

NEHEMIAH 7-8

Nehemiah 7 – Giving Charge of the City and the List of Exiles of First Return

A) *Nehemiah gives charge of Jerusalem and its gates (vv. 1-3)*

- 1) Given to Hanani, his brother, and Hananiah, the leader of the citadel
 - a) Hananiah was a “faithful man and feared God more than many”
- 2) Instructions regarding gates and guards – appointed from among inhabitants of Jerusalem

B) *The register (list) of the exiles that returned to Jerusalem (vv. 4-73)*

- 1) Jerusalem was large and spacious, but the people were few and houses not rebuilt
- 2) God put it in Nehemiah’s heart to register the people by genealogy
- 3) Found the genealogy list for those involved in the first return
 - a) Copy of list recorded in Ezra 2 (see lesson one)
 - b) Few minor differences in some names and numbers (ex. Nahamani – v. 7; Ezra 2:2?)
 - i) Attributed to copyist errors, which can increase with a large list of numbers

Nehemiah 8 – Ezra Reads the Law and the Observing of the Feast of Tabernacles

A) *Ezra reads the Law and the people react (vv. 1-12)*

- 1) The people gather in the open square in front of the Water Gate on the first day of the seventh month, and tell Ezra the scribe to bring the Book of the Law of Moses
- 2) Ezra, standing on a wooden platform, reads the Law from morning until midday; “all who could hear with understanding” were attentive to the Book of the Law
- 3) When Ezra opens the book, all the people stood up (reverence, respect); the people lift up their hands, bow their heads, and worship the Lord with faces to the ground
- 4) Levites in place as teachers to help the people understand the Law – helped them to understand the distinct reading from the book (translation, explanation, application); all reading and teaching centered on the text of God’s word
- 5) The people told to not mourn or weep, but to go out, rejoice, and help others, for the day is holy to the Lord
 - a) People go out to rejoice because they understood the word of God

B) *Keeping the Feast of Tabernacles (vv. 13-18)*

- 1) Heads of houses with priest and Levites gather the next day to understand more of the Law
- 2) Found specific instructions concerning the Feast of Tabernacles (Booths) to be kept in the seventh month (Lev. 23:33-44)
- 3) People instructed to make booths, and they do so with great gladness (Deut. 16:14); not since days of Joshua had all Israel kept the feast of Tabernacles in this *precise* manner (900+ years; cf. Ezra 3:4)
- 4) Ezra read from the Law every day of the feast (Deut. 31:10-13), and there was a sacred assembly on the eighth day (Num. 29:35)

Questions

- 1) Did character matter in the appointment of Hanani and Hananiah over the city of Jerusalem?

- 2) What good spiritual characteristics were demonstrated by the people of Israel when they gathered to hear the reading of the Law?

- 3) What are the results when people understand the word of God?

- 4) What was the key to restoring the proper observance of the Feast of Tabernacles?