

The Genealogy in Jerusalem (Part 2 of # 19)

Nehemiah 7: 5-73

In our last study we began to look at the genealogy in Jerusalem that Nehemiah was considering. To the casual reader this would be an uninteresting passage of Scripture that would be tempting to pass over. I will admit these passages are not my favorite portions of Scripture either, but they do possess great truth and application for our lives if we will take the time to consider them.

We have already looked at:

I. The Mention of the Genealogy (5)

A. The Leading

B. The Ledger

II. The Marvel of the Genealogy (6-7)

A. Their Dedication (6)

B. Their Dispersion (6)

C. Their Direction (7)

Tonight as we continue to consider the [practical lessons](#) revealed in [The Genealogy in Jerusalem](#), I want to look at:

III. The Members of the Genealogy – This will likely be the most practical study of this chapter. If you remember our study of [chapter 3](#) we found much application associated with those who actually labored on the walls. Here we find that those who inhabited Jerusalem in Nehemiah's day are really no different than the people who make up the church. In fact, we need those who possess many of these attributes among us today. First we discover:

A. The Families (8-25) – In these verses Nehemiah rehearses the individual families that were listed as inhabitants of Jerusalem. On the surface that may not seem that significant, but it is interesting to note that the families are listed at the beginning of the genealogy. Whoever recorded this list of people understood the importance and great significance of the family. They knew that the family was the essential element in society. If Jerusalem was to prosper again, she would need to be inhabited by families.

- This is a fundamental truth that many are aware of. If society would be honest and admit truth, they know that the family is the essential element of society. It has been said, “As the family goes, so goes the nation.” That is true and it cannot be argued. However, there is a clear attack on the family unit in our modern society. Many are seeking to redefine and undermine the family as it has existed since the creation of man.
- This is being championed by many in places of authority and leadership today. They are blinded by the attack of Satan and have bought into his assault on the home. It is more important today, than ever before, to stand for the family as God designed. If we don’t stand and make our voices known, the family as we know it may become obsolete in the future.

B. The Cities (26-38) – As Nehemiah continues to read the genealogy he finds various cities listed there as well. This is a compilation of the many cities and towns from which the residents of Jerusalem had originated. Several of them are well known cities, such as: *Bethlehem, Bethel, and Jericho*. *Anathoth*, v.27, was the hometown of Jeremiah. Others listed are not familiar and many are long forgotten. The little known town of *Senaah*, v.38, was responsible for 3,930 of the inhabitants.

- You might wonder what the significance of this listing of towns and cities would be. I cannot speculate to the exact reason they were listed, but a couple of thoughts came to mind. First of all it records the unity that Jerusalem enjoyed. Many of the people there were not originally from Jerusalem, but they joined in the work to ensure the reconstruction of the great city. We need to follow that example and come together for the work of the Lord.
- Also I thought of the fact that many of these were likely small towns. After the Babylonian invasion, some of them may have ceased to exist. The world would soon forget the heritage of these faithful servants, but the Lord never would. He recorded in His eternal Word the towns from which they came. God had not overlooked or forgotten their faithfulness.

C. The Priests (39-42) – These verses list the families from which the priests came. They were responsible for the sacrifices within the Temple. God had set aside the tribe of Levi to serve in the priesthood. A man had to prove his lineage among the Levites if he was to be eligible to serve in the priesthood. This registry would have been especially important to them.

- All who are born again have been adopted into the family of God. Each of us is expected to serve the Lord, but all do not have the same calling. We ought to embrace the calling God has given us, but we should never seek to do something without the approval and clear call of God. All were Israelites, but all were not Levitical priests.

D. The Levites (43) – This may appear to be a repeat of the previous verses, but it is a clear distinction between the two. The priests had to come from among the Levites, but all Levites did not serve as priests. Those who were not priests were referred to as Levites to distinguish between them. However, even though all of the Levites were not priests, they all served the Lord in various duties in the temple. The Levites were essential to the temple worship. [Ezra 8: 15-20](#) records the call for more Levites to come to Jerusalem from Babylon.

- This reveals the need for all of us in the work of the Lord. All are not preachers and pastors, but all have an essential work to perform. It takes all of us working together to accomplish all that God expects of us. I pray that we will never get to the place that we have to look outside our congregation to fulfill the necessary duties of the church.

E. The Singers (44) – We already considered the position of singers a couple of weeks ago, those who sang praises unto the Lord. These are listed as the [children of Asaph](#). He wrote 12 Psalms, [Psalm 50](#), and [Psalms 73-83](#). His children had carried on the heritage of singing they had received.

- This was clearly an important aspect of worship and daily life for those who served the Lord. There are at least 17 references to singers and singing in the book of Nehemiah. Singing and praise are important elements of worship and daily life for us as well. You may not be able to sing like you would like, but there ought to be a song of praise in your heart continually. We need to leave a heritage of praise for our children.

F. The Porters (45) – We have already dealt with the porters as well. These were the gatekeepers. The Hebrew word translated [porters](#) here is translated [doorkeepers](#) in [1 Chron.15: 23-24](#). Strong's Concordance defines the word as "*a janitor.*"

- This would not have been as glamorous or prestigious as the priests or singers, but it was very important nonetheless. These had a humbling task, but they were faithful to the work God had called them to. They may not have been recognized or appreciated, but I am sure the people would have quickly noticed if they weren't doing their job. We have considered this many, many times, but it bears remembering. We need to do all that we do as unto the Lord with joy in our hearts!

G. The Nethinims (46-56) – Nehemiah's genealogy records 32 different families from which the Nethinims came. Appointed of King David, [Ezra 8:20](#), they were literally temple slaves assigned to assist the Levites in the duties of the temple. Some scholars hold that they were

likely descendants of the Gibeonites, given specific duties. [Josh.9:27 – And Joshua made them that day hewers of wood and drawers of water for the congregation, and for the altar of the Lord, even unto this day, in the place which he should choose.](#) We cannot know with certainty their ancestry, but it is clear that they were bond slaves within the temple. It is interesting to note that they chose to be slaves within the work of the Lord rather than remain in bondage in Babylon. Apparently they chose to worship Jehovah and live among His people.

- As I pondered the Nethinims I realized that we are all like them. Prior to Christ we were all slaves to sin and the desire of the flesh. For those who have trusted Christ as Savior, they are now servants to Him. Every time the word [servant](#) is recorded in the New Testament it is translated from the Greek word *doulos*, which means “a slave or bondman.” We will serve one of two masters, Satan and the flesh or Christ Jesus the Lord.
- I praise the Lord for the privilege of serving Him and submitting to His authority in my life. The Nethinims may not have been Jews in the flesh, but they served God by faith. We need to be more than outwardly religious; we need to be born again.

H. The Servants of Solomon (57-60) – Nehemiah also mentions those known as the servants of Solomon. These were descendants of those who actually served the king. The reign of Solomon was the most glorious time in the nation’s history. It was a time of peace and great abundance. Those who served the king were proud of their service and it was a “badge of honor” for their descendants. Even hundreds of years later the people still identified themselves as the servants of Solomon. They were proud of their heritage and were not willing to let it go.

- Times and attitudes have certainly changed. We live in an age that is mesmerized with Hollywood and fame. There is little recognition for servants. I will admit that we do a fair job of honoring those who served our country proudly and courageously in the armed forces, but even they take a back seat to the Hollywood fascination. Very little acknowledgement is given to those whom the world has never heard. Society doesn’t recognize those who are true to their faith and their families.
- I do not have a heritage of the rich and famous, but I do have a heritage of those who served the King! I will likely never be rich or famous either, but I have received something that is far greater. Don’t measure your worth and influence by the standards of this world. Ensure that you leave your family a legacy of service to the King of kings and Lord of lords!

I. The Unregistered People (61-65) – Nehemiah mentions a tragedy in these verses. He reads of those who claimed Jewish lineage, [but they could not shew their father's house, nor their](#)

seed, whether they were of Israel, v.61. They sought a place among the people, but they had no record to substantiate their claims. [64] These sought their register among those that were reckoned by genealogy, but it was not found: therefore were they, as polluted, put from the priesthood. They desired to serve among the priesthood, but were denied because they could not prove their Levitical heritage. [65] And the Tirshatha (governor) said unto them, that they should not eat of the most holy things, till there stood up a priest with Urim and Thummim. The Urim and Thummim were two stones located in the breastplate of the high priest. These would not be able to serve until a high priest was appointed and sought the will of God in this matter.

- This is quite significant. Jerusalem had those who claimed association with her people, but had no evidence to prove their claims. Many today claim association with Christ and His church, but there is no evidence to prove their claims. One day the Great High Priest will separate the goats from the sheep. He is aware of those who are His and they will be the only ones granted entrance and residence in the New Jerusalem.

J. The Summary (66-69) – Here Nehemiah discovered a list of the total number counted among Jerusalem. There were 42,360 among the congregation. There were also 7,337 manservants and their maidservants. Among them were 245 singing men and women. This totals 50,212 people. Nehemiah also mentions the animals that were numbered among them, Vv.68-69.

- That may sound like a lot, and in many circumstances it would be, but Judah is now just a shadow of what she used to be. There were over 600,000 whom Joshua led across the Jordan into the Promised Land. Surely they would have numbered in the millions prior to the captivity. This reveals the devastation of sin. A numerous and blessed people had been reduced to a fraction of what they were before.

- We must be cautious in our lives as well. God has not changed and His holy standard still stands. America is the most blessed nation upon the earth today. God has richly blessed us for over 200 years. However, we are no better than the people of Judah. Sin greatly reduced their numbers and if we don't repent and seek the Lord, the same will likely happen to us. We are already seeing a decrease in church attendance and genuine conversions. This nation will suffer the consequences of her sin.

K. The Tithe (70-72) – The conclusion of the genealogical record records the offering of contributions for the temple. There is much that we could say regarding their tithe, but the most important aspect is that they gave. Even though they faced adversity and had suffered in

bondage, they gave sacrificially unto the Lord. They determined to honor the Lord with what He had blessed them with.

- I know that is not a popular subject among the modern church, but it is biblical. All that we enjoy is given of the Lord. Were it not for His abundant grace, we would have nothing. Times are tough for us right now, but we cannot refrain from giving unto the Lord. He does not fail in His goodness on a daily basis, and we should not be guilty of withholding that which is rightfully His!

This study has covered a lot of material. We have considered many different aspects and responsibilities associated with serving the Lord. I pray that we are living and serving the Lord in a way that is pleasing to Him.

It is an honor and privilege to be considered a servant of the King. That is the greatest joy and assurance in this life. I am aware, however, of folks who are like those that were unregistered. They claimed association with Jerusalem, and genuinely wanted to dwell there, but their record was not clear.

Many today want to go to heaven when they die, but they have not made the necessary preparations. Heaven is a prepared place for prepared people. Preparation must be made in this life. Is your name recorded in the Lamb's Book of Life? When the Lord opens the great registry in heaven, will your name be found there? If not, I pray that you will seek the Lord while there is still time and ensure that your name will be found among the redeemed.