

## **Nehemiah 13:23-31 – Mixed Marriages Make a Mess**

Gill, TSK, HebrewLexicon, Handfuls, Armstrong, Gaebelin, Geneva, Barnes, Clarke, Henry, Poole, Delitzsch, Trapp, INT  
Brothers and Sisters in the Lord: **It is often said that girls, from the age of 13 or so, start to plan their marriage.** They plan the ceremony, the guests, the cake, the food, the flowers, the doves they will release, the location, the dress, and the dance.

Almost always, the last thing they think about and the least time invested in getting, is the bridegroom.

**But getting the right bridegroom is the one thing on which they should invest most of their time!**

You see, **rain (or Covid)** can come a ruin the outdoor wedding.

You **might be sick** on your wedding day.

You **might have one drunk relative** who ruins everything.

The **food might spoil** and people might get sick.

Furthermore, that **wedding you planned for 10 years is over in a very short time.**

The guests, cake, food, flowers, doves, ceremony, dress, and dance will be gone and it will **be only you and your husband.**

**He will be there for his lifetime.**

If you marry poorly, it is a **life of misery** for you. But worse, it is a **robbing your children** of a good home. And worst of all, you are **robbing God** of his glory and honor.

So hear about this today as **this was the problem Nehemiah had to face in Judah.**

Our headings are:

**Nehemiah recognized that marriages were messed-up in Judah**

**Nehemiah reminded Judah of the dangers of mixed-marriages**

**Nehemiah removed obstacles to good marriages in Judah**

Our goals are: **That you will pursue faithful families (and support them if you don't have one), so children can be raised with the goal of continuing Christ's kingdom, so praises will go up to him.**

**Nehemiah recognized that marriages were messed-up in Judah**

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.

**1. In a sad reality there were Jews who had intermarried with people from Ashdod, Ammon, and Moab, and their children did not speak the language of the Jews.**

**2. What's the big deal about marrying women from Ashdod, Ammon, and Moab?**

**God cursed the people of Ammon and Moab for their incredible cruelty to the children (literal children) of Israel** as they traveled from Egypt to Canaan.

They did not let the children get even water!

**Ammon worshipped Molech** and **sacrificed their children to Molech by fire.**

**Moab worshipped Chemosh** and **sacrificed their children to Chemosh by fire.**  
Such horrible families.

**Ashdod** was a city state of the Philistines, immediate neighbors of Israel They were **bent on the destruction of Israel.**

**Be clear, God was not against marrying people from other nations!** Boaz did, for instance, even marrying a Moabitess. She became the mother of Jesus.

Deuteronomy 7:3 "**Nor shall you make marriages with them.** You shall not give your daughter to their son, nor take their daughter for your son.

2Corinthians 6:14 **Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers.** For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? 15 **And what accord has Christ with Belial?** Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? 16 And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people." 17 Therefore "Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you."

**God was against Christians marrying non-believers.**

**3. What's the big deal about the children not speaking Hebrew, but speaking a foreign language?**

God was not against people speaking foreign languages! (Acts 2) **God was against children not being able to read the language in which his Word was written.** He wanted them to be able to understand and obey his Word! They could not understand their fathers or the priests who taught God's law.

***(It wasn't a corruption of language but a corruption of faith!)***

**Not surprisingly, God called these children "bastards" because they did not have a true Father in heaven.**

#### **4. Lessons:**

**a. Israel was a theocracy, so the state had legitimate right to inflict punishment on those who violated God's law, all of them.**

We don't live in a theocracy now. The state does not punish people who, for instance, takes God's name in vain.

As God blesses the nation and causes more and more people to be converted, the laws will reflect more of God's law.

**b. The Roman Catholic Church used to forbid its members from reading the Bible in their own language.**

It was a way of controlling people and it marked the decline of true obedience in the church.

Many Catholics are trying to ban the Bible from regular people again. They should let all men read!

**c. Being unequally yoked with unbelievers has destroyed the lives of many and has robbed God of good covenant children and of worship that belong to him.**

Children naturally gravitate to the parent who does what is wrong because sin is more appealing than faithful living. Keep Christ's church pure.

#### **Nehemiah Reminded Judah of the danger of mixed marriages**

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."

**1. Nehemiah, who was not a trained priest, but a governor, tore a strip off of the Jews for intermarrying with pagans, harming their children and robbing God of worship.**

**He spoke of judgments** (curses) if they did not stop intermarrying with non-believers.

**He struck some of them**, depending on their demeanor. Were they stubborn or were they repentant?

**He shaved some of their beards** (That's what "pulling out their hair" meant). Literally: Make it bare! They were acting like pagans – Egyptians.

**He then made them all swear they would not do that again.**

**2. Ezra had made the Jews separate from these marriages, but Nehemiah, like Apostle Paul, knowing in marriage they made an oath to God, did not require this.**

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?"

**3. Nehemiah then drew their minds back to Solomon's failure – the most powerful King in Israel's history who lost everything and robbed God of his glory because he intermarried with non-believers.**

1 Kings 11:3 And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines; and his wives turned away his heart. 4 For it was so, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to the LORD his God, as was the heart of his father David.

**Solomon, the beloved king (Jedidiah), built a place to worship Chemosh**, the god of the wicked Moabites on Mt. Olives. 1Kings 11:7.

Then **Solomon's son, Rehoboam, had an Ammonite mother.**

The man who had asked God for wisdom and was given it, set it aside to pursue his own pleasure!

**4. Nehemiah thought it was unfathomable this was really happening in Judah—such treacherous behavior.**

**5. Lessons:**

**a. Be ready as a father, or elder to protect your children from the whims of foolishness.**

Be ready to rebuke and challenge them to live godly lives.

Let them honor their Savior.

**This is a good general application!**

**b. It may be exciting to run after non-believing women who are more focused on looks, wealth, and excitability rather than on faithfulness to the Lord, but know the price you will pay for it – pay dearly.**

And then run!

Know to whom you belong and whom you must serve!

**This is for women too!** Don't be drawn to man for power, money, or looks!

**c. If a godly, powerful man as Solomon could fall into pagan marriages, so can you!** Be warned!

**Nehemiah removed the obstacles to good marriages in Judah**

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.

**1. Nehemiah's strong rebuke of Judah for mixed marriages was not enough; he went further and removed the obstacles to good marriages in Judah: He removed a priest who married a pagan!**

**2. Nehemiah drove out the high priest's grandson, Sanballat's son-in-law, the enemy of God's people.**

**Remember Balaam** caused God's people to intermarry with pagans and **brought God's judgment on them!**

**He had to be removed!**

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

**3. Nehemiah then pleaded with God to bring judgment on those who worked to corrupt his people.**

**They had defiled the priesthood.** The priests duty was to go to God for the people, but how could they do that if they were corrupt?

**They had defiled the covenant.** The covenant was **THE** means of grace. How could grace come?

Malachi 2:7 "For the lips of a priest should keep knowledge, And people should seek the law from his mouth; For he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts. 8 But you have departed from the way; You have caused many to stumble at the law. You have corrupted the covenant of Levi," Says the LORD of hosts.

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 firstfruits at appointed times.**

Remember me, O my God, for good!

**4. Nehemiah then did a ritual cleaning to make sure none of the pagan things brought in by Sanballat and Tobiah and the pagans who were married to the Jews, remained in God's temple.**

**5. Nehemiah then reassigned the rightful duties to the priests and Levites to preserve the church of Jesus.**

**The priests** made sacrifices. **The Levites collected the firstfruits and gathered the wood for the altar.**

**6. Nehemiah then called on God to remember his feeble works; he did not demand a reward.**

Nehemiah was a man of prayer, a man with a vision, a man who took on great responsibility, a man who cooperated with others, and a man of great compassion, but he knew that good works were rewarded from grace, not from his purity!

**7. Lessons:**

**a. Remove anything that stands in the way of worship - a place where there will be faithful preaching to help guide you in how you are to live, including teachings about marriage.**

**b. Be ready to fight with your children, or your own heart, when they or you are tempted to marry someone out of the faith.**

Be ready to send one who is not fit packing!

The **Savior's honor is at stake!**

The **lives of children are at stake.**

**Peaceful society is at stake.**

**c. Pray for God's judgment on those who deliberately corrupt God's people for financial gain or do it simply to disrupt the worship of Almighty God.**

### **Conclusion:**

Nehemiah realized the trouble Judah was in with his mixed marriages, so he reminded them of the consequences of their actions, and then he helped to remove obstacles so they would be able to have good marriages.

Beloved in the Lord Jesus:

**1. Pursue faithful marriages.** (It's done for free here!)

Faithful marriages don't come automatically.

Learn what real marriages should be like.

Study what the duties are for good marriages.

**2. Partner with your spouse.** Fulfill your duties in marriage.

Teach your wife.

Together, raise your children to speak God's language. (What language do your children hear?)

You belong to Christ. He expects nothing else.

**3. Promote marriages, even at a time when most children are born out of wedlock in Canada!** Point non-believers to Christ.

Not only will they glorify God, but he is the only way their marriages can be good.

Finally: A Christian might survive a bad marriage because he is God's child, but if you are not God's child you will not have a godly marriage and you will end up in an ungodly place, hell.

If you want out of hell, if you want to please God, ask God to save you.

Tell him Jesus paid for your sins when he died on the cross. He'll save you.