

“Building On To Our Heritage!”
Nehemiah 12:1-26

Introduction:

1. We Have Come A Long Way In The Book Of Nehemiah!
 - Started In The Palace Of Artaxerxes, King Of Persia!
 - Nehemiah, His Cupbearer In Susa, Who Was Also A Jew Sensed The Lord’s Call To Go Home To Jerusalem & Rebuild!
 - The Walls / The People / The City / The Religion!
 - The Walls Have Been Rebuilt!
 - The People Have Been Encouraged!
 - The City Has Been Repopulated!
 - And Their Religion & Worship Of God Is Being Renewed & Re-energized!
2. Then We Come To Nehemiah 12!
 - Where There Are More Lists Of Names!
 - And Most Of The People Mentioned Did Not Live During The Lifetime Of Nehemiah!
 - Most Of The People Are From The Past!
 - So, Why After Gaining Such Success & Momentum, Does The Writer Here Start Looking Back?
 - Because: There Is Much To Learn!
 - When We Look Back!
 - Especially When We Look Back To Our Heritage Of Faith!
3. Our Faith Is Rooted In The Past! (Like Theirs!)
 - Many Today Are Trying To Separate:
 - 21st Century Christianity From That Of All The Centuries Since The Time Of Christ!
 - And With It, 21st Century Christians & The 21st Century Church!
 - But, We Can’t & We Shouldn’t!
 - Jesus Christ Said To Peter: “That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it!” (Matthew 16:18)
 - God Has Been Building His Church All Along!
 - Our Faith Is Rooted In The Past!
4. There Was A Temptation To Separate From The Past In Nehemiah Too!
 - In 586 BC - The Babylonian Captivity Begins!
 - As A Result Of The Children Of Judah’s Sin & Rebellion!
 - By 538 BC - Select Jews Are Permitted To Return To Jerusalem!
 - And This Is What Nehemiah 12 Looks Back To!
 - Why?
 - There Are Some Valuable Lessons To Be Learned As The Children Of Israel Look Back – So That They Can Continue To Build Upon Their Heritage Moving Forward!
 - Paul Said It This Way - 1 Corinthians 3:10 - “According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon!”
 - God Continues To Build His Church – Through Us – Through You! “Let Every Man Take Heed How He Buildeth Thereupon!”
 - We Can / Must Learn From The Lessons Of The Past!
 - As They Did! First Lesson:

1. *The Reception Of Our Faith!*

- 12:1-11!
 - The Jews During Nehemiah’s Time Knew That They Received A Great Heritage Of Faith!
 - And This Is Why The Writer Goes All The Way Back To The First People Who Returned From Captivity!
 - This List Is From Around 538 BC!
 - Nehemiah Left For Jerusalem Around 445 BC!
 - 93 Years In Between!
 - Not A Bunch Of Old People & Old Traditions – But A Foundation To Be Built Upon!

- They Received:
- A Heritage Of Servants! (12:1-7)
 - Different Leaders With Different Gifts & Abilities!
 - Two Key Leaders:
 - 12:1 - “Zerubbabel & Jeshua!”
 - Zerubbabel - Political - Governor!
 - The Grandson Of The Last Reigning King Of Judah, King Jehoiachin!
 - Jeshua - Spiritual - High Priest!
 - These 2 Leaders Are Significant!
 - Mentioned In & Even Spoken To In Other Books Of The Old Testament!
 - Especially: Ezra / Nehemiah / Haggai / Zechariah!
 - If We Look At What These Prophets Told Zerubbabel:
 - We Learn The Secret To Their Success!
 - Their Return To Jerusalem Was Not About Them!
 - It Was The Lord’s Work! And They Needed To Rely Upon God!
 - Rely Upon The Lord’s Presence!
 - Haggai 2:4 - “ Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith the LORD; and be strong, O Joshua, son of Josedech, the high priest; and be strong, all ye people of the land, saith the LORD, and work: for I am with you, saith the LORD of hosts!”
 - Rely Upon The Lord’s Power!
 - Zechariah 4:6 - “Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts!”
 - Rely Upon The Lord’s Promise!
 - Zechariah 4:9 - “The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it; and thou shalt know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto you!”
 - This Is How The Lord’s Work Gets Done!
 - And The Rest Of These Servants Knew This!
 - 12:1-7 - List Of 22 Leaders Of The Priests!
 - Important Number – See Why Later!
 - They Had A Great Heritage!
- A Heritage Of Service! (12:8-9)
 - List Of The Levites That Came 93 Years Earlier!
 - Even After Being Held In Captivity For Over Half A Century, They Never Forgot Their Role!
 - These Levites Were Faithful!
 - 8 Mentioned Specifically - They Took Their Responsibilities Seriously! Read Verse 8-9!
 - Especially In The Area Of Worship & Music!
 - In 586 - The Singing Stopped!
 - Now, It Was Their Turn To Get It Started Again!
 - Their Worship Was Reverent! Honored God!
 - Music Of “Thanksgiving!” (12:8)
 - Their Worship Was Regular!
 - What A Great Heritage!
- A Heritage Of Steadfastness! (12:10-11)
 - What Follows Is A List Of Some Of The High Priests!
 - From The Time Of The Return To The Time After Nehemiah!
 - All Part Of An Unbroken Line Of High Priests!
 - Part Of The Same Family! Down To Aaron!
 - They Faithfully Passed Down, From Generation To Generation, What They Had Learned!
 - A Great Heritage!
- We Have Received A Great Heritage Of Faith As Well!
 - Ephesians 2:19-22 - “Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens

with the saints, and of the household of God; / And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; / In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: / In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit!"

- Our Faith Is Not A Break From The Past!
 - But A Building Upon The Past!
- Why The Lord Says In Jeremiah 6:16 - "Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls!"
- We Need To Remember Where We've Come From!
 - Second Lesson:

2. ***The Responsibility Of Our Faith!***

- 12:12-21!
 - The Next List Is From The Generation Of Joikim!
 - The 2nd High Priest From The Captivity! (12:10)
 - Just Before The Return Of Nehemiah!
 - The List Is Similar To The First List!
 - With Some Minor Differences! Used The Names Found On The First List As Family Names! Held In Great Honor & Respect!
 - Look At The Lists On The Back! See:
- Most Were Faithful To Their Responsibility!
 - Most Of These Priests Took Their Responsibility Seriously!
 - And Kept Their Family Name & Service In Tact For The Next Generation!
 - But There Are Some Major Differences? Why?
 - Perhaps:
- Some Forsook Their Responsibility!
 - Where Is "Hattush" In The 2nd List? Not Even Mentioned!
 - Why? Perhaps He Stopped Serving In The Way He Was Supposed To!
 - Not Certain - But He Is Not In The List - Others Are!
 - Perhaps:
- Some Forgot Their Responsibility!
 - Find "Miniamin" In Both Lists!
 - But No Successor To Him, Like All Of The Others!
 - Did He Forget To Pass Down What He Learned To Others?
 - His Son? Speculation - But There Is No Successor!
- But Something Very Interesting & Informative Occurs In These Lists!
 - The 1st List - 22 Names!
 - Good, But Not The Ideal! David Originally Had 24 Divisions Of Priests To Serve In The Temple On A Rotation Basis! These 24 Divisions Are Listed In 1 Chronicles 24:7-19! But What Happened To The Other 2? 500 Years Of Sin & Captivity!
 - The 2nd List - 21 Names!
 - The 3rd List - 20 Names!
 - A Gradual Decline! 24 / 22 / 21 / 20!
 - Lesson Is This: A Gradual Decline Will Take Place!
 - If We Don't Take Our Personal Responsibilities Seriously!
- We Are Called To Be Faithful In Whatever God Calls Us To!
 - 1 Corinthians 4:2 - "Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful!"
 - We Need To Be Faithful In:
 - Sharing The Gospel!
 - But Also Teaching! Called Discipleship! Through His / Our Church! Faithful In Our Responsibility!
 - Paul - 2 Timothy 2:2 - "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also!"
- We Need To Remember Where We've Come From!
 - We Need To Remember What God Has Called Us To Do!

- Third Lesson:

3. ***The Record Of Our Faith!***

- 12:22-26!
 - The Records From “Eliashib” - Nehemiah’s High Priest!
 - People Will Remember & Relive What They Get From Us!
 - Why - 1 Corinthians 3:10 - “Let Every Man Take Heed How He Buildeth Thereupon!”
 - From 12:22-26 - Talks About The Ongoing Records Of The Priests & Levites!
- Some Records Are Detailed!
 - Instead Of Listing Everyone, The Writer Tells Us Where These Records Are Kept! (“The Book Of The Chroniciles”)
 - And For How Long!
 - Records Of The Priests:
 - “To The Reign Of Darius The Persian!” (410 BC)
 - Records Of The Levites:
 - “Until The Days Of Johanan The Son Of Eliashib!” (Also Around 410 BC)
 - How Long Will The Memory & Record Of Your Faith & Faithfulness To The Lord Last? “Jack Yates!”
- Some Records Are Dropped!
 - In 12:23 - Find That “Johanan” Is The “Son Of Eliashib” & Served As High Priest!
 - But In 12:11, The Next In Line Would Have Been “Jonathan” - The Son Of “Joiada” - The Grandson Of “Eliashib!”
 - What Happened To Jonathan? We Don’t Know!
 - Was There A Lapse In Character / Conduct?
 - Or Just A Shortened Life? Don’t Know!
 - But His Name Is Just Mentioned & Then Dropped!
 - Is This How You Want Your Spiritual Heritage To Be Like For Your Family?
- Some Records Are Delightful!
 - 12:24!
 - Some More Levites Are Mentioned - Faithfully Serving The Lord In Praise & Thanksgiving!
 - But They Served:
 - “According To The Commandment Of David The Man Of God!”
 - This Is How We Should All Seek To Be Remembered!
 - Doesn’t Come Through Personal Promotion!
 - But Through Personal Piety!
 - All Know Men & Women Of This Sort!
 - Down Through History! Even Today!
- Some Records Are Delayed!
 - 12:25-26!
 - A Bunch Of Others That Have Not Been Mentioned Served During This Time Period! (460-445)
 - May Have Been “Out-Shined” By The Popularity Of Nehemiah & Ezra! But They Were Just As Faithful & Just As Important In The Lord’s Work!
 - We Know Many Of These As Well!
 - We May Be One Of These!
 - Faithful Servants Of The Lord Who Will Affect Generations By Their Memory – Even Though There Is No Official Record Of Their Names & Accomplishments! Many Just Served As “Porters!”
 - **IE:** Like My Grandmother! Still Remember My Godly Grandmother! And Stories About Her Godly Parents & Even Grandparents! They May Be Forgotten Eventually – But What An Amazing Heritage To Pass Down To My Children!

Conclusion:

1. Lessons:

- We Need To Remember Where We've Come From! And Build On It!
- We Need To Remember What God Has Called Us To Do! And Be Faithful!
- We Need To Remember The Faithfulness Of Those Before Us!
 - And Strive To Be Faithful Like Them!
- 2. Only Then, Are We Prepared To Go Forward To The Dedication Of Our Lives To The Lord!
 - Just As They Were Prepared For "The Dedication Of The Wall Of Jerusalem" In 12:27!
- 3. As We Seek To Re-Build:
 - "Let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon!" (1 Corinthians 3:10)

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