

## **Nehemiah 13:1-3 – Cleaning out the Family for the Kingdom**

TSK, HebrewLexicon, Gaebelain, Armstrong, Handfuls, Barnes, Clarke, Expositors, Gill, Delitzsch, Henry, Poole, Trapp, Gray, JFB, INT  
Brothers and Sisters in the Lord: It is not uncommon to have to listen to a lecture from your mother about how filthy your room is before you clean it up. Isn't that right?

It isn't a bad lecture to get, especially if it gets the desired results and your room doesn't look like pigs hang out there.

Of course your room didn't start out looking like a pigsty, but life happened and you got busy and didn't do the laundry, and you didn't vacuum, and you forgot about the Kleenex and candy wrappers you left on the night table.

Then the ants came.

Life happened to Judah also.

Judah started off well after the temple was rebuilt and the walls of Jerusalem were restored and they made vows to God.

But the Jews became lovers of money (again) more than lovers of God. So they got distracted and things got messy.

**The family became messy and God's house was ignored. So their personal spiritual houses had to be cleaned.** This is today's subject.

Our headings are:

**The Sermon: Your family must be clean**

**The Sin: Your Family is corrupted**

**The Separation: Your Family must be cleansed**

Our goals are: **That you will frequently look to clean out *your personal and family sins* so the kingdom of Christ can progress and bring glory to the Savior.**

### **The Sermon**

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,**

**1. Nehemiah has gone back to serve as steward to King Artaxerxes in Persia for several years and upon his return he saw that the children of Judah, as they had done many times in their history, were not honoring the vows they made to God,**

and instead, were focused on making money and pursuing fleshly pleasures rather than building Christ's kingdom. Verse 6.

(Someone had reported the “messy houses” in Jerusalem.)

**2. Nehemiah then called for the solution to every spiritual problem – he called for the Word of God to be read and explained.**

And it was! This is what the Jews had to listen to earlier. This is what got them back on track.

Nehemiah 8:8 So they read distinctly from the book, in the Law of God; and **they gave the sense, and helped them to understand the reading.**

That is what preaching is! And they read from what they had – the Pentateuch.

**3. They learned that they were not to marry people from Ammon and Moab, and that people of Ammon and Moab were not allowed to come into the temple of God for 10 generations!**

Moab and Ammon were the incestuous sons of Lot and his daughters, but **they were singled out among the wicked because of their cruelty to God's people as they traveled from Egypt to Canaan.**

Deuteronomy 23:3 "**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.**

**4. One notably wicked Ammonite was Tobiah, who had sought to live in Jerusalem and had become related to Eliashib the priest by marriage.** (Sanballat also, but you will see that later.)

Eliashib the priest corrupted the family and **made God's house literally and spiritually messy** by giving Tobiah one of the large rooms of the temple to live in!

This grave sin was no doubt on Nehemiah's mind as he spoke. Look at what Tobiah the Ammonite did to Nehemiah.

Nehemiah 6:19 Also they reported his good deeds before me, and reported my words to him. **Tobiah sent letters to frighten me.**

***A filthy man had polluted the people of God by intermarriage and now he polluted the temple of God.***

## **5. Lessons:**

**a. Everything God wants you to know about what to believe and how to live is in the Word of God.**

Read it.

Listen to it explained.

Don't miss it!

Memorize it.

Talk about it.

**b. Sermons are always in season!**

If you don't listen to them, **you have only yourself to blame when you fall into sin.**

If you don't listen to them, you will **never understand your sin.**

If you don't listen to them, you will **never get the sense of how wonderful your Savior is.**

If you don't listen to them, you will **never be able to properly avoid your errors.**

**c. Christians have to learn to listen, specifically, to listen to the Word of God.**

Is it always easy? No.

But you must try...and fight against sleep and tiredness and against meandering, and unprepared sermons. Go to sleep early on Saturday night.

**d. Sermons aren't to tickle your ears; sermons are to stimulate your heart!**

## **The Sin**

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.**

**1. The sermon exposed many sins, but one in particular is mentioned: The marrying of those who were not believers.**

The Jews married Moabitesses, the worst people known to God's people.

**2. Take a look back in history:**

**a. Balaam was hired by Balak, king of Moab, to curse God's people, but God**

**protected the Israelites by threatening Balaam.**

Numbers 22: 6 "Therefore please come at once, curse this people for me, for they are too mighty for me. Perhaps I shall be able to defeat them and drive them out of the land, for I know that he whom you bless is blessed, and he whom you curse is cursed."

Balaam's name meant "not of the people." That should have been clue to God's people to pay attention!

**b. However, Balaam was not faithful to Yahweh and he convinced the covenant people of God to intermarry with the Moabites** and caused great danger on themselves.

Numbers 31:16 "Look, these women caused the children of Israel, **through the counsel of Balaam, to trespass against the LORD in the incident of Peor,** and there was a plague among the congregation of the LORD.

Balaam's name will forever be a symbol of wickedness. Apostles Peter and Jude both identified the wicked as following the ways of Balaam.

**c. God became very angry with the Jews for intermarrying with the Moabites, as that threatened his worship – something he desired dearly!**

Numbers 25:1 Now Israel remained in Acacia Grove, and **the people began to commit harlotry with the women of Moab.** 2 They invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate and bowed down to their gods. 3 So Israel was joined to Baal of Peor, and the anger of the LORD was aroused against Israel. 4 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Take all the leaders of the people and hang the offenders before the LORD, out in the sun, that the fierce anger of the LORD may turn away from Israel." 5 So Moses said to the judges of Israel, "Every one of you kill his men who were joined to Baal of Peor."

**d. Yet God turned Balaam attempt to curse God's people into a blessing.**

**3. This compromise was repeated and it messed up the lives of the Jews...again...during Nehemiah's time.**

**4. Lessons:**

**a. Old habits die hard.** It is easy to fall back into a sin that you often committed

and enjoyed committing – sins like adultery, alcoholism, hate, gossip, and lying...

**This is why you need supernatural help!**

You need the Holy Spirit's **help to put-off that sin and put on that habit which is good.**

**b. This problem of intermarrying with non-believers continued to the end of the Bible...and it continues today.**

Revelation 2:14 "But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality.

Guard your heart so you don't fall into this devilish trap.

**It is better to remain single than to marry a non-believer.**

Even if you could do more as a married person, **if you marry the wrong person you are asking for trouble and God may give it to you.**

**c. Consider what you would and would not do for money!** Remember, your money must be earned by honest means – means prescribed by God.

So your money must come from hard, honest work, or inherited from the hard and honest work of others.

## **The Separation**

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

**1. This sermon not only exposed the sins of Judah but it required an act of separation from that sin.**

Remember, repentance is to hate your sins, forsake them, and turn and live obediently before God.

**2. Was it wrong to marry those of a mixed multitude?**

**It is not wrong to marry foreigners.**

So why did God use such a language then? **This was a generic term and the context has to determine its meaning.**

Most foreigners did not know the Lord so they were non-believers so the two terms were used interchangeably. (Rahab the Harlot kept her name, though converted!

**True believers were always welcomed among God's people!** God gave explicit instructions regarding foreigners.

It was forbidden to reject foreigners just for their ethnicity!

That is why there was Jethro, Jael, Ruth, Rahab, and Caleb...among others! These separated themselves to live godly lives.

2Corinthians 6: 17 Therefore "Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you."

In fact, the most famous Moabitess, because she trusted in Yahweh, became the mother of Jesus!

**3. Historically, there was a mixed multitude that went up from Egypt to Canaan with Moses and Joshua, but they believed in the one true God, Yahweh, and they were waiting for Messiah to come.**

Exodus 12:38 A mixed multitude went up with them also, and flocks and herds — a great deal of livestock.

**4. Lessons:**

**a. Talk is relatively cheap. There is too much talk about living well but not enough living well!** You need to show action when you are repenting of any sin.

**b. The people of the world are not of like faith and you should not be very close to them or marry them.**

It is a serious affront to God and to his kingdom work to do so.

**c. If you are married to a non-believer, you don't have to divorce him.** That would be inconsistent with the Word of God.

Apostle Paul simply said if the non-believer wanted to leave you because you became a Christian, let him go, but even if a man had two wives, he did not have to divorce the 2<sup>nd</sup> wife when he believed. He was just limited from serving in the leadership of the church.

## **Conclusion:**

**Finding the sin, Nehemiah found the preacher!** He proclaimed God's Word and used biblical illustrations to teach that the Jews needed to lead clean personal lives and have clean families.

The Jews heard the Word of the preacher and responded with true repentance.

That is how it always should be.

Beloved in the Lord Jesus:

### **1. Examine your life and your family's life regularly in light of the Word of Truth.**

See if sins are setting in...things you get comfortable with but are really violating God's law.

See if there is contempt of the Sabbath.

See if stealing becomes insignificant.

See if sexual immorality is minimized.

See if you say, "It's just pornography, it can't hurt."

See if the songs you sing are normalizing sin.

Examine all areas of your and your family's life.

**2. Repent of your sins, not just in words, but in actions.** Repent through Christ, your only hope.

Doing this shows you know the greatness of the Savior's work.

**3. Challenge others who might be normalizing bad behavior...those little subtle things. Love them enough to call them out.**

Don't hate any of God's children by remaining silent. Point them back to the Savior.

Finally, know that life apart from God is death. If you want life, eternal life, call out to God for it.

He will give it to you for free. Jesus Christ, the only Savior of the world, paid for it.