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Nehemiah 7

(2021)

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Nehemiah 7.

Topics.

- The gatekeepers, the singers and the Levites are set-up.
- The city of Jerusalem was wide and large and the people in it were few.
- No houses had yet been built.
- Nehemiah lists the people to be enrolled by genealogy and all the exiles who Nebuchadnezzar had taken captive, but had now returned to live in their own towns.

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF NEHEMIAH

In 445 B.C. the Persian King Artaxerxes gave Nehemiah, an Israelite who was a trusted official written permission to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. Nehemiah went with the third wave of returning Jewish exiles. There was intense opposition from other people in the land, and disunity within Jerusalem. Despite the strong opposition, Nehemiah rebuilt the walls and overcame many threats. He served twice as governor and did what God had put in his heart (Neh. 2:12) (Neh. 7:5), and found that the joy of the LORD was his strength (Neh. 8:10). For an overview of the entire book see the title: "Overview of the Book of Nehemiah" (at the beginning of the index to Nehemiah).

THE PREVIOUS CHAPTER

Sanballat and Tobiah and Geshem the Arab and the rest of Israel's enemies heard that Nehemiah had built the wall in fifty-two days (although the gates were not set up). Sanballat and Geshem sent messages to Nehemiah five times, saying, "Come and let us meet together," but he refused to go, for he knew they intended to do him harm.

NEHEMIAH 7:1

- **Nehemiah 7:1:** Now when the wall had been built and I had set up the doors, and the gatekeepers, the singers, and the Levites had been appointed, ² I gave my brother Hanani and Hananiah the governor of the castle (ruler of the palace in KJV), charge over Jerusalem, for he was a more faithful and God-fearing man than many.

Hanani, had come to Jerusalem with other men from Judah, he was a near relative to Nehemiah (Neh. 1:2) and a man who accompanied him as co-worker and who he fully trusted. It is commonly supposed that Nehemiah was now intending to return to Shushan according to his promise to the Persian king, and for this reason he wisely entrusted the custody of Jerusalem and the management of its civic affairs to men on whose ability, experience, and loyalty he could trust and be confident that in all circumstances they would do the right thing. Hananiah was the ruler of the palace that Nehemiah had maintained in Jerusalem. Hanani and Hananiah's godly standard and fear of God, and their patriotic spirit for Jerusalem and the nation pre-eminently qualified them for being given this official trust of such enormous importance.

Charge over Jerusalem: (v2) committed to preserving its peace and safety, and to oversee the gates of the city were opened and shut at their proper time during Nehemiah's absence, which may be supposed to be his return to Persia, as the following verse shows he had promised:

- And the king said to me (the queen sitting beside him), “How long will you be gone, and when will you return?” So it pleased the king to send me when I had given him a time. (Nehemiah 2:6).

He was a faithful man: (v2) refers to Hananiah (the last mentioned), because there is no need to mention any commendation of Hanani, because he had shown his devotion, faithfulness, godliness and zeal for God and his country in taking a wearisome journey from Jerusalem to Shushan, to inform Nehemiah of the sad state of Jerusalem, and to plead for his help to relieve it. (Neh. 1:2).

More faithful and God-fearing man than many: (v2) it is natural that in all gatherings of God’s people and in all churches, there are those that have a greater standard of passion, devotion and zeal, this should not surprise anyone, for we are all growing in faith and in our relationship with the Lord. The statement, “more faithful and God-fearing man than many,” is no doubt added to show why Nehemiah place such confidence in Hananiah, because he knew that the fear of God would keep him from giving in to temptations that come to people that hold such high positions of power and authority, which he was likely to meet with once Nehemiah had departed. Nehemiah did not choose magistrates and officers, from any emotional favour toward his own kindred, acquaintance or favourites, but from true reverence for God and from asking himself, “who would be most fit and faithful in their exalted positions?” Nehemiah here sets the standard that all the heads of churches should use when choosing their leaders.

NEHEMIAH 7:3-4

- **Nehemiah 7:3-4:** And I said to them, “Let not the gates of Jerusalem be opened until the sun is hot. And while they are still standing guard, let them shut and bar the doors. Appoint guards from among the inhabitants of Jerusalem, some at their guard posts and some in front of their own homes.” (everyone in his watch, and every one to be over against his house in KJV). ⁴ The city was wide and large, but the people within it were few, and no houses had been rebuilt.

The common practice in the East was to open town gates at sunrise and close them at sunset, but here Nehemiah aware that their enemies that wanted to bring the city of Jerusalem to ruin told the people not to open the gates until the sun is hot, meaning fully up. This of course would be so that should an enemy attack they would be easily seen approaching and the people of the city would have time to close the gates and prepare a defence.

While they are still standing guard, let them shut and bar the doors: (v3) at face value it would appear that Hanani and Hananiah were to be standing guard and close the gate, but since these two are chief rulers, it is hardly likely, the idea is that those who they appoint to look after the gates were to stand by while their servants shut them. Naturally this extra precaution was to make sure they were never by some misfortune or accident left open.

Guard posts and some in front of their own homes: (v3) (everyone in his watch, and every one to be over against his house in KJV), meaning they were to set up guards in various areas of the city, especially around the temple and each inhabitant of the city was to set up guards in front of their own home. All appointed guards were to have others they could share this duty with so that they could have times of rest.

The city was wide and large: the circumference of the city was great and all the land within the wall covered a large area. The largeness of the land was made even more visible because of the wide-open spaces and their houses stood far apart from each other with gardens and orchards between them. Added to this the population was very small and most of the houses were plain shelters of wood or stone. Some maybe thinking,

“how could the number be small?” Because the number of those who returned with Zerubbabel from Babylon was 42,360. (Neh. 7:66) and those that returned with Ezra was around 2,000 (Ezra 8:1-20), however since the city laid in ruin a vast number chose to settle in the towns and cities in the country.

No houses had been rebuilt: (v4) in sufficient numbers to provide for all the population of those dwelling in the city, a few may have been temporarily repaired so that they could be lived in, but the majority of them stilled laid in ruin.

NEHEMIAH 7:5-6

- **Nehemiah 7:5-6:** Then my God put it into my heart to assemble the nobles and the officials and the people to be enrolled by genealogy. And I found the book (register in KJV) of the genealogy of those who came up at the first, and I found written in it: ⁶ These were the people of the province who came up out of the captivity of those exiles whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried into exile. They returned to Jerusalem and Judah, each to his town.

God put into my heart: (v5) Nehemiah does not ascribe his motive to enrol the rulers and nobles by genealogy to himself or his own wisdom, but to the gift and grace of God directing and inclining him to it. Every good motion in him, and whatever he thought of that was conducive to the good and welfare of Jerusalem, Nehemiah always ascribed it to God as did the apostle Paul.

- Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything as coming from us, but our sufficiency is from God. (2 Corinthians 3:5).

Whatever good thought is put into our minds, we must acknowledge it to come from God; and even such things that are done by human perception, intuition, farsightedness caution and wisdom etc., should all be ascribed to the direction and divine providence of God.

I found the book (register in KJV) of the genealogy: (v5) Nehemiah committed himself to preparing a register of the returned exiles, containing a record of each family’s genealogy. He discovered a register of the first group of exiles who returned from Babylon under the care of Zerubbabel.

NOTE: the following register differs in a few particulars from the list given in (Ezra 2:1-61). But these discrepancies should not surprise anyone for the following reason. The register listed in Ezra was drawn up at Babylon, while this register in Nehemiah was drawn up in Judea, after the walls of Jerusalem had been rebuilt. It is only natural that there would be minor discrepancies after the passing of so many years between the two registers, because some who did leave Babylon to travel to the land of Judah:

- May have died or got sick on the way and not made the full journey.
- May have decided to settle in one of the surrounding countries, towns, villages or cities.
- Some who did arrive may have moved from the land of Judah for various reasons.
- The same person may be called by a different name, which is sometimes found throughout the Bible in Jewish genealogies.

With these facts in mind, it is easy to understand why differences appear in the catalogue of the two registers.

Making such a register would be of great use to Nehemiah, for he would know:

- Their names and how many belonged to their families.
- What city they belonged to.
- Who they might invite to come to the city of Jerusalem to rebuild their houses, and make the city their permanent residence.

Such knowledge would not only help towards increasing the population of the city, but also greatly help with allotting certain portions of the land, especially since many would have had legal right to claim lands they owned or inherited prior to the seventy-year Babylon captivity and would now naturally come forward to claim them, this register would greatly help with these claims.

THOSE THAT CAME WITH ZERUBBEL

NEHEMIAH 7:7-38

Nehemiah 7:7: They came with Zerubbabel, Jeshua, Nehemiah, Azariah, Raamiah, Nahamani, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispereth, Bigvai, Nehum, Baanah. The number of the men of the people of Israel:

- **Nehemiah 7:8:** the sons of Parosh, 2,172.
- **Nehemiah 7:9:** The sons of Shephatiah, 372.
- **Nehemiah 7:10:** The sons of Arah, 652.
- **Nehemiah 7:11:** The sons of Pahath-moab, namely the sons of Jeshua and Joab, 2,818.
- **Nehemiah 7:12:** The sons of Elam, 1,254.
- **Nehemiah 7:13:** The sons of Zattu, 845.
- **Nehemiah 7:14:** The sons of Zaccai, 760.
- **Nehemiah 7:15:** The sons of Binnui, 648.
- **Nehemiah 7:16:** The sons of Bebai, 628.
- **Nehemiah 7:17:** The sons of Azgad, 2,322.
- **Nehemiah 7:18:** The sons of Adonikam, 667.
- **Nehemiah 7:19:** The sons of Bigvai, 2,067.
- **Nehemiah 7:20:** The sons of Adin, 655.
- **Nehemiah 7:21:** The sons of Ater, namely of Hezekiah, 98.
- **Nehemiah 7:22:** The sons of Hashum, 328.
- **Nehemiah 7:23:** The sons of Bezai, 324.
- **Nehemiah 7:24:** The sons of Hariph, 112.
- **Nehemiah 7:25:** The sons of Gibeon, 95.
- **Nehemiah 7:26:** The men of Bethlehem and Netophah, 188.
- **Nehemiah 7:27:** The men of Anathoth, 128.
- **Nehemiah 7:28:** The men of Beth-azmaveth, 42.
- **Nehemiah 7:29:** The men of Kiriath-jearim, Chephirah, and Beeroth, 743.
- **Nehemiah 7:30:** The men of Ramah and Geba, 621.

- **Nehemiah 7:31:** The men of Michmas, 122.
- **Nehemiah 7:32:** The men of Bethel and Ai, 123.
- **Nehemiah 7:33:** The men of the other Nebo, 52.
- **Nehemiah 7:34:** The sons of the other Elam, 1,254.
- **Nehemiah 7:35:** The sons of Harim, 320.
- **Nehemiah 7:36:** The sons of Jericho, 345.
- **Nehemiah 7:37:** The sons of Lod, Hadid, and Ono, 721.
- **Nehemiah 7:38:** The sons of Senaah, 3,930.

Giving a total of 25,406 men that came with Zerubbabel

PRIESTS

NEHEMIAH 7:39-42

- **Nehemiah 7:39:** The priests: the sons of Jedaiah, namely
 1. **Nehemiah 7:39:** The house of Jeshua, 973.
 2. **Nehemiah 7:40:** The sons of Immer, 1,052.
 3. **Nehemiah 7:41:** The sons of Pashhur, 1,247.
 4. **Nehemiah 7:42:** The sons of Harim, 1,017.

Giving a total of 4289 priests. It appears that only four of the courses of the priests returned from the Babylonian captivity; and that the course of Abia (also called Abijah) (Luke 1:5) is not in the list. However, these four courses were later divided into twenty-four, which retained the names of the original courses that David had appointed. For an understanding of the difference between priest and Levites see the notes following the next verse.

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LEVITES

NEHEMIAH 7:43

- **Nehemiah 7:43:** The Levites: the sons of Jeshua, namely of Kadmiel of the sons of Hodevah, 74.

Priests and Levites (Roles and Duties).

- **Ezra 2:40:** The Levites: the sons of Jeshua and Kadmiel, of the sons of Hodaviah, 74.

The Levites were the tribe of Israelites that descended from Levi, one of the twelve sons of Jacob. All priests were to be Levites, according to the Law, but not all Levites were priests. Following are the three groups of Israelites.

1. Priests (Kohens).
2. Levi (Levites).
3. Israelites.

Jacob's third son's name was Levi. Levi had three sons: Gershon, Kehath and Merari. (Gen. 46:11) (Exod. 6:16) (Num. 3:17). Kohath's firstborn was Amram, he had three children: Miriam, Aaron and Moses. Aaron was chosen to be the high priest and from his descendants all males were

priests, the rest of the tribe were Levites. All male descendant of Aaron is an Aaronite, or priest, any non-Aaronic Levite (i.e., descended from Levi but not from Aaron) assisted the Levitical priests of the family of Aaron in the care of the tabernacle (later of the temple). They each had the following specific roles within the Levite tribe:

1. **The Kohathites:** were descended from Kohath a son of Levi, their specific responsibility was primarily care of the Ark of the Covenant, the Menorah and the Table of Shewbread and other holy items.

- The Kohath were charged with the service of the holy things that had to be carried on the shoulder. (Num. 7:9).
- The Kohathites set out, carrying the holy things, and the tabernacle was set up before their arrival. (Num. 10:21).
- The Kohathites had charge of the showbread, to prepare it every Sabbath. (1 Chronicles 9:32).

The sanctuary objects that the Kohathites transported were to be carried on their shoulders with poles made for that purpose.

- You shall make for it (the table for the bread of the Presence) four rings of gold, and fasten the rings to the four corners at its four legs. ²⁷Close to the frame the rings shall lie, as holders for the poles to carry the table. ²⁸You shall make the poles of acacia wood, and overlay them with gold, and the table shall be carried with these. (Exod. 25:26-28).

2. **The Gershonites:** had the responsibility of taking care of the decorations in the sanctuary, the curtains, ropes, and coverings and given two carts and four oxen to help with the transport of these and other items of the sanctuary.

- This is the service of the clans of the Gershonites, in serving and bearing burdens: ²⁵they shall carry the curtains of the tabernacle and the tent of meeting with its covering and the covering of goatskin that is on top of it and the screen for the entrance of the tent of meeting ²⁶and the hangings of the court and the screen for the entrance of the gate of the court that is around the tabernacle and the altar, and their cords and all the equipment for their service. And they shall do all that needs to be done with regard to them. (Num. 4:24-26).
- Moses gave two wagons and four oxen to the sons of Gershon, according to their service. (Num. 7:6-8).

3. **The Merarites:** had the responsibility of maintaining and carrying from place to place the pillars, bases, frames, pegs, and cords of the structure of the tabernacle, they were given four carts and eight oxen to help with the transport of these items

- Moses gave four wagons and eight oxen to the sons of Merari, according to their service. (Num. 7:6-8).

The Primary Duties of the Levites who were Not Priests.

- They were to attend to the duties connected with the tabernacle. (Numbers chapter three and four).
- They were responsible for taking care of the tabernacle furnishings; all that belongs to it; carrying the tabernacle; taking care of the camp around the tabernacle; taking the tabernacle down and setting it up; camping around the tabernacle so that there may be no wrath on the people of Israel and keeping guard over it. (Num. 1:48-54) (Num. 3:8).
- They were minister to the high priest. (Num. 3:6)
- They were the LORD's gift to Aaron and his sons (and by extension all high priests)

- They were gatekeepers. (1 Chron. 9:22).
- They were to do service in the tabernacle and stand before the people of Israel to minister to them at the tent of meeting and make atonement for them. (Num. 16:9) (Num. 18:6). (Num. 8:19).
- They were to keep guard over the whole tent, but not go near to the vessels of the sanctuary or to the altar lest they die. (Num. 18:3).
- They were supported by the tithes of the people in return for their service that they do, in the tent of meeting. The tithe was their inheritance and from this tithe they were to give a tithe to the LORD, meaning to Aaron and the priests (and by extension all future high priests and common priests). (Lev. 27:32-33) (Numbers 18:21-28).
- They were to assist the sons of Aaron for the service of the house of the LORD, by caring for the courts; the chambers; the cleansing of all that is holy; and any work for the service of the house of God; to assist with the showbread; the flour for the grain offering; the wafers of unleavened bread; the baked offering; the offering mixed with oil; all measures of quantity or size and stand every morning and evening thanking and praising the LORD. (1 Chron. 23:28-29).
- They were to keep charge of the tent of meeting and the sanctuary; to attend to the sons of Aaron; for the service of the House of the LORD whenever burnt offerings were offered to the LORD on Sabbaths, new moons and feast days. (1 Chron. 23:30-32).

All who had come to Jerusalem from the captivity appointed the Levites, from twenty years old and upward, to supervise the work of the house of the LORD. (Ezra 3:9). Faithfully performing all these responsibilities was an important part of Israel's covenantal relationship with God and remaining in His favour, blessing and will.

The Levites: the sons of Jeshua and Kadmiel: (v40) these are Levitical families, but not priests. They are the only two that returned in the first wave and both are traced up to Hodaviah.

SINGERS

NEHEMIAH 7:44

- **Nehemiah 7:44:** The singers: the sons of Asaph, 148.

GATEKEEPERS

NEHEMIAH 7:45

- **Nehemiah 7:45:** The gatekeepers: the sons of Shallum, the sons of Ater, the sons of Talmon, the sons of Akkub, the sons of Hatita, the sons of Shobai, 138.

TEMPLE SERVANTS

NEHEMIAH 7:46-56

- **Nehemiah 7:46:** The temple servants: the sons of Ziha, the sons of Hasupha, the sons of Tabbaoth,
- **Nehemiah 7:47:** the sons of Keros, the sons of Sia, the sons of Padon,
- **Nehemiah 7:48:** the sons of Lebana, the sons of Hagaba, the sons of Shalmal,

- **Nehemiah 7:49:** the sons of Hanan, the sons of Giddel, the sons of Gahar,
- **Nehemiah 7:50:** the sons of Reaiah, the sons of Rezin, the sons of Nekoda,
- **Nehemiah 7:51:** the sons of Gazzam, the sons of Uzza, the sons of Paseah,
- **Nehemiah 7:52:** the sons of Besai, the sons of Meunim, the sons of Nephushesim,
- **Nehemiah 7:53:** the sons of Bakbuk, the sons of Hakupha, the sons of Harhur,
- **Nehemiah 7:54:** the sons of Bazlith, the sons of Mehida, the sons of Harsha,
- **Nehemiah 7:55:** the sons of Barkos, the sons of Sisera, the sons of Temah,
- **Nehemiah 7:56:** the sons of Neziah, the sons of Hatipha.

Temple servants (Heb. Nethinim): were a class of temple servants known from the books of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles. Ezra says that they had been set apart by David to attend to the Levites. (Ezra 8:20).

In the book of Numbers, we read:

- And from the people of Israel's half, you shall take one drawn out of every fifty, of the people, of the oxen, of the donkeys, and of the flocks, of all the cattle, and give them to the Levites who keep guard over the tabernacle of the LORD." (Numbers 31:30).
- From the people of Israel's half, Moses took one of every 50, both of persons and of beasts, and gave them to the Levites who kept guard over the tabernacle of the LORD, as the LORD commanded Moses. (Num. 31:47).

These verses show that after the conquest of Midian, Moses took one man drawn out of every fifty to be servants to the Levites to aid in the practical work of the tabernacle of God.

In the book of Joshua, we read:

- Joshua made them (the Gibeonites) that day cutters of wood and drawers of water for the congregation and for the altar of the LORD, to this day, in the place that he should choose. (Joshua 9:27).

Here we see that after Joshua had discovered the Gibeonites deception he made them cutters of wood and drawers of water for the congregation, and for the altar of God. This explains the origin of the class of non-Israelitish temple servants. However, the following verse shows that at the time of Ezekiel the existence of these non-Israelitish temple servants was the focus of one of his severest denunciations:

- In admitting foreigners, uncircumcised in heart and flesh, to be in my sanctuary, profaning my temple, when you offer to me my food, the fat and the blood. You have broken my covenant, in addition to all your abominations. (Ezekiel 44:7).

In place of these non-Israelitish temple servants (also called keepers) Ezekiel instructs that the Levites who had been degraded from their priestly privileges because they participated in idolatrous worship were to replace the non-Israelitish servants, and to do all the various duties of the temple that they did, except for the actual offering of sacrifices, which is reserved for "the Levitical priests the sons of Zadok.

- But the Levites who went far from me, going astray from me after their idols when Israel went astray, shall bear their punishment. ¹¹ They shall be ministers in my sanctuary, having oversight at the gates of the temple and ministering in the temple. They shall slaughter the burnt offering and the sacrifice for the people, and they shall stand before the people, to minister to them. ¹² Because they ministered to them before their idols and became a stumbling block of iniquity to the house of Israel, therefore I have sworn concerning them, declares the Lord GOD, and they shall bear their punishment. ¹³ They shall not come near to me, to serve me as priest, nor come near any of my holy things and

the things that are most holy, but they shall bear their shame and the abominations that they have committed. ¹⁴ Yet I will appoint them to keep charge of the temple, to do all its service and all that is to be done in it. ¹⁵ “But the Levitical priests, the sons of Zadok, who kept the charge of my sanctuary when the people of Israel went astray from me, shall come near to me to minister to me. And they shall stand before me to offer me the fat and the blood, declares the Lord GOD. (Ezekiel 44:10-15).

THE SONS OF SOLOMONS SERVANTS

NEHEMIAH 7:57-59

- **Nehemiah 7:57:** The sons of Solomon’s servants: the sons of Sotai, the sons of Sophereth, the sons of Perida,
- **Nehemiah 7:58:** the sons of Jaala, the sons of Darkon, the sons of Giddel,
- **Nehemiah 7:59:** the sons of Shephatiah, the sons of Hattil, the sons of Pochereth-hazzebaim, the sons of Amon.

ALL THE TEMPLE SERVANTS

NEHEMIAH 7:60

- **Nehemiah 7:60:** All the temple servants and the sons of Solomon’s servants were 392.

For information concerning temple servants see the notes following Nehemiah 7:46 (above).

THOSE WHO COULD NOT PROVE THEIR FATHERS’ HOUSES

NEHEMIAH 7:61-64

- **Nehemiah 7:61:** The following were those who came up from Tel-melah, Tel-harsha, Cherub, Addon, and Immer, but they could not prove their fathers’ houses nor their descent, whether they belonged to Israel.
- **Nehemiah 7:62:** the sons of Delaiah, the sons of Tobiah, the sons of Nekoda, 642.
- **Nehemiah 7:63:** Also, of the priests: the sons of Hobaiah, the sons of Hakkoz, the sons of Barzillai (who had taken a wife of the daughters of Barzillai the Gileadite and was called by their name).
- **Nehemiah 7:64:** These sought their registration among those enrolled in the genealogies, but it was not found there, so they were excluded from the priesthood as unclean. ⁶⁵ The governor told them that they were not to partake of the most holy food until a priest with Urim and Thummim should arise.

The Urim, Thummin: it is important to note, the Urim and Thummim were not the jewelled breastplate of judgment, but something that was placed into it as the following verse shows:

- And in the breastpiece of judgment you shall put the Urim and the Thummim, and they shall be on Aaron’s heart, when he goes in before the LORD. Thus Aaron shall bear the judgment of the people of Israel on his heart before the LORD regularly. (Exodus 28:30).

The meaning of Urim and Thummim: since it is not known exactly what the Urim and Thummin were, it has been suggested Urim and Thummim carry the following ideas:

How the Urim and Thummim functioned: following are the two most common ways various commentators suspect the Urim and Thummin may have been used:

1. They were placed in the breastplate, so that whenever the high priests entered the presence of the LORD they would be over his heart. In this way the high priest would always bear the means of making decisions for the Israelites over his heart before the LORD."
2. The high priest carried in his breastplate the Urim and Thummin perhaps two sticks or two stones, one white and the other black. When Israel was preparing for battle, and desired to know God's will, they would shake or toss the sticks or stones, if they turned up black, they would not go to battle, and if they turned up white, they would proceed into battle with the knowledge that they were in the will of God.

However, the following verse:

- And when Saul inquired of the LORD, the LORD did not answer him, either by dreams, or by Urim, or by prophets. (1 Sam. 1 28:6).

Makes clear a definite answer was not always obtainable, so it may not have been as simple as tossing two stones on ground, and Moses never used them, which would indicate that they were given for a certain time in Israel's history for the high priest to aid those who could not find God's will and guidance any other way.

The Urim and Thummim faded from use: The Old Testament indicates that the Urim and Thummin faded from use during the early days of Israel's monarchy, this may be due to the following fact: During the monarchy God installed prophets to communicate God's messages to the courts in Jerusalem and Samaria. It seems that prophets who revealed God's word to the king replaced the Urim and Thummin, by which God previously revealed His mind to the priest. The only mention of the Urim and Thummin after the Babylonian exile is the following verse showing that Ezra was still using the Urim and Thummin to determine the ancestry of the priests who returned from the exile:

- The governor told them that they were not to partake of the most holy food, until there should be a priest to consult Urim and Thummim. (Ezra 2:63).

After this the Bible never mentions the Urim and Thummin again, they were a gift from God to assist His people during a certain time in their history.

THE WHOLE ASSEMBLY

NEHEMIAH 7:66-69

- **Nehemiah 7:66:** The whole assembly together was 42,360,
- **Nehemiah 7:67:** besides their male and female servants, of whom there were 7,337. And they had 245 singers, male and female.
- **Nehemiah 7:68:** Their horses were 736, their mules 245,
- **Nehemiah 7:69:** their camels 435, and their donkeys 6,720.

The total of the assembly, their male and female servants and singers was 49,942.

The total of their horses, mules, camels and donkeys. 8,136.

GIVING TO THE WORK

NEHEMIAH 7:70-72

- **Nehemiah 7:70:** Now some of the heads of fathers' houses gave to the work. The governor (Tirshatha in KJV) gave to the treasury 1,000 darics (drams in KJV) of gold, 50 basins, 30 priests' garments and 500 minas of silver.

Tirshatha: is probably of Persian origin, meaning severity. It denotes a high civil dignity. The Persian governor of Judea is called Tirshatha (Ezra 2:63) (Neh. 7:65) (Neh. 7:70) and Nehemiah is called by this name in (Neh. 8:9) (Neh. 10:1). There is a considerable difference between the totals of the number of the moneys, and other things listed here, from that listed in Ezra, chapter two. This should not surprise anyone because the offering listed here is a different offering made some years later, after the list mentioned in the time of Ezra. The register finishes at verse sixty-nine, and the theme of Nehemiah's history is resumed, highlighting here Nehemiah's and the leading men's generosity for the work of God and the establishing of the priesthood.

Daric (drams in KJV): the daric was a high-purity gold piece of 8.4 grams based on an ancient weight standard of the Babylonian shekel. It was a month's pay for a mercenary foot soldier and an international trade coin; hoards have been found from Sicily to Afghanistan. Consider, one daric of gold covered the wages of one soldier for one month, which means 1,000 darics would be the equivalent of 1,000 months' pay for one person, that is an enormous gift.

Mina(maneh in KJV): the mina was a unit of weight and of currency generally of pure silver estimated to weight 431 grams, it was equivalent to 60 shekels. (Ezek. 45:12) and considered a large sum of money.

Fifty basins: these were vessels, in the which the blood of the sacrifices was poured into and from them the blood was sprinkled.

Priests' garments: these five hundred and thirty garments for the priests' may have been the garments laid up in the priest's wardrobe during the seventy-year captivity, since they would not have been used during these years, or Nehemiah may have had them made. These extravagant gifts manifest the zeal that the noble, the rich and the wealthy had at this time for the re-establishment of temple worship, sacrifices and the service of the priesthood.

ALL LIVED IN THEIR TOWNS

NEHEMIAH 7:73

- **Nehemiah 7:73:** So the priests, the Levites, the gatekeepers, the singers, some of the people, the temple servants (Nethinims in KJV), and all Israel, lived in their towns. And when the seventh month had come, the people of Israel were in their towns.

Nethinims: means the given ones or subjects (i.e., those set apart) for menial work). They were. It was the name given to the Temple assistants in ancient Jerusalem originally applied in the Book of Joshua to the Gibeonites. Most translations of the Bible refer to this group as temple servants, while older translations such as the KJV transliterate the word as Nethinims.

For further information concerning temple servants see the title:

- Temple Servants, following (Neh. 7:46-56) (above).

The seventh month: was the Jewish month Tisri (answering to part of September), it is in this month that the feast of tabernacles was held. The wall was finished in the twenty fifth day of the month Elul, in fifty-two days (Neh. 6:15), which means that the seventh month came five days after the wall was finished. During these five days all the people who had moved to the city to help with the work returned to their own towns, villages and cities by Nehemiah's direction, and were in their towns before the first day of the seventh month came. The compilation of this genealogical register would have given the heads of Israel enormous helpful knowledge and been a great guide for locating the land to which each tribe and ancient family belonged.

NOTE: the last two verse of Nehemiah chapter seven should stand as the beginning of Nehemiah chapter eight, the passages would then run, "And when the seventh month was come, "all the people gathered as one man into the square before the Water Gate. And they told Ezra the scribe to bring the Book of the Law of Moses that the LORD had commanded Israel etc." (Neh. 8:1).

FINAL NOTE

Nehemiah knew the great importance of establishing the priesthood and temple worship and through them bring the people back into a right relationship with God. For the safety of a city and a church depends far more upon the inhabitants than upon its walls and buildings. God gives knowledge, He inspires and gives grace, every good gift and every good work are from above, for Nehemiah as it is with all who belong to God's Kingdom all is of God and therefore all worship, praise and thankfulness must be to Him. What is done by human forethought, practicality, wisdom and calculation etc, must be ascribed to the direction of Divine Providence. How sad and tragic, it will be for those who for love of this world turn back from the Lord, and for those who endure to the end, how happy it will be.

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.

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