

Nehemiah 7:1-73 – Study Leader’s Questions

Moving on (Nehemiah 7:1-2)

1. *What work had been accomplished at this point (Nehemiah 7:1)?*
2. *What is Nehemiah’s first priority and why is it important?*
3. *What specific men were named in Nehemiah 7:2 and what positions were they given?*
4. *What characteristics qualified them for this work? Why would these qualities be important?*

New Leadership (Nehemiah 7:3-4)

5. *What is the first practical step the new leaders put in place?*
6. *Why was this necessary?*

History of the people (Nehemiah 7:5-73)

7. *What did God direct Nehemiah to do, and what did he find when he did (Nehemiah 7:5)?*
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11. *How was the condition of the people summarised in Nehemiah 7:73?*

Nehemiah 7:1-73 – Answers to Questions

See Dr Ruckman's commentary *The Books of Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther* pp 33-48, 264-273 and the Ruckman Reference Bible pp 677-680, 703.

Moving on (Nehemiah 7:1-2)

1. What work had been accomplished at this point (Nehemiah 7:1)?

The wall had been built and Nehemiah had “**set up the doors upon the gates**” Nehemiah 6:1. God had in a practical way answered Nehemiah’s prayer of Nehemiah 6:9.

“For they all made us afraid, saying, Their hands shall be weakened from the work, that it be not done. Now therefore, O God, strengthen my hands.”

The men God calls to do His work are finishers e.g. the apostle Paul and the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

“I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith” 2 Timothy 4:8.

“Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work” John 4:34. This verse should be memorised. (Have any of the Lord’s people got anything else to do, all things considered?)

“When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost” John 19:30.

See BBC One Songs of Praise, *How Deep The Father’s Love For Us*.

See www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00trks2.

See also *How Deep The Father’s Love For Us* lyrics.

See www.ap0s7le.com/list/song/28/Stuart_Townend/How_Deep_The_Father.

*Behold the Man upon a cross,
My sin upon His shoulders
Ashamed I hear my mocking voice,
Call out among the scoffers*

*It was my sin that left Him there
Until it was accomplished
His dying breath has brought me life
I know that it is finished*

God intends that His followers be finishers.

“Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ” 1 Corinthians 11:1, i.e. “**followers**” not “**imitators**” as in the NKJV. The follower obeys the leader and by definition is genuine. An imitator may not obey any leader and by definition is a counterfeit. The greatest imitator of the Lord Jesus Christ “**the light of the world**” John 8:12 is the Devil “**for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light**” 2 Corinthians 11:14.

It should also be noted that important offices had been re-established and officers appointed to them, namely “**the porters...that kept the gates**” Nehemiah 11:19, “**the singers...over the business of the house of God**” Nehemiah 11:22 and for “**songs of praise and thanksgiving unto God**” Nehemiah 12:46, which is where the BBC1 programme would have got its name*, see above and “**the Levites**” who “**caused the people to understand the law**” Nehemiah 8:7 “**even to understand the words of the law**” Nehemiah 8:13 and who would have responsibility “**to offer burnt offerings, and to kindle meat offerings, and to do sacrifice continually**” Jeremiah 33:18.

*Only belief in the Lord Jesus Christ yields “**songs of praise and thanksgiving unto God.**” See *The Bible Believers’ Bulletin*, April 2012, *The Great Missing Link* by Dr Peter S. Ruckman and the following extract, author’s emphasis.

“Among all the religions in the world, Christianity is noted for its hymns. The average hymn book in America has 400–500 songs in it about a supposed dead man (if you look at it from the standpoint of the lost world). Charles Wesley composed a minimum of 800 songs about that man, as did Fanny Crosby and Francis Havergal. That’s 2,400 songs; and that doesn’t include the ones by Isaac Watts, Philip Bliss, George Handel, John W. Peterson, Alfred Smith, and a host of others.”

2. *What is Nehemiah’s first priority and why is it important?*

Nehemiah had to appoint a suitable successor to oversee the city in his projected absence. See Nehemiah 13:6, 7. Nehemiah 2:1 shows that the recorded visit to the king was 12 years after Nehemiah’s first journey to Jerusalem, Nehemiah 2:11. The statement “**I set him a time**” Nehemiah 2:6 indicates that Nehemiah had made other visits to the king during that time interval, though these are not recorded.

3. *What specific men were named in Nehemiah 7:2 and what positions were they given?*

They are Nehemiah’s brother Hanani, and Hananiah “**the ruler of the palace.**” They were given full responsibility for governance of the city of Jerusalem.

It may be that two were appointed because “**Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend**” Proverbs 27:17 and “**Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour**” Ecclesiastes 4:9. Together with Nehemiah they were “**a threefold cord...not quickly broken**” Ecclesiastes 4:12.

4. *What characteristics qualified them for this work? Why would these qualities be important?*

It is said of Hananiah that “**he was a faithful man, and feared God above many.**” “**The fear of God**” was one of Nehemiah’s qualities, Nehemiah 5:15. Hanani, Nehemiah’s brother, shared his concern for Jerusalem and he had been among those who had alerted Nehemiah to the city’s plight.

“...Hanani, one of my brethren, came, he and certain men of Judah; and I asked them concerning the Jews that had escaped, which were left of the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem. And they said unto me, The remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province are in great affliction and reproach: the wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire” Nehemiah 1:2-3.

Nehemiah had shown his faithfulness to God in his four months’ prayer commitment, his advance preparation for the work on the wall and his commitment to finishing the work in spite of sustained opposition, Nehemiah 1:1, 4, 2:1, 5-20, 6:15, 16. In type, they picture Christian commitment to the Lord and His work.

“Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel; And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God” Philippians 1:27-28.

In other words, Nehemiah chose men of like mind, as Paul said of Timothy.

“But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state. For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state” Philippians 2:20-21.

Faithfulness and fearfulness are two essential qualities for doing God’s work God’s way.

"And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry" 1 Timothy 1:12.

"Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure" Philippians 2:12-13.

New Leadership (Nehemiah 7:3-4)

5. What is the first practical step the new leaders put in place?

They had to ensure security. The city gates were not to be opened until clear daylight in order to avoid an ambush. Note the lesson from Judges 9:32-33.

"Now therefore up by night, thou and the people that is with thee, and lie in wait in the field: And it shall be, that in the morning, as soon as the sun is up, thou shalt rise early, and set upon the city: and, behold, when he and the people that is with him come out against thee, then mayest thou do to them as thou shalt find occasion."

Judges 9:36 shows the deception that is possible in half-light.

"And when Gaal saw the people, he said to Zebul, Behold, there come people down from the top of the mountains. And Zebul said unto him, Thou seest the shadow of the mountains as if they were men."

See Judges 9:26-57 for the full account of the disaster that overtook Shechem that Nehemiah's security precautions aimed to avoid. Similar precautions attended the closing of the gates and the setting of the watches, which was the same as during the building of the wall i.e. "over against his house" Nehemiah 3:10, 28, 29 and which had proved effective. See Nehemiah 4:13-15.

"Therefore set I in the lower places behind the wall, and on the higher places, I even set the people after their families with their swords, their spears, and their bows. And I looked, and rose up, and said unto the nobles, and to the rulers, and to the rest of the people, Be not ye afraid of them: remember the Lord, which is great and terrible, and fight for your brethren, your sons, and your daughters, your wives, and your houses. And it came to pass, when our enemies heard that it was known unto us, and God had brought their counsel to nought, that we returned all of us to the wall, every one unto his work."

Nehemiah's exhortation "**Let not the gates of Jerusalem be opened until the sun be hot**" is a reminder of the association between the sun and "**the law of the LORD**" in Psalm 19:6-9. Nothing escapes either of them and so, spiritually, Nehemiah's exhortation is an admonition to subject everything to "**the law of the LORD**." Don't be taken in by shadow-men who "**loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil**" John 3:19. Psalm 19:6-9 reads as follows. All is made well by "**the law of the LORD**," the soul, the mind, the heart, the eyes, the whole being.

"His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof. The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether."

6. Why was this necessary?

The enemy was still present. See Nehemiah 13:4-5, 7-9, 28. The enemy is, on the whole, ever-present for the Christian. *The Devil* never leaves the Christian except “*for a season*” Luke 4:13, “*the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would*” Galatians 5:17 and Romans 12:2 is standing orders for the believer “*And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*”

History of the people (Nehemiah 7:5-73)

7. What did God direct Nehemiah to do, and what did he find when he did (Nehemiah 7:5)?

God prompted Nehemiah to check the lineage of the inhabitants of Jerusalem for authenticity and Nehemiah found a written record of the lineages. Such written records are important because they included those for the Lord Jesus Christ, as recorded in Luke 2:4. See Matthew 1:1-17 and Luke 3:23-38.

“And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:)”

Written records are important because the Lord Jesus Christ defeated the Devil each time starting with the simple expression “*It is written*” Matthew 4:4, 7, 10.

Written records are also important because the Christian is among “*they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life*” Revelation 21:27 especially insofar as “*...whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire*” Revelation 20:15.

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

The list records the Jewish leaders, Nehemiah 7:7, the Jews returning from captivity, Nehemiah 7:8-38, the priests, Nehemiah 7:39-42, the Levites, Nehemiah 7:43, the singers, Nehemiah 7:44, the porters, Nehemiah 7:45, the servants, Nehemiah 7:46-60, the Jews who could not prove their genealogy, Nehemiah 7:61-65 and the number of servants, male and female, Nehemiah 7:67 and livestock; horses, mules, camels, asses, Nehemiah 7:68, 69.

Ezra 2 is the equivalent list.

Each list was clearly “*done decently and in order*” 1 Corinthians 14:40. That is how the Christian should do anything, including that which is mundane, like book work (or LT work).

9. What use can such lists be to a): the Jews and b): to us today?

The list would impart a sense of community and identity. The returned exiles were not a nameless, numberless host. Moreover, they consisted of families. God is concerned for families as the expression “*the children of*” denotes, found 107 times in the Book of Nehemiah. Being part of a family is a blessing of obedience and the list essentially records families (including one that was very likely an ungodly ‘insertion’ by the unseen enemy, Nehemiah 7:18 (!) “*Adonikam*” *Lord of the rebellion*. See also Ezra 2:13 (!) and the *Ruckman Reference Bible* p 678. Always beware of potential satanic infiltration via the “*tares among the wheat*” Matthew 13:25).

“God setteth the solitary in families: he bringeth out those which are bound with chains: but the rebellious dwell in a dry land” Psalm 68:6.

“Yet setteth he the poor on high from affliction, and maketh him families like a flock” Psalm 107:41.

The list would help the Jews to know how many of their brethren were available for the various offices that needed to be filled, see Nehemiah 7:1 and *Question 8*.

Many of the names listed are of places, not individuals, e.g. Nehemiah 7:25-27, 29-39. This would help in restoring “***every one unto his city***” Nehemiah 7:6.

Like the Domesday Book, , the list was a detailed record of persons and possessions within the realm. It would therefore be an advantage to the king and in turn a benefit to his Jewish subjects to know that this part of his realm was being administered so efficiently, in accordance with Proverbs 14:35, 27:23:

The king's favour is toward a wise servant: but his wrath is against him that causeth shame.”

Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks, and look well to thy herds.”



The Domesday Book, 1086 A.D.
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Domesday_Book

The list is useful for Christians today because it illustrates God’s interest in names, no matter how great their number. “***Forty and two thousand three hundred and threescore***” Nehemiah 7:66 plus “***seven thousand three hundred thirty and seven***” Nehemiah 7:67 or forty nine thousand six hundred and ninety seven in total is a vast number for humans but a very small number for God. The number of stars is much greater but God has names for all the stars.

Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth” Isaiah 40:26.

The Lord’s people are likened to stars, especially soul winners, Proverbs 11:30.

And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever” Daniel 12:3.

Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear” Matthew 13:43.

That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world” Philippians 2:15.

Just as He gives names to the stars, God has given “***that worthy name***” James 2:7 to Christians, in that “***the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch***” Acts 11:26 and, because the Lord Jesus Christ has “***overcome the world***” John 16:33, God can bestow upon the Christian “***a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it***” Revelation 2:17.

Not every individual was specified in Nehemiah 7:7-64 but everyone on God’s list of “***the sons of God***” is both specified and special to God. Even in the Old Testament, God has a list for His people and it is not complete yet, as Psalm 87:5-6 show.

And of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her: and the highest himself shall establish her. The LORD shall count, when he writeth up the people, that this man was born there. Selah.”

See Dr Ruckman’s commentary *Volume II of the Book of Psalms* pp 642-645.

As indicated above, the Lord has already written up the followers of the Lord Jesus Christ as the Lord Himself said in Luke 10:20 and which is cause for rejoicing.

"Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven."

In addition, note Paul's reference to the Christian whom God has already written up in Philippians 4:3, the application of which cannot be limited to Paul's time or to those who co-laboured in the Gospel at that time, because it would contradict 2 Timothy 2:13 "**If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.**" Philippians 4:3 reads as follows.

"And I intreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellowlabourers, whose names are in the book of life."

10. *What was significant about the financial contributions various people made to the work (Nehemiah 7:70-72)?*

Note first the strange expression "***the Tirshatha***" Nehemiah 7:65, 70, noting the capitalisation. The expression occurs 5 times in scripture, also in Ezra 2:63, Nehemiah 8:9, 10:1. The last two references specify Nehemiah as "***the Tirshatha***" and the term is therefore defined in Nehemiah 5:14 as "***their governor***." See also Nehemiah 5:15, 18, 12:26. However, local Gentile rulers are also called "***governors***" in Nehemiah 2:7, 9, 3:7. See also Ezra 5:3, 6, 14, 6:6, 7, 13, 8:36, Esther 3:12, Daniel 2:48, 3:2, 3:3, 27:6:7, Matthew 27:2, 11, 14, 15, 21, 23, 27, 28:14, Luke 2:2, 3:1, 20:20, Acts 23:24, 26, 33, 34, 24:1, 10, 26:30, 2 Corinthians 11:32. The term "***the Tirshatha***" is said, however, to be a Persian title denoting "*highest power.*" See bibleencyclopedia.com/tirshatha.htm. This would fit Nehemiah's position and status as deriving his power of governance ostensibly from the Persian king. However, it is God that "***removeth kings, and setteth up kings***" Daniel 2:21 and the first time that the expression "***the Tirshatha***" occurs in the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah and in the scripture as a whole, it is with respect to *God's governance* in an identical statement in each Book, concerning Urim and Thummim. The King James translators inserted the word "***up***" in italics in Nehemiah 7:65 so that it reads the same as Ezra 2:13.

"And the Tirshatha said unto them, that they should not eat of the most holy things, till there stood up a priest with Urim and with Thummim" Ezra 2:63.

"And the Tirshatha said unto them, that they should not eat of the most holy things, till there stood up a priest with Urim and Thummim" Nehemiah 7:65.

"The Urim and the Thummim" are mentioned earlier in the scriptures three times, in Exodus 28:30, Leviticus 8:8 and Deuteronomy 33:8. They clearly had a vital function for determining God's judgement with respect to the people of Israel, as the first mention of these items in Exodus 28:30 shows. The terms "***the Urim and the Thummim***" together mean *lights and perfections*, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Urim_and_Thummim.

"And thou shalt put in the breastplate of judgment the Urim and the Thummim; and they shall be upon Aaron's heart, when he goeth in before the LORD: and Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel upon his heart before the LORD continually."

A governor who had to make pronouncements concerning "***the Urim and the Thummim***" therefore had a special, indeed unique responsibility of governance with respect "***the children of Israel...before the LORD***" and in turn it would be fitting that he had bestowed on him in scripture a special and unique title, namely "***the Tirshatha***," a governor certainly, Nehemiah 5:14 but a very special governor according to *the lights and perfections* of Ezra 2:63 and Nehemiah 7:65, each statement being a perfect match-mate of the other.

Concerning the financial contributions, Nehemiah set the example for by making a voluntary offering, followed by “***the chief of the fathers***” and “***the rest of the people***,” who gave gold silver and garments each “***of his own voluntary will***” Leviticus 1:3.

The lesson for the Christian is in 2 Corinthians 9:7.

“**Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.**”

11. How was the condition of the people summarised in Nehemiah 7:73?

They were settled in that “**when the seventh month came, the children of Israel were in their cities**” – in Nehemiah 7. It was like Solomon’s reign in 1 Kings 4:25.

“**And Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig tree, from Dan even to Beersheba, all the days of Solomon.**”

It pictures the Lord’s millennial reign after the Second Advent i.e. the seventh millennia after the creation, Genesis 2:2 “**And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.**” See Dr Ruckman’s commentary *The Book of Genesis* pp 47-51.

“**And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one...and there shall be no more utter destruction; but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited**” Zechariah 14:9, 11.

“**He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus**” Revelation 22:20.