

We will now begin the ninth lecture on the Book of Ezra and the Book of Nehemiah. /Today we will study Nehemiah chapter 7. /The title of verses 1-4 is “Men Chosen to Serve,” /or “Men Appointed by God.” /We must all be appointed people in our generation today.

/Read verse 1. /After the wall had been rebuilt and I had set the doors in place, the gatekeepers and the singers and the Levites were appointed.

/The Jerusalem wall was rebuilt. /The wall was rebuilt and the doors were put in place. /There were many difficulties, but God poured out his grace so that the city would be rebuilt. /Now, the finally set the doors in place.

/In 4:1-6, /Sanballat and Tobiah showed contempt and slandered the people. /However, in 4:6, /the wall was built to half its height, and the gaps between the walls were closed up.

/This was able to happen because the people worked together with all their hearts. /In 4:15-23, /there were many interferences by the enemies. /Hence, the people worked during the day, and slept with spears by their sides. /The people also worked diligently from the first light of dawn until the stars came out.

/They did not leave Jerusalem, they did not return home, and they did not take their clothes off when they slept. /They slept with their clothes on. /In 6:1, /they did not set the doors in the gates, but in today’s passage, it says that they put the doors in place.

/When did they put the doors in place? /It says in 6:15 that it was on the twenty-fifth of Elul. /How many days did it take to construct the wall? /It took fifty-two days. /The people faced many troubles as they rebuilt the wall, /but the wall was rebuilt by God’s grace.

/The people did not take off their clothes as they worked. /They worked from early morning until the stars came out, and the city wall was completed on the twenty-fifth of Elul. /The surrounding nations were afraid and lost their self-confidence /as it says in 6:16.

/“How was the small number of people able to complete the city walls through difficulties, unfavorable conditions, and in such a short amount of time?” /The surrounding nations were confused. /They were shocked and afraid. /This was because God personally worked. /Hence, all foreign peoples were shocked. /God’s works are always like this.

/Read Joshua 2:9. /and said to them, "I know that the LORD has given this land to you and that a great fear of you has fallen on us, so that all who live in this country are melting in fear because of you.

/The foreign peoples would hear and be afraid of God’s works. /God created the heavens

and the earth. /God is Lord over all the earth. /All this happened with God's help.

/The doors were set in place, and the work was completed. /Why did God allow the people to finish building the walls? /Why did God allow them to complete it? /What were they to do now that they finished construction?

/The people were to maintain and preserve the city of Jerusalem. /They were to make sure that their enemies did not come and destroy it. /The walls were built so that the people would give offerings to God in the Jerusalem temple.

/God allowed them to put the doors in place so that they could serve God. /In verse 1, whom did Nehemiah appoint after the doors were set in place? /First, he appointed gatekeepers, singers, and the Levites.

/Read verse 2. /I put in charge of Jerusalem my brother Hanani, along with Hananiah the commander of the citadel, because he was a man of integrity and feared God more than most men do.

/Nehemiah put Hanani and Hananiah the commander in charge of Jerusalem. /They were already appointed people. /There were people who were appointed gatekeepers, /singers, /Levites, /and rulers of Jerusalem.

/They were all mentioned in the passage. /They were all appointed by God. /We must always be used for God's work and for God's kingdom. /Anyone who eats but does not work is wrong.

/We must not be useless people. /We must not bring harm to others like Judas Iscariot. /We must be needed by others, /missed by others, /be appointed by God, /and be used by God.

/We must have these qualities before God. /When the doors were set in place, /Nehemiah appointed gatekeepers, singers, and the Levites. /What did these people do? /They gave offerings to God and served God. /They served God.

/Ezra 2:40 says, /"The Levites: the descendants of Jeshua and Kadmiel (through the line of Hodaviah) 74." /Verse 41 says, "The singers: the descendants of Asaph 128."

/Verse 42 says, there were 139 gatekeepers. /These people were set apart even when they returned from captivity /as is written in Ezra 2:40-42. /There were 74 Levites. /There were 128 singers.

/One hundred and thirty-nine gatekeepers returned from captivity in the first return. /In 1 Chronicles 23:1-5, /David appointed the Levites. /They were all Levites. /There were 38,000 Levites. /David focused most on serving God.

/He focused on giving offerings to God. /In today's passages, Nehemiah appointed

gatekeepers, singers, and the Levites /as soon as the doors of the wall were set in place. /It does not say how many they were.

/Still, they were all used to serve God. /Through this, we can see what Nehemiah's purpose was in building the city wall. /It was to protect the city so that they could give offerings to God, and also so that they could serve God well.

/Nehemiah put God's work first. /Nehemiah focused most on serving God. /Nehemiah was a man of good faith.

/In Nehemiah chapter 6, /Nehemiah would have fallen to the temptation of the plain of Ono if he slipped and made a wrong decision. /Nehemiah was able to overcome the temptation because he considered God's work most important.

/Nehemiah spoke in 6:3. /He said he could not stop God's work because it was a great project. /Nehemiah's faith helped him overcome the temptation of the plain of Ono. /We too face the temptation of Ono.

/We must put God's work as first priority. /This is faith that seeks God's kingdom and righteousness first, just as Jesus said. /In verse 1 of today's passage, what type of people were appointed?

/The gatekeepers, singers, /and the Levites were appointed. /We serve with the talents that God gives us. /The positions are not what is important here.

/All positions are important before God. /Psalm 84:10 says, /"Better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere; /I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wicked."

/It is better to be a doorkeeper in the house of God than dwell in the tents of the wicked. /It is important that singers practice so that they can sing better. /The same goes for gatekeepers. /The same goes for the Levites.

/There is a saying, "Genius is one percent inspiration, ninety-nine percent perspiration." /No one can win against a man who works hard. /Who did David win against with a stone? /Goliath. /David did not win against Goliath by sleeping on a stone.

/David practiced slinging stones to bears and lions as he tended sheep, and hence, he became competent. /The same goes for pastors when they give sermons. /The same goes for pastors when they pray.

/We get better at things by practicing. /We become better by endless practicing. /No one learns to sing well in one morning. /No one masters the piano in one morning.

/It was like this for the gatekeepers, /the Levites, /and the singers. /Therefore, we must always practice /so that we can be used for God.

/In verse 2, who did Nehemiah appoint to help him? /He appointed his brother Hanani and Hananiah the commander of the citadel. /We must become people who will be appointed by God.

/We must be people whom God's servants will be moved through prayer to appoint. /We must be used by God. /Nehemiah did not appoint Hanani because he was his brother.

/Nehemiah did not appoint Hanani through his emotions. /Hanani was a skilled man. /Nehemiah told why he had to appoint Hananiah. /Hananiah was a man of integrity, /and he feared God.

/What two things did Hananiah have? /He was a man of integrity and he feared God. /We must be like Hanani. /We must be like Hananiah.

/We must change. /Our personalities must change. /We must grow in faith. /There are many people, but there are not many useful people. /There aren't people to appoint. /We must be Hanani and Hananiah.

/We must be skilled people. /We must be used in this generation. /There are two men introduced here, and the first is Hanani.

/Nehemiah 1:2 says that Hanani /informed Nehemiah about Jerusalem. /Hanani traveled the difficult road from Jerusalem to Persia, and he informed his brother about the state of Jerusalem.

/In Nehemiah 5:14, /Hanani did not eat the food allotted for the governor along with Nehemiah. /Hanani transcended materials. /We must not give up our conscience for a small amount of money.

/Nehemiah 5:16 says, "I devoted myself to the work on this wall." /Hanani worked hard. /Hanani transcended materials, /and he participated in God's work.

/Hanani was Nehemiah's right hand. /The second man is Hananiah. /What was his profession? /He was the commander of the citadel. /He was a commander of Persia who guarded the city.

/He was used from that time. /What were two qualities of Hananiah's faith? /He was a man of integrity and he feared God. /What is another way to describe "integrity"? /Honesty and loyalty. /He was unchanging.

/What does it mean to fear God? /It means to serve God with fear and trembling. /We believe that God is a living God. /We believe that God sees, hears, and knows everything.

/We need faith like that of Hananiah. /His faith was one that feared God and was loyal. /Who was the most wicked king of northern Israel? /It was King Ahab. /His wife's name

was Jezebel.

/There was a man who was valuably used under the reign of the wicked King Ahab. /His name was Obadiah. /1 Kings 18:3 says, /“and Ahab had summoned Obadiah, who was in charge of his palace. /Obadiah was a devout believer in the LORD.”

/1 Kings 18:12 says, /“...I your servant have worshiped the LORD since my youth.” /Obadiah had two qualities in his faith. /He worshiped God. /He worshiped God from a young age.

/We must be believers like Obadiah. /Obadiah hid 100 prophets in a cave and supplied them with food and water. /God uses faithful people and people who fear him.

/Nehemiah 13:13 says, /“these men were considered trustworthy. /They were made responsible for distributing the supplies to their brothers. /God always uses such people.

/They distributed supplies to their brothers as storekeepers. /It was a position that was difficult to use one’s conscience. /However, these people were unchangingly trustworthy and acknowledged by others.

/Who did Nehemiah appoint as storekeepers? /He appointed trustworthy men as storekeepers. /1 Corinthians 4:2 says, those who are given a trust must prove faithful. /God does not use people who are talented.

/God does not use people who are well-educated. /Matthew 25 speaks of the parable of talents. /We must be faithful in the smallest things. /Revelation 2:10 says, /“Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life.”

/Faithfulness means to do one’s best to complete his work. /Anyone who does so can rule over Jerusalem. /Proverbs 25:13 says, /“Like the coolness of snow at harvest time is a trustworthy messenger to those who send him; /he refreshes the spirit of his masters.”

/We must be like the coolness of snow on a hot day. /We must refresh God’s heart. /We must be used by God. /We must receive God’s grace.

/We must be guided by God. /We must be protected by God. /We must be believers like Hanani and Hananiah.

/Next, the second main point. /Nehemiah gave orders in verse 3.

/Read verse 3. /I said to them, "The gates of Jerusalem are not to be opened until the sun is hot. While the gatekeepers are still on duty, have them shut the doors and bar them. Also appoint residents of Jerusalem as guards, some at their posts and some near their own houses."

/Nehemiah gave orders, and first, when did he say that the gates of Jerusalem were to be

opened? /The gates of Jerusalem were not to be opened until the sun was hot. /The city gates in the Middle East were to be opened at sunrise.

/There were not many people there, so the gates were to be opened when the sun was hot. /Second, when did Nehemiah say that the gates were to be shut? /They were to be shut while the gatekeepers were still on duty.

/The gates were to be shut when the gatekeepers were still present. /Nehemiah told the people when the gates were to be opened and closed. /Faith is very specific.

/Third, Nehemiah told the people how they were to guard the city. /They were to appoint guards at their posts and near their houses. /They did not choose just anyone as guards. /They chose men according to their locations.

/Fourth, what were they to guard? /They were told to guard places near their own houses. /Nehemiah gave four orders. /We must open the gates when we should. /We must also close the gates when we should.

/We must also be appointed to guard the city. /We must protect places near our own houses. /These are the things we must do before God. /Faith is not disorderly. /God is not the God of chaos.

/We must open the gates when it is time. /We must close the gates when it is time. /We must be appointed as guards. /It is important that we protect places near our houses. /There were also official gatekeepers.

/However, each person was to protect his own house. /Nehemiah 3:10 says, /“Jedaiah son of Harumaph made repairs opposite his house.” /Jedaiah made repairs opposite his house.

/Similar cases are recorded in verses 28-30. /The people made repairs opposite their houses when they were building the city wall. /They also needed to protect places opposite their houses when they protected the city. /This was proper faith.

/There are things that are entrusted to each individual. /One must take responsibility for them. /We must take responsibility for what is entrusted to us as we build the city. /We must fulfill our duties when we guard the city.

/We must take responsibility for all that is around us. /That is how we can properly serve God. /We must not sit and wait for others to help us. /We must not rely on others.

/We must do our best in the work that is given us. /Galatians 6:4 says, /each one should test his own actions. /It is important that we guard places opposite our houses.

/According to Solomon’s confession in Psalm 127:1, /who is the one who can protect us? /The Lord God protects the city. /Man is but a messenger. /God protects us.

/God protects our children. /God protects our businesses. /There is not much that man can do. /All we can do is sow seeds. /All we can do is water them.

/When will God protect us? /God will protect us when we guard the places opposite our houses. /God will guide us when we build places opposite our houses. /God will also give us grace.

/Read verse 4. /Now the city was large and spacious, but there were few people in it, and the houses had not yet been rebuilt.

/Why did Nehemiah give these orders? /At the time, Jerusalem was large and spacious, but there were few people in it, and there weren't too many houses. /Maintenance of public order was not intact. /The city was not safe.

/Then who was to take responsibility? /Each individual was to take responsibility for his own share. /We must not complain about the quantity of what God entrusts us with.

/We must take responsibility with thankfulness for what is given to us. /This is our valuable calling. /This will be valuable before God.

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/With this we will conclude the ninth lecture on Ezra and Nehemiah. /Thank you.