

LESSONS THIS QUARTERLIVE AS GOD WANTS

08) 28 Jan Neh 11:1-13:31 Keeping Commitments

INTRODUCTION / QUESTIONS / COMMENTS

- Nehemiah departs the scene for a short period of time, and the Jews revert back to their old worldly ways – marrying foreign women, neglecting the house of God, and forsaking the poor
- To change people it either takes a miracle such as salvation or a cattle prod – constant badgering
- Nehemiah probably new of Malachi’s warnings – fix things or be destroyed again.....Mal 1-4
- What question did the Pharisees & Sadducees ask JC after He purged the temple of moneychangers?
 - ♦ The ones who should’ve led the charge to fix problems were a big part of the problem (Priests, Levites, & civic rulers)
 - ♦ Authority to fix problems with leaders must come from higher sources (i.e., God, King, or Mob, or combination)
 - God gave JC authority to scourge the temple
 - Persian King gave Nehemiah authority
 - Nehemiah also used the masses to entice leaders to obey
 - If we have problems w/ leaders, Biblical recourse is not to remove them, but to rebuke them. If they don’t repent, then we can only be patient and let God work. (see Rev churches)

LESSON PLAN**1) Jerusalem Settled & Wall Dedicated..... Neh 11-12**

- a) Leaders settled in Jerusalem, along w/ 10% other volunteers – not an easy task in an agrarian society to live in a city..... 11:1
- b) Singers had daily obligations 11:24
- c) Two “great choirs” circle the city..... 12:31-43
 - i) Walls were 9 ft wide
- d) Tithe accountability & distribution 12:44-47

2) Nehemiah Returns & Restores God’s Word.....Neh 13

- a) Jews separated from ‘mixed blood’ 13:1-3
 - religious purity, not racial bigotry..... 2Cor 6:14
- b) Nehemiah physically tossed out Tobiah’s belongings from God’s house & restored the room’s function (Tobiah was an Ammonite) 13:7-9
 - i) Nehemiah took matters into his own hands because he did not trust the local priest (Eliashib) and the high priest (Eliashib) to fix things – they were part of the problem due to involvement or negligence
 - ii) Nehemiah, being the Governor, also had overriding civil authority to do so from the king, much like JC had God’s authority to cleanse the temple
 - This temple-purging or taking matters into our own hands is not a normal practice
 - We most often have to work w/in the system to change things – patience, prayer, lead by example, contend w/ sinners, rebuke properly, etc.
 - Revelation churches were not purged – JC either brought judgment or removed their candlestick

c) Nehemiah Restores Tithing 13:10-14

- i) Rulers Chastised by Governor Nehemiah
- ii) Levites recalled to service
- iii) Tithing restored
 - People possibly opted to stop tithing to meet new tax requirements, but God’s requirements are higher than man’s
- iv) Accountability restored
 - when people have trusted leaders, they tend to respond with greater support

d) Nehemiah Restores the Sabbath.....13:15-22

- i) Sabbath violations observed
 - Only Israel celebrated the Sabbath as a day of rest and worship
 - Keeping the Sabbath is a spiritual matter, not a legalistic practice
- ii) Protests lodged before the people and leaders
- iii) Nehemiah used logic to convince them to correct problems
- iv) Guards stationed & worked on the Sabbath to protect the Sabbath
- v) Threats made against Sabbath violators

e) Nehemiah Chastises Wrongful Marriages.....13:23-29

- i) Marriage violations observed
- ii) Contended with wrongdoers
- iii) Cursed/belittled/reviled the wrongdoers
- iv) Beat/smote/hit some of them
- v) Pulled out their hair
- vi) ...and made them fix the problem
- vii) Even drove one culprit from his presence

f) Nehemiah Finishes the Work..... 13:30,31

- i) Purification
 - We are not given details on how to cleanse/purify things, so the practice was for that generation
- ii) Resumed Levitical duties
- iii) Restored provisions/supplies

CONCLUSION

- Caution on taking matters into our own hands because of any righteous indignation or zeal
 - ♦ Jesus Christ & Nehemiah had higher authority
 - ♦ Principles to glean from Nehemiah
 - Be faithful to God’s house even when others are not
 - Know God’s word and how to recognize godly judgment

SUPPORTING PASSAGES

- Mal 1:10 "Oh, that one of you would shut the temple doors, so that you would not light useless fires on my altar [NIV]
- Mal 2:11 Judah has dealt treacherously...for Judah hath profaned the holiness of the LORD which he loved, and has married the daughter of a strange god.

NOTES

- Malachi prophesied during the absence of Nehemiah
 - ♦ Israel questioned God’s love for themMal 1:2
 - ♦ No honor given to God; no fear; no respect;Mal 1:6
 - ♦ Defiled food on the altar – 2nd rate offerings at bestMal 1:7
 - ♦ God defrauded/cheated – tithes/offerings withheld..... Mal 3:8-10
 - ♦ No one keeps God’s word – they were faithless
 - ♦ Marrying women who worship false godsMal 2:11
 - ♦ Unfaithful to wife of your youth (illus – starter marriages) ... 2:15
 - ♦ All evil doers are good in the eyes of God 2:17
 - ♦ Widows & orphans not taken care of..... 3:5
 - ♦ There comes a time when God will purify the Levites
 - Better to clean things up now – judgment starts where?
 - ♦ Coup d’grace: “It is useless to serve God...what do we get out of it?...it is evil doers who are successful in life” 3:14
 - God’s reply ~ “Trust Me – Faithful ones will win!”
 - ♦ ...and Last: repent or God will destroy the land... 4:6