

Ezra & Nehemiah; Lesson 11

Backslidden People

Our mission; Neh. 13:1–22

Memory Verse

Nehemiah 13:22, (NKJV) *“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!”*

Tainted Temple Leadership

Nehemiah 13:1–3 (NKJV) *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, 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. ³ So it was, when they had heard the Law, that they separated all the mixed multitude from Israel.*

Deuteronomy 23:3–4 (NKJV) *“An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter the assembly of the Lord; even to the tenth generation none of his descendants shall enter the assembly of the Lord forever, ⁴ because they did not meet you with bread and water on the road when you came out of Egypt, and because they hired against you Balaam the son of Beor from Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse you.*

King Sihon Defeated

Deuteronomy 2:26–33 (NKJV) *“And I sent messengers from the Wilderness of Kedemoth to Sihon king of Heshbon, with words of peace, saying, ²⁷ ‘Let me pass through your land; I will keep strictly to the road, and I will turn neither to the right nor to the left. ²⁸ You shall sell me food for money, that I may eat, and give me water for money, that I may drink; only let me pass through on foot, ...³⁰ ‘But Sihon king of Heshbon would not let us pass through, ... ³² Then Sihon and all his people came out against us to fight at Jahaz. ³³ And the Lord our God delivered him over to us; so we defeated him, his sons, and all his people.*

Paul Accused of Bringing Greeks Into the Temple

Acts 21:27–29 (NKJV) *Now when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews from Asia, seeing him in the temple, stirred up the whole crowd and laid hands on him, ²⁸ crying out, “Men of Israel, help! This is the man who teaches all men everywhere against the people, the*

law, and this place; and furthermore he also brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place.” ²⁹ (For they had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian with him in the city, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.)

Nehemiah 13:4–5 (NKJV) *Now before this, Eliashib the priest, having authority over the storerooms of the house of our God, was allied with Tobiah. 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.*

Nehemiah 4:3 (NKJV) *Now Tobiah the Ammonite was beside him, and he said, “Whatever they build, if even a fox goes up on it, he will break down their stone wall.”* Turned Temple into an Air B&B

[Churches across Europe turned into restaurants & private dwellings.](#)

Nehemiah 13:8–9 (NKJV) *And it grieved me bitterly; therefore I threw all the household goods of Tobiah out of the room. 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.*

Unauthorized Speakers—Under no circumstances should a pastor, elder, or other officer invite strangers or any unauthorized persons to conduct services. Individuals who have been removed from the ministry or who have been removed from membership in other places, or designing persons who have no authority from the church, should not be given access to the pulpit. Those worthy of confidence will be able to identify themselves by producing proper credentials. At times it is acceptable for government officials or civic leaders to address a congregation, but all others should be excluded from the pulpit unless permission is granted by the conference. Every pastor, elder, and conference president must enforce this rule. (SDA church manual 2019, Page 120.)

The Levites in the Fields

Nehemiah 13:10–13 (NKJV) *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. 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. ¹² Then all Judah brought the tithe of the grain and the new wine and the oil to the storehouse. ¹³ And I appointed as treasurers over the storehouse...*

[Clearly we don't have the same storehouse today with grain, wine and oil.](#)

1 Corinthians 9:13–14 (NKJV) *Do you not know that those who minister the holy things eat of the things of the temple, and those who serve at the altar partake of the offerings of the altar? Even so the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel.*

Matthew 10:9–10 (NKJV) *Provide neither gold nor silver nor copper in your money belts, nor bag for your journey, nor two tunics, nor sandals, nor staffs; for a worker is worthy of his food.*

Luke 10:7 (NKJV) *And remain in the same house, eating and drinking such things as they give, for the laborer is worthy of his wages. Do not go from house to house.* Shunammite Woman and Elisha

Romans 10:15 (NKJV) *And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!”*

“Not only had the temple been profaned, but the offerings had been misapplied. This had tended to discourage the liberalities of the people. They had lost their zeal and fervor, and were reluctant to pay their tithes. The treasuries of the Lord’s house were poorly supplied; many of the singers and others employed in the temple service, not receiving sufficient support, had left the work of God to labor elsewhere.”—Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings*, p. 670.

In the light of these verses, is there a place for the church to support ministers of music?

Tithes and Offerings

[READ] Malachi 3:8–12

1 Corinthians 9:3–7 (NKJV) *My defense to those who examine me is this: ⁴ Do we have no right to eat and drink? ⁵ Do we have no right to take along a believing wife, as do also the other apostles, the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas? ⁶ Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to refrain from working? ⁷ Who ever goes to war at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its fruit? Or who tends a flock and does not drink of the milk of the flock?*

2 Corinthians 9:6–7 (NKJV) *But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. ⁷ So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.*

1 Timothy 5:18 (NKJV) *For the Scripture says, “You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain,” and, “The laborer is worthy of his wages.”*

Treading the Winepresses on Sabbath

Nehemiah 13:15–22 *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. 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. 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? 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.” 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. ²⁰ Now the merchants and sellers of all kinds of wares lodged outside Jerusalem once or twice. 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. 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.*

Did Not Your Fathers Do Thus?

Nehemiah 13:22 *“Remember me, O my God, concerning this also, and spare me according to the greatness of Your mercy!”*

“Nehemiah fearlessly rebuked them for their neglect of duty. ‘What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the Sabbath day?’ he sternly demanded. ‘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.’ He then gave command that ‘when the gates of Jerusalem began to be dark before the Sabbath,’ they should be shut, and not opened again till the Sabbath was past; and having more confidence in his own servants than in those that the magistrates of Jerusalem might appoint, he stationed them at the gates to see that his orders were enforced.” —Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings*, pp. 671, 672.