

Radiant Church, November 7, 2021
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Nehemiah 11-12:26 Leadership

Nehemiah 11:1-3a *Now the leaders of the people lived in Jerusalem. And the rest of the people cast lots to bring one out of ten to live in Jerusalem the holy city, while nine out of ten remained in the other towns. And the people blessed all the men who willingly offered to live in Jerusalem. These are the chiefs of the province who lived in Jerusalem; but in the towns of Judah everyone lived on his property in their towns...*

Response to the issue first addressed earlier in Nehemiah:

Nehemiah 7:4 *The city was wide and large, but the people within it were few, and no houses had been rebuilt.*

2 challenges facing the people choosing to live in Jerusalem:

They would leave their ancestral lands - who would be left to farm their land?

They were willing to face diminished prosperity

Jerusalem would be the focus of any enemy attacks, not the little villages

They were willing to face decreased security

Nehemiah 11:2 *And the people blessed all the men who willingly offered to live in Jerusalem.*

The other 90% of the people recognized the hearts of those willing to relocate, those willing to reprioritize their lives around the greater cause

Nehemiah 11:6 “valiant men”

Nehemiah 11:8 “men of valor”

Nehemiah 11:14 “mighty men of valor”

What was so valiant or valorous about these men and their families?

It was their willingness to risk their well-being for the sake of God’s Name
(Jerusalem and the Temple were synonymous with God’s Name and reputation)

They saw their names coming up in the casting of lots as God’s will for them
And they submitted themselves to God’s will

Why is this long list of names at all important to us”

- 1) God remembers the joyful obedience of His people, whenever and wherever it happened
- 2) God has used a lot of faithful people who went before us, who left a legacy of faith to us to continue

3) Other people (not just the big names, not just the leaders) are important to God

It's like reading the names etched on a war memorial - it means so much more when you are related to or knew someone who died for the cause

Leadership of God's people requires sacrifice

Leadership of God's people requires faith to see beyond what can be seen

Hebrews 11:1-2 *Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. For by it the people of old received their commendation.*

There were primarily 3 different times when exiles returned to Jerusalem from Persia:

Zerubbabel (537/536bc)

Ezra ((458/457bc)

Nehemiah (445/444bc)

Nehemiah Chapter 12 looks back on to those who first returned to Jerusalem

Nehemiah 12:1-7 the priests who first returned with Zerubbabel

Nehemiah 12:8-9 the Levites who first returned with Zerubbabel

Nehemiah 12:10-11 the line of high priests

Jeshua was the high priest who came out with Zerubbabel

Eliashib was high priest when Nehemiah led the 3rd return

Nehemiah 12:12-21 the priests under Joiakim's leadership

Bridging the time in between Zerubbabel and Nehemiah

Nehemiah 12:22-23 the priests and Levites who served until the reign of Darius

These are the religious leaders who led during the time of the exilt

Nehemiah 12:24-26 the Levites under Joiakim's leadership

These had responded to Ezra's personal call to join him in returning to

Jerusalem and helping rebuild the Temple

Chapter 12 is essentially a record kept of those who had been willing to follow God's call on their lives

God kept His end of His covenant, His promises with His people, people who had failed to live up to their own end of the covenant - God's grace over their sin

In this long list of names, there are a variety of people, and a variety of ministries listed

Leadership of God's people requires serving during difficult times

Dangers from the outside (those who want the people of God to fail)

Dangers from the inside (those who do not care enough)

Dangers even within their own office and fellowship

Before Ezra and continuing to Nehemiah, some (not all) of the priests and Levites had married foreign wives (Ezra 9-10)

Dangers when leading in the aftermath of spiritual compromise

Dangers when the leader of God's people forgets gospel leadership means

Matthew 20:20-28 *Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came up to him with her sons, and kneeling before him she asked him for something. And he said to her, "What do you want?" She said to him, "Say that these two sons of mine are to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom." Jesus answered, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am to drink?" They said to him, "We are able." He said to them, "You will drink my cup, but to sit at my right hand and at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father." And when the ten heard it, they were indignant at the two brothers. But Jesus called them to him and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."*

God's people really reflect God when they prioritize God's Name, God's reputation over their own desires for comfort, or security, or significance