

Having A Basic Understanding of Some Old Testament Truths

Part 75 – Division Among The Jews Through Israel Returning To Their Homes (Nehemiah 5-7)

1. Who cried out against the Jews?

*“And there was a great cry of the people and of their wives **against their brethren the Jews**” (Nehemiah 5:1).*

2. Why was there an outcry?

Anger resided because they had given up much and were being sold by their brethren for debts they could not pay (v.1; 6-7): *“(2) For there were that said, We, our sons, and our daughters, are many: therefore we take up corn for them, that we may eat, and live. (3) Some also there were that said, We have mortgaged our lands, vineyards, and houses, that we might buy corn, because of the dearth. (4) There were also that said, We have borrowed money for the king's tribute, and that upon our lands and vineyards. (5) Yet now our flesh is as the flesh of our brethren, our children as their children: and, lo, we bring into bondage our sons and our daughters to be servants, and some of our daughters are brought unto bondage already: neither is it in our power to redeem them; for other men have our lands and vineyards” (Nehemiah 5:2-5).*

They needed to realize that you when you give up everything for the Lord you won't be sorry (Matthew 19:27-30 and Hebrews 13:5-6).

3. How did Nehemiah respond to the outcry of the people?

“(6) And I was very angry when I heard their cry and these words. (7) Then I consulted with myself, and I rebuked the nobles, and the rulers, and said unto them, Ye exact usury, every one of his brother. And I set a great assembly against them. (8) And I said unto them, We after our ability have redeemed our brethren the Jews, which were sold unto the heathen; and will ye even sell your brethren? or shall they be sold unto us? Then held they their peace, and found nothing to answer. (9) Also I said, It is not good that ye do: ought ye not to walk in the fear of our God because of the reproach of the heathen our enemies? (10) I likewise, and my brethren, and my servants, might exact of them money and corn: I pray you, let us leave off this usury. (11) Restore, I pray you, to them, even this day, their lands, their vineyards, their oliveyards, and their houses, also the hundredth part of the money, and of the corn, the wine, and the oil, that ye exact of them” (Nehemiah 5:6-11).

It is not right to take advantage of your brethren (Exodus 22:25, Leviticus 25:35-38, and Philippians 2:2-4).

4. Were there any that agreed to right the wrongs that were being done?

Yes: *“Then said they, We will restore them, and will require nothing of them; so will we do as thou sayest. Then I called the priests, and took an oath of them, that they should do according to this promise” (Nehemiah 5:12).*

5. What did Nehemiah proclaim concerning those who would not right the wrongs that had been done?

“Also I shook my lap, and said, So God shake out every man from his house, and from his labour, that performeth not this promise, even thus be he shaken out, and emptied. And all the

congregation said, Amen, and praised the LORD. And the people did according to this promise” (Nehemiah 5:13).

6. What kept Nehemiah honest as a governor and different from those before him?

*“(14) Moreover from the time that I was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah, from the twentieth year even unto the two and thirtieth year of Artaxerxes the king, that is, twelve years, I and my brethren have not eaten the bread of the governor. (15) But the former governors that had been before me were chargeable unto the people, and had taken of them bread and wine, beside forty shekels of silver; yea, even their servants bare rule over the people: but so did not I, **because of the fear of God**” (Nehemiah 5:14-15).*

The fear of God keeps us in line (**Leviticus 25:17, Deuteronomy 8:6, Joshua 24:14, Proverbs 1:7, and Hebrews 12:28**).

7. Was Nehemiah a “settle down and take it easy guy” or was he about getting the work of the Lord done?

He was about God’s work: *“Yea, also I continued in the work of this wall, neither bought we any land: and all my servants were gathered thither unto the work” (Nehemiah 5:16; cf. I Corinthians 15:58).*

8. Had the people of God purged from among them all the heathens at this point of our study?

No: *“Moreover there were at my table an hundred and fifty of the Jews and rulers, beside those that came unto us from among the heathen that are about us” (Nehemiah 5:17).*

Of course, this always brings problems to God’s people (**Jeremiah 10:2; cf. II Kings 16:1-3**).

9. Did Nehemiah want God to reward him according to his works?

Yes: *“Think upon me, my God, for good, **according to all that I have done for this people**” (Nehemiah 5:19).*

We do reap what we sow (**John 5:28-29 and Galatians 6:7-8**).

10. What did Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem do when they saw the progress of the wall?

*“(1) Now it came to pass, when Sanballat, and Tobiah, and Geshem the Arabian, and the rest of our enemies, heard that I had builded the wall, and that there was no breach left therein; (though at that time I had not set up the doors upon the gates;) (2) That Sanballat and Geshem sent unto me, saying, **Come, let us meet together in some one of the villages in the plain of Ono. But they thought to do me mischief**” (Nehemiah 6:1-2).*

11. How did Nehemiah respond to the invitation for the meeting (the first four times)?

*“(3) And I sent messengers unto them, saying, **I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down: why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you?** (4) Yet they sent unto me four times after this sort; **and I answered them after the same manner**” (Nehemiah 6:3-4).*

12. What charges did Sanballat lay against Nehemiah in his letter?

“(5) Then sent Sanballat his servant unto me in like manner the fifth time with an open letter in his hand; (6) Wherein was written, It is reported among the heathen, and Gashmu saith it, that thou and the Jews think to rebel: for which cause thou buildest the wall, that thou mayest be their king, according to these words. (7) And thou hast also appointed prophets to preach of thee at Jerusalem, saying, There is a king in Judah: and now shall it be reported to the king according to these words. Come now therefore, and let us take counsel together” (Nehemiah 6:5-7).

13. Were Sanballat’s charges against Nehemiah accurate?

No: *“Then I sent unto him, saying, There are no such things done as thou sayest, but thou feignest them out of thine own heart” (Nehemiah 6:8).*

14. When fear struck Nehemiah and those working in Jerusalem, who did they look to strengthen their hands?

God: *“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” (Nehemiah 6:9).*

15. Nehemiah was told to hide in the temple to save his life (Nehemiah 6:10). How did he answer that suggestion?

“(11) And I said, Should such a man as I flee? and who is there, that, being as I am, would go into the temple to save his life? I will not go in. (12) And, lo, I perceived that God had not sent him; but that he pronounced this prophecy against me: for Tobiah and Sanballat had hired him. (13) Therefore was he hired, that I should be afraid, and do so, and sin, and that they might have matter for an evil report, that they might reproach me. (14) My God, think thou upon Tobiah and Sanballat according to these their works, and on the prophetess Noadiah, and the rest of the prophets, that would have put me in fear” (Nehemiah 6:11-14).

16. What was the reaction of the heathen to the finishing of the wall?

“(15) So the wall was finished in the twenty and fifth day of the month Elul, in fifty and two days. (16) And it came to pass, that when all our enemies heard thereof, and all the heathen that were about us saw these things, they were much cast down in their own eyes: for they perceived that this work was wrought of our God” (Nehemiah 6:15-16).

17. Were there people in Judah loyal to Tobiah (he has been a sure enemy of God’s work)?

Yes: *“(17) Moreover in those days the nobles of Judah sent many letters unto Tobiah, and the letters of Tobiah came unto them. (18) For there were many in Judah sworn unto him, because he was the son in law of Shechaniah the son of Arah; and his son Johanan had taken the daughter of Meshullam the son of Berechiah” (Nehemiah 6:17-18).*

18. What was sent in the letters to and from Tobiah?

“Also they reported his good deeds before me, and uttered my words to him. And Tobiah sent letters to put me in fear” (Nehemiah 6:19).

19. Why was Hanani given charge over Jerusalem?

“That I gave my brother Hanani, and Hananiah [same person; properly word Hanani OR Hananiah] the ruler of the palace, charge over Jerusalem: for he was a faithful man, and feared God above many” (Nehemiah 7:2).

20. When were the gates of Jerusalem to be opened?

“And I said unto them, Let not the gates of Jerusalem be opened until the sun be hot; and while they stand by, let them shut the doors, and bar them: and appoint watches of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, every one in his watch, and every one to be over against his house” (Nehemiah 7:3).

21. Was Jerusalem heavily populated?

No: *“Now the city was large and great: but the people were few therein, and the houses were not builded” (Nehemiah 7:4).*

22. Whose decision was it to gather together the nobles, the rulers, and the people that they might be reckoned by genealogy?

God: *“And my **God put into mine heart** to gather together the nobles, and the rulers, and the people, that they might be reckoned by genealogy. And I found a register of the genealogy of them which came up at the first, and found written therein” (Nehemiah 7:5).*

23. What happened with the children of Solomon's servants in the reckoning by genealogy?

*“And these were they which went up also from Tel-melah, Tel-haresha, Cherub, Addon, and Immer: but **they could not shew their father's house, nor their seed, whether they were of Israel**” (Nehemiah 7:61).*

Therefore, there is no inheritance (**Numbers 33:54**).

24. What happened with the children of Habaiah, the children of Koz, the children of Barzillai, which took one of the daughters of Barzillai the Gileadite to wife, and was called after their name?

“These sought their register among those that were reckoned by genealogy, but it was not found: therefore were they, as polluted, put from the priesthood. 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 7:64-65).

25. What was the final number of the congregation of Israel besides the servants?

42,360: *“The whole congregation together was forty and two thousand three hundred and threescore” (Nehemiah 7:66).*

26. Was any among God's people willing to give to the work?

Yes: *“(70) And some of the chief of the fathers gave unto the work. The Tirshatha gave to the treasure a thousand drams of gold, fifty basons, five hundred and thirty priests' garments. (71) And some of the chief of the fathers gave to the treasure of the work twenty thousand drams of gold, and two thousand and two hundred pound of silver. (72) And that which the rest of the people gave was twenty thousand drams of gold, and two thousand pound of silver, and threescore and seven priests' garments” (Nehemiah 7:70-72).*