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Hanani, Hananiah and the Returning Exiles
Nehemiah 7: 1-73a

Hanani, Hananiah and the returning exiles DIG: How and why does Nehemiah go about re-populating Jerusalem? Why was a genealogical record important for this purpose? What does this tell you about the importance of Jerusalem to God and His people? This genealogical record is basically the same as the one found in Ezra 2. What does this list tell you? What tribes and towns are these people returning from exile? Likewise, what groups or classes of people are returning from exile? What happened to the refugee who could not properly document their family history in verses 61-65?

REFLECT: Do you keep a diary, save old letters or file away memorabilia of your family and relatives? What would an inventory of them reveal about the kind of person you are, or the kind of family you come from? Who are the meaningful people in your spiritual journey? What has been passed on to you, spiritually, from your ancestors? What one quality are you now developing as one of God's people that you would like to pass on to your children and their children? How do you intend to do this?

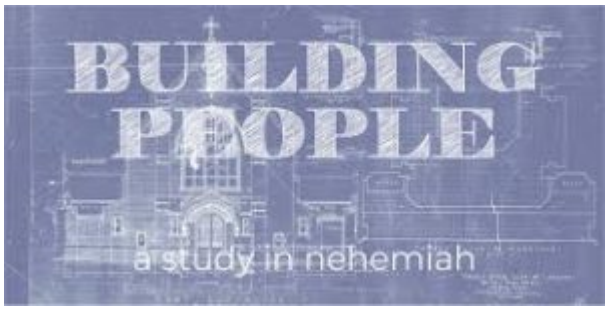
445 BC During the ministry of Nehemiah (**to see link click Bt – The Third Return**).
Compiled by: The Chronicler from the Ezra and Nehemiah Memoirs
(see **Ac – Ezra-Nehemiah from a Jewish Perspective: The Nehemiah Memoirs**)**.**

Now that **the wall** was completed, **Nehemiah** gave a brief description of the security measures **he** provided. **Nehemiah** continued strong leadership even after the building project was completed. **He** realized that great success can still be followed by great failure. **After the wall had been rebuilt, the doors set up, and the gatekeepers, singers and Levites appointed, I put in charge over Jerusalem, my brother Hanani** in **the LORD, along with Hananiah the commander of the fortress, for he was a man of integrity and feared God**

more than many. Hanani was the one who brought the sad news of the deterioration of **the walls** in **Jerusalem** that set **Nehemiah's Third Return** in motion **(Nehemiah 1:2).** Because there was still danger from within and without, **Nehemiah** carefully selected those **men**. **He said to them, "The gates of Jerusalem must not be opened until the sun is hot. While those are still on duty, have them shut and bar the doors. Also appoint residents of Jerusalem as guards, some at their post and some near their homes" (Nehemiah 7:1-3).** This was a wise move since it involved the residents themselves rotating guard duty. If their own houses were involved, they would be even more diligent.[284]

Nehemiah indicates that **he found the letter** (Hebrew: *sepher*) **of the genealogical record of those who** had formally **returned** with **Ezra** (see **Cm – The Inspired List of Ezra 2 and the Human Register of Nehemiah 7**).

Nehemiah was sensitive to the long-term needs of the community. **The wall** was necessary, but **Yerushalayim** was not safe if it was underpopulated, and perhaps **he** had specific prophecies in mind **(Ezeki'el 36:36; Zechariah 2:4-5)**. The population and housing problems referred to here are dealt with in the next file (see **Co – The New Residents of Jerusalem**). **Now the city was spacious and large, but there were few people within it and no houses were being built. So my God put into my heart to assemble the nobles, the officials and the people to be registered by genealogy. I found the registrar** (Hebrew: *sepher*) **of the genealogical record of those who formerly returned.** The genealogical record here has a different purpose from the one found in **Ezra 2**; here, it is used to choose those who would live in **Yerushalayim**. **Jewish** heritage and **holiness** still mattered for those who would live in **the Holy City**, especially **the priests (Nehemiah 7:63-65). Nehemiah** makes clear that the census was approved by **ADONAI** and not **the Adversary (First Chronicles 21:1). I found the following written there (Nehemiah 7:4-5):**[285]



A city is much more than the walls, gates, and houses, a city is **people**. **In the first half of Nehemiah, the people existed for the walls, but now the walls must exist for the people. These are the people of the province who returned from the captivity of the exile, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had taken away, and who returned to Jerusalem and to Judah, each man to his own town. Those who came with Zerubbabel were Jeshua, Nehemiah, Azariah, Raamiah, Nahamani, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispereth, Bigvai, Nehum, Baanah. The number of the men of Bnei-Yisrael was (Nehemiah 7:6-7):**

The sons of Parosh (Nehemiah 7:8) – 2,172

The sons of Shephatiah (Nehemiah 7:9) – 372

The sons of Arah (Nehemiah 7:10) – 652

The sons of Pahat-moab, from the sons of Jeshua and Joab (Nehemiah 7:11) – 2,818

The sons of Elam (Nehemiah 7:12) – 1,254

The sons of Zattu (Nehemiah 7:13) – 845

The sons of Zaccai (Nehemiah 7:14) – 760

The sons of Binnui (Nehemiah 7:15) – 648

The sons of Bebai (Nehemiah 7:16)- 628

The sons of Azgad (Nehemiah 7:17) – 2,328

The sons of Adonikam (Nehemiah 7:18) – 667

The sons of Bigvai (Nehemiah 7:19) – 2,067

The sons of Adin (Nehemiah 7:20) – 655

The sons of Ater of Hezekiah (Nehemiah 7:21) – 98

The sons of Hashum (Nehemiah 7:22) – 328

The sons of Bezai (Nehemiah 7:23)- 324

The sons of Hariph (Nehemiah 7:24)- 112

The sons of Gibeon (Nehemiah 7:25) – 95

The men of Bethlehem and Neto-phah (Nehemiah 7:26) – 188

The men of Anathoth (Nehemiah 7:27) – 128

The men of Beth-azmaveth (Nehemiah 7:28) – 42

The men of Kiriath-jearim, Kephirah, and Beeroth (Nehemiah 7:29) – 743

The men of Ramah and Geba (Nehemiah 7:30) – 621

The men of Michmas (Nehemiah 7:31) – 122

The men of Bethel and Ai (Nehemiah 7:32) – 123

The men of the other Nebo (Nehemiah 7:33) – 52

The sons of the other Elam (Nehemiah 7:34) – 1,254

The sons of Harim (Nehemiah 7:35) – 320

The sons of Jericho (Nehemiah 7:36) – 345

The sons of Lod, Hadid and Ono (Nehemiah 7:37) – 721

The sons of Senaah (Nehemiah 7:38) – 3,930

The kohanim: The sons of Jedaiah, of the house of Jeshua (Nehemiah 7:39) – 973

The sons of Immer (Nehemiah 7:40) – 1,052

The sons of Pashhur (Nehemiah 7:41) – 1,247

The sons of Harim (Nehemiah 7:42) – 1,017

The Levites: the sons of Jeshua of Kadmiel from the sons of Hodeidah (Nehemiah 7:74) – 74

The singers: the sons of Asaph (Nehemiah 7:44) – 148

The gatekeepers: the sons of Shallum, the sons of Ater, the sons of Talmon, the sons of Akkub, the sons of Hatita and the sons of Shobai (Nehemiah 7:45) – 138.

The sanctuary servants: the sons of Ziha, the sons of Hasupha, the sons of Tabbaot, the sons of Keros, the sons of Sia, the sons of Padon, the sons of Lebanah, the sons of Hagaba, the sons of Salmai, the sons of Hanan, the sons of Giddel, the sons of Gahar, the sons of Reaiah, the sons of Rezin, the sons of Nekoda, the sons of Gazzam, the sons of Uzza, the sons of Paseah, the sons of Besai, the sons of Meunim, the sons of Nephishesim, the sons of Bakbuk, the sons of Hakupha, the sons of Harhur, the sons of Bazlith, the sons of Mehida, the sons of Harsha, the sons of Barkos, the sons of Sisera, the sons of Temah, the sons of Neziah and the sons of Hatipha (Nehemiah 7:46-56).

The sons of Solomon's servants: the sons of Sotai, the sons of Sophereth, the sons of Perida, the sons of Jala, the sons of Darkon, the sons of Giddel, the sons of Shephatiah, the sons of Hattil, the sons of Pochereth-hazzebaim and the sons of Amon (Nehemiah 7:57-59).

All the Temple servants and the sons of Solomon's servants (Nehemiah 7:60) – 392.

Now the following were the ones who came up from Tel-melah, Tel-harsha, Cherub, Addon and Immer – but they were not able to identify their ancestral houses or whether their descendants were from Isra'el: the sons of Delaiah, the sons of Tobiah and the sons of Nekoda (Nehemiah 7:61-62) – 642.

Also of the cohanim: the sons of Habaiah, the sons of Hakkoz, the sons of Barzillai. (Their ancestors took a wife from the daughters of Barzillai the Gileadite and subsequently was called by their name.) These sought their names in the genealogies, but were not found; so they were disqualified from the priesthood. The governor, therefore, said to them that they

should not eat any of the most holy things until a kohen arose with Urim and Thummim (see the commentary on **Exodus Gb – The Urim and Thummim**) **(Nehemiah 7:63-65).**

The whole congregation together was 42,360, not including their male and female servants – these were 7,337 – as well as 245 male and female singers (Nehemiah 7:66-67). Nehemiah 7:68 is not included in most Hebrew bibles. At some point it must have dropped out of the Hebrew text.

There were 435 camels and 6,720 donkeys (Nehemiah 7:69).

Some from among the family leaders contributed to the work. The governor gave to the treasury: gold drachmas – 1,000; bowls – 50; and priestly tunics – 500. Those from the heads of ancestral lines gave to the treasury for the work: gold drachmas – 20,000; silver minas – 2,000. The rest of the people gave: gold drachmas (a thick piece of **gold** having on one side the figure of a king with a bow and javelin, and on the side an irregular oblong depression)[286] **– 20,000; silver minas – 2,000; and priestly tunics – 67 (Nehemiah 7:70-72).**

So the cohanim, the Levites, the gatekeepers, the singers, some of the people, and the Temple servants, even all Isra'el, dwelt in their towns (Nehemiah 7:73a). The continuation of **Nehemiah's** narrative is taken up in **Co – The New Residents of Jerusalem**.

Before we leave this section, it might be good for you to ask yourself, "If I had to prove my genealogy in order to get into **God's City**, could I do it?" You are headed for one of two destinies – heaven or hell – and only those who belong to the family of **ADONAI** can enter heaven.

If I asked you if you were a sinner, what would you say? **Romans 3:23** says: **For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.** That includes you and me, doesn't it? Most people feel that being good gets you into heaven and being bad keeps you out. That simply is not true; **we all have sinned**. What would you say sin is? I think we can agree that we are both sinners; now let's define **sin**. Some have said, "I'm not perfect," or "I have made some mistakes." But what do you think the Bible means by sin? Well, the Bible says that **everyone practicing sin breaks God's law – indeed, sin is lawlessness (First John 3:4).** Have you ever disobeyed your parents? Have you ever misused the name of **God**? Have you ever

told a lie? This is what **sin** is. It's breaking **God's law**. And any time you break **a law** there is a penalty. If you run a stop sign, the penalty is a fine. If you rob a bank, the penalty is jail. What is the penalty for breaking **God's law**?

The Bible teaches us that **the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23a). The wages** of work is money, but the wages of sin is death. In other words, what I earn – the penalty, the punishment of **sin – is death**. **Death** is separation. The Bible speaks of two kinds of **death** that is two kinds of separation. The first **death** is separation of the body and the soul. If I were to die right now my body would fall to the floor, but my soul, the real me, would go somewhere else. But the Bible speaks of another **death**, one it calls **the second death**. This is separation of the soul from **God**. Now, the penalty of sin is death, spiritual death, and separation from **the LORD**. To put it simply – hell. All this is really bad news. But there is good news.

But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:8). We were spiritually dead and unable to make the first move toward **God** because we inherited Adam's **sin** nature that rebelled and separated us from **Him**. So, **God** made the first move toward us by sending **His** one and only **Son** to die in our place for the payment for our **sins**. We stand before **the Son of God**, guilty of **sin**, and facing a death penalty. But **Yeshua**, as **judge (John 5:27)**, comes down from behind the seat of judgment, takes off **His** judicial robe and stands beside us. It is there that **He** says to us, "I will take your place. I will die for you." And if you were the only person in the world, **He** still would have died for you. The penalty for **sin** is death, but **Messiah** died and paid for **sin** so we do not have to go to hell.

It is not what you do for **God** that saves you, it is what **God** has already done for you.
You don't get to heaven by what you do; you get to heaven by what you **believe**.

What is it that I need to **believe** in, to **trust** in, to have **faith** in, to be saved?

For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son who died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16 and First Corinthians 15:3b-4). If you **believe** this, you are saved. Remember, you don't get to heaven because of what you do; you get to heaven because of what you **believe**.

Salvation = **faith** + nothing (see the commentary on **Galatians Bj – The Righteous Will Live by Faith**). **Withoutfaith it is impossible to please God because anyone who comes to Him must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him. Now is the day of salvation (Hebrews 11:6** and **Second Corinthians 6:2c).**

Would you like to be saved right now?

Pray this simple prayer in **faith**. But before you do, I want you to remember that saying a prayer does not save you, **trusting** in **Jesus Christ** does. **God,** I admit that I have sinned. I **believe Yeshua Messiah** died for my **sins** and I want to **trust Him** to save me right now. **Lord**, please come into my heart and make me a new person. I accept your **gift** of **salvation**.

If you were to die right now, where would you go?

Why should **God** let you into **His** heaven?

That's right, because **Yeshua** died to pay for your **sins**.[287]

If you prayed that prayer in **faith** see my commentary on **The Life of Christ Bw – What God Does for Us at the Moment of Faith**.