

WANDERINGS WITHIN THE WALLS

Nehemiah Ch.13

Hymns: #30 The God of Abraham Praise; #298 O Jesus I Have Promised

Readings: Nehemiah 13

Background: Last week we saw the opposition that the returning exiles faced as they set to rebuild the Altar, the Temple and the Walls. We also saw God's pushback and jumpstart through the prophetic ministry and leadership of Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi. It's now 430 BC; 108 years after the first exiles returned under Zerubbabel and just before the 400 years of silence between the OT and the NT when John the Baptist appears heralding the coming Kingdom at hand. Today, as we close the final chapter of the recorded history of the OT, we are going to see once again the downward trend and dispensational failure that accelerates in the absence of godly leadership. I've titled this view "Wanderings Within The Walls" and our text is Neh. Ch.13.

1) COMPROMISED COMPANIONSHIP V.4-9

- A)** V. 6 "But while all this was going on, I was not in Jerusalem"
- i) Nehemiah was absent for approximately 2 years
 - ii) In Nehemiah's absence serious error had occurred
- B)** Eliashib The High Priest and Tobiah the Ammonite
- i) "Closely associated" v.4
 - (1) Eliashib and his family had become friends and family of the arch and sworn enemies of God Tobiah and Sanballat
 - (2) Eliashib's own grandson had married Sanballat's daughter
 - ii) Provided a large room for Tobiah in courts of the House of God
 - (1) This room was where the "tithes" for the Levites and Priests were kept
 - (2) God's enemies have infiltrated and taken up residence in the very House of God
 - (3) Matt. 13: 31-32 "The Mustard Seed"
 - (a) One of the parables Jesus gave to describe this dispensation marked by both a visible, earthly professing church and an invisible, heavenly Spiritual Church
 - (b) Grown from small beginnings to a grotesque and abnormal monstrosity
 - (c) "the birds of the air come and perch; nest; lodge; roost in its branches"
 - (i) Lit. κατασκηνώω- to pitch one's tent, encamp, dwell
 - (ii) These are the evil enemies of God "making their home" in the professing church just like Tobiah did in the Temple.
 - iii) Priest and Pastor are complicit in this
 - (1) V.7 calls it an "evil" thing done.
- C)** True Leadership's Response to Compromised Companionship
- i) Feels it personally
 - (1) "I was greatly displeased" v. 7 Lit. Heb. "grieved"
 - (2) Have we personally felt grieved by the state of the visible church today and the enemies who are "pitching their tents" within it?
 - ii) Casts Out
 - (1) Takes bold and definitive steps to deal with known evil
 - (a) Where are the fearless, uncompromising with the world, men of Nehemiah's stature today?
 - iii) Purifies and Restores v.9
 - (1) Today purification is only found in the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ through acknowledgment of Him and confession of sin

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- (2) Putting things back where they belong is like setting a broken bone. Painful in the setting, but in doing so guarantees future functionality of the body.

2) FINANCIAL FIASCO V.10-14

- A) Levites and Singers were no longer being supported
- i) Forced to go back to their own fields so they survive
 - ii) The House of God was therefore neglected
- B) "Why Is The House of God Neglected?" v.11
- i) Because Tobiah, the enemy of God, had been allowed to take over the store room where "the tithes of grain, new wine and oil prescribed for the Levites, singers and gatekeepers, as well as the contributions for the priests" were to be stored and allocated.
 - (1) Satan targets supply and support, knowing that through peoples' compromise with the world, the flesh and the Devil, he can hinder God's purposes and rob His glory.
- C) Will a man rob God? – Mal. 3:8-10
- i) "Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me. "But you ask, 'How do we rob you?' "In tithes and offerings."
 - (1) In other words in Compromising Companionship with Tobiahs you rob God.
 - ii) V.9 "You are under a curse-**the whole nation of you**-because you are robbing me. 10 Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the LORD Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it
 - (1) In other words, cursing and blessing are set before God's people as a whole
 - (a) Deal with the Tobiah's in your life and midst and see if God will not turn the curse into a blessing.
 - iii) The true meaning of this passage is not what is commonly taught about whether Christians should "tithe" or give 10% of their income. It's about dealing with compromise, purity and restoration to functioning.

3) SECULARIZED SABBATH V.15-22

- A) Buying and selling and ignoring the Sabbath
- i) "What is this **wicked** thing you are doing?" v.17
 - (1) **Don't you remember** the past and God's wrath for this very thing?
 - (2) Are you going to stir up more wrath again?
 - ii) Loss of Sanctified Holiness
 - (1) Don't learn from the past of history, of others or even ourselves
 - (2) Don't believe that God is the same yesterday, today and forever
 - (3) Somehow think we're different
 - iii) 5 of the 7 Churches in Revelation had some kind of loss of sanctified holiness
 - (1) Jesus words to them all were
 - (a) Repent
 - (b) He who has an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches
- B) Nehemiah's Practical Measures to Curb It
- i) Had the gates shut at **a certain time**
 - (1) Psalm 139:9 "...he who seizes your infants and dashes them against the rocks".
 - (2) Often been interpreted as the laying hold of tempting "infant" thoughts early and dashing them on the Rock of Christ.

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- (3) "Shut the gates early" on any temptation or compromise.
- ii) Put trusted men in place to **watch**
 - (1) Rom.13:14 "Make no provision for the lust of flesh"
- iii) Threatened violators with **physical harm**
- iv) Rom.8:13 "For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you **put to death** the misdeeds of the body, you will live
- v) **Purified** the Levites
 - (1) 1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness
 - (2) Confession of sin is the only purification today
- vi) Ordered them to **guard** the **gates**.
 - (1) Walls Differentiate & Protect
 - (a) How are you walls? Is there enough there to differentiate you from the world and to protect you from the world.
 - (b) We're living in day where our walls are being torn down by enemies without and dismantled from within by compromise.
 - (2) Gates Allow Entrance Management & Discernment
 - (a) What do you allow through your:
 - (i) Eye gate
 - (ii) Ear Gate
 - (iii) Mouth gate
- C) Remember me for this
 - i) V.14;22;29;31
 - (1) Not that God would actually forget, but asking for God to secure and solidify Nehemiah's reforms so that the people would not backslide into these sins again,
 - ii) Remember, God takes notice
 - (1) Mal. 3:16-18

4) DOMESTIC DISOBEDIENCE V.23- 31

A) Corrupt Marriage Practices Indulged In

- i) Men of Judah had married women from:
 - (1) The Philistine city of **Ashdod**
 - (a) Ashdod, along with Gaza and Gath were where the remaining Anakites had settled in Joshua's day (Joshua 11:21-22)
 - (b) Anakites were Giants; Nephilim; the descendants of the unholy offspring of fallen angels with women which corrupted the human genome and endangered the prophetic promise made by God in the Garden when He promised the "seed of the woman" would crush Satan's head.
 - (c) It was this globalized genetic corruption that initiated the Flood in which only Noah was left and found "blameless" Lit. tamin- complete; sound; whole; healthful; unimpaired; unblemished; without defect (ST#8549) "in his generations" Lit. bedorotaw- generations plural; ie: like "genetics" of men living at a particular time in the present; used only one time in the Bible (ST#1755)
 - (d) Trace this from Gen. 3:15; 6:1-4; Num. 13:32-33; Deut. 2:11;20-21;3:11; Jos. 11:21-22; 13:12; 1 Sam. 17:4-7; 40; 2 Sam. 21:15-22; 1Chron. 20:4-8
 - (e) This lies at the heart of Gods command for Israel to deal diligently with the Philistines and certainly NOT to again corrupt their "seed" line. For "the

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Nephilim were on the earth in those days- AND ALSO AFTERWARDS- when the sons of God (fallen angels) went to the daughters of men and HAD CHILDREN BY THEM." (Gen. 6:4)

- (f) Jesus said "As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man" (Matt. 24:37)
- (2) From Ammon and Moab
 - (a) The descendants of the incestuous relationship between Lot and his two daughters
 - (i) Gen: 19:37-38 "The older daughter had a son, and she named him Moab; he is the father of the Moabites of today. The younger daughter also had a son, and she named him Ben-Ammi; he is the father of the Ammonites of today.
 - (ii) Kingdoms that refused to let the Israelites pass through their land after the Exodus (Num. 21:22-23)
 - (iii) The enemy peoples from which Tobiah came.
- ii) Marrying foreign women was expressly forbidden in the Law
 - (1) Deut. 7:3-4
 - (a) Do not intermarry with them. Do not give your daughters to their sons or take their daughters for your sons, for they will turn your sons away from following me to serve other gods, and the LORD's anger will burn against you and will quickly destroy you.
- iii) **We are clearly commanded in 2 Cor. 6:14-18**
 - (1) Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? 15What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? 16What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people." "Therefore come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you." "I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty."
- B) One of the most grievous aspects of this is the impact on Children**
 - i) v. 24 "Half of their children spoke the language of Ashdod or the language of one of the other peoples, and **did not know how to speak the language of Judah.**
 - (1) They were losing their cultural identity as God's chosen vessel through which He was manifesting Himself to the world and ultimately through whom the Messiah and Blessing to the world would come.
 - ii) Today, the corruption of marriage through both divorce and SSM is impacting children
 - (1) All Children deserve a father and a mother and the complimentary gifts they bring to their children
 - (2) All children need to be strengthened and stabilized in their God given identity in a day where the Ashdod, Ammonite and Moabite culture of the day is both weakening and destabilizing them.
 - (3) Children in Christian homes particularly **MUST** learn to "speak the language of Judah"
 - (a) This means becoming Biblically literate.

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C) Nehemiah's Response

i) Strong and decisive

(1) V.25 "Rebukes; curses; beats some of the men; pulled out their hair; made them take an oath

ii) Calls It What It Is

(1) V.27 "terrible wickedness" and "Unfaithful to our God"

iii) Reminds them of Solomon

(1) Israel's greatest King, loved by God, even he was led into sin by foreign women v.26

(2) This resulted in their Assyrian and Babylonian captivity from which they were only just recovering from and that as just a remnant.

(3) Purified the priests and Levites of everything foreign and re-assigned them their duties "each to his own task"

5) Conclusion

A) Today, each one of us has our own tasks, by faith and in an abiding communion with the Father and the Son by the Spirit:

i) To maintain our Christian identity and not equivocate with the world but call things what they are

ii) To practically deal with our own loss of sanctified holiness

iii) To not neglect the House of God

iv) To eject the spiritual Tobiahs from our lives.

B) May the Lord Remember you with favour for all this.