

**DEEP WATERS MEN'S DISCIPLESHIP-LEADERSHIP TRAINING**  
**Lesson Eleven: Final Challenges**  
**Nehemiah 13:1-31**

We know from the text that Nehemiah had served twelve years as governor of the Province of Judea – Nehemiah 13:6. Following that time he had returned to the Court of Artaxerxes to fulfill the pledge he had made to the King before he had left for Jerusalem – Nehemiah 2:6.

How long Nehemiah was gone from Jerusalem the Bible does not indicate. But it would seem that conditions, morally and spiritually, deteriorated rather quickly. This prompted Artaxerxes to send Nehemiah back to Judea as its governor once again. How long he stayed this second time, again the Bible does not indicate. Perhaps he died there in Jerusalem. We do know that by the year 407 BC that the Judean governor was named Bigvai.

Let's examine the text and see if there are some principles that we can deduce from them to help us better understand our own relationship with God.

**Nehemiah 13:1-3 – A People Set Apart**

The chronology of this final chapter in Nehemiah is very confusing. When was “on that day?” The only thing we can say conclusively is that this occurred after a public reading of the Scriptures.

Deuteronomy 23:3-6 – No Ammonite or Moabite or any of his descendants may enter the assembly of the LORD, even down to the tenth generation. For they did not come to meet you with bread and water on your way when you came out of Egypt, and they hired Balaam son of Beor from Pethor in Aram Naharaim to pronounce a curse on you. However, the LORD your God would not listen to Balaam but turned the curse into a blessing for you, because the LORD your God loves you. Do not seek peace or good relations with them as long as you live.

Living among them and even entering into marriage with their sons and daughters were the Ammonites. As we shall see they had come to Jerusalem for the purpose of conducting business.

Again, the Scriptures prompted their hearts to respond to the directives of God.

**Nehemiah 13:4-9 – Problem One: An Unwelcomed House Guest**

Verse 6 – Nehemiah had returned to Persia after serving as governor for twelve years (445-433 BC)

Verse 8 – How long Nehemiah was gone we do not know, but he returned as a fireball  
“greatly displeased” = literally, “it was evil to me”

chapter 10 In his absence the people had compromised on their oath made in

Jewish circles Tobiah – as we have already seen, he had admirers and those in high

supported him – Nehemiah 6:17–19

Tobiah – had married into a leading family and his son into another  
Nehemiah 6:18

was a patriarch Tobiah was son-in-law to Shecaniah, son of Arah (Ezra 2:5 – Arah  
of 775 people who came to Judea in that first return)

son of Tobiah’s son, Jehohana was married to the daughter of Meshullam,  
Berekiah (Nehemiah 3:30 – Meshullam was responsible for  
repairing the wall near his home)

link and Eliashib – was “closely associated” with Tobiah – there was a strong family  
influence

Eliashib granted Tobiah to move into one of the large empty storage  
rooms on the temple complex; Tobiah was now in the very center of life in  
Jerusalem by living in the temple – he could now wield his  
influence

when He Verses 8–9 – I love the way Nehemiah took charge – reminds me of Jesus  
cleansed the temple, not just once but twice

out, then threw I picture Nehemiah literally picking Tobiah up and throwing him  
out all of his stuff, finally giving orders to have the room  
fumigated

- No protocol here
- Just a strong belief in the holiness of God

**Question: Had not Nehemiah advised Eliashib during those twelve years he was in Jerusalem?**

**Had Nehemiah not provided adequate communication of his vision?**

**Had Nehemiah not really known the heart of Eliashib?**

**Principle: At times, leadership can make wrong choices of people**

**It might be a coach  
It might be a CEO or a company employee  
It might be a staff member at a church**

**Principle: When a wrong choice is made, it is imperative that three things happen:**

- 1. That the person be admonished of his/her deficiencies – mentoring could be supplied**
- 2. If correction is not made in a specified period of time, then action must be taken – usually in the form of dismissal**
- 3. An evaluation of the hiring practice should be undertaken so that this would not happen again**

Nehemiah 13:10–14 – Problem Two: Getting things back into order

People had decided to act meagerly with their gifts to God – Malachi called it “robbing God”

Malachi 3:6–9 – “I the LORD do not change. So you, O descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed. Ever since the time of your forefathers you have turned away from my decrees and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you,” says the LORD Almighty. “But you ask, ‘How are we to return?’ ‘Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me. But you ask, ‘How do we rob you?’ In tithes and offerings. You are under a curse – the whole nation of you – because you are robbing me.”

What actions did Nehemiah take?

1. He rebuked the leadership for failure to keep their oath to God.
2. He established a new temple administrative team – a group Nehemiah had great confidence in – “men were considered trustworthy”

**Sometimes the best way to recover is to completely start over again.**

**It is imperative that a Church has its best qualified people in leadership positions – men and women who have the confidence and trust of the entire congregation – men and women who have proven themselves in previous positions.**

Verse 14 – A strong prayer

“remembering” = an appeal for God’s help and intervention

This prayer connotes Nehemiah’s courage, decisiveness, and dependence upon God

Nehemiah 13:15–22 – Problem Three: A threat to the Sabbath

What Nehemiah saw reminded him of those scenes before the exile  
poor of the Amos 8:4-6 – Hear this, you who trample the needy and do away with the

land, saying, “When will the New Moon be over that we may sell grain, and the Sabbath be ended that we may market wheat?” – skimping the measure, boosting the price and cheating with dishonest scales, buying the poor with silver and the needy for a pair of sandals, selling even the sweepings with the wheat.”

- No respect for the Sabbath
- Dishonest business practices

Jeremiah 17:19-27

Nehemiah wondered if history would now repeat itself once again

What was his response to this crisis?

and walls of 1. Ordered the gates to be closed for 24 hours  
2. Gave orders that foreign merchants could not camp outside the gates  
the city on the Sabbath, jockeying for position when the gates would be opened

(sort of like standing outside for hours on Black Friday)

3. Posted guards – the Levites – to make sure that the orders were carried out.

Nehemiah 13:23-27 – Problem Four: A threat to solidarity

Hosea 7:8-10 – Ephraim mixes with the nations; Ephraim is a flat cake not turned over.

Foreigners sap his strength, but he does not realize it. His hair is sprinkled with gray, but he does not notice. Israel’s arrogance testifies against him, but despite all this he does not return to the LORD his God or search for him.

Nehemiah recognized that mixed marriage corrupted the next generation

- Verse 24 – a confusion of language; which would mean an erosion of Israelite identity

What was his response to this crisis?

of God 1. He rebuked the people publicly  
2. He called down curses upon them – this was in keeping with the Word  
3. He got physical with many of them – “beat some of the men”  
4. He caused them to be shamed – “pulled out their hair”  
(Plucking the hair out was shameful –

2 Samuel 10:4-5 – So Hanun seized David’s men, shaved off half of each man’s beard, cut off their garments in the middle at the buttocks, and sent them away. When David was told about this, he sent messengers to meet the men, for they were great humiliated. The king said, “Stay at Jericho till your beards have grown, and then come back.”

Isaiah 50:6 – I offered my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who pulled out my beard; I did not hide my face from mocking and spitting.

5. He made them swear a new oath – using the example of Solomon to illustrate what will happen if they persist in this sinful practice

6. Verse 27 – he appealed to their loyalty

Nehemiah 13:28-29 – Problem Five: A threat to the priesthood

Sanballat now had influence in the high priest’s family through the marriage of one of his daughters with the grandson of Eliashib, the high priest

What was his response to this crisis?

- Samaria
1. He drove the grandson away – possibly into a forced exile into
  2. He asked God to remember the sinful practices of the priesthood

Nehemiah 13:30-31 – Nehemiah’s Epilogue – a summary of his accomplishments

What did not make Nehemiah’s final summation?

- of the book
- Ezra
1. His rebuilding of the walls – yet this one event is recorded in one half
  2. His leading people in the study of the Scriptures, in cooperation with
  3. His participation in the dedication of the walls

What did Nehemiah include in his final summation?

- completed
1. Purified the priests and Levites of everything foreign
  2. Assigned the priests and Levites responsibilities and tasks to be
  3. Made provision for contributions of wood and firstfruit offerings

**Question: Why do you think Nehemiah made the selection of those things he wanted both**

**God and the people to remember?**

**Although the Bible does not tell us, I think Nehemiah was more concerned about spiritual renewal than he was about something as**

**temporary as city walls. Those walls would be moved as the city expanded, but the spiritual vitality of the city needed to be secured.**