

Notes on Nehemiah Chapter 7

© Copyright David E. Pratte, January 7, 2006, www.gospelway.com

Verses 1,2

1. What work had been accomplished at this point (v1)?
2. What two specific men were named in v2, and what positions were they given?
3. What characteristics qualified them for this work? Why would these qualities be important?

Responsibilities assigned and organized

The wall was now complete, doors set in place, etc. Various responsibilities were assigned. Porters or gatekeepers might be compared to modern security guards — perhaps to keep unauthorized people from going where they should not (see v3 below).

Singers were part of the worship appointed by David (I Chronicles 25:1; 2 Chronicles 35:15). Levites were responsible to care for the temple and the ceremonies there, etc.

As governor of Judah (5:14; 8:9), Nehemiah had the authority to delegate responsibilities to men of his choosing. He chose his brother Hanani (cf. 1:2) to be in charge of the city of Jerusalem, and also another man named Hananiah to be in charge of the citadel (castle — perhaps this was a responsibility for military leadership, or of the governor's headquarters).

He chose Hanani because he possessed faithfulness and fear (respect) for God more so than others did. Such qualities need to also be considered seriously in people we chose for jobs.

Verses 3,4

4. Describe the provisions made to guard the gates.
5. Why were these precautions needed?

Gates closed for protection

Those responsible for the city were charged to keep the doors closed all night and into the day until the sun was hot. Guards were appointed even though the wall was now complete. They were to stand guard and make sure the doors were shut and barred. Some stood at watch stations and others guarded near their own houses. (The fact they stood guard near where they and their family lived would motivate them to be diligent in their duties.)

These precautions were needed because it was such a large city, but only relatively few people lived there. Presumably they were still concerned about the possibility of attack from their opponents (chapter 4).

Verses 5,6

6. What did Nehemiah decide to do, and what did he find when he did (v5)?

Genealogy found for the first group who returned from captivity

God then informed Nehemiah to gather the leaders and the people to make a current genealogy. In doing this, Nehemiah discovered a genealogy from the first group that returned, and it is recorded here. Compare it to the one given in Ezra 2.

Genealogies were important to Israel in determining property rights to the land, and also to determine who could participate in various offices, especially the priests and Levites, who had to be of certain lineage. Most important was the fact that God had promised that the Christ would be a descendant of Abraham, David, etc. The nation of Israel continued and its lineage was kept, so this promise could yet be fulfilled.

What follows is a genealogy of people who returned from captivity after Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried them away. Under the leadership of Zerubbabel they returned to Jerusalem and Judah, everyone to his own city.

Verses 7-69

7. What is recorded in the 7:7-69? Where else was this information given?

These verses list the genealogy of people who had come from Babylon. Note in v61-65 certain men who could NOT prove by genealogy that they were Israelites, so they were not permitted to serve as priests, nor to eat of the holy things of priests. See notes on Ezra 2:61-63 for further discussion. We will not repeat the information here.

Verses 70-73

8. Describe the financial contributions various people made to the work (vv 70-72).

9. How was the condition of the people summarized in v73? What time of year was this?

These verses list various financial contributions made. Some were made by heads of households, others by the governor himself, and others by the rest of the people.

The result was that the people of Israel dwelt in their cities: the priests, Levites, gatekeepers, singers, and Nethinim. See on Ezra 8:20 regarding the Nethinim.

This was the condition of the people in the land when the seventh month of the year began. This was a very special month in the Israelite calendar, because it included various feast days. The next chapter will record some events of their activities on this special month after the wall had been completed.

© Copyright David E. Pratte, January 7, 2006

These study notes are copyrighted but are made available free to individuals for personal study. They must not be reproduced for distribution (other individuals may download their own copy from our web site). In no case may these commentaries be reproduced in any form for sale or a financial fee. All rights reserved. To see our copyright guidelines for more details go to

www.gospelway.com/copyrite.htm

For other free Bible commentary study notes, please visit

www.gospelway.com/commentary/.

To find topical study notes or online Bible courses about Bible topics, Christianity, and Christian doctrine, see the following links:

Free online Bible Study Courses & Lessons – www.biblestudylessons.com

Study our Online Bible Study Guides (the Gospel Way) – www.gospelway.com

Free e-mail Bible study newsletter - www.gospelway.com/update_subscribe.htm

Information about copyright permission or restrictions - www.gospelway.com/copyrite.htm