

Neh 7:1 Now when the wall had been built and I had set up the doors, and the gatekeepers, the singers, and the Levites had been appointed,

Neh 7:2 I gave my brother Hanani and Hananiah the governor of the castle charge over Jerusalem, for he was a more faithful and God-fearing man than many.

Neh 7:3 And I said to them, "Let not the gates of Jerusalem be opened until the sun is hot. And while they are still standing guard, let them shut and bar the doors. Appoint guards from among the inhabitants of Jerusalem, some at their guard posts and some in front of their own homes."

Neh 7:4 The city was wide and large, but the people within it were few, and no houses had been rebuilt.

Neh 7:5 Then my God put it into my heart to assemble the nobles and the officials and the people to be enrolled by genealogy. And I found the book of the genealogy of those who came up at the first, and I found written in it:

Neh 7:6 These were the people of the province who came up out of the captivity of those exiles whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried into exile. They returned to Jerusalem and Judah, each to his town.

Neh 7:7 They came with Zerubbabel, Jeshua, Nehemiah, Azariah, Raamiah, Nahamani, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispereth, Bigvai, Nehum, Baanah. The number of the men of the people of Israel:

Neh 7:60 All the temple servants and the sons of Solomon's servants were 392.

Neh 7:61 The following were those who came up from Tel-melah, Tel-harsha, Cherub, Addon, and Immer, but they could not prove their fathers' houses nor their descent, whether they belonged to Israel:

Neh 7:62 the sons of Delaiah, the sons of Tobiah, the sons of Nekoda, 642.

Neh 7:63 Also, of the priests: the sons of Hobaiah, the sons of Hakkoz, the sons of Barzillai (who had taken a wife of the daughters of Barzillai the Gileadite and was called by their name).

Neh 7:64 These sought their registration among those enrolled in the genealogies, but it was not found there, so they were excluded from the priesthood as unclean.

Neh 7:65 The governor told them that they were not to partake of the most holy food until a priest with Urim and Thummim should arise.

Neh 7:66 The whole assembly together was 42,360,

Neh 7:67 besides their male and female servants, of whom there were 7,337. And they had 245 singers, male and female.

Neh 7:68 Their horses were 736, their mules 245,

Neh 7:69 their camels 435, and their donkeys 6,720.

Neh 7:70 Now some of the heads of fathers' houses gave to the work. The governor gave to the treasury 1,000 darics of gold, 50 basins, 30 priests' garments and 500 minas of silver.

Neh 7:71 And some of the heads of fathers' houses gave into the treasury of the work 20,000 darics of gold and 2,200 minas of silver.

Neh 7:72 And what the rest of the people gave was 20,000 darics of gold, 2,000 minas of silver, and 67 priests' garments.

Neh 7:73 So the priests, the Levites, the gatekeepers, the singers, some of the people, the temple servants, and all Israel, lived in their towns. And when the seventh month had come, the people of Israel were in their towns.

Neh 7:1 Now when the wall had been built and I had set up the doors, and the gatekeepers, the singers, and the Levites had been appointed,

1 Ch 23:2 David assembled all the leaders of Israel and the priests and the Levites.

1 Ch 23:3 The Levites, thirty years old and upward, were numbered, and the total was 38,000 men.

1 Ch 23:4 “Twenty-four thousand of these,” David said, “shall have charge of the work in the house of the LORD, 6,000 shall be officers and judges,

1 Ch 23:5 **4,000 gatekeepers, and 4,000 shall offer praises to the LORD with the instruments that I have made for praise.”**

1 Ch 23:6 And **David organized them in divisions corresponding to the sons of Levi: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari.**

Question: 7:1 When the building work was done, the gatekeepers, the singers, and the Levites were firstly appointed. There must be some reasons why they were firstly appointed. What can we learn from such an appointment in our church life?

Fellowship: According to the account of David’s plan for the service of the temple in 1 Chronicles, all the serving ones were in fact Levites. Today, every believer in Christ is a priest and a Levite. The gatekeepers, the singers and the Levites, according to Nehemiah 7:1, may seem to be separate individuals. Actually, according to 1 Chronicles 23:5, the gatekeepers were the singers. They may have had a dual function.

What does this mean to us? In the church life, every believer is a Levite, according to the divine birth. However, not all may function accordingly. The gatekeepers are those who watch and guard the testimony of the church. These are the pillars. They are not alone but they are built up into teams of saints, with a burden. They are sensitive to know the condition of the saints, to be with and among the saints, and to know the needs of the saints. Their knowledge of the saints is not based on their natural human wisdom or capacity, but based on their fresh knowledge and experience of Christ. This is through the praising and thanksgiving (singing) in the church gatherings. Any Levitical gatekeeper must open their mouth to praise and thank the Lord. While this is not a law or a requirement, it is a fundamental aspect of serving as a Levite. We may be so bold as to say that any brother or sister serving as a Levite should learn to open their mouth to praise and thank the Lord. Then, the Lord’s testimony can be properly guarded

Neh 7:5 Then my God put it into my heart to assemble the nobles and the officials and the people to be enrolled by genealogy. And **I found the book of the genealogy of those who came up at the first, and I found written in it:**

Neh 7:6 These were the people of the province who came up out of the captivity of those exiles whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried into exile. They returned to Jerusalem and Judah, each to his town.

Neh 7:7 They came with Zerubbabel, Jeshua, Nehemiah, Azariah, Raamiah, Nahamani, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispereth, Bigvai, Nehum, Baanah. The number of the men of the people of Israel:

Neh 7:66 **The whole assembly together was 42,360,**

Neh 7:67 besides **their male and female servants, of whom there were 7,337.** And they had **245 singers, male and female.**

Jer 33:13 In the cities of the hill country, in the cities of the Shephelah, and in the cities of the Negeb, in the land of Benjamin, the places about Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah, **flocks shall again pass under the hands of the one who counts them,** says the LORD.

Question: God touched Nehemiah's heart to count the returned exiles. It must be very important, and many details were also recorded in this chapter. What did God want us to know about such counting?

Fellowship:

1. God is very detailed and thorough. He has written His word, the Bible. Indeed, He spoke creation into being, but the spoken word has been written, and eventually became incarnated. This shows that God never does anything haphazardly, or by chance. There is always a written record of what God wants us to know, so that we can refer to it again and again.
2. God has a plan and a purpose. The detailed recording of data enabled Nehemiah, through God's leading and direction, to formulate a plan. Nehemiah paid attention to data. He did research by finding the book of genealogy and finding the names of those enrolled in it who had returned from the Babylonian captivity under Nebuchadnezzar.
3. God knows each sheep by name. Nehemiah knew many of the brothers by name. For example, he knew Hanani (v.2) as a person more faithful and God-fearing than others, and therefore was able to appoint him in charge over Jerusalem. Do we know the names of the saints? Do we know the names of the saints' children?
4. Do we count all the graces or blessings that God gives to us, for the church to grow? Such a counting may encourage us to pursue the Lord more and seek to know the saints more.

Neh 7:63 Also, of the priests: the sons of Hobaiah, the sons of Hakkoz, the sons of Barzillai (who had taken a wife of the daughters of Barzillai the Gileadite and was called by their name).

Neh 7:64 These sought their registration among those enrolled in the genealogies, but it was not found there, so they were excluded from the priesthood as unclean.

Neh 7:65 The governor told them that they were not to partake of the most holy food until a priest with Urim and Thummim should arise.

Ezr 2:61 Also, of the sons of the priests: the sons of Habaiah, the sons of Hakkoz, and the sons of Barzillai (who had taken a wife from the daughters of Barzillai the Gileadite, and was called by their name).

Ezr 2:62 These sought their registration among those enrolled in the genealogies, but they were not found there, and so they were excluded from the priesthood as unclean.

Ezr 2:63 The governor told them that they were not to partake of the most holy food, until there should be a priest to consult Urim and Thummim.

Question: In 7:65 “The governor told them that they were not to partake of the most holy food until a priest with Urim and Thummim should arise”. What is the meaning of this verse?

Fellowship:

These verses may suggest that in the church life, it is not merely a question of a good heart. For example, some saints may desire to be baptized right away. This is a an excellent desire, and there should be no criticism of such a desire. However, there may be the need of Urim and Thummim (God’s provision in the Old Testament) to “read” the saints and know, to a certain extent, the condition of the saints. Is anyone accompanying the saint who desires to be baptized? Another example: a brother or sister desires to serve in some capacity. But is that saint in the church life? Does he or she praise and thank the Lord? This is not to pass judgment or condemn anyone, but rather to read the saints and care for their growth and the growth of the church. “Genealogy” may indicate knowing who beget who. In other words, who is my “spiritual father?” Or whom am I begetting? Who raised me up? Whom am I raising up?

Neh 7:68 **Their horses were 736, their mules 245,**

Neh 7:69 **their camels 435, and their donkeys 6,720.**

Jon 4:10 And the LORD said, “You pity the plant, for which you did not labor, nor did you make it grow, which came into being in a night and perished in a night.

Jon 4:11 And should not I pity Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than 120,000 persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and **also much cattle?**”

Pro 12:10 **Whoever is righteous has regard for the life of his beast,** but the mercy of the wicked is cruel.

Num 22:28 Then the LORD opened the mouth of the donkey, and she said to Balaam, “**What have I done to you, that you have struck me these three times?**”

Num 22:29 And Balaam said to the donkey, “Because you have made a fool of me. I wish I had a sword in my hand, for then I would kill you.”

Num 22:30 And the donkey said to Balaam, “Am I not your donkey, on which you have ridden all your life long to this day? Is it my habit to treat you this way?” And he said, “No.”

Question: 7:68-69 What is the special meaning of counting animals?

Fellowship:

Both Ezra and Nehemiah paid attention, not only to the spiritual welfare of the people of Judah, but also to their humanity. To me, the fact that Nehemiah paid attention to the number of animals shows his humanity, that is, the humanity of Christ. God pays attention to the animals, which are the possession of mankind (Genesis 1:26), to serve them. Do we pay attention to the human needs of the saints, for example, their studies, their jobs? Do we know what they are studying, how they are doing, what jobs they have? All of these details may help us to eventually provide proper help or suggestions for them to grow in the church life. If we are not able to care for the human needs of the saints, it will be very difficult for us to care for their spiritual needs. Much of what we share will be doctrine or knowledge.

God, in His compassion and mercy, cares for human beings, but also for the animals. God spared Nineveh during Jonah’s time, but not only the human beings but also the animals. In the giving of the law and the ordinances, God pays great attention to the treatment of animals by human beings. This shows God’s humanity.

David Shen

7:1 Now when **the wall had been built and I had set up the doors**, and the gatekeepers, the singers, and the Levites had been appointed,

7:2 I gave my brother Hanani and Hananiah the governor of the castle charge over Jerusalem, for he was a more faithful and God-fearing man than many.

7:3 And I said to them, “Let not the gates of Jerusalem be opened until the sun is hot. And while they are still standing guard, let them shut and bar the doors. Appoint guards from among the inhabitants of Jerusalem, some at their guard posts and some in front of their own homes.”

7:4 **The city was wide and large, but the people within it were few, and no houses had been rebuilt.**

The function of the door is to let people come in and out. Some people or things can be allowed to stay in the church, and some must be kept out of the church. When the church has just been established and the lives of the saints are not very strong, there must be strict control. As described in 7:3, the door can only be opened when the sun comes out, and the door should be closed before dark, indicating that the church is holy. Don't let negative elements enter the church life. The fact that there were few residents in the city shows that there are not many saints with life and experience, and they need extra protection. In addition, in 7:1, we see that the church must not only have gatekeepers, but also those who sing praises and a group of ministers (priests).

David Shen

Chapter 7 verses 5 to 62 describe in detail the names and numbers of those who returned to Jerusalem from the exile. This time the act of counting the number of people was not initiated by humans, but by God. Nehemiah was very good at cooperating with God. He knew that God remembered the returnees of Judah. Therefore, he recorded the names so that we would not forget them. They were willing to pay a price of even their lives for God's rights. Today we also need to pay a price for the Lord, that is, to do our best. This requires not only a good heart or good intentions, but also exercise and practice: reading the Lord's words every day to let the light shine, preaching the gospel with companions, having companions and fellowship, and so on.

David Shen

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7:73 So the priests, the Levites, the gatekeepers, the singers, some of the people, the temple servants, and all Israel, lived in their towns. And when the seventh month had come, the people of Israel were in their towns.

There are financial offering dedications here, and the patriarchs and the governor became role models, but they were humble and hidden. In Chapter 7:70, the names of the head and governor are not written, but in chapter 8:9, Nehemiah is referred to as governor. The following chapters also mention the names of some patriarchs.

Neh 7:1 Now when the wall had been built and I had **set up the doors**, and **the gatekeepers, the singers, and the Levites** had been appointed,

Neh 7:2 **I gave my brother Hanani and Hananiah the governor of the castle charge over Jerusalem, for he was a more faithful and God-fearing man than many.**

Neh 7:3 And I said to them, “Let not the gates of Jerusalem be opened until the sun is hot. And while they are still standing guard, let them shut and bar the doors. Appoint guards from among the inhabitants of Jerusalem, **some at their guard posts and some in front of their own homes.**”

In the Old Testament, Neh 7:1 and Neh 7:2 mentions that Nehemiah appointed Hanani (Neh 1:2) who was his brother and cared very much for the situation of the Israelis in Jerusalem, and Hananiah who was a more faithful and God-fearing man than many, to be in charge over Jerusalem. This means that the decision was entirely in the heart of Nehemiah. **However, in the New Testament (Acts 6:2-3) the service members were selected first through the fellowship among disciples (saints who were relatively willing to pursue the Lord), and then appointed by the apostles.**

Nehemiah not only asked the gatekeepers to watch the gates, but also appointed guards from among the inhabitants of Jerusalem, some at their guard posts and some in front of their own homes. **This means that every one functions and all the members serve, but with the consideration of humanity (some in front of their own homes).**

Neh 1:2 that **Hanani, one of my brothers**, came with certain men from Judah. And I asked them concerning the Jews who escaped, who had survived the exile, and concerning Jerusalem.

Acts 6:2 And the **twelve summoned the full number of the disciples** and said, “It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables.

Acts 6:3 Therefore, brothers, **pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom**, whom we will appoint to this duty.

Neh 7:1 Now when the wall had been built and I had set up the doors, and the gatekeepers, the singers, and the Levites had been appointed,

Neh 7:73 So the priests, the Levites, the gatekeepers, the singers, some of the people, the temple servants, and all Israel, lived in their towns. And when the seventh month had come, the people of Israel were in their towns.

Question 1:

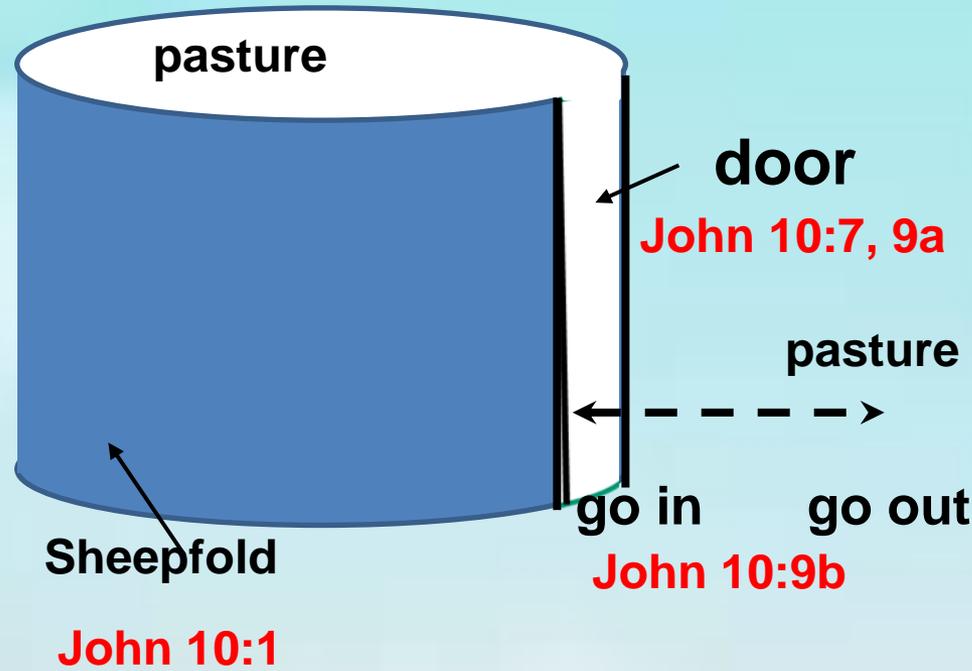
7:1 When the building work was done, the gatekeepers, the singers, and the Levites were firstly appointed. There must be some reason why they were firstly appointed. What can we learn from such an appointment in our church life?

Fellowship:

The church needs to have many service teams but follows three organic orders (order of church administration, order of life and order of burden) in the church life. The service teams try to provide support, in Christ's love and humanity, and to meet the needs of the saints in humanity and spiritually.

The brief explanation of the doors (gates) and gatekeepers is given in the next two slides.

Law and Sheepfold



Who is the door (gate)? Christ.

Who is the gatekeeper? Christ.

**What is the reality of the pasture?
Christ.**

**Who calls us out of the sheepfold?
Christ.**

John 10:1 “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber.

John 10:2 **But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.**

John 10:3 **To him the gatekeeper opens.** The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.

John 10:4 When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice.

John 10:5 A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.”

John 10:6 This figure of speech Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

John 10:7 So Jesus again said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, **I am the door of the sheep.**

John 10:8 All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them.

John 10:9 **I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture.**

The importance of the walls and gates in the description of the New Jerusalem

Please pay attention to the adjectives describing the gate

- Rev 21:12** It had a great, **high wall**, with **twelve gates**, and at the **gates twelve angels**, and on the **gates the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel were inscribed**—
- Rev 21:13** on the east **three gates**, on the north **three gates**, on the south **three gates**, and on the west **three gates**.
- Rev 21:14** And the **wall** of the city **had twelve foundations**, and **on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb**.
- Rev 21:15** And the one who spoke with me had **a measuring rod of gold** to **measure** the city and its **gates and walls**.
- Rev 21:16** The city lies foursquare, its length the same as its width. And he measured the city with his rod, 12,000 stadia. Its length and width and height are equal.
- Rev 21:17** He also **measured** its **wall**, 144 cubits by **human measurement**, which is also an **angel's measurement**.
- Rev 21:18** The **wall was built of jasper**, while the city was pure gold, like clear glass.
- Rev 21:19** The **foundations** of the **wall** of the city **were adorned with every kind of jewel**. The first was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald,
- Rev 21:20** the fifth onyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, the twelfth amethyst.
- Rev 21:21** And the **twelve gates** were **twelve pearls**, each of the **gates** made of a single pearl, and the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.

Neh 7:4 The city was wide and large, but the people within it were few, and **no houses had been rebuilt.**

Neh 7:5 Then my God put it into my heart to assemble the nobles and the officials and the people to be enrolled by genealogy. And I found the book of the genealogy of those who came up at the first, and I found written in it:

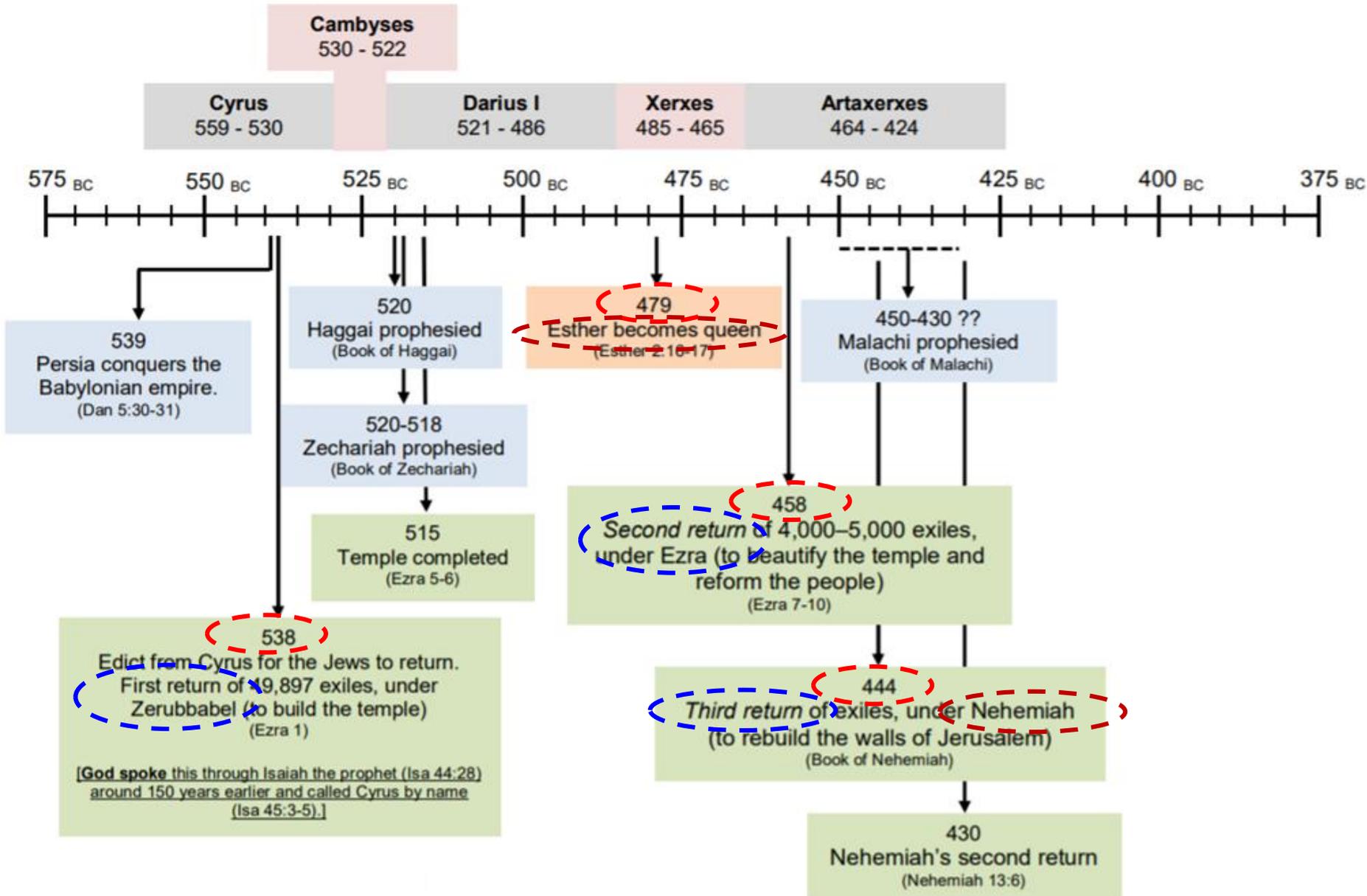
Neh 7:6 These were the people of the province who came up out of the captivity of those exiles whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried into exile. They returned to Jerusalem and Judah, each to his town.

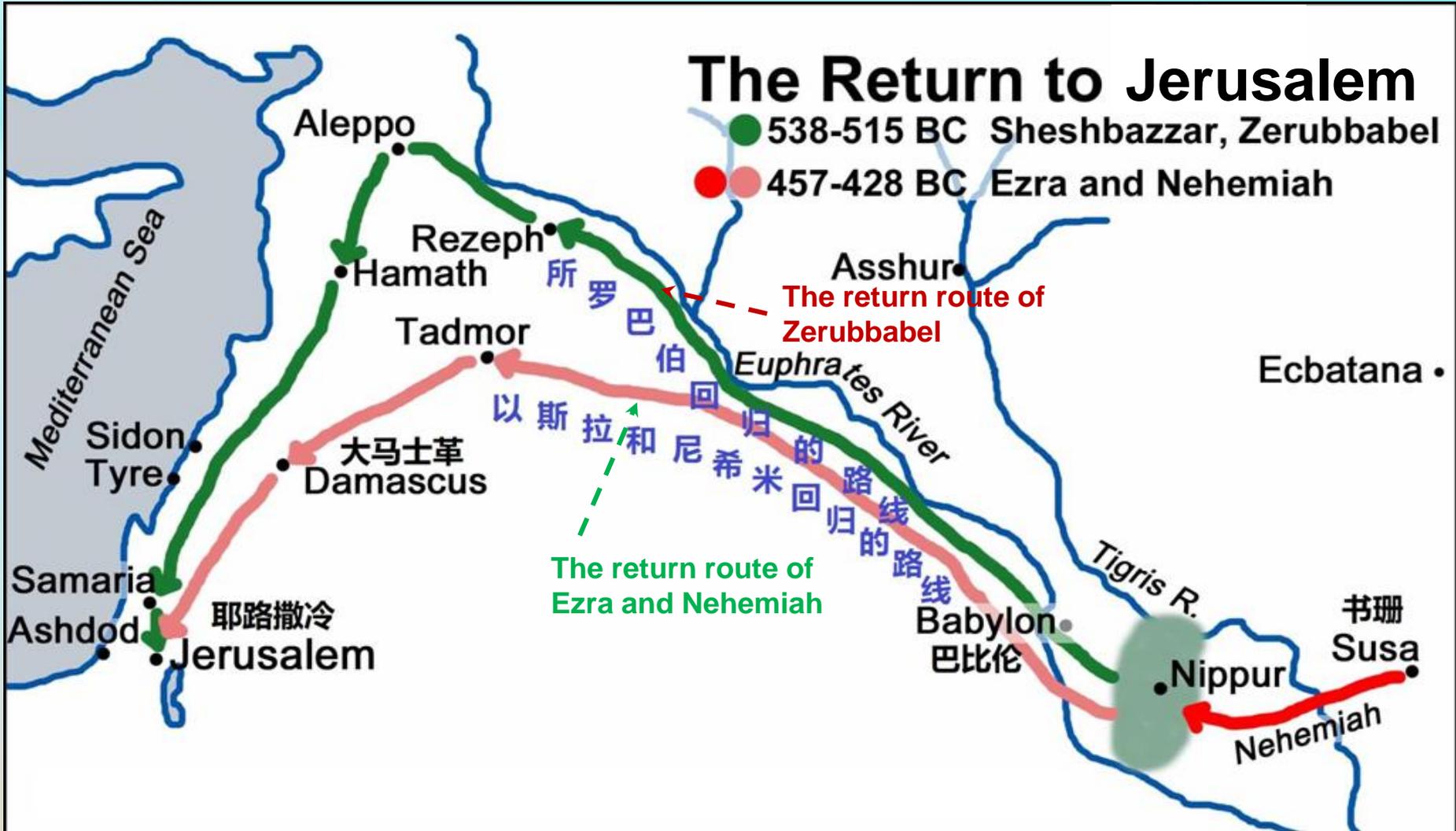
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It was so sweet that the temple, the wall and gates of Jerusalem were rebuilt first, but at the same time so challenging that the people's houses (they had travelled more than 1500 km to return to Jerusalem from the land of their captivities shown in next two slides) were not yet rebuilt. The serving ones need to pay a great attention to that church will not be that healthy for long if the saints' homes do not enjoy the peace, grace and abundant riches of Christ.

Kings of Persia

CK Jen





The Israelites travelled so long a distance (>1600 km) to return to Jerusalem (paid a great price) to rebuild the wall and gates.

Question 2:

God touched Nehemiah's heart to count the returned exiles. It must be very important, and many details were also recorded in this chapter. What does God want us to know about such a counting?

Fellowship:

There are two types of counting recorded in the bible:

1. Initiated by Satan:

1st Chron 21:1 Then **Satan stood against Israel and incited David to number Israel.**

1st Chron 21:2 So David said to Joab and the commanders of the army, "Go, number Israel, from Beersheba to Dan, and bring me a report, that I may know their number."

1st Chron 21:7 **But God was displeased with this thing, and he struck Israel.**

Such a counting, initiated by Satan, would result in the temptation to boast, to be proud and self satisfied, and even depressed (David's case), something which would eventually damage Israel's (the church's) testimony, and enrage God.

2. Initiated by God:

2nd Sam 24:1 Again the anger of Jehovah was kindled against Israel, and he incited David against them, saying, "Go, number Israel and Judah."

2nd Sam 24:2 So the king said to Joab, the commander of the army, who was with him, "Go through all the tribes of Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, and number the people, that I may know the number of the people."

Even though God's anger was kindled against Israel, He incited David to number Israel and Judah with the purpose that David would know the true weak situation of the Israelites in detail, and then be able to lead and bring them back to God. However, David failed in this situation.

The experience of my church life is that God desires all His servants, especially the leading ones (such as David), to pay attention to every saint (counting people) just like in **Col 1:28-29**: “Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. For this I [Paul] toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.” **We need to elevate and enlarge the spiritual life and human living of the saints. The counting from God is not just that of the number of the saints. God desires us to know the detailed situation of the saints so that we can grow together in Him and enhance the testimony of the church to please Him.**

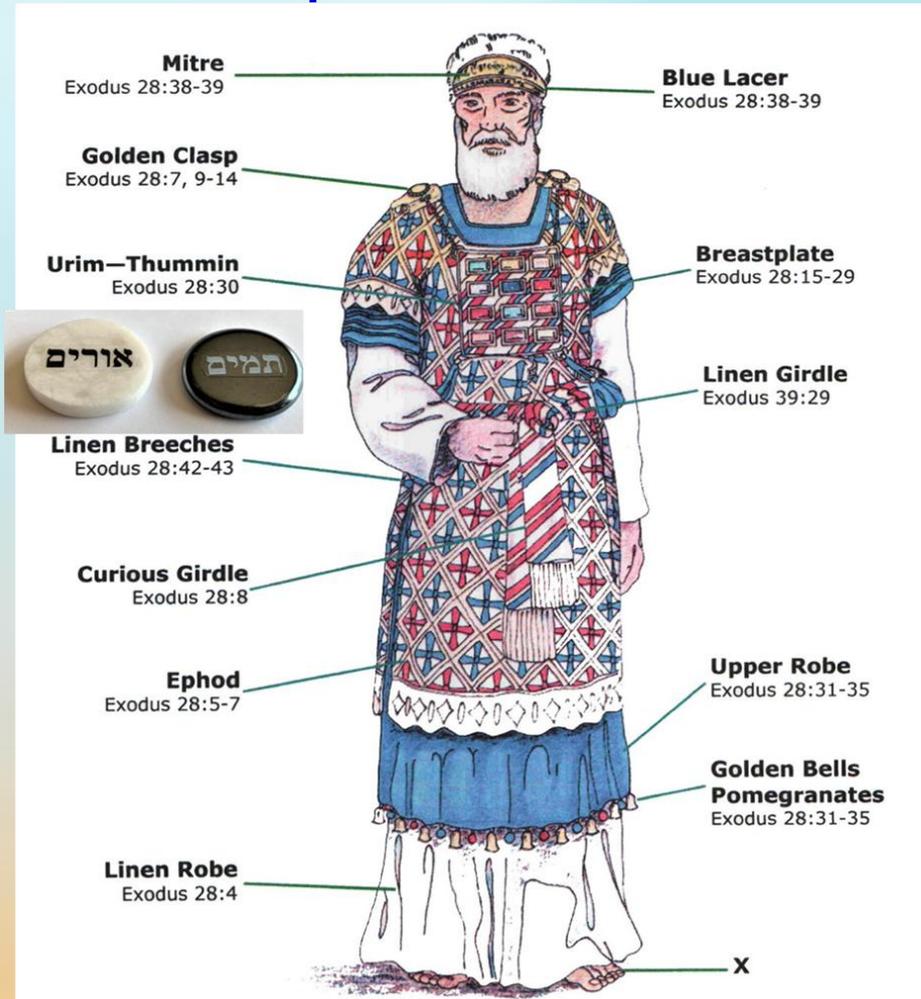
The number of people in Nehemiah chapter 7 is very positive (from God), enabling us to understand (in the church) the function (service) of each person (in the church), each family, and even the animals that carry heavy objects (horses and mules). All the people built the wall and gates of Jerusalem.

The books of Ezra and Nehemiah repeatedly present a clear written recorded list of returning people, showing that this is very important in God’s heart. On the one hand, this list shows that the people were living in the heart’s desire of God and led by God, and on the other hand, this list indicates that the foundation of rebuilding is God’s life. For example, in the exodus from Egypt, God ordered the counting of the people twice (**Num 1:2; Num 26:2**). People without the life of God are unlikely to be able to participate in the spiritual warfare with Satan or inherit God’s inheritance. God also counted the people in Neh 7:6-73 and Ezra 2:1-70), thereby setting forth a positive and healthy example. Today, only the saints who are truly regenerated, who have the life of Christ, and are growing and being perfected, can build the church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Question 3:

7:65 “The governor told them that they were not to partake of the most holy food until a priest with Urim and Thummim should arise.” What is the meaning of this verse?

Fellowship:



The terms "Urim" and "Thummim" have traditionally been understood as "light(s)" and "perfection(s)" or as "perfect light." The Urim and Thummim were a means of revelation entrusted to the high priest.

However, in the Bible, no description of them is given.

It could mean that the Israelites needed a spiritual man (the high priest) to lead them to take (provide) the healthy spiritual food. The **church does need God's leading through the Christ who dwells in the relatively mature saints.**

Neh 7:68 Their horses were 736, their mules 245,

Neh 7:69 their camels 435, and their donkeys 6,720.

Neh 7:70a Now some of the heads of fathers' houses gave to the work.

Question 4:

Neh 7:68-69 What is the special meaning of counting animals?

Fellowship:

These animals were used to carry heavy things and weak people, etc. This means that the church needs to know all its resources, as many as possible and as much in detail as possible.

Neh 7:70b The governor gave to the treasury 1,000 darics of gold, 50 basins, 30 priests' garments and 500 minas of silver.

Neh 7:71 And some of the heads of fathers' houses gave into the treasury of the work 20,000 darics of gold and 2,200 minas of silver.

Neh 7:72 And what the rest of the people gave was 20,000 darics of gold, 2,000 minas of silver, and 67 priests' garments.

The church also needs to know the financial situation, including that of each saint, in as much detail as possible. This is just like in **Exo 12:35** (“**The people of Israel had also done as Moses told them, for they had asked the Egyptians for silver and gold jewelry and for clothing**”), mainly for the building up of the tabernacle (the testimony of the church).