

“Cleaning House!”
Nehemiah 13:4-9

Introduction:

1. **IE: Around The House:**
 - Cleaning Up Is One Of My Least Favorite Things To Do!
 - But Cleaning Up Is One Of The Most Important Things To Do!
 - Because, If You Don’t Clean The House, Things Will Only Get Worse!
 - If You Don’t Clean – Things Will Get Dirtier!
 - And We Must Clean!
 - Even Our Health Depends On It!
2. **Nehemiah 13:**
 - Nehemiah Has Already Spent 12 Years As Governor Of Judah!
 - After Rebuilding The Walls & Rededicating The People!
 - He Left, To Return To The King, As Cupbearer!
 - But Still Wanted To Be Back With His People In Jerusalem!
 - How He Missed Them! Not Sure How Long He Was Gone!
 - But It Was Long Enough For Some Major Problems & Sins To Creep Back Into The Camp!
 - When Nehemiah Returned:
 - He Needed To Clean House! And He Did!
 - Already Saw In 13:1-3 - The People Started Rebuilding The Wrong Way! By Marrying Ammonites & Moabites!
 - But This Was Not All!
3. **Read 13:4-9 - “And Before This!”**
 - Nehemiah Needed To Clean House!
 - Because The Contamination Of Sin Ran High / Deep / Quiet / Wide!
 - Example For Us!
 - We Need To Keep Cleaning The House Of Our Hearts!
 - Because, Instead Of The Temple In Jerusalem, “What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? / For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s!” (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)
 - Every Day, We Need To Clean Up The House Of Our Hearts!
 - Why?

* Because The Contamination Of Sin Runs High!

1. *The Susceptibility To Sin!*

- 13:4 - “And before this, Eliashib the priest, having the oversight of the chamber of the house of our God, was allied unto Tobiah!”
 - The Contamination Of Sin Is Universal! No One Is Exempt!
 - **IE:** Just Like Noone Is Exempt From Dirt & Cleaning The House! Doesn’t Matter How Rich You Are / How Big Your House Is – Needs To Be Cleaned! In Fact, The Bigger It Is, The More It Needs To Be Cleaned! Our Bathrooms!
 - One Would Have Thought, That When Nehemiah Left, Those Who Had Spiritual Leadership / Authority Would Have Taken Over!
 - But Instead Of Providing The Right Example, They Provided The Wrong Example! The Corruption Of Sin Reached Even Up To “Eliashib The Priest!”
 - Quite Possible The High Priest!
 - Even He Was Susceptible! So Are We!
- Your Role Makes No Difference!
 - Eliashib Was A “Priest” – Possibly Even The High Priest!
 - Surely, He Had His Act Together!
 - Surely, He Would Not Fall Into Sin!
 - But He Did! And Led The People To Sin As Well!
 - What About Your Role?
 - As Pastor / Elder / Deacon / Teacher / Parent!

- Think: "I've Got It Made!" / "I Can Handle Temptation On My Own!"
- You Are Still Susceptible!
- Your Responsibility Makes No Difference!
 - He Had "The Oversight Of The Chamber Of The House Of Our God!"
 - Oversee The Entire Temple Complex! Made Up Of Different Courts – Gentile / Outer / Inner / Temple! Had Many Rooms & Chambers! Some Very Sacred & Close To The Temple In Proximity & Use!
 - So Busy In The Work Of The Lord:
 - Didn't Have To Worry About Sin & Temptation!
 - But He Should Have! He Even Used His Responsibility Over The Temple To Sin!
 - What About Your Responsibilities?
 - If We Are Not Careful, We Can Even Use Our Responsibilities To Do What Is Wrong! Many Pastors & Preachers Have Abused Their Calling & Authority!
 - You Are Still Susceptible!
- But Your Relationships **Do** Make A Difference!
 - Eliashib Was "Allied Unto Tobiah!"
 - A Term Of A Close, Personal, Friendly Relationship! Possible Even Related - Makes Things Much Harder!
 - Remember Tobiah, Though?
 - Met First In 2:10 - "When Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, heard of it, it grieved them exceedingly that there was come a man to seek the welfare of the children of Israel!"
 - Tobiah Was Not An Ammonite, But He Was A Jew With Great Influence With The Ammonites! His Name Even Meant: "Jehovah Is Good!" He Was A Traitor!
 - Eliashib Had No Business Having A Personal Relationship With This Man!
- Lesson: All Of Us Are Susceptible To The Contamination Of Sin!
 - It Runs High! And Our Relationships Do Make A Difference!
 - 1 Corinthians 10:12 - "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall!"
 - We Always Need To Be Ready To Clean Up The House Of Our Hearts!

* Also: Because The Contamination Of Sin Runs Deep!

2. **The Strength Of Sin!**

- 13:5 - "And 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!"
 - Sin Is Like Mold! Give It An Inch, It Will Take A Mile!
 - Why We Need To Keep Cleaning The House!
 - Spring Cleaning Is Not The Only Time To Clean!
 - Eliashib Allowed This Contamination Even Into The Temple Of God! It All Started When He Gave Tobiah:
 - A Room!
 - "He Had Prepared For Him A Great Chamber!"
 - Just Steps From The Altar & Temple Itself!
 - Chamber - Probably Multiple Rooms! Large & Plush!
 - But It Wasn't Just Any Room! It Led To:
 - A Replacement!
 - It Was A Chamber: "Where Aforetime They Laid"
 - These Items Were Removed To Make Way For Tobiah!
 - These Holy Things Were Replaced With Something & Someone Unholy!
 - Became Even Worse:
 - A Rebellion!
 - Led Them To Even Stop Collecting That "Which Was Commanded To Be Given!"
 - This Is The Power & Strength Of Sin!
 - James 1:15 - "Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death!"
 - Need To Clean It Up Before It Gets Worse!
 - What Sin / Corruption Has Been Given Room In Our Heart?

- It Will Not Remain Content There!
- It Will Start To Replace What Should Be There!
- Your Worship! Like The “Meat Offerings!”
- Your Prayer! Like The “Frankincense!”
- Your Works! Like The “Vessels!”
- Even Your Giving! Like The “Tithes!”
 - “Where Your Treasure Is, There Will Your Heart Be Also!” (Matthew 6:21)
- We Need To Clean House Before It Gets Worse!

* Also: Because The Contamination Of Sin Runs Quiet!

3. ***The Stealth Of Sin!***

- 13:6-7 - “But 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: / And 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!”
 - Sometimes, The Dirt Is Easy To See! Sometimes It Is Hard! Even Hidden Beneath The Surface! Sometime, We Even Try To Hide It – From Ourselves & From Others, Including The Lord! Never Really Hidden! **IE:** White Glove!
 - Without A Careful Clean-Up, We Can Even Forget!
- Don’t Forget The Presence Of The Lord!
 - The Jews Forgot About What Nehemiah Had Done!
 - So Quickly! “Out Of Sight / Out Of Mind!”
 - “But In All This Time Was Not I At Jerusalem!”
 - Nehemiah Was Gone!
 - But The Lord Was Not!
 - His Presence Remained!
 - God Is Always Present!
 - Must Not / Cannot Hide Sin!
 - “God Is Always Watching & You’re Already Caught!” (Mike Manor)
 - Don’t Let Down Your Guard!
- Don’t Forget The Position Of The Lord!
 - The Jews Also Forgot About Nehemiah’s Position & Authority!
 - He Had Been Their Governor! But He Was Also Very Close To The King! Authority!
 - “Came I Unto The King, And After Certain Days Obtained I Leave Of The King!”
 - Nehemiah’s Heart Was In Jerusalem! For His People! Couldn’t Wait To Get Back – Even To Surprise Them! But He Was The One Who Would Be Surprised!
 - “If On His First Visit He Had Been A Whirlwind, On His Second, He Was All Fire And Earthquake To A City That Had Settled Down In His Absence To A Comfortable Compromise With The Gentile World!” (Derek Kidner)
- Don’t Forget The Perception Of The Lord!
 - “And I Came To Jerusalem, And Understood The Evil That Eliashib Did For Tobiah!”
 - Eliashib Could Not Hide His Sin – “Evil” – From Nehemiah!
 - We Cannot Hide Our Sin From The Lord!
 - Noone Can! Adam & Eve Couldn’t!
 - Hebrews - “Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do!”
- How Often Do We Forget These Things About The Lord?
 - His Presence / His Position & Power / His Perception!
 - Yet, We Still Try To Hang On To & Even Hide Sin!
 - It Is Impossible!
- We Must Clean Up The House Of Our Heart!
 - Because, Like Nehemiah, The Lord Will Return!
 - Revelation 22:20 - “Surely I come quickly!”
 - Will You Be Watching & Waiting & Ready For His Return?

* But, Because The Contamination Of Sin Also Runs Wide, God Himself Provides:

4. ***The Solution For Sin!***

- 13:8-9 - “And it grieved me sore: therefore I cast forth all the household stuff of Tobiah out of the chamber. / Then 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!”
 - This Is The Reaction Nehemiah Had Toward The Sin Of Eliashib! Do We Want The Lord To Have The Same Reaction Toward Us?
 - To Clean House, It Is Going To Take:
- Fear Of The Lord!
 - This Sin & Contamination Grieved Nehemiah Sore!
 - It Does The Same To The Lord!
 - Remember What Happened Around The Temple Some 400 Years Later? Matthew 21:12-13 - “And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves, / And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves!”
 - Much Like Nehemiah!
 - God Is Grieved Over Our Sin & Corruption!
 - This Should Cause Us To Clean Up The House Of Our Hearts!
- Faithfulness To The Lord! (Going To Take:)
 - Nehemiah Gave A “Command” To Cleanse The Chambers!
 - They Had A Responsibility To Do So!
 - We Must Obey As Well!
 - God Has Provided What We Need To Be Clean!
 - Christ! Zechariah 13:1 - “In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness!”
 - Confession! 1 John 1:9 - “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness!”
 - Consecration!
 - Now, We Need To Use / Apply What He Has Given! And Clean Up The House Of Our Hearts!
 - IE:** Soap No Good!
- Fulfillment Through The Lord! (Going To Take:)
 - Look What Happens When The House Is Clean Again!
 - The Chambers Are Put Back To Their Former Use!
 - You Can Be Used By The Lord Again!
 - **IE:** Clean Dishes & Utensils!
 - 2 Timothy 2:21 - “If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and *meet for the master’s use*, and prepared unto every good work!”
- This Is What Will Happen When We Clean Up The House Of Our Hearts!

Conclusion:

1. The Contamination Of Sin:
 - Runs High / Deep / Quiet / Wide!
 - Always Be Cleaning House – The House Of Our Hearts!
2. What Needs To Be Cleaned Up In Your House?
 - James 4:7-10 - “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. / Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded. / Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. / Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up!”

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