

NEHEMIAH

Lesson 7 – Chapters 7 & 8

The wall is finished, but the work is not done. The focus in Chapter 7 turns to the people and the city, and to organizing for the future. Since the only path to success in the future is to follow God's Word, in Chapter 8 the people are gathered and the Word of God is read. In this lesson we will be reminded of the importance of and the reverence due to God's Word as we see how the people react to the reading of the Scripture to the assembly in the open square.

As you begin this study, pray for the Lord to open your mind to the truth in His Word and remind you that the written Word comes from the heart of God.

Memory Verse – This week's memory verse is Jeremiah 15:16.

*“Your words were found, and I ate them,
And Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart;
For I am called by Your name, O LORD God of hosts.”*

Key Word(s)

Read through the entire chapter, looking for words or themes that are repeated. Make note of those words and their significance here.

Read Nehemiah 7:1-4.

1. With the hanging of the doors in Nehemiah 7:1, Nehemiah now looked to to set things in order for what comes next. He began by appointing three positions.

- a. List these appointments below.

- b. How do you see Nehemiah providing for the physical and spiritual aspects of the city with these appointments?

- c. How does Psalm 127:1 apply here?

2. In Nehemiah 7:2 we find Nehemiah passing on the leadership. How does Nehemiah 2:6 help us to understand why he may have been doing this?

3. Write the names of the two men mentioned here, along with the position they were being given.

4. This is not the first time we read of Hanani. What do you find about him in Nehemiah 1:2?

5. In regard to Hananiah, what two qualifications for leadership are mentioned in Nehemiah 7:2?
 - a.
 - b.

6. What do the following scriptures say about these qualifications?
 - a. Proverbs 1:7

 - b. Luke 16:10-12

7. Read the following scriptures and list the qualities of a good leader given in each.
 - a. Deuteronomy 1:15

 - b. 1 Timothy 3:1-9

 - c. Titus 1:5-9

8. Nehemiah gave further instructions to these leaders in Nehemiah 7:3.
 - a. What instructions did he give?

 - b. What reasons do you see for the details of these instructions?

 - c. List any other reasons you find in Nehemiah 7:4.

Read Nehemiah 7:5-6.

1. What did the Lord put in Nehemiah's heart to do in Nehemiah 7:5?

2. What does Nehemiah 7:6 tell us about these people?

3. If we look back to the Book of Ezra, we find the same list from Nehemiah 7 in Ezra 2:1-70. There are also some interesting details given in Ezra Chapter 1.
 - a. What more do you find about this in Ezra 1:1-3?

 - b. What does this tell you about the people on the list?

 - c. Ezra 1:4 goes on with instructions for those who stay. What are they to do?

We must be careful not to judge those who stayed when given the opportunity to return to Jerusalem. Some may have been complacent and lost their love for the Lord, but note that some of the provision for building the temple came from those who stayed. Others might have been too old or sick (it had been 70 years since they were captured). Also remember that if Nehemiah had gone with the first group, then he would not have been in the place he needed to be when God called him to go and build the wall! When we are led by the Lord and not by what others are doing, God will have His people in the right place at the right time to do the work He has for us.

Consider Nehemiah 7:7-73.

As you look at these verses, the number of names can be overwhelming. It is hard for us to be interested in each name, but it is good for us to remember that each and every name is important to God!

1. What do you see in the following scriptures about the importance of each individual person in the eyes of God.
 - a. Psalm 139:13-15

 - b. Jeremiah 1:5

2. Because of God's covenant with the children of Israel, it was important that each person who claimed to be a Jew could trace their ancestry. Read about the incident in Nehemiah 7:61-65.

- a. What does Nehemiah 7:61 tell us happened?

- b. What was the consequence of this from Nehemiah 7:64-65?

- c. Our ancestry in the family of God traces back to Jesus! We need to know that we belong to God and are saved. How can we know this?

3. Another point of interest in this list of names is found in Nehemiah 7:70-72. What is recorded in these verses?

Read Nehemiah 8:1-6.

It had been one week since the wall was completed and, as we begin Chapter 8, *“all the people gathered together as one man in the open square...”*

1. The people had gathered for a purpose, as we can see by what they spoke to Ezra in verse 1. What did they ask him to do?

2. This is the first time Ezra has been mentioned. What do the following scriptures tell us about him?
 - a. Ezra 7:6

 - b. Ezra 7:9-10

 - c. Ezra 7:25

 - d. Read through the letter from Artaxerxes to Ezra in Ezra 7:11-28 and make note of any other interesting points below.

3. In Nehemiah 8:2-3 we read of what Ezra did on this day.
 - a. What did he do?

 - b. How long did he do this?

c. Who was present for this?

d. Write the words from last phrase in verse 3 that describe the attitude of those in the crowd.

4. As you read through Nehemiah 8:4-6 you can see the attitude the people had toward the Word of God. Write the actions described in each verse that reflect this attitude.

a. Nehemiah 8:5

b. Nehemiah 8:6

c. What does this show you about the people in this crowd?

5. What do you see in the following scriptures that is evident in this crowd?

a. Psalm 95:6

b. Jeremiah 15:16

Read Nehemiah 8:7-12.

1. What did the Levites do for the people as Ezra read the Law?

2. In verse 9, what was the reaction of the people to the reading of the Law?

3. What do you find in 2 Corinthians 7:10 that might explain this reaction to God's Law?

We have seen from the scripture that godly sorrow is the right response when we are convicted of our sin through the reading of the Word of God. But there is no benefit if we stay in the mourning and weeping and do not move on to obedience and forgiveness. There is another reason for weeping, but they are tears of joy at the wonder of our God!!

4. Read 2 Chronicles 7:14 and answer the questions below. You might remember this verse as our memory verse from Lesson 1.

a. What did the Lord call His people to do?

- b. What part of this do you see the people in the crowd in Nehemiah 8:9-11 doing?
- c. What did God promise to do if they did all of these things?

5. The promise of 2 Chronicles 7:14 is surely a cause for joy in the crowd who has confessed and mourned for their sin! What does Psalm 16:11 say gives joy?

Read Nehemiah 8:13-18.

1. Nehemiah 8:13 records what happened on the second day.

- a. Who were the people gathered to Ezra the scribe?
- b. What was the purpose of this gathering?
- c. Why is this an important part of the reading of God's Word?

2. What does Nehemiah 8:14-15 tell us they found written in the law that they should do?

3. James 1:22 exhorts us to “...*be doers of the word, and not hearers only.*”

- a. How do you see the people in Jerusalem following these words of James in Nehemiah 8:16?
- b. From Nehemiah 8:17, how long had it been since the children of Israel had celebrated this feast in obedience to the Law of God?
- c. What do you find in Judges 2:10 that may explain why it had been so long?
- d. What was the reaction of the people as they kept this feast?

4. Nehemiah Chapter 8 began with the reading of the Word and ends with the reading of the Word! According to verse 18, how many days did this go on?

In closing...

1. In Nehemiah Chapter 7 we saw that each individual is important to God. Do you know that Jesus Christ would have died on the cross for you, even if you had been the only one? Take time to really think about this and about God's very personal love for you. Express what this means to you in a thought or a prayer.

2. We saw in many ways the importance of the Word of God in Nehemiah Chapter 8.

a. What are some of the ways they showed their reverence for the Word?

b. How do we or how could we show reverence for His Word?

Memory Verse

*“Your words were found, and I ate them,
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