

Nehemiah 11

Verses 1- 2

Now the leaders of the people lived in Jerusalem, but the rest of the people cast lots to bring one out of ten to live in Jerusalem, the holy city, while nine-tenths *remained* in the *other* cities. ² And the people blessed all the men who volunteered to live in Jerusalem.

The leaders had volunteered to live in the city but they needed more people living in the city in order to defend it so some of the common people were chosen by lot.

Verses 3 - 6

Now these are the heads of the provinces who lived in Jerusalem, but in the cities of Judah each lived on his own property in their cities—the Israelites, the priests, the Levites, the temple servants, and the descendants of Solomon’s servants.

⁴ **Some of the sons of Judah and some of the sons of Benjamin lived in Jerusalem.** From the sons of Judah: Athaiah the son of Uzziah, the son of Zechariah, the son of Amariah, the son of Shephatiah, the son of Mahalalel, of the sons of Perez; ⁵ and Maaseiah the son of Baruch, the son of Col-hozeh, the son of Hazaiah, the son of Adaiah, the son of Joarib, the son of Zechariah, the son of the Shilonite. ⁶ **All the sons of Perez** who lived in Jerusalem were 468 able men.

The sons of Judah were all traced back to Perez, one of the twin sons of Judah by his daughter-in-law Tamar and totaled **468 men**.

See Gen 38:29 - 30 Perez and Zerah

²⁷ **It came about at the time she was giving birth, that behold, there were twins in her womb.** ²⁸ **Moreover, it took place while she was giving birth, that one *baby* put out a hand, and the midwife took and tied a scarlet *thread* on his hand, saying, “This one came out first.”** ²⁹ **But it came about as he drew back his hand that behold, his brother came out. Then she said, “What a breach you have made for yourself!” So he was named Perez.** ³⁰ **Afterward his brother came out who had the scarlet *thread* on his hand; and he was named Zerah.**

The family line of Perez covered a period of 1,275 years. The Jews were very good at keeping family records. One reason for this was because the rights to their land were based on their family line. This was both a religious and civil issue.

Verses 7 - 9

Now these are **the sons of Benjamin**: Sallu the son of Meshullam, the son of Joed, the son of Pedaiah, the son of Kolaiah, the son of Maaseiah, the son of Ithiel, the son of Jeshai; ⁸ and after him Gabbai *and* Sallai, 928. ⁹ Joel the son of Zichri was their overseer, and Judah the son of Hassenuah was second in command of the city.

The sons of Benjamin totaled 928 and his family line covered a period of 1295 years. The total number of leaders living in Jerusalem was 1,396.

Verses 10 - 14

From the priests: Jedaiah the son of Joiarib, Jachin, ¹¹ Seraiah the son of Hilkiah, the son of Meshullam, the son of Zadok, the son of Meraioth, the son of Ahitub, the overseer of the house of God, ¹² and their kinsmen who did the work of the temple, 822; and Adaiah the son of Jeroham, the son of Pelaliah, the son of Amzi, the son of Zechariah, the son of Pashhur, the son of Malchijah, ¹³ and his kinsmen, heads of fathers' *households*, 242; and Amashsai the son of Azarel, the son of Ahzai, the son of Meshillemoth, the son of Immer, ¹⁴ and their brothers, valiant warriors, 128. And their overseer was Zabdiel, the son of Haggadolim.

The number of priests numbered 1192.

Verses 15 – 18

¹⁵ **Now from the Levites**: Shemaiah the son of Hasshub, the son of Azrikam, the son of Hashabiah, the son of Bunni; ¹⁶ and Shabbethai and Jozabad, from the leaders of the Levites, who were in charge of the outside work of the house of God; ¹⁷ and Mattaniah the son of Mica, the son of Zabdi, the son of Asaph, who was the leader in beginning the thanksgiving at prayer, and Bakbukiah, the second among his kinsmen; and Abda the son of Shammua, the son of Galal, the son of Jeduthun. ¹⁸ **All the Levites in the holy city were 284.**

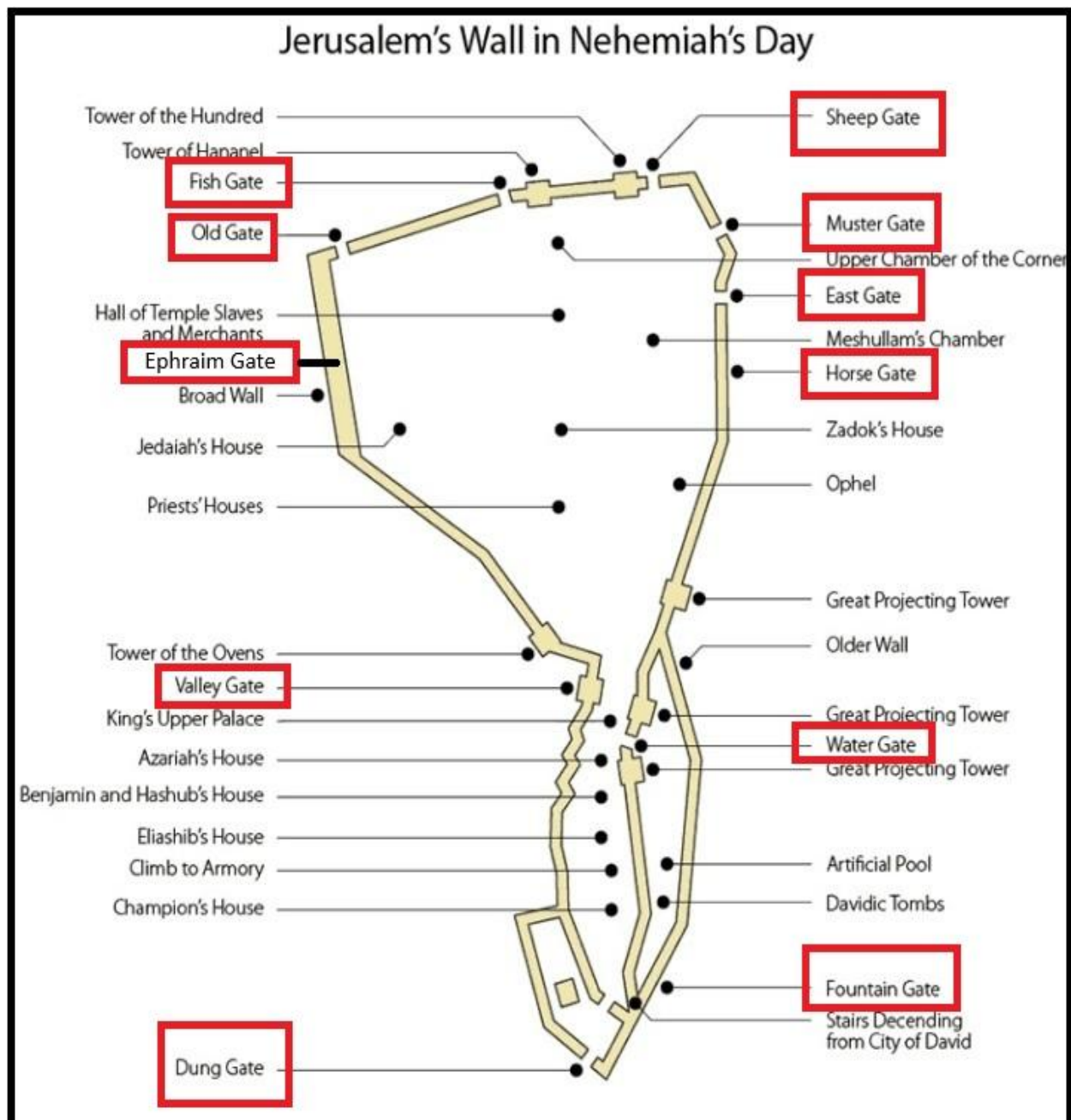
There were 4 times as many priests than there were Levites. There should have been many more Levites than priests but for some reason they were not as willing to return to Jerusalem as the priests. There is some speculation about this matter but most readers want something with a little more authority attached to it.

Verses 19

¹⁹ **Also the gatekeepers:** Akkub, Talmon, and their kinsmen who kept watch at the gates, were **172**.

There were 11 gates to protect.

See pic 1105



Verses 19 – 21

²⁰ **The rest of Israel, of the priests *and* of the Levites, were in all the cities of Judah, each on his own inheritance.** ²¹ But the temple servants were living in Ophel, and Ziha and Gishpa were in charge of the temple servants.

We know how many men lived in Jerusalem.

See chart 1110

Men living in Jerusalem	
Leaders	Numbers
Sons of Perez	468
Sons of Benjamin	928
Priests	1192
Levites	284
Gate Keepers	172
Total	3,044

We know that about 50,000 people returned to Jerusalem under Zerubbabel in 537 BC. Since the 50,000 people had come to Jerusalem about 100 years earlier (it is now 444 BC) then we can assume that the population of that group had grown to about 100,000. In addition another group of 10,000 had arrived with Ezra in 458 BC. This would put the total population at about 110,000.

One fourth of the 110,000 population (about 28,000) were men above the age of 20. Since about 3,000 men were living in Jerusalem that would mean there were about 25,000 men in all the other cities of Judah.

How many priests and Levites were part of these 25,000 men that were living in the cities of Judah and Benjamin is not clear.

Verses 22 - 24

²² Now the overseer of the Levites in Jerusalem was Uzzi the son of Bani, the son of Hashabiah, the son of Mattaniah, the son of Mica, from the sons of Asaph, *who were the singers for the service of the house of God.* ²³ For *there was a commandment from the king concerning them and a royal command for the singers day by day.* ²⁴ And Pethahiah the son of Meshezabel, of the sons of Zerah the son of Judah, was the king's representative for every matter concerning the people.

²³ For *there was a commandment from the king concerning them and a royal command for the singers day by day.*

Artaxerxes was a good friend to Israel. He had already exempted those who work in or around the temple grounds from all tolls, tribute, custom and taxes.

See Ezra 7:24

²⁴ We also inform you that it is not allowed to impose tax, tribute, or toll on any of the priests, Levites, singers, doorkeepers, temple servants, or other servants of this house of God.

However, from this it sounds like the king had assigned an allotment from the royal treasury for the singers.

Verses 25 - 36

²⁵ Now as for the villages with their fields, **some of the sons of Judah** lived in **Kiriath-arba** and its towns, in Dibon and its towns, and in Jekabzeel and its villages, ²⁶ and in Jeshua, in Moladah, and Beth-pelet, ²⁷ and in Hazar-shual, in **Beersheba** and its towns, ²⁸ and in **Ziklag**, in Meconah and in its towns, ²⁹ and in En-rimmon, in Zorah, and in Jarmuth, ³⁰ Zanoah, **Adullam**, and their villages, **Lachish** and its fields, Azekah and its towns. So they camped from Beersheba as far as the Valley of Hinnom. ³¹ **The sons of Benjamin** also *lived* from Geba *onward*, at Michmash and Aiya, at **Bethel** and its towns, ³² at **Anathoth**, **Nob**, Ananiah, ³³ Hazor, **Ramah**, Gittaim, ³⁴ Hadid, Zeboim, Neballat, ³⁵ Lod, and Ono, the Valley of Craftsmen. ³⁶ And from the Levites, *some divisions in Judah belonged to Benjamin.*

The 9 cities highlighted in yellow can be found in the maps below.

See map 1115

4 cities in Judah



Adullam was the city near the cave where David was a fugitive from Saul.

Lachish was the second largest city of Judea and was taken by Sennacherib.

Kiriath-arba is Hebron. During the long absence of Israel, it had again become known by its ancient name. It was one of the cities of Refuge.

Beer-sheba, was the southern border of Israel.

See map 1120



Ziklag is the city that the king of Gath gave to David. When Israel returned from captivity this former Philistine city was a part of Judah.

See map 1125

These 4 cities were in Benjamin



Bethel was where Jeroboam I installed one of his golden calves

Ramah featured prominently in the history of Ahab.

Anathoth was the home of Jeremiah.

Nob is where Saul murdered the priests.