

The Genealogy in Jerusalem (Part 1 of # 19)

Nehemiah 7: 5-73

Tonight we have come to another record in Nehemiah that records the genealogy of the people within Jerusalem at that time. This record is almost a “carbon copy” of the genealogy recorded in [Ezra, chapter 2](#). With the exception of a few minor discrepancies with names, the two lists are basically the same. To the skeptic this would be reason for alarm, but it in no way casts doubt upon the infallibility of God’s Word; it rather confirms it. We have solid proof of those who were counted among the inhabitants of Jerusalem at that time in history.

We have already dealt with a lengthy list of names in [chapter 3](#), but as we discovered there, there is much to be learned, even from a genealogical record. Among the listing of many names is great truth that we need to consider and apply to our lives. All of God’s Word, even the genealogies are for our benefit. Typically when people are listed there is also a glimpse into the lives they lived. The details of their lives offer wisdom and guidance for our Christian journey as well.

We will not spend as much time here as we did in [chapter three](#), but I do want to examine these verses, seeking to discover the [practical lessons](#) they reveal as we think on: [The Genealogy in Jerusalem](#).

I. The Mention of the Genealogy (5) – [And my God put into mine heart to gather together the nobles, and the rulers, and the people, that they might be reckoned by genealogy. And I found a register of the genealogy of them which came up at the first, and found written therein,](#) As Nehemiah mentions the record of genealogy we discover a couple important facts. Notice:

A. The Leading – To a casual observer, it may appear that Nehemiah had lost his focus or simply had too much time on his hands. To a select group of people, ancestry and genealogy are very interesting, but many find that type of thing boring and a waste of time. There is an important aspect of this genealogy that we must not miss. [God put in Nehemiah's heart the desire to gather the people and reckon the genealogy](#). This was not a boring waste of time; it was not a senseless duty. Nehemiah was following the leadership of the Lord. He was simply being obedient to the will of God.

- I fear that many today miss out on great blessings because they are unwilling to do what the Lord has asked of them. Many times this is the case with the simple tasks of service. There is usually a lot more pressure and responsibility with greater tasks, but often people are unwilling to assume those tasks that seem trivial or mundane.

- We need to determine in our hearts to do whatever God has asked us to do, regardless of recognition. If it is important enough for God to put something in our hearts, it is important enough to fulfill.

B. The Ledger – *And I found a register of the genealogy of them which came up at the first.* Now it may have seemed a boring job to perform, but it also would have been nearly impossible without some form of written record. The people could have remembered some of those who had returned, but they couldn't have remembered them all. God put something in Nehemiah's heart to perform and then He gave him exactly what he would need to fulfill the task.

- Dealing with genealogies may seem unimportant to some, but there is a profound truth here as well. Whatever God places within our hearts to perform, He will provide all that we need to fulfill the task. He will make a way for us to complete what He has asked of us.

I. The Mention of the Genealogy (5)

II. The Marvel of the Genealogy (6-7) – As Nehemiah read the genealogy, he discovered some astonishing facts regarding the people of Judah. Consider:

A. Their Dedication (6) – *These are the children of the province, that went up out of the captivity, of those that had been carried away, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away, and came again to Jerusalem and to Judah, every one unto his city;* Nehemiah had faced many battles as he sought to restore the city walls. But as he read the genealogy, he was reminded of the struggles and dedication of former generations as well. They had been in bondage in a foreign land and yet there was a desire to return to Jerusalem and worship the Lord.

- It is easy to get discouraged with our present troubles, but we need to be reminded that we are not the first to face such adversity. Many who have gone before us faced trials and tribulation. They too suffered for their faith and yet they persevered. We would likely not be here today if they hadn't. We need that same commitment and dedication to ensure a strong future for the coming generations.

B. Their Dispersion (6) – Nehemiah was also reminded that these had been removed from Judah and led into captivity. Surely this was a challenge to him and the others to follow God.

- Much can be learned from the mistakes of the past. It has been said that the best definition of insanity is “doing the same thing over and over again, while expecting a different result.” Throughout the Bible we find the consequences of sin and rebellion. We would be wise to avoid those paths that led to chastisement and judgment. We must be willing to learn from our mistakes, seeking to walk in the ways that are pleasing to our Lord.
- It is also important to note that Judah did not have the population she once enjoyed. The numbers within Jerusalem and throughout Judah were much less in Nehemiah's day than they were prior to the captivity. Many had grown complacent in Babylon and had no desire to return. Those who did return to Jerusalem made great sacrifices in order to do so.
- As we look around us today we see our numbers decreasing as well. It saddens me to admit it, but it is true nonetheless. Very few in our day are willing to make the necessary sacrifices to serve the Lord. Many may claim association with the Lord and His church, but those who are genuinely committed are declining in number. This ought to burden us for those who are on the fringes and appreciate those who are genuinely committed.

C. Their Direction (7) – [Who came with Zerubbabel, Jeshua, Nehemiah, Azariah, Raamiah, Nahamani, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispereth, Bigvai, Nehum, Baanah. The number, I say, of the men of the people of Israel was this;](#) As Nehemiah prepares to recite the genealogy he begins with those who had led them from Babylon back to Jerusalem. Zerubbabel led the first group back to Jerusalem, restoring hope in the people of God.

- I won't take the time to mention each of these names and their meanings, but many of them speak of Jehovah God, His comfort, mercy, help, and strength. These were just men whom Jehovah had blessed and strengthened to carry out the task of restoration. As we consider the leadership of the people, we must recognize that first and foremost, God led men who in turn led people. He was the source of their strength and wisdom. Apart from the providence of God the people would have never had the opportunity to return. (We dealt with the providence of God in the life of Nehemiah. He provided all that Nehemiah needed to rebuild the walls. He touched the heart of Artaxerxes to allow him to leave and made provision in every aspect of the construction.)
- We must always be careful not to forget the blessings and provision of God, but we also need to be thankful and recognize the leadership of godly men. Nehemiah was well aware of the great contribution these men had made. They had greatly sacrificed and braved uncertain dangers to restore Jerusalem and the hope of the people.

- I am certainly thankful for the godly leadership in my life. I am convinced that I would not be where I am today had it not been for their influence. Many of them are pastors and deacons, but there are also Sunday school teachers and those who simply led by example. My Christian life has been deeply impacted by those who lived for God and sought to shape my life as well.
- The book of Nehemiah is a great study on leadership. He was one of the greatest leaders recorded in Scripture. It is interesting to note, however, his life was influenced by others who followed God and provided leadership. I want to close our study this evening with a challenge for all of us. Regardless of our position or responsibilities, we all have the potential to lead others in the ways of God. Someone is watching each of us. We are right now shaping the next generation. They will likely serve the Lord in much the same way as we have. I pray that we will be sensitive to that and seek to provide a godly example of Christian leadership. I want to be remembered as one who sought to serve the Lord and lead others in service to Him!

This study has offered much for our consideration. I wonder if we are as sensitive to the calling of the Lord as we need to be. Are we willing to do whatever the Lord asks, regardless of the task? Are we confident in His ability to provide all we need to accomplish His will?

What will be remembered of us when we are gone? Will we have left anything of significance behind? How does the coming generation view our commitment and service to the Lord?

These are hard questions, but they are worthy of our consideration. We have a wonderful opportunity to influence those who are following us. I pray that we will seize that opportunity and make the most of it!