

Nehemiah 8 and Revelation 7 Connections

By Dawn Foran – 07/01/2021

Number of People

In Nehemiah 7:4-67 a careful registry was made of the genealogy of those who had come to Jerusalem in the first return from Babylon, numbered according to each family. The total of the remnant of the Israelites who returned from captivity was 42,360, plus their servants who numbered 7,337, as well as 245 men and women singers, **just under 50,000 people total.**

In Revelation 7:4-8, a careful numbering of those of Israel who were sealed as servants of God included **144,000**—12,000 from each of the twelve tribes (except the tribe of Dan which is not listed...Manasseh and Joseph are listed separately instead)...**plus a great multitude which no one could number** of all nations, tribes and peoples.

Time of Year

Nehemiah 8:1-2 mentions that it was **the first day of the seventh month.** This is Rosh HaShana, the Jewish New Year, also known as the Feast of Trumpets, which usually falls in late September or early October. Nehemiah 8:14 also mentions the observance of the Feast of Booths (Tabernacles or Sukkot) which occurs fifteen days after Rosh HaShana. It is a feast of rejoicing and gladness looking forward to the Lord's future tabernacling with men eternally. The people ran throughout the land collecting olive branches, myrtle branches, **palm branches** and leafy branches to build their booths. These branches would also be waved before the Lord as a wave offering of thanksgiving.

Revelation 7:9 mentions that the great multitudes were **waving palm branches** in their hands. Verse 15 mentions that, "He who sits on the throne **will dwell (tabernacle) among them**" and in verse 17, "for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them. This is the ultimate fulfillment of the Feast of Tabernacles.

Gathering as One

Nehemiah 8:1 says that "all the people **gathered together as one man** in the open square. In verse 2, this crowd included "men and women and all who could hear with understanding..."

Revelation 7:9 mentions that the multitude **from all nations, tribes, people, and tongues stood together** before the throne and before the Lamb. And they were **all clothed in white robes (uniformity).**

Elevated Leaders

In Nehemiah 8:4, 8-9, a wooden platform was built for the leaders to stand on to teach the people. The leaders included Nehemiah, the governor, Ezra the priest, and a number of Levites who translated and gave explanations of the message to those who did not understand Hebrew. So, **the people were standing before the prophets, priest and king.**

In Revelation 7:9, the great multitude was standing before the throne of God and before the Lamb. Yeshua, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world is also called **our Prophet, Priest and King** in Hebrews.

Posture of People

In Nehemiah 8:5, all the people **stood up** to listen to the message. And they **raised their hands** in response to the blessing. Then they **bowed their heads** and worshipped the LORD with their **faces to the ground**.

In Revelation 7:9-11, the multitude was **standing before the throne**. They held palm branches **up in their hands** as they blessed the Lord. Then the angels and elders and four living creatures **fell on their faces** before the throne and worshipped God.

Blessing and Response

In Nehemiah 8:6, Ezra began the message by **blessing** "the LORD, the great God". Then all the people answered, "**Amen, Amen!**"

In Revelation 7:10, the multitude began by **blessing the Lord**, crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne and to the Lamb!" Then the angels and elders and four living creatures said, "**Amen!** Blessing and glory and wisdom, thanksgiving and honor and power and might, be to our God forever and ever. **Amen.**" (Both groups said "Amen" twice.)

Origin of the Crowd

Nehemiah 7:6 says, "These are the people of the province who came back from **the captivity**, of those who had been carried away, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away, and who returned to Jerusalem and Judah, everyone to his city." The people confessed their sins in Nehemiah 9:27 saying, "Therefore You delivered them into the hand of **their enemies, who oppressed them**; and in **the time of their trouble**, when they cried to You, You heard from heaven; and according to Your abundant mercies You gave them deliverers who saved them from the hand of their enemies..."

In Revelation 7:13-14, one of the elders said, "Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?" And he explained further, "These are the ones who **come out of the great tribulation**, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

(Both groups had been delivered out of a period of great trouble and oppression.)

Translation of Message

In Nehemiah 8:7-8, a number of Levites were listed who "helped the people to understand the Law...and they gave the sense, and **helped them to understand the reading.**" Many of the people who returned from captivity had forgotten, or never learned, Hebrew. They had taken on the language of the Babylonians and Persians. They needed someone to translate not only the language of the Law, but also its interpretation.

In Revelation 7:9, the multitude consisted of people from "**all nations, tribes, peoples and tongues**", yet they all spoke in unison. There was obviously no need for special translators because they seemingly could understand simultaneously.

No Mourning Allowed

When the people heard the Law read to them in Nehemiah 9-11, **the people began to weep**. The **leaders and Levites calmed the people**, saying, "This day is holy to the LORD your God; do not mourn nor weep...this day is holy to our LORD. Do not sorrow, for the joy of the LORD is your strength...Be still, for the day is holy; do not be grieved."

"And all the people went their way...rejoicing greatly, because they understood the words that were declared to them."

Revelation 7:17 says, "And **God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.**"

Whether these are tears that Zechariah spoke of in Zechariah 12:10, "And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son..." or these are tears of joy for knowing that they are counted as servants of God, they will be calmed and their tears will be wiped away by God Himself!

Eating and Drinking

Once the people were quieted in Nehemiah 8:10, they were instructed to, "Go your way, **eat the fat, drink the sweet**, and send portions to those for whom nothing is prepared; for this day is holy to our LORD."

And in Revelation 7:16, the multitude were promised that, "They shall **neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore**; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat; for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to **fountains of the waters of life.**"