

## Nehemiah 7

**What was the first thing Nehemiah did after setting the doors in place (v. 1)?** He appointed gate-keepers, singers and Levites.

**What was the primary function of the singers and the Levites?** To lead the people in worship. The walls were not rebuilt so the people of Jerusalem could look at nice walls. They were rebuilt so they could worship God with greater glory and freedom than ever before.

**What was the next thing Nehemiah did (v. 2)?** Having finished the walls, Nehemiah took steps to ensure that the city would remain secure by appointing two security officers: his brother Hanani (the one who first told him about the sad state of affairs in Jerusalem (Nehemiah 1:2) and a man named Hananiah. Now temple worship could flourish.

**What credentials did these two men have for the job?** Both were godly men, well-suited for the responsibility.

- Hananiah was a man of integrity and had a deep reverence for God which made him a kindred spirit with Nehemiah. Plus he had been the Commander of the citadel – a fortress within the walls. Nehemiah got to see his character close up at work.
- Hanani had a similar passion (1:2), concern, and love for the Jewish nation and its people. His heart was right, he was trustworthy and he had the right motives. His initiative and concern made him well qualified to govern.

**What do you sense Nehemiah is doing here? What process is starting?** Nehemiah has accomplished his mandate/mission from God. He wasn't in this for follow on political glory. He had done a work, and now he could let it go. He's gradually turning over the reins; setting Jerusalem and the people up for his departure. He had a job to return to. This has been a temporary assignment.

**What directions did Nehemiah give the leaders (v. 3)?** To minimize the threat of potential invaders, Nehemiah ordered that the gates of Jerusalem be open only during the busiest hours of the day (v. 3). The gates were to be opened only during daylight hours, and guards, probably many of whom had been wall-repairers, were to be posted around the city, with each man serving by his own house.

**What was the immediate problem/challenge facing Nehemiah now that the wall had been rebuilt (v. 4)?** Jerusalem was a ghost town. Few people, houses not rebuilt, no one living there. The rest of the Israelites, along with the priests and Levites, were all living in the outlying towns of Judah, each on their ancestral property.

People had not been living in Jerusalem because it was vulnerable to attack. The small population made it more vulnerable than it would have been with the city full of people. Nehemiah would soon propose a plan that would increase the population and, consequently, the security of Jerusalem (11:1-2).<sup>1</sup>

**What did the Lord prompt Nehemiah to do next (v. 5)?** As he planned to repopulate the city with those who were pureblooded Israelites, he found a register of those who had returned from the

Babylonian captivity to Jerusalem under Zerubbabel. Nehemiah then used the list, first written by Ezra (Ezra 2:1-70), as the basis for his plan.

**Who was included in the genealogy of vv. 7-65?** The list included people by 18 families and clans (vv. 8-25) and a listing of inhabitants from 20 towns and villages (vv. 26-38). Then the priests (4,289 of them) were listed (vv. 39-42), followed by mention of 360 Levites which included singers and gatekeepers (vv. 43-45). The temple servants (vv. 46-56) and descendants of Solomon's servants (vv. 57-59) totaled 392 (v. 60). These were followed by reference to 642 returnees who could not trace their ancestries (vv. 61-62). Some of the priests could not clearly trace their genealogies so they were not allowed by the governor to eat the sacred food until a priest was ministering with the Urim and Thummim.<sup>2</sup>

**Why was this list of names important to God and to Nehemiah?** Because only about 2% of the Jews who were carried away into exile by the Babylonians came back. The Israelites had been putting down roots for 70 years in Babylonia and were reluctant to leave. To these returnees, life was easier in Babylonia but it was better in Jerusalem. Their names are written down for eternity / memorialized in the Scriptures twice – here and Ezra 2. These are the people who were faithful to God's leading, made the sacrifice for the good of the nation and left their comfort zones behind. That's why their names are written down.

**Why don't we have genealogies today?** I don't need to trace my lineage back to some person to prove something...to serve as a spiritual credential. I am a child of God by grace through faith. My genealogy is a spiritual genealogy. I am a spiritual child of Abraham (Galatians 3:7). I don't trace my lineage back to Aaron – my high priest is Jesus Christ. My family tree looks like: Me – Jesus the Son – God the Father.

Christ ushered in the New Covenant and most everything changed as far as how God relates to his people. He now relates to His people on the basis of grace as compared to the law.

**What was happening in vv. 70-72?** Heads of the families and even the governor and the people generously gave large amounts of money and materials to begin the work of the temple.

**What happened in v. 73?** The people settled in their ancestors' towns and villages for the time being.

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<sup>1</sup> Dr. Thomas L. Constable, Notes on Nehemiah, 2023 Edition (published by <http://planobilechapel.org/soniclight/>), 42.

<sup>2</sup> Gene A. Getz, "Nehemiah," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*: J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 687.