

The Family

Nehemiah 7:5-65

INTRODUCTION:

1. "Family" by today's definition is "a basic social unit consisting of parents and their children, considered as a group, whether dwelling together or not: *the traditional family*...a social unit consisting of one or more adults together with the children they care for: *a single-parent family*...all those persons considered as descendants of a common progenitor."¹
2. In the Old Testament, the family was a household, kindred, a division of a tribe, or a nation.
3. The genealogies occupied an important place in Israel.
 - a. They proved membership in the kingdom of God.
 - b. They contained claims to the official dignity that belonged to priest and Levite.
 - c. Therefore, the family idea had major emphasis in God's dealings with man (cf. Mal. 4:6; Luke 1:17).
4. The Nethinim (KJV, "temple servants," ESV) were non-Israelites, but are mentioned in the genealogies.
 - a. Ezra 8:20 gives the most specific clue as to their origin (cf. Josh. 9:27).
 - b. Here is even more evidence of God's concern for Gentiles and that His blessings were/are always for them as well as for the Jews.

DISCUSSION:

I. The Family Idea

- A. Father, mother, brother, and sister suggest unity in diversity.
 1. Diversity in affection
 2. Diversity in character
 3. Diversity in position or condition
- B. Differences without disagreement

II. The Family History

- A. We are heirs of all of our yesterdays.
- B. The "family tradition" that links us with some event in history is good.
- C. The "family tradition" that tells of deeds of heroism and acts of unselfishness is better.
- D. Not who we are, but what we are is the most important consideration.

CONCLUSION:

1. The idea of the family is unity. The history of the family suggests continuance.
2. No separation can ever break the fellowship of common love which exists in a home.
3. In the family, the ages are inseparably linked together.

¹ www.dictionary.com. Accessed 10/30/2012.