

We will now begin the fifteenth lecture on the Book of Ezra and the Book of Nehemiah. / Today we will study Nehemiah chapter 13. /In verses 1-3, /the Israelites defeated the Ammonites and the Moabites with the Law.

/The Israelites built the Jerusalem wall after they returned from Babylon. /After the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem, the leaders read from the Book of Moses. /They read from the book of Deuteronomy, and they removed all Ammonites and Moabites from the assembly of God.

/Deuteronomy 23:3-6 says, /“No Ammonite or Moabite or any of its descendants may enter the assembly of the LORD.” /The Ammonites and Moabites did not help the Israelites at the Exodus, but rather, interfered.

/The Moabites hired Balaam to put a curse on the Israelites, and thus, God told the people not to approve of them for as long as they lived. /Hence, those who were of Ammonite or Moabite descent were excluded from Israel.

/The Israelites made a holy distinction in the midst of their integration. /God is pleased when believers obey immediately after hearing God’s word. /God is pleased when we live distinguished lives. /God’s people must distinguish themselves from others.

/In verses 4-9, /Nehemiah purified Tobiah’s room in the courts of the temple. /Eliashib the high priest provided Tobiah the Ammonite a room in the house of God. /The high priest allowed Tobiah to use a room in the temple.

/The room was originally used to store temple equipment, grain offerings, and incense. /It was also used to store tithes and portions for those who served in the temple. /God told the people never to tolerate the Ammonites.

/Yet, the high priest was wrong in allowing an Ammonite into a room in God’s temple. /The priests received bribes and allowed Tobiah to enter the temple.

/Allowing Tobiah into a room in God’s temple was well-deserving of God’s anger. /It had not even been a long time since the temple was rebuilt. /The priests became corrupted and allowed a foreign power into the temple.

/The same goes for us today. /Corrupt churches defy the Bible, and they allow the customs of the world to enter to church. /Nehemiah did not know at first that Tobiah was using a room in the temple.

/This was because Nehemiah had gone back to Persia in the thirty-second year of King Artaxerxes. /Nehemiah found out when he received King Artaxerxes’ permission and returned to Jerusalem in the third return.

/Nehemiah then threw out all of Tobiah’s household goods from the room and purified it. /Nehemiah then brought back all the equipment of the house of God, with the grain

offerings and incense. /When Nehemiah chased Tobiah out and purified the temple room, he faced many difficulties.

/This was because there were many powerful people of Judah who were close to Tobiah and received bribes from him. /If these people were to attack Nehemiah, Nehemiah's life would have been in danger.

/Also, the person who gave Tobiah the room was the high priest Eliashib. /The high priest had great power. /In the time of Jesus, Jesus was killed after the high priest set Him up. /However, Nehemiah faced danger and restored the temple room to its original state because it did not agree with God's word.

/In verses 10-14, /Nehemiah brought the Levites together and stationed them at their posts, and the people of Judah brought their tithes. /Nehemiah found out that the people had not given tithes. /Hence, the Levites struggled to make a living.

/The Levites had no choice but to return to their towns and farm, and they no longer did temple work. /Therefore, in verse 11, Nehemiah rebuked the officials.

/Nehemiah then brought the Levites together and made them serve in the temple. /He also made the people give tithes. /Hence, the Levites were able to receive living expenses.

/In verse 10, it says that the Levites had gone back to their own fields. /Men who served in God's temple could not receive pay, and hence, they ran away. /This was wrong. /Even if God's servants face difficulties, /they must not run away but be faithful to their offices.

/People who do God's work must have faith to be content to do God's work. Then God will surely provide them with food. /In verse 14, Nehemiah spoke to God.

/"Remember me for this, O my God." /Nehemiah taught the people God's Law and chased out the Ammonites and Moabites. /Nehemiah chased Tobiah out from the temple and purified it.

/Then Nehemiah brought back and stationed the Levites who would serve in God's temple. /Nehemiah prayed that God would remember this. /God surely remembers all things and give rewards for them.

/Anything that is done for God, /for the temple, /done according to the Bible, /and given for God will remain forever in heaven.

/In verses 15-31, /it tells us what Nehemiah did to receive the Lord's great grace. /In verses 22 /and 31, /God remembered the works of Nehemiah. /Nehemiah acted in ways that pleased the Lord.

/Nehemiah acted in ways that God would remember and bless him. /Nehemiah received God's great grace and was loved by God.

/First, in verses 15-22, /Nehemiah made the people observe the Sabbath. /Nehemiah made the people keep the Sabbath day, which was worthy of God's remembrance and great grace.

/Second, in verses 23-27, /Nehemiah forbid the people from intermarrying with foreign peoples. /Third, in verses 28-31, /Nehemiah established order in the work the Levites were to do. /This was worthy of God's blessing.

/Nehemiah was worthy to receive God's great grace. /Nehemiah did good works. /The Lord would pour out his grace on Nehemiah. /This was worthy of blessings. /We must live as Nehemiah did.

/In verses 15-22, /Nehemiah did things that resulted in God's great grace. /Nehemiah acted with his heart, /his words, and with his works. /Nehemiah made the people keep the Sabbath.

/Nehemiah made the people keep the Sabbath, and this was worthy of God's great grace. /Verse 15 says, "In those days." /"In those days," Nehemiah completed his duties as governor for 12 years, went to King Artaxerxes, and returned.

/Nehemiah returned, and he again established a way to serve God. /Nehemiah corrected disorder and confusion. /Nehemiah made the people bring tithes and offerings.

/Nehemiah made the Levites return. /There were people at the time who did not keep the Sabbath. /They treaded winepresses and brought in grain on donkeys.

/The people brought wine, grapes, figs, and other kinds of loads to Jerusalem and sold them. /We must not buy and sell on Sundays. /Sundays are not working days. /Yet, these things took place in Judah.

/The Israelites did not keep the Sabbath. /Today, it would be like believers who do not keep Sundays holy. /There were many cases in Judah where people did not keep the Sabbath. /Hence, Nehemiah worked to correct this with the power and authority given to him by God.

/Nehemiah made God happy. /The people made the mistake in failing to keep the Sabbath. /First, they tread winepresses, brought in grain on donkeys, /together with wine, grapes, figs and other kinds of loads and sold them. /Today, we must not buy or sell on Sundays.

/In the latter half of verse 15, Nehemiah warned the people. /Nehemiah helped the people understand. /Nehemiah could not stay silent. /Nehemiah had no choice but to punish the people.

/Exodus 20:8-11 says, /remember the Sabbath and keep it holy. /Keeping the Sabbath is

included in the Ten Commandments. /It is the fourth commandment. /It teaches us how to keep the Sabbath.

/We must not let our children work on the Sabbath. /We must not let servants or livestock work. /Ezekiel 20:12 says, /“Also I gave them my Sabbaths as a sign between us.” /Ezekiel 20:20.

/What is the sign of believers of Jesus? /The sign is the believers who keep Sundays holy. /When we keep Sundays, it becomes the sign of faith in Jesus. /If we do not keep Sundays, we are not believers. /We would be unbelievers.

/Unbelievers do not have God. /They live however they want. /The most important commandment today and in the past is to keep the Sabbath. /We must keep it by even laying down our lives. /We must keep this commandment no matter what.

/Nehemiah had to punish the people for what happened in Judah. /Failure to keep the Sabbath in Judah was similar to yeast. /It was similar to cancer that spread through the body. /One must cut off the cancer.

/If we leave the cancer as it is, it will spread and kill the person. /Nehemiah could not let the people be, and hence, he warned the people.

/Why did the people sin in verse 15? /There was grain, /wine, /grapes, /and figs. /These were all materials. /These were all worldly materials. /The people of Judah sinned because of such worldly materials.

/We must transcend materials. /Nothing will matter if we do not transcend materials. /We must use our materials for faith. /We must take our materials and use it in our faith.

/We must not be slaves to money. /It is pitiful for someone to become a slave to money. /If we do not transcend materials, we will become like the people of Judah. /We must cut off all things that are wrong.

/God’s wrath will pile up if we continue to be taken captive by sins. /The sin of failing to keep the Sabbath is a very fighting sin. /We must not be slaves to materials, /we must overcome materials, and we must live by faith.

/Second, /men from Tyre who lived in Jerusalem brought fish and all kinds of merchandise and sold them to the people of Judah on the Sabbath. /In verse 16, sin entered through the people of Tyre.

/The people of Tyre were from Phoenicia. /There were two large harbors in Phoenicia. /They were Sidon and Tyre. /Merchants in Tyre were very skilled in business.

/However, Exodus 20:10 says, /“On it you shall not do any work...nor the alien within your gates.” /The men of Tyre sold merchandise that the people of Judah liked on the

Sabbath.

/What kind of sin was this before God, according to verse 17? /It was a wicked thing. /It was a sin. /Who took the lead in committing this sin? /It was the nobles. /It was the officials. /It was the heads of families. /This also happened in Ezra's time. /Ezra 9:2 says, /the leaders and officials led the way in unfaithfulness.

/What does it say in verse 18? /Because they desecrated the Sabbath, God brought calamity upon the city. /The people were taken into exile in Babylon for seventy years, because the people of Judah desecrated the Sabbath.

/We become slaves of the devil if we desecrate the Sabbath. /We become slaves of the world and slaves of money, and we become miserable. /Then God's wrath will be on us. /We will live in darkness. /We must live by faith like Nehemiah. /Nehemiah stood upright in the truth.

/In verses 19-20 /were ways to keep the Sabbath. /First, the gates of Jerusalem were shut. /They shut the gates before the Sabbath, when it began to grow dark. /Until when did they keep the gates closed? /They were not to open the gates until the Sabbath was over.

/The city gates were shut on the Sabbath. /If believers do not listen, there will be physical punishment. /We will be punished if we do not obey God's word. /God will have no choice but to punish us. /Thus, the city gates were closed shut.

/One day for the Jews was the time from sunset to sunrise the next day. It was from evening until evening the next day. /Hosea 2:6 says, /there will be thorn bushes if we do not obey God's word. /We will be in great pain if we face thorn bushes.

/If believers do not obey, God will put up walls. /God works so that we can be upright. /Second, /verse 19 says that men were stationed at the gates so that no load could be brought in on the Sabbath day.

/If believers disobey, all doors will be closed shut. /The doors of success, prosperity, and all doors will be closed shut. /All doors will be closed shut if we do not keep the Sabbath. /We will be punished.

/We do not know where thorn bushes will sprout up if we do not keep our faith. /We must fear God. /We must fear sin. /We must correctly believe in Jesus. /We must live upright in faith.

/In verse 20, /it says that merchants and sellers of all kinds of goods came even when the city gates were shut. /What did these merchants love? /They loved money. /Our faith will grow when we throw away love for money.

/1 Timothy 6:10 says, /the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. /This causes people to sin. /People kill, /lie, /sell their conscience /and their faith because of love of

money.

/We must be content. /We must be satisfied with God. /We must be thankful for the present time. /We must be thankful for the small things. /We must use our materials for faith. /We must not be slaves to materials.

/Why did God give us materials? /God did not give them to us so that we could store them. /Fertilizer is of no use if it is left piled up when one is farming. /Fertilizer becomes useful when it is scattered on soil.

/Money is like fertilizer. /We must scatter money. /Our money will rot away if we keep it piled up.

/In verse 21, /Nehemiah forced the believers to obey. /Nehemiah said, "I will lay hands on you." /In verse 19, Nehemiah stationed men to guard the gates. They were temporary workers.

/In verse 22, /Nehemiah commanded the Levites to continuously guard the city gates. /They purified themselves and guarded the gates. /Nehemiah worked hard. /Here, the people of Judah disobeyed the Law, /and the men of Tyre sinned as well.

/Nehemiah shut the city gates, /and he made the Levites keep the Sabbath. /Nehemiah helped lessen God's wrath. /He was a man after God's own heart.

/We must be believers like Nehemiah in this generation. /What type of person did God search for /in Jeremiah 5:1? /God sought one person up and down in the streets of Jerusalem /who sought the truth.

/We must live righteously and seek the truth /in our lives, /in our workplaces, /in churches, /in families, /and at jobs. /We must be that "one person" who God searches for.

/What type of person did God seek in Ezekiel 22:30? /God looked for a man who built up the wall /and stood before God in the gap /so that God would not have to destroy it. /God's city is falling. /The city of truth is falling.

/Churches today are becoming social organizations. /Hence, churches cover the glory of God. /Some people attend church to earn money. /Some attend church to be healed of their sicknesses.

/Mysticism is growing popular. /Churches are walking down wrong paths. /In these times, we must build up the wall of truth. /We must stand so that the wall is not destroyed.

/There was a scarcity of such believers in Ezekiel's time, /and there is a scarcity today as well. /We must have faith. /We must receive God's great grace like Nehemiah did.

/In verses 23-31, /Nehemiah did something that God would remember and bless him for. /First, Nehemiah cursed those who married foreign women. /In verse 23, /there were men who married women from Ashdod, Ammon, and Moab.

/They married foreign women. /The truth had fallen. /The men of Judah married foreign women. /Half their children spoke the languages of Ashdod, Ammon, and Moab. /“Ashdod” was one of the five cities of the Philistines.

/If you look at a map, Ashdod is located to the west of Israel. /Sin entered from the west. /“Ammon and Moab” were located to the east of the Jordan River. /Sin entered from the east. /In this way, sin enters from the east and from the west.

/Sin comes to us like water. /Water flows even through a hole. /Water flows even through a small hole. /This generation is filled with sin. /This was not something that happened only in Nehemiah’s time. /The people of Judah married foreign peoples even in Ezra’s time.

/In verse 24, the people of Judah became like foreign peoples. /Children did not speak the language of Judah, /but spoke the language of Ashdod. /Nehemiah did not let this continue, but took action.

/In verse 25, /the people were rebuked for marrying foreign women. /This was deserving of punishments. /This was a terrible sin. /It was a frightening sin.

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/Nehemiah hated sins completely. /Next, Nehemiah “made them take an oath in God’s name.” /Nehemiah did this to prevent them from committing the same sins again.

/We must strive to make things upright. /We must properly teach believers.

/In verse 26, /Nehemiah used Solomon as an example to rebuke the people.

/Solomon had a thousand wives. /Solomon listened to his wives and served idols, then the nation was split under the rule of Solomon’s son.

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/Solomon was a very wise king. /Then why was he ruined? /It was because he married foreign women. /Pastors must especially be careful of two things. /They must be careful of women and money.

/In verse 27, Nehemiah said that the sin of marriage with foreign women was an acceptable sin.

/In verses 28-31, /Nehemiah established order for the Levites.

/In verse 28, /it says that one of the sons of Joiada son of Eliashib the high priest was the son-in-law of Sanballat the Horonite. /“Sanballat” was the man who interfered with the building of the city wall. /He was a very wicked man. /He was an enemy of the people of Judah. 4:1, 2.

/However, the grandson of Eliashib the high priest married Sanballat’s daughter. /Hence, Nehemiah chased them out. /How did sin enter? /Sin entered through the high priest’s family. /The priests married foreign women.

/Leviticus 21:14 says, /priests must not marry foreign women. /A priest was to marry a virgin from his own people.

/In verse 29, /the priests defiled the priestly office and the covenant of the Levites. /Hence, Nehemiah governed over them.

/In verse 30, Nehemiah resorted the duties of the Levites.

/In verse 31, he made provision for contributions of wood at designated times, and for the first fruits.

/We must build up a proper church as Nehemiah did. /This will truly be worthy of God’s blessings.

/Here we will conclude the fifteenth lecture on Ezra and Nehemiah. /Thank you.