

Nehemiah 12 and 13:

Israel's worship of God at the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem.

1. How they prepare for this worship;

2. How they participate in this worship;

3. How they resolve to maintain this worship.

1. a)
 - i. Dedication of the wall did not follow completion right away.
 - ii. Israel first had to recommit to the covenant, in the seventh month (ch. 8-10)
 - iii. They realised it is God's work, not their own, that Jerusalem is rebuilt
- b)
 - i. They were chosen as God's people to proclaim His greatness.
 - ii. Still our task as well: see 1 Peter 2:9
 - iii. Rebuilding of the wall is only a great event if we see it in the light of the coming of the Messiah.
- c)
 - i. Following centuries: many fell back in their old pattern. Still at the coming of the Messiah: a few left who expected Him.
 - ii. God uses Jerusalem to fulfill His plan of salvation. The people must remember that. First the people and the wall have to be purified.
 - iii. Purification: be holy to come before God. Worship of God requires preparation.

2. a)
 - i. Vs. 31-43: description of the procession
 - ii. Procession finishes in the temple: to worship God.
 - iii. Leaders are mentioned but all the people followed.
- b)
 - i. Leaders must lead the people in recognising God's blessings.
 - ii. Jerusalem's walls don't protect if God doesn't bless.
 - iii. Therefore: the temple is the focus of the dedication.
- c)
 - i. The entire people involved in acknowledging God's grace.
 - ii. Worship is not the task of specialised groups, but of all the people.
 - iii. Later, the Great Reformation brought the people back into the worship service.

3. a)
 - i. Vs. 44-47: people take responsibility for continuation of the worship service.
 - ii. Those who lead in the worship should not have to worry about their needs.
 - iii. The people see the need for their leaders to be able to do their task leading them
- b)
 - i. If worship is focused on ourselves, people become dissatisfied.
 - ii. Always the temptation that we use worship to boast in our own achievements.
 - iii. Walls of Jerusalem: not people's work, but God's grace. Part of the worship.
- c)
 - i. Jerusalem still very vulnerable. People never became powerful again.
 - ii. But their worship shows their dependence on God, as every worship must show.
 - iii. Jerusalem is built by God. Not an earthly city but God's city, from heaven.

Questions:

1. What was the focus of the dedication of the walls? And what must be the focus of every worship service?
2. What is the task of the people with regard to the worship service?
3. What can be reasons (right and wrong reasons) for God's people to become dissatisfied with their leaders?
4. Of what are the walls of Jerusalem a symbol?
5. Consider how we can commit idolatry with the 'walls of Jerusalem' or with the 'church'.