

Nehemiah 13:23-31 ²³ *In those days also saw I Jews that had married wives of Ashdod, of Ammon, and of Moab: ²⁴ And their children spake half in the speech of Ashdod, and could not speak in the Jews' language, but according to the language of each people. ²⁵ And I contended with them, and cursed them, and smote certain of them, and plucked off their hair, and made them swear by God, saying, Ye shall not give your daughters unto their sons, nor take their daughters unto your sons, or for yourselves. ²⁶ Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things? yet among many nations was there no king like him, who was beloved of his God, and God made him king over all Israel: nevertheless even him did outlandish women cause to sin. ²⁷ Shall we then hearken unto you to do all this great evil, to transgress against our God in marrying strange wives? ²⁸ And one of the sons of Joiada, the son of Eliashib the high priest, was son in law to Sanballat the Horonite: therefore I chased him from me. ²⁹ Remember them, O my God, because they have defiled the priesthood, and the covenant of the priesthood, and of the Levites. ³⁰ Thus cleansed I them from all strangers, and appointed the wards of the priests and the Levites, everyone in his business; ³¹ And for the wood offering, at times appointed, and for the firstfruits. Remember me, O my God, for good.*

I. Introduction

A. Person of Nehemiah

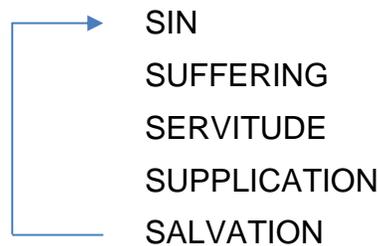
1. He was man of prayer
 - Starts with prayer when he hears distress of Jerusalem in chapter 1
 - Supplication: beg (ask) God for something, make a request
 - He prayed again in chapter 4 when Jews came under threat of attack
 - He prayed again in chapter 6 against the threats of Sanballat in Samaria
2. Man of faith that God would turn the king's heart in chapter 2
3. He showed wisdom when he arrived at Jerusalem in chapter 2
4. He committed himself & the people to building the wall of Jerusalem in chapter 3
5. He showed great courage in designing a defense while building the wall in chapter 4
6. He was a persistent fair governor for the Persian empire for 12 years (Nehemia 5:14-16)
 - He applied laws with fairness by ending Jewish slavery caused by usury (nonpayment of high interest loans) in chapter 5
 - He enforced laws to close the city gates on the Sabbath Day in chapter 7

7. He showed great generosity of spirit
 - He paid for his needs out of his own pocket (Nehemiah 5:14-16)
 - He, family leaders, & the people gave money into the temple treasury
- B. By contrast most of Jewish spiritual leaders (& rulers) were selfish people
- C. Nehemiah worked for 12 years to correct sinful conditions among the Jewish leadership & people

II. Christian Prone to Wander

A. Nehemiah's discovery

1. His goal? to rebuild walls of Jerusalem
2. He discovered spiritual leadership leading sinful lifestyles
3. Cycle of sin & its impact in spiritual life of God's people



4. He worked with the people to set everything right
5. He went back to the king's service (Nehemiah 13:6)
6. But he returned to find his corrections undone (Nehemiah 13:7)

B. Christians today

1. Prone to wander spiritually
2. Can be self-absorbed, following self-will, selfish desires

III. Christian Guard Your Heart

A. Jewish sinful practices

1. Jewish men marrying foreign women
2. God's command

Deuteronomy 7:3-4 ³ Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. ⁴ For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly.

3. Foreign wives snare their husbands with outside influences & pull their hearts away from God

Deuteronomy 12:29-30 ²⁹ When the LORD thy God shall cut off the nations from before thee, whither thou goest to possess them, and thou succeedest

them, and dwellest in their land; ³⁰ Take heed to thyself that thou be not snared by following them, after that they be destroyed from before thee; and that thou enquire not after their gods, saying, How did these nations serve their gods? even so will I do likewise.

4. King Solomon's bad example following after foreign women

1 Kings 11:1-2, 4 ¹ But king Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites; ² Of the nations concerning which the LORD said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you: for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods: Solomon clave unto these in love. ... ⁴ For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father.

B. Christian practices today

1. Christian can choose not to participate in the sin cycle

Psalm 1:1-2 ¹ Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. ² But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

2. Christian to live clean life, different from those around them

2 Corinthians 6:15, 17 ¹⁵ And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? ... ¹⁷ Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,

3. Christian comes to God in prayer in difficult & troubling time to receive God's peace in any situation – no need to worry or be anxious

Philippians 4:6-7 ⁶ Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

IV. Christian Share Your Faith

A. Generations

1. Current generation are the adults in society
2. Generation to come are the children watching & listening to the adults – next generation, upcoming generation

B. Chaotic situation in Jerusalem

1. Mixed marriages with foreign women of from surrounding pagan people

Nehemiah 6:17-18 ¹⁷ Moreover in those days the nobles of Judah sent many letters unto Tobiah, and the letters of Tobiah came unto them. ¹⁸ For there were many in Judah sworn unto him, because he was the son in law of

Shechaniah the son of Arah; and his son Johanan had taken the daughter of Meshullam the son of Berechiah.

2. Nehemiah found the children of mixed marriages only speaking their mother's foreign tongues of Ashdod, Ammon, & Moab
3. Children of mixed languages could not speak Hebrew or Aramaic

C. Need to read & understand language of God's people

1. Many priests & Levites could still read, write, & speak in Hebrew, the language of the Scriptures
2. Jewish people spoke Aramaic after 70 years of Babylonian & Persian captivity
3. Ezra (priest & scribe) led the spiritual revival & the Levites explained the law to the people

Nehemiah 8:4, 7-8 ⁴ And Ezra the scribe stood upon a pulpit of wood, which they had made for the purpose;. ... ⁷ Also the Levites ... caused the people to understand the law: and the people stood in their place. ⁸ So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading.

4. Christians need to share & explain the gospel to their family

V. Conclusion

- A. Nehemiah set a good example by living clean life in troublesome times
- B. Christian pursue God's purpose in your life
- C. God still sits & rules from His throne in heaven