compare Moses' plea (Num 14.10-20).
4.3. To show how forgiving God is (Num 14.18)
4.4. To fulfill God's promise that the city would be re-populated: see Zech 8.3-11 (compare, Zech 8.8 "bring them back" with Neh 7.6).
4.5. Nehemiah instituted the disciplines of public life in the community and it was safe for people to return and dwell in the city (compare, Zech 8.10 "no safety" with Neh 7.1, 3).

5. What is the *immediate* historical context to the events in Nehemiah 11.1-36?
5.1. Revival (Nehemiah 9.1-38 and Nehemiah 10.1-39).
5.2. The people followed their covenant confirmation by immediately implementing specific changes in their daily lives.
5.3. This is shown by their expressed willingness to participate in a lottery of relocation (Neh 11.1), and by agreeing voluntarily to relocate to Jerusalem (Neh 11.2).

Challenge (Neh 11.1)

1. What may have been the reasons so few leaders and people were willing to settle in the city?
1.1. Because the temple was in Jerusalem (the place God had chosen to put his name) we would think that people would have been willing to live in the city. But on the contrary few chose to live there.
1.2. They wanted to remain on their ancestral properties (Lev 25.10) in the hinterlands.
1.3. Living in the city was going to be a challenge: 1) hard work to re-build, 2) hard work to protect, 3) worry over the influence of the city on the morals of their children.
1.4. It was easier and more comfortable to live in the towns or rural areas surrounding the city and to come to the city only for the festivals.

2. What is the first thing we are told about the relocation program?
2.1. The leaders settled in the city (of Jerusalem).

3. Who were these leaders? (3)
3.1. The ones identified by name in verses 4-19.
3.2. There are 20 named individuals. We will look at some of the named individuals and the roles of the people mentioned when we consider the census in verses 3-19.

4. How many people are named as those who signed/sealed the covenant? (Neh 10.1-27)
4.1. 84: Nehemiah, Zedekiah, Priests (21), Levites (17), Civil Leaders (44).

5. How many of the named leaders (4-19) signed/sealed the covenant? (compare, with 10.1-27)
5.1. Only three names appear in the list of those who signed/sealed the covenant in chapter 10 and also in the list of leaders who settled in Jerusalem in chapter 11.
5.2. Even then, we cannot know for sure if individuals with common names are the same in both lists. One of the names (Shemaiah) is probably not the same individual; since in one list (Neh 10.8) the name occurs in the list of priests; and in the other (Neh 11.15) in the list of Levites.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

5.3. There are only two individuals who are likely the same person in both lists (unless individuals are named by different names in the two lists):
5.3.1. Maaseiah (Neh 10.25; Neh 11.5); from the leaders of the people and from Judah
5.3.2. Seraiah (Neh 10.2; Neh 11.11) a priest in both lists; possibly Ezra [See the notes for Neh 10.1-27, under *Personal*, for an explanation.]

6. Why did so few of the leaders who signed/sealed the covenant, apparently, settle in the city?
6.1. The reasons may include those we have considered above: their concerns over their ancestral lands and the challenges of living in the city.

7. What was the reason the leaders settled in the city?
7.1. The city needed able administrators to provide for the governance of the city (e.g., Neh 11.9; compare Neh 7.2).
7.2. The appropriate place to obtain these administrators, in the context of Jewish social structure, was from the elders of the community.
7.3. The leaders who volunteered to move into the city set an example of faith and practice. They trusted God for provision and protection, and they put their faith into practice.

8. Is there a 'follow through' problem on the part of some of the signers of the covenant?
8.1. Some were immediately faithful to their commitments and showed it by moving into the city.
8.2. Others were less willing to act in accord with their profession and instead let their material comforts dictate their behaviour.
8.3. This apparent lack of whole-hearted commitment to the covenant may help to explain some of the problems that Nehemiah encounters later (chapter 13), even though they agreed to participate in the lottery ("It is a good idea to re-populate the city, just don't ask me to do it." This is much like most people's view of public transit: it is great to have for other people to use, just don't ask them to use it.)

9. What lessons can we learn from the opening statement of this chapter "Now the leaders of the people settled in Jerusalem"?
9.1. It requires strong convictions to follow through on promises made in the 'heat of excitement' after memories fade, circumstances change, or difficulties arise.
9.1.1. It is easy in the excitement of a religious revival to step up and 'be counted' among those who are willing to make great promises for God. It is harder to follow through on those promises.
9.1.2. Examples:
9.1.2.1. Peter (Mt 26.33-35, 60-75)
9.1.2.2. Some who signed the *National Covenant* (1638) in Scotland [140 ministers, 2 professors, 98 ruling elders of whom 17 were noblemen, 9 knights)] fell away. The General Assembly of 1640 had to deal with persons who had subscribed and later spoke against the covenant. James Guthrie stated, in 1651, that God's wrath was against Scotland because of the ignorance and want of sincerity on the part of many in taking the covenants (*National Covenant* and *Solemn League and Covenant*).
9.1.2.3. The number of people who go forward at an evangelistic crusade compared with those who remain in churches for the long term, shows that some (many) are like the seed scattered on shallow soil (Mt 13.5, 20, 21). For example, the following is taken from the Luis Palau Web-site:
> Q 'How many of those who "go forward" at a Luis Palau evangelistic festival meeting will actually continue living as active, growing Christians?'
> A ... "Detailed research is not conducted after each campaign, but where results have been researched the follow-up success rate has been as high as 54 percent (for a 1976 crusade in Argentina), 57 percent (1978 in Uruguay), 78 percent (1983-84, England), and 73 percent (1987, Hong Kong)."[39]

9.1.2.4. Many students (of the 15-20,000 who attend every three to four years) fill in cards at the Intervarsity Christian Fellowship's Urbana Missionary Conferences[40] committing themselves to pursue full-time service in missions. For example, at "Urbana 2000 Total attendance of 20,241. Over 5,000 students responded, indicating that they felt God's call

[39] www.gospelcom.net/lpea/lpeafestivals.shtml

[40] Started in 1946 at University of Toronto. Theme of Urbana 03: "Your Kingdom Come, Your Will Be Done" The convention seeks to challenge students with the authority of God in their lives and help them discover their role in world missions.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

into cross-cultural missions as vocation. Over 10,000 students felt God was guiding them to purposefully join his mission in the world." Many probably did not follow through on their promises.

9.2. Strong leaders are willing to face challenges.
  9.2.1. Examples of strong leaders from the Bible who stepped out to face the challenges that others were unwilling to face:
    9.2.1.1. Nehemiah – We have noted that in the face of much opposition he has been leading the people in the reconstruction of the city and community.
    9.2.1.2. Joshua and Caleb – Willing to go in to take the promised-land.
    9.2.1.3. David – Facing Goliath.
    9.2.1.4. Daniel – Standing for the truth in a pagan society and government.
    9.2.1.5. Jesus – Heb 12.2.
    9.2.1.6. Apostle Paul – 2 Cor 11.22-29.
  9.2.2. Examples of extra-Biblical leaders in the Church who led in the face of challenges:
    9.2.2.1. Athanasius
    9.2.2.2. Martin Luther
    9.2.2.3. John Knox
    9.2.2.4. William Carey

9.3. God may be showing us the cooperation of church and state to bring about the work of building his Kingdom.
  9.3.1. It appears that there are only two named individuals (from among the leaders) who signed/sealed the covenant and then settled in Jerusalem. These two are:
    9.3.1.1. Maaseiah (Neh 10.25; Neh 11.5); from the leaders of the people and from Judah (Gen 49.10).
    9.3.1.2. Seraiah (Neh 10.2; Neh 11.11) a priest in both lists (as we've noted, possibly Ezra).
  9.3.2. If, in fact, these named individuals are the same people in both lists, what might the Holy Spirit be telling us?
    9.3.2.1. We find a leader from the house of Judah (the civil authority) and a leader from the priests (the religious authority), represented.
    9.3.2.2. We may have here an example of church and state working together to establish the city of Jerusalem. This may be stretching the lesson, but it appears to be a supportable conclusion.
      9.3.2.2.1. Census lists are intended to teach us, this could be one of the lessons.
      9.3.2.2.2. God will not leave himself without a witness at any point in history; here are witnesses both in church and state who are faithful to his cause and purposes.
      9.3.2.2.3. A precedent is set by example in Zechariah (also Ezra 1.5; Ezra 2.2) who speaks of the leadership of Zerubbabel and Joshua (c 520 BC) and foretells of a coming priest/king (Jesus), we have also seen church/state working together in the preceding chapters (7-10) under Nehemiah's and Ezra's leadership.

9.4. There is a real need for those who are willing to live and work in urban ministries. The Church needs urban saints and those willing to commit to an urban witness.
  9.4.1. Cities are full of the corruption of humanity. They attract all the elements of man's depravity (sexual deviances, drug abuse, materialism, gambling, high crime rates, false religions). They are difficult, dangerous places for Christians and especially Christian families.
  9.4.2. Large urban centers are often deserted by churches. The members of traditional older churches pull out and move to the suburbs and exurbs and the churches die, or follow. Cities are left with 'missions' and 'fringe' churches. The people who no longer live in the cities often continue to 'milk' the city by day as commuters to economic-engine islands or to isolated night playgrounds. Then they exit the cities for their non-urban sanctuaries.
  9.4.3. It is difficult for Christians to live in an ethnically/racially/religiously mixed culture that is anti-Christian (i.e., where the people of other ethnic groups openly practice and espouse their religions or speak out against Christianity). It was no different in Nehemiah's day. The Church needs real leaders who are willing to settle in cities and to be salt and light to a perpetually decaying culture.

Conscription (Neh 11.1)

1. What does the use of casting lots indicate?
  1.1. There seems to have been a problem getting enough people to live in the city.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

1.1.1. Even though a number of leaders 'signed-up' and moved to the city and a number of people volunteered to move into Jerusalem; the people, in general, were not lining up to move, so a solution had to be proposed to identify candidates.
1.1.2. The apparent commitment of the people to the covenant in Nehemiah 10.1-39, and then the general unwillingness of many of the people to follow through on their commitment with action, is indicative of human behaviour in many areas. Even though we know what is right and best for us to do, we often don't follow through. For example:
1.1.2.1. People know that smoking is not good for them, but find it difficult to quit.
1.1.2.2. People who are consulted in a survey about public transit will often indicate that public transportation is very good thing for a city to have, but then do not show a disposition to use it. It is as if they are saying: "Public transportation is good as long as others use it and make the roads less congested for me."
1.1.2.3. The same behaviour appears in spiritual matters. All men know that there is a God who demands true allegiance but they don't respond accordingly.
1.2. They had to resort to a process of conscription in order to find enough people to inhabit the city.
1.2.1. This approach is often used when a 'dirty' job needs to be done; e.g., drawing straws.
1.2.2. The approach seemed to be acceptable to the people.
1.2.3. It was certainly less oppressive than the practice of the times. For example in the Bible we read of the relocation of many of the Jews at the captivity and the re-population of Israel with the people who became Samaritans. Apparently Persian and Hellenistic cities were at times re-populated by the forcible transfer of people form one locale to another.
1.3. The use of casting lots appears to be a legitimate means (in identified circumstances) for determining God's will.
1.3.1. Where else have we seen the use of 'casting lots' in Nehemiah?
1.3.1.1. Neh 10.34 – Casting lots was used to determine the rotation of the service in the Temple.
1.3.1.2. Neh 7.65 refers to the use (non-use) of the Urim and Thummim for determining whether or not certain individuals were legitimate members of the priestly line.
1.3.2. [For additional information on casting lots to determine God's will, see: *Appendix T – Casting Lots (Considerations)*]

2. Is there an application of Nehemiah's action to our situation?
2.1. If a state government/provincial government were to propose a 'lottery' in order to have 10% of the people living in the hinterlands move into a 'blighted' urban area it might cause an uproar. We could not justify the action on the basis of Nehemiah's program. Nehemiah was dealing with the Holy City (Neh 11.1, 18); this would not be the case for a city in modern NA.
2.2. However, there are situations today where governments impose a similar form of 'lottery':
2.2.1. A military draft. Everyone likes the benefits of national security and freedom, but few are willing to endure the inconveniences associated with ensuring that it is there.
2.2.2. Doctors who arrive in a province may be required to settle in under-serviced areas (e.g., the north).
2.3. Are these justifiable actions? On what basis? [Discuss.]
2.4. Could there be a situation in a church for this kind of allocation?
2.4.1. Let's suppose that a congregation/denomination has decided that its mission will be to an inner city and that some of the people will have to live near that mission. What if, when the time came, few volunteered to move to the city? What should be done? What if most people agreed that a 'lottery' would be used? Would this be a proper or fair way for getting households to move?
2.5. Josephus adds a note about Nehemiah's action that is not in the Biblical account. "But when Nehemiah saw that the city was thin of people, he exhorted the priests and the Levites that they would leave the country, and remove themselves to the city, and there continue; and he *built them houses* at his own expenses … who willingly hearkened to the constitutions of Nehemiah, by which means the city of Jerusalem came to be fuller of people than it was before."[41]
2.5.1. If Josephus' statements are correct (and there is no reason to question them, as they are consistent with what we know about Nehemiah; e.g., Neh 5.14, 17, 18) then he made the move easier by personally subsidizing it.
2.5.2. Josephus' statements also inform us of the final success of the program. The city was populated with more people than had lived in it before the captivity.

[41] Josephus, *Antiquities* 11.5.8.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

Commendation (Neh 11.2)

1. What did the people do to those who volunteered to live in the city?
   1.1. They blessed (or commended) them.

2. How would they likely have blessed/commended them?
   2.1. Probably with a word of thanks and encouragement.
   2.2. They may have held a ceremony in which their names were read out and a speech was given and a prayer of blessing offered.
   2.3. Since effort was taken to create the list of names and record the list as part of Scripture it is possible that they made the commendation a formal activity.

3. What are examples from our current national context where commendation of right/good actions is offered?
   3.1. Governor General's medal, medals of honour and bravery, commendations for heroic action (e.g., saving someone from a fire).

4. How in the Church, today, can we apply this kind of commendation?
   4.1. We do not find many examples of God's people being commended for obedient actions/behaviour. However, commendations for suffering for the cause of Christ seem to fall within the category of legitimate commendation (1 Peter 2.20-21; 1 Tim 5.17-19).
   4.2. We need to ensure that God receives the ultimate glory and not men. However, it is not wrong to recognize (1 Cor 16.15; 2 Cor 8.1-4) and thank people, but we must continually keep focused on the fact that Jesus is building his Church (1 Cor 15.10; 2 Cor 1.12).
   4.3. Examples of what to recognize:
      4.3.1. Since there are few examples in the Bible of saints being commended for their actions by their fellows it makes it difficult to derive principles. Keeping it simple is probably the best course of action.
      4.3.2. Truly sacrificial giving and service (e.g.: giving up a career as a doctor in NA to serve in Zimbabwe); long-term faithful years of service (serving as a janitor of the church without pay for thirty years); having faced extraordinary difficulties for the cause of Christ and his Church (e.g., in jail).
   4.4. Methods that seem appropriate:
      4.4.1. A personal 'thank-you', a note in the Bulletin, a note of thanks in the Pastor's year-end letter to the congregation, a word of thanks from the pulpit, thanks in a prayer, possibly a cake and card at a regular fellowship meal.
      4.4.2. We should be cautious (this does not mean a prohibition) about holding special events to recognize individuals for service (e.g., a banquet to honour a person).
   4.5. Dangers of recognizing individuals:
      4.5.1. Keeping it at the appropriate level.
      4.5.2. Recognizing some and forgetting others.
      4.5.3. People coming to expect it.
      4.5.4. People basking in the recognition of men.
   4.6. In general, commendation should be left to the great judge (Mt 5.7-10; Lk 19.16-27) since we do not really know what is important work for the kingdom, e.g., is the faithful daily prayer of a humble widow for the work of the Pregnancy Care Centre may prove, in God's eyes, to have been of more value than the book-a-year pace of a prominent Christian speaker who basked in the accolades of his fans.

Census (Neh 11.3-19)

1. Who were the people who populated the city?
   1.1. Leaders and their associated families.

2. How many people re-inhabited Jerusalem (according to this account)?
   2.1. We find 20 named individuals (leaders) and a total census of 3,044.
      2.1.1. Judah (2): Athaiah (a descendent of Perez) [4]; Maaseiah (a descendent of Shelah) [5]. From Perez 468; doesn't say how many from Shelah.
      2.1.2. Benjamin (5): Sallu, Gabbai, Sallai [7]; Joel, Judah [8]; 928.
      2.1.3. Priests (6): Jedaiah [10]; Jakin [10]; Seraiah [11], 822; Adaiah [12], 242; Amashsai [13]; 128; Zabdiel [14]. 822+242+128=1192

© James R. Hughes, 2006

2.1.4. Levites (6): Shemaiah [15]; Shabbethai, Jozabad [16]; Mattaniah, Bakbukiah, Abda [17]; 284.
2.1.5. Gatekeepers (2): Akkub, Talmon [19]; 172

2.2. The 3,044 likely includes only heads of households (i.e., there may have been more than 3,044 men) and does not include women or children. So there was probably at least 15,000 people who re-inhabited the city. There may have been more, as this list may (probably) only include the leaders of the community (compare, verse 3 with 1) and may not include the heads of households who made up the 10% taken by lot.

2.3. 1 Chronicles 9.2-21 also provides a list of the re-settlement of Judea/Judah. From verse 2 onward the account appears to be referring specifically to the re-settlement of Jerusalem.

2.3.1. What are some differences we notice between the accounts?

2.3.1.1. The 1 Chronicles account includes people from Ephraim and Manasseh [1C: 3]. The Nehemiah account did not include these people. Its focus seems to be the restoration of the Southern Kingdom. The people from Ephraim and Manasseh would have been from the Northern Kingdom and would have been descendants of people taken into captivity about 150 years earlier.

2.3.1.2. The leaders from Judah are different individuals (Uthai from Perez; Asaiah a Shilonite, and Juel a Zerahite; another son of Judah); and 690 men from Judah are mentioned whereas in Nehemiah the number is 468. [1C: 4-6; N: 4-7]

2.3.1.3. One of the Benjamites (Sallu) appears to be the same individual in both lists (but his ancestral genealogy is quite different in the two accounts), but others are mentioned in the 1 Chronicles account (Ibneiah, Elah, Meshullam); the number of Benjamites in 1 Chronicles [956] is slightly higher than in Nehemiah [928]. [1C: 7-9; N: 7-9[

2.3.1.4. In 1 Chronicles the names of the priests appear to refer to the same individuals, with a few spelling variations (Joiarib may be Jehoiarib, Seraiah may be Azariah, and Amashsai may be Maasai); the number of priests (1,760) in 1 Chronicles is higher than the number (1,192) in Nehemiah. [1C: 10-13; N: 10-14[

2.3.1.5. There are variations in both spellings of names and in the list of the Levite leaders between 1 Chronicles and Nehemiah; the account in 1 Chronicles does not specify the number of Levite settlers. [1C: 14-16; N: 15-18]

2.3.1.6. 1 Chronicles names two additional heads of the gatekeepers, and identifies one of the new names (Shallum) as their chief; the number of gatekeepers in 1 Chronicles is [212] *vs* [172] in Nehemiah. [1C: 17-22; N: 19]

2.3.2. What might account for these differences between the accounts in 1 Chronicles and Nehemiah?

2.3.2.1. It does not appear that the accounts are to be understood as recording exactly the same thing. We are not to try to reconcile them by concluding that one or the other is in error and attempting to make corrections.

2.3.2.2. They may have been taken at different times. For example, the list in Nehemiah may refer only to those who were present at the lottery and agreed to the settlement terms or volunteered to settle in Jerusalem. The account in 1 Chronicles could refer to all those who actually settled in Jerusalem after a period of time (i.e., a larger number).

2.3.2.3. They could serve different purposes. The account in Nehemiah likely recognizes those who first agreed to settle in the city. The account in 1 Chronicles may be focusing on something else; for example, land ownership rights. Jeremiah (Jer 23.6-16) records a land deed transaction anticipating the re-settlement of Judea, indicating that the people were conscious of the potential for resettlement. There may have been an attempt after the return form the Captivity to re-allocate land within the city to those who had some identifiable claim on it. Note for example the account identifies the fact that there were people from Ephraim and Manasseh (1 Chron 9.3) in the city but does not identify who they were, they probably would not have had deeds or claims on any of the specific properties and would have been allocated space only after the descendants of the original land-holders had been accommodated.

2.3.2.4. That the census accounts serve different purposes may be attested to by the variation in ancestral genealogies. Compare the genealogies of Sallu (Nehemiah 11.7; 1 Chronicles 9.7). One may be focusing on his clan headship rights the other might be focusing on land inheritance rights. We see a similar difference in genealogies in the account of Jesus (Mt 1.1-16; Lk 3.23-38) with different names, serving different purposes.

2.4. In 2 Ki 24.14 and Jeremiah 52.30 we have a record of the number of people deported by Nebuchadnezzar.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

2.4.1. 2 Ki 24.14 {10,000; in 18th year [587 BC]}.
2.4.2. Jeremiah 52.30 [4,600]; in two deportations in 7th year [598 BC] and 23rd year [582 BC].
2.4.3. It appears that the count of captives taken into exile is based on the number of males (2 Ki 24.14). Although the use of 'people' (Jer 52.28) could include women and children, it likely refers only to the males.
2.4.4. This means that the total count of people taken into captivity (possibly with their families) included 14,600 men.
2.4.5. The total number of men who populated Jerusalem after the return from the captivity was around 3,000 men (if we take this list as a complete list and not a list of only the leaders).
2.4.6. We noted previously that Josephus says that after Nehemiah's repopulation of the city: "the city of Jerusalem came to be fuller of people than it was before."[42] Yet, the number of men taken into captivity appears to be more than three times the number that was present after the repopulation.
2.4.7. How can we explain this difference?
2.4.7.1. Josephus could be removed from the facts and be incorrect.
2.4.7.2. Josephus may have had access to information that has not been preserved.
2.4.7.3. It is possible that Josephus is including other people who inhabited the city that are not included in the census; for example, the people form Ephraim and Manasseh (mentioned in 1 Chronicles 9.3 for which no count is given), or people form the surrounding nations who also moved into the city once it was re-established with a more active socio-economic environment (e.g., Tobiah is mentioned as having lived in the city, even in the temple precincts, in Neh 13.4, 5).
2.4.7.4. The account in Nehemiah 11.1-36 may only list the leaders who volunteered. It is likely that the 10% conscription of the remainder added at least as many as had volunteered, and if it added twice the number, then the populations would have been more-or-less equal (before and after).

3. What was the purpose for including the list of names of this census, in his account?
3.1. Why has the Holy Spirit recorded these names for us?
3.2. What relevance is it to us that someone named Athaiah or Sallu moved into the city?
3.3. God demonstrates, by naming his people, that he knows each one personally and cares from them as individuals (Mal 3.16, 17; Lk 10.20; Jn 10.3; Heb 12.23; Rev 21.27).
3.4. He delights in honouring those who stand with him in the revival of true religion (Ps 87.5, 6; Prov 10.7; Heb 2.12 with Ps 22.22).
3.5. We find in this census account an 'honour roll' that is recorded for all of human history of those who followed through on keeping the obligations of the covenant.

4. What do we find about the mix, in terms of the roles, of the inhabitants in the city?
4.1. A little less than half (1,396, 46%) are men from Judah and Benjamin who would have been involved with employment other than work related to the Temple (e.g., merchants, craftsmen, administrators). The other portion (1,648, 54%) were priests, Levites and gatekeepers associated with the work of the Temple.
4.2. What might this division indicate?
4.2.1. It seems to point out that the primary purpose of Jerusalem was to support the worship of God in terms of the daily offerings and as a meeting place for the Jews during the festivals of assembly (e.g., Feast of Tabernacles).
4.2.2. It was necessary to have a support infrastructure in the city (e.g., merchants) but the primary purpose of Jerusalem was not as an industrial or trading, etc. city.
4.3. It is similar to what we find today. Many cities are known for their primary focus: NY: financial, Detroit: manufacturing, Ottawa: government …

5. How are the men from Judah and some of the priests described? (Neh 11.6, 14)
5.1. As: valiant men/mighty men of valor (NKJV) able men (NIV) Heb: "men of strength, ability, of efficiency"; often involving moral strength.
5.2. What does this tell us about the situation in Jerusalem? As we noted earlier, the city was probably not a safe place to live.
5.3. The fact that these men are credited with ability (especially of the physical kind) seems to point out that they were ideally suited for taking the lead in re-settling the city.

[42] Josephus, *Antiquities* 11.5.8.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

6. What is the balance between inhabitants from Judah and Benjamin? (Neh 11.6, 8)
   6.1. Judah: 468 *vs* Benjamin: 928; almost twice as many from Benjamin as from Judah.
   6.2. How does this compare with their pre-captivity proportions?
      6.2.1. At one point, Benjamin was almost wiped out as a tribe, and was down to 600 men (Judges 20.47) because of their wickedness (Judges 19.22-29).
      6.2.2. At the time of Saul, the first king of Israel, the tribe of Benjamin was the smallest tribe (1 Sam 9.21).
      6.2.3. At some point (e.g., around the time of David) their fighting force had regained its strength and the number was counted at 20,200 (1 Chron 7.9) compared with Issachar, for example, that had 87,000 men (1 Chron 7.5).
      6.2.4. By the time of Jehoshaphat the army included 780,000 men from Judah and 280,000 from Benjamin (2 Chronicles 17.14-18).
   6.3. After the captivity people from Benjamin returned to Judea along with people form the tribe of Judah and participated in re-building the temple (e.g., Ezra 1.5; Ezra 4.1).
   6.4. In Jewish thinking, Benjamin was treated as an equal of the larger tribes (e.g., Ps 80.2; Hosea 5.8; Obadiah 19), and even as a leader (Ps 68.27).
   6.5. Only two individuals from the tribe of Benjamin (other than those named in Nehemiah) are mentioned by name in the Bible after the captivity: Mordecai (Ester 2.5) and Saul/Paul (Rom 11.1; Phil 3.5). Both of these are presented to us as God-fearing individuals who had great concern for the welfare of the Jews and God's Law.
   6.6. What might the comparative numbers between Judah and Benjamin after the captivity, and the references to the tribe of Benjamin after the captivity teach us?
      6.6.1. God does not hold grudges and is very forgiving. The people of Benjamin had been punished for their sins and God reinstated them into the mainstream of Israel (e.g., Saul the first king was from Benjamin).
      6.6.2. The people of Benjamin, as a whole, may have learned a lesson from their corporate disobedience, and were somewhat less prone to fall-away than were the other tribes, including Judah.
      6.6.3. God's purposes are served not by the mighty and strong, but by the weak of this world so that no man will be able to boast (1 Cor 1.26-31).
      6.6.4. In the end, the number of people that God chooses to be part of his household to do his work has nothing to do with human strength or power but will be determined by God's sovereign will (Rev 7.8).

7. What was Judah's role? (9)
   7.1. The NKJV says he was 'second over the city'; the NASV: 'second in command of the city'; the NIV translates it as 'over the Second District of the city'. The Hebrew reads literally: 'over the city second'; this is how the LXX also translates it (ἐπὶ τῆς πόλεως δεύτερος) and leaves it open to interpretation via the translation. The NKJV and NASV interpret it as 'second in command over the city'. The NIV interprets it as over a second part of the city.
   7.2. His role was either as the deputy administrator over all of Jerusalem, or he was the administrator over the second district (like a mayor or city manager).
   7.3. If the reference is to the Second District, we encountered the notion of districts in the city when we looked at the reconstruction of the wall (Neh 3.14, 15, 17).
      7.3.1. The Second District is referred to in 2 Ki 22.14 (see, also, 2 Chron 34.22) and is probably the same area as the New Quarter/Second Quarter in Zeph 1.10, 11; also known as Maktesh (NKJV; dropping the article, and transliterating the Hebrew) or "*the* market district" (NIV). Literally the Hebrew can be translated as 'mortar' or the 'place of pounding' or the 'hollow resembling a mortar'; the place of the spring that resembled a mortar; referring to a place/district in Jerusalem.
      7.3.2. Where is the 'market district' or Second Quarter? As the city had grown, it spread out beyond the original walls. By the late 8th cent BC (before the time of the Captivity), the market was outside the Broad Wall on the NW side of the city.

8. Where were the priests drawn from? (11-14)
   8.1. Six families.
   8.2. We are not told if these corresponded to a sub-set of the divisions (households) of the priests used for allocating the work in the Temple.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

8.3. We find the original allocation of these divisions mentioned in 1 Chron 24.1-19; 2 Chron 8.14; 2 Chron 35.4; Ezra 10.16; Lk 1.5, 8.
8.4. If we are to understand that six of the divisions were represented by family members who lived in the city, the other divisions would have been represented by itinerant workers who came into the city when it was their turn to serve (Lk 1.23). They would have been housed in the rooms built into the Temple (see, the reference in Neh 13.7; 1 Ki 6.10; Ezk 41.6-10).

9. Did Ezra live in the city? (11)
   9.1. It is very likely that he did. He wouldn't have expected others to make the sacrifice and not have been willing to do so himself.
   9.2. As a scholar, it made sense for him to live in the city near the temple, if not directly in the temple precincts; where he would have had access to the scrolls of the Torah.
   9.3. If this is so, why isn't he mentioned? He may be. We have already noted that he may be listed under his father's name Seraiah, or he may have had the same name as his father and used Ezra as his common name.

10. What was the role of the Levites? (16)
    10.1. One of their roles was to manage the treasury (1 Chron 26.20) and the property maintenance of the Temple (1 Chron 9.26-29).
    10.2. If this was their role, why didn't they all live in the city?
        10.2.1. They were also to serve as administrators of the law and as judges in other parts of Israel (Dt 17.18; Dt 33.10; 1 Chron 26.29), e.g., in the cities of refuge.
        10.2.2. They also were charged with teaching the law throughout Israel and could not all live in the city (Lev 10.8-11; 2 Chron 15.3; 2 Chron 17.7-9 [**9**]; Mal 2.7).

11. What was Mattaniah's role? (17).
    11.1. The Hebrew reads literally: "head of the beginning he praised to prayer."
    11.2. What does that mean?
        11.2.1. NKJV: "leader who began the thanksgiving with prayer"
        11.2.2. NIV: "director who led in thanksgiving and prayer"
        11.2.3. NASV: "leader in beginning the thanksgiving at prayer".
    11.3. This was the role of the sons of Asaph (1 Chron 16.5, 7; Ps 50.1; Ps 73.1; Ps 75.1, etc.).

12. What was the gatekeepers role? (19)
    12.1. To guard the gates to the temple to make sure that no uncircumcised individual entered the holy precincts.
    12.2. To protect the Ark of the Covenant (however there was no ark in the second temple).
    12.3. What equivalent is there today in the Church? Possibly, Elders 'fencing' the admission to the Lord's Supper.

13. What does this listing of the various people who inhabited the city, and their various roles and gifts/skills teach us?
    13.1. The city of God, the Church, needs people of all kinds inhabiting it. It needs scholars, teachers, workers, supporters, leaders in worship, administrators, capable men, etc.
    13.2. Paul teaches about this mix of gifts and roles explicitly in 1 Corinthians 12.12-31; see also Ephesians 4.11-13.
    13.3. We see a rejoicing in (commended and recorded), and a respect for the variety of gifts.
    13.4. We see a unity of purpose as the various members of the Church community employ their gifts in service of the Kingdom (Eph 4.16).

Community (Neh 11.3, 20-36)

1. Why did the writer (ultimately the Holy Spirit) think it important to tell us where the rest of population settled?
   1.1. It reminds us that there was no shame being placed on those who did not settle in Jerusalem.
   1.2. Not everyone could have settled in Jerusalem.
      1.2.1. The city would not have held everyone.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

1.2.2. Some people had to live in the farmland and pastures in Judah to provide support for the city dwellers.

1.3. When presented with two good options (living in Jerusalem or living in the rural areas around it), one can be better than the other. This does not mean that the lesser option was bad. It is like choosing between two flavours of ice cream. So it was here. To provide for the welfare of Zion was a good option.

2. Where did the people who didn't settle in Jerusalem live? (Neh 11.3, 20, 25-30, 31-36)
   2.1. In the towns, on their own/ancestral property.
   2.2. Land inheritance was an inalienable right (Num 27.8-11; Num 36.7; 1 Ki 21.3) and land was to stay within clans, and as much as possible within families within the clans.
   2.3. Why did God make this provision about the land? Probably because it:
      2.3.1. Ultimately indicated God's ownership over the land. Canaan was his special inheritance (Ex 15.17; Josh 22.19; Ps 79.1) even though he owns all lands (Ps 24.1; Ps 47.2; Ps 50.12; 1 Chron 29.11). It did not belong to the people to do with as they pleased. This is similar to the nation of Israel being his special people, even though he is king over all nations (Ex 19.5; Dan 4.25).
      2.3.2. Was a symbol of the eternal inheritance of the saints (Ps 37.9, 11, 22, 29, 34; Mt 5.5; Rom 4.13).
      2.3.3. Provided a means of ensuring equity in capital distribution and prevented individuals from massive accumulation of inordinate amounts of territory (and thus wealth). (Lev 25.10-13, 30, 31).

3. Who were the Temple servants, and where did they live? (21)
   3.1. [See the notes on Nehemiah 7.73a for more information on the Temple Servants.]
   3.2. The Temple servants settled in Ophel (cf. Neh 3.26). Where was this?
      3.2.1. It was a region south of the Temple. It was the oldest part of the city, the original City of David where the Jebusites lived. This area was fortified by David after his capture of Jerusalem (2 Chron 27.3; 2 Chron 33.14).
      3.2.2. The word means "bulge" or "swelling". It is a ridge extending south between the Kidron and Tyropoeon valleys.
   3.3. Why did they live there?
      3.3.1. They were in close proximity to their work in the Temple.
      3.3.2. They took seriously their work of providing supplies (wood and water) for the Temple and they wanted to make sure that they were close to where they were needed.

4. What lessons can we derive from the reference to the settlement of the non-city dwellers?
   4.1. There is a need for careful organization in the civil and, especially, in the church setting to preserve past successes and support further advances. This requires that people take up various roles in the Church:
      4.1.1. Some are to be involved directly with the ministry of worship, others are to support it directly (e.g., those who work in the Temple precincts providing maintenance and support are equivalent to those whose work is undertaken in close proximity to the teaching/worship-leading offices, such as Sunday School teachers and those involved in ministries of mercy such as that provided through a Pregnancy Care Center or Salvation Army).
      4.1.2. Some are involved indirectly. Those who work in the fields and provide food for the city are equivalent to those in the Church who work in employment outside the Church and provide tithes and offerings for the support of the full-time and volunteer church staff and diaconal work. Their prayers are also an important aspect of indirect ministry.
   4.2. There are certain things that are proper and good to undertake, and others that are even better. We do not have to think in black-and-white terms when it comes to some aspects of fulfilling God's will. The important principle is that we are to be obedient and faithful in the situation we have been placed.
   4.3. The entire community was needed for prospering the work of the Temple. In the same way, the NT Temple (the Church, made up of living stones; 1 Pt 2.5) requires all the different kinds of gifts and skills that are included in a typical congregation (1 Cor 12.12-31).
   4.4. The peoples' returning to, and settling in, their ancestral lands reminds us how important it is for us to stay true to the principles of Scripture. We need always to return to our inheritance: God, his Word, and the prospect of eternity (Dt 10.9; Ps 16.6; Mt 5.5; Mt 19.29; Mt 25.34; Col 1.12; Col 3.23; Heb 1.14; Heb 9.15; 1 Pt 1.4).

5. What do we learn about the Levites/singers? (Neh 11.22-23, 36)
   5.1. They had a chief officer in Jerusalem (Uzzi a descendant of Asaph).
   5.2. The singers were Levites

© James R. Hughes, 2006

5.2.1. The singers were to be appointed from the Levites (1 Chron 15.16).
5.2.2. They were descendants of a specific Levite (Asaph) who was their first leader (1 Chron 25.2; Ezra 2.41), and they served in twenty-four courses (1 Chron 25.1-31).

5.3. They were under/regulated by the king's orders (23).
5.3.1. What does this mean?
5.3.1.1. NKJV: "For it was the king's command concerning them that a certain portion should be for the singers, a quota day by day."
5.3.1.2. ESV: "For there was a command from the king concerning them, and a fixed provision for the singers, as every day required."
5.3.1.3. NAS: "For there was a commandment from the king concerning them and a firm regulation for the song leaders day by day."
5.3.1.4. NIV: "The singers were under the king's orders, which regulated their daily activity."
5.3.1.5. Hebrew lit: "for/indeed command/order of the king over/upon them and regulation for/upon the ones singing activity of day in day of him."
5.3.1.6. The NKJV's translation of the Hebrew as: 'that a certain portion should be' instead of 'regulation' leads to a different interpretation. It is not clear how the NKJV translators came up with this meaning when they translated the identical form in Nehemiah 10.1 (Hebrew; 9.38 in English) as "sure" and supplied the word "covenant". The NKJV supplies an interpretive meaning rather than a literal translation.
5.3.1.7. The LXX doesn't help as it has a shorter version: ὅτι ἐντολὴ τοῦ βασιλέως ἐπ' αὐτούς, "because command of the king on them."
5.3.1.8. It is not easy to determine what is the correct meaning since this word (as a noun) occurs only in this form in Nehemiah 11.23 and Nehemiah 10.1 (Hebrew; 9.38 in English) where it can be translated as: "royal decree", "prescription", or "regulation". Although some argue that the occurrence in Nehemiah 10.1 (Hebrew; 9.38 in English) should be treated as an adjective, which has the same consonants, but different vowel pointing, and is translated as: "in truth" or "truly" in the two places it appears (Gen 20.12; Josh 7.20).
5.3.1.9. In order to understand this verse, we will assume the translation: "and regulation for/upon them".
5.3.2. Which king?
5.3.2.1. The Persian king, Darius I gave a royal stipend so Jewish elders could pray (Ezra 6.8-10). Artaxerxes may have done the same for the Levite choir. Artaxerxes may be mentioned in Nehemiah 11.24. The idea of a royal stipend could be inferred from the NKJV translation: "that a certain portion should be" (Neh 11.23). Also, Neh 11.24 seems to imply the same king is being spoken of.
5.3.2.2. However it could also be a reference to King David. It is unlikely that Nehemiah would have allowed a Persian king to regulate the worship of God, especially when he later makes reference to the regulations prescribed by David (Neh 12.36).
5.3.2.3. David provided specific regulations for the singers (1 Chron 23.1-6, 28-32; 1 Chron 25.1-31). This was new work for them since some of their Tabernacle duties were discontinued (1 Chron 23.26).

6. Where did some of them (Levites) live? (36).
6.1. Some of them lived in the towns of Judah (20), i.e., to the south and south-west of Jerusalem. But some also lived in the towns of Benjamin, a territory immediately to the north of Jerusalem.
6.2. Why are we given this information about the location of the Levites? What does it teach?
6.2.1. The Levites had been charged with teaching the law throughout Israel (Lev 10.8-11; 2 Chron 15.3; 2 Chron 17.7-9 [**9**]; Mal 2.7). They took their work seriously and distributed themselves throughout the re-inhabited territories of Judah and Benjamin (the old southern kingdom that had been ruled by the descendants of David).
6.2.2. We also have to take seriously our work for the Church.
6.2.3. Some people suggest that members of congregations should live close together, and close to the church building so that they can help one-another and fellowship together.
6.2.4. We need to work-out our time, personal, family, and life-style commitments so that we don't hinder the work of the congregation/Church and instead further it. For example we need to consider such things as:
6.2.4.1. Ownership of cottages that would take us away every weekend from the city and congregation.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

6.2.4.2. Job choices that cause us to miss opportunities for worship and fellowship.
6.2.4.3. Living within a short distance from the church building if we have a choice.
6.2.4.4. Travel arrangements that hinder our involvement in the life of the congregation.
6.2.4.5. Managing our spending priorities so that we can contribute to the cause of the Christ.

7. What was Pethahiah's role? (24)
7.1. He was apparently a Jewish official (i.e., a leader in the descendants of Zerah from Judah) appointed to act on behalf of the Persian king. He was the king's agent, representative, or deputy.
7.2. It is not clear what his role was relative to Nehemiah's. We are told that Nehemiah was the governor (Neh 5.14).
7.3. Hebrew lit: "to/at the hand of the king for/in all/every affair(s) of the people".
7.4. It could be that Pethahiah was:
7.4.1. An ambassador or a governor general.
7.4.2. A royal commissioner from Jerusalem who was the agent of the Jews, appointed by Artaxerxes, to represent Jewish affairs to the king.
7.4.3. A judicial official (i.e., a judge) to adjudicate between the king's officers and his subjects,
7.4.4. An official, particularly selected from the Jews so that he would be respected, to ensure that what was due to the king (e.g., taxes) from the people was paid.
7.4.5. An official of the king in Jerusalem who ensured that what the king allowed for the temple service and related work was paid out of the official treasury (e.g., Ezra 6.8-10; Neh 2.8).
7.5. Regardless of his specific role what lesson can we derive from the reference to Pethahiah?
7.5.1. The restored territory/province of Judah was under the authority of the Persian king and government.
7.5.2. As such, Nehemiah (and Ezra), in this text, are informing us that they were willing to be subject to God's appointed civil magistrates (Prov 8.15, 16; Jer 27.5-18; Dan 2.21; Dan 4.32; Dan 5.18-23; Rom 13.1).
7.5.2.1. Nehemiah and Ezra would have been familiar with Jeremiah's prophecy and Daniel's teachings about Nebuchadnezzar. These would have informed their thinking about the place of the reconstituted Jewish community in the context of the Persian Empire.
7.5.2.2. Nehemiah was also very aware that his enemies could claim that he was trying to re-establish an independent political entity (country). Also some of the people may have been thinking that with the restoration of the community, it was time to assert independence.
7.5.2.2.1. When we studied chapter 6 (verses 6, 7) we noted that Nehemiah was accused of trying to establish a separate political entity.
7.5.2.2.2. The Jews had been essentially a free nation from the time of the Exodus and they did not take kindly to being subjects.
7.5.2.2.3. The sacrificial system of worship in the Temple had been restored (Ezra 3.4-6; Ezra 6-8). There had also been a descendant of David among the returning exiles. Now at this later time the temple and the city wall were complete, all that was needed was a king to bring back Jerusalem to a state of independence. Nehemiah as governor with power and control could have been perceived as having aspirations to a coronation or of putting the descendant of David on the throne.
7.5.2.3. Nehemiah would have been overly scrupulous to ensure that these ideas were not reinforced by any of his actions.
7.5.3. This passage teaches us that we also are to be subject to the civil authorities that God has put in place (Mt 22.21; Rom 13.1-7; Titus 3.1; 1 Pt 2.13-17).

Westminster Confession of Faith Chapter 23 – Of the Civil Magistrate
God, the supreme Lord and King of all the world, hath ordained civil magistrates, to be, under Him, over the people, for His own glory, and the public good; and, to this end, hath armed them with the power of the sword, for the defense and encouragement of them that are good, and for the punishment of evil doers. (Rom 13.1, 2, 3, 4; 1 Pt 2.13, 14.)

II. It is lawful for Christians to accept and execute the office of a magistrate, when called thereunto; in the managing whereof, as they ought especially to maintain piety, justice, and peace, according to the wholesome laws of each commonwealth; so for that end, they may lawfully now,

© James R. Hughes, 2006

under the New Testament, wage war, upon just and necessary occasion. (Prov 8.15, 16; Rom 8.1, 2, 4; Ps 2.10, 11, 12; 1 Tim 2.2; Ps 82.3, 4; 2 Sam 23.3; 1 Pt 2.13; Lk 3.14; Rom 13.4; Mt 8.9, 10; Acts 10.1, 2; Rev 17.14, 16.)

IV. It is the *duty of people to pray for magistrates, to honour their persons, to pay them tribute and other dues, to obey their lawful commands, and to be subject to their authority, for conscience' sake. Infidelity, or difference in religion, doth not make void the magistrates' just and legal authority, nor free the people from their due obedience to them*: from which ecclesiastical persons are not exempted; much less hath the Pope any power and jurisdiction over them in their dominions, or over any of their people; and, least of all, to deprive them of their dominions, or lives, if he shall judge them to be heretics, or upon any other pretence whatsoever. (1 Tim 2.1, 2; 1 Pt 2.17; Rom 8.6, 7; Rom 8.5; Titus 3.1; 1 Pt 2.13, 14, 16; Rom 8.1; 1 Ki 2.35; Acts 25.9, 10, 11; 2 Pt 2.1, 10, 11; Jude 8; Jude 9; Jude 10; Jude 11; 2 Thess 2.4 ; Rev 13.15, 16, 17).

8. What do we learn from the list of the towns of Judah and Benjamin? (Neh 11.25-35)
   8.1. Seventeen towns are mentioned for Judah and fifteen for Benjamin.
   8.2. It gives us information about the geographical extent of the territory/province of Judah and Benjamin *vs* Samaria where the enemies of the Jews were (e.g., Sanballat; Neh 4.1, 2). It ranged from the area around Jerusalem (e.g., the Hinnom Valley) to about 50kms south (Beersheba) and included a strip to the north about 10kms deep by 40kms wide (from Bethel in the North), which covered the former territory of Benjamin.
   8.3. It gives us a sense of the extent of the territory of the Jews from the time of the return from the Babylonian Captivity to the time of Christ.
      8.3.1. The territory was much reduced from the times of:
         8.3.1.1. Joshua – Their original territory included parts of Sinai and Gaza; the east bank of the Jordan from the Arnon (north of Moab); to the Litani River and Mt Hermon NE of the Sea of Gallille.
         8.3.1.2. David – Enlarged territory included further south to the Wadi of Egypt in Sanai and to Ezion Geber on the Gulf of Aqaba (of the Red Sea) and further north, including Damascus all the way to Kadesk and Tadmor in Syria. The only part that was not in David's territory was the area called Philistia (Asdod, Gaza) about equivalent today to the Gaza strip today, and Lebanon.
         8.3.1.3. Solomon – Enlarged territory that included the area further north (inland from the coast) to the Euphrates River encompassing most of what is Syria today (1 Ki 4.21-24).
         8.3.1.4. During Hellenistic times this territory was contracted. Kiriah Arba and Beersheba with other towns in the South fell to Idumeans.
      8.3.2. The definition of the territory seems to indicate that God was not only preserving a remnant of the people, but also a remnant of the land until the time of the Messiah.
      8.3.3. It was a weak, insignificant, territory. This would remind the people that they had not yet realized the Messianic kingdom; but it would give them hope for the coming of the Messiah.
      8.3.4. The Scriptures seemed to be promising that when the seed of promise came, the Messianic kingdom would regain its former glory (Ex 23.31; Ps 72.8; Ps 80.11), but be even greater (Ps 22.27, 28). Of course the Jews interpreted the promises incorrectly, as do many Dispensational Evangelicals today, and applied the promises to the physical land rather than to the spiritual NT Church which would encompass the entire earth.
      8.3.5. Note: The current territory of Israel has no relationship to any of these boundaries (Joshua, David, Solomon, Nehemiah, NT). It is a modern construct that is not based on Biblical precedent or precept. It is inappropriate to attempt to claim a Biblical warrant for the territory now possessed by Israel.
   8.4. It mentions two cities of Refuge (Kiriath Arba/Hebron; Josh 14.15) and Beersheba. God preserved these two cities so that even under the Persian Empire his laws of justice and capital punishment could be maintained. God is, in effect, placing boundaries on the people of the world. In spite of what their empires define, God's laws are never suppressed.

9. What lessons can we derive from the account of the re-settlement of the territories of Judah and Benjamin?
   9.1. A consideration of the much reduced territory of the Jews might have led some of them to despair. This should not have been the case. A passage like this gives hope. In the midst of punishment (the Captivity) and oppressive dominance by the world's human empires, God continues to show his faithfulness to his

© James R. Hughes, 2006

covenant. He takes the small things of this world to make them his own in order to shame the worldly 'significant' and 'wise'. (Dt 7.7; 1 Cor 1.27). There is a message of hope expressed by this list of towns.

9.2. God is reminding us that his dominion (the earth) will be ruled by his laws. The mighty Persian Empire is gone, the Greeks are no longer in control, Rome fell, the Ottoman and Holy Roman Empires are history, and the US's world-crushing might will be humbled. A stone not cut by human hands will crush them all. Men may erect all kinds of systems and think they are best but in the end, if we applied Biblical laws to man's interpersonal, social, judicial, political, and economic, situations we would find that our countries would run more honestly and effectively. God preserves this small 'pocket' of Biblical-law as a witness not only to the Persian Empire, but to modern western democracies. For example, modern western democracies have (mostly):
   9.2.1. Eliminated capital punishment in all situations including murder.
   9.2.2. Stopped applying the Biblical principles of restitution and instead lock up more and more criminals.
   9.2.3. Ignored God's laws about marriage, divorce, and sexual morality.
   9.2.4. Treated with disdain his laws regarding the Sabbath.
   9.2.5. Usurped God's order for families and created a nation of slaves dependent on the benefices of the government (statism).
   9.2.6. Shunned God's means of governing the redistribution of wealth and replaced it with oppressive socialistic inequities.

   As a result we will suffer from declining morality, family deterioration, increased crime rates, and inefficient and volatile economies.

Cities (Neh 11.1, 18)

The consideration of the lessons from the re-settlement of Jerusalem and the surrounding territory leads logically to consideration of what God's purpose in establishing his kingdom. His kingdom is an 'urban' kingdom, the City of God.

[For a fuller consideration of the concept of City as it is presented in the Bible, see: *Appendix U – The Concept of City in the Bible*]

1. What specifically does our text call the city of Jerusalem? (Neh 11.1, 18)
   1.1. Holy City.
   1.2. This expression is found also in: Is 48.2; Is 52.1; Dan 9.24; Mt 4.5; Mt 27.53; Rev 11.2/Joel 3.17; Rev 21.2, 10.
   1.3. What do most these references have in common beside a reference to the 'holy city'? What is their context? What might this indicate?
      1.3.1. They are primarily found in an eschatological context.
      1.3.2. This seems to indicate that God's choice of Jerusalem is as a type or shadow of what he planned to do in the Church (which is likened to a city) and in the New Heavens and Earth (which is portrayed as a city).
      1.3.3. The message seems to be that God's ultimate plans were not to have a few scattered inhabitants in a garden (the original creation) but rather to deploy a vast city with a huge population of saints. (Gen 1.28)
      1.3.4. God will put to shame the efforts of men and show the world what cities are supposed to be like. Earthly Jerusalem failed; the church and ultimately the New Jerusalem will proclaim forever that the LORD is King indeed.
      1.3.5. The message is one of exciting dynamism … God is going to redeem the world.

2. What are our responsibilities to the Holy City?
   2.1. Inhabit it (**Neh 11.1**; Ps 84.7; Ps 126.1).
   2.2. Live as good citizens in it; obey its laws (**Neh 10.29-39**; Ps 2.6, 12; Ps 9.11).
   2.3. Build it (**Neh 2.17; Neh 3.1-32;** Ps 51.18; Is 58.12; Micah 7.11; Mt 28.18-20).
   2.4. Worship in it (**Neh 7.73; Neh 9.1**; Ps 102.21; Ps 122.1, 2; Ps 147.12).
   2.5. Pray for it (**Neh 1.9**; Ps 122.6, 9)
   2.6. Be proud of it (**Neh 12.27-43 [43]**; Ps 48.11-14).

Dedication Praise (Neh 12.1-47)

© James R. Hughes, 2006

Nehemiah went to Jerusalem in the fall of 445 (or 444) BC when he heard of its disrepair and decay (Neh 1.3). After examining the state of the wall he commissioned a rebuilding project (Neh 1-2) that faced significant challenges from the enemies of the Jews (Neh 2.1-20; Neh 4.1-14; Neh 6.1-14) and from a famine that caused unrest among the people (Neh 5.1-13). The construction of the wall (Neh 3.1-32) was completed (Neh 6.15-19) on the 25th Elul (Oct 2nd, 444/445 BC; Neh 6.15). This concluded phase 1 of Nehemiah's project: *The Reconstruction of the City*.

Once the wall was in place and people could live in the city with a degree of safety, Nehemiah began phase 2 of his project: *The Reconstruction of the Community*. He established a governing structure for the city (Neh 7.1-3) and began the process of repopulating the city. First a census was taken (Neh 7.5-73). The people were then called together for a renewal of the Covenant (Neh 7-10) that included a reading of the Law on the 1st day of the 7th month of Tishri/Ethanim (October 8th, 445/444 BC; Neh 7.73) and the confession of sin on the 24th day of the (same) month (Oct 31st, 445/444 BC). The community was then prepared to take seriously their responsibilities toward the city and it was repopulated voluntarily and through means of a subscribed conscription (Neh 11.1-36).

The essentials were in place—the city had been rebuilt and the community stabilized. Nehemiah and Ezra were then able to lead the people in a special dedication ceremony to commit the city into the hands of God, for the glory of God. It is this ceremony of Dedication Praise, recounted in Nehemiah 12.1-47, that we will now consider.

Priestly Periods (Neh 12.1-26)

1. What is recorded in this section? (1-26)
   1.1. We find a list of names, grouped by historical period and across time (a genealogy).
   1.2. This may seem to be very remote from our contemporary situation.
   1.3. The immediate inclination is to ignore such a list as not telling us anything. However, when we see a list like this it is our duty [Acts 17.11; 2 Tim 3.15-17] to try to understand why the Holy Spirit and the human author included it as part of Scripture, and what it communicates, and what lessons it teaches.

2. What are the priestly historical periods that we find recorded?
   2.1. Four periods appear to be covered:
      2.1.1. Return from Babylon (1-9)
      2.1.2. Persian Monarchy (10, 11)
      2.1.3. Reflection back on the days of Joiakim the son of Jeshua and the generation after the return from the Captivity (12-21)
      2.1.4. Summary of the leaders among the priests and Levites in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah (verses 22-26).

Return from Babylon (Neh 12.1-9)

1. How many names are listed as having returned with Zerubbabel and Jeshua? Why?
   1.1. 22
   1.2. What might be the reason for listing this number of men?
   1.3. David had appointed 24 priestly divisions to serve in the temple (1 Chron 24.7-19) after it was built. It may be that the men listed here represent most of the priestly divisions. They are called the leaders/heads of the priests and their brothers/associates (4).
   1.4. The reason that there are only 22 names and not twenty four could be:
      1.4.1. As some suggest, names could have been dropped by error during copying (the LXX, for example, has only the first three names in the list), but we do not have to rush to assume 'copying errors' to explain every apparent anomaly.
      1.4.2. A more likely explanation is that it may not have been possible to find candidates to fill the entire roster (compare, Ezra 8.15-20); some priestly families may have been annihilated, died out, or apostatized.

2. Why would the priests at the time of the return from the Captivity be listed? Why didn't Nehemiah just identify the priests who were involved in the ceremony of dedication?
   2.1. The Bible often positions historical events in context. Events are positioned relative to other key events. Compare: 2 Ki 3.1; etc.; 1 Chronicles 1-9; Ezra 1.1; Ezra 7.1; Ezra 8.1; Is 6.1; Dan 1.1, 21; Dan 2.1; etc. Hag 1.1; Mt 1.1-17; Lk 3.1, 2.
   2.2. We will consider additional reasons later.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

3. Who is listed in the **first section**? (1-7)
   3.1. The first section (1-7) provides a list of the names of the priests that returned from Babylon in the first wave (537 BC).
      3.1.1. The collective term 'priests and Levites' covers all of verses 1-9; first the priests are listed (1-7) then the Levites (8-9); all priests were Levites, not all Levites were priests; the terms are used fluidly.
      3.1.2. These came up with Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel (the descendant of David [Mt 1.12; Lk 3.27] and governor of Judah) and with Jeshua (the high priest). Ezra 2.2; Ezra 3.2; Hag 1.1; Zech 4.6-10. Note we saw a previous reference to these two individuals in Neh 7.7.
   3.2. A 'Jeremiah' and a 'Ezra' are mentioned in this account (1). These are not the prophet Jeremiah who delivered the prophecies in the book by his name, nor Ezra the Scribe at the time of Nehemiah. The prophet Jeremiah was very old at the time of the captivity (586 BC) and went into Egypt. Ezra the Scribe returned to Jerusalem in (Aug 4) 458 BC. It is possible that the Seriah mentioned in verse 1 was the father of Ezra the Scribe (Ezra 7.1).

4. Who is listed in the **second section**? (8-9)
   4.1. The second section (8-9) provides the names of eight Levites who returned with Zerubbabel.
   4.2. Ezra 2.40 appears to include two of the individuals (Jeshua and Kadmiel) and may refer to the same group of officers (i.e., the 'associates', 'brothers' mentioned in verse 8)
   4.3. If so, then there were 74 Levities who had general responsibilities, and 128 who were specifically designated as singers (Ezra 2.41); for a total of 202.
   4.4. The eight specifically mentioned in Nehemiah 12.8 may have been the most senior elders among the Levites.

5. What were their duties?
   5.1. They were responsible for ensuring that the thanksgiving psalms, were sung regularly in the temple at their appointed times.

6. What are the 'thanksgiving Psalms'?
   6.1. This word occurs only once in the OT, only in this place. It is derived from the word for praise.
   6.2. It could also be translated as 'songs of praise'.
   6.3. What Psalms could have been included?
      6.3.1. The reference could be to all the Psalms that had been collected and collated to that point (Ezra was probably the last collator of the Psalter) and were used for the Temple liturgy.
      6.3.2. Or it could refer to a specific collection of the Psalms such as one of the Hallel collections (Ps 93.1-5 through Ps 100.1-5, 'Egyptian Hallel'; Ps 113.1-9 through Ps 118.1-29 associated with the Passover), or the 'songs of ascent' (Ps 120.1 to Ps 134.3); or the closing Hallelujah Psalms (Ps 146.1-10 through Ps 150.1-6).

Persian Monarchy (Neh 12.10, 11)

1. Who is listed in the **third section**?
   1.1. The third section (10, 11) provides a succession of high priests during the Persian monarchy, from Jeshua at the time of the return from captivity (537 BC), to Jaddua (Jaddus) who was high priest when Alexander the Great (after the conquest of Tyre) came to Jerusalem (332 BC).
   1.2. Josephus, in the *Antiquities* makes reference to this later high priest and a visit by Alexander the Great to Jerusalem:
   "So when Alexander besieged Tyre, he sent an epistle to the Jewish high-priest, to send him some auxiliaries, and to supply his army with provisions; and that what presents he formerly sent to Darius, he would now send to him, and choose the friendship of the Macedonians, and that he should never repent of so doing. But the high-priest answered the messengers, that he had given his oath to Darius not to bear arms against him; and he said that he would not transgress this while Darius was in the land of the living. Upon hearing this answer, Alexander was very angry; and though he determined not to leave Tyre, which was just ready to be taken, yet as soon as he had taken it, he threatened that he would make an expedition against the Jewish high-priest, and through him teach all men to whom they must keep their oaths. … Now Alexander, when he had taken Gaza, made haste to go up to Jerusalem; and Jaddus the high-priest, when he heard that, was in an agony, and under terror, as not knowing how he should meet the Macedonians, since the king was displeased at his foregoing disobedience. He therefore ordained that the

© James R. Hughes, 2006

people should make supplications, and should join with him in offering sacrifice to God, whom he besought to protect that nation, and to deliver them from the perils that were coming upon them; whereupon God warned him in a dream, which came upon him after he had offered sacrifice, that he should take courage, and adorn the city, and open the gates; that the rest should appear in white garments, but that he and the priests should meet the king in the habits proper to their order, without the dread of any ill consequences, which the providence of God would prevent. Upon which, when he rose from his sleep, he greatly rejoiced, and declared to all the warning he had received from God. According to which dream he acted entirely, and so waited for the coming of the king. And when Jaddus understood that Alexander was not far from the city, he went out in procession, with the priests and the multitude of the citizens. The procession was venerable, and the manner of it different from that of other nations. … And when the Phoenicians and the Samaritans that followed [Alexander] thought they should have liberty to plunder the city, and torment the high-priest to death, which the king's displeasure fairly promised them, the very reverse of it happened; for Alexander, when he saw the multitude at a distance, in white garments, while the priests stood clothed with fine linen, and the high-priest in purple and scarlet clothing, with his mitre on his head, having the golden plate whereon the name of God was engraved, he approached by himself, and adored that name, and first saluted the high-priest. The Jews also did all together, with one voice, salute Alexander, and encompass him about; whereupon the kings of Syria and the rest were surprised at what Alexander had done, and supposed him disordered in his mind. However, Parmenion alone went up to him, and asked him how it came to pass that, when all others adored him, he should adore the high-priest of the Jews? To whom he replied, 'I did not adore him, but that God who has honored him with his highpriesthood; for I saw this very person in a dream, in this very habit, when I was at Dion in Macedonia, who, when I was considering with myself how I might obtain the dominion of Asia, exhorted me to make no delay, but boldly to pass over the sea thither, for that he would conduct my army, and would give me the dominion over the Persians; whence it is that, having seen no other in that habit, and now seeing this person in it, and remembering that vision, and the exhortation which I had in my dream, I believe that I bring this army under the Divine conduct, and shall therewith conquer Darius, and destroy the power of the Persians, and that all things will succeed according to what is in my own mind.' And when he had said this to Parmenion, and had given the high-priest his right hand, the priests ran along by him, and he came into the city. And when he went up into the temple, he offered sacrifice to God, according to the high-priest's direction, and magnificently treated both the high-priest and the priests. And when the Book of Daniel was showed him wherein Daniel declared that one of the Greeks should destroy the empire of the Persians, he supposed that himself was the person intended. And as he was then glad, he dismissed the multitude for the present. But the next day he called them to him, and bid them ask what favors they pleased of him; whereupon the high-priest desired that they might enjoy the laws of their forefathers, and might pay no tribute on the seventh year. He granted all they desired. And when they asked him that he would permit the Jews in Babylon and Media to enjoy their own laws also, he willingly promised to do hereafter what they desired. …"[43]

1.3. The book of Daniel was probably completed in 530 BC, not long after the capture of Babylon by Cyrus in 539 BC. The account in Josephus is called a fabrication by many 'scholars' on the assumption that long-range predictive prophecy is impossible. They claim that the book was composed no earlier than the Maccabean period (2nd century BC), and that Josephus must have enhanced the account of Alexander's visit to Jerusalem. On the contrary, if we accept Daniel and Josephus at face value, we have an example of the Bible accurately predicting exact events 200 years before they occurred.

1.4. Since there are only six names in the list covering more than 200 years, this results in an average tenure in office of about thirty-five years per high priest. This causes some people to argue that there must be names missing from the list. However, Josephus appears to support the genealogy:
'WHEN Eliashib the high priest was dead, his son **Judas** [Joiada] succeeded in the high priesthood; and when he was dead, his [i.e., of Judas] son **John** [Jonathan] took that dignity; on whose account it was also that Bagoses, the general of Artaxerxes's army, polluted the temple, and imposed tributes on the Jews, that out of the public stock, before they offered the daily sacrifices, they should pay for every lamb fifty shekels. Now Jesus was the brother of John, and was a friend of Bagoses, who had promised to procure him the high priesthood. In confidence of whose support, Jesus quarreled with John in the temple, and so provoked his brother, that in his anger his brother slew him. Now it was a horrible thing for John, when he was high priest, to perpetrate so great a crime, and so much the more horrible, that there never was so cruel and impious a thing done, neither by the Greeks nor Barbarians. However, God did not neglect its punishment, but the people were on that very account enslaved, and the temple was

[43] Josephus, *Antiquities* (translated by William Whiston), section XI.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

polluted by the Persians. Now when Bagoses, the general of Artaxerxes's army, knew that John, the high priest of the Jews, had slain his own brother Jesus in the temple, he came upon the Jews immediately, and began in anger to say to them," Have you had the impudence to perpetrate a murder in your temple?" And as he was aiming to go into the temple, they forbade him so to do; but he said to them," Am not I purer than he that was slain in the temple?" And when he had said these words, he went into the temple. Accordingly, Bagoses made use of this pretense, and punished the Jews seven years for the murder of Jesus.'[44]

1.4.1. Jonathan in Nehemiah 12.11 may be the same as Johanan in Nehemiah 12.22. However, verse 23 states (NIV/NKJV) that Johanan was the son of Eliashib rather than the grandson per 11 and 22. This may present a challenge as it appears to miss a generation, thus providing support to those who claim that names are missing from the list. However, there are other possible explanations:

1.4.2. 'Son of' may be used in a generic sense as 'ancestor'. The NEB translates the Hebrew word *ben* (usually, "son") in verse 23 as "grandson" (e.g., 2 Sam 9.10 ESV, NASV, NIV; 'son' NKJV; 2 Chron 22.9 ESV)

1.4.3. Another factor used to support the argument that names are missing is that the Mosaic Law seems to indicate that a high-priest could only serve for a maximum of twenty years (Num 4.3, 23, etc.). Numbers 4.23 seems to indicate an even shorter period; with a starting age of 25.

1.4.4. Some scholars therefore claim that there was probably instances of papponomy (the naming of a baby after his grandfather) used within the high-priestly line and that names have dropped because of the confusion. There is no necessary reason to conclude that papponomy was practiced at this time in the high-priestly line, even though it may have been practiced around the time of Christ.

1.4.5. It could be that Eliashib had two (or more sons). The elder was named Joiada and another, younger, was named Johanan. Thus the records (Neh 12.23) were kept until the time of that younger son.

1.4.6. We aren't provided enough information to give a definitive answer. But we should be careful before we jump to any conclusions, e.g., that there are names missing in chronological lists or that there has been a copying error.

1.4.7. It is also not clear what the practice was with regard to priests (high-priests) length of tenure. For example:

1.4.7.1. The regulations regarding the age of service may have applied to the Levite workers in the Tabernacle/Temple, not the priests.

1.4.7.2. Aaron served as high priest until he was well over 100.

1.4.7.3. Refugees who fled to the cities of refuge were to remain in the city until the death of the high priest serving at that time (Josh 20.6). It would seem unlikely that many would die before the age of 50.

1.4.7.4. Zachariah, the father of John the Baptist, would likely have been older than 50 (Lk 5.7) given that his wife could not have children.

1.4.7.5. The office of high priest was hereditary (Ex 29.29) and rules relating to age of service for other priests/Levites may not have applied to the office of high priest.

1.4.8. Therefore we should accept the account as recorded, as an accurate statement of the high priests during the period of the Persian monarchy.

1.4.9. The reason we looked at alternate reasonable explanations for the apparent discrepancy is because too many people, especially in the 'scholarly' world immediately jump to the conclusion that there are errors in the Bible. Copying errors did occur. But God has been providentially protecting his word and provides corrective evidence when copying errors did occur. There are no errors of statement of fact. We can accept the Bible as a reliable, historically accurate, inerrant statement of what happened in history.

2. What does the inclusion of the line of high priests to Jaddua (Jaddus) who was high priest at the time of Alexander the Great (332 BC) tell us?

2.1. This linage in the book of Nehemiah was completed after the death of Nehemiah (Nehemiah first went to Jerusalem in 445/444 BC) and Ezra.

2.2. Some liberals probably argue that this 'proves' a late date for the book of Nehemiah (dated by conservative scholars at around 430 BC).

[44] Josephus, *Antiquities* (translated by William Whiston), section XI, 7.1.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

2.3. It is possible however that a priestly scribe added the three later generations (Joiada, Jonathan, and Jaddua). It may have been Jaddua himself that added the entries, or possibly Eliashib who was high priest at the time of Nehemiah added the names when his great-grandson was born.
2.3.1. [The Eliashib mentioned in Nehemiah 12.10 (22, 23) as high priest appears to have been the one who assisted in rebuilding the wall (Neh 3.1, 20, 21). There seems to have been some challenges with his administration of the office (Neh 13.4, 7, 28). He may have been guilty of defiling the temple by assigning rooms to Tobiah the Ammonite. We will consider this matter when we look at chapter 13.]
2.4. This kind of editorial addition is similar to what we find in the account of Moses' death. Its addition to the book, does not mean that Moses did not write Deuteronomy. We find statements throughout the OT (e.g., Josh 15.63), which may have been added by later editors, not by a late date *author*.

Reflection Back to the Days of Joiakim (Neh 12.12-21)

1. Who is listed in the **fourth section**?
1.1. The fourth section reflects back to the days of Joiakim the son of Jeshua.
1.2. These verses list the heads of the priestly families in Joiakim's day; i.e., the generation after the return from the Captivity.
1.3. Twenty names are listed here, corresponding roughly to the twenty-two names in verses 1-7.
1.3.1. Hattush in verse 2 and Moadiah in verse 5 are not in the list in verses 12-21.
1.3.2. Harim (v 15) is probably the same as Rehum in Nehemiah 12.3.
1.3.3. Minjamin (v 17) is probably spelled Mijamin in Nehemiah 12.5.
1.3.4. The LXX has some variations. There may have been some fluidity in the determination of the priestly courses.

2. One name in Neh 12.16 requires particular consideration, which is it?
2.1. In this verse a Zechariah is named as the head of Iddo's house.
2.1.1. Compare Zechariah 1.1 with Neh 12.4, 16. What name is common?
2.1.2. Zechariah the prophet is the grandson of Iddo (compare, Ezra 5.1).
2.1.3. This informs us that Zechariah the prophet was also a priest.
2.2. Iddo's son and grandson had names of significance: Berechiah means: "Yahweh blesses." Zechariah's name means: "Yahweh remembers." Zechariah's prophecy tells the people that Yahweh has remembered them in their affliction and is going to keep his covenant to bless them.
2.3. Zechariah's first brief sermon highlights the word "turn" or "return," a single Hebrew word translated in several different ways.
2.3.1. His sermon is a call to the people to repent and return to the LORD.
2.3.2. It is instructive to note that Zechariah begins with a history lesson. He reminds the people of what happened to their "fathers". He speaks specifically of the exile that was their punishment for not obeying the terms of the Covenant.
2.3.3. He calls the second generation to repent of their half-heartedness. If they don't, they are in danger of falling into the same sins as their fathers and will suffer the same consequences.

3. Why does the account go back to Joiakim? Why doesn't it start with the priests and Levites serving at the time of Ezra and Nehemiah.
3.1. Verse 26 (which we will consider in the next section) mentions Levite gatekeepers who had served from the time Joiakim was high priest.
3.2. It may be that Nehemiah (or Ezra) was recognizing their long tenure and including the context for the beginning of their service.

Priests and Levite Leaders at the Time of Ezra and Nehemiah (Neh 12.22-26)

1. Who is listed in the **fourth section**?
1.1. The fifth section covers, in summary form, the leaders among the priests and Levites in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah.
1.1.1. Eliashib, as we noted, was the high priest when the wall was being reconstructed. The other names mentioned in verse 22 are the high priests who followed him.

2. What do we discover about the genealogical accounts of the high priests and of the courses of priests during the administration of Eliashib and his direct descendants? (22, 23)
2.1. The records of the family heads and priests were recorded during the reign of Darius the Persian (22).

© James R. Hughes, 2006

3.2.1. Darius is probably Darius II who ruled Persia from 423 to 404 BC.
3.2.2. According to the Elephantine papyri, Johanan was high priest in 408 BC.

2.2. Complete records up to the time of Eliashib's son were recorded in 'the book of the annals' (23).
3.2.3. The 'book of the annals' may have been an official record book of the Levite family heads. Ezra 4.15 and Nehemiah 7.5 may make reference to this kind of 'book'. The records of the Levites/priests may have been kept in the temple. This was similar to the chronicles that kings kept (Est 2.23; Est 6.1; Est 10.2; "book of the annals of the kings" mentioned 34 times in 1 and 2 Ki [e.g., 1 Ki 11.41]).
3.2.4. The scribe who added this note (if it wasn't Nehemiah or Ezra) did not believe it was important to detail, as part of scripture, the genealogical accounts after the time of the dedication of the wall.

3. Who are the leaders among the Levites identified in verses 24 and 25?
3.1. They were probably the ones who served at the time of the dedication of the wall.

4. What were their roles?
4.1. Choir leaders.
4.2. Chiefs among the gatekeepers (guards) of the temple precincts.
4.3. Note: there are similarities in the names in verses 8 and 9 and 24 and 25. These refer to different periods of administration around 90 years apart. There is no need to think that they are referring to the same individuals. Levites would have used similar names throughout generations.

5. What possible problem is presented in verse 26?
5.1. Verse 26 places the work of the named Levite gatekeepers at the time of Joiakim, and at the time of Ezra and Nehemiah.
5.2. Jeshua was high priest in 538 BC and his son, Eliashib (mentioned in chapter 3 and 13), was high priest in 443/444 or 444/445 BC, at the time of the reconstruction of the wall and later.
5.3. Between the two of them (Jeshua and Eliashib) they cover a period of almost 100 years (95). Is this possible?
5.4. Let's create a possible scenario:
5.4.1. Joiakim was 30+ in 538.
5.4.2. Joiakim had Eliashib in his 40s or 50s by either a first or second wife.
5.4.3. Joiakim served into his 70s or 80s
5.4.4. Eliashib began serving when he was in his 30s or 40s
5.4.5. Eliashib lived into his 70s or 80s
5.4.6. 538 – 48 = 490 – 48 = 442 BC (assuming that each served for 48 years)

6. What does verse 26 tell us about the genealogical list in verses 10 and 11?
6.1. It helps confirm the accuracy of the list.
6.2. There is no reason to assume that names are missing, even though six high priests cover a period of more than 200 years, with an average tenure in office of about thirty-five years per high priest.

7. Why is this list of names recorded here? (1-26) What overall lessons can we derive from this account?
7.1. To *Confirm* the historicity of the Bible – The more we study Bible history in detail, the more we should become impressed with how accurate the Bible is.
7.1.1. The liberal mind-set attempts to dismiss OT history as a late developed myth to give a wandering band of sheep herders a mythical history, and the NT accounts as oral tradition that was written in the late first generation/early second generation as a Christian polemic.
7.1.2. In contrast, the Bible is an accurate rendition of history. It is not a history textbook. It is Gospel, but it is also accurate history. We encounter real people, in real events.
7.1.3. There are many touch-points between the Biblical account and secular history. Wherever these touch-points occur, the Bible is demonstrated to be superior in its accuracy.
7.1.4. The Bible is the only objective standard for ancient history. For example, the Genesis genealogies (Gen 5.1-32; Gen 10.1-32; Gen 11.10-26) provide us with an accurate chronometer of the early history of mankind's presence on the earth. No other objective means of placing events into an accurate historical time line exists—not radio-carbon dating, Egyptian chronologies, administrative tablets from Susa, dynasty records from the Middle East, or histories written by Greek or Jewish scholars, etc.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

7.2. To provide historical *Context* – To teach us to position ourselves, congregation, age/civilization into an historical context.
  7.2.1. The Bible's emphasis on positioning events in history is part of what makes it reliable as an historical account. It contrasts markedly with other religious writing such as the Islamic *Koran*, the Buddhist *Surangama Sutras*, the Hindu *Vedic* literature, or Confucius' teachings collected in the *Analects*. None of these position their events or teachings into a consistent history.
  7.2.2. This historical positioning reminds us that we do not live isolated from the sweep of redemptive history. A common mistake that people in the 20th century made was (and make in the 21st century) to hang current events suspended in time without a historical context (especially they wanted to remove any religious historical context). Christians are often as guilty as the general populace.
  7.2.3. Twenty-first-century post-modernists have no clue about the origins of the institutions that underlie our Western culture and civilization and experiment with social, political, economic, and psychological concepts that they believe are innovative and original.
  7.2.4. Most people today (including most politicians and judges) don't know where the following concepts originated or how they have developed:
    7.2.4.1. Graded courts
    7.2.4.2. Separation of political powers
    7.2.4.3. Separation of church and state functions or roles
    7.2.4.4. Natural law, the origins of common law, and the role of statue law
    7.2.4.5. Marriage and family
    7.2.4.6. Regulations relating to consanguinity and sexual morality
    7.2.4.7. Hospitals
    7.2.4.8. Schooling and government funded schools
    7.2.4.9. Restitution *vs* imprisonment
    7.2.4.10. Capital punishment and corporal punishment
    7.2.4.11. Provisions of support for the poor
    7.2.4.12. Regulations for the monetary economy
    7.2.4.13. Origins of taxation and reasonable limits
  7.2.5. Because of their lack of understanding of the origins and development of these institutions politicians and judges make decisions that are often contrary to common sense and Biblical norms. For example:
    7.2.5.1. Many politicians claim that their latest project is going to end hunger and poverty, bring about equality, or bring about 'peace in our time'. They are quick to make promises that in reality they can never keep.
    7.2.5.2. They think that when the government encourages immorality (gambling, homosexuality, abortion, easy divorce, Sunday shopping, etc.) in the name of tolerance it will provide a better life style for all of us. They lose sight of the examples in history where encouraging these kinds of behaviours has brought countries and civilizations to a crashing end.
  7.2.6. Evangelicals think that the way things are done today by their congregations or denominations, or espoused by their leading thinkers, is the definitive standard:
    7.2.6.1. They assume that they can establish practices in worship (not governed by God) and don't reflect on historical examples where similar views led the Church into heresy (e.g., Marcionism, Anabaptists).
    7.2.6.2. They espouse views that have been dealt with definitively by the Church Fathers (e.g., open theism, annihilationism, millennialism)
    7.2.6.3. The neo-Reformed like to think they have to be 'creative' and challenge practices and beliefs (e.g., infant baptism, exclusive Psalmody, Sabbath keeping, the Covenant) that have been hammered out over the past 400 years, thought through by very godly individuals, and entrenched in the greatest confessions of faith.
  7.2.7. We should look for the historical milestones given in Scripture and use these as a reminder that we are walking on the King's highway and are under the authority of his laws and providential governance.
7.3. As a *Commemoration* – It is God's delight to remember those who are dedicated to him and who make a resolution to renew true worship (Ps 112.6). The first generation mentioned in Nehemiah 12.1-26 were involved in the re-construction of the Temple. The generation at the time of Nehemiah and Ezra were involved in the reconstitution of the full ceremonial system of worship.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

7.3.1. Note: not all of those listed here were necessarily godly men. We noted, for example, that Jonathan (v 11) may have been a murder and Eliashib compromised the Temple (Neh 13.4, 7, 28).

7.4. To *Challenge* us – When we see that state of the Church today we should be ashamed of what we and our forefathers have allowed to transpire. However, we should not be defensive and discouraged. Rather, we should be encouraged:

7.4.1. By the remembrance of those who have gone before us (Heb 13.7) in the faith.

7.4.2. Our generation is not the measure of God's dealings with his Church or the nations. We need to be encouraged by looking at his dealings over the vast sweep of four thousand years since God called Abram out of Ur.

7.4.3. To see that God delights in those who serve him properly, even if there are times of falling-away and many in the church are unfaithful.

7.4.4. To imitate their behaviour.

7.4.5. By God's provision for his Church, in which we see that God is raising up one generation to follow the next. There is always a faithful remnant, if not vast multitude, that will be striving to do what is right with respect to the worship of God.

Personnel Procurement (Neh 12.8, 9, 27-29)

1. Who were the key personnel needed for the dedication of the wall?
   1.1. The Levites.

2. What are some of the things the Bible teaches about this group of people?
   2.1. What do we know about the Levites? They:
      2.1.1. Had a Zeal for god (Ex 32.15-**28**).
         2.1.1.1. This doesn't mean that every individual was faithful (Judges 17-18).
         2.1.1.2. But as a group, they were ordained for service.
      2.1.2. Lived throughout Israel since they were given no territory as an inheritance (Num 18.23, 24; Num 35.2), but had a right to serve in Jerusalem (Dt 18.6-8).
         2.1.2.1. Their going up to Jerusalem to serve might have broken down in later times (2 Ki 23.8-9).
      2.1.3. Represented Israel's first-born:
         2.1.3.1. God claimed the first-born since he had spared them at the Passover (Ex 13.2).
         2.1.3.2. They were to be dependent upon, and totally surrendered to, God.
         2.1.3.3. They were examples of the key Biblical principle of representation (Num 3.40ff; Num 8.11, 16) and substitution (Num 8.10; cf Lev 4.24).
         2.1.3.4. They serve as a model of Christ and an example for the Christian life
      2.1.4. Were to be supported by the tithes of the people (Num 18.23, 24; Dt 18.1).
      2.1.5. Began their service at age 25 and continued until age 50.
         2.1.5.1. They seemed to go into a semi-retirement with limited duties (Num 8.24-26).
         2.1.5.2. They may have served a 5-year apprenticeship. It appears that full responsibilities fell to those from 30 years to 50 (Num 4.3ff).
         2.1.5.3. David appears to have lowered the entry age to 20 (1 Chron 23.24ff).
      2.1.6. Were to perform three roles:
         2.1.6.1. Teach and administer (judge) the Law (Lev 10.8-**11**; Dt 33.8, 10; 1 Chron 23.4; 2 Chron 15.3; 2 Chron 17.7-**9**; 2 Chron 19.8-11; 2 Chron 35.3; Mal 2.7).
            2.1.6.1.1. At minimum, they would have acted as judges in the cities of refuge.
            2.1.6.1.2. However, they were to live scattered throughout Israel. They were the equivalent of congregational pastors and teachers today.
         2.1.6.2. Conduct the non-priestly work of the tabernacle/temple (carry the ark and furniture; door keepers, guards; maintenance supervision; preparation of sacrifices, both meat and grain; and purification rites (Num 18.2-6; 1 Chron 15.11-15).
         2.1.6.3. Lead in worship (Dt 27.9; Neh 8.7-9) and provide the music for the services (1 Chron 16.4-6, 37).
            2.1.6.3.1. Two collections of psalms in the Psalter are attributed to groups into which the Levites were divided, Asaph (Ps 50.1, title; Ps 70-83, titles) and Korah (Ps 42-49, titles).

3. Why were they needed at this time (i.e., at the dedication of the wall)?

© James R. Hughes, 2006

3.1. They had been assigned with responsibility for guiding the work of praise.
3.2. Without them, true and correct worship of God that involved sacrifices and musical accompaniment could not be carried out (Ezra 8.15-20).

4. What role should Levites play in the worship of the Church today?
4.1. The initial reaction of most people would be to say, 'none'. They would say that the Aaronic priesthood was abolished in Christ and that there is no longer any need for priests or Levites because the work was abolished.
4.2. However, this common response seems to be contradicted by current practice and is full of irony. In the broader Church today, almost every element of the OT sacerdotal sacrificial system, except for bloody sacrifices, is still visible to a greater or lesser degree (e.g., choirs, 'ministries' of music to 'lead' us to God, passive congregations observing a spectacle, an emphasis on the emotional spectacle to draw us near to God, incense, confession to a priest, musical instruments, high holy days, 'high' liturgies [especially at Easter] that are similar [except for bloody sacrifices] to the liturgy of the Temple). This applies not only to the practice of Roman Catholics and Eastern Orthodoxy but also to the practice of Lutherans, Anglicans, Methodists and the broadly Evangelical churches (from Pentecostal to Baptist and many Reformed and Presbyterian).
4.3. It is clear that although men claim that the OT system is abolished, they don't in fact act as if it is abolished. This is why there is so much confusion in the Church today with respect to worship. The Church today has lost touch with Biblical principles for worship and keeps, dispenses, or changes the forms at whim, but has no standard for determining which forms to retain, eliminate, or change.
4.4. In, contrast, the *principle* of ceremonial law celebrated by priests has **not** in fact been abolished, only the *forms* have been changed. This is the essence of the irony, most people claim the principles of OT worship are abolished but they continue to observe most of the forms. In reality, the principles are preserved, but most of the forms have been changed. We can summarize this 'radical' position as follows:
4.4.1. The NT Christian is obligated to keep the entire Law, including the 'ceremonial' or 'ritual' laws (Mt 5.17-19; James 2.10).
4.4.2. The form of observance of the ceremonial or ritual laws has been changed under the NT economy (Eph 2.15).
4.4.3. The typical elements that pointed to Christ were intended to be superseded (Heb 7.11, 12, 18, 19; Heb 8.13; Heb 10.1).
4.4.4. Continuing to observe the ceremonial law in its OT form shows a misunderstanding of the meaning of the typical form, and is evidence of a bondage to an obsolete system (Gal 4.9, 10; Gal 5.2-4).
4.4.5. To be a faithful NT Christian, one must keep the principles of the ceremonial law by observing the NT forms.
4.4.6. The NT ceremonial forms of sacrifices are: prayer, singing Psalms of praise, a dedicated life of holy separation from sin.
4.5. [For a fuller explanation, see "The Ceremonial Law is *Not* Abolished" in: *In Spirit and Truth: Worship as God Requires.*[45]]

5. Who serves in the capacity of the Priests and Levites in the NT Church?
5.1. The office of a separate priesthood no longer exists. All believers, under Christ the High Priest, fill the office of priest.
5.2. The role of the Levites has been split between the Elders and Deacons in the NT Church.

6. What is the role of the Elders with respect to leading in worship?
6.1. To lead in the worship activities in a disciplined and orderly manner (1 Tim 4.11-16; 2 Tim 4.2; 1 Thess 5.27; Col 4.16; 1 Cor 14.26-40).
6.2. To train and build up the congregation so that the members can perform their works of service (Eph 4.11, 12; Rom 12.4-8).
6.2.1. It is a mistake, and a serious problem, when congregations assume that it is either the pastor's or the elders' job to do all the work of the congregation. Similarly, it is a mistake and a serious problem when the elders don't work to involve people in all aspects of the ministry of the congregation.

[45] James R. Hughes, *In Spirit and Truth: Worship as God Requires (Understanding and Applying the Regulative Principle of Worship),* 2005*;* available at: www.epctoronto.org.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

6.2.2. In the NT economy we are all called to serve.
6.2.3. What are some practical things that we can do as a congregation to encourage and increase the commitment to whole-body ministry? [Discuss.]

7. How did the Levites in Nehemiah's day demonstrate their commitment to service? (27-29)
   7.1. They came from the surrounding towns when called.
   7.2. Many lived in the immediate vicinity of Jerusalem so that it would be easy for them to perform their duties (Neh 12.28, 29).

8. What does the Levites' commitment so service teach us?
   8.1. We should ensure that we organize our lives so that we can be available for the service of the congregation.
   8.2. This organization involves time commitments, life-style choices, location choices, etc. What are some examples?
      8.2.1. Not taking on a large number of commitments in non-Church related activities. We should not be too tired to become involved in the work of our congregation or too committed to other activities to participate in the life of the congregation.
      8.2.2. We should live in a location that makes it relatively easy to participate in the activities of the congregation.
      8.2.3. We should establish our priorities so that we have resources (e.g., tithes) available to support the work.

Prophetic Prescription (Neh 12.24, 36)

1. What regulated the service of worship at the dedication of the wall?
   1.1. The prescription (command) of David.

2. Where is the prescription of David found?
   2.1. In 1 Chronicles 23.5; 1 Chron 25.1, 6.
   2.2. Note, there doesn't seem to be any specific prescription in the Scriptures about how the choirs were to stand (9, 24)
   2.3. This practice may have arisen from the example of reading the law prescribed in Deuteronomy (Dt 11.29; Dt 27.12, 13; Josh 8.33).
   2.4. Some of the Psalms are structured for antiphonal responsive choirs (Ps 136.1-26; possibly, Ps 106.1-48; Ps 107.1-43; Ps 118.1-29). This seems to indicate that the two-choir model was practiced when some of the Psalms were written (i.e., probably at, or after, the time of David).
   2.5. The reference is most likely to the broader prescription associated with the worship of the temple: which utilized the Psalms and musical instruments of praise.

3. What is David called?
   3.1. "man of God". See also 2 Chron 8.14.

4. What is the significance of this appellation?
   4.1. It puts him in a class with a select few: Moses (Dt 33.1; unnamed prophets (Judges 13.6, 8; 1 Sam 2.27; 1 Sam 9.6-10 [**9**]; 2 Chron 25.7); the prophet Shemaiah (1 Ki 12.22); the prophet from Judah (1 Ki 13.1-34); Elijah (1 Ki 17.18; etc.); Elisha (2 Ki 4.9; 2 Ki 5.8; 2 Ki 7.2; etc.); Hanan son of Igdaliah (Jer 35.4). [Two occurrences in NT 1 Tim 6.11; 2 Tim 3.17].
   4.2. Notice the heading of Psalm 90.1 refers to Moses as the 'man of God' in the context of the prophetic utterances of this Psalm.
   4.3. What do all the OT uses of the expression 'man of God' have in common (other than the references to David, since that we are trying to determine the meaning of the reference when applied to David)?
      4.3.1. They all refer to someone in the prophetic office.
   4.4. What can we conclude is probably the meaning of the expression 'man of God' with respect to David?
      4.4.1. He was included among those in the prophetic office.
   4.5. What other evidence do we have that he was considered to be among those in the prophetic office?
      4.5.1. He wrote many of the Psalms, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, that are part of Scripture (Mk 12.36).
      4.5.2. He is referred to as a prophet, indirectly, as speaking oracles (2 Sam 23.1, 2; Acts 1.16).

© James R. Hughes, 2006

4.5.3. He is called a prophet (Acts 2.29, **30**, 31).

5. Why did David have a right to prescribe worship practices or change their form?
   5.1. He was acting as a prophet.
   5.2. It was not in his capacity as king that he instituted the form or practice of worship.

6. Does the action of David give other civil magistrates (emperors, kings, presidents, prime ministers) the right to prescribe a particular form of worship?
   6.1. Every change in the order/form of Biblical worship is constituted by God through the *prophetic* office (Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Christ/Apostles).
   6.2. The action of David does not give civil magistrates (e.g., Constantine, Charlemagne, Henry VIII, Elizabeth I) the right to prescribe the form for worship of the Church.
   6.3. Unless these monarchs could have demonstrated that they filled the office of prophet they were not qualified to take such action.

7. In what areas of worship did David's regulations have significant impact?
   7.1. He prepared the plans for building the temple, but the Temple was very similar in form to the tabernacle. It was essentially a permanent form of the tabernacle that established the fact that the Israelites were no longer a wandering people. The form of the sacrificial system did not change radically as it moved from the tabernacle to the temple. The areas where David's influence was most significant are in two other areas.
   7.2. David introduced **Psalm Singing**.
      7.2.1. There is no reference to singing in the Tabernacle worship.
      7.2.2. Moses is credited with a Psalm (90). But very few, if any, of the other Psalms were written before the time of David.
      7.2.3. Most of the Psalms were written by David or his contemporaries (e.g., Asaph), and the rest between David's time and the return from the Captivity.
      7.2.4. As far as we know, no Psalms were written after the time of Ezra. Jewish tradition states that Ezra assembled the Psalter into its final form.
      7.2.5. David appears to have been the one to introduce singing into worship; and the choirs of singers.
   7.3. David introduced the use of **Musical Instruments** to accompany the sacrifice.
      7.3.1. Other than the trumpet, which was used in the tabernacle to announce the sacrifice to the assembled worshippers (Lev 23.24, 25; Num 10.10), David introduced all the other musical instruments that formed an orchestra to accompany the praise at the time of the sacrifice (2 Chron 29.27-28).

8. What lessons can we derive from the consideration that the prescriptions for worship were delivered through the prophetic office?
   8.1. A person in the prophetic office, commissioned by God, is required to institute changes in the form of worship.
      8.1.1. In the OT economy when individuals took it upon themselves to introduce changes in worship without the authority of the prophetic office they were punished (e.g., Lev 10.1-3).
      8.1.2. No unauthorized individual has the right to introduce changes in worship form or practice (Dt 4.2; Dt 12.32).
      8.1.3. Once a new form had been introduced by a person with prophetic authority, the generations that followed continued to observe the form (2 Chron 8.14, 1**5**; 2 Chron 29.25-26ff).
      8.1.4. We see that Nehemiah follows the same principle and utilizes only what was authorized by David. Nehemiah does not innovate in worship because he had had no revelation from God to introduce anything different or to change the form of the worship in the Temple.
   8.2. Since the prophetic office has ceased to exist, changes in the form of worship are no longer permissible.
      8.2.1. There has been no prophetic office since the close of the NT era, with the passing of the Apostles who were part of the prophetic office (Eph 2.20).
      8.2.2. No one in the Church today fills the prophetic office. Therefore, no one has authority to make changes in the form of worship.
      8.2.3. Our worship form must therefore be in accord with/and based upon the Apostolic form. The final form for our worship is to be derived from the time of the last formulation of worship under the guidance of a person in the prophetic office.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

8.2.4. We must do what we can to determine from Scripture what was the form that was delivered and followed at the time of the Apostles and follow it.

8.3. A simple question to ask popes, kings, Anglican liturgists, or 21st-century worship leaders is: Who appointed you to the prophetic office and gave you authority to institute changes in the form of worship? If they cannot show their warrant as prophets, then their innovations and changes in worship are not authorized by God—and are therefore man-made innovations, which in the Bible are called idolatry.

8.4. [For a detailed analysis of the regulations for worship, see: *In Spirit and Truth: Worship as God Requires.*[46]]

9. Which Psalms *might* have been used as part of the dedication of the wall and city?

9.1. 48 (about the city), 78 (history of the nation; compare with the prayer in chapter 9), 85 (restoration), 105 (history and covenant keeping), 106 (history and confession), 120-134 (Psalms of ascent as the pilgrims came to Jerusalem), 135 (history and praise by the temple worshipers).

Praise Procession (Neh 12.9, 24, 26-28, 30-42)

1. What is dedicated to the LORD? (27, 30)

1.1. The wall specifically, but in a sense the entire city and the inhabitants in the city.

1.2. What does dedication mean?

1.2.1. Consecration, inauguration

1.2.2. The Hebrew word for dedication is 'hanukkah'. The Jewish holiday in December celebrates the recapture of the temple from the Seleucids and its rededication (185 BC). The temple was restored and rededicated by Judas Maccabees [1 Mac 4.60] after the Seleucid desecration. See John 10.22 where a reference is made to the feast in NT times.

2. When was the wall/city dedicated?

2.1. No date information is given in the chapter.

2.2. 2 Maccabees 1.18 assigns the 25th of Kisleu (early December) to the events in Nehemiah 12.31.

2.3. This date seems a bit late in the year compared with the dates for the events in the preceding chapters: completion of the wall on the 25th Elul (Oct 2nd, 444/445 BC) from Nehemiah 6.15; the reading of the Law on the 1st day of the 7th month of Tishri/Ethanim (Oct 8th, 444 BC) from Nehemiah 7.73; and the confession of sin on the 24th day of the (same) month Tishri/Ethanim (Oct 31st 444/445 BC) from Nehemiah 9.1.

2.4. It is possible that the author of Maccabees made a mistake about the date or shifted the date of the events of Nehemiah to have them coincide with the events that occurred at the time of Judas Maccabees. It is also possible that the dedication ceremony did not take place until later in the year (i.e., December) and Judas Maccabees chose to rededicate the temple, about 260 years later, on the traditional date for the dedication from the time of Nehemiah.

2.5. Some argue that the dedication of the wall took place immediately after the completion of the wall but that it is reported, in the account in Nehemiah, only after intervening events and lists (Neh 8.1-12.26).

2.5.1. It is possible that the events of the dedication did occur immediately after the completion of the wall as no date information is given in chapter 12.

2.5.2. However, Nehemiah 12.27 seems to be reflecting back in time, and Nehemiah 12.27, 28 make reference to Levites and singers being sought out, as if they did not live in the city. Whereas in chapter 11 they seem to have taken up residence in the city (of course they may not have moved in yet).

2.6. It is also possible that the dedication of the wall/city did not occur until after the reading of the Law (Neh 8.1-18), confession (Neh 9.1-38), renewal of the Covenant (Neh 10.1-39), repopulation of the city (Neh 11.1-36), and appointment of liturgical offices (Neh 12.1-26); and therefore happened in late November/early December.

2.6.1. It may be more accurate to accept the position that Nehemiah is recording in chronological order the events that transpired from his arrival in the city until the dedication of the wall.

2.6.2. Nehemiah 12.43 seems to include a large number of inhabitants of the city and supports the view that the events took place after the city was repopulated or was populated by the visitors for the various festivals.

---

[46] James R. Hughes, *In Spirit and Truth: Worship as God Requires (Understanding and Applying the Regulative Principle of Worship*), 2005*;* available at: www.epctoronto.org.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

2.6.3. The dedication of the wall/city may have been in early December at the time that is traditionally celebrated by the Jews as Hanukkah.

3. Who supervised the dedication ceremonies? (Neh 12.26, 31, 36)
   3.1. The two key individuals mentioned in *vs* 26 were Nehemiah and Ezra, but the other leaders of Judah were included.
   3.2. The return to the use of the first person between verses 31 and 40 might be applied to either Ezra or to Nehemiah.
      3.2.1. Elsewhere in the book of Nehemiah, the use of the "I" pronoun in the account applies to Nehemiah (e.g., Neh 1.1; Neh 2.11; Neh 4.13; Neh 5.6; Neh 6.1; Neh 7.5; Neh 13.6).
      3.2.2. The reference in Nehemiah 12.36 refer to Ezra in the 3rd person and therefore seem to indicate that Nehemiah is the writer of this section.
   3.3. Note: Nehemiah led the worship, not as a civil magistrate, but as a prophet. He seems to have held this position as a spiritual leader commissioned by God to recall the people to true worship and as a writer of Scripture.

4. What were the artefacts used in the dedication and how were they used? (Neh 12.27, 28, 30, 35, 41-43)
   4.1. A procession of Levites and singers (choirs) with music (singing and musical instruments), ceremonial purification, and sacrifices.
   4.2. What does the use of these artefacts point to?
      4.2.1. The dedication was under the general structure of the ceremonial system.
      4.2.2. This may have relevance if we are to determine what place similar types of dedication have within in the NT economy.
   4.3. Levites and Singers
      4.3.1. They came from all parts of the country. Why?
         4.3.1.1. They were summoned to attend.
         4.3.1.2. The ceremonies of this day were greater (in number and elaborateness) than would occur on a regular day with the daily sacrifices and were even greater than the events that would occur on a festival day, so a large number of personnel were required.
         4.3.1.3. The city could be dedicated to God only if those who were part of the ceremonial system were present.
      4.3.2. The Singers were Levites (1 Chron 15.16), descended from a specific Levite (Asaph) who was their first leader (1 Chron 25.2; Ezra 2.41), who served in twenty-four courses (1 Chron 25.1-31).
         4.3.2.1. David provided specific regulations for the singers (1 Chron 23.1-6, 28-32; 1 Chron 25.1-31).
         4.3.2.2. At this time, the Levites/singers lived in the towns of Judah, i.e., to the south and south-west of Jerusalem, and also lived in the towns of Benjamin, a territory immediately to the north of Jerusalem. (Neh 11.20, 36)
   4.4. Music (Singing and playing of musical Instruments)
      4.4.1. The instruments with singing were used in previous religious ceremonies (1 Chron 13.8; 1 Chron 16.42; 1 Chron 25.1; 2 Chron 5.12; 2 Chron 29.25; Ezra 3.10).
      4.4.2. Observations on the use of Trumpets:
         4.4.2.1. Trumpets, other than possibly at the coronation of Josiah (2 Ki 11.14; 2 Chron 23.13), appear to have always been blown by priests.
         4.4.2.2. "Moreover, Moses was the inventor of the form of their trumpet, which was made of silver. Its description is this: - In length it was little less than a cubit. It was composed of a narrow tube, somewhat thicker than a flute, but with so much breadth as was sufficient for admission of the breath of a man's mouth: it ended in the form of a bell, like common trumpets. Its sound was called in the Hebrew tongue *Asosra*. Two of these being made, one of them was sounded when they required the multitude to come together to congregations. … They also made use of these trumpets in their sacred ministrations, when they were bringing their sacrifices to the altar as well on the Sabbaths as on the rest of the [festival] days ..."[47]
      4.4.3. Observation on the use of Musical Instruments in general:

[47] Josephus *Antiquities* 3.12.6.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

4.4.3.1. The use of instruments other than a trumpet (e.g., harps, cymbals, lyres, etc.) and singing appears to have been specifically and directly associated with the offering of animal sacrifices (2 Chron 29.27-28).
4.4.3.2. The correlation between musical instruments and sacrifices is so strong that to separate musical instruments in the worship of God from the sacrifices would appear to need an explicit warrant.
4.4.3.3. In the NT economy, the spiritual equivalent of musical instruments is the human voice offering a sacrifice of praise in Psalms (Heb 13.15).

4.5. *Purification*
4.5.1. How would the Levites have purified the people and the walls? (30)
4.5.1.1. Washing with water (Num 19.17-21; Num 31.23). This would have been ceremonially accomplished through sprinkling (Num 8.7).
4.5.1.2. Sacrifices and sprinkling of blood (2 Chron 29.20-24).
4.5.2. What does the purification symbolize?
4.5.2.1. Holiness, separation (dedication), spiritual cleanliness (Num 18.17; Num 19.9; Ezk 36.24-27; Heb 9.19-22).
4.5.3. What is the NT equivalent of spiritual purification?
4.5.3.1. A spiritually clean heart (1 Cor 6.11; Heb 9.14; 1 Pt 1.1, 2)
4.5.4. In the NT economy how is spiritual purification accomplished?
4.5.4.1. Confession and repentance (Psalm 24.3-4; Heb 10.22)
4.5.5. What is the NT ceremonial equivalent of sprinkling with blood or water?
4.5.5.1. Baptism (Heb 10.22; 1 Pt 3.21)
4.5.5.2. Our baptism is equivalent to dedicating the temple or the walls of Jerusalem. We are the living stones that make up the living walls of the church (1 Pt 2.5).

4.6. Sacrifices
4.6.1. What is the reason for including sacrifices in the ceremony of dedication?
4.6.2. It seems to indicate that this dedication was part of the irrevocable giving over of the dedicated object to God.
4.6.3. The burning sacrifice acted as a substitute for the object that was being dedicated (Num 18.14-17).
4.6.4. They may have prophetic significance. Not in this instance pointing to Christ, but rather to purification of the creation through Christ. It may be that the destruction/cleansing of the old world, accomplished with water (flood), and the final cleansing with fire as a 'sacrifice' (2 Peter 3.7, 10) point to the purification of the world before it is offered/dedicated by the Son to the Father. This may be the symbolical completion of his work of redemption.

5. Where does the practice of Levitical choirs originate? (31)
5.1. Music played a very small part in Israelite religious ceremonial worship prior to the time of the monarchy (David). Musical instruments (other than the use of a trumpet at the time of the sacrifice) and singing appeared not to have been included in the Tabernacle system of worship.
5.2. Religious ceremonial worship of the nations around Israel (e.g., Egyptian, Canaanite, Babylonian) appear to have included choirs of temple/religious singers.
5.2.1. The *sound* of early Near Eastern music apparently would not seem strange to modern ears. Some instruments found in tombs have the same sounds and scales as instruments used in the Near East today. The heptatonic (seven notes) and diatonic (seven sounds with eight intervals) scales, familiar to us, also existed in antiquity. Mesopotamian music of a form similar to Western music existed about fourteen hundred years before the earliest Greek sources.[48]
5.2.2. For examples of what the music at the time of Nehemiah might have sounded like, see the *Hurrian Cult Song* from Ancient Ugarit ca 1400 BC as arranged by Anne Kilmer and Richard Dumbrill.[49]
5.3. There is very little information given in the Bible about how the Psalms were sung and how musical instruments were used in the Temple. Scholars have difficulty determining from the Psalms themselves how they were played and sung. They may have been chanted by the Jews rather than sung. Although the form of chanting that may have been used is obscure and was likely quite different from ecclesiastical chanting of the Middle Ages and the ways Jews chant today. Suzanne Haïk-Vantoura, starting in 1970, spent many years deciphering the markings (apparently, eight above the Hebrew letters, and twelve underneath) in Hebrew Psalm manuscripts from the Middle Ages, and came to the conclusion that the

[48] www.rakkav.com/kdhinc/index2.htm
[49] www.rakkav.com/kdhinc/pages/sacred.htm

© James R. Hughes, 2006

Jews used an E scale. Her work has been acclaimed by some scholars, but is rejected by others as being too subjective. It is worth noting that when her deciphering key is applied to the Psalm notations, it consistently yields coherent music. Also, the music appears to be well suited to the mood of the words it accompanies in the text. For a reconstruction by Haïk-Vantoura of music that may have been associated with the Psalms from about the time of the second temple (i.e., Ezra & Nehemiah) see the Web site called King David's Harp, Inc.[50]

5.4. The only direct reference to choirs we find in the Bible are the ones in this chapter (Neh 12.31, 38, 40, 42). The term "choir" is actually a translation of the literal "thanks" (38), i.e., "thanksgiving choir" (40). The NIV translates a different word as 'choir' in 1 Chronicles 15.27; and the NASV translates another word in the titles of the Psalms and Habakkuk (e.g., Ps 4.1) as "choir director" where the NKJV, NIV, and ESV have 'chief musician', 'director of music' and 'choirmaster'.

5.5. Whether women were included in the Temple choirs is debated (Ezra 2.65).

6. Did David adopt the practices of the nations around him when he introduced musical instruments and singing?
   6.1. God does not have to establish an institution directly in order to make use of it. God uses human instruments in his providential administrations.
   6.2. He providentially prepares some institutions of men (e.g., writing styles such as poetry, covenants, kingships, Roman census and government institutions) in advance so that he can ultimately redeem them and use them for his glorious purposes.
   6.3. We must note, however, that David: 1) acted in a prophetic capacity when he made the changes to the form of worship, and 2) did so under God's direction. His actions do not give us warrant to introduce innovations in worship because neither condition applies in our situation.

7. How was the procession of choirs structured and organized? (Neh 12.31-38)
   7.1. It was a solemn procession consisting of two choirs.
   7.2. The two choirs started from the same point; probably the area of the Valley Gate (Neh 2.13, 15; Neh 3.13) on the western side of the city.
      7.2.1. This would have the leaders of the two choirs end up meeting around the area of the temple (40) at about the same time.
      7.2.2. This is the same starting place for Nehemiah's inspection of the ruined walls (Neh 2.13-15).
   7.3. They appeared to have traveled along the top of the walls (Neh 12.31, 38).
   7.4. The first choir was led by Ezra [36], and went counter-clockwise along the south and east walls; past the Dung Gate (Neh 12.31) to the Water/Fountain Gate (Neh 12.37). Apparently, they came down from the wall at the Fountain/Water Gate (where there may have been steps) to enter the Temple.
      7.4.1. This group included Hoshaiah, half the leaders of Judah (Neh 12.32), priests (seven of them named), and Zechariah and his eight associates.
   7.5. The second choir, with Nehemiah (verse 38), went clockwise along the west and north walls, and went over the gates and through the towers (Tower of the Ovens, Broad Wall) until they arrived at the Gate of the Guard (39) where they came down from the wall.
      7.5.1. This group included half the officials (Neh 12.40), priests (seven of them named), and eight others who apparently were singers.
   7.6. There is a deliberate parallel arrangement of the two processions.

8. Why did the processions encompass the city?
   8.1. Why didn't the choirs just assemble in the Temple area?
   8.2. Encompassing the city signified the dedication of it all to God. In some respects this is similar to going around the city of Jericho to dedicate it (for destruction) to the LORD.
   8.3. Walking on the top of the walls also sent an impressive message (a visible sign, living parable) to the surrounding tribes and nay-sayers (Neh 4.3) that the walls were now complete and strong.
   8.4. To glory/rejoice in the work that God had completed (Ps 48.12-13).

9. What is the application of the two choirs in our NT context?
   9.1. It could symbolize the work that we do in the Church; all individuals cooperating together in a united whole. We in the Church are priest-kings (Ex 19.6; 1 Pt 2.9; Rev 1.6; Rev 5.10; Rev 20.6).

[50] www.rakkav.com/kdhinc/pages/mp3s.htm.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

9.2. It may be that the double procession reiterates the fact that Church and State (represented by Ezra and Nehemiah and the leaders of Judah and Levites/Priests) co-operated in the reconstruction of the city and community. It is a message for our, so called, liberal democracies, that the State cannot be religion-less or Godless.
9.3. As with the choirs, we are to glory/rejoice in the work God is doing as he build the spiritual Zion (Acts 15.14-16).
9.4. "Now the truth is that there's no warrant at all in the Bible for choirs in worship. It is perfectly clear that the only choir ever sanctioned—or commanded by God—was part of ceremonial worship. … [N]ote the following facts, clearly revealed in this passage: (1) The only people who played the musical instruments, or sang in the choir, were Levites. This, right away, indicates that this was a ceremonial aspect of worship. (2) The only time when the choir, accompanied by the musical instruments, was heard was while the burnt offering was being completed. (3) Therefore, the choir and musical instruments were aspects of ceremonial worship and they have no more right to a place in our worship today than the sacrifice to which they were appended. You see, what was really going on in that temple worship was what I would call 'synthetic' redemption. It was like a program you see on TV with very tense drama. Since it isn't 'real' a musical score has to be written into the background to induce a 'feeling' response in us that approximates what we would feel if it was real. But what a tremendous difference there is between the feeling you get from watching a romance on TV and the experience you have when you actually have your own romance. Well, that's like the difference between Old and New Testament worship. We don't need a Hollywood backdrop. Yet the church today is literally full of ceremonial worship. And the more it declines in its grasp of the truth the more you see this so-called 'liturgical revival.'"[51]

10. Where did the choirs go after they had proceeded along the walls? (Neh 12.40-43)
    10.1. The choirs met and stood "in the house of God."
    10.2. A few commentators think that this is not a reference to the Temple. Their view is that the choirs remained on the walls (since there is no reference to them coming down) and that they surrounded the city on the walls. In this case, "the house of God" refers to the city as a whole.
    10.3. The expression "house of God" appears in the Bible about 50 times. It can refer to places other than the Tabernacle/Temple (e.g., Gen 28.17), but usually refers to the Tabernacle (Judges 18.31; 1 Chron 6.48) or Temple (1 Chron 9.26, 27; Ezra 2.68). Note that all other nine references in Nehemiah (Neh 6.10; Neh 8.16; Neh 11.11; Neh 13.7 etc.) make it clear that the expression refers to the Temple. No usage in the OT refers to the city as a whole. It is nothing more than an interesting theory to suggest that the reference applies to the entire city.
    10.4. We are intended to understand that the two choirs marched along the walls and after completing their traversal, came down, and met in the Temple courts.

11. What was the purpose of their coming into the "house of God"?
    11.1. Worship was to be conducted in a place, the place where God made his presence known.
    11.2. The sacrifices of dedication and worship with their accompanying songs and music were offered in the Temple.
    11.3. This reminds us (all believers/God's covenant people) that as priest-kings in the NT Church we are to assemble where God reveals himself. In other words, we are to be present at the public worship of God—the place where God makes his presence known in a special way.

12. What is the reason for two choirs standing opposite each other? (Neh 12.9, 24)
    12.1. This practice may have arisen from the example of reading the law prescribed in Deuteronomy (Dt 11.29; Dt 27.12, 13; Josh 8.33).
    12.2. Some of the Psalms are structured for antiphonal responsive choirs or possibly (but less likely) by a choir and the congregation (Ps 13.1-6; Ps 20.1-9; Ps 38.1-22; Ps 106.1-48; Ps 107.1-43; Ps 136.1-26; Ps 118.1-4). This seems to indicate that the two-choir model was practiced: "one section responding to the other" or "group alternating with group" (Neh 12.24) implies antiphonal singing where one section of the choir responded to another section.

[51] G. I. Williamson, "Renewal of Scriptural Worship," From *Journey,* January-February 1987; members.aol.com/RSICHURCH/renewal.html.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

People's Participation (Neh 12.27, 43)

1. How did the people celebrate the dedication? (Neh 12.43)
   1.1. The three components that are mentioned are sacrifices, rejoicing, and families

Great Sacrifices

1. What does "great sacrifices" mean?
   1.1. Many, numerous.
   1.2. More than a normal day's allocation (i.e., more than the daily sacrifices; Ex 29.38-42; Ezk 46.13, 14; Dan 8.11).

2. Why were there so many sacrifices?
   2.1. Since there were many people assembled for the celebrations there would have been a large number of animals offered. Part of the thanksgiving offerings were eaten by the families and part burned.
   2.2. The people were following the model of previous joyous times: David (1 Chron 29.21, 22); Solomon (2 Chron 7.5-7, 10); and Hezekiah (2 Chron 29.31-36).

3. What was the purpose of offering the sacrifices at the dedication of the wall/city?
   3.1. The initial reaction, when we think of sacrifices, is to associate them with atonement or appeasement. However, the ideas of 'homage' and 'communion' are also possible associations, as is tithing a portion.
   3.2. What was the purpose of the first sacrifices?
      3.2.1. The first sacrifices recorded in Scripture were not exclusively guilt/sin offerings but appear to include gift/thank offerings (Gen 4.3-4; Gen 8.20; Gen 46.1). Note, however, that Hebrews 11.4 places Abel's offering in the context of guilt/sin atonement.
      3.2.2. Later substitution/atonement/purification offerings were added to the ceremonial system.
   3.3. At least one of the public sacrifices in the Mosaic ceremonial system was associated with thanksgiving—Firstfruits/Weeks/Ingathering/Tabernacles (Ex 23.16; Ex 34.22).
   3.4. Thank offerings were clearly part of the OT system of worship (Lev 22.29, 30; 2 Chron 29.31; Ps 107.22; Ps 116.17). Notice that part (the muscle meat) of the offering was eaten (Lev 7.15; Lev 22.29, 30) and a portion (the fat and part of the organs; Lev 3.3) was offered as a burnt offering. Of course, without atonement, there can be no peace, and therefore no thanksgiving.
   3.5. It appears that the primary motive of the sacrifices at the time of the dedication of the wall was giving thanks for God's goodness and sharing in fellowship with the other Israelites.
   3.6. Dedications and new beginnings were also marked with sacrifice (1 Sam 6.14; 1 Sam 11.15; 2 Sam 6.17).

4. How should we respond to the 'negatives' people associate with sacrifices?
   4.1. "Wasteful of meat", "cruel to misuse animals", "barbaric form of worship", "God doesn't need the smell of burning flesh", etc.
   4.2. Substitution is symbolized in guilt/sin/atonement sacrifices. Even in a thank-offering there is the idea of substitution. The sacrificial animal was given as a token that substituted for the person. It symbolized the irrevocable giving over of the one making the offering without requiring his own death.
   4.3. The debt associated with sin must be paid. Either we, or someone else, must pay the debt. Sacrifices reminded the ancient world that:
      4.3.1. God held men accountable for their sin.
      4.3.2. A substitute would be provided in the Messiah.
   4.4. In our 'enlightened' age we have lost sight of the sinfulness of sin and mountain of debt associated with it. Sacrifices remind us that without substitution there is a great consuming fire awaiting sinful mankind.
   4.5. Sacrifices remind us of (at least) two other things:
      4.5.1. God owns all things and we are returning only a portion to him (they are a tribute payment).
      4.5.2. God's provision for mankind are so abundant that we can splurge in worship. There is no real shortage of material goods in this world. Shortages are caused by man's sin and selfishness. We don't have to be niggardly when it comes to worship (2 Chron 3-4; Mt 26.6-13). It is a false scruple that always makes the Church and worship of God take second/last place (e.g., hand-me-down furniture and dishes; least expensive carpets, sterile/utilitarian meeting halls, poor quality singing, etc.).

5. What is the NT application of these sacrifices?

© James R. Hughes, 2006

5.1. Some argue that sacrifices are done away in Christ. In one sense this is true, but in another sense it is not true.
5.2. Sacrifices for atonement purposes are complete in Christ who was the final sacrifice (Heb 9.9, 10, 23-28; Heb 10.1-**18**).
5.3. The Lord's Supper includes a memorial of the sacrifice offered once by Christ. It is a bloodless replacement for the atonement sacrifices since with Christ's blood having been shed, no more blood needs to be shed. This does not mean that the Lord's Supper is a sacrifice of Jesus (e.g., as in the Roman Catholic mass). However, it is still typical/symbolical of what was accomplished, while the animal sacrifices were typical/symbolical of what would be accomplished.
5.4. However, sacrifices for the purposes of homage/thanksgiving and communion/fellowship do not necessarily end because the atonement/substitution purposes are no longer required.
5.5. We are told explicitly in the NT that sacrifices continue (Rom 12.1; Rom 15.16-17; Heb 13.15-16; 1 Pt 2.5).
5.5.1. In spiritual form; Jn 4.23-24—the context of these words relates to determining if the sacrifices should be performed on Mount Gerizim or in Jerusalem.
5.5.2. The sacrifices in the NT economy are not always immaterial and can, for instance, involve the laying down of one's life for Christ (Phil 2.17; 2 Tim 4.6).
5.5.3. The form of offering sacrifices has changed; the substance and principle has not.

Great Rejoicing

1. What were they rejoicing about?
1.1. In the Heb. the verb "rejoice" is used three times; the noun "joy" is used two times
1.2. Rejoicing because God had given them much: protected them as they re-built the wall, re-populated the city, brought justice in the face of inequities, provided them with material blessings in the harvest (after a year or more of famine), and honoured them with his presence in word and worship. Compare: 1 Sam 4.5; Ezra 3.13; 1 Ki 1.40.
1.3. In considering what God had done, they were overwhelmed with joy and thanksgiving and worshiped loudly. The sound of their rejoicing could be heard well beyond the city.

2. What is an application of this consideration of their rejoicing?
2.1. Our worship should be joyful:
2.1.1. The celebration at the wall was joyful, almost like a prep rally before a sports game.
2.1.2. In contrast, many in the NT economy drag through church worship as if they were at a funeral. Part of the experience of worship is what we put into it—heart and soul!
2.1.3. Worship is, among other things, an act of celebration for what God has done.
2.1.4. We have much more to be joyful about than the people did in December (25th of Kisleu) 444/445 BC.
2.1.4.1. We have been saved from an eternity in Hell.
2.1.4.2. The building of the walls of the New Jerusalem is being done with the salvation of souls.
2.1.5. Paul isn't giving us a suggestion in Philippians 4.4. It is a requirement of those who are in Christ to rejoice.
2.2. Our worship should be a witness to the world:
2.2.1. Their worship was a testimony to others. They attributed their successes to God.
2.2.2. The world should see our desire to be at worship and should see our joy in worship.
2.2.3. One way we demonstrate this is through joyful singing of the Psalms.
2.3. Every society has religious rituals that are associated with rejoicing.
2.3.1. What are examples in modern NA society? They include celebrations around winning sports teams and victorious political candidates, (sometimes) around returning armies, Thanksgiving Day, and 'street' festivals.
2.3.2. The modern rituals are part of the civil religion of our day in celebration, primarily, of the god's of sport, entertainment, and government. Men have replaced true worship with the rituals of false gods.
2.3.3. The rituals and celebrations of false gods often degenerate into debauchery (e.g., Mardi Gras).
2.3.4. There needs to be common rituals in society as they are part of the 'glue' that holds society together. Religious pluralism is a myth and really impossible. The rituals will be either true or false, but they will be present.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

Grateful Families

1. What are we told about who attended the festivities?
   1.1. The women and children also rejoiced with the men. This experience of worship was for everyone (2 Chron 20.13; Ps 148.11-13).
   1.2. The events in Nehemiah's day may point to the coming Messianic age (Mt 21.9, 15).

2. Where have we seen something similar in Nehemiah?
   2.1. Neh 8.2.

3. What do the references to families worshiping together teach us?
   3.1. This passage is historical, and not directive. However, by derivation from the examples of godly man such as Ezra/Nehemiah we are encouraged to worship as families.
   3.2. In addition, we have a directive (in Dt 31.12) that points to families worshiping together.
   3.3. In the NT, we find pointers to inclusiveness in worship (Mt 14.21; Mt 15.38; Gal 3.28; Mt 19.13-15).

4. How should this participatory worship be worked out?
   4.1. At minimum it would seem that it is through corporate singing of Psalms (Eph 5.19; James 5.13).
   4.2. Corporate prayer.

Primary Purpose (Neh 12.27, 30)

1. What was the purpose of the dedication of the city walls/city?
   1.1. The word 'hanukkah' appears only few times in the Bible:
      1.1.1. Numbers 7.10-11: "When the altar was anointed, the leaders brought their offerings for its dedication and presented them before the altar."
      1.1.2. 2 Chronicles 7.9: "On the eighth day they held an assembly, for they had celebrated the dedication of the altar for seven days and the festival for seven days more."
      1.1.3. Ezra 6.16; Aramaic: "Then the people of Israel—the priests, the Levites and the rest of the exiles—celebrated the dedication of the house of God with joy."
      1.1.4. Psalm 30.1, Title: "A psalm. A song. For the dedication of the temple."
      1.1.5. Dan 3.2, 3 Aramaic: used in reference to the dedication of the image set up by Nebuchadnezzar.
      1.1.6. It is used of the altar, temple and city wall/city.
   1.2. The use of the word 'hanukkah' in Nehemiah 12.27, seems to imply that the city was set aside for a holy use/purpose.
      1.2.1. By dedicating the city to God, they effectively put the city under God's protection. (Ps 69.35; Ps 78.68; Ps 102.13; Ps 127.1)
         1.2.1.1. It appears that when Jerusalem was under Jebusite control it was under the guardianship of pagan gods, though they were useless since they were 'blind' and 'lame' (2 Sam 5.6)—i.e., not real gods.
         1.2.1.2. It was fitting that the city be re-dedicated under the living God (Zech 14.20, 21).
      1.2.2. The city was a thanksgiving offering to God for his mercy in bringing them through the difficulties over the past few months. He already owned the city and called it his, but their dedicating the city to him is similar to a tithe; God owns all of our wealth, yet we are to return a portion. (Ps 2.6; Ps 9.11; Ps 46.4; Ps 48.1, 2; Ps 132.13; Mt 5.35).

2. What are the implications for us in the NT Church?
   2.1. The walls and city of God in the NT are to be dedicated to him.
   2.2. What is the NT equivalent of the walls and city?
      2.2.1. Christians make up the living city (1 Pt 2.5, 6).
      2.2.2. Baptism is equivalent to purification as part of our dedication to God.

3. Does this dedication ceremony teach us anything about our possessions, in general?
   3.1. If our lives are to be dedicated to God, then so should all of our possessions and goods.
   3.2. All that we do is to be done for the glory of God. (1 Cor 10.31; Col 3.17 [note: in the context of the Psalms—spiritual sacrifice]; Col 3.23; 1 Pt 4.11).

4. How can we apply this dedication ceremony to our buildings?
   4.1. If/when we open a new church building, should we have a dedication/worship ceremony?

© James R. Hughes, 2006

4.2. Note the precedence we find in Nehemiah.
  4.2.1. The construction of the wall was completed on the 25th Elul (Oct 2nd, 444/445 BC; Neh 6.15).
  4.2.2. However, it was not then immediately dedicated. Nehemiah first undertook the reconstruction of the community by establishing a governing structure for the city (Neh 7.1-3) and began the process of re-populating the city. A census was taken (Neh 7.5-73). The people were then called together for a renewal of the Covenant (Neh 7-10) that included a reading of the Law on the 1st day of the 7th month of Tishri/Ethanim (October 8th, 444/445 BC; Neh 7.73) and the confession of sin on the 24th day of the (same) month (Oct 31st 444/445 BC). The community was then prepared to take seriously their responsibilities toward the city and it was repopulated voluntarily and through means of a subscribed conscription (Neh 11.1-36).
  4.2.3. It appears that it was at least a month after the wall was completed, and possibly almost three months later (2 Mac 1.18 assigns the 25th of Kisleu [early December] to the events in Neh 12.31), before the wall was dedicated.
  4.2.4. The intervening process related to the community. The community took precedence over the bricks and mortar.
  4.2.5. This should remind us that the focus of the church should be on the people, not the physical infrastructure.
    4.2.5.1. The church is made up living stones, not dead ones.
    4.2.5.2. This message needs to be heeded by congregations that make their allegiance to a building their main criterion for continuance.
    4.2.5.3. We need to take warning from this and be very careful we do not let a building program disrupt and divide the congregation.
    4.2.5.4. We must not allow buildings of bricks and mortar to divert our attention from building up the lives of the living stones that compose the Church.
    4.2.5.5. In eternity, it won't matter what happened to the physical infrastructure if a soul was lost because of an over concern on the part of the Church for physical buildings.
4.3. The example of Nehemiah provides the correct balance for us. He cared about both the reconstruction of the city and the reconstruction of the community. He knew that ultimately the true city of God was made up of the covenant community. But he was also concerned that the physical infrastructure for the city be cared for and dedicated to the LORD.
  4.3.1. A worship service in which we specifically dedicate a new church building to the Lord is probably appropriate, based on the example we have here.
  4.3.2. However, it needs to be done in the context of NT worship, and applying the principles of spiritual worship:
    4.3.2.1. For example, we would not sprinkle the building with blood or holy water. Instead, we would 'baptize' it with prayer.
    4.3.2.2. We should not send choirs of trained liturgical musicians to march around it. Rather the congregation of priest-kings would raise their voices in one accord of praise.
    4.3.2.3. Our dedication ceremony should show that we are living under the NT economy of spiritual worship, not under the OT economy of types and shadows.

Priestly Provisions (Neh 12.44-47)

1. What was the final act of establishing the renewed worship in the restored city/Temple? (Neh 12.44-46)
  1.1. Re-establishing the prescribed method for caring for the staff that performed the duties in the Temple.
  1.2. To provide for ongoing worship (priestly function) and teaching (prophetic function) that occurred in the Temple.

2. What were the reasons that the goods and money were brought to the Temple? (44)
  2.1. It was required by the Law (see, the notes for Neh 10.37-39):
    2.1.1. A reference to the Law (Neh 10.36)
    2.1.2. Giving the firstfruits of crops (Ex 23.19; Lev 19.23; Dt 26.1-3)
    2.1.3. Presenting firstborn (Num 18.14-19; Dt 12.6)
    2.1.4. Paying annual tithes (Lev 27.30).
  2.2. They were pleased with/rejoiced over those (priests and Levites) who were ministering (waiting/standing).
    2.2.1. Heb literal: "for pleasure of Judah upon the priests and upon the Levites the ones serving/ministering"

© James R. Hughes, 2006

2.2.2. Gk LXX literal: "pleasantness/gladness it was in Judah on the priests and Levites the ones standing"
2.2.3. What does this phrase mean?
2.2.3.1. It probably is not to be understood that the priests/Levites were popular with the people. This is not an endorsement of a popularity contest between men (e.g., 1 Cor 1.10-13). It does not mean that they flocked to worship because their pastors were the dynamic speakers/teachers, compassionate counsellors, or everyman's best buddy.
2.2.3.2. Rather it seems that we are to understand that the people of Judah were pleased that they had ministering priests and Levites. There had been times in the history of Israel when the Temple had fallen into disrepair and had been destroyed, and the priestly work associated with the Temple could not be performed.
2.2.4. What is the implication for us?
2.2.4.1. We should be thankful when the congregations of God are supplied with faithful men to minister (ruling, teaching, pastoring, caring). God supplies them (Rom 10.14, 15; 1 Cor 12.28; Eph 4.11).
2.2.4.2. We should treat with respect those whom God has placed in the office of ministry (1 Thess 5.12, 13; 1 Tim 5.17; Heb 13.7, 17), and submit to their authority (1 Cor 16.16; Heb 13.17).

2.3. The people had made a binding agreement to provide for the priests and Levites (see, the notes on Neh 10.37-39). The specific uses to which the items were to be applied, were:
2.3.1. To fill the storerooms of the house of our God (37)
2.3.2. For the priests ministering in the house (36, 37)
2.3.3. For the Levites (37) including gatekeepers and the singers (39).
2.4. Historical precedence (2 Chron 31.11, 12).

3. What were the responsibilities of the men who served in the Temple? (Neh 12.44-46)
3.1. To manage the storerooms (1 Ki 6.5; 1 Chron 28.11; 2 Chron 31.11-13).
3.2. To perform priestly duties:
3.2.1. Service of God in sacrifices and related ceremonial duties (Dt 10.8; Num 18.5-7; 2 Chron 13.10, 11).
3.2.2. Service/rites of purification (Lev 16.32, 33).
3.2.3. Serve as gatekeepers (1 Chron 9.18, 25; 2 Chron 8.14). [For the duties of the gatekeepers, refer to the notes on Neh 10.28-29].
3.2.4. Sing and play musical instruments (1 Chron 15.19-22; 1 Chron 16.4-7; 2 Chron 8.14).
3.3. To perform prophetic duties:
3.3.1. Teach (Lev 10.8-11; 2 Chron 15.3; 2 Chron 17.7-9 [**9**]; Mal 2.7).
3.3.2. Pray publicly (1 Chron 16.4).

4. What were the means of supporting the work of the Temple staff?
4.1. Contributions/offerings, firstfruits and tithes (44).
4.1.1. In Nehemiah 10.36, 37 we saw that the people committed/covenanted to supply:
4.1.1.1. Firstfruits of their crops and fruit trees
4.1.1.2. Firstborn of their sons, cattle, herds and flocks
4.1.1.3. A first portion of their ground meal, grain, new wine and oil.
4.2. What are the (three) specific categories?
4.2.1. Contributions/offerings; freewill gifts not required by a specific statute.
4.2.2. Firstfruits: a special tribute that instilled a recognition that God had provided another year of blessing (Ex 23.16, 19; Prov 3.9); also a symbol for deliverance and atonement (Gen 4.4; Num 18.14-19 [redeem: 15, 17]; Dt 26.1-11; 1 Cor 15.20-23; James 1.18; Rev 14.3).
4.2.3. Tithes: the covenantal statute requirement to pay tribute.
4.2.4. For a fuller consideration of the scope of our offerings to God, refer to *The Principle of the Portion*.[52]
4.3. A daily portion was to be given to the Levites/Priests from the supplies contributed by the people. (47)
4.3.1. It appears that the custodians of the Temple storerooms allocated supplies on a proportionate basis to those who served in the Temple.

[52] Available at: www.epctoronto.org.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

4.3.2. This may provide a lesson for us. God allocates to us what we need (Ex 16.14-18; Prov 30.7-9; Lk 11.3) and we are to trust that what he has given to us is what we need. Our *wants* will always be bigger than what God knows is best for us. Trusting God in this matter is not easy.

4.4. The contributions were to be continuous, consisting of a perpetual giving. They were not a one-time event. The contributions were required annually from the harvest and from the increase of the bountiful and good welfare that God had provided. This would ensure that the support staff of the Temple would always be provided for.

5. What is the precedent that Nehemiah gives for collecting and using these contributions? (Neh 12.45-47)
   5.1. Commands of David, presumably established by Solomon (1 Chron 25.1-31; 1 Chron 26.1-32). Note: the full sense of verses 45-47 implies that all the aspects of the service and support were put in place by David.
   5.2. They would also likely have considered historical precedence from the days of Hezekiah (2 Chron 31.2-8) and Zerubbabel (Neh 12.47). The reference to the events in the day of Zerubbabel, are probably recorded in Ezra 6.13-18 [17, 18] but we don't find a specific reference to the contributions.
   5.3. Behind David's commands and the establishment of procedures for supporting the Temple workers, is the command of Moses (Dt 18.1-5).

6. What were the Levites required to do with the goods that they received from the people? (47)
   6.1. The Levites were to set aside the required portion for the descendants of Aaron.
   6.2. The Levites were to tithe on what they received (Neh 10.38, 39; Num 18.26; Ezk 44.30). Their tithe was to provide for the priests' needs.
   6.3. No one was exempt from the *Principle of the Portion*,[53] even those who were supported out of the tithes were expected, in turn, to tithe.
   6.4. What might be the theological implications?
      6.4.1. All of us are under God's rule of Law; all must therefore pay tribute and homage to him. No one is above the Law—neither king nor priest.

7. What is the application of the considerations of the Priestly Provisions (44-47)? What relevance does the example of the actions of the Jews around 444/445 BC, who provided contributions for the work of the Temple, have for us in the NT age in the 21st century?
   7.1. It reminds us that the work of the church is to be funded out of the contributions supplied by the members of the assembly/congregation, through tithes and offerings.
   7.2. In the OT the Levites served as priests (a subset of the Levites) and teachers of the Law and as support workers in the Temple. In the NT economy the official duties are divided between two offices (Elder and Deacon; Acts 6.1-6; 1 Tim 3.1-8).
      7.2.1. In the OT economy the physical aspects of the Temple were intimately tied to the liturgical and spiritual aspects.
      7.2.2. In the NT economy, although the diaconal work is still required, it seems that we are to understand that the physical aspects of service are now to be distinguished from the spiritual.
      7.2.3. NT worship is not place-dependent or building-specific. The 'building' is made up of the spiritual 'bricks' of believers (1 Pt 2.4).
      7.2.4. However, this does not mean that we are to show disrespect for the physical infrastructure. When a building is set apart as an assembly place for worship it should be treated as such (e.g., the building should be maintained and used in a way that shows respect for God who is perfect in holiness).
      7.2.5. [For a considerations of tithing *vs* free-will offerings see: *Appendix J – Tithing vs Free-Will Offerings*.]

Directed Purification (Neh 13.1-31)

1. Nehemiah returns to Jerusalem after a period of absence. What does he find on his return?
   1.1. The restoration of the community that he had carefully undertaken had not been fully normalized in the community. The people had drifted into disobedience and were failing to keep their covenant promises (per, Neh 10.28-39).

2. What are the five problems (in this chapter) that needed to be addressed and corrected?

[53] Available at: www.epctoronto.org.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

2.1. *Compromised Friendships* – Foreigners participating in the assembly of worship.
2.2. *Corrupt Families* – Inter-marriage of Jews with foreigners.
2.3. *Cut Funds* – Negligence in the provision of support for the (Priest/Levite) workers in the Temple; withholding tithes, neglected stewardship.
2.4. *Contaminated Facilities* – Allowing a heathen to live in the Temple.
2.5. *Commercialized Faith* – Sabbath-breaking.

3. In summary, what were the people not showing?
   3.1. *Covenant Faithfulness*.

4. What are some preliminary observations/lessons we can derive from a survey of this chapter?
   4.1. Conformance to Biblical standards is difficult to maintain.
      4.1.1. Worldliness is a constant threat and snare for the Church.
      4.1.2. The best intentions, even of formal covenant commitments, are not sufficient to guarantee conformance to moral standards.
      4.1.3. It requires hard work to maintain a standard of godly behaviour in personal lives, society and the Church.
   4.2. Reformation is not a one-time activity.
      4.2.1. Discipline is a constant need in the Church and a pre-cursor to reformation.
      4.2.2. We need constantly to be reminded of God's standards.
      4.2.3. We all need constantly to repent and reform.
      4.2.4. Every generation must be involved in understanding and applying the requirements of God's Law.
   4.3. Extreme vigilance is required.
      4.3.1. We all must always be watching for incursions of unbelief and immorality.
      4.3.2. The sins that Nehemiah dealt with raise their ugly heads in every generation.
   4.4. The civil magistrate is as much responsible, as are leaders in the Church, for the level of morality within society (Rom 13.1-7).
      4.4.1. To claim that it is not the civil magistrate's responsibility to legislate morality is a blunder, deception, error, fallacy, fantasy, figment, hallucination, illusion, mirage, misapprehension, misbelief, mistake, phantasm, speciousness, and spuriousness!
      4.4.2. Laws, by their very nature, legislate behaviour and therefore morality.
      4.4.3. The real issue is: will the laws of the land be based on God's standard or man's?
   4.5. Leadership is required, if conformity to God's revealed will is going to be maintained in society.
      4.5.1. Nehemiah took charge and acted.

5. What do you observe about the 'pulse' of this account?
   [8] I was greatly displeased … I threw out Tobiah's household ... [9] I gave orders to purify … I put back … the equipment of God's house ... [10] I … learned that the assigned portions had not been given ... [11] I rebuked the officials … I called them together ... [13] I put Shelemiah the priest … [14] do not blot out what I have faithfully done ... [15] I saw men in Judah treading winepresses on the Sabbath … I warned them... [17] I rebuked the nobles of Judah … [19] I ordered the doors to be shut ... I stationed some of my men ... [21] I warned them … I will lay hands on you ... [22] I commanded the Levites to purify themselves … [23] I saw men of Judah who had married women ... [25] I rebuked them and called curses down on them. I beat some of them … I made them take an oath … [28] I drove him away from me. … [30] I purified the priests and the Levites ... [31] I made provision for contributions …
   5.1. Nehemiah took responsibility seriously and acted.
   5.2. The Church and society need leaders today who for the glory of God, and not for self aggrandizement, are willing to stand for what is right and take action.
   5.3. Modern-day expectations are that:
      5.3.1. Christian leaders won't demand conformity to God's standards and impose Biblical morality on those who don't agree with it.
      5.3.2. A person in a government position isn't supposed to let his religious beliefs influence his behaviour.
   5.4. Actions taken to reform behaviour and maintain community standards will not conform to everyone's (especially the 'cultural elite's') view of what it means to be tolerant or politically correct.
      5.4.1. God's standards are not tolerant or politically correct, as defined by modern opinion.
      5.4.2. For example, Nehemiah's views on marriage and Sabbath-keeping, in particular, are totally contrary to prevailing opinions today.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

5.4.3. God's standards transcend the 'rights', rules and reigns of men.

6. We can organize our consideration of this chapter as follows:
   6.1. Setting (1, 4, 6, 7, 23)
   6.2. Separation (1-3, 23-24)
   6.3. Scouring (4-9)
   6.4. Strategy (25-30)
   6.5. Support (10-14, 31)
   6.6. Sabbath (15-22)
   6.7. Supplication (14, 22, 31).

Setting (Neh 13.1, 4, 6, 7, 23)

1. When did these events occur? (6)
   1.1. We have dated the events of the rebuilding of the wall as October 444/445 BC.
      1.1.1. [Scholarly consensus is split on whether the events of dedication occurred in 444 or 445 BC. This difference of one year is not overly significant.]
   1.2. The traditional view is that the events of Nehemiah 13.1-31 occurred sometime after 433 BC.
      1.2.1. Nehemiah had been in Jerusalem for about 12 years, beginning in 445/444 BC and ending about 443, the 32nd year of Artaxerxes' reign.
      1.2.2. Nehemiah says (Neh 13.6) that the events of chapter 13 occurred after the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes king of Babylon, since it was sometime after that date that he had requested permission to return to Jerusalem for a second time.
      1.2.3. Note: Artaxerxes is called the king of Babylon because his rule over the Persian Empire included Babylon. It would be equivalent to our saying, Elizabeth is Queen of Canada. This title was taken by Cyrus after his conquest of Babylon (Ezra 5.13).
      1.2.4. Nehemiah returned to Artaxerxes (at either Persepolis, the capital, or Susa) probably in 433/432 BC.
      1.2.5. Sometime later Nehemiah asked to return to Jerusalem. He does not state how long he was away. He had to be away a few years or it is unlikely that the people would have broken their covenant (Neh 10.29) so quickly. However, he probably couldn't have been away more than 25 years since, according to the Elephantine papyri, Bagohi (Bigvai) was governor of Judah in 407BC.
      1.2.6. The traditional view puts his return at about 429 BC.
   1.3. There is, however a possible difficulty with the traditional view.
      1.3.1. It is that Ezra and Nehemiah are presented as contemporaries earlier in the book.
      1.3.2. Ezra is present at the events recorded in Nehemiah 8.9; Nehemiah 10.1; and Nehemiah 12.36.
      1.3.3. The accounts in Ezra 8-10 and Nehemiah 8-10 may record the same event.
      1.3.4. If this is correct, it seems to place Nehemiah in Jerusalem in 458 BC, much earlier than the traditional date.
   1.4. One writer, Leslie McFail[54], has suggested a means of reconciling these apparent discrepancies with an alternate view of the dates for Nehemiah's two visits to Jerusalem. His suggestion is the following:
      1.4.1. Nehemiah's first visit to Jerusalem as governor was from 465 BC to 454 BC.
         1.4.1.1. This is from the 20th to the 32nd year of Artaxerxes, per Nehemiah 5.14. However, this is a date range based on the *dynastic* reckoning of the reign of Artaxerxes, rather than on his sole reign.
         1.4.1.2. The dynastic reckoning is dated from the beginning of *Xerxes'* reign. The reigns of Xerxes and his son, Artaxerxes, are counted as one reign, and the years are numbered from the start of the dynastic reign. The 20th and 32nd years of that dynasty fall within the reign of Artaxerxes.
      1.4.2. Ezra arrived in Jerusalem in the 7th year of Artaxerxes, 458 BC (Ezra 7.7). This date is based on the *sole*-reign reckoning of Artaxerxes.
      1.4.3. In 454 BC Nehemiah's twelve-year governorship ended and he returned to Susa.
      1.4.4. Nehemiah was absent from Jerusalem for eight years (453-445). It was during this absence that Eliashib gave permission to Tobiah to occupy some of the temple storerooms.

[54] Leslie McFall, "Was Nehemiah Contemporary with Ezra in 458 B.C.?" *Westminster Theological Journal*, Vol. 53, No. 2., Fall 1991, pp 243-293.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

1.4.5. Nehemiah's request in Nehemiah 2.6 refers to the event mentioned in Nehemiah 13.6, 7. Nehemiah's second visit occurred in 445/444 BC, the 20th year of Artaxerxes according to the *sole*-reign reckoning.
1.4.6. Nehemiah's second visit began in 445/444 BC and lasted about a year, during which he guided the rebuilding of the wall.
1.4.7. Nehemiah, in Nehemiah 5.14-18, is reflecting back on events from his first visit to Jerusalem.
1.4.8. There are potential problems with this view, such as:
1.4.8.1. Hanani's news about the condition of the walls and the city (Neh 1.1-4) and Nehemiah's examination of the walls (Neh 2.11-15) seem to indicate that Nehemiah was not aware of their condition. Yet, if he had been governor for 12 years previously, he would have known about their condition.
1.4.8.2. Not only does it put the events of Nehemiah 5.14-18 into a reflection back to the first visit, but also apparently (according to McFall) also places chapters 8-10 in the previous period (458) and does not associate them with the re-building of the wall.
1.4.8.3. This means that chapters 8-10 and possibly chapter 11 don't refer to the time after the completion of the wall and before the dedication (Neh 12.27-43).
1.4.8.4. It doesn't totally reconcile the matter of Nehemiah and Ezra being contemporaries since Ezra appears to have been at the dedication of the wall (Neh 12.36) about 13 years later than the events in Neh 8-10 are supposed to have occurred.
1.4.8.5. This proposal distorts the natural flow of text that appears to be present in Nehemiah 8.1 through Nehemiah 12.47.

1.5. The events of Nehemiah 13.1-31 occurred then, either in 445/444 BC or around 430 BC. We will default to using the traditional dates; i.e., that Nehemiah 13.1-31 occurred sometime after 433 BC.

2. What does 'on that day' mean? What day was it? (1)
2.1. If we only read the first verse of the chapter we might conclude that he is speaking of one of the days mentioned in the previous chapter (e.g., Neh 12.27-43 the day of the dedication of the wall; Neh 12.44 the day men were appointed to be responsible for the storerooms of the Temple).
2.2. What in this chapter (13) seems to indicate that he is *not* speaking of either of those days.
2.2.1. He refers to events that occurred before the day spoken of in verse 1 (4).
2.2.2. He refers to an extended period when he was out of Judah (6, 7).
2.2.3. He refers to events that occurred before the day spoken of in verse 1 (23).
2.3. The 'day' he is referring to must mean something else.
2.3.1. It may have been the anniversary commemoration of the day of dedication, some years later.
2.3.2. This would be similar to our saying on Victoria's Birthday (Victoria Day) or on Washington's Birthday. We don't mean the actual day these individuals were born, but the day set apart for its commemoration.
2.3.3. We noted, when we looked at Nehemiah 12.27-43, that from that time, onward (even into our day), there was a festival commemorating the dedication of the wall. It is referred to in John 10.22 as the Feast of Dedication. We know it today as Hanukkah.
2.3.4. So, Nehemiah may be saying, in essence: "On Hanukkah".

Separation (Neh 13.1-3, 23-24)

1. What are the two situations in which Nehemiah exercises exclusions?
1.1. To ensure that the ceremonial holiness and separation laws are applied to Israel as a nation Nehemiah has the people separate from all of 'foreign descent' and he deals with those in mixed marriages.
1.2. We will examine these two cases and determine what general lessons for the NT Church can be derived from them.

2. What was read to the people that day that precipitated action on their part? (1, 2)
2.1. The Book of Moses.
2.2. What exactly was the book that was read?
2.2.1. It was probably the Covenant summary document; i.e., Deuteronomy.
2.2.2. However, it might have been the Pentateuch, in general, that was being referred to by the term.
2.2.3. The reference to the Ammonites and Moabites in Nehemiah 13.1 suggests that it was, probably, Deuteronomy (Dt 23.3-5) that was being read.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

2.2.3.1. The Ammonites and Moabites had resisted Israel's march to Canaan. Also, the Moabites had hired Balaam to curse Israel (Num 22-25).
2.2.3.2. As a result of their antagonism toward Israel, they were to be excluded from participation in Israel's worship.

2.3. When we looked at Nehemiah 8.3 and Nehemiah 9.3 we considered the importance of reading of the word aloud.
2.3.1. The public reading of the Word of God was required (Dt 31.10-13; Joshua 8.32-35).
2.3.2. The public reading of the Word of God has an effect on the people (compare, Neh 8.1-6, 13-17; Neh 9.3; Neh 13.3) since it brings to their attention God's law and their sin.
2.3.3. Public reading of the word of God should be a regular practice of the Church (1 Tim 4.13).
2.3.4. [Refer to the notes on Nehemiah 8.3 and Nehemiah 9.3 for more information.]:

3. As a result of reading the instruction in Deuteronomy, what did the people do? (3)
3.1. Being reminded of what God's word required, the people acted.
3.1.1. Even though they had fallen into sin—thus the requirement for Nehemiah to execute the reforms described in chapter 13—they were still sensitive to God's requirements in his Word.
3.2. They excluded/separated all of 'foreign descent' (mixed multitude—a heterogeneous body attached to a people) from Israel.

4. What does it mean that they 'excluded' or 'separated'?
4.1. Foreigners (the mixed multitude) may have wanted to come to the Temple but were excluded from entering with the Jews. If, so they would no longer be permitted to appear in the main court of the Temple where the Jewish males worshipped. Compare this with Nehemiah 9.1, 2. At the covenant enactment, the Jews may actually have moved to a separate area for the worship.
4.1.1. Gentiles were continually being attracted to Judaism (not in the form practiced today, but in its OT, Biblical form) from the Exodus onward because it had the truth of God in the Scriptures, true promises of hope, and strong moral standards. These Gentiles could participate in Synagogue worship and some parts of the ceremonial system, but not all (e.g., Passover), without being circumcised. From the time of Nehemiah onward more and more Gentiles were being attracted to Judaism, but all were not willing to be circumcised.
4.1.2. This may be the time when the Court of the Gentiles first originated.
4.1.2.1. In the temple of Solomon there appear to have been two courts (1 Ki 6.36 with 7.12; 2 Ki 21.5; 2 Ki 23.12; 2 Chron 4.9; 2 Chron 33.5; Is 62.9).
4.1.2.2. There may have been three courts in the post-exilic Temple (note v 7; Zech 3.7 refers to the courts)
4.1.2.3. There appear to have been three different courts in the Temple at the time of Jesus: Gentiles, women, inner (Mt 21.12-13; Rev 11.2 refer to the Court of the Gentiles).
4.1.2.4. It may be that the third, outer, court was added to the Temple to accommodate the proselytes who lived in the area of Jerusalem, but had not become part of the nation through circumcision.
4.1.2.5. The outer court was not completely finished until 64 AD and then the temple was destroyed in 70 AD. It may be that God destroyed the temple after the Jews had completed their symbolic separation from the Gentiles, to breakdown the wall of separation between Jew and Gentile (Eph 2.11-18).
4.2. It likely included a prohibition on intermarriage (see, below on 23-30).
4.3. It may have included separation from participation in social activities (e.g., inviting a gentile home for dinner) and civil activities (e.g., participation in the government of Jerusalem/Judah).
4.4. It probably did not include separation from participation in commercial activities.
4.5. The people probably isolated themselves from the world of foreigners around them except for informal contact with buyers, sellers, and traders.

5. Who was excluded?
5.1. The account in Nehemiah says 'all' the mixed multitude/those of foreign descent.
5.2. This included all those born in the nations around them, or born within the bounds of 'Israel' (i.e., those who went into captivity with them, those who aligned themselves with them during the captivity, and those who had become associated with them during the ~100 years since the return from captivity).
5.3. This seems to indicate that the exclusion applied more broadly than just to those who were descended from the Ammonites and Moabites.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

5.4. Why would they have excluded foreigners more broadly than the Law about exclusion from the assembly required?
5.4.1. They may have understood the prohibition against the Ammonites and Moabites to be representative, and applied it the way Ezra had earlier (Ezra 9.1).
5.4.2. The Law of Separation extended beyond the Ammonites and Moabites and included all the nations in Canaan and other nations around Canaan (Ex 34.12-16; Dt 7.1-4; Ezk 44.6-9).
5.4.3. Even if the law did not specifically refer to a particular nation, they may have extended the boundary on prohibitions as a means of national protection. For example, if one has an addiction to alcohol, it is better to remove all alcohol and drink none, rather than to try to drink in moderation and battle temptation.

6. What lessons can we derive from the exclusion exercised at the reading of the Law?
6.1. We need to recall that the primary motivation behind the separation was spiritual—to identify those who were visibly under the covenant *vs* those who were outside of the covenant.
6.2. The emphasis in the OT was not based on ethnic or racial differences, although it may have been most visibly enacted that way. In general, any person from a foreign nation who joined the covenant community through observance of the primary covenant sign (circumcision) was permitted to partake of all the means of grace, regardless of national or ethnic background.
6.3. If the exclusion was a separation in the assembly at the time of worship (e.g., into the court of the Gentiles), it may be that The NT Church is provided with a model/justification for the separation between those who are part of the covenant community and those who are not.
6.3.1. In the NT Church separation is shown by the separation between those who may partake of the Sacraments. Only professing believers may have their children baptized, and only professing believers may partake of the Lord's Supper.
6.3.2. Unbelievers are invited to participate in the general assembly of the church but not in the specific covenantal ordinances.
6.3.3. The separation may also be reinforced by the distinction created during Church discipline when individuals are excluded from the Sacraments and participation in the offices of the Church.
6.3.4. Paul makes it clear that the separation identified in Scripture is intended to make distinctions within the assembly (1 Cor 5.9-11).

7. What else did Nehemiah discover that concerned him on his return from the Persian capital? (23-24)
7.1. Men of Judah had intermarried with the nations around them.
7.2. What specific nations are mentioned? Ashdod (a Philistine city-state), Ammon, and Moab.

8. What connection is there between the problem of inter-marriage (23) and the problem of inclusion in the assembly (3)?
8.1. People from two nations, Ammon and Moab, connect the two problems.

9. What was the problem?
9.1. Not only had the Jews permitted people from the excluded nations to be involved in the worship in the part of the Temple reserved for the covenant community, they had intermarried with them against the explicit command of God (Dt 7.1-4; 1 Ki 11.1-2 [notice that Ammonites are Moabites named specifically]).
9.1.1. There does not appear to be a specific exclusion against marrying a Philistine. However, the Jews understood that they were not to intermarry with the Philistines (Judges 14.1-4) and the Philistines remained enemies of the Jews until they ceased to exist as a distinct people (Amos 1.8; Zech 9.6).
9.1.2. Were there any exceptions?
9.1.2.1. There were exceptions for intermarriage with a foreign enemy. It is when the person is a captive and has no ability to exercise his/her former religious practices (Num 12.1; Dt 21.10-13; 2 Sam 3.3; Mt 1.5).
9.1.2.2. In addition, we find examples in the OT where even inclusion of an Ammonite and Moabite in Israel is permitted/foreseen (Josh 6.25; Ruth 4.10; Is 56.6, 7)
9.1.2.3. What do the exceptions teach us?
9.1.2.3.1. They make it clear that the reason for separation was the protection of religious purity, not some form of xenophobia or ethnocentrism.
9.1.2.3.2. The protection provided by the law was with respect to a proximate occasion for sin (e.g., 1 Ki 11.1-4).

© James R. Hughes, 2006

9.2. Half of the children of these inter-marriages could not speak the language of Judah. Note the Hebrew says 'speak of Judah'. The account does not indicate what language this was (Hebrew or Aramaic). Why would this have concerned Nehemiah?
9.2.1. Language is, to a large extent, both a barrier and a binder.
9.2.1.1. It was language differentiation that God used to separate humankind at the tower of Babel (Gen 11.1-9), not another factor such as skin colour.
9.2.1.2. Consider how important language is to some people, for example, Francophones or Gales who create associations around language.
9.2.1.3. Those who speak a particular language tend to congregate together.
9.2.1.4. The Jews recognized foreigners by their languages (Judges 12.6; Ps 114.1; Is 33.19; Ezk 3.5-6).
9.2.2. It would not be simple to integrate these children into the worship of Israel. For example, they would not have been able to understand the public reading of the Law and the teaching provided by the Levites.
9.2.3. They would have been easily led astray to follow pagan gods (Ex 34.11-16; Dt 7.1-4; Josh 23.12, 13).
9.2.4. Children learn much from their mothers. If the mother does not follow the husband's religion, it is likely that the children will follow their mother rather than their father. In addition, corrupt human nature will incline after that which is evil. In this case the mothers were not followers of God and the children would be led astray.

10. What lesson(s) can we take from Nehemiah's actions?
10.1. The Church is to be purified of those who are blatant in their sin and disregard for obedience to the God's Law (Eccl 9.18; Mt 18.15-20 [17]; 1 Cor 5.1-13).
10.2. Pastoral leadership in the Church must be concerned that families in their congregations are instructed and disciplined to work properly as family units (e.g., understanding Biblical roles and responsibilities).
10.3. Leaders in the civil arena must also be concerned for the wellbeing of families. They must resist attacks on the proper understanding of marriage and family and combat policies and laws that undermine families such as: easy divorce, unjust taxation levels that discourage marriage, provision of day-care services that breakdown parental care, same sex 'marriage', etc.

11. What is the application of this prohibition with respect to inter-marriage in the Church today?
11.1. We need to remind each generation of the importance of Christians marrying only Christians (2 Cor 6.14-18; 1 Cor 7.39).
11.1.1. Every generation of young people doesn't see why this is so important and what the big deal is. Sadly, many Christian young people become burdened by difficult marriages or, worse, are led into great sin.
11.1.2. It is clear that intermarriage with a pagan was treated as a serious sin (Ezra 10.19; Neh 13.27).
11.1.3. The reason is the same as in the OT: it is hard to avoid corruption and to live a pure life when Christians co-habit with pagans (1 Cor 15.33).
11.2. In the OT economy, the prohibition on intermarriage was linguistically/nationality based. That would be inappropriate in the NT context where there is neither Jew nor Greek in Christ (Gal 3.28; Rev 7.9).

Scouring (Neh 13.4-9)

1. Who was Eliashib?
1.1. He was the head of a Levite family (Neh 12.22, 23).
1.2. He is referenced in Nehemiah 3.1 as high priest.
1.3. His linage is given in Nehemiah 12.10, 11.
1.4. He may have had been supportive of the work of Ezra and Nehemiah when it had begun (Ezra 10.6; Neh 3.1, 20, 21).

2. What had Eliashib done that was not right?
2.1. He had formed an alliance ('close association') of some kind with Tobiah. Why was this wrong?
2.1.1. Tobiah was an Ammonite (Neh 2.10, 19; Neh 4.3) and the Jews were prohibited from making alliances with the non-Jews living in and near Canaan; particularly with Ammonites (Ex 34.12, 15; Dt 23.3, 6).

© James R. Hughes, 2006

2.1.2. Tobiah had been an enemy of Nehemiah, opposing the reconstruction of the wall (Neh 2.10-19; Neh 4.3, 7; Neh 6.1, 12, 17, 19).
2.1.3. Tobiah opposed God's work while making it appear that he was assisting it (Neh 6.17-19).
2.1.4. Those who were uncircumcised in heart (and flesh) were not to have a role in the Temple (Ezk 44.6-9). This indicates that the real problem is a problem of the heart. Circumcision, as a sign of the Covenant, was to be a sign of a repentant and believing heart. Where the sign was missing, the reality was likely missing also.

2.2. He had formed a family alliance with Sanballat, another of the named enemies of the Jews mentioned in the book of Nehemiah who had opposed Nehemiah's work of reconstruction (Neh 2.10, 19; Neh 4.1, 7; Neh 6.1-2, 12, 14).
2.2.1. One of his grandsons had married a daughter of Sanballat.
2.2.2. This inter-marriage was immoral. [Refer to our earlier consideration of this matter in reference to Neh 9.1-3, 23, 24).

2.3. He provided an 'apartment' to Tobiah—probably by consolidating some of the storage rooms in the Temple courts. Why was this wrong?
2.3.1. No foreigners were permitted inside the Temple; particularly not those from Ammon (Dt 23.3; 2 Chron 6.32).
2.3.2. It showed that he despised the work of the priests and Levites by giving up the storage area that was allocated for their provisions.

2.4. He was a spineless wimp.
2.4.1. It appears that he wasn't able to act on his own initiative as a positive leader of the community and was easily influenced by opportunities to gain prestige among those in the surrounding territories.
2.4.2. The fact that he provided the room to Tobiah, when Nehemiah wasn't around (v 6), seems to indicate that he knew what Nehemiah would have thought about his actions.

3. What did Nehemiah do with Tobiah's household goods?
3.1. He took dramatic action to clean up the Temple:
3.1.1. He threw out the belongings.
3.1.2. It was probably a surprise for Eliashib, when Nehemiah showed up again in Jerusalem and took action against the abuse of the Temple courts.
3.1.3. We can picture Tobiah, who was probably an old man at this time, standing by spluttering as his worldly belongings were being throw into the street or over the wall into the Kidron valley.
3.1.4. It should grieve all good civil magistrates when they see wickedness in the Church.

3.2. He had the room ceremonially purified and restocked.
3.3. What are Nehemiah's actions a pre-cursor of?
3.3.1. Jesus' cleansing the Temple (Mt 21.12-13), by overthrowing the tables of the moneychangers.
3.3.2. What contrasts do we see between Jesus' actions and Nehemiah's?
3.3.2.1. Jesus evicted Jewish moneychangers from the court that had been allocated to foreigners so that they could worship in the Temple. Nehemiah in contrast threw out a foreigner who had been invited in for money (prestige) reasons.
3.3.2.2. Jews blocked the way of Gentiles in Jesus' day for money but they invited them in for money in Nehemiah's day.
3.3.3. It is likely that Jesus was conscious of Nehemiah's cleansing of the Temple when he performed his own actions, especially in his reference to Isaiah 56.6, 7.
3.3.4. Jesus acted as a king-priest when he threw out the money Isaiah 56.6, 7-changers. He showed by his actions that he was a righteous civil leader, as was Nehemiah, but also a righteous high priest in contrast to Eliashib.
3.3.5. It may be that Jesus is signalling:
3.3.5.1. The pending replacement of the OT ceremonial system, and
3.3.5.2. The opening of the Church to ethnic Gentiles (they no longer needed to become Jews through circumcision) who are true believers.
3.3.5.3. Rather than usurping the temple courts as Tobiah had, true Gentile worshipers could come into the outer court in the Temple at the time of Jesus.

4. What lessons can we learn and apply from Nehemiah's expulsion of Tobiah?
4.1. The primary application seems to be in terms of maintaining the spiritual purity of the Church in the NT era.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

4.1.1. Leaders (elders) in the Church must be very vigilant to ensure that alliances aren't made with the world (Mt 7.15-23; Mt 13.25; Mt 24.5, 11, 24; Acts 20.28-31; 2 Pt 2.1-3)
4.1.2. Where syncretism occurs it must be purged (Rom 16.17, 18; 2 Thess 3.14; 2 Tim 3.5; Titus 3.10; 2 Jn 10; 2 Jn 11).

4.2. What role does the Civil Magistrate have in purifying the Church?
4.2.1. Nehemiah acted as the instrument of cleansing when the priests failed in their duty.
4.2.2. Should the 'prince' do the same today?
4.2.3. The original *Westminster Confession of Faith* states:
III. The civil magistrate may not assume to himself the administration of the Word and sacraments, or the power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven: yet he *hath authority, and it is his duty*, to take order, that unity and *peace be preserved in the Church, that the truth of God be kept pure and entire*; that *all blasphemies and heresies be suppressed, all corruptions and abuses in worship and discipline prevented or reformed*; and all *the ordinances of God duly settled, administered, and observed*. For the better effecting whereof, he hath power to call synods, to be present at them, and to provide, that whatsoever is transacted in them be according to the mind of God.[55] [Italics added.]
4.2.4. The American version has been changed:
Civil magistrates may not assume to themselves the administration of the Word and Sacraments; or the power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven; or, in the least, interfere in matters of faith. Yet, as nursing fathers, it is the duty of civil magistrates to protect the Church of our common Lord, without giving the preference to any denomination of Christians above the rest, in such a manner that all ecclesiastical persons whatever shall enjoy the full, free, and unquestioned liberty of discharging every part of their sacred functions, without violence or danger. And, as Jesus Christ hath appointed a regular government and discipline in his Church, no law of any commonwealth should interfere with, let, or hinder, the due exercise thereof, among the voluntary members of any denomination of Christians, according to their own profession of belief. It is the duty of civil magistrates to protect the person and good name of all their people, in such an effectual manner as that no person be suffered, either upon pretense of religion or infidelity, to offer any indignity, violence, abuse, or injury to any other person whatsoever: and to take order, that all religious and ecclesiastical assemblies be held without molestation or disturbance.
4.2.5. Would it be wrong, for example, for President Bush, who professes to be a Christian, to throw out the homosexual who was ordained, in Durham NH, to the office of Bishop in the Episcopal Church? The Episcopalians with their roots in Anglicanism should not object to the civil magistrate having a say in church matters.
4.2.6. Clearly, with the views that have swept our culture, and significantly infiltrated the Church (disestablishmentarianism, separation of church and state, separation of the Christian religion and state, a sweeping tolerance, an independent spirit, etc.) even to have a meaningful discussion about the role of the civil magistrate to effect cleansing of the Church is almost beyond our capability. It is hard for us to establish principles when the concept is so foreign to our mind-set.

Strategy (Neh 13.25-30)

1. What was Nehemiah's strategy for ensuring that the separation from the surrounding nations was complete? What steps did he take? (25-30)
1.1. He **pronounced** a rebuke against the men who had intermarried. (25)
1.2. He **punished** some by beating them and pulling out their hair. (25)
1.3. He made them **promise**, through an oath in God's name, that they would not permit their children to intermarry with foreigners. (25)
1.4. He gave them a history lesson as a **precedent**. (26)
1.5. He **pleaded** with them (27)
1.6. He **purged** by expelling a prominent person. (28, 29)
1.7. He **purified** the priests and Levites. (30)
1.8. He **prayed/prophesied**. (29)

Pronounced

He **pronounced** a rebuke against the men who had intermarried. (25)

[55] *Westminster Confession of Faith* Chapter 23 – Of the Civil Magistrate, 3.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

1. What was the form of his rebuke?
   1.1. We are not told exactly how he rebuked them, but based on a comparison with verses 11 and 17 we can determine that he probably:
      1.1.1. Denounced their sin and reminded them what sin of this nature deserved.
      1.1.2. Pronouncing a curse on them (Dt 27.22, 26; 1 Cor 16.22; Gal 1.8, 9).
         1.1.2.1. We don't understand the relationship of blessing and cursing today. To us they are just words.
         1.1.2.2. In the Biblical economy blessing and cursing were seen to be accompanied by the reality (Gen 4.11; Gen 12.3; Gen 27.29, 33; Num 22.6, 11, 12; Num 23.8; etc.).
         1.1.2.3. We should not lose sight of this reality. When the pastor pronounces a blessing/benediction at the end of the worship service it is neither superstitious nor a mere formality. He is really asking God to pour out blessing. God, in keeping with his promises, will bless his people.
      1.1.3. Reminded them of the judgment of God against those who continue in sin.
      1.1.4. Quoted scripture (e.g., Dt 7.3) to confirm that it was not his law, but God's.

2. What lesson can we derive from Nehemiah's action?
   2.1. Sin is to be denounced for what it is—sin.
      2.1.1. Both the State and the Church today are too reticent to act quickly and firmly against sin.
      2.1.2. Sin has been excised from popular vocabulary along with the Ten Commandments.
      2.1.3. We see adulterers and practicing homosexuals holding office in some sections of the Church. Studies show that there does not seem to be much difference between the life-style (e.g., pre-marital sex, divorce, adultery) of those who claim to be Christians and that of the world at large.

3. Does Nehemiah's action mean that the civil magistrate has responsibility over the family?
   3.1. Nehemiah's example does not give the civil magistrate the right to define policies for the proper disposal of families, nor to usurp the role of the family (e.g., through the provision of day care services or schooling).
   3.2. Rather, Nehemiah's example shows that the civil magistrate is responsible for ensuring that people obey God's Word. [See: *Appendix G – The God-Ordained Role for Governmen*t, for more on the role of the civil magistrate with respect to enforcing God's law.]

Punished

He **punished** some by beating them and pulling out their hair. (25)

1. How did he beat some of them?
   1.1. He may have used a stave, cane, lash or whip.
   1.2. He probably did not go to the extent of administering 39 lashes (Dt 25.2, 3; 2 Cor 11.24).

2. Why did he pull out the hair of some of them?
   2.1. He probably plucked hair from their beards.
   2.2. Pulling out one's own hair seems to have been a sign of anguish and humility (Ezra 9.3; Jer 7.29; Jer 48.37; Ezk 7.18; Micah 1.16).
   2.3. Removing the hair of someone was a form of humiliation (2 Sam 10.4, 5; Is 50.6).

3. Why did he punish 'some'?
   3.1. He may have picked some who appeared more obstinate and less repentant.
   3.2. He may have made an example of these—on a representative basis (e.g., heads of clans or families).
   3.3. His point wasn't so much to use corporal punishment *per se*, but to encourage them to desist from intermarriage; bring them to reckon with God's displeasure; and call them to a true understanding of the need for repentance.

4. Were these actions too violent and inappropriate?
   4.1. Those who accuse Nehemiah of being violent or harsh have been influenced by our humanistic society which is squeamish about almost every form of punishment:
      4.1.1. Capital punishment has been outlawed.
      4.1.2. Corporal punishment has been removed from schools.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

4.1.3. Moves are underway to outlaw parents exercising physical discipline (e.g., spanking) on their children. The UN's *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (adopted by the General Assembly, 20 November 1989), Article 19, states: "States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from *all forms of physical or mental violence*, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, *while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child*."

4.1.4. Youth criminal 'justice' systems exempt 'children' from punishment.

4.2. Our society does not want punishment for crimes. It, rather, wants correction and rehabilitation.

4.2.1. The connection between sin/crime, guilt, and just deserts/punishment has been severely undermined in modern 'liberal democracies'.

4.2.2. Consider the Canadian department of Correctional Services as an example:

4.2.2.1. The institution for long-term punishment is called an institution of 'corrective action' and a 'service'. It is not called the 'Department of Punishment for Crime'.

4.2.2.2. Among its core values we find the following statements:

4.2.2.2.1. We respect the dignity of individuals, the rights of all members of society, and the potential for human growth and development.

4.2.2.2.2. We recognize that the offender has the potential to live as a law-abiding citizen.

4.2.2.2.3. We believe that our strength and our major resource in achieving our objectives is our staff and that human relationships are the cornerstone of our endeavour.

4.2.2.3. On its web site there is not a single reference to just punishment for crime.

4.2.3. The idea of 'justice' today is no longer to exact punishment for crimes but rather to prevent, reform, and rehabilitate.

4.2.4. Why do the people in our society want punishment banished? Because it reminds them of:

4.2.4.1. God's standards. For there to be punishment there has to be laws that can be broken. For there to be laws, there has to be moral standards. For there to be moral standards, there must be absolutes. Men know that ultimately all law is derived from God's law and they do not want it (Rom 7.12, 13; James 2.10, 11).

4.2.4.2. God's displeasure against sin (Dt 9.7; Prov 15.9; Jer 44.4).

4.2.4.3. The coming judgment in which all sin will be, and must be, punished (Rom 2.5-11; 2 Cor 5.10; Rev 20.12-15).

4.3. Nehemiah was concerned that God's judgment would fall again on Judah. He knew God would not tolerate this sin so he took it seriously.

4.3.1. We (Christians included) in materialistic NA are almost desensitized to the idea that God will punish sin. If we think about it at all we put it off in the distant future (e.g., the Day of Judgment) and assume that we can live lives of disobedience without suffering any consequences.

4.3.2. Our culture is totally deceived about the possibility of judgment and becomes offended if it is suggested that a war or disease (e.g., AIDS) are God's messengers to call the society/nation to repentance. The attitude of just about everyone is that portrayed by Peter in 2 Peter 3.3-7.

4.3.3. Our civil magistrates are very far from acknowledging their responsibility and accountability to God (Ps 2.1-3, 10-12; Rom 13.1-5). They couldn't imagine calling for a national day of repentance, as did Nehemiah (chapter 8), or establishing God's laws as the standard for the nation. While the ACLU would be distressed, Abraham Lincoln understood the need for governmental accountability to God:

4.3.3.1. Senator James Harlan of Iowa introduced a Resolution in the Senate on March 2, 1863. asking President Lincoln to proclaim a national day of prayer and fasting. The Resolution was adopted on March 3, and signed by Lincoln on March 30, one month before the fast day was observed. The words (excerpted) to the proclamation are:

"Whereas, the Senate of the United States, devoutly recognizing the Supreme Authority and just Government of Almighty God, in all the affairs of men and of nations, has, by a resolution, requested the President to designate and set apart a day for National prayer and humiliation.

And whereas it is the duty of nations as well as of men, to own their dependence upon the overruling power of God, to confess their sins and transgressions, in humble sorrow, yet with assured hope that genuine repentance will lead to mercy and pardon; and to

© James R. Hughes, 2006

> recognize the sublime truth, announced in the Holy Scriptures and proven by all history, that those nations only are blessed whose God is the Lord.
> And, insomuch as we know that, by His divine law, nations like individuals are subjected to punishments and chastisements in this world, may we not justly fear that the awful calamity of civil war, which now desolates the land, may be but a punishment, inflicted upon us, for our presumptuous sins, to the needful end of our national reformation as a whole People? … Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God that made us!
> It behooves us then, to humble ourselves before the offended Power, to confess our national sins, and to pray for clemency and forgiveness.
> … I do, by this my proclamation, designate and set apart Thursday, the 30th. day of April, 1863, as a day of national humiliation, fasting and prayer. And I do hereby request all the People to abstain, on that day, from their ordinary secular pursuits, and to unite, at their several places of public worship and their respective homes, in keeping the day holy to the Lord, and devoted to the humble discharge of the religious duties proper to that solemn occasion."[56]

4.4. Nehemiah did nothing that was inconsistent with God's law and the provision for punishment consistent with the law.
  4.4.1. Nehemiah did nothing more than what was provided for in the Law. He may have been even more lenient than the Law permitted (e.g., he may have punished only the most recalcitrant).
  4.4.2. To accuse Nehemiah of inappropriate action is to accuse God of enacting laws and punishments that are inappropriate.
  4.4.3. If Nehemiah's actions were inappropriate, so then were Jesus' (Jn 2.14-16). To accuse Jesus of doing anything inappropriate is blasphemy.
4.5. By what 'standard' are these actions judged as violent, inappropriate, or harsh?
  4.5.1. What human standard is holy or pure? (Ezk 20.23-25)
  4.5.2. God's standards are holy and pure! (Neh 9.13; Ps 119.39; Rom 7.12, 6)

5. How do the actions of Nehemiah and Ezra compare? (Compare: Ezra 10.1-17; Neh 13.23-27.)
  5.1. In both cases, Ezra and Nehemiah, treated the intermarriage as a serious sin (Ezra 10.19; Neh 13.27).
  5.2. Ezra dissolved the marriages.
  5.3. Nehemiah punished those who had allowed or participated in the intermarriages.
  5.4. Nehemiah appears not to have dissolved the marriages.

6. How can we explain the difference in their actions?
  6.1. Ezra as a priest and scribe may have possessed competent authority in this matter that Nehemiah did not.
  6.2. Ezra may have been dead by the time Nehemiah returned and the events of Nehemiah 13.1-31 are being transacted.
  6.3. We may be seeing differences in interpretation of how to apply God's Law and associated punishments.
  6.4. Often the Bible reports historical events without providing commentary.
  6.5. There may be (and probably are) other unrecorded factors that explain the variations.
  6.6. It is inappropriate to conclude that one man was harsh or overly strict and the other not.
    6.6.1. For example some would accuse Nehemiah of being harsh in his demands on the merchants with respect to the observance of the Sabbath, but then they would have to say he was mild in comparison to Ezra with respect to how he dealt with the sin of intermarriage.
    6.6.2. Both were godly men acting on principle.
  6.7. This variation does teach us that we must be careful not to become overly dogmatic about the creation of laws and the administration of punishment.
    6.7.1. Wisdom, discretion, thought, and careful comparison of Scriptural principles and examples are required.

7. What kind of punishment for intermarriage of a Christian (a professing believer) with an unbeliever is appropriate in NT context?
  7.1. The discussion leads to the question of its applicability in the Church and State today.
  7.2. Assumptions based on scripture:

[56] showcase.netins.net/web/creative/lincoln/speeches/fast.htm.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

7.2.1. Intermarriage between a believer and an unbeliever is wrong (2 Cor 6.14-18; 1 Cor 7.39).
7.2.2. The 'sword' is not given to the Church; it belongs to the Civil Magistrate (Rom 13.1-5).
7.2.3. It would be inappropriate for the Civil Magistrate to judge the heart of couples planning to marry. Elected political officials or government appointees are not the right ones to examine a person's profession of faith.
7.2.4. The 'keys' are given to the Church (Mt 16.18, 19). This places the administration of the rights and privileges of the Church in the hands of the ruling elders (1 Tim 5.17; 1 Thess 5.12, 13).

7.3. Therefore if any punishment (discipline) is to be administered, it should be done pastorally by the elders of the congregation.

7.4. Should elders discipline a couple that marry where one of the individuals is a believer and the other is not?
7.4.1. A pastor should not agree to perform a marriage if one party is not a professed believer and the other is. So the situation should not occur in the first place.
7.4.2. There are 'what ifs' that need to be considered:
7.4.2.1. What if the girl is pregnant? Do Exodus 22.16, 17; Deuteronomy 22.28-29 have any relevance? [Discuss.]
7.4.2.2. What if the unbelieving party claims to be a Christian but the elders think it was a profession of convenience? [Discuss.]

7.5. Assuming that the professing (i.e., claiming to be a Christian) party decides to go ahead with the marriage (e.g., by asking someone else to marry them), what kind of punishment would be appropriate?
7.5.1. It seems that a person's ignoring God's commands in this area and going ahead with the marriage would provide grounds for censure, possibly leading to excommunication, if there was no true repentance. How should this true repentance be shown? [Discuss.]
7.5.2. How would you respond if someone who was disciplined in this area said, "Why pick on me, when other sins committed by Christians are not being dealt with (e.g., breaking the Sabbath – also a serious matter addressed in this chapter)?" [Discuss.]
7.5.2.1. Are we consistent in discipline in the Church?
7.5.2.2. Are there mitigating circumstances?

7.6. Would it be Pastorally prudent to force the separation of the married couple? Does 1 Corinthians 7.12-16 have any relevance? [Discuss.]

7.7. It may be because of the variation between the actions of Ezra and Nehemiah with respect to intermarriage with pagans that the Holy Spirit, through Paul, provides us with direction in the NT on God's displeasure with intermarriage between a believer and an unbeliever.

Promise

He made them **promise**, through an oath in God's name, that they would not permit their children to intermarry with foreigners. (25)

1. What had the people done a decade, or so, before the events recorded in Nehemiah 13.1-31? (Neh 10.30)
1.1. The people of Judah had *promised* in writing, as part of the Covenant renewal ceremony that they would not intermarry with pagan people.
1.2. Many of the people who renewed the Covenant would have either been part of, or witnesses of, the painful separation that Ezra had required to cleanse the population of foreign wives around 458 BC (Ezra 10.1-44). Here in 432 BC, about 26 years later, they are dealing with the matter of intermarriage for a third time.
1.3. One would think that a sensible person would not have wanted to go through such a painful process again, or allow his family to go through it, no matter how tempting it might have been to marry into the families of the nobles or aristocracy around them.
1.4. [See *Appendix D – Lawful Oaths and Vows*, for more detail on the subject of oath taking.]

2. What does their behaviour tell us about human nature?
2.1. Many people in the Covenant Community (the Church) don't take God's laws seriously.
2.2. Many people don't take their oaths seriously.
2.3. It doesn't take long for men to forget God's requirements/laws/prohibitions and the painful consequences that can follow from sinning.
2.4. The 'pleasures of sin' for the moment have great allure and must be resisted strongly.

3. What lessons can we derive from Nehemiah's action?

© James R. Hughes, 2006

3.1. In spite of human failings with respect to people keeping their lawful oaths, we are still to place upon them the requirement to enact certain promises under oath. Even because of the continuous presence of sin, we must not give up doing what is right. We must not give up in disappointment.
3.2. His actions and requirements reinforce the importance of using specific conditions (covenants) in particular circumstances to reinforce the obligation and increase the guilt of a delinquent party. This means that a delinquent party sins against knowledge and a specific promise and is more culpable.
3.2.1. What are some of the situations that warrant special conditions? An oath of office or service (military, judicial), marriage, membership in the Church, baptism, etc.
3.2.2. The one swearing the oath cannot act contrary to obligation without sinning against knowledge.
3.3. This example of Nehemiah's reinforcement of an obligation has applicability to those who argue that it doesn't make much sense to enact some laws because they are unenforceable (e.g., against sodomy in private or smoking marijuana). If an action can be demonstrably proven contrary to God's Law then it falls within the realm of the law of the civil magistrate. The point of the law is not only to stop a particular behaviour (which it may not always accomplish), but also to reinforce culpability (i.e., hold us accountable and guilty).

Precedent

He gave them a history lesson as a **precedent**. (26)

1. What historical precedent does he use?
1.1. Solomon's love of foreign women (1 Ki 11.1-8).
1.2. Nehemiah had given them reasons why their actions were wrong:
1.2.1. Biblically prohibited
1.2.2. Broken Covenantal vows
1.2.3. Practical/pragmatic consequences of having children who couldn't speak the common language.
1.3. He then turned to historical precedent to show them the potential consequences of their actions.
1.4. What were the potential consequences of failing to heed this example?
1.4.1. Being led into the sin of syncretism. What are examples that tempt Christians today? [Discuss.]
1.4.2. Being led into the sin of unbelief. What are examples that tempt Christians today? [Discuss.]
1.5. What are examples of other history lessons used in the Bible? [Discuss.]
1.5.1. Warnings against rebellion (1 Cor 10.1-12).
1.5.2. Warning against unbelief (Heb 3.7-19).
1.5.3. Examples of faithfulness (Heb 11.1-40).

2. What is the warning of this history lesson?
2.1. We cannot assume that we are immune from temptations of intermarriage with an unbeliever.
2.1.1. Even someone who is as loved by God, as Solomon was, could not avoid the sins that result form intermarriage.
2.1.2. Even someone who was very intelligent, as Solomon was, could not avoid the sin.
2.1.3. Therefore, we cannot hope to be the exception to the rule that the desire to undertake intermarriage with an unbeliever will not affect us.
2.2. We must be careful that we don't think we are such capable saints that we cannot fall into a particular sin (Prov 16.18; 1 Cor 10.12).
2.3. We should learn the importance of respecting historical precedent. Our society downplays the importance of history:
2.3.1. The words of Henry Ford have become the mantra of our day: "History is more or less bunk. It's tradition. We don't want tradition. We want to live in the present and the only history that is worth a tinker's damn is the history we made today."[57]
2.3.2. The serious meat of analysis (cause and effect) of the core events and principles that founded Western civilization are no longer addressed and taught because it is believed that we really can't learn anything from history, and certainly not a history that is based on religious, and specifically Biblical, principles.
2.3.3. This view has been fostered by the socialistic, materialistic, atheistic agenda of the intellectual political and academic establishment that does not want us to know or understand history because an analysis of history proves their position to be faulty. Their formula for 'history' consists of:

[57] Henry Ford (1863 - 1947), Interview in *Chicago Tribune*, May 25th, 1916.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

2.3.3.1. Revisionism from a modern 'politically correct' perspective that removes the role and motivation of the true religion and disparages DWMs (dead white males).
2.3.3.2. A diet of insubstantial and disconnected vignettes that do not respect the progress of history under the providence of God.
2.3.3.3. An emphasis on the existential moment typified by the latest fashion statement, or the hottest teen idol.
2.3.3.4. George Orwell's Ministry of Truth would be proud.

2.3.4. As a result, young people today rarely receive an education that provides a meaningful perspective on history. This is shown by the following example from a *New York Post* article: 'Somebody get Nicolas Cage's new wife, Alice, an American history book—and quick! Spies at the L.A. premiere of "National Treasure" last week said Alice, 20, seemed befuddled when someone talked to her about the Declaration of Independence. "She looked at them and said, 'What is the Declaration of Independence?'" our witness relates—an account confirmed by another attendee. Cage, 40, quickly came to the rescue and said, "I'm sorry—please don't ask my wife any history questions." . . . Annett Wolff, Cage's representative, said: "I am sure Alice knows about the Declaration of Independence and they could not be more in love or happy."'[58]

2.3.5. Contrast the post-modernist view of history with the following statements about the study of history:
2.3.5.1. "Hegel was right when he said that we learn from history that man can never learn anything from history." (George Bernard Shaw, 1856-1950).
2.3.5.2. "A generation which ignores history has no past and no future." (Robert Heinlein, 1907-1988, *The Notebooks of Lazarus Long*).
2.3.5.3. History is the witness that testifies to the passing of time; it illumines reality, vitalizes memory, provides guidance in daily life and brings us tidings of antiquity. (Cicero, 106 BC - 43 BC, *Pro Publio Sestio*)
2.3.5.4. "History is philosophy teaching by example, and also warning; its two eyes are geography and chronology." (James A. Garfield, 1831-1881)
2.3.5.5. "History is a voice forever sounding across the centuries the laws of right and wrong. Opinions alter, manners change, creeds rise and fall, but the moral law is written on the tablets of eternity." (James A. Froude, novelist and historian, 1818-1894)

2.3.6. What should be our response? [Discuss.]

Pleaded

He **pleaded** with them (27)

1. How did he plead with them?
   1.1. He charged them to apply what they knew.
   1.2. He basically said: "You know what is required and the consequences of disobedience, so why are you not following what you know is right?"
   1.3. We have fuller instruction (in God's complete revelation) than did the people of Nehemiah's day. The obligations on us to obey are therefore more demanding (James 4.17; Jn 9.41; Jn 13.17; Jn 15.22; Rom 1.20, 21, 32).

Purged

He **purged** by expelling a prominent person. (28, 29)

1. Who did he drive away?
   1.1. "One of the sons of Joiada son of Eliashib the high priest" who was the son-in-law of Sanballat; i.e., Eliashib's grandson had married Sanballat's daughter.

2. Why does Nehemiah single out this action?
   2.1. Sanballat, probably a governor of Samaria, had opposed Nehemiah's work of reconstruction (Neh 2.10, 19; Neh 4.1, 7; Neh 6.1-2, 5, 12, 14) and was an avowed enemy of the Jews.
   2.2. Priests were required to follow stricter rules about marriage (Lev 21.13-15; Ezk 44.22 [Israel *vs* Levi]).
   2.3. A priest who had married a foreigner was a bad example for the people.
   2.4. A priest who had married a foreigner defiled the office and the sanctuary (29).

[58] James Taranto, "Best of the Web", *Wall Street Journal*, Opinion Journal, Friday, November 26, 2004 1:29 p.m. EST.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

2.5. A leader among the people showed that he was a traitor, not a 'peace-maker', if he married a daughter of their sworn enemy.

3. What did Nehemiah accomplish by his action?
   3.1. He sent a strong message about sin.
   3.2. He also made it clear that when it comes to God's law, even 'important' people aren't exempt from obedience.
   3.3. His purging may not have driven home the lesson to all the priesthood, as Josephus tells of a similar, later, incident with another Sanballat and a great-grandson of Eliashib (the brother of Jaddua [Neh 12.10, 11]): "Now when John had departed this life, his son Jaddua succeeded in the high priesthood. He had a brother, whose name was Manasseh. Now there was one Sanballat, who was sent by Darius, the last king [of Persia], into Samaria. He was a Cutheam by birth; of which stock were the Samaritans also. This man knew that the city Jerusalem was a famous city, and that their kings had given a great deal of trouble to the Assyrians, and the people of Celesyria; so that he willingly gave his daughter, whose name was Nicaso, in marriage to Manasseh, as thinking this alliance by marriage would be a pledge and security that the nation of the Jews should continue their good-will to him."[59]
   3.4. In God's grace, the Jewish elders, as a whole, however, knew that this kind of intermarriage was wrong: "But the elders of Jerusalem being very uneasy that the brother of Jaddua the high priest, though married to a foreigner, should be a partner with him in the high priesthood, quarreled with him; for they esteemed this man's marriage a step to such as should be desirous of transgressing about the marriage of [strange] wives, and that this would be the beginning of a mutual society with foreigners, although the offense of some about marriages, and their having married wives that were not of their own country, had been an occasion of their former captivity, and of the miseries they then underwent; so they commanded Manasseh to divorce his wife, or not to approach the altar, the high priest himself joining with the people in their indignation against his brother, and driving him away from the altar."[60]
   3.5. Notice the result of their expulsion of Manasseh: "Whereupon Manasseh came to his father-in-law, Sanballat, and told him, that although he loved his daughter Nicaso, yet was he not willing to be deprived of his sacerdotal dignity on her account, which was the principal dignity in their nation, and always continued in the same family. And then Sanballat promised him not only to preserve to him the honor of his priesthood, but to procure for him the power and dignity of a high priest, and would make him governor of all the places he himself now ruled, if he would keep his daughter for his wife. He also told him further, that he would build him a temple like that at Jerusalem, upon Mount Gerizzini, which is the highest of all the mountains that are in Samaria; and he promised that he would do this with the approbation of Darius the king. Manasseh was elevated with these promises, and staid with Sanballat, upon a supposal that he should gain a high priesthood, as bestowed on him by Darius, for it happened that Sanballat was then in years. But there was now a great disturbance among the people of Jerusalem, because many of those priests and Levites were entangled in such matches; for they all revolted to Manasseh, and Sanballat afforded them money, and divided among them land for tillage, and habitations also, and all this in order every way to gratify his son-in-law."[61]
   "Sanballat … renounced Darius, and taking with him seven thousand of his own subjects, he came to Alexander; and finding him beginning the siege of Tyre, he said to him, that he delivered up to him these men, who came out of places under his dominion, and did gladly accept of him for his lord instead of Darius. So when Alexander had received him kindly, Sanballat thereupon took courage, and spake to him about his present affair. He told him that he had a son-in-law, Manasseh, who was brother to the high priest Jaddua; and that there were many others of his own nation, now with him, that were desirous to have a temple in the places subject to him; that it would be for the king's advantage to have the strength of the Jews divided into two parts, lest when the nation is of one mind, and united, upon any attempt for innovation, it prove troublesome to kings, as it had formerly proved to the kings of Assyria. Whereupon Alexander gave Sanballat leave so to do, who used the utmost diligence, and built the temple, and made Manasseh the priest, and deemed it a great reward that his daughter's children should have that dignity …"[62]
   3.5.1. It was out of this that the Samaritans obtained their sacrificial worship at a Temple (Jn 4.20).

[59] Josephus, *Antiquities*, 11.7.2.
[60] Josephus, *Antiquities*, 11.8.2.
[61] Josephus, *Antiquities*, 11.8.2.
[62] Josephus, *Antiquities*, 11.8.4.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

3.5.2. Notice the worldly wisdom of Sanballat who realized that religion is important to a nation and set up, like Jeroboam (1 Ki 12.26-33), a false system of worship to give the people an alternate to the true worship of God.
3.5.3. This, in principle, continues today. Modern anti-Christians are doing the same thing. They set up alternate religions (e.g., Islam) as equally acceptable in society and demand toleration of them. This way they can divide the people and keep the nation from being united around the true religion.

Purified

He **purified** the priests and Levites. (30)

1. What does it mean that he purified/cleansed them?
   1.1. Heb: "ceremonially cleaned" of everything "foreign" (NIV, ESV, NASV).
   1.2. He probably had them remove pagan idols, artwork, amulets, writings, etc. (Gen 35.2; Josh 24.23; Judges 10.16; 1 Sam 7.3; 2 Chron 33.15).
   1.3. He probably had them perform a rededication ceremony.
   1.4. Through a designated priest he probably had the purification rites performed that were applicable to Israel and the priests and Levites:
      1.4.1. Washing with water (Num 19.17-21). This would have been ceremonially accomplished through sprinkling (Num 8.7).
      1.4.2. Sacrifices and sprinkling blood (Lev 14.12-17; 2 Chron 29.20-24).

2. After he had purified them, what did he do?
   2.1. He reassigned the priests and the Levites their duties.
   2.2. He reminded them of the duties they were called to and what the purpose of their office was.
   2.3. Nehemiah seems to have had a knack for getting people to work; as any good leader does. But he wasn't always going to be around and the people would, sadly, quickly fell away from their commitments and duties.

3. What lessons can we derive from Nehemiah's purification of the people?
   3.1. In the NT economy ordination and installation are dedication ceremonies for those who hold offices in the Church. These are performed only once within the context of a specific congregation.
      3.1.1. An office bearer does not become ceremonially unclean as he could in the OT by, for example, touching a dead body.
      3.1.2. How would we apply the example of Nehemiah's purifying the priests and Levites? [Discuss.]
   3.2. The OT ceremonial cleansing ordinances have been (almost entirely) *replaced* by their spiritual equivalents (which they typified).
      3.2.1. What would be the spiritual equivalent of ceremonial purification?
      3.2.2. Since ritual purification symbolizes cleansing from sin (Ezk 36.24-27; Ezk 43.22; Heb 9.14, 19-23; Heb 10.1-4), the equivalent for us is renewing our commitment to Christ through confession of sin and repentance leading to obedience (Ps 24.3-4; 1 Cor 6.11; 1 Pt 1.1, 2, 22, 23).
   3.3. We do, however, have two ceremonies in the NT economy that have a connection with OT ceremonies and continue to symbolize cleansing from sin and spiritual purification:
      3.3.1. Baptism symbolizes cleansing from sin. It is a logical continuation of the sprinkling (blood and water) and circumcision (cutting off sin) ceremonies of the OT economy (Col 2.11, 12; Heb 10.22; 1 Pt 3.21).
      3.3.2. Through the disciplined application of the NT Lord's supper we continue to purge out the old 'yeast' of sin and recognize forgiveness through repentance. The wine symbolizes the shed blood of Christ that cleanses us from our sins (Mt 26.28; Eph 1.7; Heb 9.22; Rev 1.5).
   3.4. Times of repentance through prayer appear to be the primary equivalent, for NT believers, of the OT purification rites.
      3.4.1. A Session, Presbytery, or General Assembly, or the civil magistrate could call for a time of repentance and confession of sin in which the people would renew their commitment to obey the Lord and fulfill their duties to him.
      3.4.2. Then it would be appropriate for the pastors of the congregation to remind the people of their general and specific duties through exhortation (i.e., assigning them their duties). The general duties would include obedience to God's revealed will as given in the Bible. The specific duties

© James R. Hughes, 2006

might include such things as supporting the congregation through attendance and contribution of tithes, or serving in offices such as Sunday school teacher or as a deacon.

Prayed/Prophesied

He **prayed/prophesied**. (29)

1. What kind of prayer did he offer up at this point?
   1.1. [We have already seen that Nehemiah was a man of prayer. He prayed (or had people pray) throughout his work on the reconstruction of the city and community of Jerusalem (Neh 1.4, 5-11; Neh 2.4; Neh 4.9; Neh 5.19; Neh 6.9, 14; Neh 9.5-37; Neh 13.14, 22, 29, 31).]
   1.2. It was a call for judgment on the priest's grandson and on Sanballat ('them') for defiling the temple.
   1.3. What class of prayer is this? Imprecatory; a prayer that condemns/damns the enemies of ourselves (where we are enemies for Christ's sake), Christ, or his Church.

2. What is the place of imprecatory prayer for believers in the NT economy?
   2.1. See *Appendix A – Imprecatory Prayer*, for a consideration on the place of imprecatory prayer for NT believers.

Support (Neh 13.10-14, 31)

1. What problem did Nehemiah discover and confront with respect to the provisions for the work of the Temple?
   1.1. Negligence in the provision of support for the workers in the Temple (priests/Levites).
      1.1.1. A daily portion was supposed to have been given to the Levites/Priests from the supplies contributed by the people (Neh 12.47).
      1.1.2. The contributions were to be provided continuously. The provision was not to be a one-time event.

2. When we studied Nehemiah 10.35-39 and 12.44-47, what did we note that the leaders and people had committed/covenanted to supply?
   2.1. Annual contributions of wood for the altar fires in the Temple.
   2.2. Firstfruits of their crops and fruit trees.
   2.3. Firstborn of their sons, cattle, herds and flocks.
   2.4. A first portion of their ground meal, grain, new wine and oil.
   2.5. We noted that these contributions fell into three overlapping categories:
      2.5.1. *Offerings*: freewill gifts not required by a specific statute.
      2.5.2. *Firstfruits*: a special tribute recognizing that God had provided another year of blessing.
      2.5.3. *Tithes*: the covenantal statute requirement to pay tribute (the Principle of the Portion[63]) to the Great King.

3. What was the specific issue that Nehemiah confronted?
   3.1. It was not so much that the *people* weren't faithful in the provision of the contributions. They probably were contributing—to the extent that they were being encouraged by the leaders. Although, some people may have withheld some provisions because of the abuses that they saw or directed them to the Levites outside of the Temple system of allocation (much like donors today may stop donating to a denomination or seminary that has departed from the faith).
   3.2. The problem wasn't that there weren't provisions available. There were, but they were not being *given* to the priests/Levites.
   3.3. The primary problem was that the *leaders* were withholding the provisions.
      3.3.1. Since the provisions were available, they must have been used. So, the leaders were likely selfishly consuming the provisions.
      3.3.2. It is possible, but not stated, that Tobiah was one of those who was participating in the consumption.
      3.3.3. The provisions for God's house were being consumed by the leaders for their personal pleasure and their intemperate luxuries (Is 56.9-12; 1 Peter 5.2; Jude 12).

4. Why would this problem have particularly distressed Nehemiah?

[63] Available at: www.epctoronto.org.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

4.1. The leaders had previously signed a covenant (Neh 9.38; Neh 10.14-29) promising before God that they would ensure that that the provisions were collected and administered (Neh 10.35-38).
4.2. They had specifically promised not to neglect the house of God (Neh 10.39).

5. What were the consequences of this negligence?
5.1. The Levites who were to live off the contributions (Num 18.20, 23, 24; Dt 14.29; Dt 18.1) as they performed the spiritual services for the people, had to work in the fields adjacent to their towns to provide for their needs.
5.2. This resulted in them neglecting the work of the Temple.

6. What actions did Nehemiah take to rectify the situation?
6.1. *Rebuked the Leaders* (11) – Nehemiah started with the rulers, and called them to account for their neglect.
6.1.1. We already noted another rebuke in v 25. We will also see a rebuke of the leaders (nobles) in verse 17 because they broke the Sabbath.
6.1.2. He denounced their sin and reminded them what sin of this nature deserved—removal from office and temporal and eternal punishment from God (Jer 23.1-4; Ezk 34.1-10).
6.1.3. He would have shown considerable disgust at their behaviour, and was probably severe with them, because he would have held them, as leaders, to a higher standard.
6.1.4. He demonstrated that there is a role for Christian civil magistrates to use their power and office to hold leaders of the Church accountable to their duty; just as leaders in the Church are to hold civil magistrates accountable for their actions and sins.
6.2. *Re-instated the Workers* (11) – He reinstated the priests/Levites in their jobs.
6.2.1. Nehemiah brought the Levites back to the city and had them resume their duties as gatekeepers, Temple custodians, musicians and singers, and teachers and judges of the law; and ensured that the priests were performing their ritual responsibilities.
6.2.2. Nehemiah was not just a 'talker' he was a 'doer'. He never just told the leaders or people their duty, he made sure that processes and programs were put in place that helped reinforce proper behaviour.
6.3. *Reinforced the Program* (12) – He ensured that the regular contributions would continue to flow from the donors.
6.3.1. "All Judah brought the tithes of grain, new wine and oil into the storerooms." We are not told explicitly that he had to encourage the people to their duties. However, the people would have been aware of his rebuke of the leaders and would have made doubly sure that they were performing their obligations. It is like the person who has not been speeding (very much!) and has just passed a cop who has stopped a speeder; he is extra diligent not to exceed the speed limit. Seeing someone else disciplined helps reinforce proper behaviour and correct misbehaviour.
6.3.2. Nehemiah's commitment to correct behaviour provoked a correct response in others.
6.3.2.1. As people see validly high standards being set by/for their leaders, many/most will strive to improve their own practices.
6.3.2.2. When the work of the Church is being performed correctly and well, it encourages everyone (or at least most) to participate in their share of the duties.
6.4. *Regulated the Distribution* (13) – He created a multi-disciplinary commission of worthy individuals to oversee the distribution of the contributions.
6.4.1. He appointed four men from different backgrounds and disciplines—a priest, a scribe, a Levite, and probably a leading layman/elder in the community (since he isn't described as being in a Church-related role).
6.4.1.1. Nehemiah was very astute. He understood human nature and realized that no matter how good peoples' intentions are they can always be swayed by the vested interests of their own social peer group.
6.4.1.2. He created a 'balance' of power in the committee that provided 'checks and balances' to ensure compliance.
6.4.2. He selected trustworthy/reliable men for the committee.
6.4.2.1. They had demonstrated themselves to be reliable and had a reputation for being reliable.
6.4.2.2. The qualifications for Deacons in the NT seem to relate closely to the conditions for selecting men for this committee (1 Tim 3.8-13).
6.4.3. He gave the committee its mission statement: to distribute equitably and efficiently the peoples' contributions.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

6.4.3.1. Nehemiah gave them a clear mandate for their duties.
6.4.3.2. Nehemiah understood the importance of defining clearly the duties of a committee.

6.5. *Requested Help* (14, 31) – He invoked God's help and blessing on his work.
6.5.1. Throughout Nehemiah's ministry we see him turning to God.
6.5.2. He looks to God for assistance and recognition, but not to men.
6.5.3. His attitude of dependence on God shows that he realized that he was not a lord over his fellow Jews, but a watchman-servant who was accountable to God for his actions.

7. What lessons can we derive from this consideration of support for the priests/Levites?
7.1. His example teaches us that it is the mutual duty of everyone in a position of authority to hold others in authority accountable for their behaviour. This mutuality applies in the institutions of the family, Church, and State. In all of these leaders are to:
7.1.1. Put in place laws and governing structures (standards) that are consistent with God's word,
7.1.2. Hold those under their authority accountable for their behaviour against the standards, and
7.1.3. Put in place programs and incentives that encourage proper behaviour.
7.2. Effective administration requires both vision and execution.
7.3. In the NT economy the elders (specifically, the full-time preachers) are to receive their support from the tithes of the congregation (1 Cor 9.14; Gal 6.6; 1 Tim 5.17-18).
7.3.1. If insufficient support is provided for the pastor(s) he/they will have to work in other jobs just like the Levites had to take up farming, or family members will be required to work to support their family, or the family will be subjected to increased stress from worrying about how to 'make ends meet'.
7.3.2. This passage teaches that those (e.g., a Deacon's Board or Finance Committee of a congregation) who set the salary for the pastor are to ensure that it is adequate. If they don't they will be held accountable just like the leaders were in Nehemiah's day.
7.3.3. Matthew Henry has, as usual, a pithy comment on this matter: "A scandalous maintenance makes a scandalous ministry. The work is neglected because the workmen are."[64]
7.4. Those in authority are to ensure that those placed in leadership positions (as subordinates, peers, or superiors) are trustworthy in all respects.
7.4.1. The qualifications for elders and deacons given in the Bible are a good standard to apply in every area of life where reliable and effective leadership is required.

Sabbath (Neh 13.15-22)

1. What observations can we make about the Sabbath from a general review of this passage?
1.1. The Sabbath is holy and Sabbath keeping is a significant principle, based on God's Law that must be observed as part of man's duty to God.
1.2. Commercial activities are not to be practiced on the Sabbath.
1.3. People fall into Sabbath-breaking very easily. While Nehemiah was away the people began to do what they were specifically prohibited from doing.
1.4. Sabbath breaking is a great evil worthy of severe punishment from God.
1.5. Proper Sabbath keeping is a key component of societal reformation.
1.6. The requirement to keep the Sabbath applies not only to those who are within the bounds of the Covenant Community (organized Church), it also applies to those outside (e.g., the ones from Tyre selling goods).
1.7. Sabbath keeping is to be legislated and enforced by the civil magistrate (and the Church), even within the bounds of governments that do not explicitly endorse God's laws as the basis for civil polity. Nehemiah 13.15-22 is an important passage for establishing the principle of the continuing application of the Sabbath Principle in the context of non-Christian governments.
1.8. Nehemiah considered Sabbath observance to be an important principle of reformation—of the reconstruction of the city and community.

2. Compare Isaiah 58.12-14 with Nehemiah.
2.1. Nehemiah is the "Repairer of Broken Walls, Restorer of Streets with Dwellings" (NIV)/ "Repairer of the Breach, The Restorer of Streets to Dwell In" (NKJV).

[64] Henry, Matthew, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Bible*, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers) 1997; on Nehemiah 13.10.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

2.2. Nehemiah understood the prophecy of Isaiah, and that those who would restore the community must take the Sabbath seriously.
2.3. We will consider how important Nehemiah the reformer, the repairer, the restorer, believed Sabbath keeping to be.

[Note: the sections below, dealing with Nehemiah 13.15-22, derive direct application of the passage within the context of an overriding assumption—the Biblical evidence demonstrates that all men throughout all time are expected to observe the Sabbath, and that now the Sabbath is to be observed on the Lord's Day (i.e., Sunday.) For an extensive treatment of Sabbath-keeping refer to: *The Sabbath – A Universal and Enduring Ordinance of God*.[65]]

Commercial Activity (15, 16)

1. What did Nehemiah discover when he returned to Judah/Jerusalem?
   1.1. People who claimed to be part of God's covenant people were performing work on the Sabbath that was prohibited to them (Ex 34.21; Jer 17.21).
   1.2. Men in general (pagan and Jew), to whom the Sabbath was given as a sign of eternal rest in the Creation Ordinance, performing work on the Sabbath.
   1.3. The traveling merchants selling their wares on the Sabbath and being encouraged to do so by the shoppers.
   1.4. Notice that this was from direct observation. It was open to the eyes of all, that there was a violation of God's law. This seems to indicate that the behaviour was widely spread throughout the community.

2. What are the specific activities that Nehemiah refers to as falling within the prohibitions of the Sabbath Principle?
   2.1. Wine manufacturing, transportation of merchandise, selling produce.

3. What class of activity summarizes these specific activities and falls within the prohibitions of the Sabbath?
   3.1. Commercial activity.

4. How does this passage apply the principle found in the Creation Ordinance?
   4.1. This passage provides an application and example, in the OT Jewish societal context, of what one was to stop doing (not do) if one is to rest from work. The obligation to rest from work is the Sabbath (rest) Principle first given in the Creation Ordinance (Gen 2.2, 3) and repeated in the Ten Commandments (Ex 20.8-11).
   4.2. God rested from his work activities, so we are to rest from work activities.
   4.3. In our case, this seems to include all activities related to the provision of our physical welfare and material sustenance.

5. How does this passage apply the principle found in the Ten Commandments?
   5.1. God requires man to conduct his work of labour over a six-day period and to rest from that work on the Sabbath.
   5.2. This appears to encompass all activities related to providing for our physical welfare and material sustenance.

6. Based on the example of Nehemiah, what are specific examples of activities undertaken in 21st-century NA that clearly fall within the prohibitions of the Sabbath Principle?
   6.1. Manufacturing food products (e.g., wine) or, by application, any kind of goods.
   6.2. Operating a supermarket, or other kind of store to sell merchandise.
   6.3. Operating a restaurant.
   6.4. Operating commercial transportation for the purposes of transporting goods (e.g., food or manufactured products).

7. What other classes of commercial activity in our day can we include under this prohibition because, by logical extension, they are associated with the commercial activities that are prohibited?

[65] Available at: www.epctoronto.org..

© James R. Hughes, 2006

7.1. All classes of service work that are directly related to commercial and manufacturing activity (e.g., banking, financial services, information technology services to support commercial and manufacturing activity).

8. What lessons can we take from this passage?
   8.1. We are not to carry out commercial and manufacturing activities on the Sabbath.
   8.2. We are not to utilize the services of other people who work in these commercial or manufacturing activities on the Sabbath (i.e., we are not to have them do them in our place so that we can avoid doing them directly).
      8.2.1. Nehemiah prohibited not only those who where selling, but also those would buy, from undertaking commercial activities.
      8.2.2. The Sabbath command (Ex 20.8-11) extends to servants, animals and foreigners. Nehemiah applied the Fourth Commandment directly by requiring the men of Tyre, as well as the Jews, to cease from their activities. This means that we are not to hire others to work on our behalf on the Sabbath.
      8.2.3. It wasn't right to say: "We'll let the non-Jewish sellers work, they don't hold to God's laws. We can let them sell and we can buy from them. After all, buying is not the same as selling, and we aren't breaking the law if we don't work ourselves."
      8.2.4. Specific examples:
         8.2.4.1. We should not hire Moslems or Jews (or pagans) to work on Sunday instead of us because they don't observe the Christian Sabbath, so that we can continue to reap the benefits of commercial activities performed on Sunday (e.g., operating a store). Nehemiah expected all people to stop work on the same day—the memorial of Creation rest.
         8.2.4.2. We shouldn't eat in a restaurant on the Sabbath because we require other people to work on our behalf on that day.
         8.2.4.3. We shouldn't go shopping on the Sabbath because we require other people to work on our behalf on that day.
      8.2.5. An overall principle we can derive from Nehemiah 13.15, 16, is that we should not pay others to do work or activities which require them to undertake money making/salary earning activities that are associated with prohibited commercial and manufacturing activities.

Covenant Accountability (Neh 13.17, 18)

1. What does Nehemiah call the Sabbath breaking of the Jews of his day?
   1.1. He calls it wicked/evil.
      1.1.1. He used a common word translated as evil, wicked, bad, etc.
      1.1.2. This word is first used in Genesis 2.9 (the tree); Gen 6.5 (wickedness of pre-flood humanity).

2. What standard did Nehemiah use?
   2.1. He used God's standard for judging the people's actions, not his own opinion about right or wrong.
   2.2. Nehemiah puts Sabbath breaking in the same context as idolatry (1 Ki 14.9), divination (Gen 44.5), and adultery (Hos 3.1).

3. What is the consequence of this wickedness according to Nehemiah?
   3.1. Stirring up God's wrath against the people performing the wickedness.
   3.2. Making them liable to punishment.
   3.3. The specific punishment that he is referring to is punishment by the exile (Jer 17.19-**27**).

4. What is the context he uses in his rebuke?
   4.1. He compares their actions with the actions of their forefathers and suggests that their actions could bring more wrath on Israel

5. What is implication of his statements in this context?
   5.1. He refers to corporate responsibilities rather than individual responsibilities.
   5.2. He places their actions in the context of covenant obligations and responsibilities.

6. What is the connection between the Covenant and the Sabbath?

© James R. Hughes, 2006

6.1. The Sabbath is a key sign of the Covenant.
    6.1.1. Covenant of Creation instituted in the Garden (Gen 2.3).
    6.1.2. Noahic Covenant (Gen 8.10, 12).
    6.1.3. Mosaic administration of the Covenant (Ex 31.12-13, 17; Ezk 20.12, 20).
    6.1.4. New Covenant in the Lord's Day (first day of the week) as a commemorative of the resurrection (Acts 20.7).
    6.1.5. Eternal Covenant (Heb 4.9).
6.2. Even though other signs were added to the Covenant, or replaced existing signs, through the various administrations (e.g., rainbow, circumcision, Passover, baptism, Lord's Supper) the Sabbath is a (*the only!*) perpetual sign of the Covenant.
6.3. Being a sign, however, does not make it a type that would pass away or be replaced. Because it is a sign does not necessarily mean that it is replaceable any more than the law of love, which itself was a type, can be replaced. In Deuteronomy 6.5-8 Israel is instructed to make the law of love into a sign.
6.4. The Sabbath is the one timeless sign of the Covenant that applies across *all* covenant administrations (even into eternity).

7. What evidence do we have that the people of Nehemiah's day understood the Sabbath Principle to be associated with covenant keeping?
    7.1. They promised (Neh 10.31) to keep the Sabbath as part of their vows of covenant renewal.
    7.2. They resolved not to carry out *commercial activities* on that day (Ex 20.8-11) and not carry out agricultural activities during the Sabbatical year by letting the land lie fallow (Ex 23.10-11; Lev 25.2-7; Lev 20-21).

8. Why is breaking the sign (the Sabbath) equivalent to rejecting the whole Covenant? (Ezk 20.12, 13, 16, 21, 24)
    8.1. To break the sign is to say, "I will not keep your covenant!"
    8.2. This may be the reason that Sabbath-breaking is a capital offence (Ex 31.14; Ex 35.2; Num 15.32-36).

9. Who specifically does Nehemiah rebuke? Why?
    9.1. The nobles.
    9.2. The nobles represented the people of their day:
        9.2.1. Covenants are administered federally through a representative (mediator): compare Dt 5.2, 3 with Dt 2.14, 15 and Num 14.28-35; Num 26.63-65. [We considered this concept in more detail when we addressed the topic of covenants in our studies in Nehemiah 10.28-39.]
        9.2.2. As representatives of the community, they had to be held to a higher standard.
        9.2.3. As representatives, they were expected to set an example for those under their authority.
        9.2.4. As representatives, they were expected to ensure that those under their authority consistently maintained adherence to God's requirements.
        9.2.5. As representatives, they were accountable for the actions of those under their authority.
    9.3. The nobles represented future generations. Covenants are applied to subsequent generations and perpetually (Dt 7.9; Ps 105.8-10).
        9.3.1. The nobles were the ones (or represented the ones) who had signed the covenant renewal a generation before.
        9.3.2. The nobles were the ones who stood in the place of those who had been leaders at the time of the captivity.
        9.3.3. Generational connectivity under covenants is alluded to by Nehemiah's reference to forefathers in verse 18.
    9.4. Nehemiah set an example with the 'greatest' in society.
        9.4.1. If leaders are held accountable for their faults, then all men will be viewed as being accountable.
        9.4.2. Nehemiah did not hold the view that there is a different standard for the aristocracy or such a thing as 'the king is above the law' or 'presidential immunity'.

10. How should we apply verses Nehemiah 13.17, 18 to our own situation today?
    10.1. Sabbath breaking has always been, and continues to be, a serious evil in God's eyes.
        10.1.1. Because we don't see immediate consequences form Sabbath breaking, this does not mean that we should take lightly the seriousness of the offence.
        10.1.2. We should be thankful for God's enduring patience with the Church and society in the face of blatant disregard for his holy day.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

10.2. We should understand that a careful observance of the Sabbath Principle (i.e., Sabbath keeping) is a constant invocation of the covenant sign. Sabbath keeping is covenantally equivalent to observing the Lord's Supper.
10.3. We should hold those in positions of leadership in the Church (and State) to a higher standard with respect to strict obedience to the Sabbath Principle because they are the representatives of the people under their authority, before God.

Civil Administration (Neh 13.19-22)

1. Who else did Nehemiah hold accountable for keeping the sign of the Covenant? (19-22)
   1.1. The people from the territories around Judah within the Persian Empire.

2. What did he tell the foreigners that they should/should not do?
   2.1. Not to spend the evening/night (Friday night) before the walls hoping to go into the city to sell their goods on the Sabbath (Saturday).

3. What actions did he take to enforce his commands?
   3.1. He ordered the doors of the gates to be shut during the Sabbath so that merchandise could not be transported through them into the market squares in the city.
   3.2. He probably had a horn/trumpet blown to announce the start of the Sabbath.
      3.2.1. The Biblical text does not provide this information. However Josephus does refer to it: "… the zealots threw their darts easily from a superior place, … having the advantage of situation, and having withal erected four very large towers aforehand, that their darts might come from higher places, … the last was erected above the top of the Pastophoria, where one of the priests stood of course, and gave a signal beforehand, with a trumpet at the beginning of every seventh day, in the evening twilight, as also at the evening when that day was finished, as giving notice to the people when they were to leave off work, and when they were to go to work again."[66]
      3.2.2. They may have blown the trumpet from under a canopy or awning: 2 Ki 16.18.
      3.2.3. Excavators found a stone from the remains of Titus' siege of the Temple with this inscription: "For the place of the blowing (of the trumpet)." This may refer to the place where the priest stood.
   3.3. He used his government appointed personal soldiers/guards to enforce the Sabbath laws.
   3.4. He used the Temple guards (Levites), once they had purified themselves [they may have fallen out of the discipline of their procedures during the period that Nehemiah was out of the territory], to enforce the Sabbath laws.
      3.4.1. It may be that he used the Temple guards in addition to his own soldiers because he needed to establish a permanent pattern. He and his troops would be returning to the Persian capital and he needed to leave behind a permanent administration.
   3.5. He threatened to use force and punishment ("lay hands on") to enforce obedience.
   3.6. It may be that Nehemiah's reforms were somewhat successful. Almost 500 years later, at the time of Jesus, it seems that the Jews of Jerusalem were still rigorously applying the prohibition against commercial activity on the Sabbath. However, by the time of Jesus the form had become perverted with legalism and the spirit had been sucked out of the principle.

4. What, in this passage, shows that Nehemiah understood that the Sabbath Law was applicable to both Jew and Gentile?
   4.1. He drove away the merchants who wished to sell on the Sabbath within the area of his jurisdiction.
   4.2. He did not take the modern view heard so often from the mouths of political leaders: "I believe it is wrong to conduct commercial activity on the Sabbath—or whatever else, fill in the blank—but I can't impose my morality on other people."
   4.3. Nehemiah held the view, that in the area of morality, either an action is right or it is wrong. If it is wrong, then it applies to all people, regardless of what they may believe.

5. How could Nehemiah justify the use of civil officers to enforce the Sabbath Law?
   5.1. Nehemiah did not act in a way that he believed was contrary to the correct use of the power of the civil authority.
   5.2. Nehemiah believed that God's Law applies to all men, in all times, in all places, not just to those who claim to be his people (Christians).

[66] Josephus, *Jewish War*, 4.9.12.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

5.2.1. God's character does not change and his law, which is an expression of his character, does not change.
5.2.2. God will punish eternally those who persist in breaking his law. Even if a person kept the other Commandments, and didn't murder, steal, etc., but broke the Sabbath without repentance, he would be eternally condemned.

5.3. Nehemiah did not make a distinction between morality and law, nor between God's laws and the just laws of men.
5.3.1. He understood the Sabbath Law to be a moral law and not a specific ceremonial law which had a form that applied only to Jews (e.g., ceremonial washings or wearing of particular tassels on garments).
5.3.2. He understood that God's Law (in particular the Moral Law as summarized in the Ten Commandments, including the Fourth, respecting the Sabbath) is to be applied within the context of a pagan nation—i.e., the civil magistrate of any dominion is expected to enforce God's Law.

5.4. Nehemiah did not consider it proper to enforce the laws of the Persian King but inappropriate to enforce the laws of God.

5.5. He viewed it to be the responsibility of the civil magistrate to enforce the laws of God. He did not believe in the, supposed, separation of Church and State. The civil magistrate was to work with the religious authority (the priests and Levites) for the just administration of society.

5.6. Nehemiah did not consider it inconsistent to apply the power of the civil magistrate to those who did not *agree* with the Sabbath law. He did not consider it necessary to tolerate, and permit, contrary opinions and the beliefs of other religions or the irreligious, when it came to demanding obedience to God's Law.

5.7. He did not want the ceremony of worship to be hindered by commercial activities that would distract the worshipers. He viewed the civil administration of the law to be an important aspect of preserving the right worship of God.

6. What did he expect from God as a result of taking these actions?
6.1. To be remembered with mercy and love. This seems to indicate that he believed that he was doing the will of God and that God would reward him for doing so.

7. What would most people, today, find peculiar about his actions?
7.1. Using the power of the civil magistrate to enforce the Sabbath laws.
7.2. Imposing God's Law on the pagans or those of other religions.
7.3. Being entirely 'politically incorrect' and 'intolerant'.
7.4. It is interesting to note how one commentator reacted to Nehemiah's action: "Glowing with the success of those religious purges occasioned by his architectural and political interests, Nehemiah now frankly busies himself with cult. Like many amateurs, he seems unaware of the profound values of human freedom enshrined in the harshly formulated principle *odiosa sunt restringenda* [approximately: 'vexatious it is to bind fast']. Loopholes in good laws will always be misused by evil men, but the effort to close them results progressively in an iron juridicalism."[67]
7.5. In response, we can ask:
7.5.1. Why was Nehemiah, a senior official from the Persian court, an "amateur" when he enforced one of the commands from the first portion of the Ten Commandments?
7.5.2. Since when does 'human freedom' involve the right to break God's law?
7.5.3. What is harsh about Nehemiah's edict?
7.5.4. On what ground can Nehemiah's actions be called 'iron juridicalism'?
7.5.5. How could Nehemiah appeal to God to be remembered for his work if he wasn't doing the will of God?
7.6. [For additional information on the enforcement of the Ten Commandments by the civil magistrate, see: *Appendix F – Relationship Between Church and State (Considerations*).]

8. What did Nehemiah indicate that he would do with the merchants (probably both Jews and Gentiles) who persisted in their commercial activities on the Sabbath?
8.1. He would "lay hands on them". What does this expression mean?
8.1.1. Compare NKJV and NIV Lk 20.19: 'arrest'
8.1.2. Compare NKJV and NIV Est 9.2: 'attack'
8.1.3. Compare NKJV and NIV Est 3.6: 'kill'

[67] *Jerome Bible Commentary*; Edited by Roland E. Murphy.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

8.1.4. Jer 15.6 ‘destroy’
8.1.5. Is 11.14 ‘subjugate’
8.1.6. Lk 21.12 ‘persecute’
8.1.7. Probably, it means he would take them into custody and punish them.

8.2. What was the punishment for Sabbath breaking?
8.2.1. Being put to death (Ex 31.14; Ex 35.2; Num 15.32-36).

8.3. Was Nehemiah changing the penal sanctions by referring to “laying hands on them”?
8.3.1. Probably not.
8.3.2. The first step in administering justice was to inform them that their action was wrong.
8.3.3. Only if they persisted in the action would he have arrested them.
8.3.4. He didn’t have to exercise capital punishment because the people took him seriously and the commercial activity on the Sabbath was discontinued.

8.4. Assuming that the Sabbath law continues to apply today, and the civil magistrate is supposed to administer it, how should he punish those who break the Sabbath? [Discuss.]

9. What does Nehemiah’s application of the Sabbath Law to all people (Jew and Gentile) teach in Summary about the Sabbath?
9.1. This passage alone, even if we had no other, should be enough to demonstrate the continuing application of the Sabbath Law—since it applied to Gentiles in a pagan nation it continues to apply today.

Consummate Authority

1. What do you notice about the structure of the Ten Commandments (Ex 20.1-21; Dt 5.6-21)?
1.1. The Sabbath command is the longest command
1.2. It is in the centre of the written form of the commandments.
1.3. Apparently, in covenant documents in the ancient Near-East the most important command was placed in the centre of the covenant document.
1.4. The Sabbath command is unique because it straddles both our duty to God and our duty to our fellow men. The first three commands are specifically related to the worship of God and do not have a direct impact on our fellow men. The latter six commands (at least 5-9) have a direct impact on our fellow men (i.e., they are the summary laws relating to our duty to man); the Tenth Commandment is different in that it applies to our inner-man. The Fourth Commandment straddles our duty to God and our duty to man. It has religious elements, but it also has direct consequences for those around us and for ourselves. To the extent that we keep this command, to that extent we allow our co-labourers (and animals) to rest with us.

2. In Nehemiah 9.14, what does Nehemiah call the Sabbath? What is the significance?
2.1. It is ‘holy’.
2.2. Holiness is God’s supreme attribute. This is the only attribute that weighs in with a three-fold emphasis (Is 6.3; Rev 4.8).
2.3. The Sabbath was blessed (set apart/sanctified/made holy) on the last day of creation (Gen 2.3; Ex 20.11).
2.4. The Sabbath was declared to be holy by God (Ex 16.23; Ex 31.14) and is to be kept holy (Ex 20.8; Is 58.13; Jer 17.22, 24, 27)
2.5. The Sabbath is a symbol of holiness (Gen 2.3; Ex 20.11) or separation. The people in Nehemiah’s day (Neh 10.30) promised to be separate from the nations around them. So it is fitting that the command of separation be the one that they emphasized in their promise to be faithful to the Covenant.
2.6. The Sabbath was considered to be the ‘weightiest’ of the commands.
2.7. The Sabbath is the only non-rational object that receives the blessing of God (Gen 2.3; Ex 20.11).

3. In Nehemiah 10.31 which of the Ten Commandments is referenced in the Covenant renewal? Why?
3.1. Only the Sabbath Command.
3.2. The Sabbath command is representative of the rest of the Commandments.
3.3. Keeping the Sabbath is a key sign of covenant faithfulness (Ex 31.15-17; Is 56.4-8 [6]).
3.4. If we want to be faithful to the Covenant then we will keep all of God’s commands, but in particular we will be especially careful to keep that one command of the Ten Commandments that is the sign or symbol of the Covenant—the Sabbath.
3.5. The Sabbath command is *the* command of trust. The people promised to rest from economic activities for a day pre week and agricultural activities for a year out of every seven. We have to believe whole-heartedly that God will take care of us to cease from these activities. The average merchant today, for

© James R. Hughes, 2006

example, feels that he will only be successful if he opens on Sunday. Most merchants would view Sabbath keeping as giving up a seventh (or more) of their potential income, not as a blessing.

4. Why is keeping the Sabbath so important?
   4.1. It hold's the central position in the Ten Commandments.
   4.2. It is the day associated with covenant renewal.
   4.3. It is a holy day.
   4.4. It is a blessed day.
   4.5. It is a day of trust.

Supplication (Neh 13.14, 22, 31)

1. How does Nehemiah end the account of his work in Jerusalem?
   1.1. With a short prayer. "Remember me with favor, O my God."
   1.2. In previous instances during his reform activities recorded in this chapter he also asked God to remember him (14 and 22).
   1.3. Nehemiah's asking God to *remember* his actions or the wickedness of his enemies is a common request (10 times; Neh 1.8; Neh 4.14; Neh 5.19; Neh 6.14 [2X]; Neh 9.17; Neh 13.14, 22, 29, 31).

2. What are the specific ways that he asked God to remember him in chapter 13?
   2.1. Not to blot out, or forget, his specific actions performed for the house of God and its services (14).
   2.2. To be shown mercy according to the great love of God, for his work in protecting the Sabbath (22).
   2.3. To be shown favor based on the work that he had done restocking the Temple with contributions of wood, but also, probably, for all the work he performed for the City and Temple on behalf of God throughout his time in Jerusalem (31).

3. What is Nehemiah's motive in asking God to remember him? (Compare: 14 and 22 with 31.)
   3.1. Notice in Nehemiah 13.14 he mentions his faithfulness in serving; and in Nehemiah 13.22 he refers to the mercy of God.

4. Is he in some way suggesting that he can earn his salvation, or merit with God through good works?
   4.1. No. There is no vanity in his prayers, like that found in the prayers of the Pharisees (Lk 18.10-14).
   4.2. Nehemiah's request is primarily a plea for help, not a demand for honour:
      4.2.1. He is asking that God not permit his reform efforts to be undone by the people's neglect.
      4.2.2. His prayer is not a boast, making God his debtor. Rather, Nehemiah points to what he had done as a token of his sincerity and integrity—as proof that he was a true servant of God.
      4.2.3. His request is that God not forget his efforts, not that God publish an account of his works.
   4.3. Nehemiah is essentially calling on God to remember his *promises*.
      4.3.1. He appeals to God's faithfulness through the word 'remember'.
      4.3.2. He declares God's gracious kindness. He praises God by declaring that God is faithful to his promises.
      4.3.3. He is not saying that he deserves anything for what he has done, but rather asks that God, who is gracious, will be faithful to the promises of his Covenant.
   4.4. It is useful to look at other passages (Judges 16.28; 2 Sam 22.21; 2 Ki 20.3; Ps 106.4; Heb 6.10; Lk 23.42; 2 Tim 4.6-8) to help us formulate a summary position:
      4.4.1. God's remembering a person is not based on the person's self-righteous standing before God.
      4.4.2. God remembers and rewards those who, by his grace, have imputed righteousness and have been enabled to serve him faithfully
      4.4.3. The call to remembrance is given in a covenantal context; i.e., calling God to remember his side of the Covenant obligations.
      4.4.4. The remembrance that is called for is in the context of eternal judgment and reward, not temporal rewards.
      4.4.5. Notice that in the Hebrews 6.10 and 2 Timothy 4.6-8 there is mention of God being just. Nehemiah has recently completed an exercise in justice relating to the Sabbath and misuse of the Temple courts and he is reminding God that he has promised to act justly and reward his people for their faithfulness.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

4.5. We are not to seek rewards for our works. But, because of God's faithfulness to his Covenant promises, we can expect God to *remember* us and take us into glory when we remain faithful to him. The works that we perform on God's behalf are the sign that we are faithful (e.g., Mt 25.34-40).

Conclusion

We come to the end of our studies in the book of Nehemiah. All that we know about the man, who is the subject of this book, is what we find written in the thirteen chapters of the book. The only other possible reference to him is found in Ezra 2.2. To conclude our study, let us consider (in summary form) Nehemiah from four perspectives:

- The *Life* of Nehemiah – Nehemiah the man.
- The *Lessons* of Nehemiah – What Nehemiah's activities and actions teach us.
- The *Likeness* of Nehemiah – Nehemiah as a type of Christ.
- The *Legacy* of Nehemiah – What Nehemiah accomplished.

The *Life* of Nehemiah - Nehemiah the Man

1. What have we learned about Nehemiah, the man, as we have studied this book?
   1.1. Nehemiah was a man of:
      1.1.1. *Prayer Constancy* – Before he acted he prayed, while he acted he prayed, after he acted he prayed. For Nehemiah prayer was not something that he did as a matter of duty or put on a list of resolutions. Prayer was a key part of his daily life and of his very character. He lived the command to "pray without ceasing."
      1.1.2. *Practical Creed* – Nehemiah's theology was not for the Synagogue on Saturday or the Temple at the Feast of Trumpets. He knew of God as the transcendent governor of the universe and the kings of this earth. We see from his prayers, speeches, and actions that he lived out his *credo*—his "I believe". His theology guided his actions as governor. He brought God's morality into government, politics, the public square, the judicial system, the economy, and the family. He lived *Coram Deo*—"before the face of God".
      1.1.3. *Passionate Conviction* – Nehemiah was consciously committed to God. He loved God's city and Church and set his priorities based on God's Law and the advance of God's purposes. He was empowered by an unmovable faith that trusts in God who strengthens the feeble knees and hands. He believed, trusted, and held to the foundations of truth and expected others to live by God's standards.
      1.1.4. *Perspective Clarity* – Nehemiah had vision, direction, and a single-minded focus. When most people around him saw only decay, defeat, and discouragement, Nehemiah held up a vision of a glorious city. He knew what God can accomplish through the efforts of faithful men. He knew that ultimately the work was not dependent on human efforts but on God. It was God's work, and it would not fail. He was a 'William Carey' of his generation "attempting great things for God—expecting great things from God."
      1.1.5. *Persevering Commitment* – Nehemiah did not let any obstacles stand in his way. He did not permit enemies outside or within the city, community, or Church to hinder the work. He fought enemies on every side and sustained the pace of the work of rebuilding, reconstruction, and reformation. He finished the race—to the end. He never gave up. Nehemiah can say with Paul "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing." (2 Tim 4.7-8).
      1.1.6. *Pastoral Concern* – Nehemiah cared for the people under his charge. He did not lord it over them. He shared in their hardships and generously used his own resources to further their good. He worked to remove injustices. He provided encouragement, counsel and material support.
      1.1.7. *Practical Counsel* – Nehemiah was shrewd and worldly-wise. He planned carefully, organized effectively, and delegated masterfully. He knew how to motivate people. He understood that the work of the Church is hard but never let his personal discouragement show publicly. He motivated "volunteers" to overcome laziness, unbelief, procrastination, cynicism, self-absorption, in-fighting, nay-saying, pessimism, and fence-sitting. These were the real rubble that he had to clear away if the walls of the city were to go up.
   1.2. Nehemiah is presented to us as a magnificent model of responsible leadership in the face of daunting challenges. His leadership was exemplified by: enthusiasm, effort, and encouragement.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

The *Lessons* of Nehemiah – What Nehemiah's Activities and Actions Teach Us

1. What are the summary lessons we can derive from Nehemiah's activities actions?
   We can briefly summarize them as follows:
   - 1.1. *Prayer Applied* (we learn models for prayer) [Neh 1.5-11; Neh 6.9; Neh 9.5-36].
     - 1.1.1. His prayers provide a *Plan for Prayer*:
       - 1.1.1.1. Praise (names and attributes of God)
       - 1.1.1.2. Petition (to hear his cry and prayer)
       - 1.1.1.3. Penitence (confession of sin)
       - 1.1.1.4. Promises (appealing to the promises of God)
       - 1.1.1.5. Purpose (giving God a reason/purpose for the appeal)
       - 1.1.1.6. Providence (personal appeal for help)
     - 1.1.2. His prayers give *Principles for Prayer*:
       - 1.1.2.1. Pray a theology:
         - 1.1.2.1.1. Pray from Scripture
         - 1.1.2.1.2. Use God's names, attributes, and providences.
       - 1.1.2.2. Use sincere repetition.
       - 1.1.2.3. Voice honest confession, with God as the standard bearer and personal and corporate sin against that standard.
       - 1.1.2.4. Appeal to the promises of God:
         - 1.1.2.4.1. Base the appeal on the assurance God is a covenant-keeping God.
         - 1.1.2.4.2. Ask specifically and with personal petitions.
         - 1.1.2.4.3. Not to inform God, but to place ourselves at God's feet, acknowledging our dependence on him.
       - 1.1.2.5. Respond to the nonsense of the world with imprecations. We are not to seek personal revenge, but it is appropriate, and honours God, when we pray that God will avenge himself of his enemies that continue to abuse his character, name, worship, and people.
   - 1.2. *Periodic Allotment* (we see the importance of keeping the Sabbath reinforced) [Neh 9.14; Neh 10.31; Neh 13.15-22].
   - 1.3. *Priority Activities* (the work of the Church is to be our highest priority) [Neh 1.1-11; Neh 2.1-10; Neh 3.1-32; Neh 6.15; Neh 10.1-39].
     - 1.3.1. The work of the Church must come first in our priorities.
       - 1.3.1.1. If the Church is not built, society cannot be. There cannot be reformation of the community unless there is reformation of the Church.
       - 1.3.1.2. We must pray for the reconstruction of the Church of Jesus Christ so that we can see the reconstruction of our society. We must pray for reformation so that we can see revival.
     - 1.3.2. Our covenantal priorities are:
       - 1.3.2.1. Subservience to God's law
       - 1.3.2.2. Separation from pagans (in marriage)
       - 1.3.2.3. Sabbath keeping
       - 1.3.2.4. Sacred service
       - 1.3.2.5. Supplying the poor
   - 1.4. *Planned Administration* (we are presented with models for effective personnel management) [Neh 2.11-20; Neh 3.1-32; Neh 5.1-19].
     - 1.4.1. Taking bold steps, under-girded with the true source of power and motivation—the power of Holy Spirit.
     - 1.4.2. Scoping, planning, and organizing work units.
     - 1.4.3. Delegating responsibility along with accountability, with all working toward a common goal.
     - 1.4.4. Showing courage to face powerful men and denounce their sins with immediacy and tact.
     - 1.4.5. Looking for the approval of God, not men.
     - 1.4.6. Getting personally involved in the work.
     - 1.4.7. Moving quickly into a 'maintenance' mode after the completion of a great project so that the people do not experience a 'let-down' and will continue involved in the work.
   - 1.5. *Proactive Awareness* (the Church is plagued with enemies and we need to be on the defensive) [Neh 4.1-14; Neh 5.6; Neh 6.1-14].
     - 1.5.1. In the work of the Church, we need to be vigilant:
       - 1.5.1.1. Like the people building the wall who had a weapon in one hand as they carried supplies, or had them at their side while they worked, we in the Church are to do two kinds of

© James R. Hughes, 2006

work: 1) carry out the work of the gospel, but also 2) be on the defensive against false doctrine.

1.5.1.2. Nehemiah's posting of the citizen militia teaches us the importance of constant vigilance. The enemy can attack from many directions.

1.5.1.3. Nominal 'Christians' can sometimes be our worst enemies.

1.5.1.4. We are engaged in a spiritual warfare. Additional trials and hardships will be sent by God in the midst of our on-going challenges to test our faithfulness.

1.5.1.5. We have to learn to say: "Oh no!" when invited to a summit of temptation or distraction on the plains of Ono.

1.5.2. The tactics that Satan uses most often revolve around the mind, spirit, will, and heart. Sometimes he uses actual physical abuse and torture but usually his attacks are such things as ridicule, fear, doubt, name calling, questions to cast doubt, etc. (i.e., insults, intrigue, innuendo, intimidation, insinuation).

1.5.2.1. The enemies of the Church and Christianity use these techniques because they cannot challenge it on rational grounds. They can oppose it only by farce or force.

1.5.2.2. Unbelievers are generally only tough when together. False systems have no hope of survival except in numbers. Christianity in contrast will survive even if only one person is right, such as Athanasius who stood against the world.

1.5.3. The leaders in the Church are to exercise discipline when trouble makers disrupt or hinder the advance of the work. There is nothing loving about being tolerant of those who hinder the progress of the kingdom (for any reason: pride, selfish motives, or a false adherence to traditions).

1.6. *Praise Assembly* (the worship of the Church is to be what God has authorized) [12].

1.7. *Purging Adultery* (we are to separate ourselves from a love-affair with the things of the world) [Neh 8-10; Neh 13.1-14, 23-31].

1.7.1. *Compromised Friendships* – Believers should not be close friends with those who profess to be Christians but are not.

1.7.2. *Corrupt Families* – Marriage between believers and unbelievers is not permitted.

1.7.3. *Cut Funds* – Negligence in the provision of support for the work of the Church is sinful.

1.7.4. *Contaminated Facilities* – It is improper to allow heathens to use property dedicated to the Lord.

1.7.5. *Commercialized Faith* – Addressing Sabbath-breaking should be a major concern in the Church.

1.8. *Participatory Association* (we are to be active, committed members of the Church) [Neh 3.1-32; Neh 7-11].

1.8.1. The definition of credentials for membership in the community of the Church and participation in the sacraments is reinforced by the exclusion of the priests from ministry because they could not find their genealogical records.

1.8.2. Just as some priests failed the birthright test, some people, who claim to be in the Church, will fail the birthright criteria for heaven (Mt 7.21-23). Entrance to heaven isn't based on works, it is based on birth—having been born again in Christ (Jn 3.7).

1.8.3. Just as the genealogies identified the authentic Jews, so a membership roll in a congregation identifies the members of the visible Church—members of the covenant community.

1.8.4. Each of us has a responsibility to make a public profession of covenant commitment and to join ourselves to the Lord. We learned of a seven-step program for making covenant promises permanent:

1.8.4.1. Preparation (i.e., the people met with God before they took action)

1.8.4.2. Papered (i.e., the commitment was documented in writing)

1.8.4.3. Pressed (i.e., the commitment was sealed with an oath)

1.8.4.4. Personal (i.e., each signature of a representative was applied to the paper)

1.8.4.5. Public (i.e., they were mutual witnesses of one another at a swearing ceremony)

1.8.4.6. Priorities (i.e., they laid out the actions that they planned to take to fulfill their commitment)

1.8.4.7. Practiced (i.e., they followed through on their promised actions)

If we follow this kind of discipline in our lives we will be much less cavalier about making commitments and we will be much more careful about keeping our commitments.

1.8.5. Every Christian should belong to an assembly of Christians, under the shepherding care of men whom Jesus has chosen by equipping them with gifts of eldership.

1.8.6. God delights in knowing, counting, and listing all of his people. The Church of Jesus Christ is made up of all kinds of people; all of whom have roles of service.

1.8.7. Delegation is essential. A 'one-man ministry' is not the Biblical model.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

1.9. *Public Authority* (as a minister of God, the civil magistrate is to actively enforce God's Law and address social inequities according to the Biblical model) [Neh 5.1-13; Neh 6.19-7.3; Neh 7.73-8.18; Neh 13.15-22].
1.10. *Proper Attitude* (what our attitude to sin should be) [Neh 5.1-13; Neh 8.1-18; Neh 13.1-31].
1.10.1. Point out where particular behaviour has broken the Law of God.
1.10.2. Show how sin brings reproach on the name and people of God and causes damage to others.
1.10.3. Emphasize what is the proper behaviour expected of God's people.
1.10.4. Speak prophetically.
1.10.5. Call for making right the wrong and seeking forgiveness.
1.10.6. Encourage one another:
1.10.7. Rejoice in the salvation that we have been provided.

The *Likeness* of Nehemiah – Nehemiah as a Type of Christ

1. In what ways does Nehemiah point to Christ?
1.1. The return of the people of Israel to build the City is a calling out of the pagan world. The building of the temple, city, and wall is an analogue of Christ building his Church.
1.2. Nehemiah fought temptation from material sources (e.g., giving up the comforts of a governor), enemies of the Church (e.g., Sanballat), and spiritual forces (e.g., discouragement), and prevailed. Jesus fought the same enemies and prevailed.
1.3. Jesus, the great shepherd, like Nehemiah exhibited the principles of leadership:
1.3.1. Perfect life (1 Pt 2.22); service through healing and teaching (Mt 4.23), washing feet (Jn 13.1-20) are a great example for us (Phil 2.5)
1.3.2. Living in inadequate settings for a time (no place to lay his head Mt 8.20), eating when able.
1.3.3. Gave up rights of a glorious kingdom (heaven) to save his people (Phil 2.6-8).
1.3.4. Eased the burden of the poor (Is 58.6-7 [Mt 25.34-40]; Is 61.1-3 [Mt 11.5]; Mt 11.28-30)
1.3.5. Calls us to a feast (Is 25.6; Rev 19.9)
1.3.6. Calls us to do God's will and further the work of the kingdom (Heb 10.7).
1.3.7. Purifying his people (1 Cor 6.11).
1.3.8. Grounded by prayer (Mk 1.35; Jn 17.1-26; Lk 22.42).
1.4. Nehemiah teaches us of our responsibilities to the Holy City?
1.4.1. Inhabit it (Neh 11.1; Ps 84.7; Ps 126.1).
1.4.2. Live as good citizens in it; obey its laws (Neh 10.29-39; Ps 2.6, 12; Ps 9.11).
1.4.3. Build it (Neh 2.17; Neh 3.1-32; Ps 51.18; Is 58.12; Micah 7.11; Mt 28.18-20).
1.4.4. Worship in it (Neh 7.73; Neh 9.1; Ps 102.21; Ps 122.1, 2; Ps 147.12).
1.4.5. Pray for it (Neh 1.9; Ps 122.6, 9)
1.4.6. Be proud of it (Neh 12.27-43 [43]; Ps 48.11-14).
1.5. There is a Messianic purpose in the genealogical accounts in the Bible. They remind us of the importance that God placed on being able to show the human ancestry of his son (Mt 1.1-17; Lk 3.23-37).
1.5.1. The faithfulness of the Jews in keeping the genealogy until the coming of the Messiah was required in the Providence of God as a means of authenticating Jesus as the ancestor of David and the rightful heir to the throne.

The *Legacy* of Nehemiah – What Nehemiah Accomplished

1. How does the book of Nehemiah open?
1.1. With the city of Jerusalem in disrepair.
1.2. With prayer.

2. How does the book of Nehemiah close?
2.1. Nehemiah 12.1-47 ended on a high note. Nehemiah 13.1-31 is worse than a bad dream.
2.2. Nehemiah ends with the life of the city in dissolution.
2.3. But it also closes with prayer.

3. Why does the book not end with the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem?
3.1. Nehemiah was a realist. He knew that his job was to be faithful in his generation and fulfill the job he was given to do.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

3.2. Nehemiah presents the fact that in this life, the work of the Church can never end on a 'high'. The end of the work for the Church is never *now*, but always *then*. The Church must live out its existence in space and time with the expectation that the fulfillment of its work will be in Glory.
3.3. Nehemiah reminds us that we are to look for the ultimate fulfillment of prophecy.
3.3.1. The OT prophets declared a coming glorious kingdom.
3.3.2. The return from the Babylonian Captivity was a partial temporal fulfillment of these prophecies. But what the prophets hoped for was not fulfilled in the rebuilding of the city. It was put into subjection under pagans, and eventually the Romans destroyed the city.
3.3.3. The prophecies are being fulfilled not in the physical city, but in the spiritual city—the Church of Jesus Christ.
3.3.4. The prophecies will be fulfilled in their final form in the revelation of the eternal city coming down from Heaven, the eternal abode of Jesus and his people.

4. Was Nehemiah's work a success?
4.1. The answer depends on our definition of success.
4.2. In terms of building empires and leaving a legacy of triumph, Nehemiah was a failure.
4.3. In terms of his hard work during the first twelve chapters, it seems that what he had accomplished failed. His work seems to have been a failure.
4.4. In terms of faithfulness to God, Nehemiah was a success.
4.5. In terms of confronting his generation with God's truth, Nehemiah was a success.
4.6. In terms of his legacy—his impact on subsequent generations—Nehemiah's work was a success:
4.6.1. He along with Ezra, through the covenant renewal and reformation, laid a foundation that left a remnant of the true religion surviving until the time of Christ.
4.6.2. His work resulted in true believers like Mary and Joseph, Anna, and Simeon expecting the coming of the Messiah.
4.7. About Nehemiah, Matthew Henry said: "In my esteem, Ezra the scribe and Nehemiah the tirshatha, though neither of them ever wore a crown, commanded an army, conquered any country, or was famed for philosophy or oratory, yet both of them, being pious praying men, and very serviceable in their day to the church of God and the interests of religion, were really greater men and more honourable, not only than any of the Roman consuls or dictators, but than Xenophon, or Demosthenes, or Plato himself, who lived at the same time, the bright ornaments of Greece."[68]

5. What is the lesson of Nehemiah's legacy?
5.1. Like Nehemiah we are to serve faithfully so that there will always be a generation to rise up and call Jesus Lord.

[68] Matthew Henry, "An Exposition, With Practical Observations, of The Book of Nehemiah—Introduction," *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Bible*, (Peabody, Ma.: Hendrickson Publishers) 1997.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

Appendix A – Imprecatory Prayer

1. Where else (beside Neh 4.4-5) in the Bible do we often find imprecatory prayers? Is imprecation found only in the OT?
   1.1. Ps 52.1-5; Ps 58.1-11; Ps 69.1-36; Ps 79.12; Ps 83.1-18; Ps 94.1-3; Ps 109.14; Ps 137.7-9; Ps 140.5-11; Jer 11.20.
   1.2. In the NT:
      1.2.1. Jesus: Mt 23.1-36 seven woes: 13, 15, 16, 23, 24, 27, 29, 33 (calls Pharisees a brood of vipers); Mt 26.23-24 alluding to Ps 41.8-10. Blessings are not for all Jn 17.9, 20-21.
      1.2.2. Peter: Acts 1.18-20 using Psalm 69.25 and Psalm 109.8.
      1.2.3. Paul: 1 Cor 16.21-22; Gal 1.8-9; Gal 5.12; 2 Tim 4.14.
      1.2.4. Saints in heaven: Rev 6.10; Rev 19.1-3.

2. How can we reconcile these imprecations with Jesus' teaching about loving, praying for, our enemies? Is it right for us to pray imprecatory prayers?
   2.1. Mt 5.43-47; Lk 6.27-29; compare Lev 19.18.
   2.2. We have examples that seem to teach that it is proper for us to pray imprecatory prayers:
      2.2.1. Jesus sets an example for us. He modeled the attitudes of love and forgiveness: Lk 23.34, yet he condemned his enemies: Mt 7.23; Mt 10.33; Mt 23.33-35; Mt 24.48-51; Mt 25.41-46.
      2.2.2. We need to separate Jesus the man as an individual from Jesus the king in a corporate capacity. As an individual he did not take revenge. But as the ruler of the universe he does.
      2.2.3. Paul gives us an example. He spoke of judgment on Jews, yet prayed for their conversion (Rom 10.1).
      2.2.4. Note that David did not take Saul's life (twice) yet he could pray that God would avenge him (e.g., Ps 52.5).
   2.3. We need to think in terms of a distinction between those who God loves and those whom he hates (Rom 9.13-15ff). Jesus through his Divine nature knew the difference absolutely. We can only know indirectly by their outward actions (Ps 139.21-22). It may be that an enemy of God is elected by God unto Salvation. Saul of Tarsus may be an example of someone the Church hated because he appeared to be an enemy of God (Acts 9.10-16; Acts 20-22; Acts 26-27).
   2.4. We also need to consider the difference between personal revenge for personal reproach and asking God to avenge when his holiness is abused (Dt 32.35; Rom 12.17-21).
      2.4.1. Notice that the verses in Romans chapter 12 are followed by chapter 13. One of God's instruments of vengeance is the state. It is the duty of the civil magistrate to act in the capacity of an avenger of God's righteousness and righteous requirements.
      2.4.2. "Neither in the OT nor in the NT is there a place for personal revenge. All our vengeance must be given over to the Lord. Every impulse to gratify ourselves by avenging a wrong done to us is surrendered to the Lord …"[69]
   2.5. Evil must be repaid. It is not wrong to ask God for what is right.
      2.5.1. False emotionalism ignores retributive justice of God. We need to learn to praise God for his judgments as much as for his mercies.
      2.5.2. Dabney: "Righteous retribution is one of the glories of the divine character. If it is right that God should desire to exercise it, then it cannot be wrong for his people to desire him to exercise it. It may be objected that, while he claims retribution for himself, he forbids it to them, and that he has thereby forbidden all satisfaction in it to them. The fact is true; the inference does not follow. Inasmuch as retribution inflicted by a creature is forbidden, the desire for its infliction by a creature, or pleasure therein, is also forbidden; but inasmuch as it is righteously inflicted by God, it must be right in him, and must therefore be, when in his hand, a proper subject of satisfaction to the godly."[70]
      2.5.3. Calvin preaching his 55th sermon on Deuteronomy 7.16-19) on Monday 12th of August 1555, points out that men want justice but not as God gives it. Men think they are smarter than God. We need to "learn to glory in his judgments." It is not enough to confess his justice … we must carry it out. But the civil magistrate is to be gentle when executing justice. The judge using rigor should morn and lay aside his passions of revenge and hatred. If man tries to be more 'merciful' than God

[69] James E. Adams, *War Psalms of the Prince of Peace* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1991), p. 46
[70] Robert Dabney, *Discussions Evangelical and Theological*, 1:709-710.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

("the fountain of all good") he is lewdly blasphemous. Man pretends to be more merciful than God and is worse than the Devil.

2.5.4. Luther on John 17.9: "We should pray that our enemies be converted and become our friends, and if not, that their doing and designing be bound to fail and have no success and that their persons perish rather than the Gospel and the kingdom of Christ."

2.5.5. Things pleasing to his will are to be offered up in prayer according to the SC Q98. If punishment of the wicked is pleasing to his will, then is proper to pray for this. Prayer is more than just an expression of emotion. It is "thinking God's thoughts after him."

2.5.6. It is fuzzy thinking that finds difficulty with God judging pagans/the wicked. A true zeal for God's honour and glory should give us balance. Doug Wilson used an interesting illustration in one of his messages. He said that we pray euphemistically for the destruction of our enemies, but a false sense of piety keeps us from being blunt about it. For example, it is considered a pious thing to pray for victory for our soldiers in battle, but if we came out and said something like "Lord spread their blood all over the city square with the next bomb-raid" we would be considered cruel and heartless.

2.5.7. The ultimate purpose of praying the imprecatory prayers, as with singing the Psalms, is that God may be glorified.

- 2.5.7.1. We are to pray that attacks against his Church would be frustrated. We are to ask God to stop those who hate his Church and persecute Christians whether: radical feminists pushing for abortion 'rights', homosexuals demanding sexual 'freedoms', Islamic *jihadists* prosecuting a 'holy war' against the 'Christian west', or evolutionists calling creationists stupid, wicked or insane (as Richard Dawkins has done).
- 2.5.7.2. We are to ask God to give the wicked no rest in this life until, and unless, they repent of their sins.

2.5.8. We should not lose sight of the fact that the Church is at war. The Psalms (including the examples of imprecatory prayers) are the War Songs of the Prince of Peace. It is no more improper for us to sing his war songs than for American soldiers to sing "Glory, glory, Hallelujah …"

- 2.5.8.1. Our prayers and Psalms may warn traitors, and deserters. (Ps 18.49/Rom 15.9; Ps 66.1; Ps 99.1-5)
- 2.5.8.2. Singing/praying this way encourages the saints, they know that God is in control. (Ps 2.1-12; Ps 110.1-7)
- 2.5.8.3. Dietrich Bonhoeffer: "The Psalter impregnated the life of early Christianity … Whenever the Psalter is abandoned, an incomparable treasure vanishes from the Christian Church. With its recovery will come unsuspected power."

2.5.9. We need a balance between praying for the conversion of the wicked, as God wills, and praying that his justice be exercised against wickedness. We should glory not only in the mercy and love of God, but also in his justice and judgment. (Recall Luther's words from above.)

- 2.5.9.1. It is never proper to pray out of a spirit of private vengeance.
- 2.5.9.2. The objective is that men will see God in his glory and come to repentance (Ps 83.16, 18).
- 2.5.9.3. If we find it difficult to pray an imprecatory prayer, is it possible we have lost sight of:
  - 2.5.9.3.1. The God of Scriptures
  - 2.5.9.3.2. The glory of God that motivated the reformers
  - 2.5.9.3.3. The way we have been influenced by a weakened form of Christianity which focuses on a faulty definition of the love of God but loses sight of his justice.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

Appendix B – Use of the 'Sword' for Protection and Just War Theory

Questions for Discussion

1. Would Nehemiah have used the armaments at his disposal if the enemies had attacked or had tried to stop the construction of the wall? If so, this leads logically to the next question.
2. Why was he prepared to meet a physical threat in kind, but not a psychological one? Was he inconsistent?
3. Why would he respond to threats of force with counter measures of threats of force, whereas he would not respond to verbal abuse with corresponding return of verbal abuse?
4. Shouldn't he have permitted his enemies to heap on the Jews physical abuse and trust God to protect them, and even if he did not protect them, to carry out his judgment upon the Jew's enemies in his time?
5. How should we respond to the religious pacifists who argue that it is always wrong to take up arms, even in self defence?
6. At a World Council of Churches conference, William Sloan Coffin of Riverside Church NY said: "Christians have to say that it is a sin not only to use, not only to threaten to use, but merely to build a nuclear weapon." Is this true? On what grounds?
7. What issue are we confronted with in the broadest terms? The concept of a *Just War*.

Outline of Pacifist View

1. The early Church, prior to Augustine, held largely to the view of non-resistance:
   1.1. Justin Martyr (c. 110-165): "We who formerly murdered one another now refrain from making war on our enemies."[71]
   1.2. Tertullian (c. 170-230): "It is not lawful to make a living by sword, when the Lord says that those who live by sword will perish by it."[72]
   1.3. Hippolytus (c 170- c 236) condemned voluntary military service, and taught that no one was to be baptized who was in the army.[73]
   1.4. Origen (185-255) said that Jesus doesn't teach it is right for his disciples to act in violence. Killing of any individual is opposed to his laws.[74]
   1.5. Cyprian (200-258) said that war is a wicked crime.[75]
   1.6. Arnobius (260-303) said that evil is not to be repaid with evil.[76]
   1.7. Lactantius (260-33), the tutor of Constantine's son said it was not lawful for a righteous man to engage in warfare (since his warfare is righteousness itself) or to accuse anyone of a capital offense. He also condemned capital punishment.[77]
   1.8. Canon 12, of the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD deals with leaving military service and then returning and condemns it as a grievous sin.
   1.9. In general Christians who stayed in the army were non-combatants
2. Waldenses condemned all war and taking of human life, but eventually fought in their own defence.
3. Anabaptist pacifism (e.g., Menno Simons).
4. Humanist movements:
   4.1. Hague Convention (1899)
   4.2. Hague Court (1907)
   4.3. League of Nations Covenant (1920)
   4.4. Kellog-Briand pact (1928) attempted to outlaw war. The pact had 63 signing countries who renounced war "as an instrument of national policy in their relations with one another."
5. Usually based on:
   5.1. Mt 5.38-48 "Do not resist evil ..." The pacifists say that this is not to be taken merely as counsel concerning attitude, but as a literal prescription. Herman Bavinck writing in 1914 at the outbreak of WW

[71] *Apology* 38; *Dialogue with Trypho*, 110.
[72] *The Crown*, 11.
[73] *Apostolic Tradition*, 16.
[74] *Against Celsus*, Book 3, Chapter 8.
[75] *To Donatus*, 6.
[76] *Against the Heathen*, 6.
[77] *The Divine Institutes*, Book 5, Chapter 20.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

I, says that the: "Sermon on the Mount is not to be equated with Christianity, and the problem of war is not so simple that it can be resolved by appeal to a single text. It is much rather part of a wider issue which touches on the relationship of Christianity to natural life as a whole, to the entire sinful world and all it contains."[78]

5.2. Romans 12.17-21; Hebrews 12.14; seek peace:
  5.2.1. Ronald Sider and Richard Taylor: the ultimate ground "of biblical opposition to taking life is the nature of God revealed first in Jesus' teaching and life and most fully in his death." Their view is that if you are put in a position of preserving values of justice or non-violence, choose non-violence, even at price of great injustice to yourself and others.
  5.2.2. They ignore the follow-on into Romans 13.1-7 which deals with the role of the civil magistrate and his use of the sword.
  5.2.3. "Although passive morality is in the foreground in the NT, an active and positive element is by no means lacking." (Bavinck)
5.3. Ephesians 6.17; 1 Cor 10.4: Christian's warfare not physical but spiritual.
  5.3.1. This applies to the church and Christians as individuals, not to the civil magistrate.
5.4. 1 Peter 2.21, 22; follow the example of Jesus in suffering:
  5.4.1. A problem with using the cross as an example of passive non-violence, is that in Romans 3.25, 26 Paul shows that the cross is a central demonstration of the righteousness and justice of God who must punish sin. Pacifist tradition focuses on the "exemplary" theory of the atonement, rather than the "substitutionary" and "judicial" aspects of the atonement.

Outline of Just War Theory

1. Augustine argues that in Luke 3.14 John the Baptist did not tell the soldiers to put away their swords.
2. Augustine formulated a set of criteria for just wars which established a tradition that attempted to limit the destructiveness of armed combat.
3. *Peace of God* (AD 988) sacredness of life, churches and clergy off limits, common people immune from attack.
4. *Truce of God* (AD 1095) Pope Urban II, setting out days when military conflict could occur.
5. Orthodox View: going to war and killing enemies for piety's sake (i.e., in the cause of religion) to assure the sobriety and common peace of the brethren deserves to be praised. View of Basil the Great (Canon 13) and Constantine Patriarch of Chliarinus (1154-1156).
6. Aquinas, *Just War*:
   6.1. Declared by a legitimate authority, not private individuals.
   6.2. Just cause.
   6.3. Rightful intention: to advance good or avoid evil. (This however left room for aggressive actions that could be used to defend the Crusades).
7. Mainline Reformers followed the tradition of just war concept developed by Augustine and Aquinas:
   7.1. Luther: "Without armaments peace cannot be kept; wars are waged not only to repel injustice but also to establish a firm peace."
   7.2. Calvin in the *Institutes*:[79] "For if power has been given them [civil magistrates] to preserve the tranquility of their dominion, to restrain the seditious stirrings of restless men, to help those forcibly oppressed, to punish evil deeds—can they use it more opportunely than to check the fury of one who disturbs both the repose of private individuals and the common tranquility of all ... princes must be armed not only to restrain the misdeeds of private individuals by judicial punishment, but also to defend by war the dominions entrusted to their safekeeping, if at any time they are under enemy attack." This was directed specifically against Anabaptist pacifism.
8. Modern formulation:
   8.1. Competent authority.
   8.2. Just cause (defence against aggressor, but also to support allies).
   8.3. Proportionality of proposed means and costs relative to probability of success [e.g., not to throw away life, cost of resolving injustice less than cost of allowing it to persist].
   8.4. Exhaustion of peaceful means of resolution.
   8.5. Right intent.

[78] *Banner of Truth*, July/Aug 1977, pp, 46ff.

[79] "Right of the Government to Wage War," 4:20.11, 12.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

8.6. Force and violence limited to legitimate military necessity [e.g., no abusing civilians, see not destroying fruit trees].
8.7. Discriminatory: no direct, intentional attacks on non combatants.

9. What Biblical evidence is there to support the idea of a just war?
   9.1. Instructions for waging war (Dt 20.1-20).
   9.2. God grants victory in war (Ex 15.1; Judges 3.10; Judges 4.14; Judges 5.4; 2 Sam 22.35-51; Ps 3.7; Ps 24.8; Ps 27.1-3; Ps 68.1-3, 21-23). Although it could be argued that war is now entirely spiritual, and that there is now no physical equivalent for Christians. But this would mean that God is inconsistent. If there were right conditions for war in the OT there are right conditions today. As long as we know what those conditions are then we can wage war if we fall within the guidelines. Note that the pacifists pit the NT against the OT.
   9.3. Hebrews 11.32-34: Warriors are set forth as examples of faith and accepts war, and the use of arms, in the enforcement of justice as act of faith.
   9.4. Luke 3.14 John the Baptist does not tell the soldiers to get out of the army. [Argument from silence, but very telling nevertheless, because the soldiers specifically ask what they should do, and they are not told to leave the army.]
   9.5. Luke 7.9: Jesus commends man for faith, does not tell him to leave the army.
   9.6. Jesus forbids use of sword in his defence (Mt 26.52) but is insistent that he came to bring a sword (Mt 10.34, 35) and then tells them to take up a sword (Lk 22.36, 38). Some would argue that this is not to be taken literally and that he tells them that two are enough, since they shouldn't have any. Compare Jn 18.10, 11 the time of use must be considered.
   9.7. Romans 13.4: The civil magistrate is not to bear the sword in vain. Uses the word for sword found in Gen 34.26 and Judges 3.16 (in the LXX). Using the sword is a proper expression of the authority delegated by God. Pacifists will take away the sword either for capital punishment or war. What then is the use of the sword?
   9.8. Revelation 19.11-16: God is a God of war.
   9.9. WCF: "... they [the civil magistrates] ought especially to maintain piety, justice, and peace according to the wholesome laws of each commonwealth; so, for that end, they may lawfully, now under the NT, wage war upon just and necessary occasions." (Lk 3.14; Rom 13.4; Mt 8.9, 10; Acts 10.1; Rev 17.14, 16)
10. Is there evidence that self defence is legitimate?
   10.1. Self defence in darkness is not an act of blood-guilt (Ex 22.2, 3; Jer 2.34).
   10.2. Jn 18.22, 23: Jesus did not turn the other cheek (figuratively) he challenged the injustice of the act.
   10.3. Acts 23.1-5: Paul with Sanhedrin.
   10.4. 1 Tim 5.8: Self defence and provision of material well being.

Application to Personal Self Defence

1. Analysis:
   1.1. There is a distinction between personal "turning the other cheek" and a person acting from a position of guardianship: parent, husband, employer, civil magistrate. Bavinck: "Personal insults can and must be forgiven, but when truth or justice is assaulted in one's person, then, according to Christian principles, which place the Kingdom of God and His righteousness above all else, it is one's duty to defend and give evidence."
   1.2. Love and wrath are found in God himself (Jn 3.16; 2 Thess 1.5-10).
      1.2.1. This is not a paradox (i.e., an argument that apparently derives self-contradictory conclusions by valid deduction, since somewhere in the premise there is an invalidity) but rather an antinomy (i.e., a contradiction between two apparently equally valid principles; insoluble in the light of available knowledge).
      1.2.2. Bavinck "There is therefore a true, but also a false, unreal and counterfeit love. Likewise there is a good peace for which we must strive and seek to maintain with all men, but there is also a false, sinful peace which should be broken. If with lies and injustice—by way of concession and for the sake of peace—we make a treaty or quietly permit what is wrong, then we are being spineless and denying truth and virtue."
   1.3. Preservation of life is a sacred trust.
      1.3.1. It is your duty to protect your life and the life of others, against attack. Self-defence is not a sin.
      1.3.2. Personal self-defence is in practice no different from defence of a nation, it is only scaled down.
      1.3.3. Based on the principle of the civil magistrate within his jurisdiction protecting those under his care, at the family level and individual level this seems to also apply to self defence.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

1.3.4. Self defence is never a call for revenge; and rarely a call to take the initiative for aggression (however, consider Esther 8.11).
1.3.5. There is a difference between retaliation (e.g., 1 Thess 5.15) and self defence (i.e., stopping an evil from occurring).

2. How do we balance self-defence with suffering for righteousness (e.g., 1 Pt 2.13-21; 1 Pt 3.8-17)?
2.1. 1 Pt 2.13-21 is in the context of master-slave relationships and authority, with patient endurance of injustices.
2.2. 1 Pt 3.17 is in the context of suffering for doing good in a self-defence setting (see, 13, 14).
2.3. There may be a difference between defending one's self against a belligerent aggressor when the aggressor's motives are not a direct attack against Christ and Christianity and defending against those who are attacking Christians precisely because they have taken a stand for Christ based on a specific principle.
2.4. We must be willing to defend truth even to death (our own death). God gave his son for truth (to fulfill all righteousness) which demonstrates that truth is more important than physical life.
2.5. Yet we are not to throw our lives away meaninglessly (e.g., Mt 24.15-21; Acts 25.10-12).
2.6. A balance may be developed by applying the principles for a just war.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

Appendix C – Usury and Charging Interest on Loans

1. Is it wrong to charge someone interest on a loan?
2. Is it wrong to charge usury or an exorbitant rate?
3. When does interest become usury?

4. What does the Bible say about interest and usury?
   4.1. Applicable words in Hebrew and also in Greek which seem to make a distinction:
      4.1.1. *nasak* (verb)/*nesek* (noun) (17X) [5967/5968] interest/usury (LXX: τόκον) from the word *nasa* (18X) creditor, debt
      4.1.2. *tarbiyt* (7X) [9552], (LXX: πλεονασμὸν) all cases excessive, exorbitant.
      4.1.3. *massa* (4X) [5391] twice in Nehemiah as (exacting) usury and as debts; e.g., Neh 10.31; Prov 22.26.
   4.2. It is very difficult to translate and interpret the words/passages. But we can find Biblical principles for answering the questions we have asked. First let's consider some applicable passages:
      4.2.1. Dt 23.19-20; Dt 15.6: Jews could charge a foreigner interest (*nasak*) but not a brother. [May be modified by Ex 22.25; Lev 25.35-37, see below.] Calvin translates verse 19: "shall not bite your brother with usury." *nasak* comes from the same root as the word bite.
      4.2.2. Mt 25.27/Lk 19.23 (τόκον) Jesus wants the money to be received back with interest. So it does not appear that in principle it is wrong to charge interest on money.
      4.2.3. Based on Dt 23.19-20/Dt 15.6 and Mt 25.27/Lk 19.23 it appears that it is not wrong, in principle, to charge interest.
      4.2.4. Ex 22.25: If they lend money to someone who is needy, they are not to be like a moneylender, and are not to charge him interest (*nasak*). Notice it was a loan that is to be repaid, not a handout.
      4.2.5. Lev 25.35-37: If one of your countrymen becomes poor don't charge him interest (*nasak+tarbiyt* 'interest of any kind' or possibly 'excessive interest'). They were not to sell food at a profit at the expense of the poor. Does this mean that supermarkets are required to sell food to the poor at cost? Note that it is proper to sell the food, nothing is said here about having to *give* it away, although they were encouraged to help the poor.
      4.2.6. Dt 15.7-11: Lend freely. The idea here is that they were not to expect repayment. The lender was not to expect repayment or to expect to receive anything back (although the obligation was on the borrower to repay, Lk 6.34-36). Jesus quotes verse 11 (Mt 26.11) in the context of kindness and generosity.
      4.2.7. Prov 28.8: Persons amassing wealth by exorbitant interest (*nasak+tarbiyt*) (NKJV usury and extortion) will leave it for another person who will be kind to the poor.
      4.2.8. Ezekiel 18.8, 13, 17; Ezk 22.12: Usury and excessive interest, *tarbiyt.*

5. What are some conclusions or lessons we might be able to derive from this consideration?
   5.1. Interest is not wrong in itself.
   5.2. Abuse of the right to charge interest appears to be the problem.
   5.3. The law did not forbid lending, but it did encourage giving.
   5.4. Interest for profit was not to be charged at the expense of the poor. The purpose of a loan was to make it possible for the poor to get back of their feet, not to subsidize them in poverty.
   5.5. It may not be wrong to charge interest of a rich brother who will become richer.
   5.6. There seems to be a distinction between simple interest and excessive interest or usury.
   5.7. Calvin's view, interpreting Deuteronomy 23.20, is that God does not make usury of foreigners lawful rather leaves it unpunished.

6. What is excessive interest or usury?
   6.1. It may be excessive if it is charged under the wrong circumstances. Anything in excess of capital repayment was not to be charged of the poor. Nehemiah (Neh 5.7) could be saying that it is usury because there should be no interest at all.
   6.2. It may be excessive when it exceeds a certain amount.
   6.3. It may be excessive when it harms our brother. Calvin interprets Deuteronomy 23.20 as dealing with our increase at the expense of another. He makes it clear that this is not forbidding profit of any kind, even on money. He uses an example of lending money at 5%. He says that interest on a loan may be usury when the interest would hurt our brother, but interest on a loan to a rich man who is looking for ready cash, and

© James R. Hughes, 2006

the loan will allow him, for example, to buy land and get richer, is not usury. So it is the end result of hurting our brother, or depriving him of his well being that is usury.

7. Is there anything in Nehemiah 5.1-13 that might tell us what may be a defining limit on interest?
   7.1. Verse 11 seems to indicate that it was a 1% charge that they were placing on the people.
   7.2. How much was 1%? 1% over what period?
      7.2.1. Surely not a year. 1% per year would hardly seem excessive in any situation.
      7.2.2. It was probably 1% per month, if the practice under the Persians around the middle of the 5th century BC was similar to that in other parts of the ancient Mediterranean world. Rome had a *centesima* (100th-part) which was a monthly payment (this was greater than 12% per year).
   7.3. If this (i.e., 1% per month) is defined as usury, then possibly we have a hint at a reasonable boundary for interest charges. 1% per month (more than 12% per year) may be too high. Possibly we can derive a principle from the Tithe. Note 1 Sam 8.15. It might be the case that the maximum that men take as a percent of anything is not to exceed the tithe that God takes. Interest on loans is not to exceed 10% per year. [In the same way, taxation by government should probably not exceed 10%.]
   7.4. When interest rates are at 15% for mortgages and 18% - 20% for credit cards it is considered oppressive. But the biggest culprit is sometimes not the banks, but the government which is inflating and devaluing the currency. In effect stealing from the population by forcing excessive interest rates.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

Appendix D – Lawful Oaths and Vows

1. What is an oath (or vow: Num 30.10; NIV Ps 132.2)?
   1.1. An oath is a solemn promise to keep or confirm a covenant (Dt 4.31; Dt 29.12, 14; 2 Ki 11.4).

2. What are some other reasons an oath might be taken? To:
   2.1. Devote self God (Num 6.2).
   2.2. Dedicate a child to God (1 Sam 1.11).
   2.3. Devote property to God (Gen 28.22).
   2.4. Offer sacrifices (Lev 7.16).

3. What are the guiding principles for taking an oath?
   3.1. We are not to take a false oath (Zech 8.17) or swear one rashly (Lev 5.4).
   3.2. Oaths are voluntary (Dt 23.21, 22), but binding (Num 30.2; Ps 76.11).
   3.3. We are forbidden from taking an oath in the name of idols (Josh 23.7) or any created thing (Mt 5.34-36). For example we should not say: "I give you my word as an Englishman …" or "I swear as a knight of the realm …" or "I swear on my mother's grave …" etc.
   3.4. We are to use God's name alone when taking oaths (Dt 6.13; Dt 10.20).

4. What is the implication of the following ban on taking the oath in God's name?
   4.1. 'So Help Me God' Stricken from Police Oath - Police recruits in Honolulu will no longer say, "So help me God," when they take the oath required of all new police officers. Wire reports say the group Hawaii Citizens for the Separation of State and Church pressured the police department to omit the word "God" on constitutional grounds - the "separation of church and state" argument. In fact, the U.S. Constitution says nothing about the separation of church and state. It just says, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." Some have interpreted the sentence as a blanket ban on uttering the word God on government property.[80]
   4.2. What is substituted for God's name?
      4.2.1. Either a created object or nothing.
      4.2.2. If nothing, it is equivalent to saying that the oath is based on my own veracity.
      4.2.3. If it is based on my own veracity then this is equivalent to setting my self in the place of God.
   4.3. Not taking an oath in God's name is equivalent to taking it in our own name; this is idolatry.

5. How do we explain Nehemiah's use of vows in light of Jesus' instruction in the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5.33-37)?
   5.1. The context shows us that Jesus is speaking in an extreme and hyperbolic form (e.g., plucking out eye, cutting off arm [Mt 5.29-30]).
   5.2. People had (have) trivialised oath-taking and Jesus was pointing out the need for oath-taking to be performed only in a serious context. When they trivialised oaths, they took the name of God in vain.
   5.3. They were also committing perjury by rationalising their oaths. By drawing a distinction between types of oaths they were again taking God's name in vain.
   5.4. In summary, clearly Jesus is teaching:
      5.4.1. To use the name(s) of God in casual language and swearing is anathema to God.
      5.4.2. To use God's creation as a substitute, as a form of swearing an oath, is wrong.
      5.4.3. To use oaths in casual conversation is not to be done. Oaths are a serious matter for a serious time.
      5.4.4. Vows are to be taken seriously (e.g., business contracts, courts of law, vows of office, etc.).
   5.5. Biblical examples:
      5.5.1. God to Abraham (Gen 24.7).
      5.5.2. Abraham sending Eliezer (Gen 24.2-4).
      5.5.3. Ezra and Nehemiah use in other legal settings (Ezra 10.5; Neh 13.25).
      5.5.4. Jesus did not denounce using God's name in a serious oath (Mt 26.63-4). Only when God's name was invoked did he answer.
      5.5.5. Paul used oaths (Rom 9.1; 2 Cor 1.23; Gal 1.20; 1 Thess 2.5; 1 Thess 5.27).
      5.5.6. God himself took an oath in his name (Heb 6.16, 17) and the writer of Hebrews justifies oath taking.

[80] CNSNews.com; 2002-09-25.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

5.6. WCF 22: “A lawful oath is part of religious worship, wherein, upon just occasion, the person swearing solemnly calleth God to witness what he asserteth or promiseth ... The name of God only is that by which men ought to swear and therein it is to be used with all holy fear and reverence: therefore to swear vainly or rashly by that glorious and dreadful name, or to swear at all by any other thing, is sinful, and to be abhorred (Mt 5.34, 37). ... [i]t is a sin to refuse an oath touching any thing that is good and just, being imposed by lawful authority.”

© James R. Hughes, 2006

Appendix E – The Role of the Civil Magistrate with Respect to the Church (Considerations)

1. Is it right for the state (civil magistrate) to be involved in the workings of the Church?
   1.1. If, not why not?
   1.2. If so, when (under what conditions, in what way) is it proper?

2. What are the Biblical guidelines for determining the relationship between the Church and the State?
   2.1. This has been a much debated issue from about 300 AD until recent times.
   2.2. There were significant power struggles in the Middle Ages between patriarchs and emperors, popes and emperors and kings, and archbishops and kings. Examples:
      2.2.1. The struggle between Henry IV of Germany and Hildebrand (c 1023-1085) who was instrumental in the approval of the invasion of England by William the Conqueror. As Pope Gregory VII (1073-1085) he confronted the issue of investiture (whether the monarch had the right to appoint the bishops and compel them to swear fealty to him). The pope argued that this subordinated the Church to the state and corrupted the faith (as if it could be any more corrupted in that period!!). Gregory threatened both excommunication and removal of Henry from his throne. Henry went to Canossa, a castle in Italy and stood barefoot (apparently in the snow) for three days asking for mercy. This dramatic spectacle of the mightiest prince in Europe asking pardon from a monk seemed to establish the principle for which the pope contended. But Henry was a politician. He made peace with his enemies, called a synod that deposed Gregory, placed one of his 'creatures' on the papal throne and banished Gregory to exile.
      2.2.2. Later his son, Henry V (1106-1125) continued the battle with Pope Paschal II (pope 1099-1118) who said: "The Church, redeemed by the blood of Christ, cannot become a servant. Such it would become if its pastors could not take possession of their offices without the assent of the king." The battle was finally settled at Worms (Sept. 23, 1122). The Emperor gave up and the Church was left free to choose its prelates. The 'court' of public opinion would not have allowed imperial veto of a worthy cleric elected by his brothers. (Cannon 182)
      2.2.3. In England a similar 'battle' was waged. William the Conqueror tenaciously held to his 'privileges' of controlling the principal ecclesiastical sees. He was very jealous over the revenues from them.
      2.2.4. The battle continued between Anselm (c 1033 – 1109) and William II (Rufus) and Henry I at about the same time as Gregory and Henry IV. Rufus kept the sees vacant as long as possible to collect the revenues for use by the state. On August 1, 1107 the Concordat of London concluded that a person elected to an ecclesiastical see was required to take the oath of fealty to the king before he could be consecrated. Nevertheless the church was allowed to elect who she desired.
      2.2.5. A similar battle occurred between Thomas Becket and Henry II in the 12th century. Later there was the battle between Henry VIII and the English Church. Henry VIII was a second son of Henry VII and was originally slated for a high ecclesiastical post. Arthur died in 1502 when Henry was 11. Henry reduced the clergy in England to submission through a series of steps. Although there was some opposition from the Bishop of Rochester, Cardinal John Fisher and Thomas Moore, the Church was generally complicit. In 1534 Parliament declared that the King "is and ought to be the supreme head of the Church." In 1535 Henry announced himself to be the "supreme head on earth of the English Church." In the meantime the pope had excommunicated him. Thomas Cranmer supported Henry and was appointed Archbishop of Canterbury. He seems to have been sincerely convinced of a monarch's divine right to absolute authority over the Church as well as the state.
      2.2.6. In October 1834 a licentiate (Young) was presented to a congregation in Perthshire Scotland. Only three people agreed with his placement, while 287 voted against his placement. The General Assembly, in accord with the will of the congregation, directed the Presbytery to reject Young. This decision was opposed by the patron (the Earl of Kinnoull) who raised an action with the Court of Session who ruled in favour of the patron and Young. The court over-ruled the General Assembly. The Lord President of the Court said: "That our saviour is the Head of the Kirk of Scotland in any temporal, or legislative, or judicial sense, is a position which I can dignify by no other name than absurdity. The Parliament is the temporal head of the Church, from whose Acts,

© James R. Hughes, 2006

and from whose Acts alone, it exists as a National Church, and from which alone it derives all its powers."[81]

2.2.6.1. Tensions increased, other examples arose, and the situation escalated to the point of absurdity: "an ordination [Edwards at Marnoch] altogether unparalleled in the history of the Church, performed by a presbytery of suspended ministers, on the call of a single communicant, against the desire of the patron, in face of the strenuous opposition of a united congregation, in opposition to the express injunction of the Assembly, and at the sole bidding, and under the sole authority of the Court of Session."[82]

2.2.6.2. Events came to a complete impasse between the Church and the civil courts. The Assembly in 1842 addressed to the Government its Claim, Declaration and Protest. The Claim set out the ways that the state's secular tribunal had invaded the guaranteed rights of the Church and declared the sole Headship of Jesus Christ and the government of the Church in the hands of office-bearers distinct from the Civil Magistrate. The government treated the Claim with disdain.

2.2.6.3. In November of 1842 the Evangelicals in the Church of Scotland held a convocation in Edinburgh to prepare a plan of action since a breach with the State seemed inevitable. 470 ministers attended and Thomas Chalmers preached on Ps 112.4.

2.2.6.4. The Moderates in the Church of Scotland refused to take the threat of disruption seriously and were insisting on unity and the bond of peace. But in May 1843 over 400 ministers left St Andrew's Church and moved to Tanfield Hall where Dr Welsh opened the proceedings and constituted the Assembly of the Church of Scotland Free. The first Moderator was Thomas Chalmers.

2.2.6.5. [The Claim has an inherent logic problem. It appeals to the grants given to the Church by the State. But in appealing to the State's granting rights to the Church, the authors of the Claim miss two key points: 1) the State has no right to empower the Church in the first place, and 2) what the state grants, the state can take away.]

2.3. The Establishment principle and even Erastianism (state supremacy over the affairs of the Church) was the view of many parts of Christendom (e.g., Eastern Church, Lutheran countries, England) for much of its history:

2.3.1. Constantine called synods as did many of the emperors in East and West who followed him.

2.3.2. Charlemagne instituted aspects of worship (following his understanding of David's actions). He had an organ constructed for the cathedral at Aachen and he (and his son Louis the Pious) directed other liturgical reforms such as changes in the missal (the book of worship) and introduced a special dress (cassock [black gown reaching to the feet), alb [white linen vestment with sleeves worn over the cassock], chasuble [ornate outer vestment], and camail [pointed hood or cowl]) in the style of the Roman tunic and toga to distinguish the clergy from the ordinary society. Until then the clergy in the Frankish domains had worn a shirt, fur jacket, leather pants, and a wool cloak. [It is interesting to note how the stress on formal liturgy was accompanied by a dress that distinguished the clergy from the congregation. The same occurred later in the 17th century in England.]

2.3.3. Under Henry VIII, Mary, and Elizabeth (especially) the Church of England was given the form which, in its main features, it has to this day.

2.3.3.1. "During Elizabeth's long and eventful reign (1558-1603) the Church of England was given the form which, in its main features, it was to preserve into the twentieth century."[83]

2.3.3.2. The Act of Supremacy (April, 1559) declared the Queen to be "the only supreme governor of this realm ... as well in spiritual or ecclesiastical things or causes as temporal."

2.3.3.3. The Act of Uniformity (April, 1559) prescribed one uniform ritual of public worship for all Englishmen in the *Book of Common Prayer*. No liberty of worship was permitted. Any clergyman who deviated from this prescribed form of worship was liable to be treated as a criminal.

2.3.3.4. The Elizabethan settlement (among Puritans and Roman Catholics) was an effort to steer a middle course between Catholicism and the Reformation. The Church of England is

[81] G. N. Collins, *The Heritage of Our Fathers* (Edinburgh: Knox Press, 1976). P. 49.

[82] G. N. Collins, *The Heritage of Our Fathers* (Edinburgh: Knox Press, 1976). P. 50.

[83] Kenneth Scott Latourette, *Christianity Through the Ages* (NY: Harper, 1965), p. 191.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

officially Reformed in doctrine, Roman Catholic in liturgy, and Episcopalian in church government.

2.4. This Establishment principle was rejected by the American 'wall of separation' in the US Constitution ... Amendment, Article 1 (Sept 25, 1789):

2.4.1. "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or of the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances."

2.4.2. Observations:

2.4.2.1. The original intent was to prohibit the establishment (e.g., like the Church of England or the Church of Scotland, or the Lutherans in Sweden, etc.) by the US Federal government of a particular Christian denomination (e.g., Episcopalian, Congregational, Presbyterian, Baptist, Roman Catholicism) as a single denomination for the US. It did not prohibit a state from establishing a particular denomination (which some did for a time), nor did it prohibit the explicit endorsement of Christianity by the US Federal government.

2.4.2.2. Today the 1st Amendment is viewed as the prohibition of any form of religion (and especially) Christianity being endorsed in the public forum.

2.4.2.3. This amendment has influenced the thinking of many other nations. The general trend in most 'democratic' nations today is to total disestablishment of Christianity.

2.4.2.4. The *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (1981) has clearly been influenced by the 1st Amendment as can be seen in the section on Fundamental Freedoms: "Everyone has the following fundamental freedoms: (a) freedom of conscience and religion; (b) freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, including freedom of the press and other media of communication; (c) freedom of peaceful assembly; and freedom of association."

2.4.2.5. Now other freedoms in the 1st Amendment are being threatened if they are practiced by Christians (e.g., freedom of speech and right to peaceful assembly).

2.5. In many parts of the world the establishment principle is still accepted but in the form of establishing false religions (e.g., Israel, Judaism; Saudi Arabia, Islam; North Korea, atheism or emperor worship).

2.6. The *Westminster Confession of Faith* deals with the relationship between the Church and Civil Magistrate. It was developed in an era when the role of the king or Lord Protector relative to the office-bearers of the Church was a key consideration. Below is the statement from the original 1647 version, followed by the revised American version.

2.6.1. CHAPTER XXIII — Of the Civil Magistrate. III [Original].

The civil magistrate may not assume to himself the administration of the Word and sacraments, or the power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven: yet he hath authority, and it is his duty, to take order, that unity and peace be preserved in the Church, that the truth of God be kept pure and entire; that all blasphemies and heresies be suppressed, all corruptions and abuses in worship and discipline prevented or reformed; and all the ordinances of God duly settled, administered, and observed.[84] For the better effecting whereof, he hath power to call synods, to be present at them, and to provide, that whatsoever is transacted in them be according to the mind of God.[85]

2.6.2. CHAPTER XXIII — Of the Civil Magistrate. III. [American Changed Version]

Civil magistrates may not assume to themselves the administration of the Word and Sacraments; or the power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven; or, in the least, interfere in matters of faith. Yet, as nursing fathers, it is the duty of civil magistrates to protect the Church of our common Lord, without giving the preference to any denomination of Christians above the rest, in such a manner that all ecclesiastical persons whatever shall enjoy the full, free, and unquestioned liberty of discharging every part of their sacred functions, without violence or danger. And, as Jesus Christ hath appointed a regular government and discipline in his Church, no law of any commonwealth should interfere with, let, or hinder, the due exercise thereof, among the voluntary members of any denomination of Christians, according to their own profession of belief. It is the duty of civil magistrates to protect the person and good name of all their people, in such an effectual manner as that no person be suffered, either upon pretense of religion or infidelity, to offer any indignity, violence, abuse, or injury to any other person whatsoever: and to take order, that all religious and ecclesiastical assemblies be held without molestation or disturbance.

2.6.3. Nehemiah, and the original version of the *WCofF*, operate under the principle that the Civil Magistrate has the responsibility to ensure that the Church is functioning correctly. The basic

[84] Is 49.23; Ps 122.9; Ezra 7.23, 25-28; Lev 24.16; Dt 13.5, 6, 12; 1 Kings 18.4; 1 Chron 13.1-9; 2 Ki 23.1-26; 2 Chron 34.33; 2 Chron 15.12, 13.

[85] 2 Chron 19.8-11; 2 Chron 29-30; M 2.4, 5.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

model is one of a mutual responsibility within a separation of powers. Each sphere, under Christ, has the responsibility to administer within its sphere of authority and to call the other sphere to account as the case may arise.

2.6.3.1. A proper role of the Civil Magistrate is to hold the Church accountable before God for the proper observance of Biblical principles of doctrine, worship, discipline, and the right administration of the sacraments.

2.6.3.2. In the same way, the Church is to hold accountable the Civil Magistrate to the just administration of the Laws of God, the execution of justice consistent with God's standards and examples (e.g., capital punishment) and the pursuit of peace (police and military) in the realm.

2.6.3.3. Note: the Free Church of Scotland, even though separated from the state Church at this time, continues to hold to the establishment principle.

2.7. We must realize that we are children of the 'Enlightenment' and are highly influenced by the thinking and philosophy of the 18th century. It is too easy for us to accept the modern interpretation of the 1st Amendment to the US Constitution that separates Christianity from the operations of the State. We act as if man and his institutions can exist without reference to God's Law. [Example: a head of state can lie before a grand jury and not be held to have done wrong because the state has no standards.] We must step outside our 'world-view' and see if it conforms with the Biblical model for Church-State relations.

2.8. With the denominational chaos in the Church today there is little practical reality that there could be an established denominational form supported by either the US or Canada. In the US it would be either Roman Catholicism or Southern Baptists that would become the established religion, in Canada it would likely be either Roman Catholicism or some form of 'evangelicalism.' We would object to either form being established.

2.9. We are a long way from seeing the establishment principle being applied. So whether or not we believe in it, defending the cause would be "tilting at windmills." But we should be co-belligerents with other Christians and defend the sovereign rights of Jesus over the State, and the enforcement of God's Law within society.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

Appendix F – Relationship Between Church and State (Considerations)

1. What did Nehemiah use as the primary criteria by which he selected Hananiah? (Neh 7.2)
   1.1. He was a man of integrity and one who feared God more than most men do.
      1.1.1. He doesn't tell us if Hananiah understood military tactics, was an able administrator, or was able to lead men. Although, knowing what we do about Nehemiah, we can assume that these factors also had a bearing in his selection of the man.
      1.1.2. The primary factor that Nehemiah mentions as the attribute of most value is the 'fear of God.'
      1.1.3. A man who fears God is one who considers his awe and acknowledges his greatness and sovereignty over all of life.

2. What did Jethro tell Moses should be the primary criteria for the selection of delegated judges? (Ex 18.21; Dt 1.13-18)
   2.1. Men who fear God, and are trustworthy, wise, understanding and respected; and who hate dishonest gain.

3. Compare the requirements for civil leadership with the list of qualifications for Church elders.
   3.1. Capable men (experienced, skilled) [self controlled (1 Tim 3.2; Titus 1.8); able to teach is a specific skill required of elders (1 Tim 3.2, 5; Titus 1.9); not a recent convert (1 Tim 3.6); manages own family well, children obey (1 Tim 3.4-5; Titus 1.6)].
   3.2. Men who fear God [upright, holy (Titus 1.8); keeps hold of the deep truths (Titus 1.9)].
   3.3. Trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain [not a lover of money (1 Tim 3.3); does not pursue dishonest gain (Titus 1.7)].
   3.4. Wise and understanding (both in the worldly sense, but also in the spiritual sense) [loves what is good (Titus 1.8); disciplined (Titus 1.8); temperate (1 Tim 3.2; Titus 1.7)].
   3.5. Respected [not violent or quarrelsome, gentle (1 Tim 3.3; Titus 1.7); has a good reputation with outsiders (1 Tim 3.7); not overbearing (Titus 1.7); not quick tempered (Titus 1.7); above reproach, blameless (1 Tim 3.2; Titus 1.6); respectable (1 Tim 3.2); not given to drunkenness (1 Tim 3.3; Titus 1.7)].
   3.6. In the Bible, there is essentially the same requirement (although the specific skills might be somewhat different) for someone who is in a responsible position in the state as someone who is in a responsible position in the Church.

4. Is it right or appropriate to base the appointment of a civil magistrate on his relationship with God?
   4.1. If not, why not?
   4.2. If so, how is this to be determined?
   4.3. The appointment, by Nehemiah and Moses, of men of integrity with a fear of God indicates that the *primary* criterion for their appointment was their relationship with God, not their abilities as administrators, leaders, or military tacticians (although they would have likely also had abilities in all these areas).

5. What challenges are presented by the *requirement* for a civil magistrate to have a relationship with God?
   5.1. How do we determine if the person truly fears God?
   5.2. Can the determination be based on Church membership?
   5.3. Can a person be excluded who does not have a relationship with God?
   5.4. What if a person claims to have a relationship with God, but we don't agree that it is valid (e.g., a Jew, Moslem, Mormon, etc. might claim to have a fear of God).

6. Can a religious 'test' be applied, to determine if a person is qualified to serve in a civil capacity?
   6.1. There have been times in *our* (Great Britain/Presbyterian) history when the signing of a religious oath became a requirement for holding a public office.
   6.2. The Test became a major issue during the reign of James II (1685-1688) when he attempted to place Roman Catholics in offices where they were required to take an oath of allegiance to the Anglican Church. James attempted to arbitrarily overrule the law.
   6.3. Jonathan Swift makes reference the Test requirement in his political satire: *Gulliver's Travels*.
      6.3.1. Book 1 (written in 1721-22), Section 4: "Many hundred large volumes have been published upon this controversy: but the books of the Big-Endians [Roman Catholics] have been long forbidden, and the whole party rendered incapable by law of holding employments."

© James R. Hughes, 2006

6.3.2. Book 1, Section 6: “In like manner, the disbelief of a divine Providence renders a man uncapable of holding any public station; for since kings avow themselves to be deputies of Providence, the Lilliputians think nothing can be more absurd than for a prince to employ such men as disown the authority under which he acts.”

Swift refers to the Test Act that he militantly supported. This demanded the repudiation of belief in Transubstantiation and was used to prevent Roman Catholics and Nonconformists from holding public office.

6.4. The *Laws and Liberties of Massachusetts* (1648) ruled that Anabaptists and Jesuits were to be expelled from the colony.

6.5. A Test was put in place in 1643 when the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland (etc.) adopted the *Solemn League and Covenant*.

6.5.1. The stated primary purpose of those who ratified the *Solemn League and Covenant* was the: “preservation of the reformed religion in the Church of Scotland, in doctrine, worship, discipline, and government ... [and] the reformation of religion in the kingdoms of England and Ireland, in doctrine, worship, discipline, and government, according to the word of God, and the example of the best reformed Churches.” This reformation was to be complete. And it was to be based only on the Bible. Particularly in Scotland, adherence to the *Covenant* became a condition before one could hold public office.

6.5.2. We should consider the impact of this *Covenant* (the lessons of history!).

6.5.3. On the *positive* side:

6.5.3.1. It provides an objective measure for a Christian society; much like a confession of faith does within a denomination.

6.5.3.2. When the State makes the true religion one of its primary concerns it will inevitably have an impact on individuals. At this time, the religion being supported by the State was Reformed Protestantism. The result was an increased interest in effective preaching. From this preaching arose many revivals and a true piety. In Scotland and England in the period of the Commonwealth many people were converted and lives where changed. However, this widespread piety affected, essentially, one generation only and did not last into the next century.

6.5.3.3. The *Covenant* was the first step in the attempt to create a common Church for the three countries. The next step was taken by the English Parliament when it commissioned the production of a confession of faith. The Assembly produced *the Westminster Confession of Faith*, catechisms, and directories for worship and government over a six- year period.

6.5.4. On the *negative* side:

6.5.4.1. The consequence of this requirement was to purge the civil government and the army of all those deemed not to be suitable. It appears that many who took the vow of allegiance did so insincerely or in ignorance, following the example of others, or out of fear of civil and ecclesiastical censures, or to maintain privileges. Even students had to swear to the *Covenant* before they could attend college.

6.5.4.2. Within a generation there was little of this zeal left. By 1688 few could be found, among the ordained clergy or the rest of the people, in the establishment who really cared about evangelical principles and the rights of Christ as head of his Church. Good intentions are not sufficient, nor can they be sustained.

6.5.4.3. The *Covenant* indirectly led to a breach between the English and Scottish and to a split among the Presbyterians in Scotland, and very quickly to the undoing of Presbyterianism. The precipitating factor was the treatment of King Charles I. The Scots were essentially supporters of the king, and in late 1647 a number of Scots took the side of the king. Through a secret agreement (called the Engagement) they promised to support the king if he would promise to support the Covenant. Within Scotland a split arose between the “Engagers” and the “Covenanters”. This divided a once united cause for Presbyterianism. Also, as a result of the Scottish support for Charles I, Cromwell went to war against the Scots and finally beat them in 1650. The Scottish support for Charles I may have been a factor in his execution by the English Parliament in 1649. After the death of Charles I, the Scots turned their allegiance to Charles II, and he was crowned King of Scotland in 1651. Charles II initially claimed a support for church freedoms, and even, falsely, signed the Covenant to get Scottish backing as he sought the throne. His initial ‘support’ gave way to vengeance and a resulting persecution. The persecution began in earnest with the ejection of around 400 ministers from their charges.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

6.5.4.4. The concept of a 'test' is dependent on the Church having a strong influence on society. At the time of the Second Reformation in Scotland there were many who signed the Solemn League and Covenant (1643), and in the next few years. Great enthusiasm prevailed throughout the three kingdoms (Scotland, England, Ireland) as they were swept forward with religious zeal. But how can the Church (let alone the State) be Reformed and stay Reformed?

6.5.4.5. A vow of faith is not enough. For example, ministerial vows, even if taken sincerely, do not appear to be sufficient. Even those who under solemn oath, with hands laid on their heads, have sworn agreement with the *Westminster Confession of Faith* (or a similar Reformed Confession) may begin to drift away from the principles which they have agreed to defend.

7. Does the attempt to create a Christian government blur a distinction between church and state?
   7.1. Some argue that a statement like "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's." (Mk 12.17) shows that there must be a clear 'wall of separation' between the two institutions. This passage does not speak about the accountability or mutual responsibility of the two institutions. It only indicates that there are clearly defined, and largely distinct, roles for the two institutions.
   7.2. God is sovereign over the nations. Christ is lord over the state as well as over the Church (Gen 1.27-28; Ps 2.1-12; Mt 28.19; Rom 13.1-7; Phil 2.10-11; Rev 2.26-27).
   7.3. Reformed confessions accept the view that the state is to profess the true religion.
      7.3.1. *Westminster Confession of Faith:* CHAPTER XXIII – Of the Civil Magistrate
      "God, the supreme Lord and King of all the world, hath ordained civil magistrates, to be, under Him, over the people, for His own glory, and the public good; and, to this end, hath armed them with the power of the sword, for the defense and encouragement of them that are good, and for the punishment of evil doers."
      7.3.2. *Belgic Confession:* ARTICLE 36. Of Magistrates
      "We believe that our gracious God, because of the depravity of mankind, has appointed kings, princes and magistrates, willing that the world should be governed by certain laws and policies; to the end that the dissoluteness of men might be restrained and all things carried on among them with good order and decency. For this purpose he has invested the magistracy with the sword, for the punishment of evildoers, and for the protection of them that do well."

8. On what basis is law and morality for government to be formed?
   8.1. If it is not on God's Law, the only option is man's opinion.
   8.2. God's law, not personal moral philosophy, is the basis for national morality. This requires that men legislate according to God's laws. Professed Christians have lost sight of this, for example:
      8.2.1. "First, we must recognize that the task of the state is not to legislate morality. The state may not define rules for virtuous living in society, and then insist, by legal means, that all live in accordance with those rules. This would be a most terrible form of tyranny. Instead, the task of the state is to administer public justice; an important difference and one upon which the work of CPJ [Citizens for Public Justice] is premised." [86]
      8.2.2. "Secular, unbelieving opinion has always antagonistically raged against any approach to politics which is subject to the Biblically revealed word and direction of Jesus Christ. So the dismay of many in our society to the revival of specifically Christian politics today is not surprising. The astonishing thing is that some professing *Christians* should concur with them! But sadly that is what we find in a recent issue of the *Fundamentalist Journal* (July/August 1988), in a well-meaning but theologically confused article by Norman Geisler, entitled "Should We Legislate Morality?" His answer is yes, but he stumbles badly over the question of *what kind* of morality we should legislate. Geisler is adamant that "The Bible ... is not normative for civil law." I propose that we examine and seriously evaluate that amazing proposition. ... It is Geisler's hope to find some middle ground in politics—a "just government" which is *neither* relativistic nor "religious," with a moral basis for civil law which is not the special revelation of God in the Bible. This is Geisler's primary and predominating misconception, a conceptual and theological misunderstanding which underlies and flaws his entire thinking on the subject."[87]

---

[86] Tim Schouls, "Loving our Neighbours" Politically, *Christian Week*, January 21, 1992.

[87] Greg Bahnsen., *What Kind of Morality Should we Legislate? The Biblical Worldview* 4:10 (October, 1988) © Covenant Media Foundation, 800/553-3938; www.cmfnow.com/articles/pe076.htm.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

8.3. If the state doesn't legislate morality then what does it do? What are its laws to do, legislate immorality? What are its laws dealing with if not morality? What is a law against stealing legislating? Morality or not?
8.3.1. What people are really saying is that they do not want to legislate **God's** morality. They are saying that they will not have God, and God's laws, over them. Any law that is based on anything other than what God has said is acceptable. They hate God's law.
8.3.2. To think that we should not strive and hope for a Christian government and that the civil magistrate should not adhere to God's Law is to deny the Bible's clear teachings.
8.3.2.1. "In political talk, evangelicals are especially terrified by almost any hint of biblical law. Some actually think it is a recent and novel notion to reflect upon questions in the light of biblical law. Evangelicals are embarrassed by Constantine, Alfred king of the Saxons, and the Puritans; all of whom made God's Law the Law for their nations.[88]
8.3.3. A subordinate question we have to ask is how we make a distinction between the laws applicable to the Jewish Theocracy and our own—where do we come down along the discontinuity/continuity continuum?
8.4. Late 20th c and early 21st c man does not have the monopoly on understanding how to define and apply law. A few men in black robes (the high-priests of secular humanism) are not the final authority on law.

9. Is there a distinction between law and morality?
9.1. If an *action* is immoral, it should be illegal. Only immoral *actions* can be codified as being illegal.
9.2. Men make many laws that fall outside of this principle. For example, they:
9.2.1. Judge thought ("hate crimes") when actions are what should be addressed.
9.2.2. Legislate (either through statute or judicial decision) in favour of actions that are immoral such as: gambling, homosexual 'marriage', homosexual practices, divorce for 'incompatibility'.
9.2.3. Legislate compassion when they enforce social engineering schemes for income redistribution.
9.2.4. Use the "power of the sword" to over regulate, and outlaw behaviours that we may not like but are not morally wrong. A specific example is the "no call register" to stop telemarketers from calling. As much as we may hate the interruption of these calls, those who are selling legitimate products and services are probably not breaking any of God's laws when they phone us and ask us if we would like to make a purchase.
9.3. Any law of man should be demonstrably a derivation of the principles in the Ten Commandments and an instance that follows the example of the case laws in the Bible. The classic example: a law that requires a fence around a swimming pool is a positive application of the 6th Commandment and follows the *example* of the case law found in Dt 22.8.
9.4. We should not make an artificial distinction between one form of law and another. In the end, all just law is God's Law. To be just, every law must be, as we've noted, derived from the principles enunciated in God's Moral Law (the Ten Commandments) and follow the example of its specific application.
9.5. The *Westminster Confession of Faith* states: "God, the supreme Lord and King of all the world, hath ordained civil magistrates, to be, *under Him*, over the people, *for His own glory*, and the *public good*; and, to this end, hath armed them with the power of the sword, for the defense and encouragement of them that are good, and for the punishment of evil doers."[89]

10. What is your reaction to the following statements?
10.1. "We believe that God has given to civil government, not individuals or the church, the duty to bear the sword for justice and safety. Civil authorities should not punish beliefs, but some behaviors rooted in beliefs—such as killing, assault, or theft—may be outside the law and therefore punishable by the civil authority. Which behaviors are legally prohibited in a society based on freedom of belief and religion will be determined in a process of persuasion, debate, and election of representative lawmakers, with checks and balances provided by the executive and judicial branches and by constitutional safeguards for the rights of minorities."[90]
10.1.1. He makes the civil magistrate responsible for enforcing, and punishing breaches of the second portion of the Ten Commandments such as theft, but not breaches of the first portion of the Ten Commandments such as idolatry or breaking the Sabbath.

---

[88] Douglas Jones, Douglas Wilson: "And Babylons Fall," *Angels in the Architecture*, Canon Press, 1998, p 153.

[89] *Westminster Confession of Faith* Chapter 23 – "Of the Civil Magistrate", paragraph 2.

[90] John Piper, "Eight principles: How Christians should relate to those of other faiths," *World*, October 12, 2002, Volume 17, Number 39.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

10.1.2. This is a typical dichotomy presented by modern Christians who believe that the civil magistrate is not responsible for enforcing the entire Ten Commandments. It seems to arise from the wide acceptance of the supposed "wall of separation".
10.1.3. On what grounds can this separation be made? Why is it proper to enforce on non-Christians the commandments which prohibit murder (but of course, many would exclude the broader implications such as prohibitions against abortion, euthanasia, suicide, and would reject the imposition of capital punishment on murders), adultery (but many would reject the broader implications related to sexual purity or prohibitions against homosexuality) and theft but not adulterating the worship of Creator of the universe and stealing his glory?

10.2. "I cannot object if you want to work on Sundays. You are a free agent and I have no right to dictate to you on this matter. But I do object if, because you are working, I have to put up with more noise, more traffic, more environmental damage and more interference with my day of rest and worship."[91]
10.2.1. Netted down: "I cannot object if you want to work on Sundays. You are a free agent and I have no right to dictate to you on this matter. But I do object if, because you are working, I am inconvenienced."
10.2.2. His argument for not allowing others to work is if it *inconveniences* other people, not because it is contrary to God's Law.
10.2.3. Imagine if the passage said: "I cannot object if you want to *steal*. You are a free agent and I have no right to dictate to you on this matter. But I do object if, because you are stealing, I am deprived of my goods."

11. Why do many Christians conclude that it is okay for the civil magistrate to enforce (selectively) the second six commands of the Ten Commandments but not the first four?
11.1. It is possible that the concept of '*two* tables' of the Law has contributed to a faulty view that there are two classes of Laws.
11.2. In contrast, consider:
11.2.1. The commands filled both sides of the stone tablets completely (Ex 32.15, 16).
11.2.1.1. This implies that there was no room for man to add more commands.
11.2.1.2. It also indicates that no command could be removed or the stones would have a gap.
11.2.1.3. The set of commands was perfect in its completeness
11.2.2. The complete set of commands covered each stone. The two sections were not on different stones.
11.2.2.1. Why would two stones be needed when all the commands will fit on one?
11.2.2.2. The text of the two proposed 'tables' are not nearly equal in length.
11.2.2.3. There is no division suggested in the structure of the commandments.
11.2.3. There were two complete copies of the Law (the Ten Commandments)
11.2.3.1. One was provided for each party in the covenant. Both God's and man's copies were placed inside the Ark of the Covenant (1 Ki 8.21) in the holy of holies.
11.2.3.2. God's copy was symbolically in heaven. His glory rests on Law.
11.2.3.3. Man's copy was symbolically placed under God's presence as a witness to man's obligation and commitment to God's Law.
11.2.3.4. Both copies were placed under the atonement cover. The atonement cover was over the demands of law. The blood was sprinkled on the cover symbolizing Jesus and his blood covering the demands of law.
11.2.3.5. The two tablets are the witness to the pact between God and man—the Eternal Covenant of Peace.
11.2.4. The structure and coverage of the Ten Commandments as a unitary whole is important.
11.2.4.1. They cover all our duty to God. As a set they cover our duty to:
11.2.4.1.1. God: his being, worship/honour, name, possessions (the Sabbath command is representative of the portion man owes him in tribute)
11.2.4.1.2. God's earthly representatives:
11.2.4.1.2.1. Their actions: man's life, dearest property (wife/helper), property in general.
11.2.4.1.2.2. Their words: man's reputation.
11.2.4.1.2.3. Their thoughts and attitudes.

[91] Donald Matheson, "News: Compulsory Sunday Working, *The Monthly Record—The Magazine of the Free Church of Scotland*, January 2003, p. 7.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

11.2.5. The Ten Commandments are the perfect will of God and as a whole are the complete requirement for man in summary form. They provide the comprehensive standards for church, state, family, personal life, and corporate relationships.

12. Is the suppression of false religion (the logical outworking of a Test act) a form of un-biblical intolerance or the right of a Christian nation?
    12.1. Do men have a right to disobey God? Do they have a right to do as they please?
    12.2. Can the state require men to live according to God's Laws?
    12.3. Is God's law to be applied to men today? If not, what law is?
    12.4. *The Second Helvetic Confession* – 1566, The Duty of the Magistrate:
    "The chief duty of the magistrate is to secure and preserve peace and public tranquillity. Doubtless he will never do this more successfully than when he is truly God-fearing and religious; that is to say, when, according to the example of the most holy kings and princes of the people of the Lord, he promotes the preaching of the truth and sincere faith, roots out lies and all superstition, together with all impiety and idolatry, and defends the Church of God. We certainly teach that the care of religion belongs especially to the holy magistrate."
    "Let him, therefore, hold the Word of God in his hands, and take care lest anything contrary to it is taught. Likewise let him govern the people entrusted to him by God with good laws made according to the Word of God, and let him keep them in discipline, duty and obedience. Let him exercise judgement by judging uprightly. Let him not respect any man's person or accept bribes. Let him protect widows, orphans and the afflicted. Let him punish and even banish criminals, impostors and barbarians. For he does not bear the sword in vain (Rom 13:4)."
    "Therefore, let him draw this sword of God against all malefactors, seditious persons, thieves, murderers, oppressors, blasphemers, perjured persons, and all those whom God has commanded him to punish and even to execute. Let him suppress stubborn heretics (who are truly heretics), who do not cease to blaspheme the majesty of God and to trouble, and even to destroy the Church of God."
    12.5. *Belgic Confession*, ARTICLE 36. Of Magistrates:
    "And their office is, not only to have regard unto, and watch for the welfare of the civil state; but also that they protect the sacred ministry; and thus may remove and prevent all idolatry and false worship; that the kingdom of antichrist may be thus destroyed and the kingdom of Christ promoted. They must therefore countenance the preaching of the Word of the gospel everywhere, that God may be honoured and worshipped by every one, as he commands in his Word."
    12.6. *Westminster Confession of Faith*, CHAPTER XXIII – Of the Civil Magistrate:
    "The civil magistrate may not assume to himself the administration of the Word and sacraments, or the power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven: yet he hath authority, and it is his duty, to take order, that unity and peace be preserved in the Church, that the truth of God be kept pure and entire; that all blasphemies and heresies be suppressed, all corruptions and abuses in worship and discipline prevented or reformed; and all the ordinances of God duly settled, administered, and observed. For the better effecting whereof, he hath power to call synods, to be present at them, and to provide, that whatsoever is transacted in them be according to the mind of God."
    12.7. *Westminster Confession of Faith*, CHAPTER XX – Christian Liberty, and Liberty of Conscience IV:
    "And because the powers which God hath ordained, and the liberty which Christ hath purchased, are not intended by God to destroy, but mutually to uphold and preserve one another; they who, upon pretence of Christian liberty, shall oppose any lawful power, or the lawful exercise of it, whether it be civil or ecclesiastical, resist the ordinance of God. And, for their publishing of such opinions, or maintaining of such practices, as are contrary to the light of nature, or to the known principles of Christianity, whether concerning faith, worship or conversation; or, to the power of godliness; or, such erroneous opinions or practices, as either in their own nature, or in the manner of publishing or maintaining them, are destructive to the external peace and order which Christ hath established in the Church, they may lawfully be called to account, and proceeded against by the censures of the Church, and by the power of the civil magistrate."
    12.8. Wholesome Severity Reconciled With Christian Liberty, George Gillespie:[92]
    "The true resolution of a present controversy concerning liberty of conscience.
    TO THE CHRISTIAN & COURTEOUS READER.
    Under these fair colors and handsome pretexts do sectaries infuse their poison, I mean their pernicious, God provoking, truth defacing, Church ruinating, and State shaking toleration. The plain English of the

[92] Scottish assembly delegates: Alexander Henderson, Samuel Rutherford, Robert Baillie, George Gillespie, Archibald Johnston of Warriston, John Maitland Earl of Lauderdale.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

question is this: whether the Christian Magistrate is keeper of both tables: whether he ought to suppress his own enemies, but not God's enemies, and preserve his own ordinances, but not Christ's ordinances from violation. Whether the troublers of Israel may be troubled. Whether the wild boars and beasts of the forest must have leave to break down the hedges of the Lord's vineyard; and whether ravening wolves in sheep's clothing must be permitted to converse freely in the flock of Christ. Whether after the black devil of idolatry and tyranny is trod under our feet, a white devil of heresy and schism, under the name of tender consciences, must be admitted to walk up and down among us. Whether not only pious and peaceable men (whom I shall never consent to persecute), but those also who are as a pestilence or a gangrene in the body of Christ, men of corrupt minds and turbulent spirits, who draw factions after them, make a breach and rent in Israel, resist the truth and reformation of religion, spread abroad all the ways they can their pernicious errors, and by no other means can be reduced; whether those also ought to be spared and let alone."

"I have endeavored in this following discourse to vindicate the lawful, yea necessary use of the coercive power of the Christian Magistrate in suppressing and punishing heretics and sectaries, according as the degree of their offense and of the Church's danger shall require: ..."

13. Under a system of government that professes to be Christian, what would be done with dissent? Where would people go who don't agree? How are they to be treated?
    - 13.1. Tolerance has boundaries. For example, most people would not permit false religions to sacrifice children or adults (like the Moabites or Aztecs). The real issue is not if there will be boundaries, but where they will be drawn. Some practices must be excluded.
    - 13.2. Tolerance could allow the 'right' to private beliefs.
    - 13.3. What should be done about the outward practice of falsehood?
    - 13.4. How do we avoid an inquisition?
    - 13.5. A truly Christian society is the only society that can formulate any form of true tolerance. All other societies are intolerant (for example: Islam, feminism and homosexuals have all demonstrated that they cannot tolerate any dimension of Biblical Christianity)
        - 13.5.1. It is inappropriate to argue that our current form of society is any more tolerant than a Christian state would be.
        - 13.5.2. All non-Christian societies, whether ancient Rome, France at the time of the Revolution or today, Nazism, Communism, Pol Pot and the Kemer Rouge, Islam, Hinduism, etc., persecute Christians. The only reason we don't see full-scale persecution in the West is because there are the vestiges of Christianity left in our culture. But they are fading fast.
        - 13.5.3. Is it better to live in a Christian society where evil (theft, butchery, nuclear threat, genocide, terrorism, abortion, aberrant (unnatural) sexual practices, absolute dictators) is punished or one where evil reigns and Christians are persecuted?
        - 13.5.4. 'We have swallowed whole all the Enlightenment "religion-horror-stories."'[93]
        - 13.5.5. '... if a modern State were to embrace biblical law, the result would probably look more like the absence of a State than an Islamic tyranny or the "family values" of the Christian right ... We are far too immature to face the radical liberties of biblical law. We have such State-induced slave mentalities that we couldn't handle the responsibilities of real freedom."[94]
        - 13.5.6. See my *Christian Libertarian Manifesto* for an example of what a truly Christian state might look like.[95]

14. Is the introduction of Christian civil government in a sinful world possible?
    - 14.1. From the time of Constantine various attempts to introduce Christian civil government have been tried. Geneva in the 1550s, Scotland in the 1640s and Massachusetts in the 1640s are examples. There was also an attempt in Holland in the late 19th century under Kuyper.
    - 14.2. By the third generation these societies had largely been consumed by nominalism.
    - 14.3. Religious covenanting appears to retain its 'power' only for the generation that makes the covenant.
        - 14.3.1. The Church has much to learn about how to make religious covenants work in the civil arena. Pressuring people into accepting them tempts them to sin.
    - 14.4. With all the denominational chaos in the Church, how could we have a standard for Christian government?

---

[93] Douglas Jones, Douglas Wilson: "And Babylons Fall," *Angels in the Architecture*, Canon Press, 1998, p 152.

[94] Douglas Jones, Douglas Wilson: "And Babylons Fall," *Angels in the Architecture*, Canon Press, 1998, p 153.

[95] Available at: www.epctoronto.org.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

14.4.1. What is the irreducible minimum standard for Government? Apostles Creed? Ten Commandments? *Westminster Confession of Faith*? More or less than we require for church membership? Credible profession of faith?

14.5. How are the proponents of Christian government (e.g., Christian Reconstructionists) going to make such a government work and continue to exist beyond the one generation which brings it into existence?

14.5.1. The Geneva town council found it difficult 100 years before the Puritans. Cromwell, the Scots, and Puritan NE didn't find it any easier.

14.5.2. How will it be possible in North America with an incredibly fragmented Church?

14.6. Is it feasible in lands with (essentially dead) established churches?

15. Should Christians be striving to put in place a Christian government?

15.1. If not, how are we to interpret the command of Jesus: "Therefore go and make disciples of all *nations* [not just a few individuals from different countries] ..."

15.2. How are Christians to be a leavening influence in society?

15.3. Were Nehemiah, Constantine (or some of the emperors after him), Charlemagne, some early English kings, Calvin, Cromwell, the Covenanters, the Puritans, and Kuyper wrong in attempting to set up a Christian state?.

15.4. We have to learn from history and not repeat the mistakes—a primary mistake is making people take vows that they really don't believe.

15.5. We have to be realists. At the present, the concept of a Christian government is of limited probability from our perspective. The Church is very weak and uncoordinated and living a love-affair with materialism. When our fellow believers don't hold to some of the fundamentals of Christian government (e.g., capital punishment, restitution for crimes, limited powers and activities of the state, Sabbath keeping, etc.), it is hard to expect society, in general, to hold to them. The Church needs a lot of educating with respect to the Biblical principles of government before we could hope to introduce the concepts into the society at large.

15.6. The position of some (especially many in the reconstructionist 'camp') is rather shallow in this area. Their simplistic answer is that a majority of society is going to be converted and everyone will get along happily for a 1,000 year reign (chiliasm) of Christ-centred government.

15.6.1. It may be that this will happen. We will rejoice if it does.

15.6.2. Yet much of their energy seems to be focused on: 1) trying to reform government when hearts aren't converted, and 2) trying to change the Church with a 'bludgeon.'

15.6.3. A more realistic model seems to be that we will see, until the end of time (until Christ returns), a general increase in Christian influence throughout the world. We will also see a marked increase in Christian influence over a period of a few generations and then a swing in the opposite direction for a time.

15.7. Societies will again swing to Christian moral principles because God's general grace will never permit complete collapse of all of society in the entire world. Men will see the failure of the current 'post-modern' subjective-moral thinking and socialistic government models just as they have seen the failure of communism, and will demand 'law and order.' When they do, Christians need to be prepared to present a rationale basis and model for morality rather than the form of totalitarianism that will arise from fear and un-Christian reaction to the consequences of evil.

15.7.1. John Calvin: "Even though all the princes of the earth were to unite for the maintenance of our Gospel, still we must not make that the foundation of our hope. So, likewise, whatever resistance we see today offered by almost all the world to the progress of the truth, we must not doubt that our Lord will come at last to break through all the undertakings of men and make a passage for his word. Let us hope boldly, then, more than we can understand; he will still surpass our opinion and our hope."[96]

16. What are summary principles for Church and State relationships, we can apply while living in the 21st century?

16.1. Never compromise Christian principles for apparent (short-term) political gains.

16.2. Always present Christian principles (e.g., that homosexuality is a sin, abortion is murder, commercial activity on the Sabbath is abhorrent to God).

[96] Quoted by J. H. Merle D'Aubigne', *History of the Reformation in Europe in the time of Calvin*, 1876, Vol 7, p. 49.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

16.3. Never be afraid of, or embarrassed by, declaring God's law as the standard for the nations of the world. David, Jesus, John the Baptist and Paul were not ashamed by it. Charlemagne, Alfred, Calvin, and the Puritans were not embarrassed by it. Do we know more than these men?
16.4. Always encourage, and demand, that the State follow and apply God's laws.
16.5. Continue to strive for Christian influence in government at every opportunity, using every legitimate means at the same time that we are presenting the gospel.
16.6. Pray for the civil magistrates (1 Tim 2.1, 2), and obey them as ministers of God (Rom 13.5; Titus 3.1; 1 Pt 2.13, 14).
16.7. Call the civil magistrate to account by reminding him that he is a minister of God (Rom 13.4) who must do what God requires.
16.8. Use legitimate means (e.g., the courts) to challenge impositions of evil against Christianity and God's Laws.
16.9. Where possible, vote for those who have stated that they will hold to Biblical standards while in government (yes, we might throw away a vote).
16.10. Work at all political levels (e.g., school boards) where we can have a direct influence. Follow the example of men like Joseph , Daniel and Nehemiah who served God faithfully under pagan governments.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

Appendix G – The God-Ordained Role for Government

1. What functions are often attributed to government in political science or philosophy?
   1.1. Generally: Legislative, administrative, and judicial.

2. What functions does the Bible explicitly give to government? What role is it to play?
   2.1. Not, "What role does it in fact often play in examples recorded in the Bible?"
      2.1.1. The fact that we find a record in the Bible of a government performing certain actions does not mean that this is a God-ordained function for government. The Bible's historical records of pagan government practices are not indicative of what God requires of governments.
   2.2. Not, "What role does government usurp to itself?"
      2.2.1. The fact that we find modern governments performing specific roles (e.g., health provider, education provider, or central banker) does not mean that they have an intrinsic right to do so, any more than a person who steals has a right to.
   2.3. Some people might argue that it doesn't really matter what the Bible says about the civil magistrate's role, the functions of government, or the form that government should take, since the Bible isn't a textbook for political theory/science. They argue that the Bible is a textbook for faith but not public social policy. In essence, they argue that governments can do as they please since God does not determine their role.
   2.4. It is certainly the position of Paul (Rom 13.1-7) that the civil magistrate has God-given functions. To step beyond those functions is to step into the domain of two other primal, God-ordained, and God-defined, institutions: the family and the Church.
   2.5. Its duties are to rule/govern, administer justice, and protect the people from enemies inside and outside.

3. What does the Apostle Paul say is the God-ordained role for government (Rom 13.1-7[97])?
   3.1. According to Paul who establishes governments (Rom 13.1, 4)
      3.1.1. God.
      3.1.2. This tells us that they are under his authority. The governing authority is God's servant.
      3.1.3. Therefore he is to serve God.
      3.1.4. This should silence Christians who say that Governments are not under God's authority and subject to his Laws.
      3.1.5. Since they are under his authority, governments must look to the Bible to find how they are to execute their mandate. They have no other source of guidance for what God wants them to do and how he wants them to behave.
   3.2. According to Paul what functions is the government to perform? (Rom 13.1-7)
      3.2.1. Govern according to what is right, i.e., according to God's law (1, 3) that defines right and wrong.
      3.2.2. Do good (4), i.e., act justly in judgement.
      3.2.3. Wield the power of the sword (4).
      3.2.4. Do good by punishing evil doers (4).
      3.2.5. Levy taxes to support their functions (6).

4. What are the functions of a government, under God?
   4.1. The civil magistrate as a servant (minister) of God (Rom 13.1-5) is called upon to govern according to what is right as defined by his Law, and to exercise justice in accordance with God's law.
      4.1.1. Law is not what: i) judges rule or derive through common law precedent; ii) rulers dictate; iii) social convention stipulates.
      4.1.2. His laws are to be derived from, consistent with, and subordinate to, the Moral Law of God and follow the example of the case laws.
         4.1.2.1. *Derivative*: must show how laws (e.g., speed limit, seat-belt, stock trade, prohibition of marijuana, not pay for medical treatments, etc.) are a direct application of one, or more, of the Ten Commandments and follow the example case laws in Leviticus and Deuteronomy.
         4.1.2.2. *Consistent*: not contrary or contradictory to God's Law (e.g., permitting Sunday shopping, 'marriage' of homosexuals, requiring celibacy).

[97] We could also consider what Peter says in 1 Pt 2.13, 14; Psalm 2.1-12; and a number of other passages.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

4.1.2.3. *Subordinate*: not of greater importance than God's law (e.g., mother's 'right' to abortion *vs* the father's or child's rights).

4.1.3. This truth is hard for people to 'swallow' in a culture that makes political correctness, relativism, autonomy its god's. For example:
'The Prime Minister of Canada, Jean Chretien, is a Catholic and strongly supports same-sex marriage. Bishop Fred Henry of Calgary, Alberta, said the PM "doesn't understand what it means to be a good Catholic," and, if he didn't start getting serious, he "risks his eternal salvation." Well, you can imagine. Joining in the media outrage was the Minister of Heritage, Sheila Copps, who said she was appalled by the Bishop's statement: "I think that's something that each person reconciles with their own maker and that's not something that you take to the political arena. Every Canadian, regardless of their religion, has to reconcile their beliefs with their god, their Allah, their guru, that's why we live in a country that separates the views of religion from the views of the state." The theological view of the state is that people have their own makers, their own gods, and, even, their own Allahs. Bishop Henry dissents from the state religion and gave offense by suggesting that the PM should make up his mind about whether he wants to continue in the community of dissent that is the Church. Henry's refusal to believe in the many gods of the society puts him in a position not unlike that of the early Christians who were accused of atheism. Canada may be finding its long-sought national identity as the North American social laboratory for experiments in unbounded muddleheadedness.'[98]

4.2. To protect the citizens (with the sword) from those who do not do good. To protect them from either those who are internal enemies of what is good and orderly (e.g., criminals) or external enemies (e.g., aggressors in war). This implies the establishment of police forces and armies.

4.3. To punish those who do not obey the law. This implies courts (which are shown by example, to be valid, in the Bible; as for example when Moses was instructed to setup subordinate courts), executioners, and enforcers (police).

- *Westminster Confession of Faith* – 23.1: "God, the supreme Lord and King of all the world, hath ordained civil magistrates, to be, under Him, over the people, for His own glory, and the public good; and, to this end, hath armed them with the power of the sword, for the **defense** and encouragement of them that are good, and for the **punishment** of evil doers. [Rom 13.1, 2, 3, 4; 1 Pt 2.13, 14]"
- *Westminster Confession of Faith* – 23.1: "... they ought especially to **maintain piety**, **justice**, and **peace**, according to the wholesome laws of each commonwealth [Ps 2.10, 11, 12; 1 Tim 2.2; Ps 82.3, 4; 2 Sam 23.3; 1 Pt 2.13]; so for that end, they may lawfully now, under the New Testament, wage war, upon just and necessary occasion. [Lk 3.14; Rom 13.4; Mt 8.9, 10; Acts 10.1, 2; Rev 17.14, 16]"

5. What functions are not given to government by God?

5.1. We won't consider this question in detail.[99]

5.2. You will find that to the extent that governments perform functions that they have not been given by God they fail to fulfill the obligation that he has specifically been given to them. For example: today people expect the government to provide health care, welfare, education (schooling), social security, etc. They provide these (usually inadequately), and meanwhile justice is often a farce (e.g., criminals go free, evil is endorsed) and armies (and police forces) for the defense of the nation are becoming increasingly weakened.

5.3. The civil magistrate is to perform the duties assigned by God, and not to usurp to itself the functions of the other God-ordained institutions (the family and the Church). Its duties are to rule/govern, administer justice, and protect the people from enemies inside and outside.

5.4. We can apply a similar model in the Church (e.g., Is 62.6). In addition to their responsibility of teaching the congregation, the elders of the church have a duty to rule/govern (according to God's Law), discipline/judge, and protect the congregation from enemies inside and outside.

---

[98] Richard John Neuhaus *First Things*, 137, November 2003.

[99] To pursue this question further, consider: *Christian Libertarian Manifesto;* available at: www.epctoronto.org..

© James R. Hughes, 2006

Appendix H – The Law of God, the Standard for National Laws

Proposition: Every nation should apply the Law of God as **the** normative basis for its laws.

1. What arguments might people give who disagree with this proposition? There are in essence only three:
   1.1. It is *outdated*: It was written for an OT, Jewish, agrarian society and has no relevance for us living in the sophisticated, technological, urban, democratic, pluralistic society of 21st century NA.
   1.2. It is *irrelevant*: The Bible (by this they mean the NT) deals only with matters of salvation. The economic/justice principles given in the OT have been replaced by the "law of love."
   1.3. "*You cannot legislate morality*." In response, what do governments legislate, immorality? Everything a government does has a moral implication. Governments, by their very nature, exist to legislate morality. The question is not whether or not they will legislate morality, the question is whose morality will it be, man's or God's? What they are really saying is that they don't want God's law to be applied to them. Any law that is based on anything other than what God has said, is acceptable.
   1.4. These arguments are largely inventions of the Enlightenment that bore their fruit in the 20th century. It has been commonly accepted both in Church and State (where the Civil Law is based on English Common Law) from before the time of Alfred the Great in the 9th century[100] until recently, that any law, regulation, or command that is contrary to, or not based on, the law of God is invalid.
   1.5. Views such as that of James Bannerman are problematic: "… where the laws of the state are more or less borrowed from Christianity …"[101] The laws of God must not be *borrowed* from the Bible. The Bible, God's Law, must be the basis for all law.
   1.6. The *Westminster Larger Catechism* is clear (Q93, 95, 99.5-7) that God's Law applies to all men and are, thus, to be the basis for all law.
   1.7. For more information on the topic of the applicability of God's law, refer to:
      1.7.1. *Does God's Law Apply to All Men, in All Nations, Through All Time?*[102]
      1.7.2. *Christian Libertarian Manifesto*.[103]
      1.7.3. *Criteria for Assessing Whether a Proposed Human Law is Legitimate*.[104]

2. We will be in danger if we assert either of two simple extremes:
   2.1. All the laws of the OT still apply in detail except entire classes that are explicitly changed in the NT, such as those that point to Christ's redemptive work (e.g., the sacrifices). The danger of this extreme can be seen in laws that appear meaningless to apply in their specific form in our context today (e.g., Dt 22.8). Following this course we would miss the general principles and carry over features specific to the Israelite context.
   2.2. All the laws of the OT are set aside, and we are required to obey only the laws given in the NT by Jesus or the Apostles. The danger of this extreme is illustrated by the fact that we would lose many of the specific laws relating to sexual morality given in Leviticus 18-19, because these are *not* repeated in the NT. (e.g., *Westminster Confession of Faith* 24.4)
   2.3. We must avoid both extremes and affirm that there is both continuity and discontinuity between the OT and the NT. However, too many in the Church today do not recognize the continuity and see only the discontinuity. As a result, they use a 'smorgasbord' approach and let either their own opinions or majority opinion be the determining factor about which laws of God form the OT apply today. It is important that we try to approach the difficult subject of the applicability of the OT laws with *principles* derived from the Bible.

3. Jesus himself teaches the continuing validity of the Law (Mt 5.17, 18). Paul is consistent in what he tells Timothy about the usefulness of the OT (2 Tim 3.16, 17).
   3.1. The Law, as a specific portion of God's word, continues to be valid in the NT era and retains its validity in its entirety (Mt 5.17, 18) and in its parts (Mt 5.18, 19). There is no part of the Law about which we can

[100] Perks, Stephen C. *Christianity and Law: An Enquiry into the Influence of Christianity on the Development of English Common Law*, (Whitby, England: Avant Books, 1993), pp. 52-54.
[101] Bannerman, James. *The Church of Christ*; Vol 2, (Edinburgh, 1868), p. 361. In the Appendix on Church and State.
[102] Available at: www.epctoronto.org.
[103] Available at: www.epctoronto.org.
[104] Available at: www.epctoronto.org.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

say "This is abolished or cancelled." Jesus says specifically (Mt 5.17) that he did not come to *abolish* the "Law". There is no room in Jesus' statement for the ideas:
3.1.1. The OT is obsolete
3.1.2. Has no application to us today
3.1.3. All men do not have to obey its commands.
3.2. We are not to be NT Christians; we are to be Biblical ('whole-Bible') Christians.
3.3. The fulfillment of the Law by Christ does have the effect of altering the specific *way* or sometimes the *form* by which we are to keep many of the laws. And in other cases the specific observance of some of the laws has been set aside, or the form has been changed, because the righteousness they require is now experienced in a different manner.
3.4. This, of course, introduces the difficulty of determining *how* (not if) the laws apply. However, it is not simple to determine how the laws apply, and there is much disagreement in the Church on how to apply the OT laws in the NT context:
3.4.1. Which OT laws are to be observed today exactly as they were at the time they were communicated by God?
3.4.2. Which OT laws must we continue to observe but in a new form?
3.4.3. Are governments today to apply only the last six Commandments?
3.4.4. Are they to apply only nine (i.e., not the Sabbath command as many in the Church believe) of the e Ten Commandments, or all ten?
3.4.5. Are we to apply only laws repeated in the NT by Jesus or the Apostles?
3.4.6. Are we required to keep any specific OT laws, beside the Ten Commandments, even if they are not repeated in the NT?

4. What are some guidelines or principles for applying the Law today?
4.1. God does not alter his Law from age to age. God's Law is an eternal and universal moral standard, reflecting his character and defining righteousness. It applies to all mankind, at all times (e.g., Rom 2.15; Rom 8.4; 1 Cor 7.19; 1 Tim 1.8-11; 1 Jn 3.4). It is against this standard that men will be judged on the Last Day. Time or geography do not alter his standard.
4.2. Keeping the Law expresses love for God (e.g., Mt 22.37-40; 1 Jn 5.2-3).
4.3. God does, however, change specific *ways* in which his Law is applied and observed as he deals with men through unfolding revelation. For example, he places before us the eternal requirement to worship him as he prescribes but has changed the specific forms, at various points in his redemptive plan. Abraham offered sacrifices and had a single covenantal sign (circumcision). The sacrificial system under Moses became more elaborate with the introduction of many elements pointing to Christ. At the time of David, God added new elements such as instrumental music. With the destruction of the Temple the form of worship was simplified: the types were replaced by spiritual equivalents. Today the form is somewhat different than it was for the Jews in the Synagogue, but all the essential elements of worship are present in NT worship.
4.4. The fulfillment of the Law by Jesus (Mt 5.17) does not abolish any of God's laws (principles) but does change, in many cases, the specific way we are to observe the laws. For example, the ceremonial law is *not* abolished [For a fuller explanation, see "The Ceremonial Law is *Not* Abolished" in: *In Spirit and Truth: Worship as God Requires.*[105]], but the forms have been changed. We are still required to worship God—some (most) of the external features have been set aside or changed, but not the principles.
4.4.1. Commenting on idolatry, John Knox quotes Dt 4.2 (Dt 12.32 is similar) and says: "Which words are not to be understood of the Decalogue and Law Moral only, but of statutes, rites, and ceremonies; for equal obedience of all his laws requireth God."[106]
4.4.2. The OT *forms* for observing the redemptive types in God's Law—the sacrificial system (e.g., Heb 7.11, 12; Heb 9.9, 10), the ceremonies (e.g., Acts 20.7; Col 2.16-17) and the OT signs of the covenant (e.g., Acts 2.38; Gal 5.11)—are not required by NT Christians because of God's completed revelation in Christ. The types have been replaced by NT counterparts by which Christians fulfill the requirements of the Law.
4.4.3. Although Christ was the final sacrifice, we continue to offer sacrifices (Heb 13.15, 16) and incense (Rev 8.3, 4) in spiritual form as a remembrance of what he did. Just as the Passover and Circumcision and sprinkling with hyssop have been replaced by their bloodless spiritual

[105] James R. Hughes, *In Spirit and Truth: Worship as God Requires (Understanding and Applying the Regulative Principle of Worship),* 2005*;* available at: www.epctoronto.org.
[106] Knox, John. "A vindication of the Doctrine That the Sacrifice of the Mass is Idolatry" in *Works*, David Laing, ed. (Edinburgh: the Bannatyne Club, 1854), 3:37-38.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

equivalents of the Lord's Supper and Baptism (sprinkling: Is 52.15; Lev 14.7; Num 8.7; Num 19.18, 19).

4.4.4. Specific laws of holiness and separation (e.g., food laws; clothing, seed and animal mixtures; intermarriage with non-Jews; Leverite marriage; cities of refuge; etc.) are not to be observed today (e.g., Acts 10.9-16) as they were by the Jews. These were physical symbols of principles that are to be manifested in the spiritual life of believers (e.g., Mt 16.11, 12; 2 Cor 6.14-18).

4.5. The Ten Commandments are the universal and eternal summary of all of God's laws. All other laws in the Bible are instances, or examples, of how to apply the Ten Commandments in specific circumstances.

4.5.1. All the specific laws in the OT are applications of one or more eternal principle summarized in the Ten Commandments. Although the principles are always binding on all men (Rom 2.15), the specific applications may not be. For example, we do not put walls around our roofs (Dt 22.8); but the principle, derived from the sixth Commandment, makes it right for a city council to require fences around swimming pools.

4.6. The NT writers accept the OT law as normative and often carry forward, either by inference or explicitly, specific laws of the OT in NT contexts (e.g., 1 Cor 5.1; 1 Cor 9.9, 13-14; 2 Cor 6.14; 2 Cor 13.1; 1 Tim 5.18; James 5.4).

4.7. It is not necessary for the NT to repeat a specific OT law in order for it to apply to us. Where specific laws deal with human relations they still apply in detail today, even as to Israel (e.g., laws about sexual relations, weights and measures, employer/employee relationships, kidnapping, theft, etc.).

4.8. It is wise for us to operate on the principle that specific OT laws, especially where the circumstances are the same (e.g., people relating to one another), continue to apply in the same way unless we find a clear reason (either explicit or by inference) in the NT showing that this is not the case.

4.9. The collection of specific laws in the OT is not exhaustive (covering every aspect of life). For example, a civil magistrate may create a law requiring us to stop at a red light, as an application of the sixth Commandment. Therefore, specific OT laws that apply today are not the only specific laws we are required to follow. However, specific laws created today must be consistent with the principles established in God's Law, be derived with great care from the Ten Commandments, and must follow the examples in the Bible of applying the Ten Commandments to specific situations. See the *Westminster Larger Catechism* Q136, 142, 145 for examples.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

Appendix I – Is Requiring Church Membership Biblical?

1. Why is there a common rejection of the concept of membership in a local congregation or in a denomination? What are some of the reasons that people give?
   1.1. Church membership does not make you a Christian, only profession of faith does, therefore membership isn't needed. [The logic of this argument fails when you consider the example of the following: "Baptism does not make you a Christian, only profession of faith does, therefore baptism isn't needed."]
   1.2. Membership in God's invisible/eternal church does not necessarily require membership in a local body. A person can belong to the Church of Christ without making a specific commitment to a local congregation. [It is true that one can be a Christian without being a member of congregation. However there are many things that one can do (or not do), while being a Christian, but nevertheless be an *inconsistent* Christian. If Church membership can be demonstrated to be a Scriptural requirement, then full obedience will require it. In addition, the two are not mutually exclusive. A person can be a member of both the visible and the invisible Church through two different relationships. Just as a person can be a member of a family through two different relationships (e.g., as a daughter and as a sister).]
   1.3. The sin, hypocrisy, and inconsistency visible in every congregation "turns off" people from church membership. "There is no perfect congregation, so I won't join any." [If consistently applied, the logic of this position would require Christians to cease being committed to the institution of marriage because some marriages have failed. Or, to give up citizenship in a country because particular politicians are corrupt.]
   1.4. Eldership abuse and the prevalence of cults makes people leery of the organized church and they feel it is 'safer' not to be subject to others. [This argument cannot be applied consistently. If it were, we would have to be against parenthood because some parents abuse their children. Or, we could not work for a boss because some bosses are unfair. At times all human authority is abused; this does not mean that human authority is never to be respected.]
   1.5. The Bible doesn't appear to explicitly require Church membership. [Because the term "church membership" does not appear, does not mean the concept is not taught (compare, with the Trinity). We will consider the Bible's teaching on the concept later. This kind of argument from 'silence' is very dangerous. It is used for instance by those who argue that there are no explicit examples of infant baptism, but is applied inconsistently since there is no explicit instance of a woman participating in the Lord's supper, of women singing in public worship, or of musical instruments being used in NT church worship.]
   1.6. Membership in a local congregation is not an important matter. Individual believers are at liberty to do as they please. If they want to join, that is fine; and if not, that is fine too. [This same kind of argument is used by those who say what we do in worship is not an important matter, or is to be determined by individual taste. It is also the argument used by people who want to dismiss such matters as Paul's instruction (1 Tim 2.11) about women teaching, and in other areas where people don't want to hear the Bible's teachings or the logical conclusions of arguments derived from those teachings. This argument can be used only if Church membership is truly a matter of indifference. If Church membership can be demonstrated to have Scriptural warrant, then it is required.]
   1.7. Admission to the Lord's Table, is understood in largely individualistic terms, and does not require Church membership. [If the requirements for admission to the Lord's Table are essentially the same as the requirements for Church membership, then meeting the qualifications for admission to the Lord's Supper provides admission to Church membership. If the requirements for Church membership are stricter than the requirements for admission to Lord's Supper, then men may be placing requirements on others that are greater than what God requires. If the requirements for Church membership are less than the requirements for admission to the Lord's Supper, then we will have to explain why the Church would grant privileges or rights to someone who they would exclude from the Lord's Supper. For example, why would we let someone vote for a pastor who we would not let sit at the Table? We will consider this matter later.]

2. What are the underlying reasons that influence people to hold these views about Church membership?
   2.1. A spirit of individualism and independency (fragmentation) seen throughout Western Culture.
   2.2. No commitment to corporate responsibility.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

2.2.1. A sociological analysis entitled *Habits of the Heart, Individualism and Commitment in American Life*,[107] argues that modern America [and by logical extension Canada] is infected with a virus called individualism, with an inversely correlated lack of "commitment in American life." The authors demonstrate that individualism has been associated with a deterioration of commitment in most institutions: cultural, political, educational, social, vocational and religious. Where commitment to institutions still seems to exist it appears that the primary reason is to meet individual/personal needs rather than to be of value to, or to meet, the needs of the community itself. The result has been an attitude of "consumerism" that encourages people to seek what they can get out of a particular community. So, for example, we hear people saying "I left that church because I didn't get anything out of … the preaching, the fellowship, the ministry …" Instead, we should ask: "What can we contribute?"

2.3. Lack of understanding of the covenantal/federal model that God used when he established the institutions of: marriage, state, Church.

2.4. Rebellion against the explicit oversight by Elders (or authority in general).

2.5. A marked lack of willingness to undertake careful analysis of the Bible's teachings.

2.6. Ignorance of doctrine that pervades the Church.

2.7. The Church's lack of emphasis on corporate responsibility and individual accountability with respect to admission to the Lord's Table.

2.8. No commitment to historic and Reformed confessional positions on the Church.

3. What is the 'Church'?

3.1. The Church can be defined in two senses:

3.1.1. The invisible organization (invisible to us, but visible to God) that acts visibly in time and space which is the body of Christ (Col 1.24) that includes all believers through all time in heaven and on earth, (Mt 16.18; Heb 12.23) and whose head is Christ (Eph 5.23ff; Col 1.18).

3.1.2. The visible organization that is:

3.1.2.1. Made up of a definable number of individuals (Acts 2.41, 47; Acts 4.4; Acts 5.14);

3.1.2.2. In an assembly (e.g., congregations Rom 16.1, 5; 1 Cor 1.2; 1 Cor 4.17; 1 Cor 11.18 and larger groupings of congregations such as 'fellowships' or denominations Acts 8.1, 3; Acts 9.31 [singular in Greek]);

3.1.2.3. Gathered (assembled, Heb 10.25) around a defined form of worship (1 Cor 11.17-34; 1 Cor 14.26-40), the correct observance of the sacraments (Mt 28.19; 1 Cor 11.23), a confession of faith (Acts 2.42; Col 2.7; Heb 4.14), and a Biblically-derived form of Church government (Heb 13.17);

3.1.2.4. Inclusive of both believers and unbelievers (Mt 7.21-23; Mt 13.24-30; Acts 20.29; Rev 2.20);

3.1.2.5. Ruled by Elders (Acts 20.17, 28) with a responsibility to teach (1 Tim 3.2), govern (1 Tim 5.17; 1 Pt 5.1-3; Heb 13.17), and discipline (1 Tim 6.12) those under their care.

3.2. The two sense or concepts of the Church are not separate, but rather overlap and represent two dimensions of one Church.

3.3. Fundamental to the question of church membership is the Biblical evidence for the existence of a divinely appointed visible church in scripture. If the visible church is merely an invention of men, then membership in it cannot be considered a necessary act of discipleship. However, if the visible church is a divinely appointed institution, then membership in it, and commitment to it, are acts of Christian discipleship.

4. What Biblical evidence shows that those who profess faith in Christ are to become members of local congregations?

4.1. Many believed through the preaching of the apostles. Then they were not left on their own. They were added to the number who were already part of the church at Jerusalem (Acts 2.41, 47; Acts 4.4; Acts 5.14).

4.2. Jesus appointed men to act as his 'under shepherds' in each church or congregations (Titus 1.5).

4.2.1. They are to lead, rule, guide, admonish, teach, protect and discipline the flock of God (Acts 20.13-35; 1 Tim 3.1-7; Titus 1.5-16; 1 Pt 5.1-4).

4.2.2. Paul instructed the Elders in the church at Ephesus (Acts 20.28) to care for the flock over which God has made them overseers.

[107] Robert Neelly Bellah (ed.) *et. al*., Univ. California Press, May 1996.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

4.2.3. Peter also instructed Elders (1 Peter 5.3) to "be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers."
4.2.4. The Elders in one locale (e.g., Ephesus) were not directly responsible for the 'sheep' in another locale (e.g., Jerusalem or Rome). They were responsible for the flock over which they were placed as overseers. They were not in doubt as to who in the congregation were their responsibility.
4.2.5. Caring for the flock would be impossible, if there were no recognizable membership. An elder couldn't watch over a flock that he couldn't define in terms of some form of membership or association (whatever we want to call it).
4.2.6. If Elders are directly responsible for particular assemblies of God's people, then obviously it is necessary for both them and the people to know who actually makes up the assembly.
4.2.7. It is therefore necessary to demarcate (e.g., count or enumerate, list, ask for a commitment, etc.) in some way those within the assembly and those who are inside and outside the assembly (1 Cor 5.12).
4.2.8. The people must let the Elders know whether or not they desire to be the recipients of this pastoral oversight. Unless they give some indication to that effect (e.g., a verbal profession, take out membership) there cannot be pastoral oversight.

4.3. Hebrews 13.17; 1 Timothy 5.17: How could the flock practically keep these commands without a definable and visible group of leaders?
4.3.1. These passages do not say that it is necessary to obey and submit to every self-appointed leader of every organization.
4.3.2. By necessary inference, these passages imply that a person is committed to some definable society with a definable number of leaders. Otherwise, the commands are meaningless with no real practical implications.

4.4. Matthew 16.15-19: Notice that by Christ's own authorization, the Church is provided with the power of the "keys" so as to have the authorized responsibility of "binding and loosing," which at the very least includes the authority to determine terms of communion/membership in the authorized covenant community. Notice also, that this takes place on earth while being authorized in heaven. Since the time of the Apostles, It is the Elders' job to draw the line where the Lord Jesus would draw it— no tighter and no looser!

4.5. What is excommunication? It is expelling someone from the Church, which includes, at least, barring someone from the Lord's Table. How can the church have power to expel, if it does not have power to admit? If we admit ourselves to the Church (e.g., come to the Supper solely by our own volition), then how can we be removed by any other means? Admission to, and exclusion from, the Church's sacraments is by the same means; either our own individual volition or through the authority of the Elders. In 1 Corinthians 5.13 Paul does not say the man is to remove himself, but that the Church is to expel him. How can the Church expel someone if there is no concept of membership and it does not have the duty of admission into membership?

4.6. In Matthew 18.15ff Jesus provides an order to be followed when calling an erring brother or sister to repentance and restoring fellowship between individual members of the Church. If the guilty person refuses to listen, Jesus instructs us to bring the matter to the Church. That clearly points to believers being recognized as members of some body in which to put into effect Church censure.

5. What are the conditions for Church membership?
5.1. A credible profession of faith.
5.2. Baptism into Christ.
5.3. A professed desire/willingness to align with an assembly (congregation and denomination) and to be under the authority of the Elders in that assembly.
5.4. A Christian life that lives in conformity with the credible profession.

6. What are some other conditions for Church membership that some assemblies (congregations and denominations), at various times throughout the history of the Church, have required?
6.1. Acceptance of a particular confession of faith (e.g., the *Westminster Confession of Faith*). Note that a "credible profession of faith" may be demonstrated by agreement with a confession of faith or through the recitation of a creed such as *The Apostles Creed*, but this is not the same thing as requiring a person to explain the fine points of doctrine that are catalogued in a confession of faith.
6.2. Attendance at membership classes.
6.3. Examinations of doctrinal understanding.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

6.4. A test of 'orthodoxy' such as holding a particular belief (e.g., use of a particular translation of the Bible, agreement to a particular view about the sequence of historical events before the return of Christ).
6.5. Agreement to abstain from particular behaviours (e.g., drinking alcohol, smoking, card playing, attendance at plays or movies, wearing particular types of clothing {hats}, etc.).
6.6. A test of commitment. For example, one congregation I am aware of required people to explain why they should be accepted as members and how they would contribute to the body life. I used to think that this was a 'cool' idea. But now I think it goes beyond the requirement of Scripture. I think, rather, that the leadership of the Church has the responsibility to work with members in the congregation to develop and apply their skills in service.

7. What should admission to the Lord's Supper be based on?
7.1. A credible profession of faith:
7.1.1. Metaphysical and moral 'bowing'—acknowledgement that we are creatures, and sinful creatures (Phil 2.9-11).
7.1.2. A meaningful expression of conviction of sin. Confession/repentance from sin (1 Jn 1.9).
7.1.3. An understanding that Jesus has provided salvation from sin. Belief in Jesus as saviour and Lord (Acts 16.30, 31; Rom 10.9).
7.1.4. Personal trust, not just intellectual acknowledgement.
7.1.5. We should not require more than Jesus and the Apostles required. Examples: Mt 8.5-13; Mt 9.20-22; Acts 8.26-38; Acts 16.29-34.
7.2. Baptism.
7.3. A Christian life that lives in conformity with the credible profession.
7.3.1. A life that is consistent with the profession of faith: "obedience that accompanies your confession" (2 Cor 9.13)
7.3.2. Conformity to the will of God as revealed in Scripture which is obedience to the commandments of God (Jn 14.15; Rom 13.8-10).
7.4. A desire to unite with like-minded believers.
7.5. In other words, the conditions for admission to membership in an assembly and at the Lord's Table are the same except that one who is admitted to the Lord's Supper may not also become a member because of the additional condition (desire willingness to align) because he/she may be a member in another assembly.
7.6. It seems therefore that it is inappropriate to have more stringent requirements for membership in an assembly of the visible Church than the Bible requires for admission to the Lord's Supper. It is inappropriate to require more for membership than Jesus requires for attendance at his table.
7.7. The Lord's Supper is not a converting ordinance, it is a sacrament for the strengthening of believers.[108]

8. What are the conditions for excluding a person from the Church when his/her life is not in conformity with the credible profession?
8.1. It is clear that blatant moral transgressions are a condition for excluding a person from membership (or result in excommunication), e.g., 1 Corinthians 5.1-13 (esp. verse 13).
8.2. What should we make of passages such as: Leviticus 24.13-16; Nehemiah 13.15ff? Do they, or do they not, apply in the context of Church excommunication? Why not? Compare Hebrews 2.1, 2. Why do many people in the Church agree that incest requires discipline (1 Cor 5.1-13) but not blasphemy or Sabbath breaking?
8.3. What about sincerely held beliefs that are clearly inconsistent with the doctrinal position of the *Westminster Confession of Faith* (e.g., use of hymnody and musical instruments, arminianism, pre-millennialism, non-baptism of infants, annihilationism, erastianism or congregationalism)?
8.4. The application of determining "conformity of life with the profession of faith" is one of the most difficult challenges facing Elders. The following factors should be taken into account:
8.4.1. What is the maturity of the Christian (Rom 14.1-4)?
8.4.2. Has the person been taught and had an opportunity to learn that a particular action is not consistent with a profession of faith (1 Cor 3.1-3; Titus 2.1)?
8.4.3. Is the person teachable (James 1.19; James 3.1; Heb 5.11-14)?
8.4.4. Is true repentance present or not (Lk 17.3, 4)?

[108] See: George Gillespie: *Aaron's Rod Blossoming*, Book 3 (chapters 12-18); Jonathan Edwards: *Inquiry Concerning Qualifications for Communion*.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

8.4.5. Can a distinction be made between the person's outward sin and his/her expressed belief? God is the final judge of the heart. [Elders do not judge the heart when they admit people to membership based on an outward profession of faith.]
8.4.6. Is there a concern for others, in that the person is not being divisive, not demanding that everyone be exactly the same (1 Cor 12.25)?
8.4.7. Is the person actively agitating for his/her position (Titus 3.10, 11)?
8.4.8. The conditions for membership in an assembly or for participation in the Lord's Supper will be different than the conditions required for being an Elder or Deacon.

8.5. It is difficult to maintain a proper balance.
8.5.1. Elders must not be too restrictive or too relaxed.
8.5.2. We are all sinners and the graces of the Church (e.g., the Lord's Supper, baptism of infants) are for believing sinners who need God's grace.
8.5.3. Specifically, since the Lord's Table is the Lord's and not man's, the Church includes people from many earthly expressions of the Church, and there is only one holy and catholic Church, we must allow and desire that our earthly communion at the Lord's Table be "interdenominational" in character.

8.6. Membership in an assembly and admittance to the Lord's Supper should be as wide as the gospel is wide. This seems to imply that people should be able to join our assembly who:
8.6.1. Do not necessarily understand or endorse our distinctives.
8.6.2. Do not necessarily know many of the teachings of Scripture that will eventually enable them to grow in Christian maturity.
8.6.3. However … sufficient evidence of faith in Christ (by profession and practice) is required so that the Elders do not irresponsibly mislead people into thinking they are Christians.

8.7. Just as there is to be a balance on the part of Elders in the area of assessing the consistency of behaviour with a profession of faith, so there should be a balance in those who would join an assembly.
8.7.1. The standards are neither to be too demanding nor too relaxed. A perfect visible church (assembly) does not exist, and will never exist, on earth. It is necessary for every Christian to align himself with an assembly.
8.7.2. To withhold joining because of weaknesses in the assembly is to put oneself in a position of being a judge over those who are Elders in the Church of Christ (of course specific sins in Elders are to be dealt with according to scripture, 1 Tim 5.19, 20). The conditions for withholding one's membership must be carefully considered, clearly derived from a Biblical basis (e.g., 2 Cor 6.14-18), and applied with extreme caution and humility. In general it is inconsistent, and a sin, for a person to be willing to associate with the believers in an assembly, and to commune with them at the Lord's Table, and then to withhold joining them in membership, and being subject to the Elders in the assembly. [Note: there will be anomalies that need to be addressed, but we must resist the judgmental and independent spirits of our age.]

8.8. Summary: a person can be/should be admitted to the Church of Christ upon profession of faith with limited knowledge. However, he should be expected to grow in grace, be subject to the instruction of the Elders, and willing to be corrected.

9. What are the benefits (and obligations) of Church membership?
9.1. Admission to the Lord's Table/Supper.
9.2. Baptism of children (we would baptize the children of professing believers, but ideally the parents ought to be members of the local assembly).
9.3. Right and privilege of electing Elders and Deacons, calling a Pastor.
9.4. A say in the temporal matters of the congregation (e.g., location, building, support for missionaries) when votes are called to determine the will of the congregation).
9.5. Possibility of being elected to a Church office (applies to men who are in agreement with the teaching and organizational structure of the assembly).
9.6. Care for, carry burdens of (Gal 6.2), pray for, fellowship together …

10. What historical evidence shows that the mainstream thinking within the Reformed Church has understood the Bible to teach the concept of, and requirement for, Church membership?
French Confession – Article 26
"We believe that no one ought to seclude himself and be contented to be alone; but that all jointly should keep and maintain the union of the Church, and submit to the public teaching, and to the yoke of Jesus Christ, wherever God shall have established a true order of the Church, even if the magistrates and their

© James R. Hughes, 2006

edicts are contrary to it. For if they do not take part in it, or if they separate themselves from it, they do contrary to the Word of God."

Belgic Confession – Article 28 Every One is Bound to Join Himself to the True Church

"We believe, since this holy congregation is an assemblage of those who are saved, and out of it there is no salvation, (1 Pt 3:20; Joel 2:32) that no person of whatsoever state or condition he may be, ought to withdraw himself, to live in a separate state from it; (Acts 2:40; Is 52:11) but that all men are in duty bound to join and unite themselves with it; maintaining the unity of the Church; (Ps 22:23; Eph 4:3, 12; Heb 2:12) submitting themselves to the doctrine and discipline thereof; bowing their necks under the yoke of Jesus Christ; (Ps 2:10-12; Mt 11:29) and as mutual members of the same body (Eph 4:12, 16; 1 Cor 12:12, etc.) serving to the edification of the brethren, according to the talents God has given them. And that this may be better observed, it is the duty of all believers, according to the Word of God, to separate themselves from those who do not belong to the Church, (Acts 2:40; Is 52:11; 2 Cor 6:17; Rev 18:4) and to join themselves to this congregation, wheresoever God hath established it (Mt 12:30; Mt 24:28; Is 49:22; Rev 17:14) even though the magistrates and edicts of princes be against it; yea, though they should suffer death or bodily punishment. (Dan 3:17-18; Dan 6:8-10; Rev 14:14; Acts 4:17, 19; Acts 17:7; Acts 18:13) Therefore all those who separate themselves from the same or do not join themselves to it, act contrary to the ordinance of God."

Westminster Larger Catechism, Q. 162. What is a sacrament?

"A. A sacrament is a holy ordinance instituted by Christ in his church, to signify, seal, and exhibit unto those that are within the covenant of grace, the benefits of his mediation; to strengthen and increase their faith, and all other graces; to oblige them to obedience; to testify and cherish their love and communion one with another; and to distinguish them form those that are without. (Eph 2.11, 12; Gen 34.14)"

The 1689 London Baptist Confession: The Church, 7, 12

"To each of these churches thus gathered, according to his mind declared in his word, he hath given all that power and authority, which is in any way needful for their carrying on that order in worship and discipline, which he hath instituted for them to observe; with commands and rules for the due and right exerting, and executing of that power. (Mt 18:17, 18; 1 Cor 5:4, 5; 1 Cor 5:13; 2 Cor 2:6-8)"

"As all believers are bound to join themselves to particular churches, when and where they have opportunity so to do; so all that are admitted unto the privileges of a church, are also under the censures and government thereof, according to the rule of Christ. (1 Thess 5:1)"

11. Summary considerations related to the study of church membership:
    - 11.1. There is a visible manifestation of the Church in the form of assemblies, and Christians are to be visibly identified with an assembly.
        - 11.1.1. Jesus has appointed Elders to oversee the assemblies of his people. Therefore a person should be received by, and under the care of them. Every Christian should belong to an assembly of Christians, under the shepherding care of men whom Jesus has chosen by equipping them with gifts of eldership. The fifth Commandment is the basis for this relationship: Luther argued that the fifth commandment is the root of all other earthly authorities.
        - 11.1.2. Call it whatever you want, an agreement to be subject to the Elders of an assembly is how people become members in that assembly.
    - 11.2. God does not want his children to be spiritual vagrants wandering from conference to para-church group to house-church to sermon sipping. He wants them to be living stones within the visible Church which Jesus is building.
        - 11.2.1. In general, one who is indifferent to church membership or who remains outside the membership of the local church, gives expression to the sin of supposing himself to be wiser than God.
    - 11.3. The requirements for Church membership and participation at the Lord's Supper are essentially the same.
    - 11.4. One writer has said: "In summary, a commitment to membership in the visible church is a necessary inference from the jurisdiction, nature and meaning of the Lord's supper itself. Stated with a bit of rhetorical flourish and redundancy – The Lord's supper is a visible sacramental meal for a visibly baptized people who have made a visible profession of faith in Christ and are visibly assembled under a visible government within the context of a visible ministry of God's Word …"
    - 11.5. One of the truths often not considered in connection with church membership is the inescapable *corporate responsibility* that it implies. Each person is inseparably connected with others through the unity of the body of Christ (1 Cor 12.12-31). Because of this unity a person has a responsibility to the assembly with which he associates, as it is expressed in a particular assembly (congregation and

© James R. Hughes, 2006

denomination). Your membership in a particular assembly (congregation and denomination) makes you responsible for the life, ministry, worship, and teaching of that assembly.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

Appendix J – Tithing *vs* Free-Will Offerings

1. What does God require of men when he gives them an inheritance of earthly wealth from his great storehouse? (Mal 3.8-10)
   1.1. He expects that a portion be returned to him. This portion is not to be selected from the remnants or leftovers after we have done as we please with the inheritance. Rather it is to be selected from the firstfruits (the best of what we have) of our inheritance (Prov 3.9).
   1.2. Under Moses, the regular giving of at least a tenth of one's increase was encoded in the formal laws of Israel. The Israelites were specifically instructed to give one tenth of all the general increase of their possessions (Lev 27.30).

2. Does the requirement to give a portion of our possessions to the LORD also appear in the NT?
   2.1. Paul gives instructions concerning how the portion is to be given. He indicates that our giving is to be:
      2.1.1. Regular – "on the first day of the week" (1 Cor 16.2).
      2.1.2. An act of worship on the Lord's Day – "on the first day of the week" (1 Cor 16.2).
      2.1.3. Proportionate to the increase of our possessions – "in keeping with his income" (1 Cor 16.2).
      2.1.4. Administered by persons appointed in the church (Deacons?) (1 Cor 16.3).
      2.1.5. Generous (probably at least a tithe) (2 Cor 9.6-9).
      2.1.6. For the support of those who preach the gospel (1 Cor 9.14).
      2.1.7. For the benefit of needy in the Church (2 Cor 9.12).
   2.2. However, there are many who argue that:
      2.2.1. The imposition of a tithe is a form of legalism (used in the sense of legalistic and strict adherence to the letter of the law, not in the sense of earning eternal merit with God).
      2.2.2. The NT does not specify what percentage the portion should be, and that the amount of the portion should be left to an individual's discretion.
      2.2.3. The requirement of a tithe (tenth) was cancelled with the abolition of the ceremonial laws of the OT.

3. Is it a form of legalism to require a tithe (tenth) of income NT Christians?
   3.1. There is no part of the Law about which we can say "This is abolished or cancelled." Jesus says specifically (Mt 5.17) that he did not come to abolish the "Law." However, the fulfillment of the Law by Christ *does* have the effect of altering the specific *ways* we are to keep many of the laws.
   3.2. However, it is likely that the NT does in fact support the continuation of the requirement to return an explicit tithe (tenth) to the LORD. By his instruction to the Pharisees (Luke 11.42; see also Mt 5.20) Jesus indicates that it is correct (and necessary) to continue tithing. Of course, as he states, tithing alone is not representative of true holiness!
   3.3. Abraham (a non-Jew) paid tithes to Melchizedek a non-Aaronic priest (Gen 14.20; Heb 7.4-10), shouldn't we pay tithes to a greater than Melchizedek?
      3.3.1. Abraham gave a tenth of the increase in his possessions to the LORD by giving it to the LORD's priest. This seems to have been the amount required to be returned to God by the people of God at the time of the patriarchs, since we find that Abraham's grandson planned to give this same tenth portion of the increase of his wealth (Gen 28.20-22).
      3.3.2. How the patriarchs knew that they were to return a tenth of their possessions to the LORD is not stated in Scripture.

4. Questions for discussion:
   4.1. Why is the requirement to pay a tithe (tenth) considered to be a form of legalism when the on-going requirement not to murder is not?
   4.2. What is the reason for questioning the requirement for a tithe? Is it really to protect the gospel from legalism, or is it to rationalize being cheap?
   4.3. Can we really state that the requirement to give an explicit portion (e.g., a tithe) was only ceremonial, while the requirement to give a portion is still binding?
   4.4. When did it cease being a serious sin to rob God of his right to his required portion of our possessions? (Mal 3.8-10) What evidence they, who are against tithing, give to show that the requirement to tithe has come to an end.

5. Would God leave the specification of the amount that he requires be given to him, to man's discretion?
   5.1. This is not freedom but leads to chaos and doubt.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

5.2. For the believer in Jesus Christ, saved from the guilt and curse sin, the law is more than a revealer of sin, it brings freedom (James 2.12, 13). How? It:
  5.2.1. Teaches us how we may please and love God and show love for our neighbour. Without the Law it would be a guess, and we would never be certain of the right way.
  5.2.2. Constrains *only* harmful behaviour. Keeps us from hurting others and our selves. It brings a state of peace, harmony, and joy. Only as we obey the Law are we truly able to live life to its full potential.
  5.2.3. It provides fruit, which is blessing. The Bible many times teaches that obedience leads to blessing (e.g., Dt 28.1-14; Ps 1.1-3; Jn 13.17).
5.3. Free-will offerings appear to be beyond the tithe. There are many examples in the OT. In the NT we find the following examples that appear to be representative free-will offerings: Mk 12.41-44; Acts 5.4 (Peter says that Ananias was free to do what he wanted with the land); 2 Cor 8.1-9.15 (esp. 2 Cor 8.3, 8, 12; 2 Cor 9.5, 7, 13); Phil 4.15, 18 (notice especially that Paul says that the offering is an acceptable sacrifice that pleases God).

© James R. Hughes, 2006

Appendix K – Prayer Posture

1. Jesus knelt when he prayed (Lk 22.41). There are other examples of people kneeling as well as falling with their faces to the ground.

2. Isaac Watts tried to persuade the Nonconformists of the 18th century to desist from their practice of sitting down at prayer, he assured his readers that there were three permissible attitudes for prayer warranted by the Scriptures: prostration, kneeling and standing; but that there was no divine sanction for sitting.[109]

3. Matthew Henry on Matthew 6.5: "The posture they used in prayer; they prayed standing; this is a lawful and proper posture for prayer (Mk 11:25, *When ye stand praying*), but kneeling being the more humble and reverent gesture, Lu. 22:41; Acts 7:60; Eph 3:14, their standing seemed to savour of pride and confidence in themselves (Lu. 18:11), *The Pharisee stood and prayed."*

4. Is it wrong to *sit* while praying in public worship as Watts says?
   4.1. Notice that Jesus rebukes some who love to stand to pray (Mt 6.5; Lk 18.11). Of course, it isn't their posture *per se* that is wrong, but Jesus does draw attention to their posture.
   4.2. These passages do not speak about the 'audience' they talk about the 'actor'. The individuals who are standing in both of these cases are the men making the prayer. Nothing is said about the hearers. Jesus points out that their standing is part of their desire to draw attention to themselves. These passages do not have any bearing on the subject of whether or not the members of the congregation should stand during the public prayer of the pastor/Elder.
   4.3. When Jesus prayed at the supper in the upper room, the disciples were likely lying (NIV reclining) on their sides (Lk 22.14, 17).
   4.4. Jesus told the disciples to sit and pray (Mk 14.32, 37, 38).
   4.5. Jesus directed the crowds to sit while he prayed (Mt 14.19).
   4.6. David sat when he prayed in the tent in which the Ark of the Covenant was kept (2 Sam 7.18).
   4.7. The fact that there are examples in Scripture of prayers by godly men to the holy God from a sitting posture [however, they are not in a public worship setting] indicates that the mode *per se* is not of the essence. If the mode were essential to holy prayer, holy men would have observed the mode whether in public or private.
   4.8. It seems ironic that Watts would worry about the posture of prayer when he took the church away from exclusive Psalmody with his paraphrases of the Psalms. It is possible that we find him majoring on the minors.
   4.9. Congregational standing or kneeling to pray were the usual modes of prayer. But "usual" may not mean mandatory, especially since Scripture does not give a command about the posture of prayer, and gives examples that show that other ways may be acceptable.
   4.10. We must be very careful not fall into the trap of the Pharisees, and dictate rules for behaviour and practice that God does not dictate. We must be very careful not to have the words of Jesus (Mk 7.6-8) applied to us.

[109] Davis Horton, *The Worship of the English Puritans*, p. 52.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

Appendix L – Preaching and Teaching

1. The historical example (Neh 8.8) of the Levites giving the meaning of the Law has been used as the basis for advocating expository preaching. For example John Cotton (1645) of the New England Puritans described their worship: "After prayer, either the Pastor or Teacher readeth a Chapter in the Bible, and expoundeth it, giving the sense, to cause the people to understand the reading according to Neh 8.8."[110]
   1.1. Some, however, such as Hooker in the Anglican Church at the time of the Puritans looked "askance upon sermons as the corrupt productions of men, whilst the reading of Scripture preserve[d] the Word of God unadulterated." [111]
   1.2. In response the Puritans defended exegetical preaching/teaching as against only reading the Word. For example Thomas Goodwin gave three reasons for advancing the exposition of the Word: "First, because the very 'dullness' of many people requires the illumination of preaching. Secondly, preaching is one of the gifts which the ascended Lord bequeathed to his Church. Thirdly: 'It is not the letter of the Word that ordinarily doth convert, but the spiritual meaning of it, as revealed and expounded … There is the letter, the husk; and there is the spirit, the kernel; and when we by expounding the word do open the husk, out drops the kernel. And so it is the spiritual meaning of the Word let into the heart which converts it and turns it unto God.'"[112]
      1.2.1. His reference to reading the Bible as "the husk" is not ideal, but we get his point about the importance of explaining the Word as it is read.
   1.3. Matthew Henry said: "Reading is good, and preaching good, but expounding brings the reading and the preaching together, and thus makes the reading the more intelligible and the preaching the more convincing."

2. What is the difference between preaching and expounding/teaching (in the NT sense)?
   2.1. Compare 1 Timothy 3.2 ("able to teach") with 2 Tim 4.2 (see, also Acts 15.35). What is the difference between teaching and preaching?
   2.2. Let's make some observations about "to teach" (διδάσκω in its various forms), by reviewing some of the occurrences in the NT. This word has also been brought into English as 'didactic'. In English didactics is the science of systematic instruction. The word in NT Greek appears to have a somewhat similar meaning. The word 'teach' in the Greek seems to mean primarily formal, systematic teaching.
      2.2.1. It is what Jesus did in the temple and in synagogues, along the way, and from a boat and a mountain (e.g., Mt 5.2), etc.
      2.2.2. It is what the Apostles did (Mk 6.30; Acts 21.28).
      2.2.3. It is a gift to be exercised in the Church (Rom 12.7; 1 Cor 12.28, 29; Eph 4.11; James 3.1).
      2.2.4. It is what the church leaders (Elders) are expected to do (e.g. 1 Tim 4.11; 1 Tim 6.2; 2 Tim 2.2).
      2.2.5. It is instruction in doctrine and the Apostolic tradition Eph 4.21; Col 2.7.
      2.2.6. It is aligned with preaching (Acts 15.35; 1 Tim 4.13; 1 Tim 5.17).
      2.2.7. It is what a woman is not to do in the Church (1 Tim 2.12).
   2.3. What does "preach" mean in the NT sense?
      2.3.1. κηρύσσω (61) proclaim [Mt 26.13]
      2.3.2. εὐαγγελίζω (54) preach gospel, tell good news, announce, proclaim [Acts 16.10]
      2.3.3. εὐαγγέλιον (76) gospel, good news, preach (3) [Gal 1.6]
      2.3.4. καταγγέλλω (18) proclaim, foretell, tell, report, preach (5) [Acts 15.36]
      2.3.5. κήρυγμα (8) preaching (6), message, proclamation [1 Cor 1.21]
      2.3.6. ἀπαγγέλλω (14) report, declare, preach (1) [Acts 20.20; NIV, teach NKJV].
   2.4. Teaching is not specifically **preaching** in the NT sense, although they are very closely aligned and often occur at the same time and in the same context. (Acts 15.35; Acts 20.20; Acts 28.31; 1 Tim 4.13; 1 Tim 5.17).
   2.5. What we call 'preaching' today in our Reformed context is often 'teaching' in the NT sense. When preaching (in the modern sense of the word) is done today in many Reformed and Presbyterian churches it is often the systematic instruction in doctrine and Apostolic tradition, and is in fact 'teaching' in the NT sense.
   2.6. Preaching in the NT sense is the proclamation of the gospel of salvation through Jesus Christ.

---

[110] Davis Horton, *The Worship of the English Puritans*, p. 248.

[111] Davis Horton, *The Worship of the English Puritans*, p. 186.

[112] Davis Horton, *The Worship of the English Puritans*, p. 188.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

2.7. We often make a distinction today between ‘evangelistic preaching’ and ‘doctrinal (exegetical) preaching’. It appears that we use the word ‘preaching’ today to mean NT ‘teaching’ and therefore need to qualify it in order to get closer to the meaning that is intended in words such as: κηρύσσω, κήρυγμα, εὐαγγελίζω, and εὐαγγέλιον.

3. What was the primary style of Jesus’ teaching or preaching?
   3.1. Where are accounts of his teaching/preaching [where the words teaching or preaching are used], that show us his style?
      3.1.1. Preaching repentance (Mt 4.17).
      3.1.2. Teaching in Synagogues and preaching the good news (Mt 9.35).
      3.1.3. Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5.1-7.29 [Mt 5.2; Mt 7.28, 29]). When Jesus began to teach about the nature of the Kingdom, he started by listing the attributes which define a citizen of the Kingdom—a Christian. These are the attributes of living faith. Jesus did not teach the way to become a Christian, he taught the way a Christian will live—not the way **to** Christ, rather the way **from** Christ. The *Sermon* is largely a commentary on the OT Law. It shows what kind of obedience is expected from a member of the Kingdom of Heaven – that is, the fruit that a righteous person will bear.
      3.1.4. Teaching correct doctrine about marriage (Mt 22.23-33 [33]).
      3.1.5. Teaching correct doctrine about the use of God’s house (Mk 11.12-18 [17, 18]).
      3.1.6. Teaching correct doctrine about the Messiah and false teachers (Mk 12.35-40 [35, 38]).
      3.1.7. Teaching correct doctrine about the scope of salvation (Lk 13.22-30 [22]).
      3.1.8. Teaching the correct way to pray (Lk 11.1-12 [1]).
      3.1.9. Teaching about himself as the bread of life (Jn 6.25-59 [59]).
      3.1.10. Parables (Mk 4.1-34 [4.1, 2]).
      3.1.11. May be used interchangeably (Mk 2.2, 13).
   3.2. The predominate style that is recorded in the Gospels shows Jesus, not involved in exegetical teaching working through a passage (but he does explain OT passages [e.g., Mt 22.41-45), not systematic doctrinal instruction in lengthy logical segments (but rather in short bursts), not evangelistic preaching (although we are told that he preached good news and the need for repentance); but rather illustrated teaching about how to live the Christian life.

4. What styles (as illustrated) do we find the Apostles using; teaching or preaching?
   4.1. Peter’s sermon in Jerusalem (Acts 2.14-41) appears to be a combination.
   4.2. Paul’s sermon in Athens (Acts 17.16-34) is clearly preaching the gospel, calling for belief and repentance.

5. Is there too much ‘teaching’ and not enough ‘preaching’ or too much ‘preaching’ and not enough ‘teaching’ in the church today?
   5.1. As one writer has said: “there is so much feeding of the goats, that we are starving the sheep.”

6. Where should each of teaching and preaching be used?
   6.1. In the Church, where the majority of the people are professing Christians, there should be a leaning toward teaching to build up God’s people. However, since not all people in the Church are saved, and ‘seekers’ will come into the Church, it is necessary to preach the gospel on a regular basis.
   6.2. In the world, the bulk of the preaching should be preaching God the creator, law-giver (Law), and redeemer (Gospel). People need to see their lost state in sin, and their remedy in Christ.
   6.3. Preach = breadth, ‘out’, start, plant.
   6.4. Teach = depth, ‘in’, develop, grow.

7. How can we maintain a proper balance between the two (in the Church)?
   7.1. Exegetical preaching through books (or sections) of the Bible, with a focus on each passage’s relationship to Christ. Since the entire Bible is balanced on Christ, and he is the fulcrum of Scripture, we need to tie the teaching of every passage to Christ.
   7.2. Good pastoral work. The pastors/Elders know the people and understand the needs of the congregation.
   7.3. Multiple preachers/teachers who provide different emphases. “Where there are more ministers in a congregation than one, and they of different gifts, each may more especially apply himself to doctrine or

© James R. Hughes, 2006

exhortation, according to the gift wherein he most excelleth, and as they shall agree between themselves."[113]

7.4. Multiple teaching/preaching ministries (e.g., pulpit, classes).

8. What is the importance of preaching (using the term generically to include both 'evangelistic' and 'doctrinal' preaching)?
   8.1. God has established preaching as his means of presenting the gospel to the world. Rom 10.14-15; 1 Cor 1.21.
   8.2. Preaching is God's chosen means of revival. Along with prayer, preaching has played a central role in the history of every revival and significant evangelistic movement:
      8.2.1. "As that is true in the beginning as described in the book of Acts, it was also after the Reformation. Luther, Clavin, Knox, Latimer, Ridley—all these men were great preachers. In the seventeenth century, you had exactly the same thing—the great Puritan preachers and others. And in the eighteenth century, Jonathan Edwards, the Wesleys, Rowland, and Harris were all great preachers. It was an era of great preaching. Whenever you get Reformation and Revival, this is always and inevitably the result."[114]
      8.2.2. We can add the Irish preachers of the 5^{th}-10^{th} centuries, Wycliff, Zwingli, and the Welsh revivals.
      8.2.3. "Preaching of the word, *being the power of God unto salvation* ..."[115]
   8.3. There has been a dramatic down-grading in the practice of preaching in our age.
      8.3.1. Most people, in the church and outside of it, find preaching dull and claim that it is ineffective. Where does the fault lie? 1) seminaries, 2) presbyteries permitting non-preachers (i.e., those not truly called), 3) preachers themselves, 4) lack of prayer (for pulpit ministry), 5) lack of emphasis on the part of people in the Church on good preaching, 6) people in the Church seeking entertainment?
      8.3.2. Many people suggest that the use of other means such as music concerts, puppetry, videos, charismata … will be more effective in the 'video-age' or 'cyber-age.' For example: "Father Marcelo Rossi holds up the Blessed Sacrament during Mass in Sao Paulo, Brazil. With his matinee-idol looks and a chart-topping record, Music to Praise the Lord, Rossi, 33, is part of a new generation of clerics who belong to the Catholic Church's charismatic movement. 'I want to make the act of worship a spiritual rush, rather than drag on about the Bible for hours and make people lose their concentration,' he says."
      8.3.3. God, being omniscient, omnipotent and predestingly sovereign, knew of, and planned, for the invention of modern media. Yet he ordained preaching as his medium for communicating his Word.
      8.3.4. Preaching is authoritative monologue. Autonomous men do not want the unambiguous communication of authoritative truth. There is no opportunity for argument and contradiction during the preached word. Revival and reformation are marked by proclamation of God's word, not by sharing, discussing, debating or dialoguing.
      8.3.5. Face-to-face preaching cultivates communion. The electronic media encourage individualism.
      8.3.6. The Bible uses visible signs and symbols (e.g., in the Tabernacle/Temple). But the overwhelming emphasis of the Bible, and the OT is on the spoken word to communicate God's purposes to man. Idolatry focuses on physical representations of deities with statues and images. God, the universal deity, cannot be represented in concrete images. Neil Postman: "The God of the Jews was to exist in the Word and through the Word, an unprecedented conception requiring the highest order of abstract thinking."[116]
      8.3.7. There are a number of things that may have a place in the work of the Church, in a pre-evangelism context, rather than in evangelism itself. Some people have been saved through these means, but their impact has been very limited in bringing people to salvation, when compared with preaching.
      8.3.8. The reality is that we cannot find one revival that was created by something other than God's designated dynamic duo: prayer and preaching.
      8.3.9. Spurgeon: "I do not look for any other means of converting men beyond the simple preaching of the gospel and the opening of men's ears to hear it. The moment the church of God shall despise

[113] "*Of the Preaching of the Word*," Westminster Standards: *The Directory for the Public Worship of God*.

[114] D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *The Primacy of Preaching*, (London: Hodder & Stroughton, 1971), p. 24.

[115] "*Of the Preaching of the Word*," Westminster Standards: *The Directory for the Public Worship of God*.

[116] Quoted in: Charles Colson, Nancy Pearcey, *How Now Shall We Live?* (Wheaton IL: Tyndale, 1999), p. 468.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

the pulpit, God will despise her. It has been through the ministry that the Lord has always been pleased to revive and bless His churches."[117]

8.3.10. We might think it self serving for preachers to proclaim the importance of preaching But see Romans 10.14, this is God's chosen means. We despise it at our peril, and at the peril of the Church and the lost.

8.3.11. The challenge for the Church today is knowing how to get preaching before the world by knowing what/where is the modern equivalent of the agora of Paul's day?

9. How should preaching be undertaken?

9.1. Approach to sermon preparation and delivery:[118]

9.1.1. Pick a text on doctrine or work through a book or chapter.

9.1.2. Introduce the topic, followed by summary or paraphrase of the text if lengthy.

9.1.3. Divide the text into doctrines; not too many divisions so as to "trouble their minds with obscure terms of art."

9.1.4. Make sure the doctrines are truths derived from the text to show what God teaches.

9.1.5. Clarify in plain terms anything that is obscure. Use scripture parallels.

9.1.6. Use solid arguments that convince.

9.1.7. Use illustrations that are full of light to convey truth to the heart.

9.1.8. Remove any causes for doubt by reconciling the apparent differences.

9.1.9. Apply the doctrine to the hearers so the hearers personally may feel the word to be cutting and powerful at disclosing thoughts.

9.1.10. Add weight to the argument from other places in scripture.

9.1.11. Challenge errors; with care, so as not to raise heresy from the grave.

9.1.12. Exhort action, as drawn from the passage.

9.1.13. Declare the sin of disobedience and means of avoiding it.

9.1.14. Apply comfort against temptations, terrors, and troubles.

9.1.15. Don't exhaust the doctrines in the text. Choose wisely what is useful at the time to draw men to Christ "the fountain of light, holiness, and comfort."

9.2. "This method is not prescribed as necessary for every man, or upon every text; but only recommended, as being found by experience to be very much blessed of God, and very helpful for the people's understandings and memories."[119]

9.3. But the servant of Christ, whatever his method be, is to perform his whole ministry:[120]

9.3.1. Painfully, not doing the work of the Lord negligently.

9.3.2. "Plainly, that the meanest [simplest] may understand; delivering the truth not in the enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect; abstaining also from an unprofitable use of unknown tongues, strange phrases, and cadences of sounds and words; sparingly citing sentences of ecclesiastical or other human writers, ancient or modern, be they never so elegant."

9.3.3. "Faithfully, looking at the honour of Christ, the conversion, edification, and salvation of the people, not at his own gain or glory …"

9.3.4. "Wisely, framing all his doctrines, exhortations, and especially his reproofs, in such a manner as may be most likely to prevail; showing all due respect to each man's person and place, and not mixing his own passion or bitterness."

9.3.5. "Gravely, as becometh the word of God; shunning all such gesture, voice, and expressions, as may occasion the corruptions of men to despise him and his ministry."

9.3.6. With loving affection ... from his godly zeal, and hearty desire to do them good.

9.3.7. Taught of God, persuaded in his own heart, that what he teaches is the truth of Christ.

9.3.8. Walking before his flock, as an example to them.

10. How can preaching be made memorable (i.e., easy to remember)?

---

[117] C. H. Spurgeon, The Early Years, Vol 1, (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1962), p. v.

[118] "*Of the Preaching of the Word*," Westminster Standards: *The Directory for the Public Worship of God*, abbreviated and paraphrased.

[119] "*Of the Preaching of the Word*," Westminster Standards: *The Directory for the Public Worship of God*, abbreviated and paraphrased.

[120] "*Of the Preaching of the Word*," Westminster Standards: *The Directory for the Public Worship of God*, abbreviated and paraphrased.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

10.1. "Since Puritan sermons were most carefully prepared for the edification of the people, it was natural enough that their authors should try to make them as memorable as possible. One method of attaching the sermon to the memory of the congregation was to provide headings for the main divisions or doctrines of the sermon, all beginning with the same letter. Baxter, for instance, claims that if this device is used and also another, the numbering of the directions, the sermon can be easily retained in the memory. As an illustration of the method he suggests: 'as if I were to direct you to the chiefest helps to your salvation, and should name, 1. Powerful Preaching, 2. Prayer, 3. Prudence, 4. Piety, 5. Painfulness, 6. Patience, 7. Perseverance.'"[121]

11. What are the attributes of anointed (Is 61.1) preaching?
    11.1. From the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 2.1-5; Eph 3.8)
    11.2. Expository; saturated with scripture (2 Tim 4.2)
    11.3. Christ Centered (preach Christ; 1 Cor 1.23)
    11.4. Powerful (Mt 12.41; Acts 2.41)
    11.5. Enlightens the Mind (Rom 10.14)
    11.6. Stirs the Affections, probes the heart (Acts 2.37)
    11.7. Uses analogies and images (Mt 5.13-16; Mt 7.1-6; Mt 13.1-9; Mt 15-18; Mt 24-27)
    11.8. Helpful (Acts 20.20)
    11.9. Threats and warnings (Acts 17.30, 31)
    11.10. Full of good news (Acts 17.18)
    11.11. Pleads for a response (Acts 2.40)
    11.12. For the people (simple) (Mk 16.15; 1 Cor 1.17)
    11.13. Adapted to the audience (Acts 17.22, 23)
    11.14. Mouthpiece of God (not freelance thinker) (Num 22.38 [if so for Balaam, how much more so for those who are truly desiring to please God.?]; 2 Chron 18.13; 2 Cor 2.17; Gal 1.11, 12)
    11.15. Commissioned (Rom 10.15)
    11.16. Urgent (Mt 10.7)
    11.17. Compulsive (not an intellectual exercise) (1 Cor 9.16).

[121] *A Christian Directory*, part II, chapter 18; volume 4 (ed. Orme), p. 255 quoted in Davis Horton, *The Worship of the English Puritans*, p. 196.]

© James R. Hughes, 2006

Appendix M – The Church's Response to Poverty

1. Who are the deserving poor?
   1.1. Assumption: we (as individuals, the church, or the state) are not just to hand out food, clothing, or money arbitrarily to anyone; i.e., there are some who deserve (by yet to be determined criteria) support and some who don't.
      1.1.1. Common sense tells us that this has to be the case. If we gave anything to everyone, we would have noting left to give, and have nothing left for ourselves. Therefore we need some form of criteria by which to make a distinction as to whom we should/should not give.
      1.1.2. Common sense also tells us that to give money to a drug addict, alcoholic, or compulsive gambler that will further his habit or to provide shelter for a teenager who refuses to obey just authority is to subsidize his behaviour and rebellion, has nothing to do with caring for the deserving poor.
      1.1.3. Therefore we need some form of criteria by which to make a distinction.
      1.1.4. An article in *Maclean's*,[122] reinforces the need to have proper principles and discrimination for determining the allocation of food, clothing, and money handouts. The article recounts the situation of a woman (Caroll Herron) who was caught in a downward spiral from secretary to cleaner, to collecting government-funded support. In the article, she complains that after rent, food, and utilities she doesn't have much left to pay bills. It is reported that she quit the cleaning job when she developed asthma from the cleaning chemicals. There is a picture of her and her daughter sitting at a kitchen table. Prominent in the foreground is (apparently) her package of cigarettes. It is ironic that she can afford to buy cigarettes when she is worried about food for her daughter; and that she complains about asthma from cleaning chemicals but persists in smoking. In the article, it is reported that she is a 'single mother.' It is not 'politically correct' to ask questions such as: Why should the rest of us subsidize her when the father of her child is not doing so?
      1.1.5. Why should we have to pay for her cigarettes? What obligations do her own parents or extended family have to support her? Has she been offered jobs, or could she get them, which she is unwilling to take because they are 'beneath' her? Why does she blame government bureaucrats for her lack of skills, and not take a student loan and get the computer training she says she needs?
      1.1.6. I know that it is easy for me, with a well-paid job, etc. to sound smug when I ask these questions.
      1.1.7. On the other hand, it is just as easy for many (most) of those in media (with their support of a welfare state philosophy) to smugly declare our societal obligations to those they define as needy, to sound sanctimonious as they defend the 'rights' of the poor, and to react in feigned horror if someone dares suggest that people such as Caroll Herron may be nothing more than leeches living off productive members of society.
   1.2. Much poverty is the result of outright rebellion and sin and not the result of environment or circumstances. [Not all poverty is caused by personal sin. We will deal with the exceptions below, we are looking at the principles first, not the exceptions.]
      1.2.1. We should not abuse charity by misapplying it to nourish sin.
      1.2.2. Charity that results in, or causes, a loss of soul (purpose, meaning, direction, eternal salvation), is sin on our part.
      1.2.3. Blind, indiscriminate giving of food, clothing, or money is a cause of more poverty and crime and not its solution; since it rewards rebellion. For example, when we reward begging we get more of it. The natural tendency of the sinful heart is to take without giving.
      1.2.4. Supporting the undeserving poor in our society has moved from being a supposed act of compassion to an obligation on society.
   1.3. Note: we won't consider whether or not the government should be in the business of economic re-distribution or providing almost universal payments for social engineering programs (e.g., a 'baby-bonus' or sending every tax-payer a cheque for $200).

2. How are we to determine who are the deserving poor? Or, What will be our standard?
   2.1. There are only two possibilities: Human *opinions* as formulated and promulgated by professors, social organizers, politicians, reporters, etc., or the *Bible*.
   2.2. The un-believing world and many of those who profess to be Christians reject the view that the Bible can serve as a basis for answering this question (i.e., who are the deserving poor), and follow instead the opinions of men, because:

[122] "The Wealth Gap," *Maclean's,* August 28, 2000.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

2.2.1. They feel that that the Bible (now) deals only with matters of salvation and that the economic/ justice principles given in the Bible were for the OT, Jewish, agrarian society and have no relevance for us living in the sophisticated, technological, urban society of 21st century NA.

2.2.2. They don't like what the Bible teaches and claim that it is not compassionate. It is mind boggling that people can criticize God's instruction given in the Bible and claim that they are more compassionate than God. It has to be one of the greatest examples of hubris and blasphemy imaginable: to claim that our society is more just and compassionate than God!

2.3. The Bible does not agree with the view that the Bible does not apply today: Mt 5.17-19; 2 Tim 3.16, 17.

2.4. Our subordinate standards do not agree with the view that the Bible does not apply today:

The Westminster Shorter Catechism

"Q3: What do the Scriptures principally teach?

A3: The Scriptures principally teach what man is to believe concerning God, and what *duty* God requires of man."

Westminster Confession of Faith, 1647 – Chapter I, Of the Holy Scripture

"VI. The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for His own glory, man's salvation, faith, and *life*, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men. …"

2.5. The Bible deals with two types of relationships: our relationship with God and our relationship with our neighbours.

2.5.1. These are summarized in the two portions of the Ten Commandments.

2.5.2. The curse on human relationships has not changed since the Fall, and God's principles for governing human relationships have not changed since they were recorded in Scripture (the detailed application may have changed, but the "general equity" has not).

2.5.3. Although the Bible is not a textbook on sociology, psychology, economics, political science, or jurisprudence, when it does speak on any these areas of human study it is definitive and we ignore its principles at our peril (as the past century proved with such disasters as Communism, Socialism, Freudian Psychology, etc.).

3. What does the Bible give as guidelines for determining who are the deserving poor?

3.1. If an able person is unwilling to work he is **not** among the deserving poor.

3.1.1. The Biblical model for welfare requires that an able (capable in mind or body) person work for what he eats (2 Thess 3.10). He is not to be on the 'dole' or support himself by begging.

3.1.2. It is significant that in OT Biblical society begging was almost non-existent and considered to be a curse (1 Sam 2.36; Ps 109.10), not a tolerated way life as it is in downtown Toronto today.

3.1.3. This approach to dealing with poverty did not come about because people didn't care about the poor but because they cared about dealing with poverty in the way God taught; which would be the best way for really helping the truly needy.

3.2. It identifies specific classes to whom we are to give food, clothing, and money directly. This course of action is reserved for the classes of poor who are not able to help themselves due to age [too young or too old] or real infirmity:

3.2.1. Older widows, orphans, and aliens (Dt 10.18; Dt 16.9-12; Acts 6.1; 1 Tim 5.3-9, 16)

3.2.2. Those unable work due to severe disabilities (Acts 3.2-10).

3.2.3. When they are in distress, i.e., with serious need and in extreme circumstances, with no family members to help (Lev 25.25; Is 58.7; 1 Tim 5.8-10; 1 Tim 5.16).

4. How are we to share with the poor the bounty that the Lord has given us?

4.1. The Bible directs us to help the poor (Prov 14.21; Is 1.17; Is 58.6, 7; Mt 25.35, 36; 1 Jn 3.17-19). There are four ways that the Bible gives for helping the poor:

4.1.1. Giving handouts (food, clothing, money) to the needy poor; the deserving poor (orphans and widows, those unable to care for themselves due to age [too old or too young to help themselves] or with physical or mental disability).

4.1.2. Work-based provisions: gleaning (Lev 19.9, 10; Lev 23.22; Dt 24.19-22; Ruth 2.2), working as a servant (Lev 25.39-43).

4.1.3. Interest-free loans (Lev 25.35-37; Dt 15.7-11; Mt 5.42) that are to be repaid (Ps 37.21) except in the Sabbatical Year (Dt 15.1-7; see notes on Neh 10.31).

4.1.4. Paying a fair wage (Lev 19.13; Dt 24.14, 15; Jer 22.13; Mal 3.5 [note: widows and orphans as well as hired workers]; Col 4.1; James 5.4).

© James R. Hughes, 2006

4.2. The Biblical model basically is to assist the poor to support themselves; not to provide indiscriminate giving that makes them dependent on others. The Biblical model is to provide a form of *work*fare that builds confidence, encourages thrift, and makes each individual into a productive member of society (Eph 4.28; 1 Thess 2.11, 12).
4.2.1. Note: even those who experience a 'natural' disaster or calamity, it seems, were expected to help themselves within these guidelines and not to expect handouts (Lev 25.35-43).

5. What is the key to poverty fighting? It is a changed heart through grace and a renewal of character. If there is true conversion, social reform and social programs will be required much less.
5.1. Many say in response to this: "You can't convert a hungry man, you need to feed him first."
5.2. There is truth in this. But if we talk with people who work on the food lines (e.g., Scott Mission, Salvation Army) we will see how few sinners with full stomachs are ready to repent.
5.3. Marvin Olasky, editor of *World* in his book, *The Tragedy of American Compassion*, gives the structure of a program for dealing with poverty (I have adapted the list):
5.3.1. **A**ffiliation (attend church),
5.3.2. **B**onding (personal involvement, knowledge, investigation),
5.3.3. **C**ategorization (truly needy *vs* greedy),
5.3.4. **D**iscernment (benevolent suspicion; short term, small amounts for immediate needs, not susceptible to abuse; not prolonged giving; require discontinuing of abusive behavior),
5.3.5. **E**mployment,
5.3.6. **F**aith in **G**od.
5.4. He points out that it is much easier for Christians to give money, clothing, and food, or to let the government redistribute our money, than it is to deal with the real problem (sin) on a one-on-one personal basis through a program that requires friendship and true caring for those who have needs.

6. What are we to make of (think of/do with) the modern 'welfare' support structures in our society?
6.1. Consider for example the Macleans article referred to above (*The Wealth Gap*), quoting a Queens Univ. economist, who says: "governments should start viewing health and educational programs as economic necessities for Canada's most highly prized resource: people. Government transfers should encourage education from early childhood to post-secondary to lifelong learning."
6.2. What are the latent assumptions in this quotation?
6.2.1. Governments are to solve the problem. Notice how political debates and discussions always seem to assume that it is the government's responsibility to care for the poor. What happened to individual and family responsibility? Where is the Church?
6.2.2. More education will solve the problem. Social reformers since the 18th century have been of the view that more education (of course in state-run schools), "from early childhood" ("get them while they are young and indoctrinate them in secular humanism"), will solve all problems. They miss the point that if everyone is trained at, say, a high school level, a high school level diploma is no longer sufficient to make distinctions and it becomes necessary for more education. It is the old problem of "everyone being equal but some are more equal than others." [Notice that there has been a subtle shift in the positioning of these people. Thirty years ago they would have talked about direct cash transfers to the poor. But as the evidence has mounted that this does not work, they have shifted to indirect transfers (e.g., funding education or daycare), instead of abandoning the view that government is the solution.]
6.2.3. The assumption is that education should be aligned with health care. We should also question the 'basic' assumption that health care falls within the area of responsibility of the government.
6.2.4. The article states that governments should 'start' doing something. The faulty assumption is that they have not been doing anything. They have been doing far more than enough damage.
6.2.5. More money will solve the problem. To fund more education, more taxes and more transfer payments are needed.
6.2.5.1. The irony is that there is more than enough money already in social programs, but it will never be enough if we funnel the money through governments.
6.2.5.2. Assume that there are 2M families in poverty in Canada (30M people, 10M households, 20% = 2M; this is a high estimate, per the *Macleans* article which estimated that 12.5% of the households were in the poorest and lower-middle income brackets in 1997). If we augmented the income of each family by $20K (the *Macleans* article stated that $25k was a comfortable amount for two people) annually that would cost $40B. 24% of the Federal budget, about $49B, was allocated for social programs. Also Provincial and Municipal

© James R. Hughes, 2006

programs in Canada add a lot more money. It is NOT a problem of a lack of money, yet everywhere people ask us to throw more money at the problem of poverty.

6.2.5.3. Because 'social reformers' know that there is more than enough money in social programs they want more money to fund state run schools, with no proof that more money actually provides any better schooling.

6.3. It is important that we understand that the modern welfare culture is based on the assumption of the supposed innate goodness of men. Our culture denies entirely the doctrine of total depravity. So, in the church, the Social Gospel emphasizes God's love but not his holiness. The reality is that people tend to laziness and covetousness and are quick to accept handouts that have no obligations for moral transformation.

6.4. We must become more critical and Biblical in our thinking.

6.5. We need to advocate spiritual reform rather than social reform (as defined by the world). There can only be real social reform where there is spiritual reform.

7. How is the Church to apply the principles of Nehemiah 8.10, 12 in the 21st century?

7.1. Assumptions:

7.1.1. Providing welfare does not fall within the God-given mandate of the government.

7.1.2. To attempt to provide meaningful welfare through the State will fail because it is impossible for human governments to legislate compassion and make it work.

7.1.3. The first line of ministering to the needy is through the family structure. Families are to be held responsible for their own members.

7.1.4. The role of last-resort ministering of compassion has been given to the Church.

7.1.4.1. The Church is the God ordained means of caring for the needy (Acts 6.1-6; 1 Cor 16.1-3).

7.1.4.2. The Deacons of the church are to be the custodians of the care for the needy poor. The Deacons provide the collective (pooled resources), coordinated, execution of God's Biblical model in the NT economy (not the state).

7.1.4.3. The basic order of providing care/compassion must be first to those inside the Church who are truly needy and then to those outside

7.2. People often say that the Church couldn't afford to support the poor. That is only true when the world's model is applied rather than God's model. The reality is that even the world's model cannot 'find' enough money. Social engineers always cry for more government programs (e.g., 24hr daycare), and money.

7.3. Note: We will run into practical difficulties if we try to apply Biblical principles today. With such an extensive network of social services provided by the government it becomes very difficult for the Church to defend, and implement, a Biblical model.

7.4. However, there are a number of ways that we as the Church can respond to poverty:

7.4.1. Speak prophetically. Where we are absolutely convinced of a Biblical position (in whatever area; e.g., Sabbath keeping, against gambling or abortion) we need to find opportunities to keep God's truth before the world. The Church should also preach about personal and family responsibility within the realm of providing for the needs of the poor; we live in an age of abdicated responsibility.

7.4.2. Much poverty and un-employment is systemic and is caused by the economic policies of government (e.g., minimum wages, welfare programs, excessive taxation) that exclude people form the workforce and discourage thrift and industry. The Church should not only challenge faulty policies of government, but also respond to the root cause (sinful hearts) as well symptoms of the problem.

7.4.3. Involvement in government policy setting. Either as elected or appointed government officials where we can have an influence (e.g., Joseph and Daniel).

7.4.4. Tithe our income through the Church. God requires a tithe (Dt 14.28-29; Mal 3.10).

7.4.5. We can also give freewill, voluntary, offerings beyond the tithe to support Church-based programs or those of para-church Christian organizations that support a Biblical model; e.g., providing job training or workfare opportunities for the poor. Congregations with the right gifts can administer such programs.

7.4.6. In modern society the poor have difficulty finding food in an urban setting in contrast to an agrarian setting. However, we can make 'gleaning' work today, but have to find ways to apply the principle in our cultural context.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

7.4.7. Look after the poor directly (e.g., adopt children, provide meals to shut-ins, perform works of sweat-equity that help the elderly).

7.4.8. The Church is negligent in the area of caring for the needy poor. Barna research found, in surveys conducted in 1998, that budgets for community ministry are practically non-existent in all but a few churches. Less than 10% of protestant churches have worked in cooperation with any other churches to provide any 'parallel ministry.'

7.5. As a final consideration we should note that we are to start with the problems at home, in our own congregation. We are to deal with the problems of needy brothers and sisters first (Rom 12.13; Gal 6.9, 10; James 2.15, 16; 1 Jn 3.17). True concern for the poor must start in our home assembly. If we give money in the offering plate or to some impersonal organization such as the United Appeal this may salve our conscience so that we can say that our duty is done. But do we miss the needs among our own congregation?

© James R. Hughes, 2006

Appendix N – Fasting

1. Where do we find fasting in the church today? Where is it part of religious worship?
   1.1. Other than when folks are raising money for World Vision, (religious) fasting has essentially disappeared from the Protestant, Evangelical church. It rarely appears in any form of worship.
   1.2. In fact most people would be surprised if the Elders of their congregation called for a day of fasting.
   1.3. About the only place we find fasting is in the liturgical churches (Eastern, Roman Catholic, Anglican), and even among their adherents it is rarely practiced.

2. Why has fasting largely disappeared from Protestant, Evangelical worship?
   2.1. Is it because we have overreacted to the abuses of fasting associated with Lent and abstaining from meat on Fridays?
   2.2. Is it because we live hedonistically, like much of the world?

3. Historical Biblical context:
   3.1. We have to turn to the OT to gain an appreciation for the context and purpose of fasting because very little is mentioned in the NT.
   3.2. OT law required a fast once per year, on the Day of Atonement (Lev 16.29; Lev 23.27; Num 29.7). Which in the context of Nehemiah had occurred on the 10th day of the month; Oct 17th; two weeks before the day of fasting on the 24th (Neh 9.1; Tishri/Ethanim [the 7th month in the religious calendar]; Oct 31st 444/445 BC.).
   3.3. The Jews appear to have added other annual fasts (Zech 8.19).
   3.4. In addition, special times of fasting were called during national emergencies (Judges 20.26; Joel 1.14) and individuals fasted at times of personal distress (2 Sam 12.22; Nehemiah 1.4).
   3.5. Typically, the Pharisees went beyond the requirements of Scripture and required fasting twice per week (Lk 18.12). They changed the observance of fasting from a time of intense worship associated with the confession of sin or a special call for God's help, into a hollow ritual of sanctimonious outward display.

4. What guidelines does Jesus provide about how we are to fast?
   4.1. There is no specific command in the New Testament that states that we must practice fasting; and the only specific day of fasting commanded in the OT is the Day of Atonement. We could conclude, since Jesus says he will never leave us (Jn 14.15-21), that there is no need for us to fast (Mt 28.20; Mk 2.19).
   4.2. However, Jesus assumes that his disciples will fast ("when you fast" [Mt 6.16]), and he says that there will be a time for fasting (Mk 2.20). Does this assumption act as an implicit command?
   4.3. Also, we are provided with examples of fasting in the NT (Acts 13.3; Acts 14.23) that indicate that it was an accepted practice among the Apostles. Their practice provides an example and may act as a standard for us.
   4.4. From this analysis we can probably conclude that fasting is not *required* of Christians. Nevertheless it pleases God when it is offered as a special offering of private worship.

5. What is the purpose of fasting? What examples of fasting do we find in the Bible that tell us about when it can/should be used?
   5.1. We can derive the purpose of fasting from examples of its use. We should consider fasting in any of the following circumstances:
      5.1.1. To facilitate grieving over sin and confession (personal or corporate) (Judges 20.26; 1 Sam 7.5-6; Neh 9.1, 2; Ps 69.5-12).
      5.1.2. To help us obtain guidance and help from God (2 Chron 20.3; Ezra 8.21-23; Neh 1.4; Est 4.16).
      5.1.3. To heighten our appeal to God (e.g., asking him to save a friend; when we are setting out on something new and extraordinary) (Ps 35.13; Mt 17.21; Acts 13.2, 3; Acts 14.23).
      5.1.4. To remind us that man does not live only on natural bread (by inference: Mt 2.1-4).
      5.1.5. To curb the desires of the sinful nature (by inference: Titus 2.2).

6. What must accompany fasting if it is to be valid?
   6.1. Jer 14.10-12: Fasting is worthless if it is not accompanied by restraint of personal sin.
   6.2. Is 58.6-14; Zech 7.4-10: True fasting is to perform justice, care for the needy poor, and keep the Sabbath.

7. What is fasting?

© James R. Hughes, 2006

7.1. In most instances in the Bible fasting appears to consist of complete abstinence from food and drink (possibly other than water) for an entire day.
7.2. But sometimes a fast may have consisted of taking only a small amount of bread and water (Dan 10.2, 3) so as to abstain from legitimate gastronomical pleasures for a time.
7.3. The fast that God delights in is the one that raises our souls to heaven, not one that causes physical pain (e.g., a headache) and makes us irritable (Is 58.4, 5).
7.4. Fasting is an inner act of worship that is not to be made visible to others (Mt 6.17-18). It is a private matter between a Christian and God. We cannot, and should not, know if another person is fasting. Therefore, we must never judge the apparent behaviour of others when it comes to the matter of fasting. Nor can we assume that if there are no signs of fasting, that our fellow Christians lack sincerity or commitment to Christ. Our own views about the frequency or 'proper' manner of fasting are not God's standard. What others do about fasting is simply not our concern.
7.5. Nor should we ever feel that we are more righteous than other Christians if we do fast (regularly). The false righteousness of the Pharisees is shown by the irony of their denial of physical pleasures so that they could glory in the act of fasting and draw attention to themselves.

8. What do the instruction and examples of true fasting provided in the Bible teach us?
8.1. That fasting is not to be performed as a duty for its own sake but as an inward (silent, personal, and private) form of worship that advances our outward, corporate worship and our visible walk of obedience before God. It is a humbling of the soul that makes us desire to obey God and follow the example of Jesus (Is 58.6-14).

9. How can/should we apply fasting in public worship today?
9.1. The OT ceremonial law called for an annual fast on the Day of Atonement. At that time it was a publicly observed act of worship. There were also additional public fasts called at important junctures in the life of the nation, church, family, or individual.
9.2. Since the NT endorses fasting as a voluntary act of worship it seems that we can call for times of fasting without *requiring* it. So, for example, the Elders of a congregation, presbytery, or denomination could call for a day of prayer and fasting, but they should not enquire into the fasting practices of the members of the congregation.
9.3. Beyond that, fasting seems to be left to the discretion of the individual as an additional, voluntary, extra-ordinary act of private, personal worship.
9.4. It is wrong, at least by my reading of Scripture, for a Church to require fasting of its members and to establish a regular (e.g., weekly; annual) fast; for example, at Lent.
9.5. Nevertheless fasting is a neglected aspect of worship in our hedonistic age. Many of us probably need to think seriously about how we should apply the teaching of Jesus in our lives and how we can honour God through fasting.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

Appendix O – Repentance in Sackcloth and Ashes

1. We may ask: "What relevance does a discussion of sackcloth and dust/ashes have for us today?"
   1.1. It is important that we consider every part of the Bible's teachings and determine how it relates to us. This, of course, does not mean that a discussion of this topic is anywhere near as important as a consideration of topics such as Creation, Covenant, or Christ; or Law and grace.
   1.2. In our study of Nehemiah, our approach has been to address each topic of consideration as it is presented to us and to determine its applicability to our situation.

2. How should we apply sackcloth and dust/ashes today? Should we be wearing sackcloth and adorning our heads with dust or fire-ashes to lament the sinful state of our nation today? (Neh 9.1)

3. In what context was placing dust on the head used?
   3.1. As a sign of mourning or grave concern (Josh 7.6; Job 2.12; Lam 2.10 [note sackcloth]; Rev 18.19).

4. What did the dust signify?
   4.1. Lowliness: man was taken from dust (Gen 2.7; Job 4.19; Ps 103.14) and will return to the dust (Gen 3.19; Job 17.16).

5. In what context were ashes placed on the head used?
   5.1. As a sign of mourning or grave concern (Job 2.8; 2 Sam 13.19; Est 4.1-4; Ps 102.9; Is 61.3; Jer 6.26; Mt 11.21).

6. What did the ashes signify?
   6.1. The ashes were sometimes obtained from the offering of a sin sacrifice. The ashes mixed with water were used in the ceremonial washing process. The person was thus washed with a sin sacrifice and ceremonially cleansed (Num 19.9, 10, 17; Heb 9.13).
   6.2. They also signified worthlessness, or lowliness; similar to the significance of dust (Ps 102.9; Is 44.20).
   6.3. There seems to be a relationship between dust and ashes: Ezk 27.30; and in Num 19.17 (also 2 Ki 23.4) the Hebrew word for dust is translated as 'ashes'.
   6.4. It may be that in some of the verses where dust is mentioned as being placed on the head, the 'dust' was understood to be ashes.

7. What did the wearing of sackcloth signify?
   7.1. Sackcloth: A dark-coloured material of goat or camel hair used for making grain bags and coarse garments. English 'sack' is derived from the Hebrew *saq*, via Latin *saccus* and Greek *sakkos.*
   7.2. It signified mourning, confession of sin, and grave concern (Gen 37.34; 1 Ki 21.27; 2 Ki 19.1, 2; Est 4.1-4; Ps 35.13; Ezk 7.18).
   7.3. Notice there is an association between sackcloth and dust/ashes with fasting (Neh 9.1; Is 58.5; Lam 2.10; Dan 9.3) and in the Jewish context with sacrifice (Num 19.9, 10). Note however, that the use of sackcloth (and presumably dust/ashes) was not exclusively a Jewish custom (e.g., Jonah 3.5, 6, 8), but a general Middle Eastern custom.
   7.4. The use of sackcloth and dust/ashes likely was part of the OT ceremonial system that has been superseded by the NT system. This places a boundary on our interpretation of how to apply the use of sackcloth and dust/ashes today.[123]
   7.5. Nowhere is there a specific instruction given by God that the Jews were to use sackcloth and dust/ashes. They are mentioned in the NT context only in Jesus' illustration (Mt 11.21); Heb 9.13; and Rev 11.3; Rev 18.19, and certainly not as a command for the NT ceremonial system.
   7.6. To the contrary, Jesus seems to prohibit the use of sackcloth and ashes (Mt 6.16-18) as an outward display of inner contrition and true piety. The outward act of debasement has been superseded, but not the inner substance.

[123] Refer to the question: 'What are some guidelines or principles for applying the Law today?' in *Appendix H – The Law of God, the Standard for National Laws*, for a fuller discussion of the replacement of the OT ceremonial rituals with their spiritual equivalent in the NT economy.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

8. Is there to be any outward means today by which we show a heart that is full of contrition, confession, concern, or chagrin?
   8.1. The outward means are probably to be through singing the Psalms (Ps 35.13; Ps 69.10, 11) and prayer—note the connection between prayer and fasting: Acts 14.23; Mt 17.21/Mk 9.29 (NIV footnote; NKJV); 1 Cor 7.5 (NKJV); particularly when we sing Psalms of confession (e.g., Ps 27.1-14; Ps 51.1-19; Ps 103.1-22; Ps 106.1-48; Ps 130.1-8) and pray prayers of confession.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

Appendix P – Revivals

1. What are examples of revivals (as distinct from major missionary activities such as Jonah's preaching in pagan Nineveh [Jonah 3.4-10]) recorded in the Bible?
   1.1. Old Testament
      1.1.1. Joshua (Josh 5.2-9)
      1.1.2. Samuel (1 Sam 7.1-6)
      1.1.3. Elijah (1 Ki 18.17-40)
      1.1.4. Jehoash and Jehoiada (2 Ki 11.4-12.18; 2 Ki 12.4-18; 2 Chron 23.1-21; 2 Chron 24.1-19)
      1.1.5. Hezekiah (2 Ki 18.1-7; 2 Chron 29-31)
      1.1.6. Josiah (2 Ki 22-23; 2 Chron 34-35)
      1.1.7. Asa (2 Chron 14.2-5; 2 Chron 15.1-14)
      1.1.8. Manasseh (2 Chron 33.12-19)
      1.1.9. Ezra (Ezra 10.1-44)
      1.1.10. Nehemiah (Neh 8-10)
   1.2. New Testament
      1.2.1. John the Baptist (Mt 3.5, 6; Mk 1.4, 5)
      1.2.2. Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2.1-42, 46, 47). We can consider this a revival of true religion among the people of God, or a missionary activity.
      1.2.3. NT Church (Acts 4.4; Acts 5.14; Acts 6.7; Acts 12.24; Acts 14.1; Acts 19.17-20). The other account of conversions in Acts should probably be considered as missionary activity rather than revival: Acts 9.35 [although he as a proselyte]; Acts 11.20, 21; Acts 14.1 [Greeks as well as Jews]; Acts 19.17-20 [Greeks as well as Jews]).

2. What key components are found in a religious revival?
   2.1. Penitence (confession), Proclamation (reading the Bible and preaching), Prayer, Praise.

3. What are some famous revivals in history?
   3.1. Much of the history of the early church and Middle Ages is one of Missionary expansion, as distinct for revival. As new geographic territories (e.g., Syria, Asia Minor and the Caucus Mountain regions, Persia, North Africa, Greece, Italy, Spain, France, Germany, Ireland, Scotland, England, Scandinavia, Russia) were Christianized. There were undoubtedly times of revival in these areas where the Gospel had penetrated. In many areas, sadly, instead of revival, we see a petrifying of the Church and its eventual decline. In some of these areas, where the Gospel was first preached, Christianity has been overrun by Islam (North Africa, Middle East, Persia, Asia Minor, Eastern Europe) or we see decay into syncretistic religions (beyond Persia to India and China).
   3.2. England
      3.2.1. Under Wycliffe (1320-1384) a professor at Oxford who had the Bible translated from Latin into English by Nicholas of Herford and others at Oxford. He emphasized the Bible as the source of religious authority.
      3.2.2. He was scandalized by the Avignon Papacy ("Babylonian Captivity" 1304-1377; war between France and Italy, pope kidnapped) and the Great Schism (1377-1417; two, and then three, popes) and began writing against the sins in the hierarchy. He said that popes could err and they were not necessary for the administration of the Church; and that a worldly pope should be removed from office. [Note: Council of Constance (ca 1414) concluded that the supreme authority of the Church was not pope but councils, popes could err, bad popes should be removed.]
      3.2.3. He condemned transubstantiation; the cult of relics and saints, and pilgrimages; and taught that reading the Bible and preaching were more important than the sacraments.
      3.2.4. He sent out preachers, who became known as Lollards and had an influence throughout England and Scotland. This movement continued its effect until it was swallowed by the Reformation.
      3.2.5. His writings were condemned by the Council of Constance; in 1428 his remains were dug up and burned.
   3.3. Prague/Bohemia
      3.3.1. John Hus (c. 1373-1415) at Univ. of Prague in his preaching advocated reform and stirred people of all classes.
      3.3.2. The emphasis of his preaching was ethical rather than theological, but he adopted many of the theological reformed positions (e.g., giving both bread and wine to the laity at communion, and

© James R. Hughes, 2006

opposed practices that were forbidden by the Bible) of Wycliffe [Later Luther was accused of being a follower of Hus.]

3.3.3. Hus was condemned by the Pope, and in spite of a pledge of safe conduct, was sentenced to death by burning at the stake by the Council of Constance (this was the same council that condemned Wycliffe).

3.3.4. His preaching had a lasting effect on Bohemia and was a direct precursor of movements that followed in the 16th century.

3.4. Reformation started by Luther in Germany and occurring in parallel in Switzerland, England, Holland and Scotland:

3.4.1. We cannot summarize a history of the Reformation in this lesson. Rather we will note some of the Characteristics …

3.4.1.1. Key themes: *sola gratia; sola fide; sola scriptura, sola christo*. Not grace & sacraments ... faith & works ... scripture & church/councils ... Christ & saints/Mary. Luther's verse: Rom 1.17 (blinding light) "first to last." Eph 2.8, 9. Faith alone saves.

3.4.1.2. An emphasis on making the Bible available to the laity in the common ('vulgar') language and the standard for all theology and morality

3.4.1.3. A reform of morals and theology, and Church polity and practice

3.4.1.4. A renewal of missionary zeal

3.4.1.5. Hundreds of thousands of conversions throughout Northern Europe.

3.5. Second Reformation (1637-1651) in England and Scotland and the time of the Commonwealth (1651-1660) in England.

3.5.1. National Covenant (1638)

3.5.2. Solemn League and Covenant (1643)

3.5.3. Westminster Assembly (1643-1649)

3.5.4. Puritan and Presbyterian preaching and many conversions

3.5.5. Tremendous growth in the depth of Biblical knowledge throughout the population (for at least first generation).

3.6. First Great Awakening:

3.6.1. A series of religious revivals in the American colonies about the middle of the 18th century.

3.6.2. Started among the Presbyterians under William Tennent and his son Gilbert Tennent in the Middle Colonies.

3.6.3. Continued among the Congregationalists/Puritans (1734) with the preaching of Jonathan Edwards. "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" preached on Deuteronomy 32.35, at Enfield July 8th 1741. "There is nothing that keeps wicked men at any one moment out of hell, but the mere pleasure of God. … The wrath of God burns against them, their damnation does not slumber; the pit is prepared, the fire is made ready, the furnace is now hot, ready to receive them; the flames do now rage and glow. The glittering sword is whet, and held over them, and the pit hath opened its mouth under them. And now you have an extraordinary opportunity, a day wherein Christ has thrown the door of mercy wide open, and stands in calling, and crying with a loud voice to poor sinners; a day wherein many are flocking to him, and pressing into the kingdom of God."

3.6.4. Methodist preacher, George Whitefield, conducted a tour of the colonies (1739-41).

3.6.5. Revival reached the South with the preaching of Samuel Davies among the Presbyterians of Virginia (1748-59), and among the Baptists in North Carolina in the 1760s.

3.6.6. It was part of a broader evangelical movement in all Protestant cultures that arose to counter the currents of the 'Enlightenment'; it emphasized a true (and rational) religion based on faith and relied on Biblical revelation rather than purely human reason.

3.6.7. It resulted in an outpouring of missionary activity among native peoples (e.g., David Brainerd, Eleazar Wheelock, and Samuel Kirkland) and the first movement of importance against slavery. It also led to the founding of a number of colleges, including Princeton, Brown, Rutgers, and Dartmouth.

3.6.8. Ended in New England in bitter doctrinal disputes between the "New Lights" (modified Calvinism that held that conversion was the light of God shining on the sinner's soul) and the "Old Lights" (led by Charles Chauncy of Boston; they emphasized traditions, opposed revivals as extravagant emotionalism; developed into the Universalist Unitarian positions).

3.6.9. A similar division between "New Sides" and "Old Sides" in the Middle Colonies, caused a schism (1741-58) in the Presbyterian Church.

3.6.10. These divisions drew in the civil governments. Denominations lobbied legislatures for disestablishment and an end to the favored status of Congregationalism in Connecticut and

© James R. Hughes, 2006

Massachusetts and of Anglicanism in the southern colonies. This had a direct bearing on the creation of the 1st Amendment (1789) to the US Constitution ("Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof …") And … the rest … as they say … is history!

3.7. Second Great Awakening:

3.7.1. Nineteenth century American evangelicalism became characterized by its dynamism, and activism. Charles Grandison Finney, the leading evangelical of mid-nineteenth century America: "religion is the work of man, it is something for man to do." His emphasis was on what 'worked' in evangelism. He introduced the "anxious bench."

3.7.2. Incorporated an important doctrinal shift away from Calvinist doctrines that stressed: 1) original depravity, 2) innate spiritual helplessness to overcome sinful human nature, 3) the direct action of God's grace working through the Holy Spirit.

3.7.3. Nineteenth-century evangelicals (e.g., Francis Asbury (1745-1816), Lyman Beecher (1775-1863), Finney (1792-1875)) focused on sin as human action. They preached hellfire and damnation but they held to an unshakable belief in the capacity of humans for moral action. Whatever their particular doctrinal stance, most nineteenth-century evangelicals preached a kind of practical Arminianism (emphasized the ability of sinners to repent/desist from sin).

3.8. Welsh Revivals in the 19th Century:

3.8.1. Local revivals of Religion – 1823-1827. For example in Cardiganshire (1824) "There are wonderful and free outpourings of the Holy Spirit this year on several parts of the cause." It began at Llangeitho during a sermon of David Evans of Aberaeron on the words "Why stand ye here all the day idle" (Mt 20.6). South Wales—late 1820s—close to 400 were converted at Capel Isaac, among whom were Thomas Rees and William Williams who both became famous preachers. The revival affected the Calvinistic Methodist chapel at Llanddeusant. The preaching of the word that summer resulted in 280 conversions. A few days after holding a Calvinistic Methodist Association meeting at Aberavon revival broke out at Morriston, near Swansea. At Mynyddbach Daniel Evans received 650 new members to the Congregational church. The attendance at the communion services was so numerous they had to be held in the graveyard. Almost 2,000 were added to the churches of the different denominations of that region. The following year in Trelech and her daughter congregations Morgan Jones received 556 converts. One Sunday was particularly memorable when he gave the right hand of fellowship to about 130. Thomas Rees in his *History of Protestant Nonconformity in Wales* estimated that over 30,000 members were added to the churches of the four nonconformist denominations as a result of this revival.

3.8.2. Great Revival in South Wales – 1849. A letter to the editor that appeared in the *The Christian Witness*, vii (1850), pp. 315-6 (Reprinted in Thomas Rees, *Miscellaneous Papers Relating to Wales*, pp. 93-96), reads:

"SIR, - In your remarks on the general dearth of revivals of religion in the United Kingdom, on the wrapper of the WITNESS for this month, you intimate that no such thing as a revival has been heard of even in Wales during the last twelve years. It affords me the highest gratification to be now able to inform you that powerful awakenings were felt in North Wales in the years 1839 and 1840, and in South Wales in 1841, 1842, and 1843. The circulation of a translation of Mr. Finney's "Lectures," by Mr. Griffiths, of Swansea, was eminently instrumental, in the hand of God, in promoting that ever-memorable revival. … [L]ast year [1849] most of the churches in the counties of Monmouth and Glamorgan, and many in those of Brecon and Carmarthen, were blessed with a most powerful revival.

Some months ago, on the suggestion of my excellent friend, Mr. Joseph Maybery, of Llanelly, I wrote to the ministers of those churches which were most signally blessed with these awakenings, for the numbers added to their churches during the year, intimating my intention of publishing the account in one of the periodicals. The following is a list of as many of the churches as furnished me with the numbers added to them. If you will insert it in the CHRISTIAN WITNESS, it will undoubtedly be pondered over with gratification. by thousands of your pious readers, and will also be transmitted to future generations as a memorial of the gracious dealings of God with our highly-privileged nation: [He goes on to provide a long list of locations and thousands of conversions]"

3.8.3. Other notable smaller, local, revivals occurred throughout the rest of the 19th century.

3.9. Local revivals in Scotland (1850-1950): The following is one example:

3.9.1. *When the Mountains Flowed Down* (from a message delivered by Mr. Duncan Campbell in the early 1980s to the students of the Faith Mission Bible College in Edinburgh, that chronicles the revival from 1949-1953 in Barvas on the island of Lewis).

© James R. Hughes, 2006

'In revival, God moves in the district. Suddenly, the community becomes God conscious. The Spirit of God grips men and women in such a way that even work is given up as people give themselves to waiting upon God. In the midst of the Lewis Awakening, the parish minister at Barvas wrote, "The Spirit of the Lord was resting wonderfully on the different townships of the region. His Presence was in the homes of the people, on meadow and moorland, and even on the public roads." This presence of God is the supreme characteristic of a God-sent revival. Of the hundreds who found Jesus Christ during this time fully seventy-five per cent were saved before they came near a meeting or heard a sermon by myself or any other ministers in the parish. The power of God, the Spirit of God, was moving in operation, and the fear of God gripped the souls of men - this is God-sent revival as distinct from special efforts in the field of evangelism.
How did this gracious movement begin? In 1949, the local presbytery issued a proclamation to be read on a certain Sunday in all the Free Churches on the island of Lewis. This proclamation called the people to consider the "low state of vital religion . . . throughout the land . . . and the present dispensation of Divine displeasure . . . due to growing carelessness toward public worship . . . and the growing influence of the spirit of pleasure which has taken growing hold of the younger generation." They called on the churches to "take these matters to heart and to make serious inquiry what must be the end if there be no repentance. We call upon every individual as before God to examine his or her life in light of that responsibility which attends to us all and that happily in divine mercy we may be visited with a spirit of repentance and turn again to the Lord whom we have so grieved." I am not prepared to say what effect the reading of this declaration had upon the ministers or people of the island in general, but I do know that in the parish of Barvas a number of men and women took it to heart, especially two old women. I am ashamed to think of it - two sisters, one eighty-two and one eight-four, the latter blind. These two women developed a great heart concern for God to do something in the parish and gave themselves to waiting upon God in their little cottage. One night God gave one of the sisters a vision. Now, we have got to understand that in revival remarkable things happen. It is supernatural; you are not moving on human levels; you are moving in divine places. In the vision, she saw the churches crowded with young people and she told her sister, "I believe revival is coming to the parish." At that time, there was not a single young person attending public worship, a fact which cannot be disputed. Sending for the minister, she told him her story, and he took her message as a word from God to his heart. Turning to her he said, "What do you think we should do?" What?" she said, "Give yourself to prayer; give yourself to waiting upon God. Get your elders and deacons together and spend at least two nights a week waiting upon God in prayer. If you will do that at your end of the parish, my sister and I will do it at our end of the parish from ten o'clock at night until two or three o'clock in the morning." So, the minister called his leaders together and for several months they waited upon God in a barn among the straw. During this time they plead one promise, "For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring" (Isaiah 44:3). This went on for at least three months. Nothing happened. But one night a young deacon rose and began reading from Psalm 24.3, "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation" (Psalm 24:3-5). Closing his Bible, he addressed the minister and other office bearers in words that sound crude in English, but not so crude in our Gaelic language, "It seems to me so much humbug. To be waiting as we are waiting, to be praying as we are praying, when we ourselves are not rightly related to God." Then, he lifted his hands toward heaven and prayed, "O God, are my hands clean? Is my heart pure?" Then, he went to his knees and fell into a trance. Now, don't ask me to explain the physical manifestations of this movement because I can't, but this I do know, that something happened in the barn at that moment in that young deacon. There was a power loosed that shook the heavens and an awareness of God gripped those gathered together.'

3.10. China (We should mention the moving of the Holy Spirit in China, although it may not be called a *revival*, in the strict sense; it is really *evangelism* as China was never anywhere near being a Christian country, nor has it ever had any significant percentage of Christians (until recently). However the term revival is used in the following description):

3.10.1. "Today, the biggest revival in Christian history is taking place in China. Lambert estimates 30 to 50 million evangelicals (p. 179). I spoke with a Chinese member of my local church two weeks ago. He had just returned from Beijing. He said the Chinese government has recently published

© James R. Hughes, 2006

an estimate of 100 million Christians. He saw it in a government-run newspaper. Yet just 25 years ago, there was almost no trace of Christianity in China."[124]

3.11. Russia:

3.11.1. "There is … the dramatic revival of religion in Russia, now so obvious that no one can dispute it. Three out of five Russians say that they believe in God, a higher rate than in West Germany, the Netherlands, and the Scandinavian countries. Two out of five say that they didn't used to believe in God but do now. 58% describe their religion is Orthodox, though only one out of ten were raised Orthodox. The majority of Russians want baptisms, weddings and funerals in church and agree that religion provides the moral basis for life and a support for family relationships. Almost half of them attend church services at least once a year and one out five pray at least once a week. … Thus nine years after the abortive Communist coup that brought Boris Yeltsin to power, Orthodoxy has reemerged as a major force in Russian life, so important indeed that, when Boris Nicoalaevitch resigned as president, the Patricarch Alexei, in full robes, stood besides him. Half a decade ago such a resurgence of Orthodoxy was dismissed, perhaps not unreasonably, as impossible when I reported the first survey results, collected the same year as Yeltsin's rise to power. Now the religious revival in Russia, perhaps the most dramatic in human history, has become so obvious that it is taken for granted. Patently the millennium-long Russian religious heritage was too strong to be destroyed by seventy years of sometimes vicious but almost always inept Socialist oppression. Vladimir of Kiev triumphed over Karl Mark." (Andrew Greeley teaches sociology at the University of Chicago and the University of Arizona; www.agreeley.com)

3.12. What about Canada?

3.12.1. The Great Awakening appears to have had some impact on Canada: "From New England, the centre of American revivalism and the source of most early British settlement in Nova Scotia, beliefs and experiences familiar to those acquainted with revival and pietism came to the Maritimes. But the Canadian Awakening was also an indigenous response to peculiarly local conditions. In their scattered wilderness settlements Maritimers teetered on the brink of economic disaster, and with the outbreak of the American Revolution - which the isolated settlers did not really understand - there was a crisis of identity which a movement emphasizing personal salvation could allay, if not resolve. … The revival never really ended, but ebbed and flowed throughout much of the 19th century as settlement spread."[125]

3.12.2. Influential in this movement was Henry Alline an itinerant evangelist from Newport, Rhode Island (b. 1748). He began his career as a saddlebag preacher in Falmouth, Nova Scotia, and spent most of his life touring Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. Although self-educated, he was a prolific writer and speaker committed to music as a part of religious worship. His followers, who were based mainly in Nova Scotia, were referred to as "Allinites."

3.12.3. "In a rough comparison, the Maritimes became to Canada what Scotland was to England—a place of vigorous Christian loyalties that nonetheless remained on the margin of cultural influence, famous as much for sons and daughters who left for other parts as for those who remained behind."[126]

3.12.4. There does not appear to have been a significant revival in Canada. There is no mention of on in Mark Noll's book, *A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada*. Nor in a search on the Internet ("revival and Canada and Christianity") is much found with respect to revival in Canada. The Vineyard movement is called a revival, but many of us would likely not include that movement in our definition of revival of true religion.

3.12.5. In passing we can note what Knoll has to say about the Free Church in Canada: "The conditions that divided the church in Scotland were next to meaningless in Canada … Canadian Presbyterians … did not need to divide over what were essentially Scottish issues. But divide they did, with the more evangelical group coming out to form the Presbyterian Church of Canada, which, after the Old World example, was usually called the Free Church. This new denomination grew rapidly, and soon outdistanced the Kirk Synod in Canada that remained in fellowship with the Auld Kirk of Scotland. By 1861 the Free Church had grown to about 150,000 (or roughly 10 percent of Ontario's population), while the Kirk Synod had fallen behind. In [1861] the Free Church completed a merger with the United Presbyterian Church in

[124] Gary North, ICE July, 2000, www.myrightstart.com [Web site no longer exists.]

[125] *The Canadian Encyclopedia* 2000, National Edition; McClelland & Stewart.

[126] Mark A. Noll, *A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada*, p. 265.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

Canada (a New World offshoot of earlier splinters from the Scottish Kirk). These negotiations, in turn, became the vanguard of a more general movement toward Presbyterian union that culminated in the gathering of almost all Canadian Presbyterians into one denomination in 1875. … During its short existence, the Free Church vigorously maintained Scottish traditions of Sabbath observance, anti-Catholicism, and conservatism in worship and church architecture. But it also took on some habits of North American evangelical Protestantism by vigorously promoting temperance reform and eagerly sponsoring missionary outreach, especially in the opening Canadian west … At its beginning, the Free Church was officially establishmentarian … Within two decades, the denomination's vision had been turned sufficiently from Scotland to Canada—that is, from the remembered ideal to the current reality—to abandon all but the most ephemeral establishment aspirations."[127]

3.12.6. Canada has not been blessed with a revival. Canada needs to see a revival. This leads logically to three questions: 1) What are the signs of true revival? 2) What are the causes of revival? And then: 3) What are the lessons we can derive from historical revivals?

4. What are the signs of true revival?
   4.1. We can consider some of what Jonathan Edwards wrote on the topic from his vantage point in the midst of the Great Awakening.
   4.2. *A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God* (pub. 1737)
      4.2.1. In the introductory portion of the account he mentions as background the full attention of the congregation to the public worship: "Our public assemblies were then beautiful: the congregation was live in God's service, every one earnestly intent on the public worship, every *hearer* eager to drink in the words of the *minister* as they came from his mouth; the assembly in general were, from time to time, in *tears* while the word was preached; *some* weeping with sorrow and distress, *others* with joy and love, *others* with pity and concern for the souls of their neighbours. Our public praises were then greatly enlivened; God was then served in our *psalmody*, in some measure in the beauty of holiness. … in *singing* his praises Our congregation excelled all that ever I knew in the *external* part of the duty before [with multi-part harmony] but now they were evidently wont to sing with *unusual elevation* of heart and voice, which made the duty pleasant indeed." (p. 1.348)
      4.2.2. He identifies a number of the generic characteristics of the various types of conversions that he witnessed:
         4.2.2.1. There was a great variety as to the degree of fear/dread of sin and its consequences.
         4.2.2.2. Many seemed to come to a conviction of absolute dependence on God's sovereign power and grace and the universal necessity of a mediator.
         4.2.2.3. Conviction of the justice of God in their condemnation.
         4.2.2.4. Sweet view of the mercy of God and his sufficiency as a redeemer.
         4.2.2.5. Some people's affections were moved greatly.
         4.2.2.6. A manifestation of sincerity in the fruits brought forth.
      4.2.3. The third section of his treatise deals with illustrations from particular instances.
   4.3. *The Distinguishing Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God* (pub. 1741)
      4.3.1. Negative signs (i.e., not signs, or not evidence that the work is not from God), [selected]:
         4.3.1.1. The work is unusual or different. It proves nothing. We cannot tell how great a variety of means God will use.
         4.3.1.2. Effects on men's bodies
         4.3.1.3. Impressions on minds
         4.3.1.4. Imprudence and irregularities
         4.3.1.5. Errors in judgment
         4.3.1.6. Counterfeits
         4.3.1.7. Promoted by terrors of God's holy law.
      4.3.2. Distinguishing Evidences of a work of the Spirit of God, [selected]:
         4.3.2.1. The prevailing spirit works against the interests of Satan's kingdom
         4.3.2.2. The spirit operates to cause in men a greater regard for the Bible
         4.3.2.3. The spirit of love to God and man is a sure sign that the work is of the Spirit of God.
   4.4. *Some Thoughts Concerning the Present Revival of Religion in New England* (1740). An abbreviated outline of the book:
      Part I A Glorious Work of God

[127] Mark A. Noll, *A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada*, pp. 274-275.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

Sect 1. 1. We should judge of it by its effects
2. We should judge by all of Scripture (not philosophy or history)
3. We should not judge of the whole by a part (distinguish the bad from the good)
4. Nature of the work in general (increase in seriousness about life and sin; youth forsaking frivolousness; greater esteem for the Bible; multitudes brought to conviction of sin; many Indians converted) Why would people raise the question if this is the work of God or the Devil?
5. Nature of the work in a particular instance
6. The work is very glorious: "God in the conversion of one soul, considered together with the source, foundation, and purchase if it, and also the benefit, end, and eternal issue of it, is a more glorious work of god than the creation of the whole material universe. It is the most glorious of God's work … This work is very glorious both in its *nature*, and in its *degree* and *circumstances*."

Part II Obligations to acknowledge, rejoice in, and promote this work

Sect 2. 1. Indifference dangerous
2. Probability of work beginning in America (beginning the Millennial age; shows Jonathan Edward's Post-millennialism; rather ethnocentric; possibly naively optimistic)
3. Danger of slighting the work (Here he speaks of the various OT feasts as foreshadowing the later glorious days of the Church. We noted that the revival at the time of Nehemiah was in the context of the conclusion of the Feast of Tabernacles, or Ingathering. He also uses Michal, David's wife as an example of slighting the work of God.)
4. Obligations of rulers, ministers, and others to promote the work

Part III Wherein the Zealous Promoters of the Work have been Injuriously Blamed

Sect 3. 1. Ministers addressing affections rather than understandings; he says:
"I should think myself in the way of my duty, to raise the affections of my hearers as high as possibly I can, provided that they are affected with nothing but truth, and with the affections that are not disagreeable to the nature of the subject."
2. Speaking terror to those under terror. He uses a medical analogy of cleaning a wound. He says that only in the case of melancholy (depression) should people not be reminded of terror. "The most awful truths of God's word ought not to be withheld from public congregations …"
3. Too much time spent in religious meetings
4. Use of much singing. He agrees with use of Psalms but questions their exclusive use, and applies Watt's argument for the use of hymns.

Part IV What things are to be corrected and avoided

Sect 4. 1. Spiritual pride (especially affected style)
2. Wrong principles (1. Second blessing with immediate revelation; 2. Following 'feelings' from the Holy Spirit; 3. Pragmatism: what is of immediate benefit should always be practiced without looking to future consequences; 4. Judging that success given to individuals in the work of God, means that all that they do is approved by God; 5. External order in the means of grace can now be disregarded as ceremonies and dead forms; 6. Ministers take on prophetic authority.)
3. Ignorance of inward experiences (1. They are mixed and always tainted by remnants of sin especially self-righteousness and spiritual pride; 2. Effects/incomplete experience; 3. Degenerating of experiences; 4. Influences how we behave)
4. Of censuring professing Christians
5. Errors relative to lay-exhorting (held by some that it was a Christian duty; difficult to determine what belongs to the office of teacher; Christian conversation *vs* preaching)
6. Errors relative to singing ("handle the ark with reverence"; not be hasty to introduce innovation; new wine in old bottles;

Part V What ought to be done to promote this work

Sect 5. 1. we should remove stumbling blocks
2. What should be done to advance it
3. Some things that concern all (fasting is mentioned; Lord's Supper)

4.4.1. The statement in his preface sets the tone for the entire treatise: "I make it my rule to lay hold of light and embrace it, wherever I see it, though held forth by a child or an enemy." (p. 1.365)

4.4.2. "These persons are extraordinarily affected with a new sense, and recent discovery, of the greatness and excellency of the Divine Being, the certainty and infinite importance of eternal

© James R. Hughes, 2006

things, the preciousness of souls, and the dreadful danger and madness of mankind, together with a great sense of God's distinguishing kindness and love to them. Is it any wonder that now they think they must exert themselves, and do something extraordinary for the honour of God and the good of souls? They know not how to sit still, and forbare speaking and acting with uncommon earnestness and vigour. And in these circumstances, if they be not persons of more than common steadiness and discretion, or have not some person of wisdom to direct them, it is a wonder if they do not proceed without due caution, and do things that are irregular, and that will, in the issue, do much more hurt than good. Censuring others is the worst disease with which this affair has been attended." (p. 1.373)

5. What are the essential accompanying elements or ingredients of a true revival?
   5.1. Note: This question is not asking what is the *cause* of revival, or the *result*. Ultimately the cause is the Holy Spirit. We are to pray for revival (Hab 3.2); this indicates that revival is the work and gift of God (Is 32.15; Joel 2.28-32). But there are certain and specific actions of God's people that accompany revival. Whether they are the immediate cause or the result of revival is not the important question.
   5.2. *Precepts (Reading of the Bible*, as we saw in Nehemiah 8.1-18*)*.
      5.2.1. Neh 9.14 NKJV; Dt 33.10 NIV; ~25X in Psalms, e.g., Ps 119.159.
      5.2.2. What is the logical connection between reading the word and revival?
      5.2.3. Without the conviction of sin, there is no repentance. Without repentance there is no revival.
      5.2.4. We considered in considerable detail, when we looked at Nehemiah 8.1-18, the importance of public reading of the Bible.
      5.2.5. In more and more churches today the reading of the Bible is not taken seriously.
      5.2.6. Jonathan Edwards mentioned that as a key sign of true revival there would be a prevailing spirit operating in people that would cause them to have a greater regard for the Bible.
      5.2.7. Where there is revival, the Bible will be read in both pulpit and pew, publicly and privately; consistently, sincerely, devoutly, and with an accepting, non-judgmental spirit.
   5.3. *Prayer*.
      5.3.1. We have already seen a number of times that Nehemiah and Ezra were men of prayer and that he or Ezra led the nation in prayer (Neh 1.4-11; Neh 2.4; Neh 6.9; Neh 8.6).
      5.3.2. Nehemiah 9.5c-37) provides a great prayer. It accompanied the revival at the time of Nehemiah.
      5.3.3. True prayer that is "an offering up of our desires unto God for things agreeable to his will, in the name of Christ, with confession of our sins, and thankful acknowledgement of his mercies" (*Westminster Shorter Catechism*).
      5.3.4. True prayer is that which is acceptable to God and which will be seen accompanying revival. We saw for example when we considered the revival in Barvas (Lewis) the role that two elderly women played as they prayed nightly in their home and the elders and the deacons prayed in a barn.
   5.4. *Preaching*.
      5.4.1. Preaching is God's *chosen* means of revival. Along with prayer, preaching has played a central role in the history of every revival and significant evangelistic movement.
      5.4.2. We noted when we were studying Nehemiah 8.1-18, examples of powerful preaching being a key component of revival in various historical contexts.
      5.4.3. Jonathan Edwards said: "Our public assemblies were then beautiful: the congregation was live in God's service, every one earnestly intent on the public worship, every *hearer* eager to drink in the words of the *minister* as they came from his mouth; the assembly in general were, from time to time, in *tears* while the word was preached; *some* weeping with sorrow and distress, *others* with joy and love, *others* with pity and concern for the souls of their neighbors."[128]
      5.4.4. "PREACHING of the word, being the power of God unto salvation ..."[129]
      5.4.5. Dr. John Greeves: "The pulpit is the altar where the fire falls on Mount Carmel. The pulpit is the heart beat of the gospel proclamation. As the pulpit goes so goes the churches.... As the pulpit goes so goes the hearts of men in our generation.... The pulpit is the front line of the spiritual battle that is waged in every generation and in every culture."[130]
      5.4.6. At times of revival there will be a greater emphasis on praying for preaching, attendance at preaching, and serious application of preaching.

[128] *A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God* (pub. 1737), p. 1.348.
[129] "Of the Preaching of the Word," Westminster Standards: *The Directory for the Public Worship of God*.
[130] John Greeves, Trinity Seminary, "Expository Preaching," Tape 2.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

5.5. *Practice* (Ps 119.56, 128).
  5.5.1. Jonathan Edwards mentioned two additional signs of true revival: 1) The prevailing spirit works against the interests of Satan's kingdom, and 2) The spirit of love to God and man is a sure sign that the work is of the Spirit of God. Both of these fall into the category of practice.
  5.5.2. In James we find different case studies that show us how to put faith into practice and do the word:
    5.5.2.1. Love Your Neighbour (James 2.1-13)
      5.5.2.1.1. Favouritism Forbidden (James 2.1-7)
      5.5.2.1.2. Royal Law (James 2.8-13)
    5.5.2.2. Faith that Works (James 2.14-26)
    5.5.2.3. Tame Your Tongue (James 3.1-12)
    5.5.2.4. Gain True Wisdom (James 3.13-18)
    5.5.2.5. Avoid Quarrels (James 4.1-12)
    5.5.2.6. Plan in God's Will (James 4.13-17)
    5.5.2.7. Don't be an Oppressor (James 5.1-6).
    5.5.2.8. When looking at James 2.8 we need to ask what it means to love God. The basis of loving God is obedience to God's Law (Jn 14.15). This ties Practice to the first point of evidence of true revival—Precepts.
    5.5.2.9. Since Law is the basis of love for God, it is also the basis of love for man.
    5.5.2.10. James applies the Scriptures (the OT Law) to drive home his point about love for God and man being the evidence of faith. Practice, not proclamation is the evidence of the work of the Spirit. For example James uses Leviticus 19.11-18 six times (James [2.1 (15); James 4.11 [16]; James 5.4 [13]; James 5.9 [18]; James 5.12 [12]; James 5.19 [17]) to show the meaning of love for our neighbour.
  5.5.3. What is the classic statement of Love in the NT?
    5.5.3.1. 1 Corinthians 13.1-13.
    5.5.3.2. Note: All of the terms that Paul uses in this passage are examples of obedience in the OT [the actual words vary depending on the translation used but the essence is clear] and particularly from the book of Proverbs: patient (Prov 14.29); kind (Prov 11.17); no envy (Prov 23.17); not boast (Prov 27.1); no pride (Prov 16.5); not rude (Prov 15.1); not self seeking (Prov 18.1); slow to anger (Prov 29.11); no record of wrongs (Prov 10.12); not delight in evil (Prov 8.13); rejoices w/ truth (Prov 12.22); protects (Prov 31.27); trusts (Prov 3.5); hopes (Prov 24.14); perseveres (Prov 17.17).
  5.5.4. How can we love our neighbour as ourselves? By obeying God's Law (Rom 13.8-10). By keeping the Law we exercise love for our neighbour.
  5.5.5. Average Christians don't want to hear this, and ask: "Can't I love without reference to Law?" However morality without absolutes is a fiction. Love w/out law is a farce.
  5.5.6. When James tells us to keep the whole law (James 2.10) found in Scripture (James 2.8), he means that Christians are to obey the OT Law. It is tiring to hear Christians say that the OT Law does not apply today. Clearly, they are not listening to James, Jesus (Mt 5.17-20), and Paul (Rom 13.8-10; 2 Tim 3.16, 17). Love is keeping God's Law as found in the Scriptures—OT and NT.
5.6. *Praise*
  5.6.1. Jonathan Edwards said: "Our public praises were then greatly enlivened; God was then served in our *psalmody*, in some measure in the beauty of holiness. … in *singing* his praises Our congregation excelled all that ever I knew in the *external* part of the duty before [with multi-part harmony] but now they were evidently wont to sing with *unusual elevation* of heart and voice, which made the duty pleasant indeed."[131]
  5.6.2. Praise is suitable for all kinds of occasions: confession of sin (Ps 44.1-26; Ps 51.1-19); appeal for mercy (Ps 25.1-22; Ps 41.4-7; Ps 86.1-17; Ps 123.1-4), supplication for support (Ps 42.1-11; Ps 43.1-5; Ps 77.1-10; Ps 130.1-8); thanksgiving (Ps 34.1-22; Ps 92.1-4; Ps 103.1-22; Ps 107.1-43); rejoicing (Ps 100.1-5; Ps 146.1-10; Ps 147.1-20; Ps 148.1-14; Ps 149.1-9).
  5.6.3. We are enjoined by scripture to sing Psalms (Ps 7.17; Ps 95.2; Eph 5.19; Col 3.16; Heb 13.15; James 5.13) and by example (Mt 26.30; Acts 16.25).
  5.6.4. Times of revival will be accompanied by a renewed emphasis in singing the words of God as found in the Psalms.
5.7. We could say that the Holy Spirit *uses* the true and sincere administration of these actions (*precepts, prayer, preaching, practice*, and *praise*) to initiate a revival, but also once a revival is initiated we see

[131] *A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God* (pub. 1737), p. 1.348.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

more of these actions—i.e., they are the result of revival. However, there are times when these actions are performed by God's people faithfully, sincerely, in confession, and true dependence and there is not the experience of revival. So we cannot say that whenever they are performed there will be a revival. Regardless, the fact is, they accompany all revivals. Without these elements, revival is not found. Where there is revival these elements are found. These are the five signs of true revival and they are found in Nehemiah 8-10.

6. What are some lessons we can derive from this study of (Biblical and extra-Biblical) revivals?
   6.1. God has many people that he is saving (Rev 7.9). We note that the revival recounted in Nehemiah 8-10 occurred in the context of the Feast of Tabernacles (Neh 8.14-18). From this we obtain a promise of the in-gathering of the Gentile nations (Zech 14.16; Jn 4.35-38; Fall 27 AD) as a great outpouring of worship to God. Jonathan Edwards in *Some Thoughts Concerning the Present Revival of Religion in New England* (p. 1.383) refers to the Feast of Tabernacles as a sign of the spiritual feast of souls in a revival.
   6.2. God accompanies true revival with five key signs: *precepts*, *prayer*, *preaching*, *practice*, and *praise*. This tells us that we can discern the spirits (1 Cor 12.10 [although the specific reference in this context may be to an extra-ordinary gift]; 1 Jn 4.1). God gives us guidelines for judging one movement over another. Not all movements in the Church are from the Spirit of God. Some movements are impostor movements from the hand of man (2 Cor 11.3, 4, 13-15; Col 2.20-23; 2 Pt 2.1), and from the hand of Satan (1 Tim 4.1; 2 Cor 11.11-15).
   6.3. God is patient. He puts up with rebellion for far longer than we are willing to tolerate it. We cannot stand it if someone irritates us even a little bit. God is irritated a lot by man's sin but does not snuff him out as if he were an irritating mosquito—as he deserves. Rather God sends revival to wake up a people and to save some more from their midst (Ex 34.6-7; Ps 78.38; Ps 86.15; Is 30.18; Rom 2.1-4).
   6.4. From these examples we can receive great encouragement (Joel 2.28; Zech 8.20-23; Micah 4.1-8). God is in control of all events. When we see the increase in wickedness around us, and the overt hatred of Christian morality and principles, we do not loose hope. We can rest in the assurance that the Church is not in eclipse. Jesus Christ will have the final victory. One means of his achieving his victory is saving sinners out of the clutches of Satan. Revival is a direct attack on the kingdom of Satan.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

Appendix Q – The 'Problem of Evil'

1. When considering God's providential control over all events, someone might ask why God would plan, decree, and permit (i.e., not restrain, *cf* Gen 20.6) such a heinous crime as a terrorist activity. This raises the question of the, so called, 'problem of evil.'
   1.1. Hume (1711-1776) in *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* (1779): "Is [God] willing to prevent evil, but not able? then he is impotent. Is he able, but not willing? then he is malevolent. Is he both able and willing? whence then is evil?" This viewpoint has been re-stated by many atheists since Hume.
   1.2. However, there is no 'problem of evil' unless evil really exists. Without God's moral standard there is no evil. All other definitions of 'evil' are purely subjective. One man's 'evil' can be another man's 'good'. The 'problem of evil' turns out to be a problem for Hume, all atheists, and all unbelievers. In order to argue that something is evil they must first show that something *can* be evil (i.e., that the existence of evil is meaningful) and not just inconvenient, unpleasant, or against their own wills. Moral indignation against atrocities is inconsistent within their materialistic naturalistic philosophy. The unbeliever has to stand on the Christian's side to declare something as evil. The real problem of evil is a logical problem for the unbeliever.

2. How then, as Christians, can we answer Hume's challenge?
   2.1. God is all good (completely and only).
   2.2. God is all powerful (he can do anything except that which is against his nature; e.g., God cannot deny truth).
   2.3. Evil exists (both by definition [against God's law] and by actuality [evil happens]).
   2.4. God has a morally sufficient and good reason for decreeing evil. [This is the assumption missed by Hume.] God planned, decreed, and permits evil for reasons which are morally commendable and good.
   2.5. When taken as a set, there is no logical contradiction in these four statements.
   2.6. What is the primary example of how the statements about God and evil work as a set? What is the greatest example of God's goodness? The crucifixion of Jesus [Rom 5.8]. What is the greatest evil ever committed on earth? The crucifixion of Jesus. Those who sentenced to death and executed Jesus were guilty of great evil [Acts 2.23, 24]. Yet God's goodness was shown in his decreeing this event [Gen 18.25; Acts 4.27, 28].

3. The real 'problem of evil' is not logical but psychological. We are rarely given the over-riding reason for why evil events happen [Jn 9.1-3]. But we must trust God instead of trying to subordinate God to our standards of 'morality' and our intellectual authority. Those who reject God's goodness on the grounds that he decrees and permits evil, perpetuate the problem of evil in their rebellion against God.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

Appendix R – Selected Aspects of Biblical Covenant Making

1. What is a covenant?
   1.1. There are various definitions of covenant including: treaty, pact, agreement, standing contract, etc.. These various usages depend on the context.
      1.1.1. A covenant may be a formal *mutual agreement* or treaty between two parties with each assuming some obligation. Examples of this kind of covenant, from the Bible, include:
         1.1.1.1. Individuals, e.g., Laban and Jacob (Gen 31.44-54) or David and Jonathan (1 Sam 18.3; 1 Sam 23.18);
         1.1.1.2. King and people, e.g., David and the people (2 Sam 5.3);
         1.1.1.3. States/nations, e.g., Abraham and the Amorites (Gen 14.13), Solomon and Hiram (1 Ki 5.12); and
         1.1.1.4. Husband and wife (Mal 2.14; Ezk 16.8).
      1.1.2. A covenant may also be *imposed* by a greater power upon a lesser one (suzerain-vassal treaties) where the greater power demands loyalty and obligates itself to the protection of the lesser one, e.g., Israel and the Gibeonites (Josh 9.1-27) and the request by Jabesh-gilead of the king of Ammon (1 Sam 11.1-2).
   1.2. The definition given by O. Palmer Robertson in his book *The Christ of the Covenants* in terms of God's relationship with his people is: "A covenant is a bond in blood sovereignly administered." He then dissects the definition with respect to the three parts: bond, in blood, sovereignly administered. We can consider a covenant in terms of:
      1.2.1. A bond with conditions, promises, curses, and oaths.
      1.2.2. In blood, with cutting (indicating the life-and-death seriousness of the agreement).
      1.2.3. Sovereignly administered with no bargaining, bartering or contracting. "The sovereign Lord of heaven and earth dictates the terms of the covenant."

2. There are other aspects of the divine covenant making that we can consider briefly:
   2.1. *A Covenant is Not a Testament*. Death (symbolized by cutting) initiates a covenant relationship. Death ends a testamentary relationship. In addition, substitution for another has no place in the administration of a 'last will and testament'.
      2.1.1. The OT and NT should probably not be called 'testaments' but rather 'covenants'. The expression 'testament' was probably applied to the major divisions of the Bible incorrectly because the Greek word for 'covenant' can also be translated as 'testament'.
         2.1.1.1. Examples of 'covenant' (Acts 3.24; Acts 7.8; Lk 22.20; Mt 26.28; Gal 3.15; many examples in Hebrews 8-10).
         2.1.1.2. Examples of 'testament or will' (Heb 9.16, 17). Compare Heb 9.15-20 for both usages; both are the same Greek word [NKJV uses 'testament' and 'covenant'; NIV uses 'will' and 'covenant'].
      2.1.2. The translator(s) of the Vulgate used a single word (testament) to translate the word 'covenant'. This may have been acceptable, as the Latin word 'testament' may have carried both meanings. This likely influenced the translators of the KJV.
         2.1.2.1. The *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary* gives 'a covenant between God and man' as an archaic definition of the word.
         2.1.2.2. 2 Cor 3.14 is an example where a translation difference is obvious (compare, NIV with NKJV).
   2.2. *Federal Representation*. Covenants are administered federally through a representative (mediator).
      2.2.1. Compare: Dt 5.2, 3 with Dt 2.14, 15 and Num 14.28-35; Num 26.63-65.
      2.2.2. In family, church, and state God works with representatives of the people (i.e., husband/father; elders, civil magistrates [judges, elected representatives, or kings]).
         2.2.2.1. We need to respect this representative construct.
         2.2.2.2. Leaders are held accountable for the actions of those under their authority.
         2.2.2.3. The people are held accountable for the actions of those who represent them.
         2.2.2.4. If it were not for the fact that God accepts representation through a mediator the salvation rights acquired by Christ through his life and sacrificial death could not be applied to us.
   2.3. *Numerous Administrations*. There is, in essence, one covenant between God and man, but it has been re-stated through a number of administrations. There are (at least) two ways to classify these administrations:

© James R. Hughes, 2006

2.3.1. *Chronologically (Biblical Theology)* – Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, [Phinehas], David, Christ.
2.3.2. *Topically (Systematic Theology)* – Creation (works?), life, redemption, grace, old and new.
2.3.3. The existence of multiple covenantal administrations reminds us that it is necessary for mankind periodically to recommit to God. Individuals and families at life-milestones; and churches, and nations in each generation need to recommit covenantally with God.
2.3.3.1. Individuals: at baptism, conversion, church membership; key events such as marriage, a new job, a new school year, at a birthday, or at the time of a significant illness (e.g., Hezekiah; 2 Ki 20.1-11), confession of sin.
2.3.3.2. Families: marriage, baptisms, death, move, job change.
2.3.3.3. Churches: new elder or pastor, major new initiative (e.g., evangelism program), anniversaries.
2.3.3.4. Nations: new government, war or victory, major disaster (e.g., 9/11 or hurricane).

2.4. *Unity of the Covenants*. Although there have been a number of covenant administrations between God and man, all the administrations are restatements of a single covenant.
2.4.1. Factors that indicate this unity include:
2.4.1.1. Covenants are applied to subsequent generations (see, verses under *Federal Representation*, above) and perpetually (Dt 7.9; Ps 105.8-10).
2.4.1.2. There is a thematic unity: "I will be your God, and you will be my people."
2.4.1.2.1. This is the "Immanuel principle"; God will be with his people (Gen 17.7; Ex 6.6, 7; Ex 19.4, 5; 2 Ki 11.17; 2 Chron 23.16; Zech 2.11; Zech 8.8; Heb 8.10, 11).
2.4.1.2.2. God dwelt among his people and embodied this principle in the appearance of Jesus Christ (Jn 1.14).
2.4.1.3. The Davidic, Mosaic, Abrahamic and New covenants are all connected in Ezk 37.24-26.
2.4.1.4. The covenants are connected by the types and anti-types; with Christ as the fulfillment.
2.4.2. There is **one** covenant of God with mankind—with many administrations. This has a direct bearing on our understanding of God's Law since the delivery of his Law occurred in the context of covenantal administrations.
2.4.3. Covenant Theology is not an esoteric or obtuse area of study that has no bearing on our practical lives. The study of the covenants, and our understanding of them, has a direct bearing on how we live before God. What we think/believe is how we live!

2.5. *Diversity across the Covenantal Administrations*. We can note, briefly, a few of the different ways to identify differences among the covenantal administrations:
2.5.1. *Relationship to Sin*. God made covenants before sin was in the world and after it had entered. The Eternal Covenant (Covenant of Redemption) was made before man was created, between the Father and Christ (as man's representative). The Covenant of Creation was made with Adam as the representative of all his posterity.
2.5.1.1. *Note:* Neither of these covenants has cutting as a sign associated with its direct administration.
2.5.2. *Promissory vs Fulfillment*. Many (most, or all) aspects of the OT covenants pointed to Christ. In Christ these promises were fulfilled. This aspect of completion affects the form of administration. For example in the OT economy the covenants were (generally) administered with bloody signs. The NT administration (since Christ shed his blood once) has bloodless signs.
2.5.3. This fulfillment changes the *form* of the administration of many (most/all) of the ceremonial aspects of the OT Law. The *substance* and principles still apply to NT believers. While the form has changed (in some cases radically), the principles have not. For example singing Psalms is clearly a key part of the replacement for the bloody sacrifices (Heb 13.15).
2.5.4. The Bible and redemptive history is structured around covenantal administrations. The covenant administrations between God and man have different emphases and signs or seals: [Note this list is repeated below with Scripture references]
2.5.4.1. Creation (Adam): commencement; Sabbath
2.5.4.2. New World (Noah): preservation; Rainbow
2.5.4.3. National (Abraham): promise of seed and land (world); Circumcision
2.5.4.4. Sinaitic (Moses): Law; Passover [although before the actual giving of the Law] and sacrifices (ceremonial system)
2.5.4.5. Priestly (Phinehas): holiness; Urim and Thummim (?)
2.5.4.6. Royal (David): kingdom; Scepter (?) Temple (?)
2.5.4.7. New (Christ): consummation; Baptism and Lord's Supper

© James R. Hughes, 2006

2.5.5. We need to consider the complete set of covenant administrations and all their facets in order to understand in a full way God's revelation about himself and man's place before God.
2.5.6. The various covenant administrations provide the basis for a holy nation of kings and priests to serve continually in a land (Ex 19.6; 1 Pt 2.9; Rev 1.6; Rev 20.6). We need to understand the full set of covenant administrations to understand fully our place in the kingdom of God.

3. Why were/are covenants used by God?[132]
   3.1. God does not explicitly state the reason that he uses the covenant form as one of his means of dealing with mankind. However, it may be helpful to surmise some reasons why God chose to use the *covenantal relationship* as a key means of structuring his dealings with mankind:
      3.1.1. *It is consistent with his nature*. As a triune-God there is a multi-faceted relationship among the members of the trinity. A covenant is a form of agreement between the persons in the Trinity to fulfill their respective responsibilities.
      3.1.2. *It provides accountabilities*. The nature of a covenant provides for explicit accountabilities within a hierarchy of responsibilities (Gen 1.28-30).
      3.1.3. *It is a legally binding relationship*. God is a God of law and order who communicates his laws to those who dwell within his dominion (i.e., all of the created order). A covenant provides a basis for structuring formally (in a legally binding way) the relationship between God and mankind.
      3.1.4. *It binds man to God*. A covenant formally binds man to God in terms of his being a subject under law. It shows God's ownership of man.
      3.1.5. *It provides a clear line of demarcation.* In four ways:
         3.1.5.1. It forms the basis of demonstration for *God as the covenant-keeping* God and man as the covenant breaker. God never fails to keep his promises; man breaks the obligations of the Covenant (as provided in the Law) consistently.
         3.1.5.2. The first Adam failed to keep his covenant obligations; and 100% of mankind since Adam (born through natural generation) has failed to keep the covenant. God, in the Second Adam—Christ, the God-man—fulfilled perfectly the covenant obligations placed on man. This shows clearly the *failure of natural man*; and the success of man empowered by God.
         3.1.5.3. It provides the basis for *establishing membership in the Kingdom of Heaven*. There are only two classes of mankind. All men, women, and children are under the obligations of the covenant (and therefore obedience to the entire Law). There are people who are covenant breakers and people who are covenant keepers. There is no middle-ground. Man who wants to be autonomous and self-willed is a covenant breaker; man indwelt by the Holy Spirit is, in principle, a covenant keeper.
         3.1.5.4. It provides a means of visibly *distinguishing* those who are *participants in the Kingdom of Grace* and those who are not. This is accomplished through the administration of the covenant signs. There are some who have been circumcised/baptized and others who have not been.

4. A common expression used for making a covenant is literally "to cut a covenant".
   4.1. The idea of cutting is usually said to be *derived* from cutting of the male foreskin (e.g., Gen 17.10-14).
   4.2. Yet, the first occurrence of this expression is in Gen 15.18.
      4.2.1. In Gen 15.10 Abram brought pieces of meat that he cut in two and arranged in two rows. The Hebrew word used in this instance for cutting is used only in this verse. But the term "cut a covenant" is used in verse 18. In this example of "cutting a covenant" there is no connection with the male foreskin, but rather cut pieces of sacrificial (clean) animals.
      4.2.2. It is likely, therefore, that the sense or meaning of "cutting a covenant" is to be found in the generic use of cutting, i.e., cutting or separating by cutting away or removing (other translations: eliminate, root out, exclude, destroy). In enactments of the Covenant there may be the use of signs that represent cutting or separation.
      4.2.3. There can be more than one form of the sign used to symbolize the act of cutting (cut meat, cut foreskin). The cutting of the foreskin may have been added as a sign of the cutting or removal of sin.

[132] A more complete discussion of the topic, *Why Does God Use Covenants?;* available at: www.epctoronto.org.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

4.2.4. In the OT economy there could have been more than one form of the sign used to symbolize cutting or removing, just as there is, in the NT economy, more than one form of the removal of sin through washing: immersion, pouring, sprinkling can be applied in Baptism.

4.3. The second occurrence of the expression "cut a covenant" in Genesis, is in Genesis 31.44: "let us make/cut a covenant".

4.4. Other representative places we find the expression "cut a covenant" are in: Judges 2.2; 2 Chron 29.10; Ezra 10.3; Is 55.3; Is 61.8; Jer 31.31, 33; Jer 32.40; Ezk 34.25; Ezk 37.26; Hos 2.18.

5. Do all administrations of the Biblical covenant involve an act of cutting or an act of separation?

5.1. In Genesis, we find explicit references to covenants in chapter 6 (18), 9, 15, 17. The first covenant is made with Noah (6, 9); the second with Abram (15, 17). Although it is not explicitly stated as such, most Reformed scholars also view the pronouncement of God to Adam, and the relationship between God and Adam to be a covenantal relationship.

5.2. Since all OT covenant administrations between God and man, from Abraham onward, were accompanied by at least the sign of cutting in circumcision, we could view them as all having a form of cutting used as a sign. But there could be more than one sign (just as in the NT economy both Baptism and the Lord's Supper relate to the one (New) covenant).

5.3. The major covenants to consider:

5.3.1. Creation (Adam) or Commencement – There may (it could be a stretch) be a removal (symbolically cutting) or separation in the act of setting apart the Tree of Life from man's use. Since sin had not been introduced yet into the world, there could not be death or a bloody act of removal. This may be a bloodless act of removal (in a similar way the NT covenant signs are bloodless). [Jer 33.20-26; Hos 6.7 may indicate that a covenant was made with Adam.] The Sabbath also could be understood as being a sign of the covenant administration. Here it could include an aspect of separation or cutting of time into two components: that which is devoted to God's worship and that which is allocated to man's work.

5.3.2. New World (Noah) or Preservation (Gen 6.18; Gen 9.9-17) – It is possible that separation of clean and unclean animals was a sign of the covenant. While this had occurred before the enactment of the covenant (Gen 7.2, 8), these animals are used (Gen 8.20) in the context of the covenantal administration (Gen 8.20-9.17). There may also be something in the rainbow as it, in a sense, cuts the sky in two; separating the dark from the light.

5.3.3. National (Abraham) or Promise – The promise of seed and land (world) (Gen 15.18, 17 [2]). The cutting is found in the split animals in Genesis 15.10.

5.3.4. Sinaitic (Moses) or Law (Ex 24.1-18; Dt 4.13; Dt 5.2, 3; Dt 9.9, 11, 15; renewal: Ex 34.10-28; Dt 29.1-29; Joshua 24.1-28; Ezra 10.1-44; Nehemiah 10.1-39; Zedekiah; Jer 34.8-22) – There seem to be two signs of the covenant:

5.3.4.1. The Sabbath (Ex 31.16-17). The Sabbath had existed from creation but here it may be included an explicit sign of the covenant in separation.

5.3.4.2. The Sacrificial system and the ordinances of the ceremonial law (Ps 50.5). There certainly was cutting associated with the sacrificial system (Lev 1.3-9 [**6**]).

5.3.5. Priestly (Phinehas) (Num 25.10-13) – The account of the enactment of this covenant is very brief. Little of the background or formula for enactment is given to us. So we cannot tell if there was any explicit sign given as part of the covenant. There could be a "cutting" in the separation of duties or in the cutting that took place when Phinehas destroyed the fornicators. [Notice that it is hard to determine exactly what is the sign of this covenant; yet most commentators would argue that a covenantal enactment would have an associated sign.]

5.3.6. Royal (David) or Kingdom (2 Sam 7.5-16; 2 Sam 23.5; 2 Chron 13.5; 2 Chron 21.7; Jer 33.21; Renewal: Asa 2 Chron 15.12; Jehoiada/Joash 2 Ki 11.4, 12, 17/2 Chron 23.1-21; Hezekiah 2 Chron 29.10; Josiah 2 Ki 22-23/2 Chron 34-35) – The sign could be in the cutting off of enemies (Neh 7.9, 15), or the separation of an eternal royal house from the rest of Israel (Neh 7.11-12). [As above, it is hard to determine exactly what is the sign of this covenant.]

5.3.7. New (Christ) or Consummation (Jer 31.31-34; 1 Cor 11.25; Heb 8.1-13) – ("cut a covenant" Jer 31.31, 33) and in NT (Mt 14.24; Lk 22.17-20). Jesus tells us that: "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you." We may have in this a sign related to cutting.

5.3.8. Eternal (between the Father and Son) – Hebrews 13.20 speaks of the "blood of the eternal covenant". This may be a reference to the covenant that was made in eternity between the Father and the Son to provide redemption. In Heb 13.20 there is reference to blood. As above this may be

© James R. Hughes, 2006

the symbol of cutting. There may also be something in the fact that Jesus was cut off (forsaken) as in Mt 27.46 (the sign occurred later in time as in Ex 3.12.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

Appendix S – The On-going Role of Public Covenanting

1. Opening questions for discussion:
   1.1. Why did the Covenanters determine that it was necessary to make a national covenant (e.g., the National Covenant of 1638 or the Solemn League and Covenant 1643) that was to be signed by the king?
   1.2. What place does covenanting have today, in the 21st century?
   1.3. What role does covenanting have in the Church (e.g., in denominations or congregations) and in the State (i.e., in nations)?

2. Where do we see explicit examples of different forms of covenanting today?
   2.1. Individuals: baptism, church membership.
   2.2. Families: marriage, baptisms.
   2.3. Churches: weekly Lord's Day (Sabbath) worship, observance of Lord's Supper, ordination of new elder or pastor.
   2.4. Corporations: contracts.
   2.5. Nations: treaties.
   2.6. [Note: all the elements of the full-formed covenant model do not have to be present. See for example, Lev 24.8; Num 18.19 (compare: Lev 2.13; 2 Chron 13.5)]

3. Is there a Biblical case for churches/Christians creating/renewing covenants today?
   3.1. The *existence of multiple* covenantal administrations (and renewals) reminds us that it is necessary for mankind periodically to recommit to God. [See *Appendix R – Selected Aspects of Biblical Covenant Making*, for a list of the Biblical covenant administrations.]
   3.2. Covenant making seems to be a *requirement from God*. God requires people to be in a covenantal relationship with himself throughout all time.
      3.2.1. The covenants are given as being perpetual (e.g., Gen 17.7; 2 Sam 23.5; Is 55.3; Jer 32.40; Jer 50.5; Heb 13.20).
      3.2.2. The Church is in a covenanted relationship with God that is equated with marriage:
         3.2.2.1. Marriage is a covenantal relationship (Prov 2.17; Mal 2.14).
         3.2.2.2. The Song of Solomon may be an allegory for the marriage relationship between Christ and the Church
         3.2.2.3. Isaiah 62.1-5 [4] speaks of Zion (the Church) being in a marriage relationship with the LORD
         3.2.2.4. Ephesians 5.23, 25-30 speaks of Christ's relationship to the Church as being like one of marriage
         3.2.2.5. Revelation 19.7, 9 refers to the Church as the bride of Christ coming to the wedding feast.
      3.2.3. The NT Church is under on-going covenant obligations; i.e., the New Covenant (2 Cor 3.6; Heb 7.22; Heb 8.6-10, 13).
   3.3. Each of us has a responsibility to make a public profession joining ourselves to the Lord:
      3.3.1. New converts by being publicly baptized into the covenant community.
      3.3.2. Young people growing up with the sign of the covenant on them, by coming to a point of profession through joining with God's people at the Lord's Supper.
      3.3.3. This could be restated as: "Every one who understands his obligations before God must reaffirm the Covenant with God."
   3.4. There is a strong *connection between Sabbath-keeping and Covenant-keeping*. Both are perpetual ordinances that continue together. The Sabbath is a sign/symbol of the Covenant (Ex 31.15-17). Sabbath keeping is a sign of Covenant obedience (Is 56.6). The sign hasn't been removed, because the substance hasn't. If we want to be faithful to the Covenant then we will keep all of God's commands; but in particular we will be especially careful to keep the Sabbath.

4. Why does it seem that there is no *explicit* example of covenant making/renewal in the NT Church after the death of Christ?
   4.1. With the introduction of the New Covenant in Christ, there is no need for an additional administration. His administration is the final administration of the covenant. This is the argument of Hebrews 8.1-3 and Hebrews 9.1-28 (also Heb 7.22; Heb 10.16; Heb 12.24).

© James R. Hughes, 2006

4.2. The NT Church at the time of the Apostles likely viewed the Lord's Day activities (including the Lord's Supper and Baptisms) as an on-going perpetual covenant *renewal* (e.g., 1 Cor 11.17-34).
4.3. [Note for additional thought: Could the council in Acts 15.1-41 have a covenantal element to it?]

5. Is public worship a form of weekly Covenant renewal?
   5.1. Worship is a collective activity of the people of God.
      5.1.1. In Nehemiah 8-10 we see the people assembling together in worship as part of the covenant renewal ceremony.
      5.1.2. Other places that indicate that worship is a collective activity include: Ps 22.22, 23, 25; Ps 34.3; Ps 95.6, 7; Acts 1.14; Acts 4.31; Acts 20.7.
   5.2. Psalm 50.5 ''Gather to me my consecrated ones, who made a covenant with me by sacrifice." This seems to indicate that covenant renewal is part of the sacrificial system.
      5.2.1. If so, then our worship, the sacrifice of praise (Heb 13.15), may be part of covenant renewal.
      5.2.2. Notice that this covenant sacrifice is in the context of the gathered consecrated ones, i.e., the public assembly.
   5.3. Hebrews 9.1-5 associates the incense with the Ark of the Covenant (see, also: 2 Chron 29.2-11 [10, 11]).
      5.3.1. The corporate prayers of the saints are equivalent to the incense (Ps 141.2 [note association with evening sacrifice]; Lk 1.9-11; Rev 5.8; Rev 8.3, 4).
      5.3.2. This seems to indicate that worship with corporate prayer is part of the reconfirmation of the Covenant. In many places in the OT offering incense to a false god is given as a sign of falling into covenant unfaithfulness (1 Ki 3.3; Jer 7.9-11; Jer 11.1-17 [2, 13]).
   5.4. Hebrews 10.19-25 teaches that we can come boldly together to corporate worship. Notice:
      5.4.1. This worship seems to be presented in the context of a covenantal sign (sprinkling, washing)
      5.4.2. We are not to forsake this corporate worship, but rest and revel in it.
   5.5. The context of the covenantal meal (Lord's Supper) is corporate worship (1 Cor 11.17, 33)
   5.6. How could we structure our worship deliberately to be more explicitly a covenant renewal ceremony?
      5.6.1. Introduction – call to worship
      5.6.2. Preamble – prayer and praise (thanksgiving and adoration)
      5.6.3. Historical Prologue – scripture reading
      5.6.4. Stipulations – preaching, prayer of confession and supplication (asking for support)
      5.6.5. Ratification – tithes and offerings, and Lord's supper
      5.6.6. Leadership Succession – benediction, commissioning into the world.
   5.7. If weekly worship on the Lord's Day is, in fact, a covenant renewal exercise, then more work is required:
      5.7.1. To review the structure of Synagogue worship and see how the Jews from the time of Ezra/Nehemiah adapted the Temple worship into a non-bloody sacrificial system and how the early church adapted the Synagogue worship form. This will be very difficult as there is very little source material on the origins of the Synagogue and on early worship liturgies.
      5.7.2. To pursue the background to the formation of the various liturgies in the Reformed churches to see what influenced their development (i.e., was there a covenantal renewal model in mind).
      5.7.3. To work out a conscious model of how our worship services should be structured as covenant renewal ceremonies.

6. Are there ways in which congregations, denominations, or the Church should be applying covenant renewal to other formal times or events?
   6.1. Repentance of corporate sin (e.g., a congregation has come to the conviction that their corporate actions in worship or a particular belief have been wrong); or when a serious sin on the part of an influential member or leader has had to be dealt with and the congregation is sensitive to renewing their commitment to God.
   6.2. Serious illnesses or other afflictions (e.g., church building bombed by Moslems).
   6.3. When there has been an outpouring of the Spirit and many people have been converted and have joined the church.
   6.4. When the church has been spared from calamity (e.g., missionaries have been released and returned safely form a war-zone; or a tornado has passed through town and missed the church building).

7. What are some of the places where we might see covenant making/renewal in the Church:
   7.1. Individuals: at baptism, conversion, church membership; key events such as marriage, a new job, a new school year, at a birthday, or at the time of a significant illness (e.g., Hezekiah; 2 Ki 20.1-11), confession of sin.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

7.2. Families: marriage, baptisms, death, move, job change.
7.3. Corporate: weekly Lord's Day (Sabbath) worship, observance of Lord's Supper, ordination of new elder or pastor, major new initiative (e.g., evangelism program), anniversaries.

8. What are examples of significant events in the history of the Church (post NT times) where covenant ceremonies (or their essential equivalent) have been pursued?
   8.1. It is difficult to find examples in churches. At the time of the Covenanters much of their emphasis was on public *national* covenanting (i.e., among the civil leaders).
   8.2. This may be because the Church:
      8.2.1. Hasn't given a lot of thought to the on-going role of the covenant renewal.
      8.2.2. Baptism and the Lord's Supper are the explicit covenant making/renewal activities.
      8.2.3. Worship (although rarely understood or presented this way) is the primary form of covenant renewal activity.

9. Is there a Biblical case for the idea that national public covenanting is an on-going obligation?[133] The primary arguments seem to fall into the following categories:
   9.1. *By Historical Precedent*: J. G. Vos in his book, *The Scottish Covenanters*, indicates that the practice of covenanting started during the Reformation under the leadership of John Knox.
      9.1.1. The first covenants were made in 1556-1560.
      9.1.2. This was followed later (during the Second Reformation) with the very significant formal covenant making activity in 1638 and 1643.
      9.1.3. Vos does not address the question of why they made these covenants. He just indicates that they did. He also does not address the question of why the covenanting movement seems to have originated in, and been mostly associated with, Scotland.
      9.1.4. Making *national* covenants does not appear to be a significant activity in the other Reformed churches in the 16th and 17th centuries. It does not seem that there is any period prior to the 16th century where religious covenants play a significant part in the life of nations.
         9.1.4.1. William Roberts contends that the use of public covenanting occurred at earlier periods in the history of the church but gives no documentary evidence that I could check. He says: "The existence of such federal deeds can be distinctly traced in the writings of Irenaeus, Justin Martyr, Tertullian, and others of the early Christian fathers. During the dark ages, the testimony of the Waldenses and of the Bohemian brethren to the practice can be easily adduced. In more modern times it is well ascertained to have prevailed in all the Reformed churches of the continent-in Germany, France, Switzerland, and the Netherlands (The league of Smalcalde, for example)."[134]
         9.1.4.2. A search through the CD with the text of the writings of the early Church fathers didn't find anything under "covenanting" "federal" or "national/public covenant". It is possible that they used different words to express the concept of public covenanting.
         9.1.4.3. There is a possible reference to covenant making among the Waldenses. It goes as follows: "In the name of the Vaudois Churches of the Alps, of Dauphine, and of Piedmont, which have ever been united, and of which we are the representatives, we here promise, our hands on our Bibles, and in the presence of God, that all our Valleys shall courageously sustain each other in matters of religion, without prejudice to the obedience due to their legitimate superiors. We promise to maintain the Bible, whole and without admixture, according to the usage of the true Apostolic Church, persevering in this holy religion, though it be at the peril of our life, in order that we may transmit it to our children, intact and pure, as we received it from our fathers. We promise aid and succor to our persecuted brothers, not regarding our individual interests, but the common cause; and not relying upon man, but upon God".[135] This however, was not a national covenant.

---

[133] See: John Cunningham, The Ordinance of Covenanting (1843) "This book is considered by many as the classic work on covenanting. He deals with the manner, duty and nature of covenanting (including personal and social covenanting), the obligation covenanting confers, how covenanting is provided for in the everlasting covenant, how it is adapted to the moral constitution of man and how it is according to the purposes of God. … [C]ovenanting is shown to be one of the great privileges of the Christian life." See also: Archibald Mason, Minister of the Gospel at Wishawtown, Observations On The Public Covenants, Betwixt God And The Church: A Discourse, Glasgow: Printed By E. Miller, 1799.

[134] William Roberts, "11: On the Duty of Covenanting and the Permanent Obligations of Religious Covenants," *Reformed Presbyterian Catechism*, 1853.

[135] J. A. Wylie. *The History of the Waldenses* (chapters 9 & 15), London: Cassell and Company, c 1860, www.reformedreader.org.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

9.1.4.4. The League of Smalcalde (1537) appears to have been a civil treaty among protestant (Lutheran) princes (Dukes and Electors) who pledged to defend Lutheran churches and territories from being overthrown by Papal forces.[136]

9.2. *By Biblical Example (national leaders making religious covenants)*:
- 9.2.1. Moses (Dt 29.9-15).
- 9.2.2. Joshua (Josh 24.16-18, 21, 24, 25).
- 9.2.3. Jehoiada/Joash (2 Ki 11.17).
- 9.2.4. Josiah (2 Ki 23.1-3; 2 Chron 34.29-32) "In all which he is set forth as a precedent to Christian reformers, that they may know their duty in like cases."[137]
- 9.2.5. Asa (2 Chron 15.12-15).
- 9.2.6. Nehemiah (10).

9.3. *By Application of direct Biblical Command*:
- 9.3.1. Jeremiah 50.4, 5 (future Israel; this could refer to the nation after the captivity [Jer 3.18] or the Church).
- 9.3.2. "As it is of moral obligation, it is consequently a duty incumbent upon present times; for things which are moral do not diminish in their obligation by the lapse of time."[138]

9.4. *By Logical Argument (from Scripture)*:
- 9.4.1. Kings/leaders of earth to be subject to Christ (Ps 2.10-12; Ps 22.27; Ps 68.31; Is 52.15; Dan 7.27; Phil 2.10; Rev 11.15).
- 9.4.2. Civil magistrates are subject to God, and to be ministers of God, for good:
  - 9.4.2.1. Romans 13.1-7
  - 9.4.2.2. "When we come to the state, no human activity can legitimately be undertaken in attempted independence of God and His Word. The idea that the state can be neutral is atheism. No human activity is neutral. And the idea that a nation can be governed in a neutral manner is nonsense. If the ruler of a nation is to attempt neutrality, he must behave in his actions of government like an atheist and that is not neutrality, it is sin. The ruler of a nation is to punish evil. ... If the ruler of a nation is to punish evil within the limited power given to him by God in His Word, then it must be evil as defined by God in His law."[139]

10. Are the previous public national covenants (from the 17th century) still binding?[140]

10.1. J. G. Vos in his book, *The Scottish Covenanters*, addresses the question of whether or not the covenants (especially those of 1638 and 1643) continue to be binding on church and state. "The National Covenant of 1638 purported to be inviolable and perpetually binding on the nation to all generations."[141]

10.2. Similarly the *Solemn League and Covenant* specifically binds the signers and their posterity. James Guthrie in a sermon (1663) on Ezk 17.19 argues for that the covenants were perpetually binding and addresses eleven objections. "In essence it an argument that the Covenants were (1) moral in character; (2) Scriptural in content; (3) taken by the lawful rulers and representatives of the nation; (4) purported to be, and were in their nature, perpetual bonds; and therefore (5) are perpetually binding on the Church and nation of Scotland." [142]

10.3. There continue to be some in Scotland who hold the view that these two covenants are still binding on that nation (and possibly the entire UK), and there are even some in NA who hold the view that the Covenants are also still binding in NA. They base their arguments on the following considerations:

10.3.1. Biblical covenants were considered binding on/by subsequent generations (e.g., Ex 13.19; Dt 5.2; Dt: 29.9-14; Josh 9.15 with 2 Sam 21.1, 2; Jer 11.10).

---

[136] Friedrich Schiller,, "An Early Look at a Religious War," *The History of the Thirty Years' War*. trans. Rev. A. J. W. Morrison (London: H.G. Bohn, 1846).

[137] George Gillespie, "Chapter XVI: A Treatise of Miscellany Questions (Whether it be lawful, just and expedient, that there be an ordinance of parliament for the taking of the solemn league and covenant, by all persons in the kingdom, under a considerable penalty ...)," pp. 85-88 from: *The Works of George Gillespie*, volume 2, Still Waters Revival Books reprint.

[138] William Roberts, "11: On the Duty of Covenanting and the Permanent Obligations of Religious Covenants," *Reformed Presbyterian Catechism*, 1853.

[139] Loughbrickland Reformed Presbyterian Church, "What the Solemn League and Covenant means for today," www.loughbrickland.org/Articles/slc.shtml.

[140] See: John Cunningham, *The Ordinance of Covenanting* (1843).

[141] J. G. Vos, *The Scottish Covenanters*, p. 193.

[142] J. G. Vos, *The Scottish Covenanters*, p. 201.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

10.3.2. The fact that the covenants (e.g., in 1643) consider themselves to bind posterity.
10.3.2.1. The *Solemn League and Covenant* asserts that the nations may "remain conjoined in a firm peace and union to all posterity." [Article 5]
10.3.2.2. The General Assembly that proposed and adopted it, declared it to be: "the most powerful means, by the blessing of God, for settling and preserving the Protestant religion with perfect peace, and propagating the same to other nations to all ages and generations." (Act dated 1643.08.17)
10.3.3. The fact that those who made the covenants considered them to be binding on subsequent generations.
10.3.3.1. The noble Marquis of Argyle on the scaffold said: "We are tied by covenants to religion and reformation. Those that were then unborn are yet engaged; and it passeth the power of all the magistrates under heaven to absolve them from the oath of God."
10.3.3.2. Rev. James Guthrie said, also at his execution: "I do bear my witness to the National Covenant of Scotland, and the Solemn League and Covenant betwixt the three kingdoms. These sacred, solemn, public oaths of God, I believe can be loosed by no person, or party, or power upon earth, but are still binding upon these kingdoms, and will be for ever hereafter; and are ratified and sealed by the conversion of many thousand souls, since our entering thereunto." His last words: "The Covenants—the Covenants will yet be Scotland's reviving."
10.3.4. The unity of the nation. Some argue that nations do not possess a perpetual constitution as the Church does. Nations may be dissolved. However, they claim, the obligations created by national covenants extend through the posterity of the society, because society and its leaders can be treated as a 'moral person'.
10.3.5. The principle of federal representation (i.e., the one swearing to the covenant represented himself, those under his authority, and his posterity).[143, 144,145,146]

10.4. One writer from the mid-19th Century said: "To some minds, it may seem little less than ridiculous, at this time of day, to speak of reviving the testimony contained in the Solemn League and Covenant. That Covenant has been so completely trampled under-foot, and has, by the vast majority of Scottish, as well as English Christians, been so long consigned to oblivion, that almost everywhere it is counted as a thing entirely obsolete and antiquated. It is the object of this discourse to show, that the great principles of that solemn deed were in entire accordance with the Word of God; and, consequently, that their obligation is as binding at this day as when the Covenant was sworn."[147]

10.5. How should we respond to the following questions, based on the arguments above?
10.5.1. Is there a distinction among nations? Are Canada and the US held accountable today to the covenants because they came out of the nations that originally formed the covenants?
10.5.2. Is Scotland (or England) held accountable to these covenants today since it, at one time, explicitly swore to the covenant as a nation?
10.5.3. Are the current citizens/leaders of any of these nations held accountable today for the covenants, when the covenants were made by people about 450 years ago?
10.5.4. Are the current citizens/leaders of any of these nations held accountable today to the covenants, when the covenants were broken by citizens/leaders who lived over 400 years ago?
10.5.5. Is there merit in the argument that once the covenants were broken, the generation that broke them was accountable for breaking them, but subsequent generations are no longer accountable?
10.5.6. Could this be likened to breaking a marriage covenant? For example, a person in a marriage divorces his/her partner and breaks the marriage covenant and goes off and marries another. The

---

[143] William Roberts, "11: On the Duty of Covenanting and the Permanent Obligations of Religious Covenants," *Reformed Presbyterian Catechism*, 1853.

[144] George Gillespie, "Chapter XVI: A Treatise of Miscellany Questions (Whether it be lawful, just and expedient, that there be an ordinance of parliament for the taking of the solemn league and covenant, by all persons in the kingdom, under a considerable penalty ...)," pp. 85-88 from: The Works of George Gillespie volume 2, Still Waters Revival Books reprint.

[145] Rev. J. W. Shaw, Pastor of The Reformed Presbyterian Congregation of Coldenham, N. Y. *Hephzibah Beulah—Our Covenants, The National and Solemn League; and Covenanting by The Reformed Presbyterian Synod in America*, Newburgh, N. Y.: Jas. J. Mcnally, Printer, Daily Telegraph Office. Crawford's Hall, No. 27 Third Street. 1872.

[146] James R. Wilson, D.D., Professor of Systematic Theology, &c. *Public Covenanting—Introductory Lecture at the Opening of the Session of The Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary*, November 7, 1848. Cincinnati: Printed by Smith and Chipman, Corner of Fourth & Walnut Streets. 1849.

[147] Rev. Alex. Hislop, Arbroath. *The Scriptural Principles of The Solemn League and Covenant, In Their Bearing on The Present State of The Episcopal Churches*. Glasgow and London: W.R. M'phun. Bookseller And Publisher To H.R.H. The Prince Consort. 1858.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

marriage is now broken. The other party isn't held accountable to the marriage covenant. In addition the children from that broken marriage are not held accountable (although they may suffer the consequences) because of the unfaithfulness of one of their parents.

10.5.7. Is there a distinction between human-originated and divine-originated covenants?

10.5.8. These questions and their answers need more thought. In light of these difficult questions it is probably not appropriate, as some do today, to accuse fellow Christians (and Reformed Presbyterians) in NA of being unfaithful to God because they don't hold the position that the covenants of 17th century are still binding on the US and Canada today.

11. Questions for discussion.
    11.1. We will assume that we agree (from above) that it is right and proper for a nation (through its leaders) to make a covenant with God; i.e., we will accept the principle that the establishment of the Christian religion (as distinct from a particular denomination) is proper (both the 1646 and US versions of the *Westminster Confession of Faith* indicate that it is the duty of the civil magistrate to support the Christian religion; the US version has modified the role of the magistrate with respect to calling of synods and the punishment of heretics).
    11.2. Is it idealistic and impractical to hold to the view that a nation (through its leaders) must covenant with God and even possibly observe the covenants that historically bind it?
    11.3. Should we be pushing for the government to make an explicit covenant with God?
    11.4. How practical is such an initiative in our day?
    11.5. Are there other things that we should be pushing for first? e.g., application of Biblical laws with respect to the abortion, homosexuality, divorce and marriage, Sabbath keeping…
    11.6. How should we approach national covenanting in a secular state?

12. Assuming that we could get the national leaders to be interested in making a covenant between our nation and God, what would be the reason for it at this time?
    12.1. It could be as part of a return to God and as a confession of our national rebellion. This would be similar to what we find in Nehemiah 9.1-38 and Nehemiah 10.1-39 and in other covenant renewals by the kings of Judah.

13. Is public, national covenanting an ordinary or occasional and extraordinary duty?
    13.1. It may be that it is occasional and extraordinary. We do not find examples of national covenant making being exercised as a regular, stated action (e.g., when each king came to the throne). Although, it may be implied in the requirements placed upon the king (Dt 17.18-20; Dt 31.9-13).

14. What are some of the circumstances under which a nation should engage in public, national covenanting?
    14.1. Public humiliation for apostasy from God (Jer 50.4, 5).
    14.2. Serious national affliction (2 Chron 34.29-32).
    14.3. At times of reformation and spiritual revival (2 Ki 23.1-3).
    14.4. Thanksgiving for special deliverance (2 Ki 11.17-20).
    14.5. Significant times in history (e.g., before Israel crossed the Jordan).[148]

15. Public covenanting is an essential part of community reconstruction. This is the reason we see it included in the activities of Nehemiah's day:
    15.1. Public humiliation for apostasy from God (Neh 9.16-18, 26, 29, 34).
    15.2. Serious national affliction (Neh 4.1-3; Neh 5.1-5).
    15.3. At times of reformation and spiritual revival (Neh 8.5, 6; Neh 9.1).
    15.4. Thanksgiving for special deliverance (Neh 8.9-12).
    15.5. Significant times in history (Neh 6.15, 16; Neh 7.1, 2).

[148] Adapted from: William Roberts, "11: On the Duty of Covenanting and the Permanent Obligations of Religious Covenants," *Reformed Presbyterian Catechism*, 1853.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

Appendix T – Casting Lots (Considerations)

1. In Nehemiah 7.65 we find a reference to the use of the Urim and Thummim.
   1.1. The Urim and Thummim (Exd 28.30) appear to mean "curses" (or some "light") and "perfections" or "revelation and truth (or holiness); like alpha and omega, in Hebrew the Urim begins with the first letter in the alphabet, Aleph; and Thummim begins with the last letter, Tau.
   1.2. Examples of the use of the Urim and Thummim for decision making Num 27.18-21; Josh 7.14; I Sam 23.6, 9.
   1.3. Some have suggested the Urim and Thummim consisted of two flat stones with different engravings or colours on each side that were dumped out of a pouch on the ephod/breast-piece. Both 'yes' or both 'no' or one of each meaning 'no answer' (see, Rev 2.17).
   1.4. Possibly it was nothing more than the word of the priest who spoke under the direct guidance of the Holy Spirit when acting in the capacity of priest (see, Zachariah in Lk 1.22).
   1.5. It seems that when the ark was destroyed (with the destruction of the temple under Nebuchadnezzer) the Urim and Thummin were also destroyed. Although the reference in Nehemiah 7.65 might indicate that the Urim and Thummim had been preserved, or a new set put in place. However Rabbis (e.g., Bustorf, Vitringa) indicate that the Urim and Thummim were never used again, after the captivity.

2. Examples from that historical period of casting lots (e.g., Ezk 24.6; Joel 3.3; Obadiah 11; Jonah 1.7; Nah 3.10) that use the same word as in Nehemiah 11.1 would not have used the Urim and Thummim—even if it was available to Israel, it would not have been available to the nearby nations.

3. From the use of the term "cast lots" it appears likely that people used small stones, or pieces of wood or bone. They may have used a form of dice. Pyramidal, tetrahedral (e.g., found in Ur) or icosahedral (e.g., from Egypt; dice appear to have been found among games dated from the Third Intermediate period [Dynasties XXI - XXIII, ~1069 BC - ~664 BC]).

4. Examples where the lots or similar means of 'chance' were used for the determination of God's will, and sanctioned, by God:
   4.1. Determination of the scapegoat (Lev 16.8).
   4.2. Allocation of priestly, Levitical, and gatekeeper duties at the time of David (1 Chron 24.5, 7, 31; 1 Chron 25.8, 9; 1 Chron 26.13, 14, 16)
   4.3. Determining who had 'sinned' (1 Sam 14.41-42).
   4.4. Determining who should live in Jerusalem (Neh 11.1).
   4.5. The selection of Matthias from among the two candidates to replace Judas (Acts 1.24-26).
   4.6. Proverbs 16.33 "The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD."
   4.7. Proverbs 18.18 "Casting the lot settles disputes and keeps strong opponents apart."

5. On what basis can we say that the use of casting lots is permitted to Christians today?
   5.1. By example of the godly, and endorsed by God (e.g., Acts 1.24-26).
   5.2. By the fact that God claims ownership over the casting of the lot (Prov 16.33; Prov 18.18).
   5.3. By the fact that all events are controlled by God; there is no such thing as chance.

6. What are legitimate circumstances under which lots can be used today?
   6.1. Not to challenge God's explicitly revealed will. For example, it would not be right to say: "Let's throw dice to decide whether or not we should go to church or watch a football game instead." Or "Let's flip a coin to decide if we should get drunk or not."
   6.2. (Probably) not to make complex decisions (e.g., whether to become a Missionary; or whether to take a particular course at university; or what person we should marry). This kind of decision should be guided by a weighed decision-making process in which pros and cons are laid out that consider such factors as motives, skills/suitabilities, and outcomes. For example, we should not chose to pursue a physics course because a flip of a coin said we should, when we don't have any ability at math and we are working on a degree in early childhood education.
   6.3. Where two equally valid and apparently equal options are presented to us (e.g., which team gets the ball first (as in football), or whether to sign-up for the 10:00 Tues or 10:00 Wed course.
   6.4. Where it is clear that we are really leaving the decision up to God, not letting the 'fates' decide.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

7. Casting of lots is not a pagan superstition. Using, for example, dice, *per se*, is not the problem. The problem is to what end the supposed instruments of 'chance' are put. If they are put to use to cheat others out of their wealth or to fulfill our covetous lusts (as in gambling) then the reason for using the dice is wrong. If they are used as a means of obtaining an apparently random sequence (e.g., as in statistical analysis), to facilitate a game for recreation (e.g., in Yahtzee), or to commit the outcome to the Governor of the universe (e.g., as above, to select between two essentially identical choices) this is a legitimate use of instruments of 'chance'.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

Appendix U - The Concept of City in the Bible

1. What are cities?
   1.1. Large areas of high population density. But that alone is not a sufficient definition. A US college football stadium in the middle of corn-country and surrounded by hectares of parking could contain 100,000 people on alternate fall Saturdays.
   1.2. People living/working in the high-density area. Still not sufficient. A jail with inmates and guards could have people living in high density and not classify as a city. The World Trade Centre before 9/11 had 50,000 working in it but it wasn't a city.
   1.3. Full spectrum of economic, industrial, political, educational, cultural and religious activities.

2. What was the first city (both in history and the Bible)?
   2.1. Enoch built a city (Gen 4.17) before the Flood.
   2.2. Cush built a city/cities (Gen 10.8-12).

3. Why were/are cities built by men?
   3.1. To perpetuate a name (Gen 11.4; Judges 18.29; Dan 4.30).
   3.2. To challenge God. Men build a city and a great tower (Gen 11.4). Notice that God comes down to see the city and the tower (Neh 11.5), i.e., God intervenes, and they stop building the city (Neh 11.8).
   3.3. As places of protection (Judges 9.51; 1 Ki 10.2).
   3.4. For economic activity (Ezk 17.4; Rev 18.10, 11); government, religious observance, cultural advancement …

4. What do we learn about the cities built by men in the Bible?
   4.1. The enemies of God lived in cities:
      4.1.1. Sodom and Gomorrah were unrighteous cities (Gen 18.24ff; Gen 19.1ff).
      4.1.2. Hittites living in a city (Gen 23.10); Shechemites in a city (Gen 34.25).
      4.1.3. Pharaoh lived in a city at the time of Joseph (Ex 9.33).
      4.1.4. Pergamum, a city where Satan lives (Rev 2.13).
   4.2. Wicked cities were to be destroyed as a symbol of being given over to God (Joshua 6.1-27), as with Jericho. The conquest of Canaan is the attacking of cities.
   4.3. Woe is declared on cities founded on bloodshed (Hab 2.12) and oppression (Zeph 3.1).
   4.4. Cities not build by God will not prosper (Ps 127.1).
   4.5. Wicked, rebellious cities bring grief to God. Jesus wept over the city (Lk 19.41).
   4.6. Cities are symbols of apostasy (Rev 17.18).
   4.7. We (Christians) can have no enduring city in this world and life (Heb 13.14).
   4.8. Seeking safety in the city of man is not where our security is to come from. Jacob settled near Shechem for safety (Gen 33.18). He was using man instead of God as his security. This led to problems with the Shechemits (Gen 34.1-31).
   4.9. God did not choose any of man's cities to live in (1 Ki 8.16). [However … see below]

5. What are some lessons we can learn from the reference to the cities of men in the Bible?
   5.1. The first cities are not from the line of the godly; but the line of the wicked. This means that the cities of men are designed to further their objectives; not God's.
   5.2. Men use cities to perpetuate their wickedness. Where there are concentrations of wicked men and their institutions (power, money, political might, government, religious influence (priest cults), 'culture', schools, and military might) there are concentrations of evil.
   5.3. Men desperately try to renew cities (and mankind) based on their own philosophies, social theories, and psychological models. Yet these attempts will fail because they are not based on God's model for man.
      5.3.1. An issue of the *University Bookman* (summer/fall 2002) was devoted to the "new urbanism," which has been the subject of a flood of books in the past ten years. This movement railed against the suburbs: "The critique of the American suburbs has long been a staple of the political left. In the 1950s and 1960s, the ticky–tacky boxes of postwar suburban tract housing were attacked for the conformity and 'inauthenticity' of the lives lived therein, with gray–flannelled fathers making their way in the 'system' and oppressed mothers 'imprisoned' at home with their children. Presumably, authenticity lay in the orgiastic, liberated irresponsibility of urban bohemia. In the 1970s and 1980s, the left's critique of the suburbs moved to environmental concerns. Suburbanites commute, which means that suburban life demands ever more internal combustion engines,

© James R. Hughes, 2006

holding the fate of earth in the balance. Moreover, it was said, the green–field developments characteristic of suburban sprawl eat up precious 'wilderness,' endangering biodiversity." Today's new urbanists, who are trying to create real small towns for real people, may be, whether they know it or not, the new traditionalists. …This is the hope that the new urbanism offers: *a means of renewing the culture by recognizing the culture–forming power of the built environment*."[149]

5.4. The cities of men are judged by God (Is 25.2; Is 26.5; Is 27.10; Jer 6.6; Jer 21.8).

6. Questions for discussion:
   6.1. In the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy cities are either hideous or destroyed. The semi-rural life of the Hobbits is presented as the ideal.
   6.2. Does the fact that man was placed in a garden mean that cities are not the ideal habitat for man?
   6.3. Is this a Biblical world-view?
   6.4. Are cities intrinsically immoral, amoral, or moral?
   6.5. Are cities places in which Christians cannot and should not reside?
   6.6. Did God ever intend for men to live in cities?

7. What are some of the positive references to cities in the Bible?
   7.1. A God-honouring priest/king on which Christ's priesthood/kingship is modeled is a king of city (Gen 14.17-20).
   7.2. Cities as places of refuge (Num 35.6).
   7.3. Cities are a gift from God (Josh 24.13).
   7.4. People are considered to be wanderers without a city (Ps 107.4).
   7.5. Cities prosper when righteousness is present (Prov 11.10, 11).
   7.6. Christians are to seek the peace and prosperity of city in which they live (Jer 29.7; 1 Tim 2.1-3).
   7.7. God makes his name known in a city of his choice (Jerusalem) (1 Ki 11.32, 36; Dan 9.18).
   7.8. The Ark and Temple were in Jerusalem (2 Sam 6.12; 1 Ki 8.1, 2, 44, 48); and the place to pray toward.
   7.9. Jerusalem is a royal city for God's chosen dynasty (2 Sam 5.9; 1 Sam 27.5).
   7.10. Abraham was looking to/for a city with foundations whose architect and builder is God (Heb 11.10).
   7.11. God presents the city as the image of his eternal kingdom (Ps 46.4; Ps 48.2; Ps 87.3; Ps 122.3; Dan 9.16; Mt 12.25; Ezk 45.6; Ezk 48.30, 31).
   7.12. Mount Zion is the city of the living God (Heb 12.22), and the City of Truth (Zech 8.3).
   7.13. There is no evil in the City of God (Ps 101.8; Is 52.1; Rev 22.14).
   7.14. God has prepared a city for his people as an inheritance (Heb 11.16); the New Jerusalem (Rev 3.12; Rev 21.2, 10, 14-23).
   7.15. The Tree of Life is in the Holy City (Rev 22.19). Whereas it was in the Garden originally. It will be found in the Holy City in the new creation.
   7.16. A city is a symbol or representation of the saints of God as the visible Church (Mt 5.14. Song 3.2, 3 [metaphor]; Rev 11.2), and as the Church triumphant (Rev 21.2).

8. What do we learn from these positive references?
   8.1. Cities in the Bible, cast in a positive light, point to the work of Christ and the Church.
   8.2. Man is destined for city life:
      8.2.1. 'Aquinas felt quite at home in the growing urban enclaves of the thirteenth century. Man, he assured us, is "naturally a town–dweller," and rural life is "the result of a misfortune."'[150]
      8.2.2. We may not agree that 'rural life' is the result of misfortune because the Garden of Eden was perfect.
      8.2.3. However, the sentiment is right in that man is designed by God as a communal creature, not a loner, intended to be in fellowship with God and other rational creatures. This is fostered by city life, not rural life.
   8.3. God is going to redeem cities for his purposes.
   8.4. Ultimately he will show that every institution and cultural artefact among men is polluted by destroying them all and redeeming some (government, religion/worship, cities, work, etc.) for his ultimate glory.

9. There is a tension in the Bible around cities.
   9.1. Cities are both good and bad. This is no different from anything that man touches.

[149] *First Things*, 131 March 2003, 2003, 68-88.
[150] *First Things*, 131 March 2003, 2003, 68-88.

© James R. Hughes, 2006

9.1.1. Unbelievers pervert every institution they touch. (Is 5.20)
9.1.2. Man who is redeemed is sanctified but is yet to be sanctified (holy and becoming holy). Men who are redeemed are tainted by sin. Even their good works have the vestiges of sin still in them.
9.2. Institutions instituted by God among men: government, marriage, churches, worship, etc. are all represented by good examples and bad examples and all are tainted by sin.
9.3. In the end, God is going to redeem the institutions that he has established.
9.3.1. Someone might argue that God didn't institute kingships and cities in contrast to marriage and worship.
9.3.2. God does not have to establish an institution directly in order to make use of it.
9.3.2.1. God uses human instruments in his providential administrations. The writers of the Bible used narrative and poetic forms similar to those used in their cultural contexts (e.g., chronologies, proverbs, thought parallels, acrostics, word-plays, chiasms, laws on tablets and pillars, scepters, etc.). We could say that God adopted these forms to communicate to mankind. Alternatively, we could say that God in his providence, laid out means of communication and he prepared human communication mechanisms so that he could reveal himself and his truths to mankind.
9.3.3. He providentially prepares some institutions of men (e.g., covenants, kingships, Roman census and government institutions, and in this case cities) in advance so that he can ultimately redeem them and use them for his glorious purposes.
9.3.3.1. God used the form that was available in a human cultural context, removing any pagan aspects, and applied it to his redemptive plan.
9.3.3.2. God prepares cultural artefacts within human societies in his providential governance.
9.3.3.3. This is encompassed in the concept of 'plundering the Egyptians' as it was presented in the last sermon preached (at least recorded) by Gregory Nazianzen on Easter Sunday, 383 AD. Augustine picks up a similar theme in his book *On Christian Doctrine* (Book 2, chapter 40—'Whatever has been rightly said by the heathen, we must appropriate to our uses') written in 397 AD.
9.3.4. It may be that cities and kingships are a logical extension of the original institutions of family and government. Cities are equivalent to families in the context of larger agglomerations of people. Kings are equivalent to the father of a family but for a larger group (Is 49.23; Jer 19.4; Dan 9.8).

10. What makes cities good?
10.1. The presence of God.
10.2. The presence of God's people.
10.3. God's blessing through grace.
10.4. In essence this is the same thing that make people good. Cities, like people, are redeemed.

11. What are our responsibilities to the Holy City?
11.1. Inhabit it (**Neh 11.1, 18**; Ps 84.7; Ps 126.1).
11.2. Live as good citizens in it; obey its laws (**Neh 10.29-39**; Ps 2.6, 12; Ps 9.11).
11.3. Build it (**Neh 2.17; Neh 3.1-32;** Ps 51.18; Is 58.12; Micah 7.11; Mt 28.18-20).
11.4. Worship in it (**Neh 7.73; Neh 9.1**; Ps 102.21; Ps 122.1, 2; Ps 147.12).
11.5. Pray for it (**Neh 1.9**; Ps 122.6, 9)
11.6. Be proud of it (**Neh 12.27-43 [43]**; Ps 48.11-14).

© James R. Hughes, 2006

Bible References Index

01 Genesis
ch. 1, v. 1, pg., 15, 111
ch. 1, v. 2, 28, pg., 90
ch. 1, v. 26, pg., 107
ch. 1, v. 27-28, pg., 301
ch. 1, v. 28, pg., 141, 221, 355
ch. 1, v. 28-30, pg., 355
ch. 1, v. 30, pg., 144
ch. 1-11, pg., 33
ch. 2, v. 2, 3, pg., 270
ch. 2, v. 3, pg., 160, 199, 272, 276
ch. 2, v. 4, 5, pg., 15
ch. 2, v. 7, pg., 144, 339
ch. 2, v. 9, pg., 271
ch. 2, v. 17, pg., 121, 171
ch. 2, v. 19, 20, pg., 90, 104, 151, 191
ch. 3, v. 1-5, pg., 37
ch. 3, v. 4, 5, pg., 31, 65
ch. 3, v. 10, pg., 44
ch. 3, v. 14-19, pg., 156
ch. 3, v. 15, pg., 154, 163, 171
ch. 3, v. 19, pg., 339
ch. 3, v. 20, pg., 150
ch. 4, v. 1, pg., 32, 150, 258, 367
ch. 4, v. 3-4, pg., 241
ch. 4, v. 4, pg., 247
ch. 4, v. 8, pg., 66
ch. 4, v. 11, pg., 32, 258
ch. 4, v. 11-14, pg., 32
ch. 4, v. 17, pg., 367
ch. 5, v. 1-32, pg., 228
ch. 6, v. 5, pg., 18, 171, 271
ch. 6, v. 7, pg., 146
ch. 6, v. 18, pg., 356
ch. 7, v. 1, pg., 81, 163
ch. 7, v. 2, 8, pg., 357
ch. 7, v. 11, pg., 81
ch. 8, v. 10, 12, pg., 272
ch. 8, v. 11, pg., 126
ch. 8, v. 13, pg., 81
ch. 8, v. 20, pg., 241, 357
ch. 8, v. 20-9.17, pg., 357
ch. 8, v. 21, pg., 171
ch. 9, v. 9-17, pg., 356
ch. 9, v. 12, 13, pg., 189
ch. 9, v. 26, pg., 15
ch. 10, v. 1-32, pg., 228
ch. 10, v. 8-12, pg., 367
ch. 10, v. 25, pg., 150
ch. 11, v. 1-9, pg., 254
ch. 11, v. 4, pg., 367
ch. 11, v. 5, pg., 160
ch. 11, v. 10-26, pg., 229
ch. 12, v. 3, pg., 258
ch. 12, v. 10, pg., 49, 148
ch. 12, v. 10-20, pg., 148
ch. 14, v. 13, pg., 148, 353
ch. 14, v. 17-20, pg., 368
ch. 14, v. 18, pg., 94, 205
ch. 14, v. 19, 20, pg., 146
ch. 14, v. 19, 22, pg., 146
ch. 14, v. 20, pg., 322
ch. 14, v. 22, pg., 142, 195
ch. 15, v. 1, pg., 19, 44, 78, 151, 152, 154, 166, 356, 357
ch. 15, v. 1-21, pg., 151, 152
ch. 15, v. 4-21, pg., 149
ch. 15, v. 6, pg., 148
ch. 15, v. 9-18, pg., 195
ch. 15, v. 9-21, pg., 60
ch. 15, v. 10, pg., 356, 357
ch. 15, v. 13, 14, 16, pg., 154
ch. 15, v. 13-16, pg., 19
ch. 15, v. 16, pg., 166
ch. 15, v. 18, 17, pg., 357
ch. 15, v. 18, pg., 151, 152, 356, 357
ch. 15, v. 18-20, pg., 151, 152
ch. 15, v. 19, pg., 151
ch. 15, v. 19-20, pg., 151
ch. 15, v. 20, pg., 151
ch. 16, v. 1, pg., 142, 148, 149
ch. 16, v. 4, pg., 31, 65
ch. 16, v. 13, pg., 142
ch. 16, v. 15, pg., 149
ch. 17, v. 1, pg., 15, 142, 151, 189, 356
ch. 17, v. 2, 4, 6, pg., 150
ch. 17, v. 5, pg., 150
ch. 17, v. 7, pg., 354, 358
ch. 17, v. 9, 10, pg., 15
ch. 17, v. 9, pg., 15, 149
ch. 17, v. 10-14, pg., 356
ch. 17, v. 11, pg., 189
ch. 17, v. 15, pg., 151
ch. 18, v. 5-8, pg., 123
ch. 18, v. 12, pg., 150
ch. 18, v. 16-19, pg., 18
ch. 18, v. 24, pg., 367
ch. 18, v. 25, pg., 176, 352
ch. 19, v. 1, pg., 367
ch. 20, v. 1-18, pg., 51
ch. 20, v. 6, pg., 352
ch. 20, v. 12, pg., 217
ch. 20, v. 14, pg., 163
ch. 21, v. 3-7, pg., 150
ch. 21, v. 8, pg., 32
ch. 21, v. 9, pg., 31, 65, 148
ch. 22, v. 1-24, pg., 111
ch. 22, v. 2, pg., 205
ch. 22, v. 17, pg., 165
ch. 23, v. 10, pg., 48, 367
ch. 23, v. 15, pg., 201
ch. 24, v. 2-4, pg., 294

© James R. Hughes, 2006

ch. 24, v. 3, 7, pg., 15
ch. 24, v. 7, pg., 294
ch. 24, v. 60, pg., 152, 161, 165
ch. 25, v. 2, 4, pg., 149
ch. 25, v. 12, pg., 148
ch. 26, v. 1, pg., 49
ch. 26, v. 4, pg., 165
ch. 27, v. 29, 33, pg., 258
ch. 28, v. 17, pg., 240
ch. 28, v. 18-22, pg., 157
ch. 28, v. 20-22, pg., 322
ch. 28, v. 22, pg., 293
ch. 31, v. 19, pg., 173
ch. 31, v. 44, pg., 356
ch. 31, v. 44-54, pg., 148, 353
ch. 31, v. 45-48, pg., 187, 189
ch. 31, v. 53, pg., 195
ch. 32, v. 9, 12, pg., 153
ch. 32, v. 28, pg., 151
ch. 33, v. 18, pg., 367
ch. 34, v. 1-31, pg., 367
ch. 34, v. 14, pg., 320
ch. 34, v. 20, 24, pg., 48
ch. 34, v. 25, pg., 367
ch. 34, v. 26, pg., 289
ch. 35, v. 2, pg., 265
ch. 35, v. 13-15, pg., 157
ch. 37, v. 34, pg., 339
ch. 38, v. 18, pg., 188
ch. 41, v. 27, 54, pg., 49
ch. 41, v. 32, pg., 114
ch. 41, v. 42, pg., 188
ch. 43, v. 14, pg., 22
ch. 43, v. 31-34, pg., 62
ch. 44, v. 5, pg., 272
ch. 46, v. 1, pg., 241
ch. 46, v. 8-27, pg., 94
ch. 47, v. 11, 12, pg., 59
ch. 47, v. 13-26, pg., 49, 59
ch. 47, v. 21, pg., 59
ch. 47, v. 23, pg., 59
ch. 47, v. 24, pg., 59
ch. 47, v. 26, pg., 59
ch. 47, v. 27, pg., 59
ch. 49, v. 10, pg., 152, 208
02 Exodus
ch. 2, v. 22, pg., 103
ch. 2, v. 24, pg., 175
ch. 3, v. 7-9, pg., 154
ch. 3, v. 8, 17, pg., 151
ch. 3, v. 8, pg., 151
ch. 3, v. 12, pg., 357
ch. 3, v. 13, 14, pg., 143
ch. 3, v. 14, pg., 15
ch. 3, v. 15, pg., 141, 143
ch. 3, v. 21, 22, pg., 59
ch. 4, v. 11, pg., 144
ch. 6, v. 6, 7, pg., 354
ch. 6, v. 8, pg., 161, 195
ch. 7, v. 14-11.10, pg., 59
ch. 9, v. 29, pg., 173
ch. 9, v. 33, pg., 367
ch. 11, v. 2, 3, pg., 59
ch. 12, v. 17, pg., 123
ch. 12, v. 31, pg., 154
ch. 12, v. 35-36, pg., 59
ch. 12, v. 48-49, pg., 105
ch. 13, v. 2, pg., 128, 157, 230
ch. 13, v. 9, pg., 160
ch. 13, v. 14, pg., 143
ch. 13, v. 19, pg., 362
ch. 13, v. 21-22, pg., 128, 157
ch. 14, v. 19, pg., 158, 164
ch. 14, v. 19-20, pg., 158
ch. 15, v. 1, pg., 216, 289
ch. 15, v. 17, pg., 216
ch. 15, v. 22-25, 27, pg., 161
ch. 16, v. 14-18, pg., 247
ch. 16, v. 20, pg., 52
ch. 16, v. 23, pg., 160, 276
ch. 16, v. 31, pg., 161
ch. 17, v. 6, pg., 128
ch. 17, v. 10, pg., 165
ch. 18, v. 17-26, pg., 90
ch. 18, v. 21, pg., 44, 78, 90, 299
ch. 19, v. 4, 5, pg., 354
ch. 19, v. 5, pg., 173, 216
ch. 19, v. 6, pg., 105, 239, 355
ch. 20, v. 1, pg., 145, 146, 159, 160, 161, 199, 200, 276
ch. 20, v. 1-17, pg., 161
ch. 20, v. 1-21, pg., 276
ch. 20, v. 4-6, pg., 163
ch. 20, v. 7, pg., 142
ch. 20, v. 8, pg., 160, 199, 204, 270, 271, 272, 276
ch. 20, v. 8-11, pg., 199, 270, 271, 272
ch. 20, v. 10, pg., 200
ch. 20, v. 11, pg., 145, 146, 160, 199, 276
ch. 20, v. 20, pg., 44, 78
ch. 20, v. 25, pg., 157
ch. 21, v. 6, pg., 50
ch. 21, v. 7-8, pg., 54
ch. 21, v. 13-14, pg., 74
ch. 21, v. 24, 25, pg., 57
ch. 22, v. 1, pg., 57
ch. 22, v. 2, 3, pg., 289
ch. 22, v. 4, 7, 9, pg., 57
ch. 22, v. 16, 17, pg., 261
ch. 22, v. 25, pg., 56, 291
ch. 22, v. 27, pg., 154
ch. 22, v. 31, pg., 134
ch. 23, v. 3, pg., 58, 165, 185, 220
ch. 23, v. 10, 11, pg., 200
ch. 23, v. 10, pg., 160, 199, 200, 272
ch. 23, v. 10-11, pg., 199, 272

© James R. Hughes, 2006

ch. 23, v. 14-17, pg., 114
ch. 23, v. 16, 19, pg., 247
ch. 23, v. 16, pg., 82, 111, 127, 241, 247
ch. 23, v. 16b, pg., 82
ch. 23, v. 17, pg., 114
ch. 23, v. 19, pg., 202, 245
ch. 23, v. 24, pg., 157
ch. 23, v. 31, pg., 165, 220
ch. 23, v. 31-33, pg., 165
ch. 23, v. 32, pg., 185
ch. 24, v. 1-18, pg., 357
ch. 25-30, pg., 86
ch. 26, v. 33, 34, pg., 143
ch. 26, v. 33, pg., 17, 143
ch. 28, v. 11-23, pg., 188
ch. 29, v. 29, pg., 226
ch. 29, v. 38-42, pg., 241
ch. 30, v. 11-16, pg., 95, 201
ch. 30, v. 13, pg., 96, 201
ch. 31, v. 12-13, 17, pg., 272
ch. 31, v. 14, pg., 160, 272, 275, 276
ch. 31, v. 15-17, pg., 199, 276, 358
ch. 31, v. 16, 17, pg., 160, 199
ch. 31, v. 16-17, pg., 357
ch. 31, v. 17, pg., 145
ch. 32, v. 1, pg., 162, 165, 230, 303
ch. 32, v. 4, pg., 162
ch. 32, v. 8, pg., 178
ch. 32, v. 9, pg., 162
ch. 32, v. 13, pg., 165
ch. 32, v. 15, 16, pg., 303
ch. 32, v. 15-28, pg., 230
ch. 33, v. 3, 5, pg., 162
ch. 33, v. 18-34.8, pg., 141
ch. 33, v. 19, pg., 154
ch. 34, v. 1-35, pg., 133
ch. 34, v. 4, pg., 160
ch. 34, v. 6, 7, pg., 163
ch. 34, v. 6, pg., 163, 175, 178, 351
ch. 34, v. 6-7, pg., 351
ch. 34, v. 10-28, pg., 357
ch. 34, v. 11-16, pg., 133, 198, 254
ch. 34, v. 12, 15, pg., 68, 255
ch. 34, v. 12-16, pg., 253
ch. 34, v. 21, pg., 270
ch. 34, v. 22, pg., 241
ch. 34, v. 32, pg., 159
ch. 35, v. 2, pg., 272, 275
ch. 35, v. 13, pg., 201
ch. 38, v. 25, pg., 201
ch. 40, v. 33-38, pg., 157
03 Leviticus
ch. 1, v. 3-9, pg., 357
ch. 1-9, pg., 86
ch. 2, v. 13, pg., 358
ch. 3, v. 3, pg., 241
ch. 4, v. 24, pg., 230
ch. 5, v. 1-4, 5, pg., 132
ch. 5, v. 4, pg., 293
ch. 6, v. 12-13, pg., 202
ch. 7, v. 15, pg., 241
ch. 7, v. 16, pg., 293
ch. 8-10, pg., 86
ch. 10, v. 1-3, pg., 234
ch. 10, v. 3, pg., 60
ch. 10, v. 6, pg., 52
ch. 10, v. 8-11, pg., 118, 215, 218, 231, 246
ch. 10, v. 16, pg., 52
ch. 14, v. 7, pg., 313
ch. 14, v. 12-17, pg., 266
ch. 16, v. 1-34, pg., 111
ch. 16, v. 8, pg., 365
ch. 16, v. 21, pg., 132
ch. 16, v. 29, pg., 13, 336
ch. 16, v. 29-31, pg., 13
ch. 16, v. 32, 33, pg., 246
ch. 17, v. 11, pg., 144
ch. 18, v. 5, pg., 171
ch. 18, v. 21, 24, 26, pg., 105
ch. 18-19, pg., 311
ch. 19, v. 9, 10, pg., 333
ch. 19, v. 11-18, pg., 349
ch. 19, v. 13, pg., 333
ch. 19, v. 15, pg., 53, 58
ch. 19, v. 18, pg., 284
ch. 19, v. 23, pg., 202, 245
ch. 19, v. 32, pg., 116
ch. 20, v. 3, pg., 142
ch. 20, v. 24, pg., 193
ch. 20-21, pg., 272
ch. 21, v. 13-15, pg., 264
ch. 22, v. 29, 30, pg., 241
ch. 23, v. 22, pg., 333
ch. 23, v. 23-25, pg., 111
ch. 23, v. 24, 25, pg., 234
ch. 23, v. 24, 32, pg., 111
ch. 23, v. 24, pg., 82, 111, 122, 234
ch. 23, v. 26-32, pg., 111
ch. 23, v. 27, pg., 13, 336
ch. 23, v. 27-32, pg., 13
ch. 23, v. 33-36, 39-44, pg., 111
ch. 23, v. 33-36a, 39-43, pg., 125
ch. 23, v. 33-43, pg., 82
ch. 23, v. 34, pg., 123, 127, 130
ch. 23, v. 34-42, pg., 130
ch. 23, v. 34-44, pg., 127
ch. 23, v. 36, pg., 82
ch. 23, v. 39-43, pg., 128
ch. 23, v. 43, pg., 127
ch. 24, v. 5-9, pg., 105
ch. 24, v. 8, pg., 358
ch. 24, v. 12, pg., 119
ch. 24, v. 13-16, pg., 318
ch. 24, v. 16, pg., 297
ch. 24, v. 17-22, pg., 57

© James R. Hughes, 2006

ch. 25, v. 1-7, pg., 160, 199
ch. 25, v. 2-7, 20-21, pg., 199
ch. 25, v. 2-7, pg., 199, 272
ch. 25, v. 10, pg., 56, 57, 206, 216
ch. 25, v. 10-13, 30, 31, pg., 216
ch. 25, v. 10-13, 47-54, pg., 56
ch. 25, v. 25, pg., 332
ch. 25, v. 35-37, pg., 56, 291, 333
ch. 25, v. 35-43, pg., 333
ch. 25, v. 36, pg., 63
ch. 25, v. 39-40, pg., 50, 54
ch. 25, v. 39-43, pg., 333
ch. 26, v. 1, pg., 157, 159
ch. 26, v. 14-17, pg., 159
ch. 26, v. 42, pg., 153, 175
ch. 27, v. 30, pg., 202, 245, 322
ch. 27, v. 34, pg., 159
04 Numbers
ch. 1, v. 1-54, pg., 95, 100
ch. 1, v. 3, pg., 96, 201
ch. 1, v. 46, pg., 95
ch. 3, v. 10, pg., 105
ch. 3, v. 40, pg., 230
ch. 4, v. 3, 23, pg., 226
ch. 4, v. 3, pg., 226, 230
ch. 4, v. 23, pg., 226
ch. 5, v. 5-7, pg., 132
ch. 6, v. 2, pg., 293
ch. 7, v. 10-11, pg., 243
ch. 8, v. 7, pg., 237, 266, 313
ch. 8, v. 10, pg., 230
ch. 8, v. 11, 16, pg., 230
ch. 8, v. 24-26, pg., 230
ch. 10, v. 10, pg., 234
ch. 11, v. 10, pg., 52
ch. 11, v. 24-30, pg., 77
ch. 11, v. 25, pg., 160
ch. 11, v. 31-33, pg., 163
ch. 12, v. 1, pg., 77, 254
ch. 12, v. 1-15, pg., 77
ch. 12, v. 5, pg., 160
ch. 13, v. 16, pg., 151
ch. 14, v. 1-12, pg., 21
ch. 14, v. 4, pg., 162
ch. 14, v. 10-20, pg., 94, 205
ch. 14, v. 12, pg., 21
ch. 14, v. 13-16, pg., 21, 54
ch. 14, v. 18, 19, pg., 163
ch. 14, v. 18, pg., 94, 163, 205
ch. 14, v. 28-35, pg., 273, 354
ch. 14, v. 30, pg., 161, 195
ch. 15, v. 32-36, pg., 272, 275
ch. 15, v. 34, pg., 119
ch. 16, v. 1-7, pg., 105
ch. 16, v. 15, pg., 52
ch. 18, v. 2-6, pg., 231
ch. 18, v. 5-7, pg., 246
ch. 18, v. 7, pg., 75
ch. 18, v. 14-17, pg., 238
ch. 18, v. 14-19, pg., 202, 245, 247
ch. 18, v. 17, pg., 237
ch. 18, v. 19, pg., 358
ch. 18, v. 20, 23, 24, pg., 268
ch. 18, v. 21, 24-32, pg., 201
ch. 18, v. 23, 24, pg., 230
ch. 18, v. 26, pg., 203, 247
ch. 19, v. 9, 10, 17, pg., 339
ch. 19, v. 9, 10, pg., 339
ch. 19, v. 9, pg., 237, 339
ch. 19, v. 17, pg., 237, 266, 339
ch. 19, v. 17-21, pg., 237, 266
ch. 19, v. 18, 19, pg., 313
ch. 20, v. 7-11, pg., 128
ch. 21, v. 21-35, pg., 165
ch. 22, v. 4, 5, 13, 15, pg., 67
ch. 22, v. 6, 11, 12, pg., 258
ch. 22, v. 22, pg., 52
ch. 22, v. 38, pg., 330
ch. 22-24, pg., 31
ch. 22-25, pg., 251
ch. 23, v. 8, pg., 258
ch. 23, v. 19, pg., 155
ch. 25, v. 10-13, pg., 22, 357
ch. 25, v. 12, pg., 15
ch. 26, v. 1-65, pg., 95, 100, 192
ch. 26, v. 51, pg., 95
ch. 26, v. 63-65, pg., 273, 354
ch. 27, v. 8-11, pg., 216
ch. 27, v. 18-21, pg., 365
ch. 28, v. 26-31, pg., 123
ch. 29, v. 1-6, pg., 111
ch. 29, v. 7, pg., 111, 336
ch. 29, v. 7-11, pg., 111
ch. 29, v. 12-34, pg., 111
ch. 29, v. 12-39, pg., 130
ch. 29, v. 13-39, pg., 127
ch. 29, v. 35-39, pg., 130
ch. 29, v. 36, pg., 127
ch. 29, v. 40, pg., 130
ch. 30, v. 2, pg., 293
ch. 30, v. 10, pg., 293
ch. 31, v. 23, pg., 237
ch. 31, v. 40, 42, 47, pg., 109
ch. 33, v. 52, pg., 165
ch. 35, v. 2, pg., 230
ch. 35, v. 6, pg., 368
ch. 36, v. 7, 9, pg., 105
ch. 36, v. 7, pg., 105, 216
ch. 36, v. 8, 9, pg., 98
ch. 36, v. 13, pg., 159
05 Deuteronomy
ch. 1, v. 1-5, pg., 183
ch. 1, v. 6-4.43, pg., 183
ch. 1, v. 10, pg., 165
ch. 1, v. 13-18, pg., 90, 299
ch. 1, v. 19-3.20, pg., 122

© James R. Hughes, 2006

ch. 1, v. 26-46, pg., 121
ch. 1, v. 34, 37, pg., 52
ch. 2, v. 14, 15, pg., 273, 353
ch. 3, v. 22, pg., 44, 78
ch. 4, v. 2, pg., 184, 234, 312
ch. 4, v. 6, pg., 159
ch. 4, v. 7, 8, pg., 159
ch. 4, v. 8, pg., 159
ch. 4, v. 13, pg., 357
ch. 4, v. 23, pg., 184
ch. 4, v. 31, pg., 293
ch. 4, v. 32, pg., 145
ch. 4, v. 37, pg., 147
ch. 4, v. 39, pg., 15
ch. 4, v. 44-26.19, pg., 184
ch. 5, v. 1-21, pg., 121
ch. 5, v. 2, 3, pg., 273, 353, 357
ch. 5, v. 2, pg., 273, 353, 357, 362
ch. 5, v. 6-21, pg., 276
ch. 5, v. 14, pg., 107
ch. 6, v. 5, pg., 18, 159, 197
ch. 6, v. 5-8, pg., 272
ch. 6, v. 10-12, pg., 165
ch. 6, v. 11, 12, pg., 166
ch. 6, v. 13, pg., 293
ch. 6, v. 15-19, pg., 28
ch. 6, v. 16, pg., 46
ch. 7, v. 1, pg., 15, 133, 151, 155, 159, 164, 165, 198, 253, 254
ch. 7, v. 1-3, pg., 198
ch. 7, v. 1-4, pg., 198, 253, 254
ch. 7, v. 1-6, pg., 133, 165
ch. 7, v. 2, pg., 68
ch. 7, v. 3, pg., 81, 105, 258
ch. 7, v. 5, pg., 157
ch. 7, v. 6, pg., 105
ch. 7, v. 7, pg., 15, 147, 173, 175, 220
ch. 7, v. 7-11, pg., 147, 173
ch. 7, v. 7-12, pg., 15, 175
ch. 7, v. 9, 12, pg., 15
ch. 7, v. 9, pg., 175, 273, 354
ch. 7, v. 11, pg., 15
ch. 7, v. 12, 13, pg., 155
ch. 7, v. 12, pg., 155, 159, 164
ch. 7, v. 12-15, pg., 164
ch. 7, v. 16-19, pg., 285
ch. 8, v. 1-4, pg., 164
ch. 8, v. 3, pg., 161
ch. 9, v. 1, pg., 21, 45, 122
ch. 9, v. 1-6, pg., 122
ch. 9, v. 4, 5, pg., 166
ch. 9, v. 7, pg., 259
ch. 9, v. 7-29, pg., 21
ch. 9, v. 9, 11, 15, pg., 357
ch. 9, v. 13, 14, pg., 21
ch. 10, v. 8, pg., 246
ch. 10, v. 9, pg., 217
ch. 10, v. 12-13, pg., 44, 78
ch. 10, v. 14, pg., 143
ch. 10, v. 18, pg., 332
ch. 10, v. 20, pg., 293
ch. 10, v. 22, pg., 96, 104, 165
ch. 11, v. 29, pg., 233, 240
ch. 12, v. 4, 5, pg., 20
ch. 12, v. 5, 11, 21, pg., 141
ch. 12, v. 6, pg., 202, 245
ch. 12, v. 32, pg., 234, 312
ch. 13, v. 5, 6, 12, pg., 297
ch. 13, v. 5, pg., 32, 297
ch. 13, v. 17, pg., 22, 154
ch. 14, v. 2, pg., 105, 124, 134, 268, 335
ch. 14, v. 28, 29, pg., 124
ch. 14, v. 28-29, pg., 335
ch. 14, v. 29, pg., 268
ch. 15, v. 1, 9, pg., 56
ch. 15, v. 1-7, pg., 333
ch. 15, v. 1-8, pg., 200
ch. 15, v. 6, pg., 56, 291
ch. 15, v. 7-11, pg., 56, 291, 333
ch. 15, v. 9-11, pg., 200
ch. 15, v. 12-18, pg., 50, 54
ch. 15, v. 17, pg., 50
ch. 16, v. 1-17, pg., 122
ch. 16, v. 2, 6, pg., 141
ch. 16, v. 9-12, pg., 124, 332
ch. 16, v. 13-15, pg., 111, 122, 123, 125, 127
ch. 16, v. 14, pg., 128
ch. 16, v. 15, pg., 121
ch. 16, v. 16, pg., 127, 129
ch. 16, v. 16-17, pg., 127
ch. 16, v. 22, pg., 157
ch. 17, v. 7, pg., 32
ch. 17, v. 8-11, pg., 112
ch. 17, v. 18, pg., 215, 364
ch. 17, v. 18-20, pg., 364
ch. 18, v. 1, pg., 168, 230, 247, 268
ch. 18, v. 1-5, pg., 247
ch. 18, v. 5, pg., 147
ch. 18, v. 6-8, pg., 230
ch. 18, v. 15, 18, pg., 168
ch. 18, v. 20, pg., 75
ch. 19, v. 15, pg., 70
ch. 19, v. 19, pg., 32
ch. 19, v. 20-21, pg., 41
ch. 20, v. 1-20, pg., 289
ch. 20, v. 3, pg., 44, 78
ch. 20, v. 10-11, pg., 165
ch. 20, v. 12-15, pg., 165
ch. 20, v. 19, 20, pg., 126
ch. 21, v. 10-13, pg., 254
ch. 21, v. 10-14, pg., 165
ch. 21, v. 19, pg., 48
ch. 22, v. 8, pg., 302, 311, 313
ch. 22, v. 15, pg., 48
ch. 22, v. 28-29, pg., 261

© James R. Hughes, 2006

ch. 23, v. 3, 6, pg., 255
ch. 23, v. 3, pg., 31, 81, 251, 255, 256
ch. 23, v. 3-5, pg., 251
ch. 23, v. 3-6, pg., 31, 81, 194
ch. 23, v. 19-20, pg., 56, 291
ch. 23, v. 20, pg., 291, 292
ch. 23, v. 21, 22, pg., 293
ch. 24, v. 14, 15, pg., 333
ch. 24, v. 19-22, pg., 333
ch. 25, v. 2, 3, pg., 258
ch. 25, v. 4, pg., 107
ch. 25, v. 7, pg., 48
ch. 26, v. 1-11, pg., 247
ch. 26, v. 1-3, pg., 202, 245
ch. 26, v. 12, 13, pg., 124, 200
ch. 26, v. 19, pg., 105
ch. 27, v. 9, pg., 121, 231
ch. 27, v. 9-26, pg., 121
ch. 27, v. 12, 13, pg., 233, 240
ch. 27, v. 15-26, pg., 60, 116
ch. 27, v. 22, 26, pg., 258
ch. 27-30, pg., 184
ch. 28, v. 1-14, pg., 122, 323
ch. 28, v. 9-11, pg., 134
ch. 28, v. 15-68, pg., 121, 195
ch. 28, v. 58-61, pg., 113
ch. 28, v. 61, pg., 113
ch. 29, v. 1-29, pg., 357
ch. 29, v. 9-15, pg., 361
ch. 29, v. 12, 14, pg., 293
ch. 29, v. 21, pg., 113
ch. 30, v. 1-5, pg., 19
ch. 30, v. 3, pg., 154
ch. 30, v. 10, pg., 113
ch. 31, v. 6, 8, pg., 44, 78
ch. 31, v. 6, pg., 44, 45, 78, 163
ch. 31, v. 9-13, pg., 364
ch. 31, v. 10, pg., 114, 115, 128, 129, 252
ch. 31, v. 10-11, pg., 128
ch. 31, v. 10-13, pg., 114, 129, 252
ch. 31, v. 12, pg., 114, 243
ch. 31, v. 20, pg., 166
ch. 31, v. 24-26, pg., 113
ch. 31, v. 26, pg., 113
ch. 31-33, pg., 184
ch. 32, v. 4, pg., 171, 175
ch. 32, v. 5, 6, pg., 146
ch. 32, v. 15, pg., 166
ch. 32, v. 34, 35, pg., 155
ch. 32, v. 35, pg., 41, 284, 342
ch. 32, v. 47, pg., 171
ch. 33, v. 1, pg., 215, 233, 348
ch. 33, v. 8, 10, pg., 231
ch. 33, v. 10, pg., 215, 348
ch. 33, v. 27, pg., 155
ch. 34, v. 1-12, pg., 184
06 Joshua
ch. 2, v. 11, pg., 15, 83
ch. 5, v. 1, pg., 83
ch. 5, v. 2-9, pg., 341
ch. 6, v. 1-27, pg., 165, 367
ch. 6, v. 25, pg., 254
ch. 7, v. 6, pg., 339
ch. 7, v. 14, pg., 365
ch. 7, v. 20, pg., 217
ch. 8, v. 1, pg., 44, 78, 165
ch. 8, v. 1-29, pg., 165
ch. 8, v. 31, pg., 157
ch. 8, v. 32-35, pg., 252
ch. 8, v. 33, pg., 233, 240
ch. 8, v. 34, 35, pg., 159
ch. 9, v. 1, pg., 99, 109, 148, 151, 353, 362
ch. 9, v. 1-27, pg., 109, 148, 353
ch. 9, v. 3, pg., 99
ch. 9, v. 15, pg., 362
ch. 9, v. 17, pg., 99
ch. 9, v. 21, 23, pg., 100
ch. 9, v. 27, pg., 109, 202
ch. 10, v. 8, pg., 44, 78
ch. 10, v. 25, pg., 44, 78
ch. 10-12, pg., 165
ch. 11, v. 3, pg., 151
ch. 14, v. 15, pg., 220
ch. 15, v. 63, pg., 227
ch. 15-19, pg., 98
ch. 18, v. 1, pg., 100
ch. 20, v. 6, pg., 226
ch. 21, v. 18, pg., 99
ch. 22, v. 19, pg., 216
ch. 22, v. 23, pg., 194
ch. 22, v. 27, 28, 34, pg., 187, 189
ch. 23, v. 7, pg., 293
ch. 23, v. 12, 13, pg., 198, 254
ch. 23, v. 12, pg., 105, 198, 254
ch. 23, v. 14, 15, pg., 20
ch. 24, v. 1-28, pg., 357
ch. 24, v. 2b-13, pg., 139
ch. 24, v. 11, pg., 151
ch. 24, v. 13, pg., 368
ch. 24, v. 16-18, 21, 24, 25, pg., 361
ch. 24, v. 19, pg., 142
ch. 24, v. 23, pg., 265
ch. 24, v. 26, pg., 157, 160
ch. 24, v. 26-27, pg., 157
ch. 24, v. 27, pg., 187, 189
07 Judges
ch. 2, v. 1, pg., 153
ch. 2, v. 2, pg., 356
ch. 3, v. 10, pg., 289
ch. 3, v. 16, pg., 289
ch. 4, v. 4, pg., 76
ch. 4, v. 14, pg., 289
ch. 5, v. 4, pg., 289
ch. 8, v. 19, pg., 195
ch. 9, v. 45, pg., 105

© James R. Hughes, 2006

ch. 9, v. 51, pg., 367
ch. 10, v. 10-16, pg., 176
ch. 10, v. 16, pg., 265
ch. 12, v. 6, pg., 254
ch. 13, v. 6, 8, pg., 233
ch. 14, v. 1-4, pg., 254
ch. 16, v. 6, 10-11, 15-16, pg., 67
ch. 16, v. 28, pg., 277
ch. 17-18, pg., 18, 230
ch. 18, v. 14, pg., 173
ch. 18, v. 29, pg., 367
ch. 18, v. 30, pg., 103
ch. 18, v. 31, pg., 240
ch. 19, v. 22-29, pg., 213
ch. 20, v. 13, pg., 32
ch. 20, v. 18, 23, 28, pg., 186
ch. 20, v. 26, pg., 336
ch. 20, v. 47, pg., 213
08 Ruth
ch. 1, v. 1, pg., 49, 194
ch. 1, v. 2, pg., 82, 99
ch. 1, v. 17, pg., 194
ch. 1, v. 22, pg., 82
ch. 2, v. 2, pg., 333
ch. 4, v. 1, 11, pg., 48
ch. 4, v. 10, pg., 254
09 1 Samuel
ch. 1, v. 11, pg., 293
ch. 1, v. 20, pg., 150
ch. 2, v. 6, pg., 144
ch. 2, v. 7, pg., 144
ch. 2, v. 12-17, pg., 18
ch. 2, v. 27, pg., 233
ch. 2, v. 36, pg., 332
ch. 4, v. 5, pg., 242
ch. 6, v. 14, pg., 241
ch. 7, v. 1-6, pg., 341
ch. 7, v. 2-6, pg., 132
ch. 7, v. 3, pg., 265
ch. 7, v. 5-6, pg., 336
ch. 7, v. 6, pg., 176
ch. 8, v. 13, pg., 34
ch. 8, v. 15, pg., 292
ch. 9, v. 6-10, pg., 233
ch. 9, v. 21, pg., 213
ch. 10, v. 24, pg., 147
ch. 11, v. 1-2, pg., 148, 353
ch. 11, v. 15, pg., 241
ch. 12, v. 1-5, pg., 61
ch. 12, v. 21, pg., 141
ch. 14, v. 41-42, pg., 365
ch. 15, v. 29, pg., 155
ch. 18, v. 3, pg., 148, 353
ch. 20, v. 13, pg., 194
ch. 21, v. 1-6, pg., 100
ch. 23, v. 2, 4, 10-12, pg., 186
ch. 23, v. 18, pg., 148, 353
ch. 27, v. 5, pg., 368
ch. 30, v. 7-8, pg., 186
10 2 Samuel
ch. 2, v. 1, pg., 186
ch. 3, v. 3, pg., 194, 254
ch. 3, v. 27, pg., 66
ch. 3, v. 35, pg., 194
ch. 5, v. 3, pg., 148, 353
ch. 5, v. 6, pg., 244
ch. 5, v. 9, pg., 368
ch. 5, v. 19, pg., 186
ch. 6, v. 12, pg., 368
ch. 6, v. 17, pg., 241
ch. 6, v. 19, pg., 62
ch. 7, v. 5-16, pg., 357
ch. 7, v. 13, pg., 141
ch. 7, v. 18, pg., 324
ch. 7, v. 21, pg., 195
ch. 7, v. 25-26, pg., 20
ch. 9, v. 10, pg., 226
ch. 10, v. 4, 5, pg., 258
ch. 12, v. 15, pg., 144
ch. 12, v. 22, pg., 336
ch. 13, v. 19, pg., 339
ch. 14, v. 26, pg., 201
ch. 15, v. 10, pg., 70
ch. 17, v. 24, 26, pg., 26
ch. 18, v. 6, 8-9, pg., 26
ch. 18, v. 18, pg., 157
ch. 19, v. 7, pg., 195
ch. 20, v. 9-10, pg., 66
ch. 21, v. 1, 2, pg., 362
ch. 21, v. 1, pg., 49, 102, 362
ch. 21, v. 19, pg., 102
ch. 22, v. 21, pg., 64, 277
ch. 22, v. 35-51, pg., 289
ch. 23, v. 1, 2, pg., 233
ch. 23, v. 3, pg., 219, 309
ch. 23, v. 5, pg., 357, 358
ch. 23, v. 28, pg., 99
ch. 24, v. 1-9, pg., 95
ch. 24, v. 9, pg., 95
ch. 24, v. 14, pg., 22
11 1 Kings
ch. 1, v. 11, pg., 81
ch. 1, v. 32-35, pg., 70
ch. 1, v. 40, pg., 242
ch. 1, v. 50, 51, pg., 74
ch. 2, v. 23, pg., 194
ch. 2, v. 35, pg., 219
ch. 3, v. 3, pg., 359
ch. 3, v. 26, pg., 22
ch. 4, v. 21-24, pg., 220
ch. 4, v. 22-23, pg., 62
ch. 5, v. 12, pg., 148, 353
ch. 6, v. 5, pg., 246
ch. 6, v. 10, pg., 214
ch. 6, v. 12, pg., 197
ch. 6, v. 23, 31-33, pg., 126

© James R. Hughes, 2006

ch. 6, v. 36, pg., 127, 252
ch. 8, v. 1, 2, 44, 48, pg., 368
ch. 8, v. 2, 65, pg., 127
ch. 8, v. 10, pg., 20
ch. 8, v. 15, 20, pg., 20
ch. 8, v. 16, pg., 367
ch. 8, v. 21, pg., 303
ch. 8, v. 22-53, pg., 178
ch. 8, v. 23, pg., 15
ch. 8, v. 29, pg., 20
ch. 8, v. 35, pg., 132
ch. 8, v. 53, pg., 149
ch. 8, v. 57, pg., 163
ch. 8, v. 58, pg., 197
ch. 9, v. 3, pg., 20
ch. 9, v. 20, 21, pg., 109
ch. 9, v. 20-22, pg., 100
ch. 10, v. 2, pg., 367
ch. 11, v. 1-2, pg., 254
ch. 11, v. 1-4, pg., 254
ch. 11, v. 1-8, pg., 262
ch. 11, v. 32, 36, pg., 368
ch. 11, v. 41, pg., 228
ch. 12, v. 22, pg., 233
ch. 12, v. 26-33, pg., 265
ch. 13, v. 1-34, pg., 233
ch. 13, v. 16-19, pg., 75
ch. 14, v. 9, pg., 272
ch. 17, v. 18, pg., 233
ch. 18, v. 2, pg., 49
ch. 18, v. 4, 13, pg., 168
ch. 18, v. 4, pg., 297
ch. 18, v. 17-40, pg., 341
ch. 19, v. 2, pg., 194
ch. 19, v. 10, pg., 168
ch. 20, v. 10, pg., 194
ch. 20, v. 23, 28, pg., 173
ch. 20, v. 23, pg., 15, 173
ch. 21, v. 3, pg., 216
ch. 21, v. 8, pg., 188
ch. 21, v. 27, pg., 339
ch. 22, v. 11, pg., 74
12 2 Kings
ch. 3, v. 1, pg., 223
ch. 4, v. 9, pg., 233
ch. 4, v. 23, pg., 119
ch. 4, v. 38, pg., 49
ch. 5, v. 8, pg., 233
ch. 7, v. 2, pg., 233
ch. 7, v. 6, pg., 151
ch. 11, v. 4, 12, 17, pg., 357
ch. 11, v. 4, pg., 293, 341, 357
ch. 11, v. 4-12.18, pg., 341
ch. 11, v. 14, pg., 237
ch. 11, v. 17, pg., 354, 361, 364
ch. 11, v. 17-20, pg., 364
ch. 12, v. 4, pg., 96, 341
ch. 12, v. 4-18, pg., 341
ch. 12, v. 5, pg., 203
ch. 13, v. 23, pg., 155, 175
ch. 16, v. 18, pg., 274
ch. 17, v. 33, pg., 31
ch. 18, v. 1-7, pg., 341
ch. 18, v. 7, pg., 24
ch. 18, v. 17-22, 26, pg., 37
ch. 19, v. 1, 2, pg., 339
ch. 20, v. 1-11, pg., 354, 360
ch. 20, v. 3, pg., 64, 277
ch. 21, v. 4-5, 7, pg., 203
ch. 21, v. 5, pg., 127, 252
ch. 22, v. 5, pg., 203
ch. 22, v. 14, pg., 76, 214
ch. 22-23, pg., 341, 357
ch. 23, v. 1-26, pg., 297
ch. 23, v. 1-3, pg., 197, 361, 364
ch. 23, v. 2, pg., 114, 173
ch. 23, v. 4, pg., 339
ch. 23, v. 8-9, pg., 230
ch. 23, v. 12, pg., 127, 252
ch. 23, v. 13, pg., 32
ch. 23, v. 24, pg., 173
ch. 23, v. 34, pg., 151
ch. 24, v. 1, 20, pg., 24
ch. 24, v. 8, pg., 102
ch. 24, v. 11-16, pg., 172
ch. 24, v. 14, pg., 212
ch. 24, v. 15-16, pg., 96
ch. 24, v. 17, pg., 151
ch. 25, v. 1-21, pg., 172
ch. 25, v. 2-4, 8-10, pg., 205
ch. 25, v. 8, pg., 102
ch. 25, v. 11-12, pg., 94, 96
ch. 25, v. 18, 21, pg., 97
13 1 Chronicles
ch. 1-9, pg., 223
ch. 3, v. 17, pg., 97
ch. 6, v. 14-15, pg., 97
ch. 6, v. 48, pg., 240
ch. 7, v. 5, pg., 213
ch. 7, v. 9, pg., 213
ch. 8, v. 12, pg., 66
ch. 9, v. 2-21, pg., 211
ch. 9, v. 3, pg., 212
ch. 9, v. 7, pg., 212
ch. 9, v. 17-27, pg., 87, 193
ch. 9, v. 18, 25, pg., 246
ch. 9, v. 19, 23, pg., 193
ch. 9, v. 22, pg., 193
ch. 9, v. 26, 27, pg., 240
ch. 9, v. 26, pg., 193, 215, 240
ch. 9, v. 26-29, pg., 215
ch. 12, v. 32, pg., 14
ch. 13, v. 1-9, pg., 297
ch. 13, v. 8, pg., 236
ch. 15, v. 11-15, pg., 231
ch. 15, v. 16, pg., 107, 193, 217, 236

© James R. Hughes, 2006

ch. 15, v. 16-22, pg., 193
ch. 15, v. 19-22, pg., 246
ch. 15, v. 27, pg., 238
ch. 16, v. 4, pg., 231, 236, 246
ch. 16, v. 4-6, 37, pg., 231
ch. 16, v. 4-7, pg., 246
ch. 16, v. 5, 7, pg., 215
ch. 16, v. 15-18, pg., 175
ch. 16, v. 36, pg., 60, 116
ch. 16, v. 39, pg., 100
ch. 16, v. 42, pg., 236
ch. 17, v. 23, 26, pg., 153
ch. 20, v. 5, pg., 102
ch. 21, v. 1-6, pg., 95
ch. 21, v. 6, pg., 95
ch. 21, v. 18-30, pg., 94, 205
ch. 22-25, pg., 86
ch. 23, v. 1-6, 28-32, pg., 86, 218, 236
ch. 23, v. 4, pg., 231
ch. 23, v. 5, pg., 233
ch. 23, v. 24, pg., 231
ch. 23, v. 26, pg., 86, 218
ch. 24, v. 1-19, pg., 214
ch. 24, v. 5, 7, 31, pg., 365
ch. 24, v. 7-19, pg., 223
ch. 25, v. 1, 6, pg., 233
ch. 25, v. 1, pg., 86, 217, 218, 233, 236, 237, 247
ch. 25, v. 1-26.32, pg., 86
ch. 25, v. 1-31, pg., 217, 218, 236, 247
ch. 25, v. 2, pg., 217, 236
ch. 25, v. 8, 9, pg., 365
ch. 26, v. 1-19, pg., 86, 87
ch. 26, v. 1-32, pg., 247
ch. 26, v. 13, 14, 16, pg., 365
ch. 26, v. 20, pg., 215
ch. 26, v. 29, pg., 215
ch. 27, v. 23, pg., 165
ch. 28, v. 2-3, pg., 28
ch. 28, v. 11, pg., 246
ch. 29, v. 11, pg., 216
ch. 29, v. 21, 22, pg., 241

14 2 Chronicles
ch. 1, v. 3-5, pg., 100
ch. 1, v. 17, pg., 151
ch. 2, v. 6, pg., 143
ch. 2-7, pg., 86
ch. 3, v. 1-2, pg., 94, 205
ch. 3-4, pg., 242
ch. 4, v. 9, pg., 127, 252
ch. 5, v. 3, pg., 127
ch. 5, v. 12, pg., 237
ch. 6, v. 14, pg., 15
ch. 6, v. 18, pg., 143
ch. 6, v. 32, pg., 256
ch. 6, v. 39, pg., 40
ch. 7, v. 1, pg., 40, 151
ch. 7, v. 5-7, 10, pg., 241
ch. 7, v. 8-10, pg., 127
ch. 7, v. 9, pg., 243
ch. 7, v. 14, pg., 151
ch. 8, v. 12, 13, pg., 129
ch. 8, v. 14, 15, pg., 234
ch. 8, v. 14, pg., 214, 233, 234, 246
ch. 13, v. 5, pg., 357, 358
ch. 13, v. 10, 11, pg., 246
ch. 14, v. 2-5, pg., 341
ch. 15, v. 1-14, pg., 341
ch. 15, v. 3, pg., 112, 118, 215, 218, 231, 246
ch. 15, v. 12, 13, pg., 297
ch. 15, v. 12, pg., 297, 357, 361
ch. 15, v. 12-15, pg., 361
ch. 17, v. 7-9, pg., 118, 215, 218, 231, 246
ch. 17, v. 14-18, pg., 213
ch. 18, v. 13, pg., 330
ch. 19, v. 5-7, pg., 90
ch. 19, v. 8, pg., 88, 231, 297
ch. 19, v. 8-11, pg., 231, 297
ch. 20, v. 3, pg., 337
ch. 20, v. 13, pg., 243
ch. 21, v. 7, pg., 357
ch. 22, v. 9, pg., 226
ch. 23, v. 1-21, pg., 341, 357
ch. 23, v. 4, pg., 193
ch. 23, v. 13, pg., 237
ch. 23, v. 16, pg., 354
ch. 24, v. 1-16, pg., 86
ch. 24, v. 1-19, pg., 341
ch. 24, v. 7, pg., 203
ch. 24, v. 20, 21, pg., 168
ch. 25, v. 7, pg., 233
ch. 26, v. 16-21, pg., 75
ch. 27, v. 3, pg., 216
ch. 29, v. 1-31.21, pg., 86
ch. 29, v. 2-11, pg., 359
ch. 29, v. 10, pg., 356, 357
ch. 29, v. 20-24, pg., 237, 266
ch. 29, v. 25, pg., 193, 234, 237
ch. 29, v. 25-26, pg., 234
ch. 29, v. 25-30, pg., 193
ch. 29, v. 27-28, pg., 87, 234, 237
ch. 29, v. 31, pg., 241
ch. 29, v. 31-36, pg., 241
ch. 29-30, pg., 297
ch. 29-31, pg., 341
ch. 30, v. 9, pg., 22, 155
ch. 30, v. 26, pg., 129
ch. 31, v. 2, pg., 86, 247
ch. 31, v. 2-8, pg., 247
ch. 31, v. 3, pg., 129
ch. 31, v. 11, 12, pg., 246
ch. 31, v. 11-13, pg., 246
ch. 32, v. 6, pg., 112
ch. 32, v. 13-19, pg., 173
ch. 32, v. 18, pg., 73

© James R. Hughes, 2006

ch. 33, v. 5, pg., 127, 252
ch. 33, v. 12-19, pg., 341
ch. 33, v. 14, pg., 216
ch. 33, v. 15, pg., 265
ch. 34, v. 8-13, pg., 86
ch. 34, v. 9, pg., 191
ch. 34, v. 22, pg., 214
ch. 34, v. 29-32, pg., 197, 361, 364
ch. 34, v. 33, pg., 297
ch. 34-35, pg., 341, 357
ch. 35, v. 1-19, pg., 86
ch. 35, v. 3, pg., 231
ch. 35, v. 4, pg., 214
ch. 35, v. 8, pg., 191
ch. 35, v. 18, pg., 129
ch. 35, v. 25, pg., 107
ch. 36, v. 9, pg., 102
ch. 36, v. 21, pg., 160, 199
ch. 36, v. 22-23, pg., 20
ch. 36, v. 23, pg., 15
15 Ezra
ch. 1, v. 1, pg., 17, 97, 223
ch. 1, v. 2, pg., 15
ch. 1, v. 5, pg., 108, 208, 213
ch. 1, v. 8, 11, pg., 11
ch. 2, v. 1, pg., 97, 98, 101, 102, 104, 108
ch. 2, v. 1-70, pg., 97, 101, 102, 104, 108
ch. 2, v. 2, pg., 101, 208, 223, 278
ch. 2, v. 5, pg., 31, 109, 202
ch. 2, v. 8, pg., 101
ch. 2, v. 10, pg., 101
ch. 2, v. 18, pg., 101
ch. 2, v. 20, pg., 101
ch. 2, v. 21, 22, pg., 101
ch. 2, v. 30, pg., 101
ch. 2, v. 33, pg., 66
ch. 2, v. 40, pg., 224
ch. 2, v. 41, pg., 193, 217, 224, 236
ch. 2, v. 42, pg., 193
ch. 2, v. 58, pg., 109, 202
ch. 2, v. 64-67, pg., 38
ch. 2, v. 65, pg., 107, 238
ch. 2, v. 68, pg., 240
ch. 2, v. 69, pg., 108
ch. 2, v. 70, pg., 34, 109, 110
ch. 3, v. 1, pg., 108, 110, 111, 237, 242
ch. 3, v. 1-6, pg., 111
ch. 3, v. 2, pg., 70, 105, 223
ch. 3, v. 4, pg., 70, 129, 219
ch. 3, v. 4-6, pg., 219
ch. 3, v. 4-8, pg., 70
ch. 3, v. 8, pg., 70, 86
ch. 3, v. 8-13, pg., 70
ch. 3, v. 10, pg., 237
ch. 3, v. 13, pg., 242
ch. 4, v. 1, pg., 12, 24, 71, 119, 213, 228
ch. 4, v. 1-24, pg., 12
ch. 4, v. 4-5, pg., 28
ch. 4, v. 8, 9, 17, 23, pg., 98
ch. 4, v. 11-22, pg., 71
ch. 4, v. 15, pg., 228
ch. 4, v. 18, 19, pg., 24
ch. 4, v. 18, pg., 24, 119
ch. 4, v. 21, 23, pg., 12, 27
ch. 4, v. 21, pg., 12, 24, 27
ch. 5, v. 1, pg., 11, 71, 227, 250
ch. 5, v. 1-6.13, pg., 71
ch. 5, v. 2, pg., 105
ch. 5, v. 8, pg., 98
ch. 5, v. 13, pg., 250
ch. 5, v. 14, 16, pg., 11
ch. 6, v. 8-10, pg., 217, 218
ch. 6, v. 13-18, pg., 247
ch. 6, v. 16, pg., 86, 244
ch. 6, v. 16-22, pg., 86
ch. 6, v. 17, pg., 98
ch. 6-8, pg., 219
ch. 7, v. 1, pg., 97, 191, 223
ch. 7, v. 1-28, pg., 97
ch. 7, v. 6, 10-12, 14, 25-26, pg., 112
ch. 7, v. 7, pg., 250
ch. 7, v. 8, pg., 87
ch. 7, v. 23, 25-28, pg., 297
ch. 7, v. 24, pg., 110
ch. 8, v. 1, pg., 87, 98, 110, 202, 223, 231
ch. 8, v. 14, pg., 98
ch. 8, v. 15-20, pg., 87, 223, 231
ch. 8, v. 17, 20, pg., 110
ch. 8, v. 17-20, pg., 202
ch. 8, v. 20, pg., 110
ch. 8, v. 21-23, pg., 186, 337
ch. 8, v. 35, pg., 98
ch. 8-10, pg., 250
ch. 9, v. 1, 2, pg., 105, 193
ch. 9, v. 1, pg., 105, 113, 151, 179, 193, 253
ch. 9, v. 1-15, pg., 179
ch. 9, v. 1-4, pg., 113
ch. 9, v. 2, pg., 81
ch. 9, v. 3, pg., 258
ch. 9, v. 7, pg., 179
ch. 9, v. 13, pg., 179
ch. 10, v. 1, pg., 12, 132, 133, 179, 193, 198, 214, 255, 260, 262, 341, 357
ch. 10, v. 1-17, pg., 260
ch. 10, v. 1-44, pg., 12, 133, 179, 198, 262, 341, 357
ch. 10, v. 2, 10, pg., 113
ch. 10, v. 3, pg., 198, 356
ch. 10, v. 5, pg., 294
ch. 10, v. 6, pg., 255
ch. 10, v. 9-17, pg., 133
ch. 10, v. 11-19, pg., 193
ch. 10, v. 16, pg., 214
ch. 10, v. 19, pg., 255, 260
16 Nehemiah

© James R. Hughes, 2006

ch. 1, v. 1, 4, pg., 120
ch. 1, v. 1, pg., 2, 10, 11, 20, 21, 23, 120, 142, 174, 236, 250, 279
ch. 1, v. 1-11, pg., 174, 279
ch. 1, v. 1-4, pg., 2, 11, 250
ch. 1, v. 2, 3, pg., 87
ch. 1, v. 2, pg., 14, 21, 52, 87, 89
ch. 1, v. 2-3, pg., 89
ch. 1, v. 3, pg., 149, 222
ch. 1, v. 4, 5-11, pg., 267
ch. 1, v. 4, pg., 15, 25, 63, 267, 336, 337, 348
ch. 1, v. 4-11, pg., 348
ch. 1, v. 5, 6, 10-11, pg., 49
ch. 1, v. 5, 6, pg., 49, 82, 132
ch. 1, v. 5, pg., 2, 14, 15, 40, 49, 52, 62, 72, 79, 82, 132, 149, 174, 179, 279
ch. 1, v. 5-11, pg., 2, 14, 52, 72, 79, 279
ch. 1, v. 6, 7, pg., 55, 56
ch. 1, v. 6, pg., 2, 14, 16, 17, 55, 56
ch. 1, v. 6a, 11a, pg., 2, 16
ch. 1, v. 6b, 7, pg., 2, 17
ch. 1, v. 7, 8, pg., 149, 159
ch. 1, v. 8, 9, pg., 2, 19
ch. 1, v. 8, pg., 2, 19, 44, 63, 79, 277
ch. 1, v. 9, pg., 222, 282, 370
ch. 1, v. 10, pg., 2, 20
ch. 1, v. 11, pg., 2, 10, 21, 142
ch. 1, v. 11b, pg., 2, 21
ch. 1-2, pg., 222
ch. 2, v. 1, pg., 2, 10, 22, 23, 27, 28, 30, 31, 35, 36, 52, 61, 64, 77, 78, 81, 83, 87, 89, 91, 96, 120, 222, 236, 239, 250, 255, 264, 279, 282, 370
ch. 2, v. 1-10, pg., 279
ch. 2, v. 1-20, pg., 222
ch. 2, v. 1-9, pg., 2, 23
ch. 2, v. 2, pg., 31, 40, 78
ch. 2, v. 4, 6, pg., 22
ch. 2, v. 4, pg., 22, 25, 187, 267, 348
ch. 2, v. 5, pg., 71
ch. 2, v. 6, pg., 25, 61, 250
ch. 2, v. 6b-8a, pg., 25
ch. 2, v. 8, pg., 90, 218
ch. 2, v. 10, 19, 20, pg., 2, 31, 36, 64, 91
ch. 2, v. 10, 19, pg., 2, 31, 36, 91, 255, 264
ch. 2, v. 10, pg., 2, 31, 36, 83, 91, 255, 264
ch. 2, v. 10-19, pg., 255
ch. 2, v. 11, pg., 2, 27, 120, 236, 250, 279
ch. 2, v. 11-15, pg., 250
ch. 2, v. 11-16, pg., 2, 26, 27
ch. 2, v. 11-20, pg., 279
ch. 2, v. 12, pg., 52, 96
ch. 2, v. 12-15, pg., 52
ch. 2, v. 13, 15, pg., 239
ch. 2, v. 13-15, pg., 93, 205, 239
ch. 2, v. 16, pg., 30, 89
ch. 2, v. 17, 18, pg., 78
ch. 2, v. 17, pg., 2, 28, 52, 78, 222, 282, 370
ch. 2, v. 17-18, pg., 2, 28
ch. 2, v. 18, pg., 30, 35, 77, 81
ch. 2, v. 19, pg., 64
ch. 2, v. 20, pg., 31, 40
ch. 3, v. 1, 20, 21, pg., 226, 255
ch. 3, v. 1, 22, 28, pg., 34
ch. 3, v. 1, 5, pg., 30
ch. 3, v. 1, pg., 2, 30, 33, 34, 35, 67, 98, 124, 184, 205, 214, 222, 226, 239, 255, 279, 280, 282, 370
ch. 3, v. 1-32, pg., 2, 33, 124, 184, 205, 222, 279, 280, 282, 370
ch. 3, v. 1-7, pg., 35
ch. 3, v. 3, pg., 34, 67
ch. 3, v. 5, pg., 80, 89
ch. 3, v. 6, pg., 67, 127
ch. 3, v. 7, pg., 100
ch. 3, v. 8, 31, 32, pg., 34
ch. 3, v. 8, pg., 34, 35
ch. 3, v. 8-13, pg., 35
ch. 3, v. 9, 12, 14-19, pg., 34
ch. 3, v. 9, 12, pg., 34, 89
ch. 3, v. 10, 23, 28-30, pg., 35
ch. 3, v. 13, pg., 67, 239
ch. 3, v. 14, 15, 17, pg., 214
ch. 3, v. 14, pg., 35, 67, 214
ch. 3, v. 15, pg., 35, 67
ch. 3, v. 15-32, pg., 35
ch. 3, v. 17, pg., 34, 98
ch. 3, v. 20, pg., 35
ch. 3, v. 26, 31, pg., 110
ch. 3, v. 26, pg., 34, 67, 110, 216
ch. 3, v. 28, pg., 67
ch. 3, v. 29, pg., 34, 67
ch. 3, v. 31, pg., 67
ch. 3, v. 32, pg., 34
ch. 4, v. 1, 2, pg., 220
ch. 4, v. 1, 7, pg., 51, 255, 264
ch. 4, v. 1, pg., 3, 19, 30, 35, 36, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 51, 63, 64, 67, 69, 78, 79, 81, 83, 89, 91, 184, 198, 220, 222, 236, 255, 264, 277, 280, 364
ch. 4, v. 1-14, pg., 64, 184, 222, 280
ch. 4, v. 1-23, pg., 3, 36, 91
ch. 4, v. 1-3, 7, pg., 198
ch. 4, v. 1-3, 7-8, pg., 64
ch. 4, v. 1-3, pg., 81, 198, 364
ch. 4, v. 2, pg., 3, 37, 47, 62, 71, 83, 173
ch. 4, v. 2-3, 10-12, pg., 3, 37
ch. 4, v. 3, 7, pg., 255
ch. 4, v. 3, pg., 239, 255
ch. 4, v. 4, 5, pg., 67, 79, 80
ch. 4, v. 4, 9, 15, 20, pg., 47
ch. 4, v. 4, 9, 20, pg., 173
ch. 4, v. 4, 9, pg., 25, 47, 173

© James R. Hughes, 2006

ch. 4, v. 4, pg., 3, 25, 39, 40, 44, 47, 52, 67, 72, 79, 80, 173, 284
ch. 4, v. 4-5, pg., 3, 39, 44, 284
ch. 4, v. 6-8, pg., 3, 42
ch. 4, v. 9, 13, 14, pg., 43
ch. 4, v. 9, 13-14, 20, 16-23, pg., 3, 43
ch. 4, v. 9, 14, 16, 23, pg., 44
ch. 4, v. 9, pg., 3, 35, 43, 44, 267
ch. 4, v. 10, pg., 47, 67
ch. 4, v. 11, 15, 16, 17, 19, 21, pg., 30
ch. 4, v. 11, pg., 30, 67
ch. 4, v. 12, pg., 83
ch. 4, v. 13, pg., 236
ch. 4, v. 14, 19, pg., 89
ch. 4, v. 14, 20, 16, 23, pg., 43
ch. 4, v. 14, pg., 19, 43, 44, 63, 67, 78, 79, 89, 277
ch. 4, v. 15, 21-23, pg., 3, 46
ch. 4, v. 15, pg., 3, 46
ch. 4, v. 16, 23, pg., 35, 44
ch. 4, v. 16, pg., 35, 44, 45, 67, 91
ch. 4, v. 16-18, pg., 67
ch. 4, v. 16-23, pg., 45
ch. 4, v. 17, 18, pg., 46
ch. 4, v. 20, pg., 173
ch. 4, v. 21, 22, 23, pg., 47
ch. 4, v. 21, pg., 47, 62, 71
ch. 4, v. 21-23, pg., 62
ch. 4, v. 22, pg., 47
ch. 5, v. 1-13, pg., 34, 78, 109, 184, 200, 222, 281, 292
ch. 5, v. 1-19, pg., 3, 47, 280
ch. 5, v. 1-2, 8-9, 10, pg., 48
ch. 5, v. 1-5, pg., 3, 48, 124, 364
ch. 5, v. 2, pg., 62, 67
ch. 5, v. 2-4, pg., 62
ch. 5, v. 3, pg., 81, 203
ch. 5, v. 4, 15, pg., 87
ch. 5, v. 4, pg., 87, 203
ch. 5, v. 6, pg., 3, 51, 124, 236, 280
ch. 5, v. 6-7, pg., 3, 51
ch. 5, v. 6-8, pg., 124
ch. 5, v. 7, 12, pg., 80, 89
ch. 5, v. 7, pg., 3, 53, 80, 89, 292
ch. 5, v. 7-11, pg., 3, 53
ch. 5, v. 8c, 12, 13, pg., 60
ch. 5, v. 8c, 12-13, pg., 3, 60
ch. 5, v. 9, pg., 173
ch. 5, v. 10-13, pg., 112
ch. 5, v. 11, pg., 3, 57
ch. 5, v. 12, pg., 80
ch. 5, v. 14, 17, 18, pg., 210
ch. 5, v. 14, pg., 3, 31, 56, 59, 61, 90, 112, 210, 218, 250
ch. 5, v. 14-18, pg., 59, 250
ch. 5, v. 14-19, pg., 3, 56, 61, 90
ch. 5, v. 16, pg., 30, 62
ch. 5, v. 17, pg., 74
ch. 5, v. 19, pg., 12, 19, 25, 44, 52, 55, 63, 72, 79, 267, 277
ch. 6, v. 1, 12, 17, 19, pg., 255
ch. 6, v. 1, pg., 3, 4, 19, 25, 31, 44, 48, 50, 61, 63, 64, 66, 74, 75, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 89, 91, 173, 184, 198, 222, 236, 240, 244, 255, 264, 277, 279, 280, 281, 364
ch. 6, v. 1-14, 17-19, pg., 3, 64, 91
ch. 6, v. 1-14, pg., 3, 64, 91, 184, 198, 222, 280
ch. 6, v. 1-2, 12, 14, pg., 255
ch. 6, v. 1-2, 5, 12, 14, pg., 264
ch. 6, v. 1-4, pg., 3, 66
ch. 6, v. 3, 9, 16, pg., 30
ch. 6, v. 3, pg., 30, 81
ch. 6, v. 5, pg., 3, 69, 188
ch. 6, v. 5-9, pg., 3, 69
ch. 6, v. 6, pg., 31
ch. 6, v. 9, 14, pg., 25, 65, 267
ch. 6, v. 9, pg., 25, 65, 79, 83, 267, 279, 348
ch. 6, v. 10, 12, 13, pg., 75
ch. 6, v. 10, pg., 3, 74, 75, 240
ch. 6, v. 10-14, pg., 3, 74
ch. 6, v. 12, 13, pg., 75
ch. 6, v. 14, 17-19, pg., 83
ch. 6, v. 14, pg., 19, 44, 63, 79, 83, 277
ch. 6, v. 15, 16, pg., 4, 81, 364
ch. 6, v. 15, pg., 4, 25, 48, 50, 61, 81, 82, 184, 222, 235, 244, 279, 364
ch. 6, v. 15-19, pg., 184, 222
ch. 6, v. 16, pg., 173
ch. 6, v. 17, pg., 3, 31, 80, 89, 255
ch. 6, v. 17-19, pg., 3, 80, 255
ch. 6, v. 18, pg., 31
ch. 6, v. 19-7.3, pg., 281
ch. 7, v. 1, 2, pg., 93, 364
ch. 7, v. 1, 3, pg., 94, 206
ch. 7, v. 1, pg., 4, 84, 85, 86, 88, 92, 93, 94, 98, 101, 110, 206, 222, 244, 357, 364
ch. 7, v. 1-3, pg., 4, 84, 85, 92, 110, 222, 244
ch. 7, v. 2, pg., 4, 88, 90, 91, 99, 101, 207, 299
ch. 7, v. 2-3, pg., 4, 91
ch. 7, v. 3-64, pg., 105
ch. 7, v. 4, pg., 4, 84, 87, 93, 97, 100, 101, 110, 205
ch. 7, v. 4-73, pg., 97
ch. 7, v. 4-73a, pg., 4, 84, 93
ch. 7, v. 5, pg., 4, 89, 94, 97, 100, 101, 102, 104, 118, 192, 222, 228, 236, 244
ch. 7, v. 5-60, pg., 100
ch. 7, v. 5-62, pg., 4, 97
ch. 7, v. 5-65, pg., 102, 118
ch. 7, v. 5-73, pg., 97, 101, 192, 222, 244
ch. 7, v. 6, pg., 4, 38, 71, 94, 98, 101, 104, 105, 107, 108, 118, 126, 202, 206, 209

© James R. Hughes, 2006

ch. 7, v. 7, pg., 4, 5, 30, 84, 100, 105, 108, 109, 110, 111, 222, 223, 244, 281, 282, 370
ch. 7, v. 8-62, pg., 98
ch. 7, v. 9, 15, pg., 357
ch. 7, v. 11-12, pg., 357
ch. 7, v. 13, pg., 101
ch. 7, v. 15, pg., 101
ch. 7, v. 19, pg., 98
ch. 7, v. 24, pg., 101
ch. 7, v. 25, pg., 99, 101
ch. 7, v. 26, pg., 99, 101
ch. 7, v. 27, pg., 99
ch. 7, v. 29, pg., 99
ch. 7, v. 33, 34, pg., 101
ch. 7, v. 33, pg., 102
ch. 7, v. 37, pg., 66
ch. 7, v. 39-42, pg., 100, 101
ch. 7, v. 43-44, pg., 100
ch. 7, v. 43-45, pg., 101
ch. 7, v. 60, pg., 202
ch. 7, v. 61-65, pg., 4, 105
ch. 7, v. 64-65, pg., 104
ch. 7, v. 65, pg., 209, 365
ch. 7, v. 66, pg., 4, 38, 71, 101, 107, 118, 126
ch. 7, v. 66-67, pg., 118, 126
ch. 7, v. 66-69, pg., 4, 38, 107
ch. 7, v. 67, pg., 102
ch. 7, v. 67-69, pg., 98
ch. 7, v. 70, 71, pg., 30
ch. 7, v. 70, pg., 4, 30, 105, 108
ch. 7, v. 70-72, pg., 4, 108
ch. 7, v. 72b-10 39, pg., 138
ch. 7, v. 73, pg., 4, 5, 84, 108, 109, 110, 111, 134, 193, 216, 222, 235, 244, 281, 282, 370
ch. 7, v. 73-8.18, pg., 281
ch. 7, v. 73a, pg., 4, 109, 110, 193, 216
ch. 7, v. 73b, pg., 4, 5, 84, 110, 111
ch. 7, v. 73b-8.1, pg., 4, 5, 84, 110, 111
ch. 7, v. 73b-8.18, pg., 4, 84, 111
ch. 7, v. 73b-8.8, pg., 4, 111, 134
ch. 7-10, pg., 222, 244
ch. 7-11, pg., 280
ch. 8, v. 1, 14, pg., 149, 159
ch. 8, v. 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 9, 13, 18, pg., 179
ch. 8, v. 1, 2, pg., 112, 113, 179
ch. 8, v. 1, 9, pg., 112
ch. 8, v. 1, pg., 5, 108, 112, 113, 114, 119, 120, 121, 123, 125, 126, 127, 131, 133, 136, 149, 159, 179, 184, 200, 235, 240, 251, 252, 281, 334, 348, 349, 351
ch. 8, v. 1-12.26, pg., 235
ch. 8, v. 1-18, pg., 112, 114, 120, 184, 235, 281, 348, 349
ch. 8, v. 1-6, 13-17, pg., 252
ch. 8, v. 1-6, pg., 5, 113, 252
ch. 8, v. 1-8, pg., 127
ch. 8, v. 2, 3, pg., 113, 194
ch. 8, v. 2, pg., 82, 111, 113, 191, 194, 243
ch. 8, v. 3, pg., 115, 118, 252
ch. 8, v. 3-6, pg., 115
ch. 8, v. 4, pg., 113, 115, 131
ch. 8, v. 5, 6, pg., 364
ch. 8, v. 5, pg., 115, 135, 364
ch. 8, v. 6, pg., 60, 115, 117, 135, 348
ch. 8, v. 7, 8, pg., 5, 117
ch. 8, v. 7, 9, pg., 88
ch. 8, v. 7, pg., 5, 88, 115, 117, 135, 136, 231
ch. 8, v. 7-9, pg., 231
ch. 8, v. 8, 18, pg., 160
ch. 8, v. 8, pg., 118, 160, 325
ch. 8, v. 9, pg., 5, 105, 108, 120, 121, 250, 364
ch. 8, v. 9-12, pg., 5, 120, 121, 364
ch. 8, v. 10, 11, pg., 200
ch. 8, v. 10, 12, pg., 123, 334
ch. 8, v. 10-12, pg., 5, 121, 123
ch. 8, v. 12, pg., 119, 123
ch. 8, v. 13, pg., 5, 125, 131
ch. 8, v. 13-15, pg., 5, 125
ch. 8, v. 13-18, pg., 5, 125
ch. 8, v. 14, pg., 159, 351
ch. 8, v. 14-18, pg., 351
ch. 8, v. 15-17a, pg., 5, 126
ch. 8, v. 16, pg., 240
ch. 8, v. 17b, 18, pg., 5, 127
ch. 8, v. 18, pg., 136
ch. 8-10, pg., 250, 251, 280, 341, 351, 359
ch. 9, v. 1, 2, pg., 252, 336
ch. 9, v. 1, pg., 5, 6, 13, 19, 22, 44, 52, 72, 84, 128, 130, 131, 132, 138, 139, 140, 141, 149, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 174, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 191, 197, 199, 206, 222, 235, 252, 256, 260, 276, 277, 279, 282, 336, 339, 348, 364, 370
ch. 9, v. 1-10.39, pg., 183
ch. 9, v. 1-3, 23, 24, pg., 256
ch. 9, v. 1-3, pg., 5, 52, 72, 84, 128, 130, 131, 185, 235, 256
ch. 9, v. 1-37, pg., 5, 84, 130
ch. 9, v. 1-38, pg., 52, 72, 128, 163, 178, 179, 183, 184, 185, 206, 235, 364
ch. 9, v. 1-5, pg., 132, 184
ch. 9, v. 1-5a, pg., 5, 130, 182, 183, 184
ch. 9, v. 2, 3, 5, pg., 131
ch. 9, v. 2, 3, pg., 131, 186
ch. 9, v. 2, pg., 5, 6, 131, 133, 139, 140, 141, 164, 165, 167, 171, 174, 176, 177, 181, 185, 186, 193

© James R. Hughes, 2006

ch. 9, v. 3, pg., 5, 6, 15, 133, 134, 136, 138, 139, 141, 149, 172, 174, 175, 176, 177, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 185, 186, 187, 188, 252, 268
ch. 9, v. 3-5a, pg., 5, 134
ch. 9, v. 4, 5, pg., 132, 190
ch. 9, v. 4, pg., 116, 132, 133, 190
ch. 9, v. 5, 17, 31, 32, pg., 180
ch. 9, v. 5, 6, 7, pg., 164
ch. 9, v. 5, 6, pg., 144, 164, 180
ch. 9, v. 5-20, 32, 33, pg., 180
ch. 9, v. 5-36, pg., 279
ch. 9, v. 5-37, pg., 25, 134, 178, 186, 267
ch. 9, v. 5b, 6, pg., 180
ch. 9, v. 5b, pg., 5, 135, 136, 138, 140, 141, 180, 181, 182, 183
ch. 9, v. 5b-10.39, pg., 136, 182
ch. 9, v. 5b-31, pg., 138, 182
ch. 9, v. 5b-37, pg., 5, 135, 136, 184
ch. 9, v. 5b-6, 19, 20, pg., 181
ch. 9, v. 5b-6, pg., 136, 138, 181, 182, 183
ch. 9, v. 5b-7, 15-21, pg., 181
ch. 9, v. 5c-37, pg., 348
ch. 9, v. 6, pg., 5, 136, 137, 138, 140, 142, 146, 180
ch. 9, v. 6-31, pg., 138
ch. 9, v. 7, 8, 9-13, 15, 17c, 19a, pg., 182
ch. 9, v. 7, 8, pg., 5, 138, 140, 147, 182
ch. 9, v. 7, pg., 5, 136, 138, 140, 147, 180, 181, 182, 183
ch. 9, v. 7-31, pg., 138
ch. 9, v. 7-37, pg., 136, 182, 183
ch. 9, v. 7-8, pg., 137
ch. 9, v. 8, 32, pg., 182
ch. 9, v. 8, pg., 151, 180, 181, 182
ch. 9, v. 9, 12, pg., 5, 154, 180
ch. 9, v. 9-11, pg., 137, 181
ch. 9, v. 9-12, 22-31, pg., 181
ch. 9, v. 9-12, pg., 5, 138, 140, 153, 181
ch. 9, v. 10, 11, 33, pg., 5, 155
ch. 9, v. 10, 11, pg., 5, 155, 180
ch. 9, v. 10, pg., 5, 141, 155, 180
ch. 9, v. 12, 19, pg., 181
ch. 9, v. 12, pg., 5, 156, 180, 181
ch. 9, v. 12-21, pg., 137
ch. 9, v. 13, 14, pg., 177, 182, 197
ch. 9, v. 13, pg., 5, 138, 140, 158, 160, 177, 180, 181, 182, 260
ch. 9, v. 13-14, pg., 5, 139, 140, 158
ch. 9, v. 14, pg., 149, 159, 181, 199, 276, 279, 348
ch. 9, v. 15, 20, 21, pg., 181
ch. 9, v. 15, pg., 5, 139, 140, 160, 161, 180, 181
ch. 9, v. 15-21, pg., 5, 139, 140, 160
ch. 9, v. 16, 17, 19, pg., 162
ch. 9, v. 16, 17, pg., 162
ch. 9, v. 16, 29, pg., 162
ch. 9, v. 16-17, pg., 177
ch. 9, v. 16-18, 26, 29, 34, pg., 364
ch. 9, v. 16-18, pg., 6, 162, 364
ch. 9, v. 17, 19, 27, 28, 31, pg., 181
ch. 9, v. 17, pg., 19, 44, 162, 180, 181, 277
ch. 9, v. 17b, 27, pg., 181
ch. 9, v. 17c, 19a, pg., 180
ch. 9, v. 17c, pg., 162, 180
ch. 9, v. 18, pg., 162, 177
ch. 9, v. 19, 20, pg., 164, 180
ch. 9, v. 19, 27, 28, pg., 22, 155
ch. 9, v. 19, pg., 157, 174
ch. 9, v. 19-21, pg., 6, 163
ch. 9, v. 20, pg., 164, 181
ch. 9, v. 22-25, pg., 6, 137, 139, 140, 165, 181
ch. 9, v. 22-31, pg., 137, 138
ch. 9, v. 23-25, pg., 165
ch. 9, v. 25, 28, pg., 176
ch. 9, v. 25, pg., 174
ch. 9, v. 26, pg., 6, 139, 141, 167, 177, 181
ch. 9, v. 26-28, pg., 6, 139, 141, 167
ch. 9, v. 26-31, pg., 137
ch. 9, v. 27, pg., 174
ch. 9, v. 28, 29, pg., 177
ch. 9, v. 29-31, pg., 6, 139, 141, 171
ch. 9, v. 30, 31, pg., 181
ch. 9, v. 31, pg., 174
ch. 9, v. 32, 33, 36, 37, pg., 179
ch. 9, v. 32, 34, 36, pg., 179
ch. 9, v. 32, 34, pg., 176
ch. 9, v. 32, pg., 6, 15, 138, 139, 141, 149, 172, 174, 175, 176, 179, 180, 181, 182
ch. 9, v. 32-33, pg., 181
ch. 9, v. 32-34, pg., 175
ch. 9, v. 32-35, pg., 6, 138, 139, 141, 172
ch. 9, v. 32-37, pg., 137, 138, 182
ch. 9, v. 33, pg., 179, 180, 182
ch. 9, v. 33-35, 37, pg., 182
ch. 9, v. 34, pg., 181, 182
ch. 9, v. 34-35, pg., 181
ch. 9, v. 35, pg., 174, 177
ch. 9, v. 36, 37, pg., 181, 182
ch. 9, v. 36-37, pg., 6, 138, 139, 141, 177, 182
ch. 9, v. 38, pg., 6, 133, 134, 136, 182, 183, 185, 187, 188, 268
ch. 9, v. 38-10.29, pg., 136, 183
ch. 9, v. 38-10.39, pg., 6, 133, 182, 183, 185
ch. 9-10, pg., 136, 178
ch. 10, v. 1, pg., 6, 116, 120, 179, 183, 184, 185, 188, 190, 198, 206, 209, 217, 235, 250, 268, 279, 357, 364
ch. 10, v. 1-17, pg., 188, 198
ch. 10, v. 1-27, pg., 6, 179, 190, 206
ch. 10, v. 1-29, pg., 185

© James R. Hughes, 2006

ch. 10, v. 1-39, pg., 179, 183, 184, 206, 209, 235, 279, 357, 364
ch. 10, v. 2, pg., 6, 80, 89, 98, 105, 116, 149, 159, 160, 185, 193, 197, 206, 208, 221, 246, 248, 250, 282, 370
ch. 10, v. 3, pg., 30, 87, 96, 98, 116, 136, 173, 183, 185, 201, 209, 245, 246, 247, 262, 268, 272, 276, 279, 291, 333
ch. 10, v. 7, 20, pg., 116
ch. 10, v. 7, pg., 116
ch. 10, v. 8, pg., 206
ch. 10, v. 9, pg., 133
ch. 10, v. 14-29, pg., 268
ch. 10, v. 18, pg., 116
ch. 10, v. 20, pg., 116
ch. 10, v. 22, pg., 116
ch. 10, v. 25, pg., 98, 116, 185, 206, 208
ch. 10, v. 28, 29, pg., 160
ch. 10, v. 28, 30, 31, pg., 133
ch. 10, v. 28, pg., 6, 98, 133, 160, 190, 193, 246, 248, 273
ch. 10, v. 28-29, pg., 6, 193, 246
ch. 10, v. 28-39, pg., 248, 273
ch. 10, v. 29, pg., 6, 80, 89, 149, 159, 160, 197, 221, 250, 282, 370
ch. 10, v. 29-39, pg., 6, 197, 221, 282, 370
ch. 10, v. 30, pg., 98, 136, 183, 185, 262, 276
ch. 10, v. 30-39, pg., 136, 183, 185
ch. 10, v. 31, pg., 199, 272, 276, 279, 291, 333
ch. 10, v. 32, 33, 34, 36, 37, 38, 39, pg., 173
ch. 10, v. 32, pg., 87, 95, 96, 109, 173
ch. 10, v. 32-39, pg., 173
ch. 10, v. 33, pg., 109
ch. 10, v. 34, pg., 173, 185, 209
ch. 10, v. 35-38, pg., 268
ch. 10, v. 35-39, pg., 267
ch. 10, v. 36, 37, pg., 246
ch. 10, v. 36, pg., 245
ch. 10, v. 37, 38, pg., 201
ch. 10, v. 37, pg., 30, 201, 245, 246
ch. 10, v. 37-39, pg., 245, 246
ch. 10, v. 38, 39, pg., 247
ch. 10, v. 39, pg., 268
ch. 10-11, pg., 82
ch. 11, v. 1, 18, pg., 7, 209, 221, 370
ch. 11, v. 1, 2, pg., 204
ch. 11, v. 1, pg., 6, 7, 34, 84, 88, 96, 100, 110, 116, 191, 201, 202, 204, 206, 208, 209, 212, 221, 222, 235, 240, 244, 282, 365, 370
ch. 11, v. 1-2, pg., 34
ch. 11, v. 1-34, pg., 100
ch. 11, v. 1-36, pg., 6, 84, 201, 204, 206, 212, 222, 235, 244
ch. 11, v. 2, pg., 6, 110, 135, 204, 206, 210, 217, 220, 236
ch. 11, v. 3, 20, 25-30, 31-36, pg., 215
ch. 11, v. 3, 20-36, pg., 6, 215
ch. 11, v. 3-19, pg., 6, 211
ch. 11, v. 4-9, pg., 100
ch. 11, v. 5, pg., 206, 208, 367
ch. 11, v. 6, 14, pg., 213
ch. 11, v. 6, 8, pg., 213
ch. 11, v. 7, pg., 212
ch. 11, v. 8, pg., 367
ch. 11, v. 9, pg., 207
ch. 11, v. 11, pg., 116, 191, 206, 208, 240
ch. 11, v. 15, pg., 206
ch. 11, v. 19, pg., 88
ch. 11, v. 20, 36, pg., 236
ch. 11, v. 21, pg., 110
ch. 11, v. 22-23, 36, pg., 217
ch. 11, v. 23, pg., 184, 217
ch. 11, v. 24, pg., 135, 217
ch. 11, v. 25-35, pg., 220
ch. 11, v. 33-35, pg., 66
ch. 12, v. 1, 24, pg., 118
ch. 12, v. 1, 26, 33, 36, pg., 179
ch. 12, v. 1, pg., 7, 84, 118, 179, 191, 222, 223, 224, 227, 235, 264
ch. 12, v. 1-26, pg., 7, 184, 222, 230, 235
ch. 12, v. 1-47, pg., 7, 84, 222, 282
ch. 12, v. 1-9, pg., 7, 223
ch. 12, v. 3, pg., 86, 98, 112, 116, 193, 217, 227, 235, 236, 238, 239, 244, 250, 251
ch. 12, v. 4, 16, pg., 227
ch. 12, v. 5, pg., 227
ch. 12, v. 7, pg., 116
ch. 12, v. 8, 9, 27-29, pg., 7, 230
ch. 12, v. 8, pg., 224
ch. 12, v. 9, 24, 26-28, 30-42, pg., 7, 235
ch. 12, v. 9, 24, pg., 7, 235, 240
ch. 12, v. 10, 11, pg., 7, 224, 255, 264
ch. 12, v. 10, pg., 226, 255
ch. 12, v. 11, pg., 225
ch. 12, v. 12-21, pg., 7, 227
ch. 12, v. 16, pg., 227
ch. 12, v. 22, 23, pg., 255
ch. 12, v. 22, pg., 225
ch. 12, v. 22-26, pg., 7, 227
ch. 12, v. 23, pg., 226
ch. 12, v. 24, 36, 45, pg., 149
ch. 12, v. 24, 36, pg., 7, 149, 233
ch. 12, v. 24, pg., 7, 149, 233, 241
ch. 12, v. 26, 31, 36, pg., 236
ch. 12, v. 26, 47, pg., 120
ch. 12, v. 26, pg., 105, 120, 236
ch. 12, v. 27, 28, 30, 35, 41-43, pg., 236
ch. 12, v. 27, 28, pg., 235
ch. 12, v. 27, 30, pg., 7, 243
ch. 12, v. 27, 43, pg., 7, 241

© James R. Hughes, 2006

ch. 12, v. 27, pg., 7, 82, 87, 222, 235, 236, 241, 243, 244, 251, 282, 370
ch. 12, v. 27-43, pg., 222, 251, 282, 370
ch. 12, v. 27-47, pg., 87
ch. 12, v. 28, 29, pg., 232
ch. 12, v. 31, 38, 40, 42, pg., 238
ch. 12, v. 31, 38, 40, pg., 193
ch. 12, v. 31, 38, pg., 238, 239
ch. 12, v. 31, pg., 193, 235, 238, 239, 245
ch. 12, v. 31-38, pg., 239
ch. 12, v. 32, pg., 239
ch. 12, v. 33, 36, pg., 112
ch. 12, v. 35, 41, pg., 116
ch. 12, v. 36, pg., 86, 217, 236, 250, 251
ch. 12, v. 37, pg., 239
ch. 12, v. 40, pg., 239, 240
ch. 12, v. 40-43, pg., 240
ch. 12, v. 43, pg., 236, 241
ch. 12, v. 44, pg., 7, 87, 245, 246, 251
ch. 12, v. 44-46, pg., 245, 246
ch. 12, v. 44-47, pg., 7, 87, 245
ch. 12, v. 45-47, pg., 247
ch. 12, v. 47, pg., 247, 251, 267
ch. 13, v. 1, 4, 6, 7, 23, pg., 7, 249
ch. 13, v. 1, pg., 7, 8, 11, 19, 25, 29, 31, 44, 63, 64, 79, 80, 81, 84, 89, 91, 116, 118, 133, 149, 160, 173, 193, 204, 248, 249, 251, 261, 262, 267, 269, 270, 271, 273, 277, 279, 280, 281, 282, 318
ch. 13, v. 1-14, 23-31, pg., 280
ch. 13, v. 1-3, 23-24, pg., 7, 251
ch. 13, v. 1-3, pg., 7, 11, 84, 133, 193, 248, 249, 251, 261, 262, 281, 282
ch. 13, v. 1-31, pg., 7, 11, 84, 248, 249, 251, 261, 262, 281, 282
ch. 13, v. 2, 4, 18, 27, pg., 173
ch. 13, v. 2, pg., 7, 31, 149, 173, 193, 198, 204, 255, 257, 260, 294
ch. 13, v. 3, pg., 252
ch. 13, v. 4, 5, pg., 212
ch. 13, v. 4, 7, 28, pg., 226, 230
ch. 13, v. 4, pg., 7, 31, 32, 173, 212, 226, 230, 255
ch. 13, v. 4-9, 28, pg., 32
ch. 13, v. 4-9, pg., 7, 32, 255
ch. 13, v. 5, pg., 31
ch. 13, v. 6, 7, pg., 61, 250
ch. 13, v. 6, pg., 25, 61, 89, 112, 198, 236, 249
ch. 13, v. 6-7, pg., 25
ch. 13, v. 7, pg., 89, 214, 240
ch. 13, v. 10, 31, pg., 204
ch. 13, v. 10, pg., 269
ch. 13, v. 10-14, 31, pg., 8, 267
ch. 13, v. 11, pg., 204
ch. 13, v. 13, pg., 116, 118
ch. 13, v. 14, 22, 29, 30, pg., 25
ch. 13, v. 14, 22, 29, 31, pg., 19, 45, 63, 79, 267, 277
ch. 13, v. 14, 22, 31, pg., 8, 63, 277
ch. 13, v. 14, pg., 64, 277
ch. 13, v. 15, 16, pg., 271
ch. 13, v. 15, pg., 270, 271, 318
ch. 13, v. 15-19, pg., 91
ch. 13, v. 15-22, pg., 8, 19, 204, 269, 270, 279, 281
ch. 13, v. 17, 18, pg., 8, 271, 273
ch. 13, v. 17, pg., 8, 80, 89, 271
ch. 13, v. 18, 27, pg., 173
ch. 13, v. 19-21, pg., 29
ch. 13, v. 19-22, pg., 8, 273
ch. 13, v. 22, pg., 64, 193, 277
ch. 13, v. 23, pg., 193, 198, 204, 260
ch. 13, v. 23-27, pg., 198, 260
ch. 13, v. 23-28, pg., 204
ch. 13, v. 25, pg., 7, 257, 294
ch. 13, v. 25-30, pg., 7, 257
ch. 13, v. 27, pg., 255, 260
ch. 13, v. 28, pg., 31, 198
ch. 13, v. 29, pg., 149
ch. 7-8-25, pg., 100
17 Esther
ch. 2, v. 23, pg., 228
ch. 3, v. 6, pg., 275
ch. 4, v. 1-4, pg., 339
ch. 4, v. 11, pg., 22
ch. 4, v. 16, pg., 13, 337
ch. 6, v. 1, pg., 228
ch. 6, v. 7-11, pg., 70
ch. 8, v. 8, pg., 188
ch. 8, v. 11, pg., 290
ch. 9, v. 2, pg., 275
ch. 10, v. 2, pg., 228
18 Job
ch. 1, v. 6-22, pg., 51
ch. 1, v. 9, pg., 37
ch. 2, v. 1-13, pg., 51
ch. 2, v. 8, pg., 339
ch. 2, v. 12, pg., 339
ch. 4, v. 19, pg., 339
ch. 9, v. 12, pg., 155
ch. 12, v. 10, pg., 164
ch. 13, v. 15, pg., 72
ch. 15, v. 16, pg., 171
ch. 17, v. 16, pg., 339
ch. 26, v. 11, pg., 157
ch. 31, v. 13-15, pg., 54
ch. 31, v. 16-20, pg., 124, 200
ch. 34, v. 19, pg., 53
ch. 36, v. 5, pg., 195
ch. 38-41, pg., 146
19 Psalms
113, 128
ch. 1, v. 1-3, pg., 172, 323
ch. 2, v. 1-12, pg., 285, 301, 308

© James R. Hughes, 2006

ch. 2, v. 1-3, 10-12, pg., 259
ch. 2, v. 1-6, pg., 32
ch. 2, v. 6, 12, pg., 221, 282, 370
ch. 2, v. 6, pg., 33, 221, 244, 282, 370
ch. 2, v. 8, pg., 152
ch. 2, v. 10, 11, 12, pg., 219, 309
ch. 2, v. 10-12, pg., 319, 361
ch. 3, v. 4, pg., 40
ch. 3, v. 6, pg., 44, 78
ch. 3, v. 7, pg., 289
ch. 4, v. 1, pg., 238
ch. 4, v. 3, pg., 40
ch. 4, v. 4, pg., 37
ch. 5, v. 11, pg., 141
ch. 5, v. 12, pg., 144
ch. 6, v. 4, pg., 72
ch. 7, v. 6, 8, pg., 166
ch. 7, v. 9, 11, pg., 152
ch. 7, v. 12, 13, pg., 144
ch. 7, v. 16, pg., 40
ch. 7, v. 17, pg., 350
ch. 9, v. 2, pg., 119
ch. 9, v. 11, pg., 33, 221, 244, 282, 370
ch. 11, v. 6, pg., 144
ch. 13, v. 1-6, pg., 240
ch. 15, v. 3, pg., 70
ch. 16, v. 6, pg., 217
ch. 16, v. 10, pg., 44
ch. 17, v. 6, pg., 40
ch. 17, v. 13, pg., 44, 166
ch. 17, v. 14, pg., 72
ch. 18, v. 6, pg., 40
ch. 18, v. 40, 41, pg., 40
ch. 18, v. 49, pg., 285
ch. 19, v. 1-4, pg., 157
ch. 19, v. 8, pg., 121
ch. 19, v. 11, 13, pg., 121
ch. 20, v. 1-9, pg., 240
ch. 20, v. 4, pg., 28
ch. 22, v. 2, pg., 94, 144, 152, 191, 213, 220, 359, 361
ch. 22, v. 5, pg., 72
ch. 22, v. 22, 23, 25, pg., 359
ch. 22, v. 22, pg., 191, 213, 359
ch. 22, v. 23, pg., 319
ch. 22, v. 27, 28, pg., 152, 220
ch. 22, v. 27, pg., 152, 220, 361
ch. 22, v. 28, pg., 144, 152
ch. 23, v. 3, pg., 196
ch. 23, v. 4, pg., 44, 78
ch. 24, v. 1, pg., 173, 216
ch. 24, v. 3, pg., 237, 344
ch. 24, v. 3-4, pg., 237, 266
ch. 24, v. 3-5, pg., 345
ch. 24, v. 8, pg., 289
ch. 25, v. 1-22, pg., 350
ch. 25, v. 10, pg., 175
ch. 25, v. 11, pg., 142, 196
ch. 25, v. 14, pg., 157
ch. 27, v. 1, 2, pg., 44, 78
ch. 27, v. 1-14, pg., 340
ch. 27, v. 1-3, pg., 289
ch. 28, v. 6, pg., 145
ch. 28, v. 7, pg., 121
ch. 30, v. 1, pg., 244
ch. 30, v. 4, pg., 142
ch. 31, v. 3, pg., 196
ch. 31, v. 9-13, pg., 70
ch. 31, v. 19, pg., 44, 78
ch. 32, v. 5, pg., 132, 148
ch. 33, v. 3, pg., 129
ch. 33, v. 6-10, pg., 146
ch. 33, v. 8, 18, pg., 44, 79
ch. 33, v. 10, 11, pg., 28
ch. 33, v. 11, pg., 147
ch. 34, v. 1-22, pg., 350
ch. 34, v. 3, pg., 359
ch. 34, v. 9, 11, pg., 44, 79
ch. 34, v. 10, pg., 59
ch. 35, v. 13, pg., 337, 339, 340
ch. 36, v. 5, pg., 123, 175
ch. 36, v. 5-9, pg., 123
ch. 37, v. 9, 11, 22, 29, 34, pg., 216
ch. 37, v. 12, pg., 67
ch. 37, v. 21, pg., 333
ch. 38, v. 1-22, pg., 240
ch. 38, v. 18, pg., 132
ch. 40, v. 3, pg., 129
ch. 40, v. 6, pg., 50
ch. 41, v. 4-7, pg., 350
ch. 41, v. 8-10, pg., 284
ch. 41, v. 9, pg., 75
ch. 42, v. 1-11, pg., 123, 350
ch. 42-49, pg., 231
ch. 43, v. 1-5, pg., 350
ch. 43, v. 4, pg., 123
ch. 44, v. 1-26, pg., 350
ch. 44, v. 11, pg., 144
ch. 46, v. 4, pg., 244, 368
ch. 47, v. 2, pg., 216
ch. 48, v. 1, 2, pg., 244
ch. 48, v. 2, pg., 368
ch. 48, v. 11-14, pg., 222, 282, 370
ch. 48, v. 12-13, pg., 33, 239
ch. 49, v. 6, pg., 53
ch. 50, v. 1, pg., 73, 173, 215, 216, 231
ch. 50, v. 2, pg., 33
ch. 50, v. 5, pg., 357, 359
ch. 50, v. 12, pg., 173, 216
ch. 50, v. 15, pg., 73
ch. 51, v. 1, pg., 22, 33, 41, 132, 148, 154, 222, 282, 340, 350, 370
ch. 51, v. 1-19, pg., 340, 350
ch. 51, v. 1-4, pg., 148
ch. 51, v. 1-6, pg., 132
ch. 51, v. 18, pg., 33, 222, 282, 370

© James R. Hughes, 2006

ch. 52, v. 1-5, pg., 284
ch. 52, v. 5, pg., 284
ch. 54, v. 5, pg., 70
ch. 55, v. 17, pg., 40
ch. 57, v. 3, pg., 175
ch. 58, v. 1-11, pg., 284
ch. 58, v. 10, 11, pg., 41, 167
ch. 58, v. 11, pg., 156
ch. 59, v. 2, pg., 72
ch. 59, v. 5, pg., 41
ch. 59, v. 10, pg., 70
ch. 60, v. 1, pg., 172
ch. 61, v. 5, pg., 44, 79
ch. 63, v. 11, pg., 39
ch. 65, v. 2, pg., 144
ch. 66, v. 1, pg., 40, 285
ch. 66, v. 7, pg., 144
ch. 66, v. 17, 18, pg., 40
ch. 68, v. 1-3, 21-23, pg., 289
ch. 68, v. 4, pg., 119
ch. 68, v. 27, pg., 213
ch. 68, v. 31, pg., 361
ch. 68, v. 35, pg., 15, 72
ch. 69, v. 1-36, pg., 284
ch. 69, v. 5-12, pg., 336
ch. 69, v. 10, 11, pg., 340
ch. 69, v. 22-28, pg., 41
ch. 69, v. 25, pg., 284
ch. 69, v. 35, pg., 244
ch. 70-83, pg., 231
ch. 71, v. 1, 2, pg., 72
ch. 71, v. 23, pg., 119
ch. 72, v. 8, pg., 152, 220
ch. 72, v. 8-11, pg., 152
ch. 72, v. 17, pg., 24
ch. 73, v. 1, pg., 123, 215
ch. 73, v. 3, pg., 53
ch. 73, v. 17, pg., 123
ch. 74, v. 2, pg., 33
ch. 74, v. 7, pg., 141
ch. 74, v. 8, pg., 119
ch. 75, v. 1, pg., 215
ch. 75, v. 3, pg., 157
ch. 75, v. 6, 7, pg., 144
ch. 76, v. 2, pg., 33, 94, 205
ch. 76, v. 11, pg., 293
ch. 77, v. 1-10, pg., 350
ch. 77, v. 9, pg., 22, 154
ch. 78, v. 1-72, pg., 139
ch. 78, v. 21, pg., 52
ch. 78, v. 38, pg., 351
ch. 78, v. 68, pg., 33, 244
ch. 79, v. 1, pg., 13, 216, 284
ch. 79, v. 1-13, pg., 13
ch. 79, v. 9, pg., 196
ch. 79, v. 12, pg., 284
ch. 80, v. 1-19, pg., 13
ch. 80, v. 2, pg., 213
ch. 80, v. 11, pg., 220
ch. 81, v. 1, pg., 119
ch. 81, v. 16, pg., 122
ch. 82, v. 3, 4, pg., 219, 309
ch. 83, v. 1-18, pg., 284
ch. 83, v. 16, 18, pg., 286
ch. 83, v. 18, pg., 144
ch. 84, v. 7, pg., 33, 221, 282, 370
ch. 86, v. 1-17, pg., 350
ch. 86, v. 5, 15, pg., 163
ch. 86, v. 7, pg., 40
ch. 86, v. 15, pg., 175, 351
ch. 87, v. 2, pg., 33
ch. 87, v. 3, pg., 368
ch. 87, v. 4, pg., 33
ch. 87, v. 5, 6, pg., 101, 191, 192, 212
ch. 87, v. 6, pg., 106
ch. 89, v. 5-7, pg., 145
ch. 89, v. 8, pg., 175
ch. 89, v. 11, pg., 146
ch. 89, v. 14, pg., 175
ch. 89, v. 34, pg., 153
ch. 90, v. 1, pg., 233
ch. 91, v. 5, pg., 44, 78
ch. 91, v. 7-10, pg., 44
ch. 91, v. 15, pg., 20
ch. 92, v. 1-4, pg., 350
ch. 92, v. 4, pg., 121
ch. 93, v. 1-5, pg., 224
ch. 94, v. 1-3, pg., 284
ch. 94, v. 1-5, 13-15, pg., 44
ch. 94, v. 1-5, pg., 41, 42, 44
ch. 95, v. 1, pg., 119, 121
ch. 95, v. 2, pg., 350
ch. 95, v. 6, 7, pg., 359
ch. 96, v. 1, pg., 129, 166
ch. 96, v. 2, pg., 145
ch. 96, v. 10, 13, pg., 166
ch. 98, v. 1, pg., 129
ch. 98, v. 9, pg., 166
ch. 99, v. 1-5, pg., 285
ch. 99, v. 2, pg., 33
ch. 99, v. 3, pg., 141
ch. 99, v. 5, 9, pg., 144
ch. 99, v. 9, pg., 142
ch. 100, v. 1-3, pg., 145
ch. 100, v. 1-5, pg., 224, 350
ch. 100, v. 5, pg., 175
ch. 101, v. 8, pg., 369
ch. 102, v. 9, pg., 339
ch. 102, v. 13, pg., 244
ch. 102, v. 16, pg., 33
ch. 102, v. 21, pg., 33, 222, 282, 370
ch. 102, v. 25, pg., 145
ch. 103, v. 1-22, pg., 340, 350
ch. 103, v. 4, pg., 155
ch. 103, v. 8-10, pg., 163
ch. 103, v. 9-14, pg., 170

© James R. Hughes, 2006

ch. 103, v. 13, pg., 155
ch. 103, v. 14, pg., 339
ch. 103, v. 19, pg., 144
ch. 103, v. 22, pg., 144
ch. 104, v. 1-9, pg., 145
ch. 104, v. 15, 21, pg., 144
ch. 105, v. 1-45, pg., 139, 140
ch. 105, v. 8-10, pg., 273, 354
ch. 105, v. 8-11, pg., 175
ch. 106, v. 1, pg., 145, 233, 240, 340
ch. 106, v. 1-48, pg., 139, 140, 233, 240, 340
ch. 106, v. 4, pg., 60, 163, 277
ch. 106, v. 6, pg., 176
ch. 106, v. 8, pg., 196
ch. 106, v. 24, pg., 20
ch. 106, v. 26, pg., 195
ch. 106, v. 43-46, pg., 163
ch. 106, v. 48, pg., 60
ch. 107, v. 1-43, pg., 233, 240, 350
ch. 107, v. 4, pg., 60, 368
ch. 107, v. 22, pg., 241
ch. 107, v. 42, pg., 60
ch. 109, v. 8, pg., 284
ch. 109, v. 10, pg., 332
ch. 109, v. 14, pg., 284
ch. 109, v. 21, pg., 196
ch. 110, v. 1, pg., 83, 285
ch. 110, v. 1-7, pg., 285
ch. 110, v. 2, pg., 33
ch. 111, v. 7, pg., 175
ch. 111, v. 10, pg., 44, 79, 145
ch. 112, v. 4, pg., 296
ch. 112, v. 6, pg., 230
ch. 113, v. 1-9, pg., 224
ch. 113, v. 4-6, pg., 146
ch. 114, v. 1, pg., 254
ch. 115, v. 3, pg., 155
ch. 115, v. 15, pg., 173
ch. 115, v. 16, pg., 143
ch. 116, v. 5, pg., 152
ch. 116, v. 11, pg., 39
ch. 116, v. 14, pg., 60
ch. 116, v. 17, pg., 241
ch. 117, v. 2, pg., 175
ch. 118, v. 1-29, pg., 224, 233
ch. 118, v. 1-4, pg., 241
ch. 118, v. 24, pg., 122
ch. 119, v. 1-176, pg., 13, 18, 159
ch. 119, v. 23, pg., 70
ch. 119, v. 36, pg., 56
ch. 119, v. 39, pg., 260
ch. 119, v. 56, 128, pg., 349
ch. 119, v. 75, 137, pg., 152
ch. 119, v. 75, pg., 152, 176
ch. 119, v. 77, pg., 155
ch. 119, v. 140, pg., 20
ch. 119, v. 159, pg., 348
ch. 120, v. 1, 2, pg., 42
ch. 120, v. 1, pg., 224
ch. 121, v. 1-8, pg., 44
ch. 121, v. 3, 4, pg., 144
ch. 122, v. 1, 2, pg., 222, 282, 370
ch. 122, v. 3, pg., 368
ch. 122, v. 6, 9, pg., 222, 282, 370
ch. 122, v. 9, pg., 196, 297
ch. 123, v. 1-4, pg., 350
ch. 124, v. 8, pg., 173
ch. 125, v. 1, 2, pg., 44
ch. 126, v. 1, pg., 33, 134, 221, 282, 370
ch. 126, v. 1-6, pg., 134
ch. 126, v. 2, 3, pg., 122
ch. 126, v. 2, pg., 83, 121
ch. 127, v. 1, pg., 92, 93, 244, 367
ch. 127, v. 5, pg., 48
ch. 128, v. 1, pg., 81
ch. 128, v. 5, pg., 33
ch. 129, v. 4, pg., 152
ch. 129, v. 5, pg., 33
ch. 130, v. 1-8, pg., 340, 350
ch. 132, v. 2, pg., 293
ch. 132, v. 13, pg., 33, 244
ch. 134, v. 3, pg., 33, 173, 224
ch. 135, v. 3, pg., 145
ch. 135, v. 21, pg., 33
ch. 136, v. 1-26, pg., 13, 233, 240
ch. 137, v. 1-9, pg., 13
ch. 137, v. 2, pg., 87
ch. 137, v. 7-9, pg., 284
ch. 138, v. 2, pg., 142
ch. 139, v. 14, pg., 144
ch. 139, v. 16, pg., 144
ch. 139, v. 21-22, pg., 284
ch. 140, v. 5-11, pg., 284
ch. 140, v. 8, pg., 28
ch. 141, v. 2, pg., 359
ch. 143, v. 1, pg., 175, 196
ch. 143, v. 11, pg., 196
ch. 144, v. 9, pg., 129
ch. 145, v. 1, 2, pg., 145
ch. 145, v. 1, pg., 141, 145, 175, 176
ch. 145, v. 8, 9, pg., 163
ch. 145, v. 9, pg., 154
ch. 145, v. 13, pg., 175
ch. 145, v. 17, pg., 176
ch. 146, v. 1-10, pg., 224, 350
ch. 146, v. 6, pg., 173, 175
ch. 147, v. 1-20, pg., 350
ch. 147, v. 2, pg., 33
ch. 147, v. 4, pg., 104, 135, 191
ch. 147, v. 12, pg., 33, 222, 282, 370
ch. 147, v. 19, 20, pg., 159
ch. 148, v. 1-14, pg., 350
ch. 148, v. 4, pg., 143
ch. 148, v. 5, pg., 146
ch. 148, v. 11-13, pg., 243

© James R. Hughes, 2006

ch. 149, v. 1, pg., 129, 350
ch. 149, v. 1-9, pg., 350
ch. 150, v. 1-6, pg., 224
20 Proverbs
ch. 1, v. 7, pg., 44, 79
ch. 1, v. 22-28, pg., 40
ch. 2, v. 17, pg., 358
ch. 3, v. 1, 2, pg., 171
ch. 3, v. 5, pg., 187, 350
ch. 3, v. 5-6, pg., 187
ch. 3, v. 7, 8, pg., 164
ch. 3, v. 9, pg., 247, 322
ch. 4, v. 14, 15, pg., 204
ch. 6, v. 30, 31, pg., 176
ch. 8, v. 13, pg., 350
ch. 8, v. 15, 16, pg., 218, 219
ch. 9, v. 1, pg., 157
ch. 10, v. 7, pg., 191, 212
ch. 10, v. 12, pg., 350
ch. 10, v. 18, pg., 70
ch. 11, v. 10, 11, pg., 368
ch. 11, v. 17, pg., 350
ch. 12, v. 5, pg., 28
ch. 12, v. 10, pg., 107
ch. 12, v. 22, pg., 350
ch. 14, v. 15, pg., 67
ch. 14, v. 21, pg., 332
ch. 14, v. 29, pg., 350
ch. 14, v. 31, pg., 54
ch. 15, v. 1, pg., 68, 350
ch. 15, v. 8, 9, 29, pg., 40
ch. 15, v. 9, pg., 259
ch. 16, v. 3, pg., 28, 144, 187, 365
ch. 16, v. 5, pg., 350
ch. 16, v. 18, pg., 263
ch. 16, v. 33, pg., 144, 365
ch. 17, v. 17, pg., 350
ch. 18, v. 1, pg., 53, 141, 350, 365
ch. 18, v. 10, pg., 141
ch. 18, v. 11, pg., 53
ch. 18, v. 18, pg., 365
ch. 18, v. 23, pg., 53
ch. 19, v. 6, pg., 80
ch. 19, v. 17, pg., 54
ch. 20, v. 6, pg., 10, 78
ch. 21, v. 1, pg., 26, 144
ch. 22, v. 2, pg., 26, 54, 291
ch. 22, v. 7, pg., 53
ch. 22, v. 26, pg., 291
ch. 22, v. 29, pg., 26
ch. 23, v. 17, pg., 350
ch. 24, v. 7, pg., 48
ch. 24, v. 14, pg., 350
ch. 24, v. 23, pg., 58
ch. 25, v. 21-22, pg., 41
ch. 26, v. 4, 5, pg., 71
ch. 26, v. 24-26, pg., 67
ch. 26, v. 27, pg., 40
ch. 27, v. 1, pg., 350
ch. 28, v. 1, pg., 78, 132
ch. 28, v. 4, pg., 80
ch. 28, v. 8, pg., 56, 291
ch. 28, v. 9, pg., 40
ch. 28, v. 13, 14, pg., 132
ch. 29, v. 1, pg., 79, 350
ch. 29, v. 11, pg., 350
ch. 29, v. 26, pg., 80
ch. 30, v. 7-9, pg., 247
ch. 31, v. 8, 9, pg., 58
ch. 31, v. 23, pg., 48
ch. 31, v. 27, pg., 350
21 Ecclesiastes
ch. 1, v. 10, pg., 168
ch. 2, v. 5, pg., 25
ch. 2, v. 8, pg., 107
ch. 3, v. 4, pg., 122
ch. 9, v. 18, pg., 254
ch. 10, v. 8, pg., 40
ch. 12, v. 13, pg., 44, 79
22 Song of Solomon
ch. 1, v. 1, pg., 143
ch. 3, v. 2, 3, pg., 369
23 Isaiah
ch. 1, v. 15, pg., 40
ch. 1, v. 17, pg., 332
ch. 2, v. 13, pg., 26
ch. 4, v. 3, pg., 104, 107, 192
ch. 5, v. 20, pg., 369
ch. 6, v. 1, pg., 166, 223
ch. 6, v. 3, pg., 17, 41, 160, 197, 276
ch. 6, v. 10, pg., 166
ch. 7, v. 14, pg., 103, 150
ch. 8, v. 1-4, pg., 150
ch. 8, v. 16, pg., 188
ch. 8, v. 19, 20, pg., 75
ch. 9, v. 6, pg., 155
ch. 10, v. 21, pg., 152
ch. 11, v. 12, pg., 20
ch. 11, v. 14, pg., 275
ch. 14, v. 4, pg., 103
ch. 15, v. 5, pg., 31
ch. 15-16, pg., 31
ch. 20, v. 2-4, pg., 74
ch. 21, v. 1-17, pg., 14
ch. 21, v. 8, pg., 103
ch. 24, v. 15, pg., 141
ch. 25, v. 1, pg., 141
ch. 25, v. 2, pg., 368
ch. 25, v. 6, pg., 59, 63, 124, 282
ch. 25, v. 6-8, pg., 124
ch. 26, v. 5, pg., 368
ch. 27, v. 10, pg., 368
ch. 27, v. 11, pg., 146
ch. 29, v. 11, pg., 188
ch. 30, v. 1, pg., 28, 40, 351
ch. 30, v. 18, pg., 351

© James R. Hughes, 2006

ch. 30, v. 19, pg., 40
ch. 30, v. 29, pg., 119
ch. 32, v. 7-8, pg., 28
ch. 32, v. 15, pg., 348
ch. 33, v. 8, pg., 103
ch. 33, v. 19, pg., 254
ch. 35, v. 3, 4, pg., 72
ch. 35, v. 10, pg., 122
ch. 37, v. 25, pg., 103
ch. 38, v. 21, pg., 158
ch. 39, v. 6, 7, pg., 172
ch. 40, v. 12, 28, pg., 146
ch. 40, v. 30, 31, pg., 165
ch. 41, v. 10, pg., 72, 152
ch. 41, v. 20, pg., 146
ch. 42, v. 3, pg., 175
ch. 42, v. 5-7, pg., 146
ch. 42, v. 21, pg., 195
ch. 43, v. 1-7, pg., 146
ch. 43, v. 7, pg., 151
ch. 44, v. 1-5, pg., 185
ch. 44, v. 3, pg., 344
ch. 44, v. 20, pg., 339
ch. 44, v. 28, pg., 20, 98
ch. 45, v. 1, 13, pg., 20, 98
ch. 45, v. 1, 7, 11-13, pg., 146
ch. 45, v. 2, pg., 103
ch. 45, v. 11-13, pg., 146
ch. 45, v. 18-19, pg., 146
ch. 46, v. 10, pg., 144
ch. 48, v. 2, pg., 221
ch. 48, v. 9, pg., 195
ch. 49, v. 13, pg., 155
ch. 49, v. 22, pg., 320
ch. 49, v. 23, pg., 297, 370
ch. 49, v. 24, pg., 103
ch. 50, v. 6, pg., 258
ch. 51, v. 2, pg., 148
ch. 51, v. 3, pg., 122
ch. 51, v. 11, pg., 122, 152
ch. 51, v. 19, pg., 49
ch. 52, v. 1, pg., 164, 221, 313, 361, 369
ch. 52, v. 11, pg., 319
ch. 52, v. 12, pg., 164
ch. 52, v. 15, pg., 313, 361
ch. 54, v. 7, pg., 22, 155
ch. 54, v. 10, pg., 15
ch. 55, v. 3, pg., 149, 184, 356, 358
ch. 56, v. 4-8, pg., 160, 199, 276
ch. 56, v. 6, 7, pg., 194, 254, 256
ch. 56, v. 6, pg., 194, 199, 254, 358
ch. 56, v. 7, pg., 194
ch. 56, v. 9-12, pg., 267
ch. 56, v. 11, pg., 75
ch. 58, v. 4, 5, pg., 337
ch. 58, v. 5, pg., 339
ch. 58, v. 6, 7, pg., 332
ch. 58, v. 6-10, pg., 125, 200
ch. 58, v. 6-14, pg., 337
ch. 58, v. 6-7, pg., 63, 282
ch. 58, v. 7, pg., 332
ch. 58, v. 9, pg., 40
ch. 58, v. 12, pg., 222, 282, 370
ch. 58, v. 12-14, pg., 270
ch. 58, v. 13, pg., 160, 276
ch. 60, v. 10, pg., 154
ch. 61, v. 1, pg., 63, 282, 329
ch. 61, v. 1-3, pg., 63, 282
ch. 61, v. 2, pg., 167
ch. 61, v. 3, pg., 339
ch. 61, v. 8, pg., 175, 356
ch. 62, v. 1-5, pg., 358
ch. 62, v. 2, pg., 104, 151, 191
ch. 62, v. 6, pg., 310
ch. 62, v. 9, pg., 252
ch. 65, v. 13, pg., 59
ch. 65, v. 15, pg., 104, 191
ch. 65, v. 17, 18, pg., 146

24 Jeremiah

ch. 1, v. 1, pg., 99
ch. 1, v. 5, pg., 147
ch. 2, v. 34, pg., 289
ch. 3, v. 17, pg., 152
ch. 3, v. 18, pg., 361
ch. 5, v. 28, pg., 166
ch. 6, v. 6, pg., 368
ch. 6, v. 13-15, pg., 18
ch. 6, v. 26, pg., 339
ch. 7, v. 9-11, pg., 359
ch. 7, v. 29, pg., 258
ch. 9, v. 3-6, pg., 70
ch. 9, v. 23, pg., 53
ch. 9, v. 26, pg., 31
ch. 10, v. 23, pg., 187
ch. 11, v. 1-17, pg., 359
ch. 11, v. 10, pg., 362
ch. 11, v. 20, pg., 284
ch. 12, v. 1, 2, pg., 152
ch. 12, v. 15, pg., 155
ch. 14, v. 7-9, pg., 176
ch. 14, v. 9, pg., 151
ch. 14, v. 10-12, pg., 337
ch. 14, v. 13-18, pg., 49
ch. 14, v. 21, pg., 196
ch. 15, v. 6, pg., 275
ch. 15, v. 16, pg., 151
ch. 17, v. 1, pg., 188, 272
ch. 17, v. 9, pg., 171
ch. 17, v. 19-27, pg., 272
ch. 17, v. 21, pg., 270
ch. 17, v. 22, 24, 27, pg., 160, 276
ch. 18, v. 5-10, pg., 152
ch. 18, v. 20, 23, pg., 42
ch. 19, v. 4, pg., 370
ch. 20, v. 4, pg., 172
ch. 21, v. 8, pg., 368

© James R. Hughes, 2006

ch. 22, v. 13, pg., 56, 333
ch. 22, v. 13-17, pg., 56
ch. 23, v. 1-4, pg., 268
ch. 23, v. 6-16, pg., 211
ch. 23, v. 23, pg., 20
ch. 25, v. 2-11, pg., 172
ch. 25, v. 21, pg., 31
ch. 25, v. 34-38, pg., 18
ch. 26, v. 20-23, pg., 168
ch. 27, v. 2-7, pg., 74
ch. 27, v. 3, pg., 31
ch. 27, v. 5-18, pg., 218
ch. 28, v. 10-11, pg., 74
ch. 29, v. 4-7, pg., 92
ch. 29, v. 7, pg., 368
ch. 29, v. 10-11, pg., 152
ch. 29, v. 10-14, pg., 20
ch. 30, v. 18, pg., 152
ch. 31, v. 31, 33, pg., 356, 357
ch. 31, v. 31-34, pg., 357
ch. 32, v. 10, pg., 188
ch. 32, v. 16, 17, pg., 146
ch. 32, v. 17, pg., 155
ch. 32, v. 17-25, pg., 140
ch. 32, v. 40, pg., 356, 358
ch. 33, v. 3, pg., 40
ch. 33, v. 11, pg., 122
ch. 33, v. 20-26, pg., 356
ch. 33, v. 21, pg., 149, 357
ch. 33, v. 22, pg., 165
ch. 34, v. 8-22, pg., 357
ch. 35, v. 4, pg., 233
ch. 36, v. 5, pg., 74
ch. 39, v. 10, pg., 172
ch. 44, v. 4, pg., 259
ch. 44, v. 26, pg., 195
ch. 48, v. 3, 5, 34, pg., 31
ch. 48, v. 37, pg., 258
ch. 50, v. 4, 5, pg., 185, 361, 364
ch. 50, v. 5, pg., 358
ch. 50, v. 29, pg., 57
ch. 51, v. 8, pg., 14
ch. 51, v. 15, 16, pg., 146
ch. 52, v. 12, pg., 94, 102, 205
ch. 52, v. 12-13, pg., 94, 205
ch. 52, v. 24, pg., 191
ch. 52, v. 27-30, pg., 94
ch. 52, v. 28, pg., 172, 212
ch. 52, v. 28-30, pg., 172
ch. 52, v. 30, pg., 212
25 Lamentations
ch. 2, v. 10, pg., 339
ch. 3, v. 37, pg., 176
ch. 5, v. 16, pg., 176
ch. 5, v. 19-21, pg., 172
26 Ezekiel
ch. 1, v. 1, pg., 105
ch. 3, v. 5-6, pg., 254
ch. 4, v. 1-17, pg., 74
ch. 7, v. 18, pg., 258, 339
ch. 11, v. 16, pg., 119
ch. 12, v. 3-11, pg., 74
ch. 13, v. 9, pg., 192
ch. 14, v. 1, pg., 119
ch. 16, v. 5, pg., 154
ch. 16, v. 8, pg., 148, 353
ch. 17, v. 4, pg., 367
ch. 17, v. 19, pg., 362
ch. 18, v. 8, 13, 17, pg., 291
ch. 18, v. 8, 17, pg., 56
ch. 20, v. 9, 14, 22, 44, pg., 141
ch. 20, v. 11, 13, 21, pg., 171
ch. 20, v. 12, 13, 16, 21, 24, pg., 272
ch. 20, v. 12, 20, pg., 272
ch. 20, v. 23-25, pg., 260
ch. 20, v. 34, 41, pg., 20
ch. 22, v. 12, pg., 291
ch. 24, v. 6, pg., 365
ch. 25, v. 8-11, pg., 31
ch. 27, v. 6, pg., 26
ch. 27, v. 30, pg., 339
ch. 34, v. 1-10, pg., 268
ch. 34, v. 4-6, pg., 62
ch. 34, v. 7-10, pg., 18
ch. 34, v. 25, pg., 15, 356
ch. 36, v. 22, pg., 196
ch. 36, v. 24-27, pg., 237, 266
ch. 37, v. 24-26, pg., 354
ch. 37, v. 26, pg., 356
ch. 41, v. 6-10, pg., 214
ch. 43, v. 22, pg., 266
ch. 44, v. 2, pg., 157, 264
ch. 44, v. 6-9, pg., 253, 255
ch. 44, v. 22, pg., 264
ch. 44, v. 30, pg., 203, 247
ch. 45, v. 6, pg., 368
ch. 46, v. 13, 14, pg., 241
ch. 48, v. 30, 31, pg., 368
27 Daniel
ch. 1, v. 1, 21, pg., 223
ch. 1, v. 6, 7, pg., 151
ch. 2, v. 1, pg., 15, 223
ch. 2, v. 19, 28, pg., 15
ch. 2, v. 20, pg., 142
ch. 2, v. 21, pg., 26, 218
ch. 2, v. 28, pg., 157
ch. 3, v. 2, pg., 244
ch. 3, v. 16-18, pg., 44
ch. 3, v. 17, 18, pg., 72
ch. 3, v. 17-18, pg., 320
ch. 4, v. 17, pg., 152
ch. 4, v. 25, pg., 216
ch. 4, v. 26, pg., 195
ch. 4, v. 30, pg., 367
ch. 4, v. 32, pg., 218
ch. 5, v. 1-4, pg., 62

© James R. Hughes, 2006

ch. 5, v. 18-23, pg., 218
ch. 5, v. 23, pg., 26
ch. 5, v. 28, pg., 133
ch. 6, v. 1, pg., 50
ch. 6, v. 8-10, pg., 320
ch. 7, v. 27, pg., 361
ch. 8, v. 11, pg., 241
ch. 9, v. 2, pg., 82, 98, 152, 221
ch. 9, v. 3, 4, 20, pg., 132
ch. 9, v. 3, pg., 13, 132, 339
ch. 9, v. 4, pg., 15, 176
ch. 9, v. 4-19, pg., 176
ch. 9, v. 8, pg., 370
ch. 9, v. 14, pg., 195
ch. 9, v. 16, pg., 152, 368
ch. 9, v. 18, pg., 368
ch. 9, v. 24, pg., 221
ch. 9, v. 25, pg., 82
ch. 10, v. 2, 3, pg., 337
ch. 10, v. 3, pg., 13
ch. 12, v. 9, pg., 188
28 Hosea
ch. 2, v. 18, pg., 356
ch. 3, v. 1, pg., 272
ch. 5, v. 8, pg., 213
ch. 6, v. 7, pg., 356
29 Joel
ch. 1, v. 14, pg., 336
ch. 2, v. 13, pg., 154, 163
ch. 2, v. 28, pg., 348, 351
ch. 2, v. 28-32, pg., 348
ch. 2, v. 32, pg., 319
ch. 3, v. 3, pg., 365
30 Amos
ch. 1, v. 8, pg., 254
ch. 2, v. 1-3, pg., 31
ch. 3, v. 6, pg., 144
ch. 9, v. 12, pg., 151
31 Obadiah
v. 11, pg., 365
v. 15, pg., 57
v. 19, pg., 213
32 Jonah
ch. 1, v. 7, pg., 365
ch. 1, v. 9, pg., 144
ch. 3, v. 4-10, pg., 341
ch. 3, v. 5, 6, 8, pg., 340
ch. 3, v. 9, pg., 154
ch. 4, v. 2, pg., 163
ch. 4, v. 4, 9, pg., 52
33 Micah
ch. 1, v. 16, pg., 258
ch. 3, v. 11, pg., 75
ch. 4, v. 1-8, pg., 351
ch. 5, v. 2, pg., 98
ch. 7, v. 11, pg., 222, 282, 370
ch. 7, v. 18, 19, pg., 163
34 Nahum
ch. 3, v. 10, pg., 365
35 Habakkuk
ch. 1, v. 1-11, pg., 49
ch. 2, v. 8, pg., 57
ch. 2, v. 12, pg., 367
ch. 3, v. 2, pg., 348
36 Zephaniah
ch. 1, v. 10, 11, pg., 214
ch. 2, v. 8-11, pg., 31, 41
ch. 3, v. 1, pg., 367
37 Haggai
ch. 1, v. 1, pg., 70, 97, 105, 112, 200, 223
ch. 1, v. 2-11, pg., 200
ch. 1, v. 3-11, pg., 76
ch. 1, v. 3-9, pg., 83
ch. 1, v. 4, pg., 12, 17
ch. 1, v. 5-11, pg., 49, 82
ch. 1, v. 10, 11, pg., 200
ch. 1, v. 12, pg., 112
ch. 2, v. 2, pg., 70
38 Zechariah
ch. 1, v. 1, pg., 227
ch. 2, v. 11, pg., 152, 354
ch. 3, v. 7, pg., 252
ch. 4, v. 6, pg., 14, 223
ch. 4, v. 6-10, pg., 223
ch. 4, v. 14, pg., 112
ch. 7, v. 1-7, pg., 13
ch. 7, v. 4-10, pg., 337
ch. 7, v. 9, pg., 154
ch. 8, v. 3, pg., 94, 205, 369
ch. 8, v. 3-11, pg., 94, 205
ch. 8, v. 8, pg., 94, 205, 354
ch. 8, v. 10, pg., 94, 206
ch. 8, v. 17, pg., 293
ch. 8, v. 19, pg., 13, 336
ch. 8, v. 20-23, pg., 159, 351
ch. 9, v. 6, pg., 254
ch. 11, v. 2, pg., 26
ch. 12, v. 1-2, pg., 146
ch. 13, v. 9, pg., 20
ch. 14, v. 16, pg., 82, 111, 128, 129, 351
ch. 14, v. 16-19, pg., 82, 111
ch. 14, v. 17, pg., 128
ch. 14, v. 20, 21, pg., 244
39 Malachi
ch. 2, v. 7, pg., 118, 215, 218, 231, 246
ch. 2, v. 10, pg., 146
ch. 2, v. 14, pg., 148, 353, 358
ch. 3, v. 1, pg., 49, 82, 104, 106, 159, 168, 191, 212, 335
ch. 3, v. 5, pg., 333
ch. 3, v. 8-10, pg., 322, 323
ch. 3, v. 10, pg., 49, 82, 335
ch. 3, v. 12, pg., 159
ch. 3, v. 16, 17, pg., 104, 191, 212
ch. 3, v. 16-18, pg., 106
ch. 4, v. 5-6, pg., 168

© James R. Hughes, 2006

40 Matthew
ch. 1, v. 1-16, pg., 212
ch. 1, v. 1-17, pg., 104, 223, 282
ch. 1, v. 5, pg., 254
ch. 1, v. 12, pg., 70, 223
ch. 1, v. 21, pg., 150
ch. 1, v. 23, pg., 103, 150
ch. 2, v. 1-13, pg., 71
ch. 2, v. 1-4, pg., 337
ch. 3, v. 5, 6, pg., 341
ch. 3, v. 6, pg., 132
ch. 4, v. 1-11, pg., 37, 51, 67
ch. 4, v. 4, pg., 161
ch. 4, v. 5, pg., 44, 221
ch. 4, v. 5-7, pg., 44
ch. 4, v. 7, pg., 46
ch. 4, v. 10, pg., 144
ch. 4, v. 17, pg., 326
ch. 4, v. 23, pg., 46, 63, 281
ch. 5, v. 1, pg., 70, 115, 231, 311, 312, 322, 326, 329, 332, 350, 369
ch. 5, v. 1-7.29, pg., 326
ch. 5, v. 2, pg., 37, 293, 322, 325, 326
ch. 5, v. 4, pg., 68, 122, 284, 333
ch. 5, v. 5, pg., 150, 152, 161, 165, 216, 217
ch. 5, v. 7-10, pg., 210
ch. 5, v. 11, pg., 70
ch. 5, v. 13-16, pg., 329
ch. 5, v. 14, pg., 369
ch. 5, v. 17, 18, pg., 311, 312
ch. 5, v. 17, pg., 231, 311, 312, 322, 332, 350
ch. 5, v. 17-19, pg., 231, 332
ch. 5, v. 17-20, pg., 350
ch. 5, v. 18, 19, pg., 312
ch. 5, v. 20, pg., 322
ch. 5, v. 21, 22, pg., 37, 51
ch. 5, v. 29-30, pg., 293
ch. 5, v. 33-37, pg., 293
ch. 5, v. 34, 37, pg., 294
ch. 5, v. 34-36, pg., 293
ch. 5, v. 35, pg., 244
ch. 5, v. 37, pg., 72
ch. 5, v. 38, pg., 57
ch. 5, v. 38-48, pg., 287
ch. 5, v. 42, pg., 68, 333
ch. 5, v. 43-47, pg., 284
ch. 6, v. 5, pg., 324
ch. 6, v. 7, 8, pg., 16
ch. 6, v. 9, pg., 14, 22, 142, 143, 164
ch. 6, v. 9-13, pg., 14, 22
ch. 6, v. 10, pg., 68, 145
ch. 6, v. 13, pg., 204
ch. 6, v. 16, pg., 13, 336, 340
ch. 6, v. 16-18, pg., 13, 340
ch. 6, v. 17-18, pg., 337
ch. 6, v. 25-27, pg., 164
ch. 6, v. 25-34, pg., 166
ch. 6, v. 33, pg., 83
ch. 7, v. 1-6, pg., 329
ch. 7, v. 2, pg., 57, 106, 280, 284, 315, 326
ch. 7, v. 7, pg., 40
ch. 7, v. 11, pg., 164, 166
ch. 7, v. 15-23, pg., 256
ch. 7, v. 21, pg., 106, 280, 315
ch. 7, v. 21-23, pg., 106, 280, 315
ch. 7, v. 23, pg., 284
ch. 7, v. 28, 29, pg., 326
ch. 8, v. 5-13, pg., 317
ch. 8, v. 9, 10, pg., 219, 289, 309
ch. 8, v. 11, 12, pg., 150
ch. 8, v. 11, pg., 123, 150
ch. 8, v. 20, pg., 63, 128, 281
ch. 9, v. 9, 10, pg., 120
ch. 9, v. 20-22, pg., 317
ch. 9, v. 35, pg., 21, 46, 326
ch. 9, v. 35-38, pg., 21
ch. 9, v. 36, pg., 154
ch. 10, v. 3, pg., 120, 144, 284, 289
ch. 10, v. 7, pg., 330
ch. 10, v. 16, pg., 69, 79, 83
ch. 10, v. 19, pg., 78
ch. 10, v. 21-23, pg., 79
ch. 10, v. 28-31, pg., 44, 59, 78
ch. 10, v. 29, pg., 144
ch. 10, v. 30, pg., 144
ch. 10, v. 33, pg., 284
ch. 10, v. 34, 35, pg., 289
ch. 11, v. 5, pg., 63, 282
ch. 11, v. 17, pg., 107
ch. 11, v. 21, pg., 339, 340
ch. 11, v. 28-30, pg., 63, 282
ch. 11, v. 29, pg., 319
ch. 12, v. 25, pg., 368
ch. 12, v. 30, pg., 320
ch. 12, v. 41, pg., 329
ch. 13, v. 1-9, pg., 329
ch. 13, v. 5, 20, 21, pg., 207
ch. 13, v. 24-30, pg., 315
ch. 13, v. 25, pg., 256
ch. 13, v. 35, pg., 145
ch. 14, v. 14, pg., 125, 154
ch. 14, v. 14-21, pg., 125
ch. 14, v. 19, pg., 324
ch. 14, v. 21, pg., 114, 243
ch. 14, v. 24, pg., 357
ch. 15, v. 2-9, pg., 128
ch. 15, v. 19, pg., 70
ch. 15, v. 32, pg., 154
ch. 15, v. 38, pg., 114, 243
ch. 15-18, pg., 329
ch. 16, v. 11, 12, pg., 313
ch. 16, v. 15-19, pg., 316
ch. 16, v. 18, 19, pg., 261

© James R. Hughes, 2006

ch. 16, v. 18, pg., 47, 81, 261, 315
ch. 16, v. 26, pg., 32
ch. 17, v. 21, pg., 337, 340
ch. 17, v. 24, 27, pg., 50
ch. 17, v. 24-27, pg., 96, 201
ch. 18, v. 15, pg., 53, 169, 254, 317
ch. 18, v. 15-20, pg., 53, 169, 254
ch. 18, v. 17, 18, pg., 320
ch. 18, v. 22, pg., 163, 170
ch. 19, v. 4, pg., 145
ch. 19, v. 13-15, pg., 114, 243
ch. 19, v. 23, pg., 166
ch. 19, v. 26, pg., 155
ch. 19, v. 29, pg., 217
ch. 20, v. 1-16, pg., 50
ch. 20, v. 6, pg., 343
ch. 20, v. 25-28, pg., 62
ch. 21, v. 5, pg., 34
ch. 21, v. 6-9, pg., 70
ch. 21, v. 9, 15, pg., 243
ch. 21, v. 12-13, pg., 252, 256
ch. 21, v. 24, pg., 68
ch. 21, v. 32-46, pg., 168
ch. 22, v. 2-14, pg., 123
ch. 22, v. 4, pg., 147, 326
ch. 22, v. 15-22, pg., 68
ch. 22, v. 21, pg., 135, 203, 219
ch. 22, v. 23-33, pg., 71, 326
ch. 22, v. 37, pg., 18, 159, 197, 312
ch. 22, v. 37-40, pg., 312
ch. 22, v. 41-45, pg., 326
ch. 23, v. 1-36, pg., 284
ch. 23, v. 23, pg., 175
ch. 23, v. 33-35, pg., 284
ch. 23, v. 34-37, pg., 168
ch. 24, v. 5, 11, 24, pg., 256
ch. 24, v. 15-21, pg., 79, 290
ch. 24, v. 28, pg., 320
ch. 24, v. 48-51, pg., 284
ch. 24-27, pg., 329
ch. 25, v. 27, pg., 291
ch. 25, v. 31-46, pg., 156
ch. 25, v. 34, pg., 63, 64, 145, 217, 278, 282
ch. 25, v. 34-40, pg., 63, 64, 278, 282
ch. 25, v. 35, 36, pg., 332
ch. 25, v. 40, pg., 54
ch. 25, v. 41, pg., 59, 156, 284
ch. 25, v. 41-46, pg., 284
ch. 26, v. 6-13, pg., 242
ch. 26, v. 11, pg., 56, 291
ch. 26, v. 13, pg., 325
ch. 26, v. 23-24, pg., 284
ch. 26, v. 28, pg., 266, 353
ch. 26, v. 30, pg., 350
ch. 26, v. 33-35, 60-75, pg., 207
ch. 26, v. 36-46, pg., 186
ch. 26, v. 39, 42, pg., 16
ch. 26, v. 41, pg., 204
ch. 26, v. 52, pg., 289
ch. 26, v. 60, 61, pg., 70
ch. 26, v. 62-64, pg., 24
ch. 26, v. 63, pg., 194, 294
ch. 26, v. 63-4, pg., 294
ch. 27, v. 46, pg., 357
ch. 27, v. 53, pg., 221
ch. 27, v. 66, pg., 188
ch. 28, v. 9, 17, pg., 145
ch. 28, v. 16-20, pg., 69
ch. 28, v. 18-20, pg., 159, 222, 282, 370
ch. 28, v. 19, 20, pg., 161, 165, 166
ch. 28, v. 19, pg., 97, 142, 152, 161, 165, 166, 301, 315
ch. 28, v. 20, pg., 13, 336
41 Mark
ch. 1, v. 4, 5, pg., 341
ch. 1, v. 5, pg., 132
ch. 1, v. 35, pg., 282
ch. 2, v. 2, 13, pg., 326
ch. 2, v. 19, pg., 336
ch. 2, v. 20, pg., 336
ch. 2, v. 26, pg., 105
ch. 3, v. 17, pg., 151
ch. 4, v. 1, pg., 115, 326
ch. 4, v. 1-34, pg., 326
ch. 5, v. 19, pg., 97
ch. 6, v. 30, pg., 325
ch. 7, v. 6-8, pg., 324
ch. 7, v. 33, pg., 158
ch. 8, v. 23, pg., 158
ch. 9, v. 29, pg., 340
ch. 9, v. 35, pg., 115
ch. 10, v. 6, pg., 145
ch. 10, v. 15, pg., 126
ch. 11, v. 12-18, pg., 326
ch. 11, v. 15-18, pg., 52
ch. 11, v. 16, 17, pg., 194
ch. 11, v. 25, pg., 324
ch. 11, v. 27-33, pg., 37
ch. 12, v. 17, pg., 301
ch. 12, v. 30, pg., 18, 159, 174
ch. 12, v. 35-40, pg., 326
ch. 12, v. 36, pg., 233
ch. 12, v. 41-44, pg., 323
ch. 13, v. 19, pg., 145
ch. 14, v. 32, 37, 38, pg., 324
ch. 14, v. 61, 62, pg., 71
ch. 14, v. 61, pg., 71, 195
ch. 16, v. 15, pg., 329
42 Luke
ch. 1, v. 1, pg., 33
ch. 1, v. 5, 8, pg., 214
ch. 1, v. 5, pg., 81, 214
ch. 1, v. 9-11, pg., 359
ch. 1, v. 16, 17, pg., 168
ch. 1, v. 22, pg., 365

© James R. Hughes, 2006

ch. 1, v. 23, pg., 214
ch. 1, v. 37, pg., 155
ch. 1, v. 46-55, pg., 178
ch. 1, v. 69-73, pg., 153
ch. 2, v. 1, pg., 15, 95, 111
ch. 2, v. 1-3, pg., 81, 111
ch. 2, v. 1-5, pg., 94
ch. 2, v. 4, pg., 98
ch. 2, v. 14, pg., 15
ch. 2, v. 36, pg., 76
ch. 3, v. 1, 2, pg., 223
ch. 3, v. 14, pg., 219, 288, 289, 309
ch. 3, v. 23-37, pg., 104, 282
ch. 3, v. 23-38, pg., 212
ch. 3, v. 27, pg., 223
ch. 4, v. 16, 20, pg., 115
ch. 4, v. 16-21, pg., 114
ch. 5, v. 3, pg., 115
ch. 5, v. 7, pg., 226
ch. 6, v. 12-16, pg., 186
ch. 6, v. 27-29, pg., 284
ch. 6, v. 34-35, pg., 56
ch. 6, v. 34-36, pg., 291
ch. 7, v. 9, pg., 289
ch. 9, v. 5, pg., 29, 60
ch. 10, v. 1, pg., 36
ch. 10, v. 20, pg., 104, 191, 193, 212
ch. 10, v. 25, pg., 171
ch. 10, v. 26, pg., 68
ch. 10, v. 27, pg., 159
ch. 10, v. 28, pg., 171
ch. 11, v. 1-12, pg., 326
ch. 11, v. 2-4, pg., 14, 22
ch. 11, v. 3, pg., 247
ch. 11, v. 42, pg., 322
ch. 13, v. 1-5, pg., 25
ch. 13, v. 22-30, pg., 326
ch. 13, v. 34, 35, pg., 13
ch. 14, v. 13, 14, pg., 124
ch. 14, v. 15-24, pg., 123
ch. 15, v. 23, 24, pg., 123
ch. 16, v. 19-31, pg., 158
ch. 16, v. 30, 31, pg., 158
ch. 17, v. 3, 4, pg., 318
ch. 17, v. 3, pg., 169, 318
ch. 18, v. 1, pg., 25, 68, 73, 277, 324, 336
ch. 18, v. 2-5, pg., 67
ch. 18, v. 7, pg., 16
ch. 18, v. 10-14, pg., 277
ch. 18, v. 11, pg., 324
ch. 18, v. 12, pg., 336
ch. 18, v. 19, pg., 68
ch. 18, v. 29, pg., 196
ch. 19, v. 8, pg., 57
ch. 19, v. 16-27, pg., 210
ch. 19, v. 23, pg., 291
ch. 19, v. 41, pg., 13, 367
ch. 19, v. 41-44, pg., 13
ch. 20, v. 19, pg., 275
ch. 20, v. 24, pg., 25
ch. 20, v. 38, pg., 164
ch. 21, v. 12, pg., 25, 275
ch. 21, v. 12-19, pg., 25
ch. 21, v. 27, pg., 164
ch. 21, v. 36, pg., 73
ch. 22, v. 14, 17, pg., 324
ch. 22, v. 17-20, pg., 357
ch. 22, v. 20, pg., 353
ch. 22, v. 35, pg., 164
ch. 22, v. 36, 38, pg., 289
ch. 22, v. 41, pg., 324
ch. 22, v. 42, pg., 282
ch. 23, v. 34, pg., 284
ch. 23, v. 35-37, pg., 37
ch. 23, v. 42, pg., 277
ch. 23, v. 43, pg., 25

43 John

ch. 1, v. 3, pg., 145
ch. 1, v. 4, 5, pg., 157
ch. 1, v. 13, pg., 106
ch. 1, v. 14, pg., 128, 354
ch. 1, v. 17, pg., 159
ch. 1, v. 42, pg., 151
ch. 2, v. 14-16, pg., 260
ch. 2, v. 17, pg., 22
ch. 3, v. 7, pg., 106, 281
ch. 3, v. 16, pg., 290
ch. 3, v. 18, pg., 141
ch. 3, v. 19, pg., 31
ch. 3, v. 30, pg., 31
ch. 4, v. 10, pg., 128, 166
ch. 4, v. 10-14, pg., 128
ch. 4, v. 20, pg., 265
ch. 4, v. 23-24, pg., 242
ch. 4, v. 24, pg., 204
ch. 4, v. 34-39, pg., 82
ch. 4, v. 35, pg., 25, 128, 351
ch. 4, v. 35-38, pg., 128, 351
ch. 6, v. 1-15, pg., 128
ch. 6, v. 25-40, pg., 123
ch. 6, v. 25-59, pg., 326
ch. 6, v. 27, pg., 188
ch. 6, v. 70, pg., 147
ch. 7, v. 2, 10, pg., 127
ch. 7, v. 2, 37, pg., 111
ch. 7, v. 2-53, pg., 128
ch. 7, v. 37-39, pg., 130
ch. 8, v. 2, pg., 115
ch. 8, v. 7-10, pg., 60
ch. 8, v. 12, pg., 128
ch. 8, v. 33, pg., 70
ch. 8, v. 39, pg., 150
ch. 8, v. 44, pg., 150
ch. 8, v. 46, pg., 73
ch. 9, v. 1-3, pg., 352
ch. 9, v. 6, pg., 158

© James R. Hughes, 2006

ch. 9, v. 31, pg., 40
ch. 9, v. 41, pg., 264
ch. 10, v. 3, pg., 104, 191, 212
ch. 10, v. 22, pg., 235, 251
ch. 10, v. 27-29, pg., 163
ch. 10, v. 28, pg., 147
ch. 11, v. 25, pg., 154, 164
ch. 11, v. 32, pg., 145
ch. 11, v. 35, pg., 121
ch. 13, v. 1-20, pg., 63, 281
ch. 13, v. 3, pg., 55, 155
ch. 13, v. 17, pg., 264, 323
ch. 13, v. 23, pg., 120
ch. 13, v. 35, pg., 55
ch. 14, v. 2, 3, pg., 166
ch. 14, v. 13, 14, pg., 142
ch. 14, v. 13-14, pg., 20
ch. 14, v. 15, pg., 317, 336, 349
ch. 14, v. 15-21, pg., 336
ch. 14, v. 17, pg., 163
ch. 14, v. 18, pg., 84
ch. 14, v. 26, pg., 164, 165
ch. 14, v. 27, pg., 44, 78
ch. 15, v. 16, pg., 20, 142
ch. 15, v. 18-2, pg., 51
ch. 15, v. 22, pg., 264
ch. 15, v. 26, pg., 164, 165
ch. 16, v. 8-11, pg., 51
ch. 16, v. 23, 24, pg., 142
ch. 16, v. 23-24, pg., 20, 142
ch. 16, v. 33, pg., 44, 51, 78
ch. 17, v. 1-26, pg., 282
ch. 17, v. 9, 20-21, pg., 284
ch. 17, v. 9, pg., 285
ch. 17, v. 11, pg., 141
ch. 17, v. 20-21, pg., 55
ch. 17, v. 24, pg., 145, 146
ch. 18, v. 10, 11, pg., 289
ch. 18, v. 22, 23, pg., 289
ch. 18, v. 33-37, pg., 73
ch. 19, v. 12, pg., 71
ch. 19, v. 26, pg., 120
ch. 20, v. 2, pg., 103, 120
ch. 20, v. 29, pg., 103
ch. 21, v. 7, 20, pg., 120
ch. 21, v. 24, pg., 120

44 Acts

ch. 1, v. 9, pg., 164
ch. 1, v. 14, pg., 359
ch. 1, v. 16, pg., 233
ch. 1, v. 18-20, pg., 284
ch. 1, v. 24-26, pg., 365
ch. 1, v. 25, 26, pg., 186
ch. 2, v. 1-42, 46, 47, pg., 341
ch. 2, v. 8, pg., 95
ch. 2, v. 14-41, pg., 327
ch. 2, v. 23, 24, pg., 352
ch. 2, v. 29, 30, 31, pg., 233
ch. 2, v. 36, pg., 168
ch. 2, v. 37, pg., 329
ch. 2, v. 38, pg., 142, 153, 313
ch. 2, v. 39, pg., 97, 153
ch. 2, v. 40, pg., 319, 329
ch. 2, v. 41, 47, pg., 315, 316
ch. 2, v. 41, pg., 315, 316, 329
ch. 2, v. 42, pg., 117, 123, 124, 315
ch. 2, v. 42-47, pg., 123, 124
ch. 2, v. 47, pg., 193
ch. 3, v. 2-10, pg., 332
ch. 3, v. 16, pg., 142
ch. 3, v. 22, pg., 168
ch. 3, v. 24, pg., 175, 353
ch. 3, v. 24-26, pg., 175
ch. 4, v. 4, pg., 315, 316, 341
ch. 4, v. 10, pg., 168
ch. 4, v. 12, pg., 142
ch. 4, v. 13-17, pg., 158
ch. 4, v. 17, 19, pg., 320
ch. 4, v. 27, 28, pg., 352
ch. 4, v. 27-28, pg., 144
ch. 4, v. 31, pg., 359
ch. 4, v. 32-35, pg., 124
ch. 5, v. 1-11, pg., 156
ch. 5, v. 4, pg., 323
ch. 5, v. 14, pg., 193, 315, 316, 341
ch. 5, v. 37, pg., 95
ch. 5, v. 38-39, pg., 83
ch. 6, v. 1, pg., 90, 248, 332, 334
ch. 6, v. 1-6, pg., 90, 248, 334
ch. 6, v. 7, pg., 341
ch. 7, v. 2-50, pg., 140
ch. 7, v. 8, pg., 154, 353
ch. 7, v. 8-18, pg., 154
ch. 7, v. 52, pg., 168
ch. 7, v. 60, pg., 324
ch. 8, v. 1, 3, pg., 315
ch. 8, v. 1-4, pg., 79
ch. 8, v. 26-38, pg., 317
ch. 8, v. 30, 31, pg., 120
ch. 9, v. 4, 5, pg., 157
ch. 9, v. 10-16, pg., 284
ch. 9, v. 15, pg., 147
ch. 9, v. 31, pg., 315
ch. 9, v. 35, pg., 341
ch. 10, v. 1, 2, pg., 219, 309
ch. 10, v. 1, pg., 219, 289, 309
ch. 10, v. 2, pg., 97, 145
ch. 10, v. 9-16, pg., 313
ch. 10, v. 25, 26, pg., 145
ch. 11, v. 20, 21, pg., 341
ch. 11, v. 26, pg., 151
ch. 11, v. 28, pg., 49
ch. 12, v. 24, pg., 341
ch. 13, v. 1-3, pg., 186
ch. 13, v. 2, 3, pg., 337
ch. 13, v. 2-3, pg., 13

© James R. Hughes, 2006

ch. 13, v. 3, pg., 336
ch. 13, v. 15, pg., 114
ch. 13, v. 51, pg., 60
ch. 14, v. 1, pg., 157, 341
ch. 14, v. 17, pg., 157
ch. 14, v. 22, pg., 51
ch. 14, v. 23, pg., 13, 336, 337, 340
ch. 15, v. 1-41, pg., 359
ch. 15, v. 14-16, pg., 239
ch. 15, v. 21, pg., 114, 119
ch. 15, v. 26, pg., 196
ch. 15, v. 35, pg., 325, 326
ch. 15, v. 36, pg., 326
ch. 16, v. 6-10, pg., 28
ch. 16, v. 10, pg., 325
ch. 16, v. 25, pg., 350
ch. 16, v. 29-34, pg., 317
ch. 16, v. 30, 31, pg., 317
ch. 16, v. 33, 34, pg., 97
ch. 17, v. 7, pg., 320
ch. 17, v. 11, pg., 92, 222
ch. 17, v. 16, 22-23, 28, pg., 25
ch. 17, v. 16-34, pg., 327
ch. 17, v. 18, pg., 329
ch. 17, v. 22, 23, pg., 330
ch. 17, v. 22-31, pg., 29
ch. 17, v. 24, 30, pg., 146
ch. 17, v. 24, 31, pg., 146
ch. 17, v. 24, pg., 146, 173
ch. 17, v. 25, pg., 144
ch. 17, v. 28, pg., 144, 164
ch. 17, v. 30, 31, pg., 329
ch. 18, v. 5, 6, pg., 29
ch. 18, v. 6, pg., 60
ch. 18, v. 9, pg., 44, 78
ch. 18, v. 13, pg., 320
ch. 19, v. 17-19, pg., 132
ch. 19, v. 17-20, pg., 341
ch. 20, v. 7, pg., 272, 313, 359
ch. 20, v. 13-35, pg., 316
ch. 20, v. 17, 28, pg., 315
ch. 20, v. 20, pg., 326, 329
ch. 20, v. 28, pg., 256, 316
ch. 20, v. 28-31, pg., 256
ch. 20, v. 29, pg., 315
ch. 20, v. 33, pg., 75
ch. 20-22, pg., 284
ch. 21, v. 9, pg., 76
ch. 21, v. 11, pg., 74
ch. 21, v. 13, pg., 196
ch. 21, v. 28, pg., 105, 325
ch. 21, v. 37, pg., 91
ch. 21, v. 40-22.21, pg., 73
ch. 23, v. 1-5, pg., 24, 135, 289
ch. 23, v. 1-8, pg., 73
ch. 23, v. 12-35, pg., 46
ch. 24, v. 12, 13, pg., 72
ch. 25, v. 7, 10, pg., 72
ch. 25, v. 9, 10, 11, pg., 219
ch. 25, v. 10-12, pg., 290
ch. 26, v. 24, 25, pg., 65
ch. 26, v. 24, pg., 31, 65
ch. 26-27, pg., 284
ch. 27, v. 24, pg., 44, 78
ch. 28, v. 31, pg., 326
45 Romans
ch. 1, v. 4, pg., 155
ch. 1, v. 5, pg., 196
ch. 1, v. 16, pg., 155
ch. 1, v. 17, pg., 342
ch. 1, v. 18-20, 25, pg., 146
ch. 1, v. 18-21, pg., 167
ch. 1, v. 18-32, pg., 162
ch. 1, v. 19, 20, pg., 157
ch. 1, v. 20, 21, 32, pg., 264
ch. 1, v. 20, pg., 145, 264
ch. 1, v. 21, pg., 162, 176
ch. 1, v. 21-23, pg., 176
ch. 1, v. 23, 25, pg., 162
ch. 1, v. 28, pg., 162
ch. 1, v. 29, pg., 162
ch. 1, v. 30, pg., 162
ch. 1, v. 32, pg., 155, 156
ch. 2, v. 1-4, pg., 351
ch. 2, v. 5-11, pg., 259
ch. 2, v. 7, pg., 156
ch. 2, v. 15, pg., 312, 313
ch. 2, v. 28, 29, pg., 150
ch. 3, v. 1, 2, pg., 159
ch. 3, v. 19, pg., 60
ch. 3, v. 20, pg., 121
ch. 3, v. 22, pg., 156
ch. 3, v. 24-26, pg., 111
ch. 3, v. 25, 26, pg., 288
ch. 4, v. 11, pg., 189
ch. 4, v. 13, pg., 150, 153, 216
ch. 4, v. 13-16, pg., 153
ch. 4, v. 13-17, pg., 150
ch. 4, v. 20, pg., 20
ch. 5, v. 2, pg., 47, 66
ch. 5, v. 8, pg., 154, 352
ch. 6, v. 1-14, pg., 140
ch. 6, v. 5, pg., 154
ch. 7, v. 4, 6, 9, pg., 166
ch. 7, v. 7-12, pg., 121
ch. 7, v. 7-25, pg., 148, 172
ch. 7, v. 12, 13, pg., 259
ch. 7, v. 12, 6, pg., 260
ch. 7, v. 22, 25, pg., 160
ch. 8, v. 1, 2, 4, pg., 219
ch. 8, v. 1, pg., 146, 219
ch. 8, v. 4, pg., 312
ch. 8, v. 5, pg., 219
ch. 8, v. 6, 7, pg., 219
ch. 8, v. 7, pg., 160
ch. 8, v. 9, pg., 165

© James R. Hughes, 2006

ch. 8, v. 19-22, pg., 146
ch. 8, v. 28, pg., 72, 144, 154, 172
ch. 8, v. 28-31, 35-39, pg., 172
ch. 8, v. 29, 30, pg., 147, 148
ch. 8, v. 35-39, pg., 163
ch. 8, v. 37, pg., 72
ch. 8, v. 38, pg., 65, 72
ch. 8, v. 38-39, pg., 72
ch. 9, v. 1, pg., 147, 284, 294
ch. 9, v. 4, pg., 105, 159
ch. 9, v. 4-5, pg., 105
ch. 9, v. 6, pg., 150
ch. 9, v. 11, pg., 147
ch. 9, v. 13-15, pg., 284
ch. 9, v. 33, pg., 34
ch. 10, v. 1, pg., 246, 284, 327, 329, 330
ch. 10, v. 5, pg., 171
ch. 10, v. 9, pg., 317
ch. 10, v. 14, 15, pg., 246
ch. 10, v. 14, pg., 246, 327, 328, 329
ch. 10, v. 14-15, pg., 327
ch. 10, v. 15, pg., 330
ch. 11, v. 1, pg., 213
ch. 11, v. 5, pg., 147
ch. 12, v. 1, pg., 92, 106, 125, 156, 242, 284, 335
ch. 12, v. 4-8, pg., 232
ch. 12, v. 7, pg., 325
ch. 12, v. 13, pg., 125, 335
ch. 12, v. 17-13.7, pg., 156
ch. 12, v. 17-21, pg., 284, 288
ch. 12, v. 18, pg., 92
ch. 12, v. 20, pg., 41
ch. 13, v. 1, 2, 3, 4, pg., 219, 309
ch. 13, v. 1, 4, pg., 308
ch. 13, v. 1, pg., 60, 90, 91, 218, 219, 248, 259, 261, 301, 308, 309
ch. 13, v. 1-5, pg., 260, 261, 308
ch. 13, v. 1-7, pg., 60, 90, 91, 219, 248, 288, 301, 308, 362
ch. 13, v. 4, pg., 90, 219, 289, 304, 307, 309
ch. 13, v. 5, pg., 307
ch. 13, v. 7, pg., 135
ch. 13, v. 8-10, pg., 317, 350
ch. 14, v. 1-4, pg., 318
ch. 14, v. 19-21, pg., 68
ch. 15, v. 9, pg., 152, 285
ch. 15, v. 9-12, pg., 152
ch. 15, v. 16-17, pg., 242
ch. 16, v. 1, 5, pg., 315
ch. 16, v. 17, 18, pg., 256
ch. 16, v. 17-18, pg., 32
ch. 16, v. 26, pg., 157

46 1 Corinthians
ch. 1, v. 2, pg., 147, 214, 220, 315, 326, 327, 329
ch. 1, v. 10-13, pg., 245
ch. 1, v. 12, pg., 77
ch. 1, v. 17, pg., 329
ch. 1, v. 21, pg., 326, 327
ch. 1, v. 23, pg., 329
ch. 1, v. 26-31, pg., 214
ch. 1, v. 27, pg., 147, 220
ch. 1, v. 27-29, pg., 147
ch. 1, v. 30, pg., 156
ch. 2, v. 1-5, pg., 329
ch. 2, v. 9, pg., 166
ch. 3, v. 1-3, pg., 318
ch. 3, v. 5-9, pg., 77
ch. 3, v. 16, pg., 150
ch. 4, v. 17, pg., 315
ch. 5, v. 1, pg., 32, 134, 254, 313, 316, 318
ch. 5, v. 1-13, pg., 254, 318
ch. 5, v. 4, 5, pg., 320
ch. 5, v. 9-11, pg., 253
ch. 5, v. 9-12, pg., 134
ch. 5, v. 11, 12, pg., 134
ch. 5, v. 12, 13, pg., 32
ch. 5, v. 12, pg., 32, 316
ch. 5, v. 13, pg., 317, 320
ch. 6, v. 2, pg., 152, 161, 165
ch. 6, v. 11, pg., 141, 237, 266, 282
ch. 6, v. 12, 19, pg., 68
ch. 7, v. 5, pg., 340
ch. 7, v. 12-16, pg., 261
ch. 7, v. 19, pg., 312
ch. 7, v. 32-35, pg., 79
ch. 7, v. 39, pg., 134, 193, 198, 255, 261
ch. 9, v. 1-23, pg., 62
ch. 9, v. 2, pg., 66, 160, 188, 196
ch. 9, v. 9, 13-14, pg., 313
ch. 9, v. 14, pg., 269, 322
ch. 9, v. 16, pg., 330
ch. 9, v. 21, pg., 160
ch. 9, v. 23, pg., 196
ch. 9, v. 24, pg., 66
ch. 10, v. 1-12, pg., 263
ch. 10, v. 4, pg., 288
ch. 10, v. 12, pg., 204, 263
ch. 10, v. 13, pg., 65, 195
ch. 10, v. 27, pg., 134
ch. 10, v. 31, pg., 35, 68, 187, 204, 244
ch. 11, v. 17, 33, pg., 359
ch. 11, v. 17-34, pg., 315, 359
ch. 11, v. 18, pg., 315
ch. 11, v. 20, pg., 125
ch. 11, v. 23, pg., 315
ch. 11, v. 25, pg., 124, 357
ch. 11, v. 26, pg., 124
ch. 11, v. 28, pg., 186
ch. 12, v. 10, pg., 351
ch. 12, v. 12, pg., 77, 194, 216, 319, 320
ch. 12, v. 12-30, pg., 104
ch. 12, v. 12-31, pg., 194, 215, 216, 320

© James R. Hughes, 2006

ch. 12, v. 14, 18-20, pg., 36
ch. 12, v. 25, pg., 318
ch. 12, v. 28, 29, pg., 325
ch. 12, v. 28, pg., 36, 246, 325
ch. 12, v. 28-30, pg., 36
ch. 13, v. 1-13, pg., 350
ch. 14, v. 14-16, pg., 117
ch. 14, v. 26-40, pg., 232, 315
ch. 14, v. 31, pg., 136
ch. 14, v. 33, 40, pg., 36
ch. 14, v. 33, pg., 36, 93
ch. 15, v. 10, pg., 210
ch. 15, v. 20-23, pg., 247
ch. 15, v. 25, pg., 65, 83
ch. 15, v. 33, pg., 198, 255
ch. 15, v. 58, pg., 66, 69
ch. 16, v. 1-3, pg., 334
ch. 16, v. 2, pg., 204, 258, 284, 322
ch. 16, v. 3, pg., 322
ch. 16, v. 13, pg., 204
ch. 16, v. 15, pg., 210
ch. 16, v. 16, pg., 246
ch. 16, v. 21-22, pg., 284
ch. 16, v. 22, pg., 258
47 2 Corinthians
ch. 1, v. 12, pg., 210
ch. 1, v. 15-17, pg., 28
ch. 1, v. 17, pg., 28
ch. 1, v. 20, pg., 153
ch. 1, v. 21, 24, pg., 47
ch. 1, v. 21, pg., 47, 66
ch. 1, v. 23, 24, pg., 62
ch. 1, v. 23, pg., 62, 195, 294
ch. 1, v. 24, pg., 66
ch. 2, v. 6-8, pg., 320
ch. 2, v. 17, pg., 330
ch. 3, v. 6, pg., 358
ch. 3, v. 14, pg., 353
ch. 5, v. 10, pg., 259
ch. 5, v. 17, pg., 146
ch. 5, v. 20, pg., 106
ch. 6, v. 1, pg., 81, 106, 134, 193, 194, 198, 255, 261, 313, 319
ch. 6, v. 14, pg., 81, 134, 193, 198, 255, 261, 313, 319
ch. 6, v. 14-17, pg., 193
ch. 6, v. 14-18, pg., 134, 198, 255, 261, 313, 319
ch. 6, v. 15-18, pg., 194
ch. 6, v. 17, pg., 320
ch. 8, v. 1-4, pg., 210
ch. 8, v. 1-9.15, pg., 323
ch. 8, v. 3, 8, 12, pg., 323
ch. 9, v. 5, 7, 13, pg., 323
ch. 9, v. 6-9, pg., 322
ch. 9, v. 7, pg., 59
ch. 9, v. 12, pg., 322
ch. 9, v. 13, pg., 317
ch. 11, v. 3, 4, 13-15, pg., 351
ch. 11, v. 11-15, pg., 351
ch. 11, v. 13-15, pg., 75
ch. 11, v. 22-29, pg., 208
ch. 11, v. 24, pg., 258
ch. 12, v. 4, pg., 25
ch. 12, v. 20, pg., 37, 70
ch. 13, v. 1, pg., 313
48 Galatians
ch. 1, v. 6, pg., 326
ch. 1, v. 8, 9, pg., 41, 75, 258
ch. 1, v. 8-9, pg., 284
ch. 1, v. 11, 12, pg., 330
ch. 1, v. 20, pg., 195, 294
ch. 2, v. 9, pg., 157
ch. 2, v. 19, pg., 166
ch. 3, v. 7-9, pg., 150
ch. 3, v. 12, pg., 171
ch. 3, v. 15, pg., 353
ch. 3, v. 20, pg., 195
ch. 3, v. 28, pg., 114, 243, 255
ch. 3, v. 29, pg., 153
ch. 4, v. 6, pg., 165
ch. 4, v. 9, 10, pg., 232
ch. 4, v. 24, 25, pg., 148
ch. 4, v. 28, pg., 153
ch. 5, v. 2-4, pg., 232
ch. 5, v. 11, pg., 313
ch. 5, v. 12, pg., 284
ch. 5, v. 24, pg., 166
ch. 6, v. 1, pg., 20, 150, 169
ch. 6, v. 2, pg., 35, 319
ch. 6, v. 6, pg., 269
ch. 6, v. 9, 10, pg., 335
ch. 6, v. 16, pg., 20, 150
49 Ephesians
ch. 1, v. 4, pg., 145, 147
ch. 1, v. 5, pg., 147
ch. 1, v. 6, 7, pg., 163
ch. 1, v. 6, pg., 147, 163
ch. 1, v. 7, pg., 266
ch. 1, v. 11, pg., 144
ch. 1, v. 13, pg., 153, 188
ch. 2, v. 1-3, pg., 171
ch. 2, v. 3-5, 8-10, pg., 171
ch. 2, v. 8, 9, pg., 342
ch. 2, v. 8, pg., 146, 148, 170, 342
ch. 2, v. 8-10, pg., 146, 148
ch. 2, v. 11, 12, pg., 320
ch. 2, v. 11-18, pg., 252
ch. 2, v. 15, pg., 232
ch. 2, v. 20, pg., 234
ch. 3, v. 6, pg., 153
ch. 3, v. 8, pg., 329
ch. 3, v. 9, pg., 145, 146
ch. 3, v. 14, pg., 324
ch. 3, v. 15, pg., 20, 97
ch. 3, v. 16, pg., 72

© James R. Hughes, 2006

ch. 3, v. 20, 21, pg., 27
ch. 4, v. 3, 12, pg., 319
ch. 4, v. 11, 12, pg., 232
ch. 4, v. 11, pg., 35, 232, 246, 325
ch. 4, v. 11-13, pg., 35, 215
ch. 4, v. 12, 16, pg., 319
ch. 4, v. 16, pg., 36, 215
ch. 4, v. 21, pg., 325
ch. 4, v. 25-29, pg., 37
ch. 4, v. 26, pg., 37, 52
ch. 4, v. 28, pg., 333
ch. 4, v. 31, pg., 70
ch. 4, v. 32, pg., 154
ch. 5, v. 3, pg., 134
ch. 5, v. 9, pg., 175
ch. 5, v. 18, pg., 65
ch. 5, v. 19, pg., 18, 193, 243, 350
ch. 5, v. 23, 25-30, pg., 358
ch. 5, v. 23, pg., 315
ch. 6, v. 5-9, pg., 107
ch. 6, v. 10-18, pg., 46
ch. 6, v. 11-14, pg., 66
ch. 6, v. 12, pg., 65, 92, 93
ch. 6, v. 14, pg., 175
ch. 6, v. 16, pg., 39
ch. 6, v. 17, pg., 288
ch. 6, v. 18, pg., 25, 73
50 Philippians
ch. 1, v. 6, pg., 163
ch. 1, v. 8, pg., 76
ch. 1, v. 29, pg., 144
ch. 2, v. 5, pg., 281
ch. 2, v. 6-8, pg., 62, 63, 281
ch. 2, v. 9-11, pg., 142, 317
ch. 2, v. 10, pg., 301, 361
ch. 2, v. 10-11, pg., 301
ch. 2, v. 17, pg., 242
ch. 3, v. 5, pg., 213
ch. 3, v. 9, pg., 156
ch. 3, v. 10, 11, pg., 154
ch. 3, v. 12-13, pg., 144
ch. 4, v. 3, pg., 41
ch. 4, v. 4, pg., 243
ch. 4, v. 6, 7, pg., 187
ch. 4, v. 13, pg., 72
ch. 4, v. 15, 18, pg., 323
ch. 4, v. 18, pg., 106
ch. 4, v. 19, pg., 144
51 Colossians
ch. 1, v. 12, pg., 217
ch. 1, v. 15, 16, pg., 146
ch. 1, v. 15, pg., 146, 157
ch. 1, v. 16, 17, pg., 145
ch. 1, v. 16, pg., 145, 146
ch. 1, v. 17, pg., 144, 164
ch. 1, v. 18, pg., 315
ch. 1, v. 24, pg., 315
ch. 1, v. 28, pg., 169
ch. 2, v. 5, pg., 36
ch. 2, v. 7, pg., 315, 325
ch. 2, v. 11, 12, pg., 266
ch. 2, v. 16, pg., 111
ch. 2, v. 16-17, pg., 313
ch. 2, v. 17, pg., 111
ch. 2, v. 20-23, pg., 351
ch. 3, v. 8, pg., 37
ch. 3, v. 10, pg., 146
ch. 3, v. 12, 13, pg., 134
ch. 3, v. 12, pg., 55, 134, 154
ch. 3, v. 12-14, pg., 55
ch. 3, v. 16, pg., 18, 169, 174, 193, 350
ch. 3, v. 17, pg., 187, 244
ch. 3, v. 23, pg., 204, 217, 244
ch. 4, v. 1, pg., 232, 333
ch. 4, v. 16, pg., 232
52 1 Thessalonians
ch. 2, v. 5, pg., 195, 294
ch. 2, v. 11, 12, pg., 333
ch. 4, v. 18, pg., 46, 78, 197
ch. 5, v. 1, pg., 320
ch. 5, v. 11, pg., 46, 78, 123, 197
ch. 5, v. 12, 13, pg., 169, 246, 261
ch. 5, v. 13, 14, pg., 92
ch. 5, v. 14, pg., 46, 78
ch. 5, v. 15, pg., 290
ch. 5, v. 17, pg., 25, 73
ch. 5, v. 23, pg., 159, 174, 197
ch. 5, v. 27, pg., 195, 232, 294
53 2 Thessalonians
ch. 1, v. 5-10, pg., 290
ch. 1, v. 6, pg., 166, 195
ch. 1, v. 8, 9, pg., 155
ch. 2, v. 4, pg., 220
ch. 3, v. 2, 3, pg., 73
ch. 3, v. 3, pg., 163
ch. 3, v. 7-9, pg., 62
ch. 3, v. 10, pg., 332
ch. 3, v. 14, pg., 256
54 1 Timothy
ch. 1, v. 8-11, pg., 312
ch. 2, v. 1, 2, pg., 219, 307
ch. 2, v. 1, pg., 106, 170, 219, 307, 314, 325, 368
ch. 2, v. 1-3, pg., 170, 368
ch. 2, v. 2, pg., 219, 309
ch. 2, v. 8, pg., 116
ch. 2, v. 11, pg., 314
ch. 2, v. 12, pg., 325
ch. 3, v. 1-13, pg., 36
ch. 3, v. 1-7, pg., 316
ch. 3, v. 1-8, pg., 248
ch. 3, v. 2, 5, pg., 299
ch. 3, v. 2, pg., 10, 73, 112, 125, 299, 315, 325
ch. 3, v. 2-3, pg., 10
ch. 3, v. 3, 8, pg., 63

© James R. Hughes, 2006

ch. 3, v. 3, pg., 63, 75, 76, 109, 299
ch. 3, v. 4-5, pg., 299
ch. 3, v. 6, pg., 299
ch. 3, v. 7, pg., 299
ch. 3, v. 8-13, pg., 269
ch. 3, v. 15, pg., 157
ch. 4, v. 1, pg., 55, 114, 232, 252, 325, 326, 351
ch. 4, v. 11, pg., 232, 325
ch. 4, v. 11-16, pg., 232
ch. 4, v. 13, pg., 114, 252, 325, 326
ch. 4, v. 14, pg., 55
ch. 5, v. 3-9, 16, pg., 332
ch. 5, v. 8, 16, pg., 97
ch. 5, v. 8, pg., 97, 289, 332
ch. 5, v. 8-10, pg., 332
ch. 5, v. 10, pg., 125
ch. 5, v. 16, pg., 332
ch. 5, v. 17, pg., 112, 210, 246, 261, 269, 315, 316, 325, 326
ch. 5, v. 17-18, pg., 269
ch. 5, v. 17-19, pg., 210
ch. 5, v. 18, pg., 313
ch. 5, v. 19, 20, pg., 319
ch. 6, v. 1, pg., 53, 55, 203, 204, 233, 316
ch. 6, v. 2, pg., 325
ch. 6, v. 10, pg., 203
ch. 6, v. 11, pg., 233
ch. 6, v. 12, pg., 316
ch. 6, v. 17, 18, pg., 53
55 2 Timothy
ch. 1, v. 1, pg., 72, 153, 157, 163
ch. 1, v. 9, pg., 147
ch. 1, v. 12, pg., 72, 163
ch. 1, v. 14, pg., 157
ch. 2, v. 2, 24, pg., 112
ch. 2, v. 2, pg., 90, 112, 144, 325
ch. 2, v. 13, pg., 155
ch. 2, v. 25, pg., 144
ch. 3, v. 5, pg., 256
ch. 3, v. 12, pg., 51
ch. 3, v. 15-17, pg., 222
ch. 3, v. 16, 17, pg., 12, 157, 311, 332, 350
ch. 3, v. 17, pg., 233
ch. 4, v. 2, pg., 46, 78, 169, 232, 325, 329
ch. 4, v. 6, pg., 61, 64, 242, 277
ch. 4, v. 6-8, pg., 61, 64, 277
ch. 4, v. 7, pg., 47, 66, 85, 278
ch. 4, v. 7-8, pg., 47, 278
ch. 4, v. 8, pg., 166
ch. 4, v. 14, pg., 284
56 Titus
ch. 1, v. 1, 2, pg., 153
ch. 1, v. 5, pg., 36, 316
ch. 1, v. 5-16, pg., 316
ch. 1, v. 5-9, pg., 36
ch. 1, v. 6, pg., 299
ch. 1, v. 7, 11, pg., 63
ch. 1, v. 7, pg., 63, 75, 299
ch. 1, v. 8, pg., 125, 299
ch. 1, v. 9, pg., 299
ch. 1, v. 13, pg., 169
ch. 2, v. 1, pg., 46, 78, 169, 318
ch. 2, v. 2, pg., 337
ch. 2, v. 3-5, pg., 76
ch. 2, v. 3-8, pg., 55
ch. 2, v. 4, pg., 35
ch. 2, v. 5, 8, 10, pg., 204
ch. 2, v. 8, pg., 73
ch. 2, v. 15, pg., 46, 78, 169
ch. 3, v. 1, pg., 219, 257, 307, 318
ch. 3, v. 2, pg., 70
ch. 3, v. 3, pg., 171
ch. 3, v. 10, 11, pg., 318
ch. 3, v. 10, pg., 257, 318
58 Hebrews
ch. 1, v. 1, 2, pg., 157
ch. 1, v. 1, pg., 145, 157, 168, 217
ch. 1, v. 1-3, pg., 168
ch. 1, v. 3, pg., 164
ch. 1, v. 10, pg., 145
ch. 1, v. 14, pg., 217
ch. 2, v. 1, 2, pg., 318
ch. 2, v. 2, pg., 156, 176
ch. 2, v. 12, pg., 191, 212, 319
ch. 3, v. 7-19, pg., 263
ch. 3, v. 12, 13, pg., 204
ch. 3, v. 13, pg., 35, 46, 78, 197
ch. 3, v. 17, pg., 52
ch. 4, v. 1, pg., 78, 146, 153, 315
ch. 4, v. 3, pg., 145
ch. 4, v. 9, pg., 272
ch. 4, v. 13, pg., 146
ch. 4, v. 14, pg., 315
ch. 4, v. 16, pg., 78
ch. 5, v. 11-14, pg., 318
ch. 6, v. 1-3, pg., 144
ch. 6, v. 4, pg., 157
ch. 6, v. 10, pg., 64, 277
ch. 6, v. 12, 15, pg., 153
ch. 6, v. 12, pg., 153
ch. 6, v. 16, 17, pg., 294
ch. 6, v. 18, pg., 155
ch. 7, v. 4-10, pg., 322
ch. 7, v. 5, pg., 105
ch. 7, v. 11, 12, 18, 19, pg., 232
ch. 7, v. 11, 12, pg., 232, 313
ch. 7, v. 22, pg., 153, 358, 359
ch. 7, v. 26, pg., 106
ch. 8, v. 1-13, pg., 357
ch. 8, v. 1-3, pg., 359
ch. 8, v. 6, pg., 153, 358
ch. 8, v. 6-10, 13, pg., 358
ch. 8, v. 10, 11, pg., 354
ch. 8, v. 10, pg., 159, 354
ch. 8, v. 13, pg., 232

© James R. Hughes, 2006

ch. 8-10, pg., 353
ch. 9, v. 1-28, pg., 359
ch. 9, v. 1-5, pg., 359
ch. 9, v. 3, pg., 143
ch. 9, v. 7, pg., 111
ch. 9, v. 9, 10, 23-28, pg., 242
ch. 9, v. 9, 10, pg., 242, 313
ch. 9, v. 13, pg., 339, 340
ch. 9, v. 14, 19-23, pg., 266
ch. 9, v. 14, pg., 237, 266
ch. 9, v. 15, pg., 153, 217, 353
ch. 9, v. 15-20, pg., 353
ch. 9, v. 16, 17, pg., 353
ch. 9, v. 19-22, pg., 237
ch. 9, v. 22, pg., 266
ch. 9, v. 26, pg., 145
ch. 9, v. 27, pg., 156
ch. 10, v. 1, pg., 106, 232, 242, 266, 359
ch. 10, v. 1-18, pg., 242
ch. 10, v. 1-4, pg., 266
ch. 10, v. 3, 19-22, pg., 111
ch. 10, v. 7, pg., 63, 282
ch. 10, v. 10, pg., 106
ch. 10, v. 16, pg., 359
ch. 10, v. 19-25, pg., 359
ch. 10, v. 22, pg., 237, 266
ch. 10, v. 24, 25, pg., 204
ch. 10, v. 25, pg., 46, 78, 123, 197, 204, 315
ch. 10, v. 27, pg., 156
ch. 10, v. 35, pg., 153
ch. 10, v. 36, pg., 153
ch. 11, v. 1-40, pg., 263
ch. 11, v. 3, pg., 65, 145, 146, 153
ch. 11, v. 4, pg., 241
ch. 11, v. 8, pg., 148
ch. 11, v. 10, pg., 92, 93, 135, 368
ch. 11, v. 12, pg., 165
ch. 11, v. 16, pg., 369
ch. 11, v. 17-22, pg., 154
ch. 11, v. 24-26, pg., 107
ch. 11, v. 32-34, pg., 289
ch. 11, v. 33, pg., 65, 153
ch. 11, v. 33-38, pg., 65
ch. 12, v. 1, pg., 66, 72, 104
ch. 12, v. 1-3, pg., 66
ch. 12, v. 2, pg., 13, 34, 104, 153, 191, 208, 212, 315, 359, 369
ch. 12, v. 5-12, pg., 172
ch. 12, v. 12, pg., 72
ch. 12, v. 14, pg., 288
ch. 12, v. 22, pg., 13, 34, 369
ch. 12, v. 23, pg., 104, 191, 212, 315
ch. 12, v. 24, pg., 153, 359
ch. 13, v. 2, pg., 125, 357, 358
ch. 13, v. 5, pg., 45, 163
ch. 13, v. 7, 17, pg., 246
ch. 13, v. 7, pg., 230, 246
ch. 13, v. 14, pg., 367
ch. 13, v. 15, 16, pg., 106, 313
ch. 13, v. 15, pg., 87, 106, 193, 237, 242, 313, 350, 355, 359
ch. 13, v. 15-16, pg., 242
ch. 13, v. 17, pg., 246, 315, 316
ch. 13, v. 20, pg., 357, 358
59 James
ch. 1, v. 1, pg., 20, 65, 79, 153, 155, 164, 166, 247, 318
ch. 1, v. 2-18, pg., 65
ch. 1, v. 6, pg., 40
ch. 1, v. 12, pg., 153
ch. 1, v. 13, pg., 155
ch. 1, v. 14, pg., 65
ch. 1, v. 17, pg., 155, 164, 166
ch. 1, v. 18, pg., 247
ch. 1, v. 19, pg., 318
ch. 1, v. 27, pg., 125, 203
ch. 2, v. 1-13, pg., 349
ch. 2, v. 1-7, pg., 53, 349
ch. 2, v. 2-7, pg., 135
ch. 2, v. 5, pg., 153
ch. 2, v. 7, pg., 195
ch. 2, v. 8, pg., 349, 350
ch. 2, v. 8-13, pg., 349
ch. 2, v. 10, 11, pg., 259
ch. 2, v. 10, pg., 18, 176, 231, 259, 350
ch. 2, v. 12, 13, pg., 323
ch. 2, v. 14-26, pg., 349
ch. 2, v. 15, 16, pg., 335
ch. 3, v. 1, pg., 112, 318, 325, 349
ch. 3, v. 1-12, pg., 349
ch. 3, v. 13-18, pg., 349
ch. 4, v. 1-12, pg., 349
ch. 4, v. 3, pg., 40
ch. 4, v. 11, pg., 70, 126, 349
ch. 4, v. 13-15, pg., 28
ch. 4, v. 13-17, pg., 349
ch. 4, v. 15, pg., 144
ch. 4, v. 17, pg., 264
ch. 5, v. 1-6, pg., 53, 54, 349
ch. 5, v. 4, pg., 313, 333, 349
ch. 5, v. 9, pg., 349
ch. 5, v. 11, pg., 154
ch. 5, v. 12, pg., 349
ch. 5, v. 13, pg., 73, 134, 243, 350
ch. 5, v. 16, pg., 19, 132
ch. 5, v. 19, pg., 169, 350
ch. 5, v. 19-20, pg., 169
60 1 Peter
ch. 1, v. 1, 2, 22, 23, pg., 266
ch. 1, v. 1, 2, pg., 237, 266
ch. 1, v. 2, pg., 147
ch. 1, v. 4, pg., 217
ch. 1, v. 15, pg., 106
ch. 2, v. 1, pg., 70, 73, 204, 219, 290, 307, 308, 309

© James R. Hughes, 2006

ch. 2, v. 4, pg., 150, 248
ch. 2, v. 5, 10, pg., 20
ch. 2, v. 5, 6, pg., 244
ch. 2, v. 5, 9, pg., 106
ch. 2, v. 5, pg., 20, 106, 216, 237, 242, 244
ch. 2, v. 6, pg., 34
ch. 2, v. 9, pg., 193, 239, 355
ch. 2, v. 12, 15, pg., 54
ch. 2, v. 12, pg., 73, 204
ch. 2, v. 13, 14, 16, pg., 219
ch. 2, v. 13, 14, pg., 219, 307, 308, 309
ch. 2, v. 13, pg., 219, 290, 307, 308, 309
ch. 2, v. 13-17, pg., 219
ch. 2, v. 13-21, pg., 290
ch. 2, v. 17, pg., 219
ch. 2, v. 20-21, pg., 210
ch. 2, v. 21, 22, pg., 288
ch. 2, v. 22, pg., 63, 281
ch. 3, v. 1-6, pg., 191
ch. 3, v. 8, pg., 154, 290
ch. 3, v. 8-17, pg., 290
ch. 3, v. 16, pg., 204
ch. 3, v. 17, pg., 290
ch. 3, v. 20, pg., 319
ch. 3, v. 21, pg., 237, 266
ch. 4, v. 7, pg., 204
ch. 4, v. 11, pg., 204, 244
ch. 4, v. 14, pg., 196
ch. 4, v. 16, pg., 20
ch. 4, v. 19, pg., 144, 146
ch. 5, v. 1-3, pg., 315
ch. 5, v. 1-4, pg., 316
ch. 5, v. 2, 3, pg., 62
ch. 5, v. 2, pg., 62, 75, 109, 267
ch. 5, v. 3, pg., 316
ch. 5, v. 8, pg., 92, 93, 204
ch. 5, v. 10, pg., 72
61 2 Peter
ch. 1, v. 4, pg., 153
ch. 1, v. 10, pg., 147
ch. 1, v. 21, pg., 157
ch. 2, v. 1, 10, 11, pg., 219
ch. 2, v. 1, 10, 13-15, pg., 18
ch. 2, v. 1, pg., 18, 219, 256, 351
ch. 2, v. 1-3, pg., 256
ch. 2, v. 3, pg., 75
ch. 2, v. 9, pg., 156
ch. 3, v. 3, pg., 31, 65
ch. 3, v. 3-5, pg., 65
ch. 3, v. 3-7, pg., 259
ch. 3, v. 4, 5, pg., 145
ch. 3, v. 7, 10, pg., 238
ch. 3, v. 7, pg., 156
ch. 3, v. 9, 13, pg., 20
ch. 3, v. 11-13, pg., 155
ch. 3, v. 13, pg., 153
62 1 John
ch. 1, v. 5, pg., 195
ch. 1, v. 8-10, pg., 148
ch. 1, v. 9, pg., 175, 317
ch. 2, v. 20, pg., 195
ch. 2, v. 25, pg., 153
ch. 3, v. 4, pg., 312
ch. 3, v. 17, pg., 333, 335
ch. 3, v. 17-19, pg., 333
ch. 3, v. 23, pg., 141
ch. 4, v. 1, pg., 351
ch. 4, v. 8, pg., 195
ch. 5, v. 2-3, pg., 312
ch. 5, v. 14, pg., 40
63 2 John
v. 10, pg., 257
v. 11, pg., 257
64 3 John
v. 7, pg., 196
v. 8, pg., 196
v. 9, pg., 75, 83
65 Jude
v. 4, pg., 18
v. 7, pg., 156
v. 8, pg., 219
v. 9, pg., 220
v. 10, pg., 220
v. 11, pg., 220
v. 12, pg., 18, 267
v. 12-13, pg., 18
v. 18, pg., 31, 65
66 Revelation
ch. 1, v. 5, pg., 266
ch. 1, v. 6, pg., 239, 355
ch. 2, v. 7, pg., 26
ch. 2, v. 13, pg., 367
ch. 2, v. 14-15, 20, pg., 18
ch. 2, v. 17, pg., 104, 135, 151, 191, 365
ch. 2, v. 20, pg., 32, 315
ch. 2, v. 26-27, pg., 301
ch. 3, v. 5, pg., 41
ch. 3, v. 12, pg., 13, 20, 33, 151, 157, 369
ch. 3, v. 19, pg., 172
ch. 4, v. 8, 11, pg., 15
ch. 4, v. 8, pg., 15, 17, 41, 160, 276
ch. 4, v. 11, pg., 144, 145, 146, 173
ch. 5, v. 1, 5, pg., 189
ch. 5, v. 1, pg., 188, 239
ch. 5, v. 8, pg., 359
ch. 5, v. 10, pg., 239
ch. 6, v. 1, pg., 166, 189, 284
ch. 6, v. 10, pg., 166, 284
ch. 7, v. 4-8, pg., 95
ch. 7, v. 8, pg., 214
ch. 7, v. 9, pg., 104, 145, 152, 165, 255, 351
ch. 7, v. 9-12, pg., 145
ch. 7, v. 11, 12, pg., 116
ch. 7, v. 13, 14, pg., 164

© James R. Hughes, 2006

ch. 7, v. 15, pg., 35, 128
ch. 8, v. 1, pg., 60
ch. 8, v. 3, 4, pg., 313, 359
ch. 10, v. 5-7, pg., 146
ch. 11, v. 2, pg., 221, 252, 369
ch. 11, v. 3, pg., 340
ch. 11, v. 13, pg., 15
ch. 11, v. 15, pg., 361
ch. 13, v. 8, pg., 41, 193
ch. 13, v. 15, 16, 17, pg., 220
ch. 14, v. 3, pg., 247
ch. 14, v. 7, pg., 146
ch. 14, v. 14, pg., 320
ch. 15, v. 4, pg., 144
ch. 16, v. 11, pg., 15
ch. 17, v. 8, pg., 145
ch. 17, v. 14, 16, pg., 219, 289, 309
ch. 17, v. 14, pg., 320
ch. 17, v. 18, pg., 367
ch. 18, v. 1-24, pg., 14
ch. 18, v. 4, pg., 320
ch. 18, v. 10, 11, pg., 367
ch. 18, v. 19, pg., 339, 340
ch. 18, v. 20, pg., 167
ch. 19, v. 1-3, pg., 284
ch. 19, v. 7, pg., 358
ch. 19, v. 9, pg., 59, 63, 124, 282
ch. 19, v. 10, pg., 145
ch. 19, v. 11, pg., 175
ch. 19, v. 11-16, pg., 289
ch. 20, v. 6, pg., 152, 161, 165, 239, 355
ch. 20, v. 12, 15, pg., 41
ch. 20, v. 12, pg., 33, 41, 95, 135, 259
ch. 20, v. 12-15, pg., 259
ch. 21, v. 2, 10, 14-23, pg., 369
ch. 21, v. 2, 10, pg., 13, 221, 369
ch. 21, v. 2, pg., 13, 92, 93, 104, 150, 191, 212, 221, 369
ch. 21, v. 25, pg., 92, 93
ch. 21, v. 27, pg., 104, 191, 212
ch. 22, v. 8, 9, pg., 145
ch. 22, v. 14, pg., 369
ch. 22, v. 18, 19, pg., 121
ch. 22, v. 19, pg., 369

© James R. Hughes, 2006