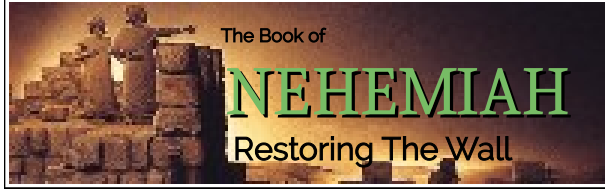


A TIME TO BUILD

Let us rise up and build ... Nehemiah 2:18



Separation and Restoration
Nehemiah 13
Lesson 19

Background Information

After going back to Persia for an unknown amount of time, Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem. During his absence from the city, the Jews gradually stopped keeping the covenant they had made with God. By the time he returned, the people were once again far from God. The walls of the city were still strong but the spiritual walls of separation were crumbling. The people were no longer bringing their tithes and offerings into the temple and the priests were forced back into their fields in order to feed their families. Nehemiah wasted no time, setting things in order again.

The enemy never takes a break, he is always on the prowl seeking to devour and destroy the work of God. The people of God must always remain diligent and keep their guard up if they are going to remain vigilant and strong. Cleansing and confession are a continual part of the Christian life. *PROV 6:23 For the commandment is a lamp, And the law a light; Reproofs of instruction are the way of life.* How we respond to correction, shows the true condition of our heart.

*Let us search out and examine our ways,
And turn back to the Lord,..*
Lam 3:40

Treasures of the Heart

So it was, when they had heard the Law, that they separated all the mixed multitude from Israel.

Neh 13:3

What does it say?

The first step is getting the lay of the land. Carefully observe the text looking to see where you might dig to find hidden treasure. Studying a narrative requires following the key characters and paying special attention to what God says and does. Mark your text looking for repeated words, contrasts or similarities. **Does a key verse stand out in each section?** Look for answers to: Who? What? When? Where? Why or How?

Nehemiah 13:1-9

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, **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.

4 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. **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, **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. **8** 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.

Digging Deeper

Dig deeper using other resources such as a dictionary, concordance, maps and cross-references. **Notate** where you found it to share with the group. Look for commands to obey or questions to be answered. **What does God want you to know about Himself?**

Something to think about when looking up a word or topic: *The **principle of first mention** teaches that the first time a word or phrase appears in Scripture often establishes a precedent, pattern, or biblical concept that occurs throughout the rest of the Bible. Be careful not to ignore the context.*

Nehemiah 13:10-14

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. 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 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.

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!

Nehemiah 13:15-22

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. 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.

Remember me, O my God, concerning this also, and spare me according to the greatness of Your mercy!

Nehemiah 13:23-31

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

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. **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 women caused even him to sin. **27** Should we then hear of your doing all this great evil, transgressing against our God by marrying pagan women?"

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.

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

30 Thus I cleansed them of everything pagan. I also assigned duties to the priests and the Levites, each to his service, **31** and to bringing the wood offering and the first fruits at appointed times. Remember me, O my God, for good!

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What does it mean?

What lesson can I draw from my observations? Ask yourself, "What was the intended meaning of the original author?" Is there a command to obey, a warning to heed, or an example to follow or avoid? State each lesson in a simple sentence that you could share with someone else.

(aim for 10 words or less)

Nehemiah 13:1-9 _____

Nehemiah 13:10-14 _____

Nehemiah 13:15-22 _____

Nehemiah 13:23-31 _____

How can I apply it?

Ask yourself, "What course of action do I need to take to apply each lesson?" How should it change me? What does it challenge me to do? Does it point out error in my attitude or actions?

(aim for 10 words or less)

Nehemiah 13:1-9 _____

Nehemiah 13:10-14 _____

Nehemiah 13:15-22 _____

Nehemiah 13:23-31 _____

What did God say?

See if you can discover what God wants us to understand about His character and His ways? Which of His attributes is He displaying? When we are questioning the circumstances that surround us, understanding Who God is helps us trust Him when we don't see Him working. Simply state what God is trying to communicate about Himself **and how it affects your thinking**.

What words or phrases are repeated? Repeated words help us discover the main point.

Getting the point!

Discover the "Big Idea" of each section. The main point of the passage is like a topic sentence in a paragraph. See if you can boil down the meaning of each section into one or two words. This helps you fully understand what the author is trying to convey. (It's fun to alliterate if you want to try) Did you find the "Big Idea"

Nehemiah 13:1-9 _____

Nehemiah 13:10-14 _____

Nehemiah 13:15-22 _____

Nehemiah 13:23-31 _____

Title

State the main point of the entire passage in the form of a title.

Flex Your Muscles

From your title Can you discover a N.T. example of this O.T. truth?

Time to build

Take note of how Nehemiah prepared and planned. Ask yourself, how did he attack each challenge? How did it affect those who interacted with him? What building materials did he use? (prayer, confrontation, standing firm, waiting etc.) **What did you learn that can help you next time you meet an obstacle?**

Radiating His Truth

Hearing the Law brings a call to obedience.

David Gusik



