

**NEHEMIAH CHAPTER 13 - A Refreshing Chapter! Frailty of Vows of Man; Necessity of Constant Strong Leadership - Being Filled with Holy Spirit! The Importance of Prayer; Our Character and Zeal for the Lord!**

OBSERVATION

Monday 7:00pm, H 105 (1st floor, High School--foot of stairs, behind the gym, by the vending machine area), Tuesday 7:00am, Family, Room, CCCM – Phil Twente, cell #714 425 9221; email – ptwente@gmail.com For past studies, audio plus notes, go to: www.ptwente.com Click on “Bible Studies” on the left column. References include commentaries by numerous pastor/teachers.

INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

**EZRA – BOOK OF RESTORATION; NEHEMIAH – BOOK OF RECONSTRUCTION**

**Chapter 13 – Principles of Separation; The Reforms of Nehemiah**

From Neh 13:6 and Neh 7:2 we learn that Nehemiah returned to Babylon for a time, leaving the governing of the city in the hands of his brother. **When he returned, he discovered that the people had fallen back into their old ways.** Neh 13:1-3 speak of a cleansing that took place the very day of the dedication, when they separated the heathen wives in the families; see Deu 23:1-5. Years before, Ezra had faced this problem (Ezr 10:1-44). Sin has a way of repeating itself. When Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem, he found that the Jewish men had repeated this sin (Neh 13:23-31). In fact, even the priests had sinned in this way. It was necessary for this courageous leader to face sin honestly and judge it.

He started at the house of God, where he discovered (Neh 13:4) that **the high priest was allied with the Jews’ enemy, Tobiah.** (“Allied” most like means “related to” through the marriage of Eliashib’s grandson to Tobiah’s daughter. Also Tobiah was certainly connected to the priesthood through unholy marriages - see Neh 6:18 and Neh 13:28.) **It is a sad thing when the servants of God compromise with the enemies of God. The high priest even gave Tobiah a chamber in the temple and provisions from the temple store, provisions that really belonged to the priests and Levites.** Nehemiah lost no time in throwing out Tobiah and his goods, and having the temple chamber sanctified for its proper use.

Another sin was the failure of the people to support their spiritual servants, the priests and Levites. Malachi, who, it is thought, wrote about the same time as Nehemiah, had something to say about this; read Mal 3:1-18. Nehemiah reproached the people and set up a dependable system for the priests to follow. Note how he asks for God’s help in all his ministry (Neh 13:14).

**Sabbath disobedience was another problem.** The workers were employed on the Sabbath (Neh 13:15), and the merchants were selling on the Sabbath (Neh 13:16). While we do not believe that the Lord’s Day today is the same as the Jewish Sabbath, we do feel that God’s people ought to set apart the Lord’s Day and use it to glorify Him. Our economic system requires that some people must work on Sunday, but it is far better for workers and the nation if they are allowed to honor the Lord’s Day. Certainly no Christian should use Sunday as a day for shopping or for doing work that can wait. Nehemiah reproved the Jews for dishonoring the Sabbath, and he closed the gates of the city against the Sabbath salesmen. See Jer 17:21-27 with reference to Neh 13:18.

But note that even the Levites were guilty of **desecrating the Sabbath** (Neh 13:22). Read Mal 1-2 and you will see that the priesthood had fallen into shameful sins. Unless the leaders of God’s people set the example, the people will not easily obey God. Of course, it may be that **the failure of the people to support the temple** (Neh 13:10-13) forced the Levites into working on the Sabbath to keep themselves alive.

The book closes with three prayers (Neh 13:22, Neh 13:29, Neh 13:31). Nehemiah has done his work, but only God can bless it and keep it going. Nehemiah would one day die, and the people would forget him. But God would never forget him!

It is believed there is a time break at this point of **about 12 years between chapters 12 and 13.** Nehemiah left Jerusalem in the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes c. 433 B.C. (cf. Neh 5:14; Neh 13:6) and returned to Persia as he had promised (cf. Neh 2:6). **During his absence, the people returned to their former ways, led by the high priest Eliashib (Neh 13:4-5). Such a defection called for the needed reforms of verses Neh 13:10-30. It was during Nehemiah’s absence that Malachi also wrote his prophetic book indicting both priests and people for their sinful defection. Possibly having heard of Eliashib’s evil, Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem (Neh 13:4-7). Nehemiah 13 was the last portion of the OT to be written.**

We see the almost unbelievable failure of those who had so recently signed a covenant in committing the same sins that they had committed not to do! But we recognize that if we could be saved by our own promises, by our own commitment to Jesus, then His death would have been noble, but unnecessary. We aren’t saved by some vow we make, or some leaf we turn over, **but by trusting in who Jesus is, and what He has done to save us.**

**TIME LINE – BOOKS OF EZRA – (“Bible Hub” online)**

537 BC	The Proclamation of Cyrus	Ezra 1
537 BC	The Exiles Return	Ezra 2
535 BC	Temple Work Begins (70 yrs. from 605BC)	Ezra 3
534 BC	Artaxerxes Orders Work Stopped	Ezra 4:17
520 BC	Tattenai’s Letter to Darius	Ezra 5
520 BC	Temple Work Resumed by Darius’ Decree	Ezra 6
(Books of Haggai & Zechariah occur here)		
515 BC	Completion and Dedication of the Temple	Ezra 6:16
<b>(Book of Esther occurs here)(about 60 yrs. from 1<sup>st</sup> return)</b>		
458 BC	Ezra to Jerusalem (147 years from 605; 79 years from 1 <sup>st</sup> return; 57 years from last verse of chapter 6!)	Ezra 7
458 BC	Ezra Commissioned by Artaxerxes	Ezra 7:11
457 BC	Families Return to Jerusalem with Ezra	Ezra 8
457 BC	Ezra’s reforms (80 yrs. from 1 <sup>st</sup> return)	Ezra 9
456 BC	Ezra’s Prayer About Intermarriage	Ezra 10
<b>BOOK OF NEHEMIAH (about 100 years from 1<sup>st</sup> return)</b>		
445 BC	Nehemiah’s Prayer for the Exiles	Nehemiah 1
444 BC	Artaxerxes Sends Nehemiah to Jerusalem	Nehemiah 2
444 BC	Builders of the Walls Named	Nehemiah 3
444 BC	Builders Overcome Ridicule	Nehemiah 4
444 BC	Nehemiah Abolishes Debt and Bondage	Nehemiah 5
444 BC	Completion of the Wall	Neh. 6:15
444 BC	Census of Returned Exiles	Nehemiah 7
444 BC	Ezra Reads the Law	Nehemiah 8
444 BC	Israelites Fast and Repent	Nehemiah 9
444 BC	Israelites Seal the Covenant	Neh. 10
444 BC	People Settle in Jerusalem	Neh. 11, 12
432 BC	<b>Nehemiah Restores Laws</b>	<b>Neh. 13</b>

**Kings of Persia in Ezra-Nehemiah:**

Cyrus (539-530-9yrs); Darius I (522-486-36yrs); Xerxes (Ahasuerus 485-464-21yrs); Artaxerxes I (464-423-41yrs)

**BREATHE ON ME, BREATH OF GOD** – Edward Hatch – York College Concert

*1 Breathe on me, Breath of God, Fill me with life anew, That I may love what Thou dost love, And do what Thou wouldst do.  
2 Breathe on me, Breath of God, Until my heart is pure, Until with Thee I will one will, To do and to endure.  
3 Breathe on me, Breath of God, Till I am wholly Thine, Until this earthly part of me Glows with Thy fire divine.  
4 Breathe on me, Breath of God, So shall I never die, But live with Thee the perfect life Of Thine eternity.*

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INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

***NEHEMIAH CHAPTER 13 - “Principles of Separation; Condemnation of the Wicked:!”***

*Neh 13:1 On that day they read from the Book of Moses in the hearing of the people, and in it was found written that no Ammonite or Moabite should ever come into the assembly of God,*

*Neh 13:2 because they had not met the children of Israel with bread and water, but hired Balaam against them to curse them. However, our God turned the curse into a blessing.*

*Neh 13:3 So it was, when they had heard the Law, that they separated all the mixed multitude from Israel.*

***The Reforms of Nehemiah***

*Neh 13:4 Now before this, Eliashib the priest, having authority over the storerooms of the house of our God, was allied with Tobiah.*

*Neh 13:5 And he had prepared for him a large room, where previously they had stored the grain offerings, the frankincense, the articles, the tithes of grain, the new wine and oil, which were commanded to be given to the Levites and singers and gatekeepers, and the offerings for the priests.*

*Neh 13:6 But during all this I was not in Jerusalem, for in the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes king of Babylon I had returned to the king. Then after certain days I obtained leave from the king,*

***When Nehemiah came back he discovered many alarming areas of violations to God’s laws, commandments and statutes! We’ll see here his response. What strong personal character and zeal along with prayer!***

***v. 1 that day*** Perhaps on the anniversary commemoration on that day the wall was dedicated, possibly on the day Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem from Persia, likely several years later, the law (Dt. 23:3-5) was read. ...*the Ammonite and the Moabite should not come into the congregation of God for ever*; They were not to be regarded as a part of Israel forever.

***v. 2 ...not met the children of Israel with bread and water:*** The Ammonites and Moabites were singled out because of their schemes against Israel, when Israel came into the promised land - a thousand years earlier. ...***God turned the curse into a blessing:*** In Numbers 24:10; Dt. 23:5, God blessed Israel, even though the prophet Balaam wanted to curse them. It also reminds us that **God is able - more than able** - to turn any curse into a blessing.

***v. 3*** Upon hearing God’s command, Israel obeys and separates from the mixed multitude, those who wanted to associate with the people of Israel, but did not want to fully commit to doing that.

***v. 4*** Now we will see Nehemiah cleaning up some of the problems that had occurred in his absence.

***Tobiah, the Ammonite,*** is the man who had given Nehemiah such a bad time, working hard to hinder the work of the rebuilding of the wall. He was an enemy, conspiring against Nehemiah. Yet, here he was allied with one of the priests, Eliashib, who is referred to in Nehemiah 3:1 as ***“the high priest”***

***v. 5*** Eliashib had prepared a large chamber as a living quarter, used to store the meal offerings, the frankincense, tithes of corn, wine and oil, which was to be given to the Levites, in the temple. He cleaned out this chamber and gave it to Tobiah, this enemy of the work of God.

***v. 6 But during all this time I was not in Jerusalem:*** We’re told here that Nehemiah left Jerusalem and went back to his duties in the Persian court in the 32<sup>nd</sup> year of Artaxerxes, twelve years later. (Neh. 4:14). Although it is now known how long he was in Persia/Babylon before he went back, it is believed to be about 2 years or so.

***v. 1*** Notice how specific the Scriptures are with respect to the thing that they needed so much to achieve – that of separation. Paul said in Corinthians, “Come out from among them” – **be separate. That applies to every believer!**

***v. 2*** How often does God work on our behalf turning the curses into blessings? God indeed is able - more than able - to turn any curse into a blessing!

***v. 3*** We see the obedience of the people, once again, to the God’s word, which was heard.

***v. 4*** An example of the problems is intermarrying, of being unequally yoked! Here we see the Eliashib, high priest allied with the enemy, Tobiah. When Satan can’t defeat from without, he often tries defeat from within! Beware!

***v. 5*** We see a holy man, a priest change something that was set aside for holy things to become used for the unholy! – The enemies of God’s work being accommodated in the House of God!

***v. 6*** Nehemiah left sometime after the great spiritual revival given to us in previous chapters. It’s important to realize the real test of revival, as well as **the real test of God’s work in our lives, is that of the long term. Where are we with the Lord ten years or so after a season of great work?**

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INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

*Neh 13:7 and I came to Jerusalem and discovered the evil that Eliashib had done for Tobiah, in preparing a room for him in the courts of the house of God.*

*Neh 13:8 And it grieved me bitterly; therefore I threw all the household goods of Tobiah out of the room.*  
*Neh 13:9 Then I commanded them to cleanse the rooms; and I brought back into them the articles of the house of God, with the grain offering and the frankincense.*

*Neh 13:10 I also realized that the portions for the Levites had not been given them; for each of the Levites and the singers who did the work had gone back to his field.*

*Neh 13:11 So I contended with the rulers, and said, "Why is the house of God forsaken?" And I gathered them together and set them in their place.*

*Neh 13:12 Then all Judah brought the tithe of the grain and the new wine and the oil to the storehouse.*

**v. 7** When Nehemiah returned from Babylon, he found out that *Eliashib the high priest* had entered into agreements with Tobiah, one of the enemies the entire time of Nehemiah’s work of rebuilding the wall. **Tobiah**, an Ammonite (*Neh 2:10*), was one of the very mixed multitude that had been put out of the assembly of God’s people some 10 years before. Tobiah had not changed over the years. He did not join the people of God in the terms of His covenant. The problem was evident to Nehemiah, but **Eliashib** was blind to it.

**vs. 8-9** *And it grieved me bitterly*: Grieving and righteous anger! What a proper response! How tragic! Eliashib, a priest, even the high priest, who was to be one of the most influential spiritual leader in Israel, was so instrumental and blind to this problem area. Because of Eliashib’s high position, there was also no one around him who could confront him. But Nehemiah’s response was one of strong and immediate action! He **threw all the household goods of Tobiah out of the room!** He then ceremonially cleansed the rooms, restoring the rooms to their proper use - as storerooms for the sacred things of the temple! *“My Heart, God’s Home!”*

**v. 10** Nehemiah now learns of the reason the room given to Tobiah was empty. Another act of disobedience! **The portions for the Levites had not been given them**: Because of the lack of support, the Levites could not continue - and they had to leave that service. Note here the evidence that making vows to the Lord, don’t work well! They had just made the covenant the last couple ago; words, words, words, but they didn’t follow through! It’s so easy at times when God is moving to say, “Oh God, I’ll give you everything,” or make rash kind of vows and commitments unto the Lord. Usually we make a vow in order to gain or extract some special favor from God Like Jacob, “Lord, I’ll do this for you if you do this for me”. Usually **the making of a vow is only demonstrating confidence in the flesh. It’s never good to depend on arm of our flesh!** Nehemiah gets back and he finds that the Levites have all gone out to their fields, they’re all working in their fields again, the support wasn’t coming for them.

**v. 11** The lack of giving was, in fact one way of forsaking the house of God. **So I contended with the rulers. Contended** – to **strive with a loud voice!** Amazing boldness and decisiveness! He yelled at the rulers! Why are you forsaking the **house of God?** He will respond in this fashion three times in this chapter! He sets the situation right by having the Levites and the singers to recommit to the work of serving God and His people as they should.

**v. 12** An awesome response! **Then all Judah** once again is bringing in the tithe of the grain, wine and oil in accordance with the Word of God!

**v. 7** Nehemiah, is in absolute shock realizing the serious of turning a “holy thing” into that of “unholy”. To make matters worse, it was done by the high priest, Eliashib – an unthinkable example of unholiness! **We need to be on guard against making anything that is holy to be profane or common-like the world.**

**vs. 8-9** Notice the zeal of Nehemiah! **This thing had to be dealt with right now! He took bold action, reminding us of our Lord in driving out the money changers from the temple! We too are priests! Do we have any rooms, bought by the blood of Christ, that have been given over to the enemy?**

**v. 10** Again we see that Nehemiah **will act immediately and decisively when learning** of yet another practice of disobedience, even though they had signed the covenant to obey. **What great examples Nehemiah gives us! But with respect to making vows or covenants with the LORD, we should refrain as they tend to make us rely on our flesh, which reliance with always result in not keeping them.**

**v. 11** Notice Nehemiah’s seriousness and effectiveness. He gathers the rulers **together and sets them in their place**, apparently using a loud voice! What **righteous anger!** **Again he sets the situation right! He fired everybody connected with this!**

**v. 12** We see here one more time the results of Nehemiah’s swift and strong response to the problem - **Then all Judah brought the tithe of the grain and the new wine and the oil to the storehouse.**

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INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

*Neh 13:13 And I appointed as treasurers over the storehouse Shelemiah the priest and Zadok the scribe, and of the Levites, Pedaiah; and next to them was Hanan the son of Zaccur, the son of Mattaniah; for they were considered faithful, and their task was to distribute to their brethren.*

*Neh 13:14 Remember me, O my God, concerning this, and do not wipe out my good deeds that I have done for the house of my God, and for its services!*

*Neh 13:15 In those days I saw people in Judah treading wine presses on the Sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and loading donkeys with wine, grapes, figs, and all kinds of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the Sabbath day. And I warned them about the day on which they were selling provisions.*

*Neh 13:16 Men of Tyre dwelt there also, who brought in fish and all kinds of goods, and sold them on the Sabbath to the children of Judah, and in Jerusalem.*

*Neh 13:17 Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said to them, "What evil thing is this that you do, by which you profane the Sabbath day?"*

*Neh 13:18 Did not your fathers do thus, and did not our God bring all this disaster on us and on this city? Yet you bring added wrath on Israel by profaning the Sabbath."*

*Neh 13:19 So it was, at the gates of Jerusalem, as it began to be dark before the Sabbath, that I commanded the gates to be shut, and charged that they must not be opened till after the Sabbath. Then I posted some of my servants at the gates, so that no burdens would be brought in on the Sabbath day.*

*v. 13* Men of integrity and good report were appointed by Nehemiah to act as trustees of the sacred treasures, and thus order, regularity, and active service were re-established in the temple. New ones, worthy of trust, since the others appointed were either dead or unfaithful to their trust, ...*to distribute unto their brethren*; to deliver to them their share in the tithes.

*v. 14 Remember me, O my God* What a man of prayer we see here. He will repeat this refrain three time in this chapter, once after each rebuke. We his pattern of looking up to God on every occasion and committing himself and his affairs to him. 1. He here reflects with comfort and much satisfaction upon what he had done for the house of God and the offices thereof; it pleased him to think that he had been any way instrumental to revive and support religion in his country and to reform what was amiss.

*vs. 15-16 ...people in Judah treading wine presses on the Sabbath:* They went against their previous covenant by violating the Sabbath. It was being ignored in disobedience to God's clear command under the Old Covenant. On the Sabbath day, foreigners brought their wares into the city, sold them, and the people of Israel bought! They also were laboring on the day, treading wine presses.

*v. 17* Once again Nehemiah takes strong, immediate action. He again contends, shouts with a loud voice, to the nobles. He had been gone for a short time, back to the king of Syria to keep his commitment there. When he gets back, they're already gone quickly astray from their covenant keeping promises. How important is strong leadership? Here we find that it was very important. This man of God Nehemiah, diligent in the things of the Lord, people vacillating. And he said to them, "what are you doing profaning, making common, sabbath days, just like any other?"

*v.18* Don't you remember that our fathers did not keep the Sabbath? Their disobedience, idolatry and immorality resulted in Jerusalem being destroyed and their being sent to exile in Babylon. Here they were doing the very same things. *You bring added wrath on Israel by profaning the Sabbath:* If such an open sin is left uncorrected among God's people, He will step in with His correcting.

*v. 19* Nehemiah took charge here; Friday evening before the sun goes down, **shut the gates and keep them shut.** They must not be opened until after the Sabbath. Nehemiah sent his own trustworthy servants there to watch, to see that no one would try to bring burdens in on the Sabbath day.

*v. 13* We see Nehemiah's prompt action in removing the untrustworthy custodians of the storehouse and replacing them with treasurers, considered faithful. **As we consider our own trustworthiness, am I closer to being considered one faithful or one who is not totally faithful?**

*v. 14* We need to note and practice how Nehemiah turned to the Lord. In humility he prays, **Remember me**, not **Reward me – Do not wipe out my good deeds**, not **Publish them, Record them**. Yet he was rewarded and his good deeds were recorded; for God does more than we are able to ask. **Nehemiah is also intimating, I'm not caring about what any man thinks of me, although I'm making many look bad, just what You think of me!!!**

*vs. 15-16* We need to notice how quickly the cares of the world, pressures of convenience and making money tend to crowd out the things of the Lord. They had profaned, making the Sabbath Day common, Just like any other day. **In light of this, are we really serving our Lord only?**

*v. 17* He is not only having to take a stand against the evil world, but also against the Jewish people and their priests and leaders.

*v.18* We see the tendency to repeat the sins of our fathers even though we promise not to. **How we need to heed the enabling power of the Holy Spirit in us and obedience to His Word!**

*v. 19* Notice the importance of a leader who is uncompromising in his faith and actions. **Nehemiah, such a man of prayer, boldly and decisively corrects this problem of profaning the Sabbath day. Are we aware of the power for righteous correction that He gives to us as His children?**

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INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

*Neh 13:20 Now the merchants and sellers of all kinds of wares lodged outside Jerusalem once or twice.*

*Neh 13:21 Then I warned them, and said to them, "Why do you spend the night around the wall? If you do so again, I will lay hands on you!" From that time on they came no more on the Sabbath.*

*Neh 13:22 And I commanded the Levites that they should cleanse themselves, and that they should go and guard the gates, to sanctify the Sabbath day. Remember me, O my God, concerning this also, and spare me according to the greatness of Your mercy!*

*Neh 13:23 In those days I also saw Jews who had married women of Ashdod, Ammon, and Moab.*

*Neh 13:24 And half of their children spoke the language of Ashdod, and could not speak the language of Judah, but spoke according to the language of one or the other people.*

*Neh 13:25 So I contended with them and cursed them, struck some of them and pulled out their hair, and made them swear by God, saying, "You shall not give your daughters as wives to their sons, nor take their daughters for your sons or yourselves.*

*Neh 13:26 Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things? Yet among many nations there was no king like him, who was beloved of his God; and God made him king over all Israel. Nevertheless pagan (outlandish) women caused even him to sin.*

*v. 20* So on the following couple of Sabbath days of having the gates shut, *the merchants and sellers of all kinds of wares lodged outside Jerusalem.* Business on the Sabbath Day had been good and they wanted it to continue.

*v. 21* Nehemiah lets the merchants and sellers know that he is serious in stopping the profaning of the Sabbath Day. He asks them why they are spending the night outside the wall, strongly warning them that if they do it again, he will lay rough hands on them or have them arrested. They got the message and from then *on, they came no more on the Sabbath.*

*v. 22 ...commanded the Levites..* – First, Nehemiah had employed his own servants in the work of keeping the gates. He now assigned the duty to the Levites, which properly belonged to them, since the object of the regulation was the due observance of the Sabbath. Now again, being a man of constant prayer, he prays again - *Remember me, O my God, concerning this also,* When we have received the gift of God, our hearts seek to respond and we do things for the Lord, serving the Lord. We want the Lord to observe our service but when we come to Him for His blessings and for His salvation, we come not on the basis of our service or our works but we come on the basis of God’s mercy; *and spare me according to the greatness of Your mercy!*

If I am a child of God my life is going to bring forth fruit. I do not look to the fruit as the basis of my salvation. **I look to the works of the fruit as the genuineness of my faith.** If a person doesn’t have good fruit, doesn’t have any works, then it follows **that he really doesn’t have a genuine faith.** A genuine faith in God will produce good fruit in your life and good works for the kingdom.

*v. 23* Although it seems unthinkable, in the years Nehemiah was away the Israelites, in direct disobedience to God’s command, had resumed their practice of intermarrying with the pagan nations surrounding them, not just the Ammonites and Moabites, but also the Philistines!

*v. 24* One of the consequences this intermarrying was that the children of those marriages were not even able to speak in the language of Judah. Therefore how could they pray or even worship as they ought? How tragic?

*v. 25* Nehemiah is incensed! He contends with them! **So I contended with them and cursed them, struck some of them and pulled out their hair, and made them swear:** With a very strong reaction, he cursed them, struck some, pulled out their hair and made them promise not to intermarry!

*v. 26* Nehemiah brings up the example of Solomon. *Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things? . . . pagan women caused even him to sin. IKi 11:1 But King Solomon loved many foreign women, ....IKi 11:2 from the nations of whom the LORD had said to the children of Israel, "You shall not intermarry with them, nor they with you. Surely they will turn away your hearts after their gods." Solomon clung to these in love.*

*vs. 20-21* What is needed for such a situation to be settled is for a strong leader to take a strong stand. Nehemiah made it clear that he would not stand for continuing business as usual on the Sabbath Day!

*v. 22* Anytime a stand is taken for the Lord, we know there will be resistance from those being effected. Nehemiah must have gotten a strong reaction each time he contended with those involved. **We see him again going to prayer! How we need to do this!** Notice he asks the **Lord to remember his works, but to be spared on the greatness of His mercy! Our works are an indication of the genuineness of our faith. Our blessings and salvation are only because of the greatness of His mercy!**

*v. 23* It seems unthinkable that so soon after going through this with Ezra, only a few years earlier, that **the people would repeat this horrible sin, which they had just covenanted with the Lord not to do – in fact it was one of the main thing mentioned (Neh. 10:30). How this should speak to us regarding being unequally yoked!**

*v. 24* Here is an excellent example of the problem of being unequally yoked! Children produced will always have a greater tendency to be drawn toward the worldly practices of the ungodly parent. **We need to note the Biblical instruction, “Do not be unequally yoked”!**

*v. 25* From this strong reaction of Nehemiah, we see he considered this to be the most dangerous of their sins - pursuing ungodly romance, and getting involved in romantic relationships God had said “no” to. **What are we doing with our children regarding their dating of unbelievers?**

*v. 26* If Solomon, one of the wisest and most blessed men ever, spoken to by God twice, sinned with outlandish, foreign women, **then how can we consider ourselves invulnerable? Do we think that sin in our lives is going to have a different outcome than of King Solomon?**

*IKi 11:4 For it was so, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to the LORD his God, as was the heart of his father David.*

**NEHEMIAH CHAPTER 13 - A Refreshing Chapter! Frailty of Vows of Man; Necessity of Constant Strong Leadership - Being Filled with Holy Spirit! The Importance of Prayer; Our Character and Zeal for the Lord!**

OBSERVATION

INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

Monday 7:00pm, H 105 (1st floor, High School--foot of stairs, behind the gym, by the vending machine area), Tuesday 7:00am, Family, Room, CCCM – Phil Twente, cell #714 425 9221; email – ptwente@gmail.com For past studies, audio plus notes, go to: www.ptwente.com Click on “Bible Studies” on the left column. References include commentaries by numerous pastor/teachers.

<p><i>Neh 13:27 Should we then hear of your doing all this great evil, transgressing against our God by marrying pagan women?"</i></p> <p><i>Neh 13:28 And one of the sons of Joiada, the son of Eliashib the high priest, was a son-in-law of Sanballat the Horonite; therefore I drove him from me.</i></p> <p><i>Neh 13:29 Remember them, O my God, because they have defiled the priesthood and the covenant of the priesthood and the Levites.</i></p> <p><i>Neh 13:30 Thus I cleansed them of everything pagan. I also assigned duties to the priests and the Levites, each to his service,</i></p> <p><i>Neh 13:31 and to bringing the wood offering and the firstfruits at appointed times. Remember me, O my God, for good!</i></p>	<p><u>v. 27</u> Both the priests and the people had married pagans of the land in violation of the Mosaic Law (cf. <i>Exo_34:15-16; Deu_7:3</i>), the earlier reforms of Ezra (cf. <i>Ezra 9; 10</i>), and their own covenant (cf. <i>Neh_10:30</i>). Malachi spoke against this sin (<i>Mal_2:10-16</i>)</p> <p><u>v. 28</u> How little love had that man, probably Jaddua, the grandson of the high priest, Eliashib, either to God or his country, who could align himself to the enemy by marrying the daughter of a sworn enemy to both. It seems this young priest would not put away his wife, and therefore Nehemiah said, ... <i>I drove him from me</i>, deprived him, degraded him, and made him for ever incapable of the priesthood.</p> <p><u>v. 29</u> <i>Remember them, O my God, because they have defiled...!</i> Again, as Nehemiah did back in chapter 6:14 with Tobiah and Noadiah, Nehemiah gave them over to the Lord, for Him to handle them in their defiling <i>the priesthood and covenant of the priesthood and the Levites.</i></p> <p><u>v. 30</u> It was no loss to the priests and Levites for them to part with one that was the scandal of their priesthood. The work would be done better without him. When Judas had gone out Christ said, <i>Now is the Son of Man glorified, Joh 13:30, Joh 13:31.</i></p> <p><u>v. 31</u> Even though the people failed miserably in not doing three things: The taking of daughters or giving sons to intermarry with outlandish, foreigners. (<i>Neh 10:30</i>), buy and sell on the Sabbath (<i>Neh 10:31</i>), and support the work of God with money as He commanded (<i>Neh 10:32-39</i>), which things they had agreed in signing the covenant not many years earlier, Nehemiah has a clear conscience. He again prays! <i>Remember me, O my God:</i> At the end of it all, Nehemiah knew he did his best to make the people of God strong, safe, and secure. Beyond that, he also led them to be pure, worshipful, and obedient.</p>	<p><u>vs. 27-28</u> What examples of being snared by foreign, outlandish women for us. Considering King Solomon’s tragic downfall and even here a priest, the grandson of the high priest, both doing the same thing! <b>May we not be confident in our own strength, less the same thing happen to us!</b></p> <p><u>v. 29</u> Another of Nehemiah’s 14 prayers recorded in this Book, what a man of prayer! <b>Is there any similarity to that in my prayer life?</b></p> <p><u>v. 30</u> Notice there are times that severe housecleaning must be done, by eliminating those involved and loving the pagan things and the pagan ways. <b>May we be sensitive to the Lord’s leading and guiding in such matters.</b></p> <p><u>v. 31</u> The book closes with three prayers (<i>Neh 13:22, Neh 13:29, Neh 13:31</i>). Nehemiah has done his work, but only God can bless it and keep it going. Nehemiah would one day die, and the people would forget him. But God would never forget him!</p> <p><b>CLOSING SUMMARY: THE HOLY SPIRIT IN US!!</b></p> <p>If we could be saved by our own promises, by our own commitment to Jesus, then His death would have been noble, but unnecessary. We aren’t saved by some vow we make, or some leaf we turn over, but by trusting in who Jesus is, and what He has done to save us.</p> <p>We can learn much from this Chapter and from Nehemiah. He is a very important character in the Bible! We see in him this great strength of character, strong conviction, this holy zeal to correct wrongful, disobedient things. So quickly the people had again fallen back into their old sins. Just think about what Nehemiah encountered and what he did in chapter 13! The chapter may seem discouraging or you may find it refreshing.</p> <p>We see so clearly here that a godly people needed the presence of a Nehemiah, having the strength of character, the conviction, the holy zeal that’s required to resist the natural tendency of all things in this fallen world to go downward and that includes the things of the Lord. Without that leader, over and over again they fall back into their disobedient sin.</p> <p>We look at that and say that is extraordinary! That’s exactly what is needed in God’s people, the Body of Christ, in this hour. To go against the flow. Not to get boiled like a frog in slowly heated boiling water. Then we cease to make stands! First against the sin in the world and then to stand against sin in our lives. We look at the strength, godliness and holiness that’s needed! It doesn’t just happen. If it is not constantly maintained in our lives, it will always decline, if left unattended.</p> <p>As we look at Nehemiah and see this kind of passion, this kind of conviction, this kind of zeal, if it makes us smack our lips at that kind of strength, then there <u>is the realization that a greater than Nehemiah lives inside of each of us as Christians, in the person of the Holy Spirit who is wanting to produce this same kind of character and express it through our lives as well.</u> If we are heading into compromise or this situation or that situation. The Holy Spirit says, wait a minute! You’ve been there, done that. You’re not going to do that again! Over my dead body, over the quenching of My Holy Spirit! He is very good at keeping us in a good place and on top of that, is nurturing this kind of zeal for the things of the Lord. This is not something that we’re looking at longingly. God, the Holy Spirit does and will produce that in our lives!</p> <p>The important thing is <u>to heed His voice as He speaks to us,</u> situation by situation that we come into contact in our lives!</p>
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