

Nehemiah 13

King James Version (KJV)

13 On that day they read in the book of Moses in the audience of the people; and therein was found written, that the Ammonite and the Moabite should not come into the congregation of God for ever; (They were judged by God for their idolatry and for being sworn enemies of Israel) (Moabite here is in the masculine context only. Ruth was not included in this ruling even if she was of Moab)

²Because they met not the children of Israel with bread and with water, but hired Balaam against them, that he should curse them: howbeit our God turned the curse into a blessing. (They refused safe passage to Israel when they were crossing the wilderness from Egypt into the Promised Land. Balaam was a corrupt money grubbing priest)

³Now it came to pass, when they had heard the law, that they separated from Israel all the mixed multitude. (They separated themselves from their heathen spouses)

⁴And before this, Eliashib the priest, having the oversight of the chamber of the house of our God, was allied unto Tobiah: (He was allied to Tobiah in chapters 2,4 and6. He was trying to stop the will of God in rebuilding the wall and temple. They already have a corrupt high priest)

⁵And he had prepared for him a great chamber, where aforetime they laid the meat offerings, the frankincense, and the vessels, and the tithes of the corn, the new wine, and the oil, which was commanded to be given to the Levites, and the singers, and the porters; and the offerings of the priests. (He set up Tobiah in the chamber of the treasury of the temple. Tobiah stole as much as he could get his hands on)

⁶But in all this time was not I at Jerusalem: for in the two and thirtieth year of Artaxerxes king of Babylon came I unto the king, and after certain days obtained I leave of the king: (This is Nehemiah speaking)

⁷And I came to Jerusalem, and understood of the evil that Eliashib did for Tobiah, in preparing him a chamber in the courts of the house of God. (The enemy is "watching" their treasury of the temple)

⁸And it grieved me sore: therefore I cast forth all the household stuff to Tobiah out of the chamber. (He threw the bum out)

⁹Then I commanded, and they cleansed the chambers: and thither brought I again the vessels of the house of God, with the meat offering and the frankincense.

¹⁰And I perceived that the portions of the Levites had not been given them: for the Levites and the singers, that did the work, were fled every one to his field. (Tobiah had been keeping the Levites and the priests' portion for himself. They had to go work in the fields to feed themselves, so no one was doing the priests' duties in the temple)

¹¹Then contended I with the rulers, and said, Why is the house of God forsaken? And I gathered them together, and set them in their place. (It didn't take long for corruption to sneak back into the duties of Judah's ruling class)

¹²Then brought all Judah the tithe of the corn and the new wine and the oil unto the treasuries. (He replenished the treasury)

¹³And I made treasurers over the treasuries, 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 counted faithful, and their office was to distribute unto their brethren. (He appointed more than one person to oversee the treasury. That helps to keep people honest)

¹⁴Remember me, O my God, concerning this, and wipe not out my good deeds that I have done for the house of my God, and for the offices thereof. (He was asking God to preserve his works in Judah because he was the service of Artaxerxes – the king. He returned to Judah and found all sorts of sin and corruption)

¹⁵In those days saw I in Judah some treading wine presses on the sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and lading asses; as also wine, grapes, and figs, and all manner of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the sabbath day: and I testified against them in the day wherein they sold victuals. (He was trying to enforce God's statutes. They had already broken the oath that they took to God in chapter-10)

¹⁶There dwelt men of Tyre also therein, which brought fish, and all manner of ware, and sold on the sabbath unto the children of Judah, and in Jerusalem. (Tyre was the stronghold of the Kenites. The crooked merchants had also moved in)

¹⁷ Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said unto them, What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the sabbath day?

¹⁸ Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city? yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the sabbath.

¹⁹ And it came to pass, that when the gates of Jerusalem began to be dark before the sabbath, I commanded that the gates should be shut, and charged that they should not be opened till after the sabbath: and some of my servants set I at the gates, that there should no burden be brought in on the sabbath day. (He was forced to use his own servants to guard and stop the corrupt merchants)

²⁰ So the merchants and sellers of all kind of ware lodged without Jerusalem once or twice.

²¹ Then I testified against them, and said unto them, Why lodge ye about the wall? if ye do so again, I will lay hands on you. From that time forth came they no more on the sabbath. (Telling the Kenite merchants to get lost, or else)

²² And I commanded the Levites that they should cleanse themselves, and that they should come and keep the gates, to sanctify the sabbath day. Remember me, O my God, concerning this also, and spare me according to the greatness of thy mercy. (They had better atone for the sins that they had already committed)

²³ In those days also saw I Jews that had married wives of Ashdod, of Ammon, and of Moab: (Right back to what they were doing before the captivity – again, breaking their oath to God)

²⁴ And their children spake half in the speech of Ashdod, and could not speak in the Jews' language, but according to the language of each people. (Even the language had been changing to – half Philistine, half Hebrew. God warned them that the heathen would take away Israel, heritage, their religion and their culture)

²⁵ And I contended with them, and cursed them, and smote certain of them, and plucked off their hair, and made them swear by God, saying, Ye shall not give your daughters unto their sons, nor take their daughters unto your sons, or for yourselves. (He made them to retake their oath to God. It won't last. There is no saving these people) Also see Ezre-9:3

²⁶ Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things? yet among many nations was there no king like him, who was beloved of his God, and God made him king over all Israel: nevertheless even him did outlandish women cause to sin. (They refused to learn from their own history) see 2Samuel-12:25

²⁷ Shall we then hearken unto you to do all this great evil, to transgress against our God in marrying strange wives?

²⁸ And one of the sons of Joiada, the son of Eliashib the high priest, was son in law to Sanballat the Horonite: therefore I chased him from me. (Even Sanballat's son in law, the son of the high priest of Jerusalem, had gotten in) see Josephus antiquities-8:3 (He fled to Samaria. This is not Biblical, it is historical. Sanballat built his own temple there)

²⁹ Remember them, O my God, because they have defiled the priesthood, and the covenant of the priesthood, and of the Levites.

³⁰ Thus cleansed I them from all strangers, and appointed the wards of the priests and the Levites, every one in his business;

³¹ And for the wood offering, at times appointed, and for the firstfruits. Remember me, O my God, for good. (Asking God to remember what he tried to accomplish. Would it last long? It didn't, because the people refused to learn) (This is a lesson for us today)