The Significance of Names
Nehemiah 3

INTRODUCTION:

1. Nehemiah 3 is a chapter of names.
2. Though often passed over by Bible readers, the names are significant.

DISCUSSION:

I.   The Meanings of Names
   A. In the earliest times, and in all nations, names meant things.
   B. Names were especially important in the Jewish nation.
   C. Names were given, not because others had them, but to indicate character, to commemorate a circumstance, or to prophesy a future.
   D. Examples:
      1. David meant dearly-beloved.
      2. Elijah, God the Lord or the strong Lord
      3. Elisha, "to whom God is salvation"
      4. Abraham, "the father of a multitude"
   E. In Nehemiah 3,
      1. Eliashib's name (v. 1) perpetually reminded him that "God is in heaven and governs the world He created."
      2. Nehemiah's name was appropriate for the arduous work he was doing, i.e. "whom God comforts."
      3. If true to his name, Meremoth (v. 4) was a firm man.
      4. Joiada (v. 6) needed no priest to remind him that he was known of God.
      5. Uzziel (v. 8) might have been a fearless worker, for his name meant, "God is my strength."
      6. Malchijah (v. 11) might have said to the enemies, "My name tells that God is my King."
      7. Etc.

II.   The Significance of Names
   A. A name is a key to the nature or history of the thing which bears it.
   B. Science has within it the process of right naming.
   C. Speech is given us to reveal our thoughts (cf. Matt. 12:34; Prov. 23:7).
   D. Truth is the correspondence of life with speech and speech with life (cf. Matt. 12:37)

III. The Relation of Names
   A. Names perpetuate memory.
   B. One may be named after an ancestor, but of that ancestor, only the name is left (Eccle. 1:4).
   C. The day of judgment will harmonize names and things (cf. Matt. 24:34-46).