

Nehemiah 13:15-31 – Rebuilding Morals

In Nehemiah chapter 10 the people took an oath to obey God's Law. In verse 31 they promised to observe the Sabbath day. In verse 30 they promised not to marry outside their faith. The chapter ended with them saying "We will not neglect the House of our God". In Nehemiah 13:4-14 we saw how the people had neglected God's House while Nehemiah was away. The remainder of chapter 13 tells us whether or not they kept the Sabbath and if they avoided marrying foreign women.

Read Nehemiah 13:15-18.

When Nehemiah returned to Judah, what did he observe? Had Israel been faithful to their oath to keep the Sabbath? (13:15-16)

What did Nehemiah do when he observed Israel's sin? What had happened to Israel when they had previously profaned the Sabbath day? (13:15-18)

What would happen to Israel if they continued to profane the Sabbath Day? (13:18)

Read Nehemiah 13:19-22.

What did Nehemiah do to help Israel keep the Sabbath day? (13:19)

What did Nehemiah say to the merchants and sellers who had previously sold their wares in Jerusalem on the Sabbath? Was Nehemiah successful in stopping commerce on the Sabbath day? (13:20-21)

How did Nehemiah engage the Levites to help Israel keep the Sabbath? What did Nehemiah ask of God? (13:22)

Read Nehemiah 13:23-27.

When Nehemiah returned to Judah, what did he observe besides Israel's failure to keep the Sabbath? The "language of Judah" was probably Hebrew. What language was the Old Testament written in? What was the problem with Israelite children not being able to speak the language of Judah? (13:23-24)

Verse 25 says that Nehemiah confronted Jewish men who married women of Ashdod, Ammon and Moab. What measures did he take to correct this sin? What do you think the effectiveness of each measure was? The people took an oath not to marry women in Nehemiah 10:30. What is the chance they would keep their oath this time? (13:25)

What effect did foreign wives have on King Solomon? How did Nehemiah describe the sin of marrying foreign women? (13:26-27)

Read Nehemiah 13:28-31.

Eliashib was the high priest during the time of Nehemiah. One of Eliashib's grandsons married a daughter of Sanballat the Horonite. Why was this bad in more than one way? See Nehemiah 2:19, 4:1-9, 6:1-9, 13:29. What did Nehemiah do about the situation? (13:28-29)

Nehemiah had set things in order in Jerusalem before he returned to King Artaxerxes. What did Nehemiah need to redo once he returned to Jerusalem? What was Nehemiah's prayer at the end of the book? (13:30-31)

What does Nehemiah teach us about the balance between praying and taking physical action?

What does Nehemiah teach us about perseverance in spite of external and internal opposition?

What does Nehemiah teach us about the faithlessness of people but the faithfulness of God?