

THE BOOK OF NEHEMIAH

"Jerusalem Activities"

Nehemiah 12;1-47

Introduction

1. Jerusalem had been resettled (11:1-36). Willing men had come from the country to reestablish Israel in the city and the land. The account of the previous chapter is at once exciting and challenging.

2. Now comes more concerning the returning captives from Babylon. Lists about them have already been noted (7:6-73), but now additional details are provided. An account of a spiritual dedication is also given. How God worked in the POW's hearts spiritually to reestablish neglected practices is clearly marked. Here is an account which shows that God had not forgotten Jerusalem, albeit the people had spent 70 years under a foreign flag!

1. GOD'S PERSONNEL--REGISTRATION.

There had been 24 courses into which the priesthood was divided (1 Chron. 24:1-20). A very small number of these returned (7:38-42). Zerubbabel, apparently, took this remnant and provided the necessary courses again. Twenty-two of these are enumerated (vv.1-7). Five generations of high priests are given (vv. 10,11). To show the historicity of these names, notations such as "the book of the Chronicles" and "Darius the Persian" are mentioned (vv. 22, 23). Surely, if anything is to be derived from these lists, aside from the chronology of the times, it is that God keeps the records. We may not have sufficient information to harmonize the details, but we do have more than abundant evidence to demonstrate that our Bibles are historical and not mythical.

Added to these enumerations are some gracious pertinent items. Take these as samples: Some men are listed because they are associated with "thanksgiving" (vv.8,24) David is singled out as a "man of God" (vv. 24, 36) and the things done were according to his commandment (v.24). God had so worked it out that all was as intended (vv. 24, 25). Oh, the thrill of reading truth like this!

2. GOD'S PROPERTY--DEDICATION

Again, the Spirit makes certain that all the participants in this glad occasion are listed (vv. 27-44). The

walls had been rebuilt and now all is dedicated to the Lord (v. 27). The root of this word "dedicate" means to "be narrow, strait, close." From this, the meaning of "initiate, train" was derived (Prov. 22:6). It was expected that this act be performed before a house was used (Deut. 20:5). There was great pagentry in this instance. Musical instruments (vv. 27, 35, 36, 41) were employed, along with the singers vv. 27, 29 35 36) and this resulted in "loud singing" (v. 42).

It is indicated that there were two long columns of parading people (vv. 31, 38). They marched alternatively on the wall and the ground. At last they met at the guard (prison) gate for a mass meeting (v. 39). Besides the men, the women and children participated (v. 43). It was a fantastic demonstration of "gladness" (v. 27) and "thanksgiving" (v. 27, 31, 40). There was such joy that the areas around were filled with the sound of it (v. 43).

It is clear that what was done was not without the deep spiritual content expected from the Lord. The record provides the truth that purification took place (v. 30) and this included both the people and the building. sacrifices were offered (v. 43). Interestingly, all was done in association with the "house of God" (v. 40) and it was God Who made them rejoice (v. 43).

3. GOD'S PORTION--RESTORATION.

There is no question about it. When the restored people have restored walls and gates there must of necessity be a restoration of spiritual responsibility! Check it out anytime and anyplace--where there is default in responsibility, there is a default in spiritual restoration! So, the record is here that what had been neglected was now restored: storage, offerings, tithes, first fruits, for those who were supported by these (v. 44). The sound of praise returned (as in the days of David and Solomon (vv. 45, 46). All shared as they were intended (v. 47). Spiritual vitality was more than words; it was action.

Conclusion Zechariah 2:12 alone records that Palestine is the "holy land". The present record shows how the Jerusalem is rightly called the "holy city". Amen.