

Nehemiah 11:1-36 – Study Leader's Questions

1. *Where did the leaders of the people live? Where did most of the other people live?*
2. *Why was it important to move people to the city?*
3. *How did they decide where people would live?*
4. *Should New Testament believers use this today?*
5. *Why would people not want to live in Jerusalem?*
6. *What stands out about the many names that are given here?*
7. *What lessons can we learn from the fact that 'Perez' is mentioned in the list?*
8. *Why are we told about the 'king's representative' (Nehemiah 11:24)?*
9. *What can we learn from this chapter that can be applied to church life today?*

Nehemiah 11:1-36 – Answers to Questions

See Dr Ruckman's commentary *The Books of Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther* pp 33-37, 179-180 (not 173-174), 302, 313-320 and the *Ruckman Reference Bible* pp 667-680, 693, 702-704, 710, 939, 1104 for detailed comments and additional information.

1. *Where did the leaders of the people live? Where did most of the other people live?*

“And the rulers of the people dwelt at Jerusalem...” Nehemiah 11:1.

“...in the cities of Judah dwelt every one in his possession in their cities, to wit, Israel, the priests, and the Levites, and the Nethinims, and the children of Solomon's servants” Nehemiah 11:3.

Those that dwelt in Jerusalem after the selection by lot, Nehemiah 11:1, included ***“four hundred threescore and eight”*** Nehemiah 11:6, ***“nine hundred twenty and eight”*** Nehemiah 11:8, ***“eight hundred twenty and two”*** Nehemiah 11:12, ***“two hundred forty and two”*** Nehemiah 11:13, ***“an hundred twenty and eight”*** Nehemiah 11:14, ***“two hundred fourscore and four”*** Nehemiah 11:18, ***“an hundred seventy and two”*** Nehemiah 11:19.

The total is three thousand and forty four with respect to the numbers mentioned. This suggests that the population of Jews in Jerusalem and ***“in other cities”*** Nehemiah 11:1 was a little over thirty thousand or, for the purpose of comparison, a little over one-and-a-half times the population of this writer's locale, Guisborough, North Yorkshire, which is given as 18,108, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guisborough.

That is not ***“a great host, like the host of God”*** 1 Chronicles 12:22 or ***“an exceeding great army”*** Ezekiel 37:10. Israel at one time did have such an army and in turn an even greater population, noting that the following total is men-only.

“And Joab gave up the sum of the number of the people unto the king: and there were in Israel eight hundred thousand valiant men that drew the sword; and the men of Judah were five hundred thousand men” 2 Samuel 24:9.

Note in passing that the totals of forty nine thousand six hundred and ninety seven from Ezra 2:64, 65 and Nehemiah 7:66, 67 are a genealogical record i.e. ***“a register of the genealogy of them which came up at the first”*** Nehemiah 7:5. See Ezra 2:1, 2 and Nehemiah 7:5, 6, 7. The record includes ***“the children of the province, that went up out of the captivity...Who came with Zerubbabel, Jeshua, Nehemiah, Azariah, Raamiah, Nahamani, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispereth, Bigvai, Nehum, Baanah”*** Nehemiah 7:6-7 and their descendents living at the time of Ezra and Nehemiah 80-90 years later. Note Genesis 10, 1 Chronicles 1-9, Matthew 1:1-16, Luke 3:23-38 for other genealogical examples.

The above figures indicate the judgement and mercy of God, by comparison with Israel as ***“the stars of heaven for multitude.”***

“And ye shall be left few in number, whereas ye were as the stars of heaven for multitude; because thou wouldest not obey the voice of the LORD thy God” Deuteronomy 28:62.

“Except the LORD of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah” Isaiah 1:9.

God is nevertheless still God, with many or with few.

“And Asa cried unto the LORD his God, and said, LORD, it is nothing with thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power: help us, O LORD our God; for we rest on thee, and in thy name we go against this multitude. O LORD, thou art our God; let not man prevail against thee” 2 Chronicles 14:11.

2. *Why was it important to move people to the city?*

It was important to move the right kind of men to the city, men who were upright and wise.

“By the blessing of the upright the city is exalted: but it is overthrown by the mouth of the wicked” Proverbs 11:10.

“Scornful men bring a city into a snare: but wise men turn away wrath” Proverbs 29:8.

The city needed:

- **“valiant men”** Nehemiah 11:6 to *safeguard* it
- **“priests...And their brethren that did the work...of the house of God”** Nehemiah 11:10-12 to *sanctify* it
- **“the levites”** for **“the oversight of the outward business of the house of God”** and **“to begin the thanksgiving in prayer”** Nehemiah 11:15-17 to *sustain* it
- **“the porters...that kept the gates”** Nehemiah 11:19 to *secure* it
- **“the singers...over the business of the house of God”** Nehemiah 11:22 to *spiritualise* it, such that it should be said of Jerusalem **“Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God”** Isaiah 62:3, *not* **“spiritually...called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified”** Revelation 11:8.

3. *How did they decide where people would live?*

They decided by means of casting lots, Nehemiah 11:1, with respect to **“all the men, that willingly offered themselves to dwell at Jerusalem”** Nehemiah 11:2. Proverbs 16:33 explains the principle, which in the Old Testament is a means of seeking God’s will:

“The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the LORD.”

4. *Should New Testament believers use this today?*

New Testament believers should first apply the principle of willingness, as the Macedonian believers did.

“For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves...And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God” 2 Corinthians 8:3-5. See also Romans 12:1:

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.”

Being **“a living sacrifice...unto God”** is **“reasonable”** in that **“Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour”** Ephesians 5:2.

Instead of casting lots, the New Testament believer should then **“Continue in prayer and watch in the same with thanksgiving”** Colossians 4:2 that he **“may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God”** Romans 12:2, as Paul states in Ephesians 6:5-7 for any kind of service.

“Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men:”

5. *Why would people not want to live in Jerusalem?*

Nehemiah 11:3 states “...in the cities of Judah dwelt every one in his possession in their cities, to wit, Israel, the priests, and the Levites, and the Nethinims, and the children of Solomon's servants.”

Like the rich young ruler, they may not have wanted to leave their possessions.

“Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me. And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions” Mark 10:21-22.

Willingness toward God starts with reconciliation **“through the blood of his cross”** Colossians 1:20. That is how anyone **“first gave their own selves to the Lord.”**

The phrase **“take up the cross”** is omitted by the 1582 JR NT, Jesuit Rheims New Testament, DRB, Douay-Rheims Bible Challoner’s Revision, 1749-1752, 1881 RV, 1984/2011 NIVs, NWT, JB, NJB, Jerusalem and New Jerusalem Bibles, NASV, NRSV, CEV, ESV, HCSB, NCV, NLT. Nestle’s 21st Edition omits the phrase, Stephanus’s 1550 and the ‘Majority’ Text editions retain it. The phrase **“take up the cross”** is retained by all the Bibles of the 16th century English Protestant Reformation; Tyndale, Coverdale, Matthew, Great, Geneva, Bishops’. Two of the 16th English Protestant reformed editors of those Bibles, William Tyndale and John Rogers of the Matthew Bible who obeyed the Lord’s command to **“take up the cross”** in their ministry of the scriptures were burnt at the stake by Catholics i.e. the co-religionists of those behind the modern versions. See *Did The Catholic Church Give Us The Bible?* by David W. Daniels, Chick Publications, www.chick.com/default.asp.

See en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Tyndale.

See en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Rogers_%28Bible_editor_and_martyr%29.

See www.avpublications.com/avnew/content/Critiqued/james1.html Dr Mrs Riplinger’s coverage of Mark 10:21 in *The James White Controversy Part 1*

6. *What stands out about the many names that are given here?*

As in the lists for Ezra 2:1-57, 10:18-43, Nehemiah 7:7-63, besides the names of tribal families (though indeed also familiar Old Testament names) i.e. **“Judah,” “Benjamin,” “Zadok,” “Asaph”** Nehemiah 11:4, 11, 17, the names of well-known Old Testament characters, long dead in Nehemiah’s time, reappear e.g. **“Uzziah,” “Baruch,” “Perez”** (**“Pharez”** Genesis 38:29, Ruth 4:12, **“Phares”** Matthew 1:3), **“Joel,” “Seraiah”** (the name of **“a quiet prince”** steadfast in **“reading this book”** Jeremiah 51:59, 63), **“Ahitub”** (1 Samuel 14:3), **“Pashur”** (Jeremiah 20:1, 2, 3, 6), **“Micha”** (**“Micah”** Jeremiah 26:18, Micah 1:1), **“Zerah”** (**“Zarah”** Genesis 38:30, **“Zara”** Matthew 1:3), Nehemiah 11:4, 5, 6, 9, 11, 12, 17, 22, 24.

See also **Nehemiah 10:1-39 – Answers to Questions**. Noting that names of both righteous, e.g. **“Zadok”** and unrighteous, e.g. **“Pashur”** individuals are mentioned in Nehemiah 11, this recurrence serves as a reminder in at least three respects:

6.1. *The Restoration of Israel*

“Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts. Therefore prophesy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. And ye shall know that I am the LORD, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, And shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the LORD have spoken it, and performed it, saith the LORD” Ezekiel 37:11-14.

Warning: If you don’t want God to get mad at you, don’t write off Israel.

“And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed” Genesis 12:3.

“Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off” Romans 11:22.

6.2. **“A resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust”** Acts 24:15

“And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt” Daniel 12:2.

6.3. **“The books...and another book...the book of life”** Revelation 20:12

God is interested especially in names connected with His Son, both Israel and the Lord Jesus Christ, Hosea 11:1, Matthew 2:15. Be sure to be among those **“whose names are in the book of life”** Philippians 4:3.

7. *What lessons can we learn from the fact that ‘Perez’ is mentioned in the list?*

See *Question 6* above. Perez (Pharez) has a humble beginning but gets an honourable place in the genealogy of King David, 1 Samuel 13:14, 16:1 and the Lord Jesus Christ.

“And let thy house be like the house of Pharez, whom Tamar bare unto Judah, of the seed which the LORD shall give thee of this young woman” Ruth 4:12.

“Now these are the generations of Pharez: Pharez begat Hezron, And Hezron begat Ram, and Ram begat Amminadab, And Amminadab begat Nahshon, and Nahshon begat Salmon, And Salmon begat Boaz, and Boaz begat Obed, And Obed begat Jesse, and Jesse begat David” Ruth 4:18-22.

“And Judas begat Phares and Zara of Thamar; and Phares begat Esrom; and Esrom begat Aram; And Aram begat Aminadab; and Aminadab begat Naasson; and Naasson begat Salmon; And Salmon begat Booz of Rachab; and Booz begat Obed of Ruth; and Obed begat Jesse; And Jesse begat David the king; and David the king begat Solomon of her that had been the wife of Urias...And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ” Matthew 1:3-6, 16.

The Lord imputes an honourable place to anyone willing to receive His Son.

“Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus” Ephesians 2:5-6.

8. *Why are we told about the ‘king’s representative’ (Nehemiah 11:24)?*

The king of Persia had oversight of the entire restoration project for Jerusalem and took a special interest in the spiritual ministry of song associated with the restoration.

“Then I came to the governors beyond the river, and gave them the king’s letters. Now the king had sent captains of the army and horsemen with me” Nehemiah 2:9.

“For it was the king’s commandment concerning them, that a certain portion should be for the singers, due for every day” Nehemiah 11:23.

Music is repeatedly associated with ruler-ship in scripture, both God’s and the Devil’s, 2 Samuel 6:5, Job 38:7, Isaiah 14:11, Ezekiel 28:13, Daniel 3:4-7, 10, 15, Revelation 5:9, 14:2, 3. King Artaxerxes understood the importance of music *favourable* to ruler-ship, as Scots statesman Andrew Fletcher did.

See en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andrew_Fletcher_%28politician%29.

See en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Andrew_Fletcher.

[Andrew Fletcher of Saltoun](#) (1653–September 1716) was a [Scottish](#) writer, politician and [patriot](#). He was a Commissioner of the old [Parliament of Scotland](#) and opposed the 1707 Act of Union between Scotland and England.

“I said I knew a very wise man so much of Sir Christopher’s sentiment, that he believed **if a man were permitted to make all the ballads he need not care who should make the laws of a nation**, and we find that most of the ancient legislators thought that they could not well reform the manners of any city without the help of a lyric, and sometimes of a dramatic poet.”

From ‘An ACCOUNT of A CONVERSATION concerning A RIGHT REGULATION of GOVERNMENTS For the common Good of Mankind: In A LETTER to the Marquis of Montrose , the Earls of Rothes, Roxburg and Haddington, From London the first of December, 1703.’ Later variants express the sentiment in the first person, e.g.:

- “Let me make the songs of a nation, and I care not who makes its laws.”
- “Give me the making of a people’s songs, and I care not who makes its laws.”

The practice continues to the present day, for example, with respect to Handel’s music for royal occasions, notably *Water Music*.

See

www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/music/western_tradition/music_voices5.shtml.

George Friderich Handel was a Christian composer who wrote “SDG” – *Sola Dei Gloria*, “To God alone the glory” at the end of his manuscript of *Messiah*.

See en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Frideric_Handel.

See en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Messiah_%28Handel%29.

“Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God” 1 Corinthians 10:31.

1 Corinthians 10:31 should be memorized.

It is **“the king’s commandment.”**

Music is also important in the world, including commerce e.g. **“The ships of Tarshish did sing of thee in thy market”** Ezekiel 27:25, from 588 B.C., i.e. Tyre **“a mart of the nations”** Isaiah 23:3, from 712 B.C. Today’s marts are the same e.g. Confused.com, Gocompare.com etc. The AV1611 sets the pace and commerce keeps up when it can.

“Pethahiah the son...of Zerah the son of Judah, was at the king’s hand in all matters concerning the people” was the king’s ‘right hand man’ or ambassador, who spoke to the king about his subjects and to whom the king spoke about his subjects. He could relay **“the king’s words”** and **“the king’s commandment”** Nehemiah 2:18, 11:23 to the king’s subjects and report the outcome with any further requests such as Nehemiah had initially made in Nehemiah 2:5-8 to King Artaxerxes who would have been wise enough to understand the principle of Proverbs 27:23 that King Solomon stated.



Andrew Fletcher 1653-1716



George Friderich Handel 1685-1759

“Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks, and look well to thy herds.”

It is also very likely that King Artaxerxes was wise enough to understand the principle of 2 Samuel 23:3 that Solomon’s father, King David stated.

“The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God.”

Note Ezra 6:10 therefore **“...pray for the life of the king, and of his sons”** (and observe that **“the king’s words”** Nehemiah 2:18 are law, **“Also I have made a decree, that whosoever shall alter this word, let timber be pulled down from his house, and being set up, let him be hanged thereon; and let his house be made a dunghill for this”** Ezra 6:11. The judgment of Ezra 6:11 has sadly fallen on too many households in Britain today. Christian corrupters 2 Corinthians 2:17 of **“the king’s words”** will have a lot to answer for at **“the judgment seat of Christ”** Romans 14:10).

Paul states what the Christian should do in 1 Timothy 2:1-2, which should be memorised.

“I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.”

“Pethahiah the son...of Zerah the son of Judah” could therefore in his ambassadorial role typify the Lord Jesus Christ **“Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him”** 1 Peter 3:22, in the Lord’s intercessory role.

“For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” 1 Timothy 2:5.

“Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them” Hebrews 7:25.

“Pethahiah the son...of Zerah the son of Judah” therefore gives an honourable place to his ancestors Zerah and Judah, see *Questions 6, 7*.

“Pethahiah the son...of Zerah the son of Judah” as an ambassador, also typifies the Christian in his ambassadorial role. **“And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God”** 2 Corinthians 5:18-20.

9. *What can we learn from this chapter that can be applied to church life today?*

At least nine important lessons emerge from this chapter, if Nehemiah 11 is taken as a picture of New Testament church life today. The list below is a summary that could be expanded upon by comparison with the material in each of the questions also listed.

- The importance of members with *different gifts*, *Question 2*. **“As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God”** 1 Peter 4:10. See also Romans 12:4-8, 1 Corinthians 12:4-12, Ephesians 4:11-16.
- The importance of members with *caring dispositions*, *Questions 2*. **“That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another”** 1 Corinthians 12:25.
- The importance of members with *decisive, unequivocal attitudes and speech*, *Question 3*. **“But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil”** Matthew 5:37. See also 2 Corinthians 1:17-20. (This writer was once told by a brother in Christ (in about 1985) that *“The English are very good at playing cricket.*

That is, you don't name names and you don't say what you mean. If you name names and say what you mean, that isn't 'cricket.'" Matthew 5:37, 2 Corinthians 1:17-20 run counter to that form of 'Englishness.' Note that Paul, who invariably said what he meant, 2 Corinthians 1:17-20, did "*name names*" besides in greetings and salutations, both favourably and unfavourably, e.g. Philippians 4:2, 3, 1 Timothy 1:20, 2 Timothy 1:15, 16, 4:10, 14.)

- The importance of members with *willing hearts*, Question 4. "**as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men:**" Ephesians 6:6-7. Note that, along with the 1881 RV, JB, NJB, NWT, the 1984/2011 NIVs, NKJV omit "*the*" from "**the servants of Christ,**" breaking the cross reference to 2 Timothy 2:19 "**Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his...**" The Bibles of the 16th century English Protestant Reformation; Tyndale, Coverdale, Matthew, Great, Bishops', Geneva retain "*the*" in Ephesians 6:6 with the AV1611.
- The importance of members with *unity of spirit and purpose*, Question 4. "**Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel**" Philippians 1:27.
- The importance of members with *saved souls*, Question 5. "**And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight**" Colossians 1:21-22.
- The importance of members with *open, written professions*, Question 6. "**No man, when he hath lighted a candle, putteth it in a secret place, neither under a bushel, but on a candlestick, that they which come in may see the light**" Luke 11:33.
- The importance of members with *humble minds*, whether or not with humble beginnings, Question 7. "**Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time**" 1 Peter 5:6.
- The importance of members with *royal allegiances*, Question 8. "**Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen**" 1 Timothy 1:17.

Amen.