

THE BOOK OF NEHEMIAH  
"A Divine Roll-Call"  
Nehemiah 7:5-73

Introduction

1. There is no idle word of God. Hence, this long list of names is just as surely the inspired revelation of God as more familiar portions, such as John 3:16.
2. What is recorded here is an instruction from God. This is the significance of the verb "put" (Hebrew: "gave") and the name of God, "Elohim" (meaning: the Mighty God). It was a matter given to Nehemiah--"to mine heart." God is specific in His assignments (cf. Jonah).
3. Hence, here is an enrollment of genealogy commanded by God for Nehemiah. There are a number of unique items included. Check them out for your spiritual profit:-

1. REGISTRATION

a. Compared.

There are a number of name lists in the Bible (Gen. 5; 49; 2 Sam. 23; 1 Chron. 1-9; Ezra 2; Nehemiah 7; Rom. 16; Heb. 11). There is something solemn about all this--God has not forgotten one person in all of history! Many who are listed probably never thought they would be included in inspired Scripture, but God! Differences between Ezra 2 and Nehemiah 7 can be accounted for, but both are provided by God through inspiration. Ezra was written before the return to the land; Nehemiah after. Remember: God evaluates all things!

b. Declared.

These verses are really interesting. Various groups are listed (v. 5). Cities are included (vv. 26, 27, etc.). In some instances, the progeny are noted ("children" means "sons" in vv. 8, 9, etc.) and in others the "men" are noted (cf. vv. 26, 27, etc.). All these details are marks of a divine record which is absolutely accurate. To claim there are "peripheral matters" subject to error leads one to an errant Bible. This we cannot accept under any circumstances.

c. Included.

The amazing details of this chapter include the animals of the people (vv. 68-69). God knows our persons (vv. 5-67) and our possessions (vv. 68-69)!

2. PRESENTATION

From the many bits of information provided here, the following are selected:-

a. About the Levites.

Specifically, only 74 Levites are recorded (v, 43). This was a small company, if it is seen from man's point of view. Perhaps it is accounted for by the test through which they passed (cf. 13:10). There were others who probably were Levites, but with other functions. They were priests (vv. 39-42) and singers (v. 44) and porters (v. 45). The "Levites" had special functions with the temple. How God provided!

b. About the Nethinims.

The identification of these is related to their assignment by David for the service of the Levites (Ezra 8:20). Three groups are associated with the term: Midianites (Num. 31:47), Gibeonites (Josh. 9:23) and the children of Solomon's servants (v. 60). Hence, even the slaves are registered before God!

c. About the Unknown.

Certain who are listed were not sure of their heritage (v. 61). Others had intermarried and assumed the name of the wife's parents (v. 63). Neither of these two groups were considered "of Israel" (v. 61). Those of priestly background who took the matriarchal position were questioned. In their case, a decision was not promised until the high priest could determine by the use of the Urim and Thummim what the mind of God was (v. 65). The Urim and Thummim apparently were additions to the high priest's ephod (breast-plate) through which God gave direction by special revelation.

3. DEDICATION

a. By giving.

An amazing item is recorded here. Three specific segments of the nation gave to the Lord's work (Levites and temple):

1. Heads of houses. These probably indicated various leaders in the nation (vv. 70, 71). They were able to give and they did!

2. Tirshatha. This is a Persian title for the governor of Israel. Here it is an oblique reference to Nehemiah (cf. v. 65; 8:9; 10:1).

3. Rest of people. What a testimony to a harmony in the nation. All participated in giving. Both money and garments were involved (vv. 70-72).

b. By uniting.

What a glorious word is given: "all Israel" (v. 73). God saw in this group of returned refugees the entire nation. He saw unity and prospect. He saw them settled "in their cities."

Conclusion God keeps records. He knows your situation today.