



Rice Memorial MBC

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Dedication of the Wall

Definitions in **bold** letters are from **Strong's** Exhaustive Concordance
Other definitions are from **Webster's** Dictionary, 1828 Edition
or Roget's Thesaurus – **August 18, 2013**

Worship with us at **3201 Mary St** until we rebuild our sanctuary at 802 W. 15th,
... We're just behind Kaufman's Lumber Company in Little Rock Arkansas

Nehemiah 12:27-36, 38, 43

Introduction: This chapter gives an account of the chief of the priests and Levites in the days of Zerubbabel, Jeshua, Joiakim, Eliashib, and Nehemiah, Ne 12:1-26, of the **dedication** (act of devoting, honor and approve) of the **wall** of Jerusalem, and of the **JOY** expressed on that occasion, Ne 12:27-43, and of the appointment of some persons over the treasuries for the priests, Levites, **singers**, and porters (door-keeper), Ne 12:44-47.
(Source: biblestudytools.com/commentaries/gills-exposition-of-the-bible/)

Nehemiah 12:26-29, *These were in the days of Joiakim the son of Jeshua, the son of Jozadak, and in the days of Nehemiah the **governor**, and of Ezra the priest, the **scribe**. 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. And the sons of the **singers** gathered themselves together, both out of the plain country round about Jerusalem, and from the villages of Netophathi; Also from the house of Gilgal, and out of the fields of Geba and Azmaveth: for the singers had builded them villages round about Jerusalem.*

NOTE: Although our text does not give us the exact date of the dedication, the historical note in, "Second Maccabees 1:18 gives the date of the dedication as the twenty fifth of the ninth month (Kislew), only **three months** after the completion of the wall." (Source: *Coffman Commentaries on the Old & New Testament* classic.studylight.org/com/bcc/)

NOTE: a. The **Levites** had many **responsibilities** in the life and **worship** of Israel, but one of the most important jobs they had was to lead the people in songs of worship and praise to God

b. Mostly, they did not sing without musical instruments; here are specifically mentioned *cymbals and stringed instruments and harps* i. There are at least **twenty-two** different musical instruments mentioned in the Bible, including the harp, the lyre (an ancient guitar), horns, trumpets, flutes, tambourines, drums, cymbals, and bells
ii. The Levites were specially **appointed** to use these instruments to lead the people in worshipping God through singing

c. There were also specially **appointed** singers; the singers in Nehemiah's day had a **close-knit bond** (*sons of the singers . . . the singers had built themselves villages*) i. Since the job of these singers was to lead the people in worship of God, they had to be **good singers**; but more importantly, they had to be people of WORSHIP themselves ii. There is a huge

difference between being a **great singer** and being a **great leader of songs** of worship **to God**; worship should be EXCELLENT, but it isn't ENTERTAINMENT. The goal isn't to give the people a good feeling (though that may happen), but to give **glory** and **honor** to God. (Source: David Guzik's Commentaries on the Bible classic.studydrive.org/com/guz)

Thought 1. Jesus echoed this truth in John 4 when talking to the woman at the well.

John 4:20-24, Our fathers **worshipped** in this mountain; and ye say, that in **Jerusalem** is the place where men ought to worship. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.

Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the **true worshippers** shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a **SPIRIT**: and they that **WORSHIP** him **must** worship him in **SPIRIT** and in **TRUTH**.

Spirit defined 4151, pneuma pnyoo'-mah; i.e. breath (blast) or a breeze; by analogy or figuratively, a spirit (an immaterial INTELLIGENT being), **LIFE**. Immaterial, not consisting of MATTER (This means material consist of matter)

Thought 2 We know that God is not AIR like we breathe, even though "pneuma" is the Greek word for Spirit. But, he is an immaterial intelligent being; life. This proves just because a word CAN mean something, doesn't mean that it does.

Worship defined 4352, do reverence to, ADORE (1. to worship with profound (deep) REVERENCE 2. To love in the highest degree; to regard with the utmost esteem, affection and respect).

Reverence, **1. deep respect** and esteem (high value, regards) mingled with FEAR and affection (LOVE). (1913 Webster's) **2.** The fear acceptable to God, is a filial [child in relation to his parents] fear, an awful reverence of the divine nature, proceeding from a just esteem [high value, regards] of his PERFECTIONS [infinite power, holiness, justice, benevolence and wisdom], which produces in us an inclination (leaning of the MIND or WILL) TO his service and an unwillingness to offend him.

Spirit defined 4151, mind (1. the heart or seat of affection: passion, feeling, LOVE).

Thought 3. Reverence is the MOOD of true worship. It's in our mind as we look at who our Father and the Lord Jesus are as we sing to them, and about them in song, and do the things that make up a worship service. Also, when we think on what they've done for us and others, we have this feeling in our mind because we are **grateful**.

And whether we feel his anointing or not, we know he's pleased, if we meet the requirements of which Jesus spoke. Some people who don't know this try to work themselves into a place so they can feel God every time. This is not true worship.

Truth defined 225, verity (the quality of being TRUE or REAL [not artificial, counterfeit or FACTITIOUS]).

Factitious, unnatural, anything is *unnatural* when it departs in any way from its simple or normal state; it is *factitious* when it is wrought [worked] out or wrought **[worked] up** by LABOR [1. exertion of muscular strength 2. Intellectual exertion] and effort [straining], as, a *factitious* excitement.

Nehemiah 12:30, And the priests and the Levites **purified** themselves, and **purified** the people, and the gates, and the wall.

NOTE: This consisted in **washings**, abstinence from wine, and other matters, which, on all

other occasions, were lawful. And as to the purifying of the gates and the walls, nothing was requisite but to remove all **filth** from the former, and all **rubbish** that might have been laid against the latter. (Source: *The Adam Clarke Commentary* classic.studydrive.org/com/acc/)

Numbers 8:5-7, 20-22, And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Take the **Levites** from among the children of Israel, and **cleanse** them. And thus shalt thou DO unto them, to **cleanse them: Sprinkle water** of purifying upon them, and let them shave all their flesh, and let them WASH their clothes, and so make themselves clean. ...And Moses, and Aaron, and all the congregation of the children of Israel, **did** to the Levites according unto all that the Lord commanded Moses concerning the Levites, so did the children of Israel unto them. And the Levites were **purified**, and they **washed** their clothes; and **Aaron** offered them as an **offering** before the LORD; and Aaron made an atonement for them to cleanse them. And after that went the Levites in to do their service in the tabernacle of the congregation before Aaron, and before his sons: as the Lord had commanded Moses concerning the Levites, so did they unto them.

Nehemiah 12:31-38, Then I brought up the princes of Judah **upon the wall**, and **appointed TWO great companies** of them that **gave thanks**, whereof ONE went on the right hand upon the wall toward the **dung gate**: And after them went Hoshaiiah, and half of the princes of Judah, And Azariah, Ezra, and Meshullam, Judah, and Benjamin, and Shemaiah, and Jeremiah, And certain of the priests' sons with **trumpets**; namely, Zechariah the son of Jonathan, the son of Shemaiah, the son of Mattaniah, the son of Michaiah, the son of Zaccur, the son of Asaph: And his brethren, Shemaiah, and Azarael, Milalai, Gilalai, Maai, Nethaneel, and Judah, Hanani, with the musical instruments of **David** the man of God, and Ezra the scribe before them. And at the **fountain gate**, which was over against them, they went up by the stairs of the city of David, at the going up of the wall, above the house of David, even unto the **water gate** eastward. And the other company of them that **gave thanks** went over against them, and I after them, and the half of the people upon the wall, from beyond the tower of the furnaces even unto the **broad wall**...

NOTE: The procession went to the Broad Wall. This may refer to the wall built by Hezekiah extending to the West. Its name may have come from its unusual thickness (**twenty-three feet**). From there the **choir** moved around the north side of Jerusalem to the east. Two groups then went into the temple together.

(Source: *The Bible Expositor and Illuminator, Union Press Publication-Christian Life Series*)

NOTE: Many of the older scholars thought that the grand processions, one moving clockwise, the other counter clockwise, circled the wall around the city, walking on the ground; but the text here flatly declares that **they marched atop the wall**. This is to be trusted as the way it happened. Excavations by Kathleen Kenyon in Jerusalem have indicated that, Nehemiah's wall was **nine feet wide**. As Hamrick noted, That was ample room for a procession to move along the top of it. (Our map, p. 138, will show how the processions proceeded.)

These verses concern only half the procession; there were two, one led by Ezra the priest the scribe, and the other by the governor Nehemiah. Both began in the area between the Dung Gate and the Valley Gate, Ezra moving northward around the **eastern wall** of the city, and Nehemiah and his procession heading northward around the **western wall**, both processions coming together in the vicinity of the temple.

(Source: *Coffman Commentaries on the Old & New Testament* classic.studydrive.org/com/bcc/)

Nehemiah 12:39-43, And from above the gate of **Ephraim**, and above the **old gate**, and above the fish gate, and the tower of Hananeel, and the tower of Meah, even unto the sheep gate: and they stood still in the prison gate.

So stood the **two companies** of them that **gave thanks** in the house of God, and I, and the half of the rulers with me: And the priests; Eliakim, Maaseiah, Miniamin, Michaiah, Elioenai,

*Zechariah, and Hananiah, with trumpets; And Maaseiah, and Shemaiah, and Eleazar, and Uzzi, and Jehohanan, and Malchijah, and Elam, and Ezer. And the singers sang **LOUD**, with Jezrahiah their OVERSEER. Also that day they offered great sacrifices, and **rejoiced**: for God had **MADE** them **rejoice** with **great joy**: the wives also and the children **rejoiced**: so that the **JOY** of Jerusalem was **heard** even **afar off**.*

NOTE: a. The TWO large choirs were called **thanksgiving choirs** for good reason; all praise and worship must have a strong element of thanksgiving to God for it to be genuine.
i. Notice that *the singers sang loudly*; they had to be heard, because as glorious as the instruments were, the people would **follow the lead** of the singers in worship
b. With the choirs assembled, and the people spread all about, *God made them rejoice with great joy*. They were overwhelmed with joy and thanksgiving, considering all God had done
c. This tremendous experience of worship was for everyone; *the women and the children also rejoiced*. There weren't some who weren't able to worship
d. *The joy of Jerusalem was heard afar off*: their worship was **a testimony** to others, and what others heard was not so much the singing itself as the joy.

We often worry about others hearing us sing; but what God wants to hear and what others should hear is not so much your singing, but your JOY.

(Source: David Guzik's Commentaries on the Bible classic.studylight.org/com/guz)

NOTE: At length both companies **met** in the **temple**, where they joined their thanksgivings, Nehemiah 12:40. The **crowd** of people, it is likely, walked on the **ground**, some within the wall and others without, one end of this ceremony being to affect them with the **mercy** they were **giving thanks** for, and to perpetuate the remembrance of it among them. Processions, for such purposes, have their use. (3.) The people greatly rejoiced, Nehemiah 12:43. While the princes, priests, and Levites, testified their joy and thankfulness by great sacrifices, sound of trumpet, musical instruments, and songs of praise, the **common people** testified theirs by **loud shouts**, which were heard afar off, further than the more harmonious sound of their songs and music: and these shouts, coming from a **sincere** and hearty joy, are here taken notice of; for God overlooks not, but graciously accepts, the honest zealous services of mean people, though there is in them little of art and they are far from being fine. It is observed that the women and children rejoiced; and their hosannas were not despised, but recorded to their praise. All that share in public mercies ought to join in public thanksgivings. The reason given is that God had made them rejoice with great joy. He had given them both matter for joy and hearts to rejoice; his providence had made them **safe** and **easy**, and then his grace made them cheerful and thankful. The baffled opposition of their enemies, no doubt, added to their joy and mixed triumph with it. Great mercies call for the most solemn returns of praise, in the courts of the Lord's house, in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem!

(Source: *The Matthew Henry Commentary on the whole Bible* classic.studylight.org/com/mhc)

Thought 1. One thing we must never forget is even though there is shouting taking place in their midst to make a JOYFUL noise unto their God, it's a **reverential noise**. In other words, it's not "noise" for the sake of noise. It's a noise that never lost the RESPECT, LOVE, high REGARD, AWE, and FEAR like a child would have of their parents whom they don't want to offend, or displease.

Remember, as a nation, they're rebuilding AFTER being in CAPTIVITY for seventy years! It's time to rejoice over every bit of progress made toward getting things back to the way they were before "SIN" caused them, as a nation, to be punished. So, when they sang, played their instruments, and shouted, they were ever aware of the fact it's necessary to "keep it REAL" and not put on a show! When people are coming out a situation like this one, they are truly "thankful" and "grateful" to be back to their own country. It's like the saying in the Wizard of Oz movie, **"There's no place like HOME."** Even when we go on vacation and come back home, that saying rings true to us. How much more, after being in captivity for seventy years?