

Let's Worship God

2nd-7th September 2019
Nehemiah



NEHEMIAH

pray | plan | build

Monday - Nehemiah 13:1-3 - Exclusion From Worship

During the worship of God and especially through the reading of the Word of God, the people became more aware of the standards that God had set for His own people. It is, of course, quite clear that we can only know what it is that God requires of man as we find it recorded in what has been revealed to us in the Holy Scriptures. In the case before us in this passage it was the teaching given in Deuteronomy 23:3-4 describing those who were to be excluded from the assembly of the Lord. The Amorites and the Moabites and their descendants down to the tenth generation were not to be a part of the people of God on account of their conduct towards the people of Israel. In the call that God gave to Abram God promised to bless those who blessed Abram and to curse those who cursed him Gen. 12:3, and here this promise is fulfilled, for the Amorites and the Moabites did not meet the Israelites with food and water when they came out of Egypt and even hired Balaam to curse them, and now this ill-treatment is turned upon their own heads as they are excluded from the people of God.

Having heard the Word of God, the people immediately sought to put it into practice and began to exclude from their company those who had no right to be there. No doubt many of these people had lived amongst the Israelites for many years and were probably friends and neighbours. Perhaps some even participated in Israelite worship, but nevertheless, they were not a part of God's people.

Attending worship in a gathering of God's people does not make somebody a child of God any more than having friends who are believers does. To be a member of the church of God requires the new birth, the forgiveness of sins, and a personal relationship with God through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Questions

1. Why were the Amorites and Moabites excluded from the worship?

Prayer Points

1. Pray for the salvation of family and friends.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

“Remember me, O my God, concerning this, and do not wipe out my good deeds which I have done for the house of my God and for his service.” Nehemiah 13:14

Praise: Psalm 36 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.



Tuesday - Nehemiah 13:4-5 - Becoming Lazy

There had been a very high standard set at the dedication of the wall and there was probably every intention in the minds of the people to adhere to the commitments they had made and to uphold the terms of the solemn covenant they had signed. It is however, sadly true that it is so easy to fall away even from solemn promises made in the presence of the Holy God. To live consistently for God and in obedience to his Word requires constant vigilance and effort otherwise we will slip back into previous patterns of behaviour.

That is quite clearly what had happened to the people here. It seems as though Nehemiah had left Jerusalem and gone back to his position in the king's palace, he had, after all, only been given a leave of absence. It is not clear just how long he was away from Jerusalem, but it could have been as much as ten or twelve years. However long it was, it was evidently long enough for the leaders of the people to become lax and to allow things to take place that would never had been tolerated if Nehemiah had still been present.

In the matter of the purity of the church and of the individual believer, the price of security and safety is eternal vigilance. When Christian believers become complacent and think that there is no longer any need to 'put to death the deeds of the flesh', there is great danger. It was for that reason that the apostle Paul in writing to the young man Timothy, urges him to be especially careful in watching his own life and doctrine 1 Tim. 4:16. It is especially important for ministers and elders to be careful about their own spiritual relationships and their understanding of and obedience to the teaching of the Word of God as they seek to shepherd the flock of God.

Questions

1. What had happened since Nehemiah left?
2. How can we be watchful in our own Christian walk?

Prayer Points

1. Pray that you would watch against sin in your life.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

“Remember me, O my God, concerning this, and do not wipe out my good deeds which I have done for the house of my God and for his service.” Nehemiah 13:14

Praise: Psalm 37 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.



Wednesday - Nehemiah 13:4-9 - Tobiah in the Temple

There are four things mentioned in particular that show the backsliding of the people: the presence Tobiah in the courts of the Temple; the failure to provide adequately for the Levites; the desecration of the Sabbath; and the return to mixed marriages. When Nehemiah came back to Jerusalem he saw something that must have both grieved and angered him. He found that the priest Eliashib had entered into an agreement with one of the men who had been at the forefront of the opposition to the wall rebuilding. Not only was Tobiah personally a proven enemy of the people of God, he was an Ammonite, a part of the 'mixed multitude' put out of the temple years before. In chapter 6 Tobiah was exerting his influence from without, and maintaining contact with some of the nobles within by letter. But now he was right inside! It is not at all surprising that Nehemiah was upset!

a. The temple rooms that Tobiah was occupying were supposed to be used for the storage of tithes and offerings for the priests and for the service of God's sanctuary. It was unthinkable that rooms set apart for a holy purpose should be used by a pagan opponent of the work of God.

b. Eliashib had failed as the spiritual leader of the people and had neglected to maintain the purity of the house of God. He had not recognised the danger of having an alliance with such a man. Possibly Eliashib thought the regulations for 'separation' and 'no mixing' were far too strict and uncharitable, but we ignore God's commands at our peril!

Nehemiah was not just grieved but determined to take radical measures to solve the problem: He threw Tobiah and all his possessions out of the temple; He restored the temple rooms to their proper function. No doubt some would see his action as being harsh but like the Lord Jesus when he cleansed the temple Nehemiah had the wisdom not to confuse 'love' with 'being nice'!

Questions

1. What steps did Nehemiah take to fix things?

Prayer Points

1. Pray that we would not ignore the commands of God.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

“Remember me, O my God, concerning this, and do not wipe out my good deeds which I have done for the house of my God and for his service.” Nehemiah 13:14

Praise: Psalm 38 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

NEHEMIAH

pray | plan | build

Thursday - Nehemiah 13:10-14 - Withholding Tithes

In chapter 10:39 in all the excitement and enthusiasm of the dedication of the wall, the people had solemnly promised that they would not forsake the house of their God, and yet when Nehemiah returned he found that the Levites and the singers had been forced to go back to working in the fields because of the lack of provision made for them by the people.

There was a very stern challenge made to them by Nehemiah, 'why is the house of the Lord forsaken?' By neglecting to make provision for those who had been called to serve in the full time ministry of the temple the people were guilty of breaking the covenant they had sworn. It is not just by committing breaches of the law that people break their covenant with God, but also by neglect! There are sins of omission as well as commission.

The particular sin of omission that Nehemiah highlighted here had to do with giving to support the work of the Lord. It is the very same thing that was highlighted by the Lord through the prophecy of Malachi. God accused his people of robbing him and when they challenged Him to tell how they had robbed Him, He responds by pointing to their failure in giving tithes and offerings ch. 3:8-10. What a tragedy it is when the work of the Lord suffers because the people of God will not fulfil the responsibilities laid upon them to provide for those who minister the Word. Sadly this is a pattern so often seen in the life of the church. James Philip asks a very pertinent question when he says: 'Is this an inevitable experience? Are we to expect this, as a matter of course? Is Christian life also to be nothing more than a series of comings and goings? Surely not, if the testimony of the early Church is to be taken seriously! The power of the indwelling Spirit is more than sufficient, and we must not allow ourselves the luxury of acquiescing in the 'backwards and forwards pattern', as if it were inevitable. It is not!'

Questions

1. How were the people neglecting the work of the Lord?

Prayer Points

1. Pray that we would keep our promises to God.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

“Remember me, O my God, concerning this, and do not wipe out my good deeds which I have done for the house of my God and for his service.” Nehemiah 13:14

Praise: Psalm 39 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

NEHEMIAH

pray | plan | build

Friday - Nehemiah 13:15-22 - The Sabbath

In the covenant the people made with God at the dedication of the wall, there was a specific promise made with regard to Sabbath observance ch.10:31, but it is clear that this was another promise they broke. It was not surprising that the foreigners from Tyre should wish to trade on the Sabbath, but what annoyed Nehemiah was that they were being facilitated by the people of God who were buying the goods from them. Nehemiah immediately took action by rebuking the nobles and reminding them of the judgement of God that had come upon their ancestors for doing the very same thing, and he then reinforced the rebuke by ensuring that the gates were closed on the eve of the Sabbath and not reopened until it was over. After warning the traders not to camp outside the walls, his final action was to make sure that the Sabbath day would be properly observed.

It is always a sign of spiritual declension when people find the Sabbath irksome, binding, and restricting. The Old Testament places enormous emphasis on Sabbath observance and on the consequences of observance or neglect, Exod 31:13-17, Ezek 20:17, Jer 17:19ff. Sabbath observance was important as a sign of God's covenant with his people and to neglect it was to neglect Him and to break the covenant. To neglect a day when He specially met with His people for blessing was therefore serious indeed.

It should always be remembered that the Sabbath principle goes back to creation and is merely reiterated in the law of Moses. Could it be possible that this creation principle that was so significant that it should be included in the law given on Sinai would suddenly become of no importance to God, no interest to Him, now that the New Testament has dawned? The same principle holds good, for the Sabbath is still the day when God specially blesses His people, and to neglect it is still to neglect Him and set little store by His blessing.

Questions

1. How were the people treating the Sabbath?

Prayer Points

1. Give thanks for the Sabbath day.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

“Remember me, O my God, concerning this, and do not wipe out my good deeds which I have done for the house of my God and for his service.” Nehemiah 13:14

Praise: Psalm 40 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.



Saturday - Nehemiah 13:23-31 - Downward Spiral

It seems as though every aspect of the covenant the people had made at the wall dedication had been cast aside, for Nehemiah having rebuked them for not keeping themselves separate from the ungodly, failure to provide for the worship of the sanctuary, desecration of the Sabbath, he now turns to their failure to maintain pure and godly marriages. They had been warned about taking wives or husbands from amongst the heathen nations around them, but these warnings appeared to have fallen on deaf ears.

Nehemiah's violent reaction should be a clear warning to Christian young people about the dangers of romantic relationships with those who are not believers. The Scriptures of both Old and New Testaments give very clear teaching that the people of God are to be a separated people and to indulge in marriage with unbelievers is to lose that separated character and thus to lose their testimony.

There is a clear downward spiral in the declension seen in this chapter. In verse 28 the high priest, Eliashib is again mentioned - he had already been condemned for providing a room in the temple for Tobiah and now it is revealed that his son was married to the daughter of Sanballat, the other leader of the opposition to Nehemiah! Here at the very heart of the nation is where the corruption began. The high priest had no concern for the sanctity of the Lord's house, no interest in providing for the Levites so that they could carry out their work, and no concern to observe purity in the matter of marriage.

When once the enemy gains access to the heart - whether it is the heart of the temple, the heart of the leaders, or the heart of our own individual lives, his wicked influence will soon be seen in every aspect of the life and work. Keep the heart, says the Old Testament, for out of it are the issues of life.

Questions

1. Why do we need to guard our heart from sin?

Prayer Points

1. Pray for the preaching and hearing of God's Word tomorrow.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

“Remember me, O my God, concerning this, and do not wipe out my good deeds which I have done for the house of my God and for his service.” Nehemiah 13:14

Praise: Psalm 41 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

The goal of Let's Worship God is to encourage and help you in your worship of God each day.

**God tells us that
Ezra read from
the book of the Law
day after day
and that
the people of God
were filled with joy!**

Let's Worship God is produced for the RP Global Alliance
by the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland.

If you have any queries please contact - admin@rpglobalalliance.org