

The Consecration of the City # 29

Nehemiah 12: 27-47

In the opening verses of this chapter Nehemiah records the names of the priests, the Levites, and the porters of the city of Jerusalem. We have already spent much time discussing the significance of each of these positions. We will not take time to discuss them further, but I do want to remind us that each of these was important and they were filled by faithful men.

The focus of this twelfth chapter is a celebration that took place sometime after the reconstruction was complete and the city had been inhabited by many people. It appears that once again Nehemiah realized the faithfulness of God. He has called the city together and organized a celebration of worship and remembrance for all God had done for them and the accomplishments they had made through the help of the Lord.

We need leaders today that possess the commitment and desire that Nehemiah had for the Lord. He had been very successful in this campaign, and yet he was careful to praise the Lord for His great blessing. Nehemiah was aware that God had secured all that was needed to accomplish such a monumental task and he wanted to ensure that the praise was given to the One that deserved it. Let's consider the [events](#) that are recorded during this celebration as we think on: [The Consecration of the City](#).

I. The Dedication of the City (27-29) – These verses speak of the actual dedication of the wall of the city. This is a type of celebration that continues in our day as well. Often when a task is completed there will be a dedication ceremony. What we can discover? We see:

A. The Invitation – Nehemiah sought the Levites and the singers from among their places to attend the dedication. These were expected to have part in such a ceremony and Nehemiah has extended a special invitation for them to come and help lead in this celebration.

- There is a great application for the children of God in this passage. We have an open invitation to attend regular celebration services that are held at the house of God. Particularly those who have leadership positions are expected to be there, but it is encouraging to know that we are welcomed and wanted in an atmosphere of worship and adoration for our Lord.
- I couldn't help but consider the great celebration that will happen one day as the New Jerusalem comes down from God out of heaven. That will be a celebration unlike any we've ever experienced and the invitation is extended to all who will come to Christ by faith. The Lord paid our sin debt upon the cross, providing reconciliation for all who believe, and He is inviting all to come unto Him.

B. The Celebration (27) – And at the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem they sought the Levites out of all their places, to bring them to Jerusalem, to keep the dedication with gladness, both with thanksgivings, and with singing, with cymbals, psalteries, and with harps. The people came with all the instruments of praise and worship unto the Lord. They didn't cut any corners, offering their very best to the Lord.

- That ought to be the desire of our hearts each and every day. Each day we enjoy His benefits and God is worthy of our praise each day. We will one day worship around the throne of God as we stand before Him in heaven. What a celebration that will be!

C. The Participation (28-29) – This was a grand celebration for the dedication of the city wall, but it was not reserved for only those who dwelt within the city. Many came from the plain country round about Jerusalem. These had likely helped with the construction of the walls and Nehemiah wanted to ensure that all had an opportunity to attend. This was a celebration for those who had returned from captivity, a day of national worship and celebration.

- As I pondered these verses I was reminded of the Kingdom of God. His kingdom is a vast kingdom, made up of all races, kindreds, and tongues. There are born again believers all over the world. When the Lord comes again for His own, all who have believed in Him will be included in that number. As we gather together in heaven, all will be present and accounted for. There won't be a one that was saved left out or overlooked.

I. The Dedication of the City (27-29)

II. The Purification of the City (30) – And the priests and the Levites purified themselves, and purified the people, and the gates, and the wall. Nehemiah ensured that all were ceremonially clean for the dedication of the city wall. Let's consider this purification. We see the purification of:

A. The Priests – These were regularly and faithfully engaged in the work of the Lord. The priests and the Levites were the spiritual leaders of the people, but they too need to be pure. Even though they were engaged in the work of the Lord daily, they needed to take inventory of their lives and make sure they were clean before the Lord.

- That truth needs to be emphasized in our day as well. Being busy in the work of the Lord on a regular basis does not ensure purity. Being in a place of leadership or authority within the church does not excuse one from the obligation of personal purity. We all need to take inventory of our lives to ensure that our hearts are right with God.

B. The People (30) – [And the priests and the Levites purified themselves, and purified the people.](#) Not only did the priests and Levites need to be pure, the people did as well. They were coming together in worship before the Lord and all needed to be pure.

- Righteous living is not reserved for the pastor and church leadership. All of God's children have an obligation to live lives that honor the Lord. The only way that is possible is to live a pure life, free of unconfessed sin. I can do my best to live for the Lord, but I can't live your life for you. You too must seek to live upright before the Lord.

C. The Possession (30) – [And the priests and the Levites purified themselves, and purified the people, and the gates, and the wall.](#) They even purified the gates and the wall itself. This was a ceremonial cleansing, but I am sure that they wanted to rid the city of any dirt or filth that might mar the celebration. They wanted to ensure that all looked as good as it possibly could for the Lord.

- There is a great lesson for us in this as well. We too need to do all we can to ensure that our lives present a righteous testimony for the Lord. We cannot expect to honor the Lord or influence others if we surround ourselves with the filth and lusts of this world.

- We are watched more carefully than we care to admit. The world notices how we dress, speak, and act. They notice the things that we possess and where we place our emphasis. [We must abstain from even the appearance of evil.](#) If you have to question whether something may hurt your testimony, I would leave it alone.

I. The Dedication of the City (27-29)

II. The Purification of the City (30)

III. The Procession through the City (31-39) – In these verses we find that Nehemiah appointed two companies, led by the princes of Judah, to proceed throughout the city offering thanksgiving as they went. Each company went in different directions, compassing the city as they marched. Nehemiah records several of the gates and the other significant locations within the city that the people passed by.

- Take a moment to imagine this scene. The people had labored hard against great adversity and opposition. God had blessed their efforts and they had succeeded in restoring the city walls. Sanballat, Tobiah, and others had said it would never be accomplished, but they were faithful to the task and finished the work.

- Now we see a grand parade marching around the city, upon the wall. The residents of the city could see the parade as they marched. The naysayers had spoken, but God provided victory in the end. We are all familiar with parades. Often they create a sense of excitement and thankfulness or patriotism.
- Looking at this from a spiritual perspective, we ought to have a personal parade once in a while. It does us good to thoughtfully march around the walls of our lives and count the many blessings we have received from the good hand of God. No doubt there are some landmarks and stones we have set up along the way that we need to be reminded of. There have been times in all our lives when it seemed as if we would never make it, and yet God was faithful. We have all enjoyed great victories, and even some humbling defeats, that brought us closer to the Lord. It would do us all good to have a parade of praise from time to time.

I. The Dedication of the City (27-29)

II. The Purification of the City (30)

III. The Procession through the City (31-39)

IV. The Adoration of the City (40-47) – In the closing verses Nehemiah records the praise and adoration of the people for the Lord. The two companies met at the house of God and began to worship. Consider the aspects of their worship.

- **Thanksgiving** (40) – this speaks of confession and praise, songs of worship.
- **Singing** (42) – The people lifted their voices in songs of praise and adoration.
- **Sacrifice** (43) – They also offered sacrifices unto the Lord within the Temple. Jesus fulfilled the righteous demands of the Father and sacrifices are no longer needed to secure our salvation, but we are commanded to offer the sacrifice of praise unto the Lord. [Heb.13:15 – By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.](#)
- **Worship** (43) – The people genuinely and openly worshipped the Lord. God had filled their hearts with joy and they rejoiced before Him in worship.
- **Testimony** (43) – [so that the joy of Jerusalem was heard even afar off.](#) Their worship was offered in such a way that it could be heard beyond Jerusalem. I am not advocating that we worship so people three miles away can hear it, but that we worship and live for God in such a way that other will notice and seek the Lord themselves.

- **Submission (44-47)** – This worship service moved the people to action. They wanted to ensure that worship continued in Jerusalem. They made provision for the continuation of worship, knowing this was pleasing unto the Lord and beneficial for the people.

Once again we have discussed a very encouraging and challenging passage in Nehemiah. The worship of the people in Jerusalem serves as a reminder of our need and obligation to worship the Lord. He is worthy of all the worship we can give and more. We all have reason to worship and I pray that we will humble ourselves in offering that worship.

This passage also reminds us of the great celebration that awaits all the redeemed. We will one day enter that glorious city of rest, dwelling in the presence of our Lord forevermore. The question is: have you made preparation to enter the gates of the city? Heaven is a prepared place for prepared people. All of the saved and only the saved will enter there.