

Happily N'Ever After: Nehemiah's Last Stand

Nehemiah 13:10-31

September 22, 2013

LAST WEEK

1. SUBMISSION TO GOD'S WORD

Nehemiah 13:1-3 (NLT)

2. SEPARATION FROM GODLESS WAYS

Nehemiah 13:4-9 (NLT)

3. SUPPORT OF GOD'S WORK

Nehemiah 10:32 (NLT)

32 “In addition, we promise to obey the command to pay the annual Temple tax of one-eighth of an ounce of silver for the care of the Temple of our God.

Nehemiah 13:10-13 (NLT)

10 I also discovered that the Levites had not been given their prescribed portions of food, so they and the singers who were to conduct the worship services had all returned to work their fields. 11 I immediately confronted the leaders and demanded, “Why has the Temple of God been neglected?” Then I called all the Levites back again and restored them to their proper duties. 12 And once more all the people of Judah began bringing their tithes of grain, new wine, and olive oil to the Temple storerooms. 13 I assigned supervisors for the storerooms: (Shell-a-mia) Shelemiah the priest, Zadok the scribe, and (Pa-day-a) Pedaiah, one of the Levites. And I appointed Hanan son of Zaccur and grandson of Mattaniah as their assistant. These men had an excellent reputation, and it was their job to make honest distributions to their fellow Levites.

4. SABBATH DEVOTION FORGOTTEN

Nehemiah 10:31 (NLT)

31 “We also promise that if the people of the land should bring any merchandise or grain to be sold on the Sabbath or on any other holy day, we will refuse to buy it. Every seventh year we will let our land rest, and we will cancel all debts owed to us.

Nehemiah 13:14-22 (NLT)

14 Remember this good deed, O my God, and do not forget all that I have faithfully done for the Temple of my God and its services. 15 In those days I saw men of Judah treading out their winepresses on the Sabbath. They were also bringing in grain, loading it on donkeys, and bringing their wine, grapes, figs, and all sorts of produce to Jerusalem to sell on the Sabbath. So I rebuked them for selling their produce on that day. 16 Some men from Tyre, who lived in Jerusalem, were bringing in fish and all kinds of merchandise. They were selling it on the Sabbath to the people of Judah—and in Jerusalem at that! 17 So I confronted the nobles of Judah. “Why are you profaning the Sabbath in this evil way?” I asked. 18 “Wasn’t it just this sort of thing that your ancestors did that caused our God to bring all this trouble upon us and our city? Now you are bringing even more wrath upon Israel by permitting the Sabbath to be desecrated in this way!” 19 Then I commanded that the gates of Jerusalem should be shut as darkness fell every Friday evening, not to be opened until the Sabbath ended. I sent some of my own servants to guard the gates so that no merchandise could be brought in on the Sabbath day. 20 The merchants and tradesmen with a variety of wares camped outside Jerusalem once or twice. 21 But I spoke sharply to them and said, “What are you doing out here, camping around the wall? If you do this again, I will arrest you!” And that was the last time they came on the Sabbath. 22 Then I commanded the Levites to purify themselves and to guard the gates in order to preserve the holiness of the Sabbath. Remember this good deed also, O my God! Have compassion on me according to your great and unfailing love.

For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them—yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me. (1 Corinthians 15:9, 10 NIV)

Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.” (Matthew 11:28-30 NKJV)

5. SACREDNESS OF MARRIAGE NEGLECTED

Nehemiah 13:23-31 (NLT)

23 About the same time I realized that some of the men of Judah had married women from Ashdod, Ammon, and Moab. 24 Furthermore, half their children spoke the language of Ashdod or of some other people and could not speak the language of Judah at all. 25 So I confronted them and called down curses on them. I beat some of them and pulled out their hair. I made them swear in the name of God that they would not let their children intermarry with the pagan people of the land. 26 “Wasn’t this exactly what led King Solomon of Israel into sin?” I demanded. “There was no king from any nation who could compare to him, and God loved him and made him king over all Israel. But even he was led into sin by his foreign wives. 27 How could you even think of committing this sinful deed and acting unfaithfully toward God by marrying foreign women?” 28 One of the sons of Joiada son of Eliashib the high priest had married a daughter of Sanballat the Horonite, so I banished him from my presence. 29 Remember them, O my God, for they have defiled the priesthood and the solemn vows of the priests and Levites. 30 So I purged out everything foreign and assigned tasks to the priests and Levites, making certain that each knew his work. 31 I also made sure that the supply of wood for the altar and the first portions of the harvest were brought at the

proper times. Remember this in my favor, O my God.