

When the Lots Were Cast

Nehemiah 11:1-12:26

INTRODUCTION:

1. Remember:
 - a. The Persians (who had conquered the Medes) conquered Babylon in 539 B.C.
 - b. 536 B.C.: Cyrus the Great (a.k.a. "Darius the Persian" and "Darius the Mede") released Zerubbabel and 50,000 Jews to go to Jerusalem.
 - c. Ezra and others returned in 458 B.C.
 - d. Nehemiah went to Jerusalem the first time in 445 B.C.
2. God's people need to focus on the most important things. The book of Nehemiah illustrates this point.
3. In Nehemiah 11, the people are faced with a national decision.
 - a. The lots were cast.
 - 1) Method unknown
 - 2) Some believe Urim and Thummim were involved, but they seemed not to be present during the time of Ezra and Nehemiah (cf. Ez. 2:63; Neh. 7:65).
 - 3) "The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the Lord" (Prov. 16:33).
 - b. Since the walls were restored, the capital city was to be inhabited.
 - 1) Some volunteered willingly.
 - 2) Others had to be "drafted" (11:1).
4. Here are four attitudes to be emulated.

DISCUSSION:

- I. **Be willing to move out of your "comfort zone."**
 - A. The families living outside of Jerusalem depended on the land for existence, and had adapted to that (cf. 11:25-36).
 1. The thought of leaving their comfort zone was traumatic.
 2. Leaving their homes, relatives, neighbors, work, friends and familiar routines they began a new life in a very different environment.
 - B. God wants you to be available. Are you willing to adapt?
 - C. Be careful about for what you pray.
- II. **Be willing to commit to holiness.**
 - A. The people were moving into the holy city (i.e. Jerusalem).
 - B. Nehemiah was focused on that which was holy (cf. 10:31).
 - C. Ezra also enforced the need for holiness in the people (Ezra 9:2, 3).
 - D. Jerusalem was to be set apart for God's special use, i.e. sanctified.
 - E. To live in a holy city is a great privilege and a great responsibility.

III. Be willing to use your talents (abilities).

- A. Though some had to be “drafted,” others were willing (cf. 11:1, 2).
- B. God is able to use a wide variety of people (cf. 11:3-24; Rom. 12:6-8).
 - 1. “...the one who leads, with zeal...” (Rom. 12:8).
 - a. Leaders of provinces of Jerusalem are mentioned in Neh. 11:3.
 - b. “The speed of the leader determines the speed of the team” (unknown source).
 - 2. Administrators made sure the city functioned well (11:9).
 - 3. “...if service, in our serving...” (Rom. 12:7). Some “were over the outside work of the house of God” (11:16).

IV. Be willing to worship God.

- A. Some lead us in worship (11:17).
- B. We praise God in song (11:17, 22).
- C. In our assemblies, we thank God in prayer (11:17; 12:24).

CONCLUSION: