

# How Are We Going To **Grow**?

*Text: Nehemiah 13*



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The church CAN grow  
in an ungodly world!  
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The church CAN grow in an ungodly world!

*(see the book of Acts)*

- ▶ Ignorant — Jews (Acts 2:23; 3:17)
- ▶ False teacher — Simon (Acts 8:9-13)
- ▶ Religiously wrong — Saul (Acts 8:3; 9:1-2; 1 Tim. 1:15)
- ▶ Non-Religious — Jailor (Acts 16:31-33)
- ▶ Idolaters — Thessalonians (Acts 17:3,4; 1 Thes. 1:9)
- ▶ Worldly — Corinthians (Acts 18:8; 1 Cor. 6:9-11)

*Text: Nehemiah 13*



# WHY Are We **NOT** Growing?



## **THOSE AROUND US ARE**

- ▶ Wealthy / materialistic / self sufficient / comfortable (Mt. 19:24; Lk 12:19)
- ▶ Given to sinful pleasure / entertainment (2 Th. 2:10-12)
- ▶ Filled with pride & selfishness (2 Tim. 3:1-7)
- ▶ Seeking only what they want to hear (2 Tim. 4:3,4)
- ▶ Deceived by false teachers (Titus 1:10,11; 2 Pet. 2)



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## COULD IT BE WE ARE ...

- ▶ Wealthy / materialistic / self sufficient / comfortable? (Rev. 3:14-22)
- ▶ Given to sinful pleasure / entertainment? (Jam. 4:1-4)
- ▶ Filled with pride & selfishness? (Rom. 2:17-24)
- ▶ Sharing only what others want to hear? (John 12:42)
- ▶ To busy fighting amongst ourselves? (1 Cor. 1:10; Jn 17:21)



# How Are We Going To **Grow**?

## **Honey I Shrunk the Church**

### Part 2 - The Chicken or the Egg?

*by Allen Ratta*

"The oft recited, 'which came first, the chicken or the egg,' riddle is easy for those who understand biblical creationism. God made chickens first. . . . If the sequencing is right, things have a way of taking care of themselves. For example, when one has healthy chickens there will be no shortage of eggs or those to hatch them."



Raising Happy Chickens



# How Are We Going To **Grow**?



- Judah was in Babylon 70 years because of their idolatry (Jer. 29:10)
- 539 BC. Cyrus the Great conquered Babylon & released the Jews as foretold by Isaiah. (Isa. 44:28; 45:1-4 [150 years before Cyrus])
- Zerubbabel leads the first wave back to Jerusalem to reestablish the priesthood and sacrificial system — Ez 3:1-8 (**538 BC**)
- The temple is rebuilt under the leadership of Zerubbabel — Ez 3:8-6:18 (**537-516 BC**)
- Ezra returns to teach and lead the people in worship & service according to the Law — Ez 7:1-10 (**457,458 BC**)
- Nehemiah leads another group back to direct the reconstruction of the wall – Neh. 1:1-7:15 (25th of Elul ~ Sept 20, **444 BC**)



# How Are We Going To **Grow**?

## Principles of Rebuilding & Revival



- ▶ The first 7 chapters of the book of Nehemiah deal with his return to the ancient site, and the rebuilding of the walls of the city.
- ▶ Chapters 8 - 12 deal with the reading of the law, and the efforts to restore a faithful observance of it.



# How Are We Going To **Grow**?

## Principles of Rebuilding & Revival



- ▶ WE MUST CARE
- ▶ WE MUST PRAY
- ▶ WE MUST TRUST GOD
- ▶ WE MUST BE HONEST
- ▶ WE MUST BE PATIENT
- ▶ WE MUST BE DILIGENT
- ▶ WE MUST BE REVERENT



# How Are We Going To **Grow**?

## Principles of Rebuilding & Revival



- ▶ In Neh 13:4ff, Nehemiah returns to Jerusalem to find the house of God in disarray and the Levites not receiving their rightful portions.
- ▶ These leaders previously signed a document promising before the Lord & the people that they would never again let this happen (Neh. 9:38; 10:14–29, 35, 37, 39).
- ▶ They said specifically, “We will not neglect the house of our God” (10:39b).



# How Are We Going To **Grow**?

## BY CORRECTING OUR OURSELVES



### Nehemiah 13:11 (NKJV)

<sup>11</sup> So I contended with the rulers, and said, “Why is the house of God forsaken?” And I gathered them together and set them in their place.



# WHY Are We **NOT** Growing?

## DISRESPECT FOR GOD'S HOUSE



► Residency was given to the enemy, Tobiah (13:4)

- Eliashib, the high priest in Judah (cf. 3:1, 20; 13:28), had prepared a room in the temple for Tobiah the Ammonite (2:10; 4:3; 6:1; also cf 13:1-3).
- Tobiah was an enemy of Nehemiah along with Sanballat (2:10–19; 4:3, 7; 6:1, 12, 17, 19)



# WHY Are We **NOT** Growing?

## DISRESPECT FOR GOD'S HOUSE



### ► Holy Things Replaced By Enemies Things - 13:5

- The room he occupied had been one of the temple storerooms (13:4–5). There Tobiah could oppose God's work while posing to assist it!
- In order to make room for Tobiah - the things commanded by God had to be removed. (vs 8)



# WHY Are We **NOT** Growing?

## DISRESPECT FOR GOD'S HOUSE



- ▶ The temple needed to be “cleansed” - 13:6-9
  - Required ALL things “common” cast out (vs. 8; 2 Ch. 29:5, 15–19; Mar. 11:15–17; Jno. 2:13–17; 1 Cor 5; 11:21,22,34; Lev 10:1-4).
  - Required the temple articles and offerings that belonged there be restored. (9; 10:37; 12:47)



# WHY Are We **NOT** Growing?

## DISRESPECT FOR GOD'S HOUSE



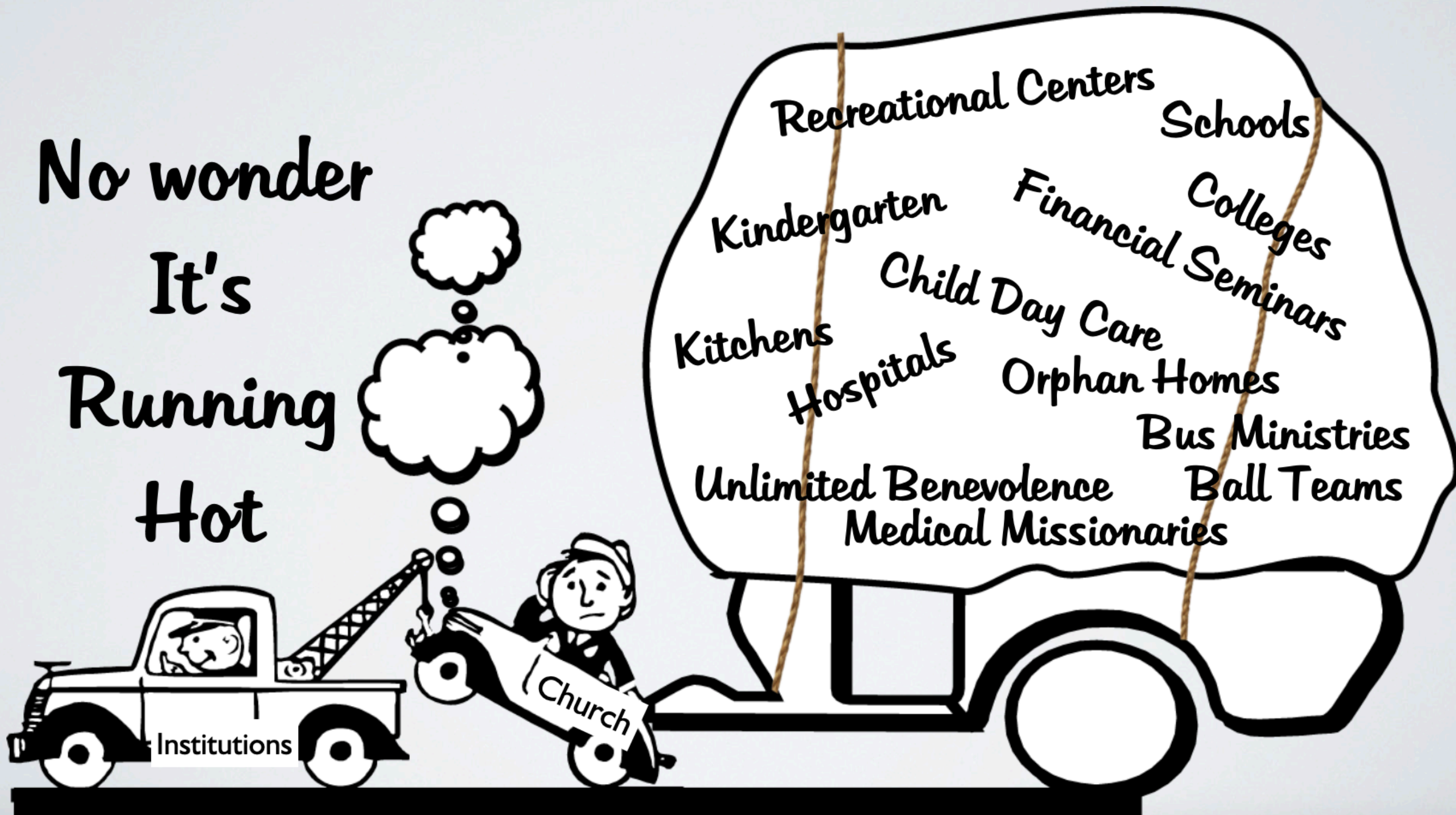
- ▶ Worldly & common things have been given residency in MANY churches claiming to belong to Christ (1 Cor 11:34)
- ▶ While taking up residency under the guise of “expedients” - they are in fact undermining & destroying God's people & work. (Mt 13:22; 1 Tim 5:16; 2 Cor. 10:4)



# WHY Are We **NOT** Growing?

## DISRESPECT FOR GOD'S HOUSE

No wonder  
It's  
Running  
Hot





# How Are We Going To **Grow**?

## RESPECT GOD'S HOUSE



- ▶ We need the same zeal Nehemiah & our Lord had for God's house! (Jn. 2:13–17)
- ▶ The church needs to be cleansed from all things common, (*human institutions, carnal pleasures, enticements, & doctrines of men*) (2 Cor. 6:14-7:1)
- ▶ The church's spiritual worship & work needs to be restored! (1 Tim 3:15; Jn 4:24)



# WHY Are We **NOT** Growing?

## MATERIALISTIC PRIORITIES



Nehemiah 13:10 (NKJV)

<sup>10</sup> I also realized that the portions for the Levites had not been given *them*; for each of the Levites and the singers who did the work had gone back to his field.

- ▶ Neglected support for those serving - 13:10-14
  - The Levites had to leave the Temple and work their lands for substance. (10; Deut 25:4; Mat 10:10; 1 Cor. 9:7-9)



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### ► Neglected support for those serving - 13:10-14

- The Levites had to leave the Temple and work their lands for substance. (10; Deut 25:4; Mat 10:10; 1 Cor. 9:7-9)
- To neglect those who labor in God's house is to neglect God's house! - (11; Mal 3:8-11; 1 Tim 5:17,18; 1 Cor 9:14)



# WHY Are We **NOT** Growing?

## MATERIALISTIC PRIORITIES



Nehemiah 13:11 (NKJV)

<sup>11</sup> So I contended with the rulers, and said, “Why is the house of God forsaken?” And I gathered them together and set them in their place.

### ► Neglected support for those serving - 13:10-14

- Nehemiah set out to correct the problem. (cf. 13:11-14).
- The people complied (12)
- Levites placed at their posts - four men to oversee the distribution of the tithes (12,13; cf. v. 5; 10:39).
- Also Nehemiah prayed for God's help in the matter (13:14).



# WHY Are We **NOT** Growing?

## MATERIALISTIC PRIORITIES



### ► Neglected Worship 13:15-22

- Spiritual things were put on the back burner to material things (13:15-22)
- Another commitment Israel had made in writing, but had broken, was to keep God's laws regarding the Sabbath (10:31).



# WHY Are We **NOT** Growing?

## MATERIALISTIC PRIORITIES



### ► Neglected Worship 13:15-22

- They were working on the Sabbath as other days of the week. (*Treading grapes in winepresses, & transporting wine, grain, grapes, figs, merchandise, into Jerusalem to sell it*).
- They also were buying fish and other items from people of Tyre who resided in Jerusalem.

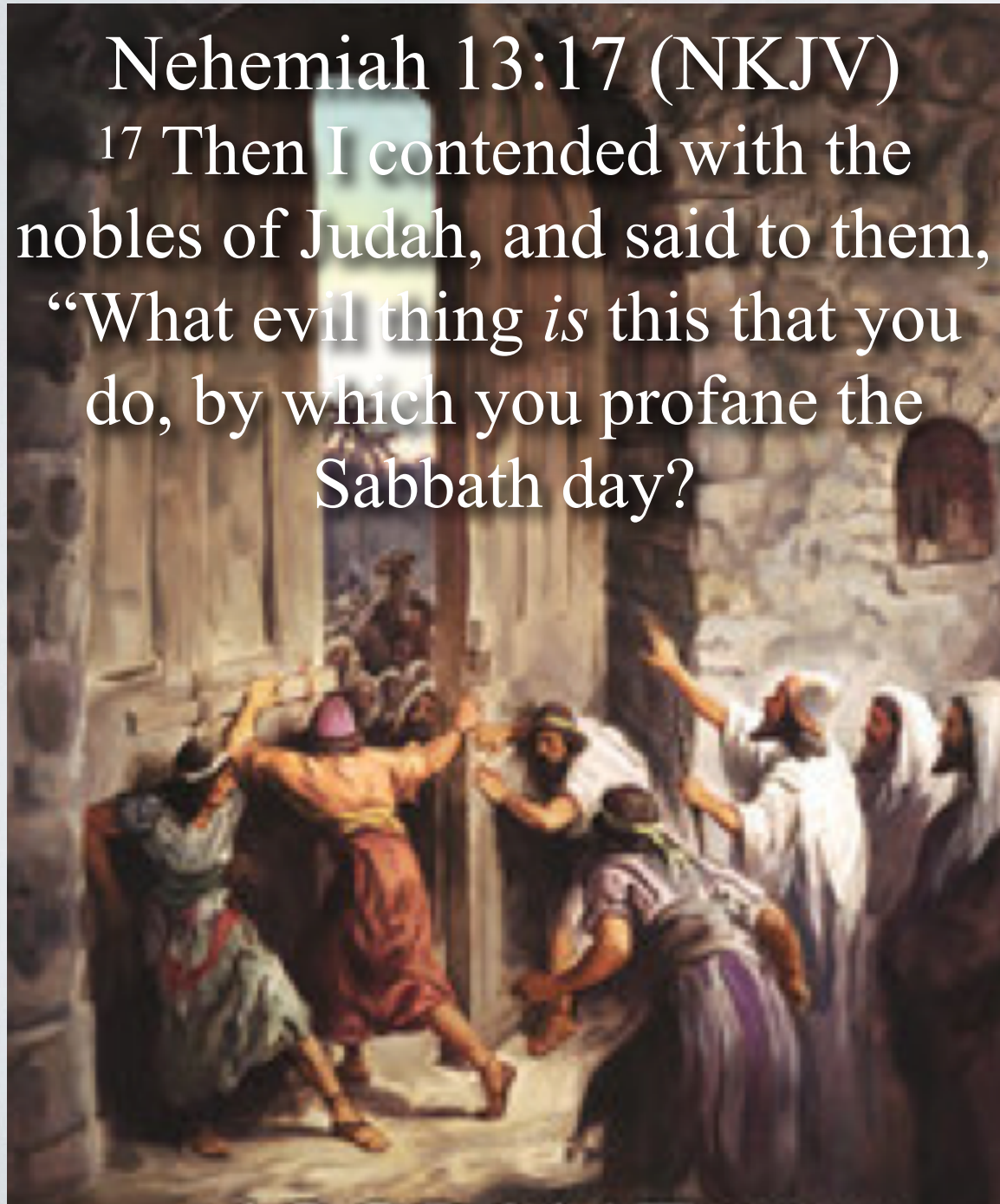


# WHY Are We **NOT** Growing?

## MATERIALISTIC PRIORITIES

Nehemiah 13:17 (NKJV)

<sup>17</sup> Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said to them, “What evil thing *is* this that you do, by which you profane the Sabbath day?



### ► Neglected Worship 13:15-22

- Nehemiah met the problem with both rebuke & action (17-22; cf. vv. 11–13).
- Called it what it was - EVIL - one of the sins for which they were exiled (17,18; cf. Jer. 17:19–27)
- Had the doors to the city shut on the Sabbath (19)

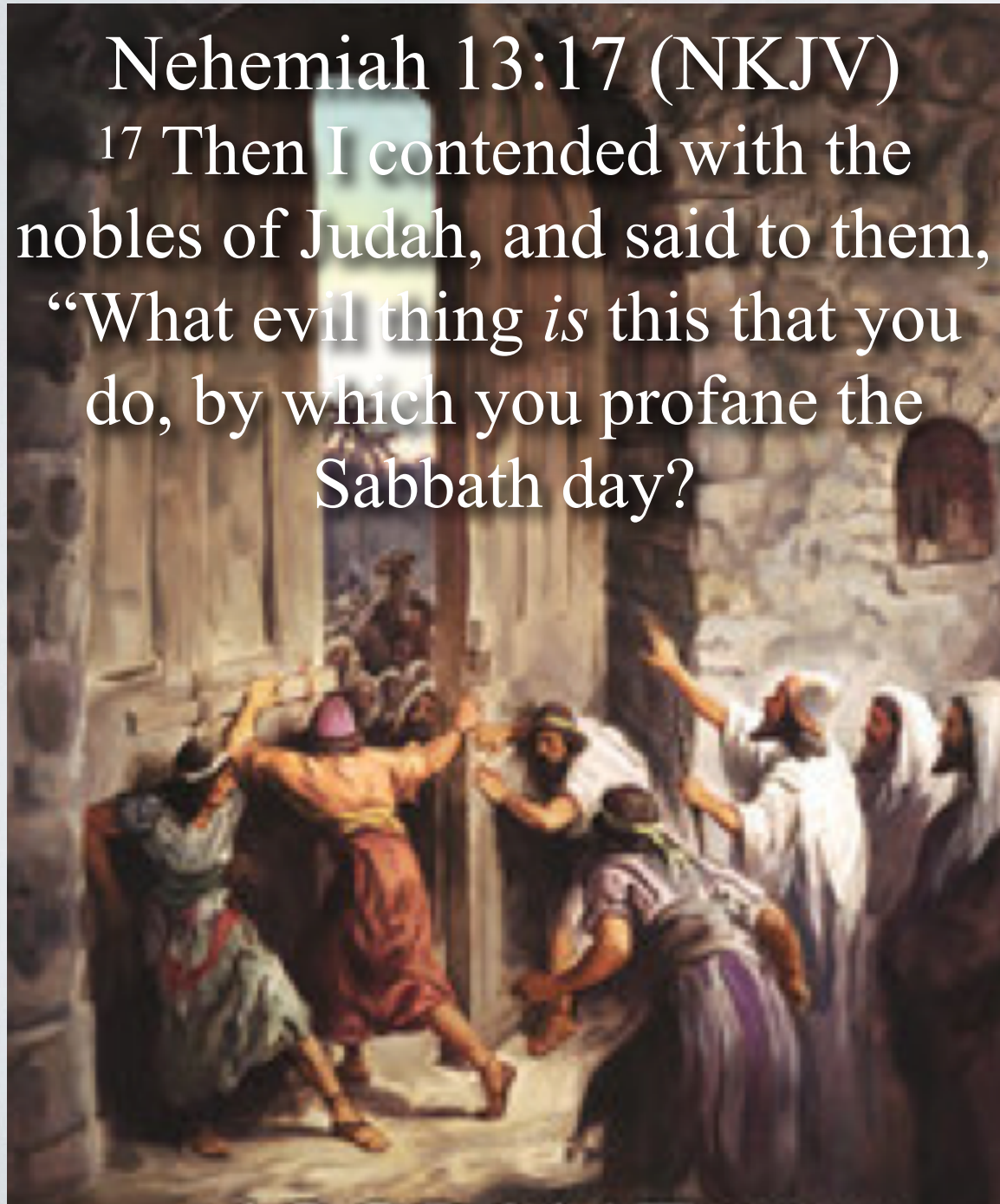


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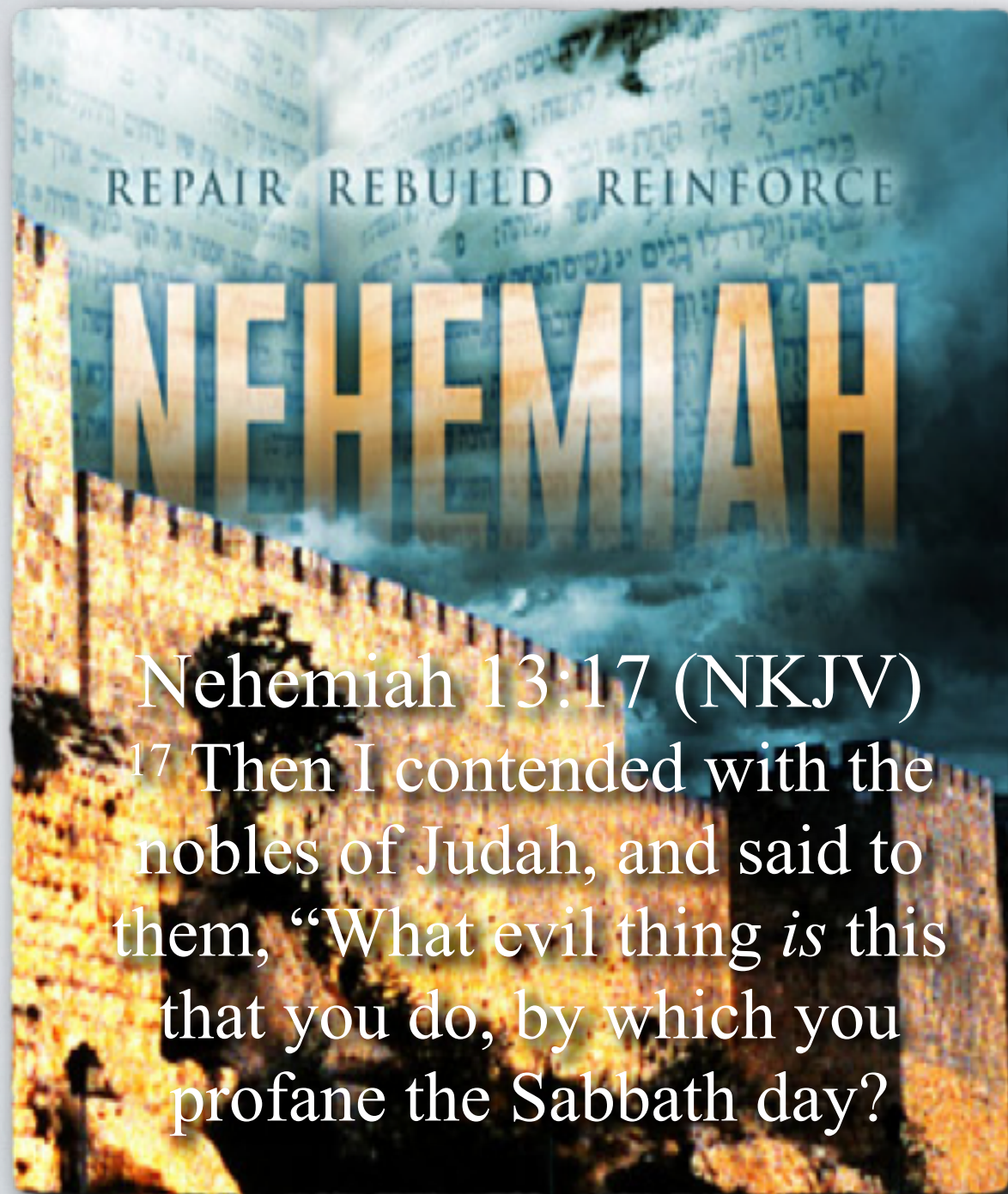
### ► Neglected Worship 13:15-22

- Guards were posted to keep merchandise out (19)
- Some merchants stayed all night outside the walls. Nehemiah threatened to use force. (20,21)
- He had Levites help guard the gates (30; cf. 7:1; 11:19).
- He asked for God's help (22)



# How Are We Going To **Grow**?

## SPIRITUAL PRIORITIES



Nehemiah 13:17 (NKJV)

<sup>17</sup> Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said to them, “What evil thing is this that you do, by which you profane the Sabbath day?”

- ▶ God's house and work should be more valuable & important to us than material things & worldly pleasures (Mat 6:33; 2 Cor 8,9)
- ▶ Preachers & elders, who stand for & teach the truth, need to be supported (1 Tim 5:17,18; 1 Cor 9:14)



# How Are We Going To **Grow**?

## SPIRITUAL PRIORITIES



- ▶ The first day of the week is the Lord's day - and Christians are to come together to worship God, edify & encourage one another (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor 16:1,2; Heb 10:24,25)
- ▶ Do we view Sunday as JUST another day? (*working when not absolutely necessary, golfing, fishing, shopping, family outings, yard work, TV*)



# How Are We Going To **Grow**?

## SPIRITUAL PRIORITIES



- ▶ Can a Christian truly have their priorities and values where they ought to be while neglecting worship and service to God? (Mark 12:29-31; Heb 10:24,25; Mat 6:19-24; 1 Jn 2:15-17)
- ▶ If we are to grow in a way that pleases the Lord, we will have to put the Lord, His people, and His work first! (Eph. 4:12-16; Mat. 28:19)



# WHY Are We **NOT** Growing?

## HEARTS CORRUPTED BY THE WORLD



### ▶ Married To The Enemy (13:23-29)

- The children of Israel had intermarried with the Philistines, Ammonites & Moabites, (23 - people they were specifically forbidden to marry - Ex. 34:12–16; Deut. 7:1–5)
- Half the children spoke the language of Ashdod & not able to speak Hebrew (24)



# WHY Are We **NOT** Growing?

## HEARTS CORRUPTED BY THE WORLD



### ▶ Married To The Enemy (13:23-29)

- Nehemiah “struck them and pulled out their hair” making them swear before God to not continue in this sin. (25)
- He reminded them of Solomon (26; cf. 1 Ki 11:1–8).
- This was wickedness, an act of unfaithfulness, for they had done “a great evil” (25-27)



# WHY Are We **NOT** Growing?

## HEARTS CORRUPTED BY THE WORLD



### ▶ Married To The Enemy (13:23-29)

- Eliashib's grandson had married a daughter of Sanballat – thus Nehemiah put him out (28)
- Nehemiah pleads with God to remember him for correcting those who had defiled the priesthood and the covenant of the priesthood (29)



# How Are We Going To **Grow**?

## HEARTS PURIFIED BY THE WORD



- ▶ Beware of compromising companionships (Prov. 1:8ff; 4:14; Psa. 1:1; 1 Cor. 15:33; 2 Cor 6:14-7:1; 1 Cor. 7:12-16)
- ▶ It is vitally important for our children to be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Eph. 6:1-4)
- ▶ Too many children are not grounded in the scriptures - and are more familiar with the “worlds” language than God’s word (Eph 5:4-7; 1 Pet 4:11)



# How Are We Going To **Grow**?

## HEARTS PURIFIED BY THE WORD



- ▶ By collectively retaining our distinction from the world and those in error (2 Cor. 6:14-7:1; 1 Pet 2:4-12)
- ▶ By speaking as the oracles of God, i.e., preaching and teaching the word (2 Pet. 4:11; 2 Tim. 4:1-4)
- ▶ By believing, teaching and practicing only those things authorized by God's word (Col. 3:17; 2 Tim. 1:13)



# How Are We Going To **Grow**?

- ▶ By having deep abiding respect & zeal for His house - the church!
- ▶ By truly focusing on & prioritizing spiritual things!
- ▶ By maintaining our holy distinction from the world and false religions!


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# How Are We Going To **Grow**?

## Ephesians 4:15–16 (NKJV)

<sup>15</sup> but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—



<sup>16</sup> from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.







# How Are We Going To **Grow**?

## **Charts by Don McClain**

Preached January 3, 2021 AM

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## 2 Timothy 4:1–5 (NKJV)

<sup>1</sup> I charge *you* therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: <sup>2</sup> Preach the word! Be ready in season *and* out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. <sup>3</sup> For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, *because* they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; <sup>4</sup> and they will turn *their* ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. <sup>5</sup> But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.



