

WHY IS THE *HOUSE OF GOD* FORSAKEN?

Nehemiah 13

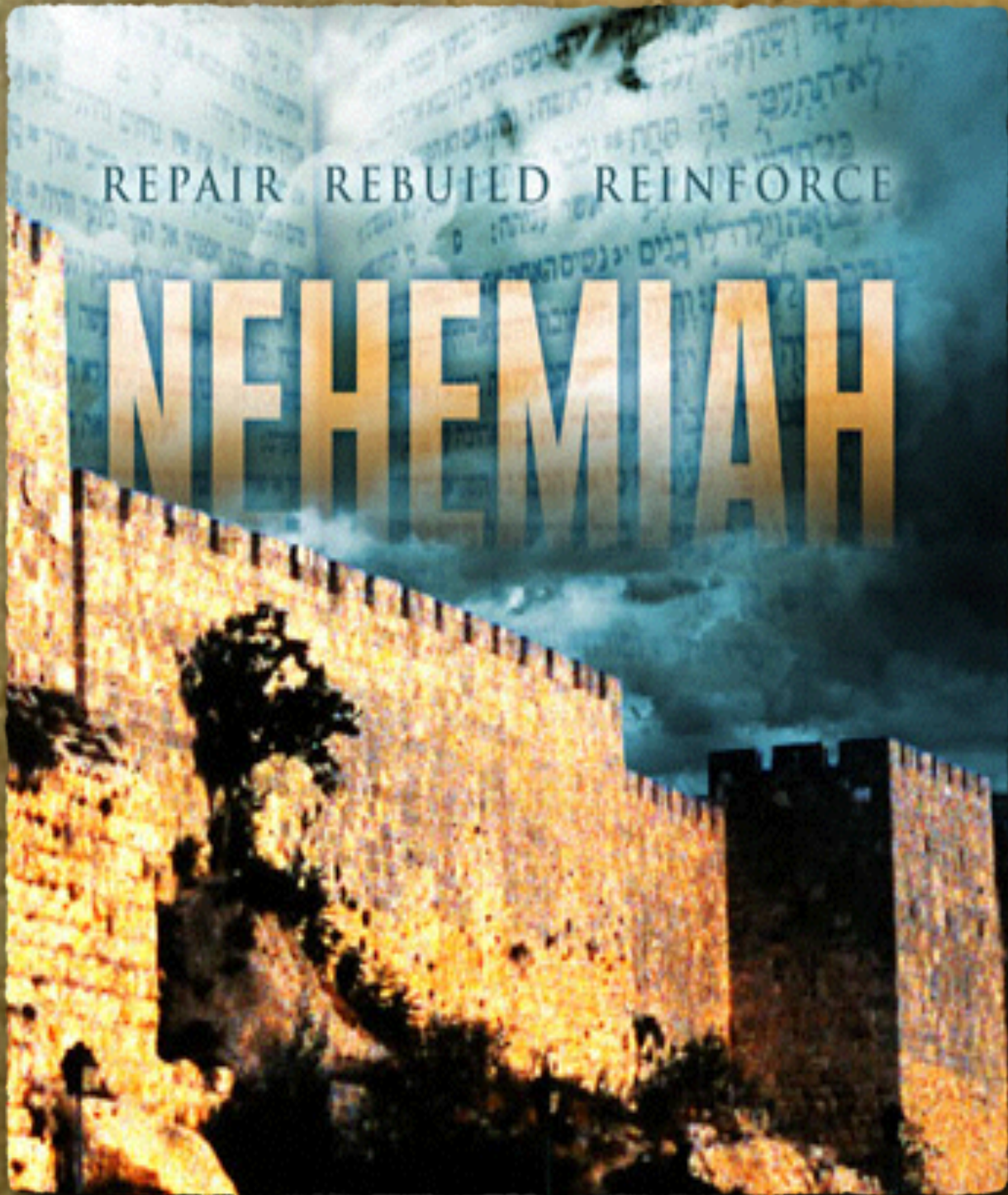
Nehemiah 13:11 (NKJV)

¹¹ 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 IS THE **HOUSE OF GOD** FORSAKEN?”

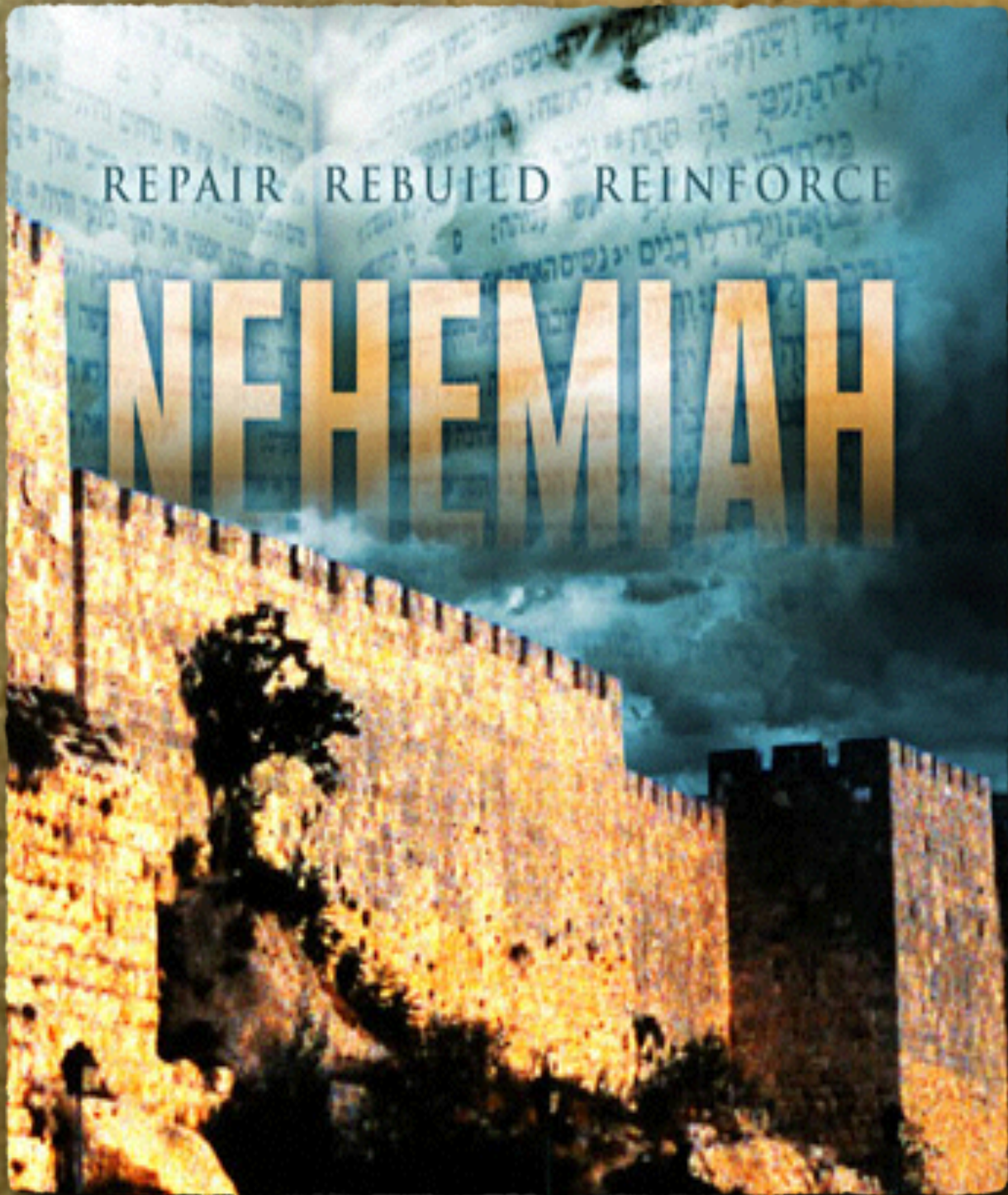
INTRODUCTION



- ◆ 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.

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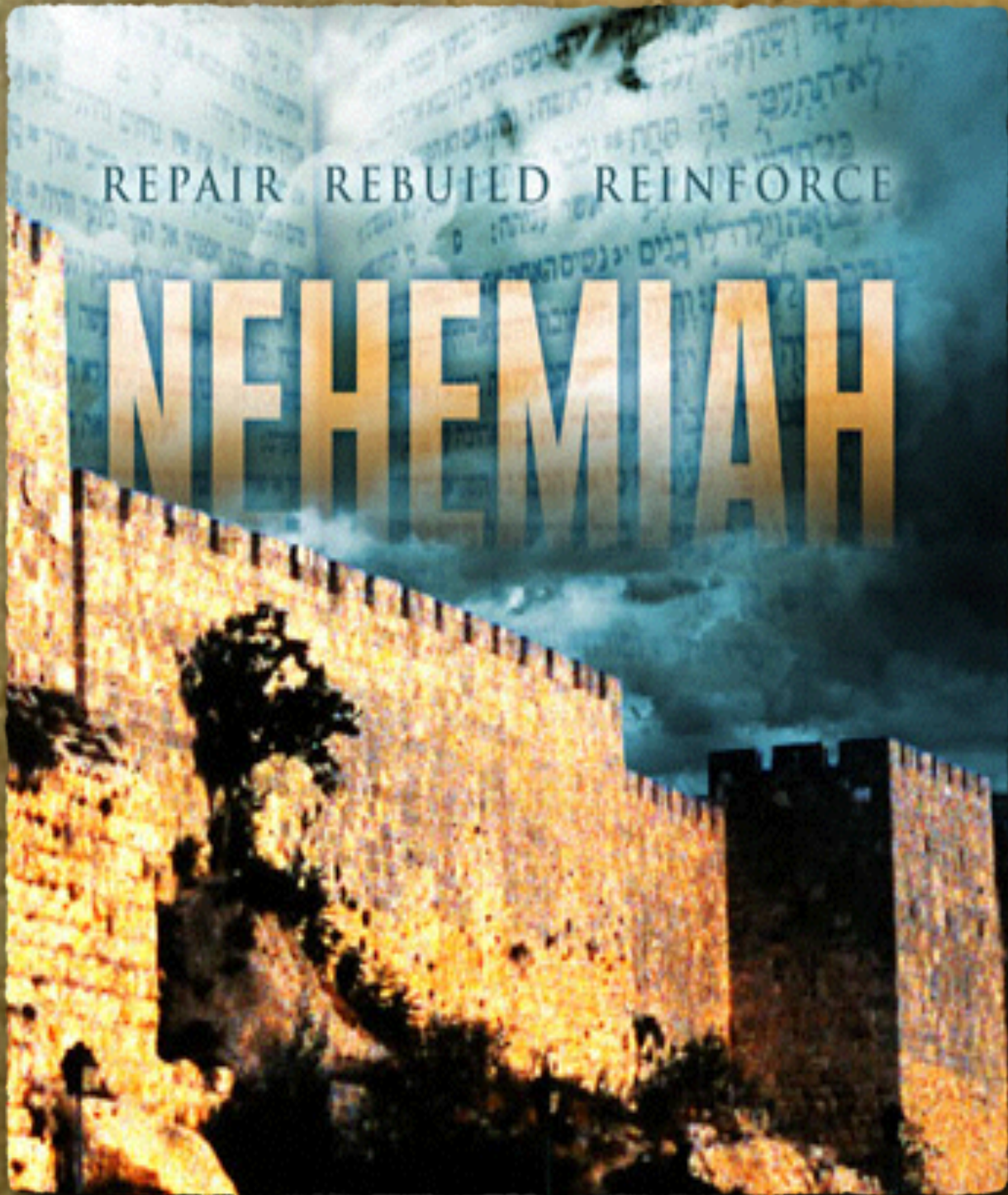
INTRODUCTION



- ◆ In Neh 13:4ff, Nehemiah returns to Jerusalem, but what he found was disturbing (13:7ff).
- ◆ The house of God was in disarray and the Levites had not been given their rightful portions.

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INTRODUCTION



- ◆ 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).

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NEHEMIAH 13:11
(NKJV)

" 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.



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INTRODUCTION



- ◆ From time to time, over the years, the Lord's house has been forsaken.
- ◆ The question put forth by Nehemiah is one which needs to be asked today: “Why is the house of God forsaken?”

“WHY IS THE HOUSE OF GOD FORSAKEN?”

Disrespect For God's House

Residency given to the enemy - 13:4

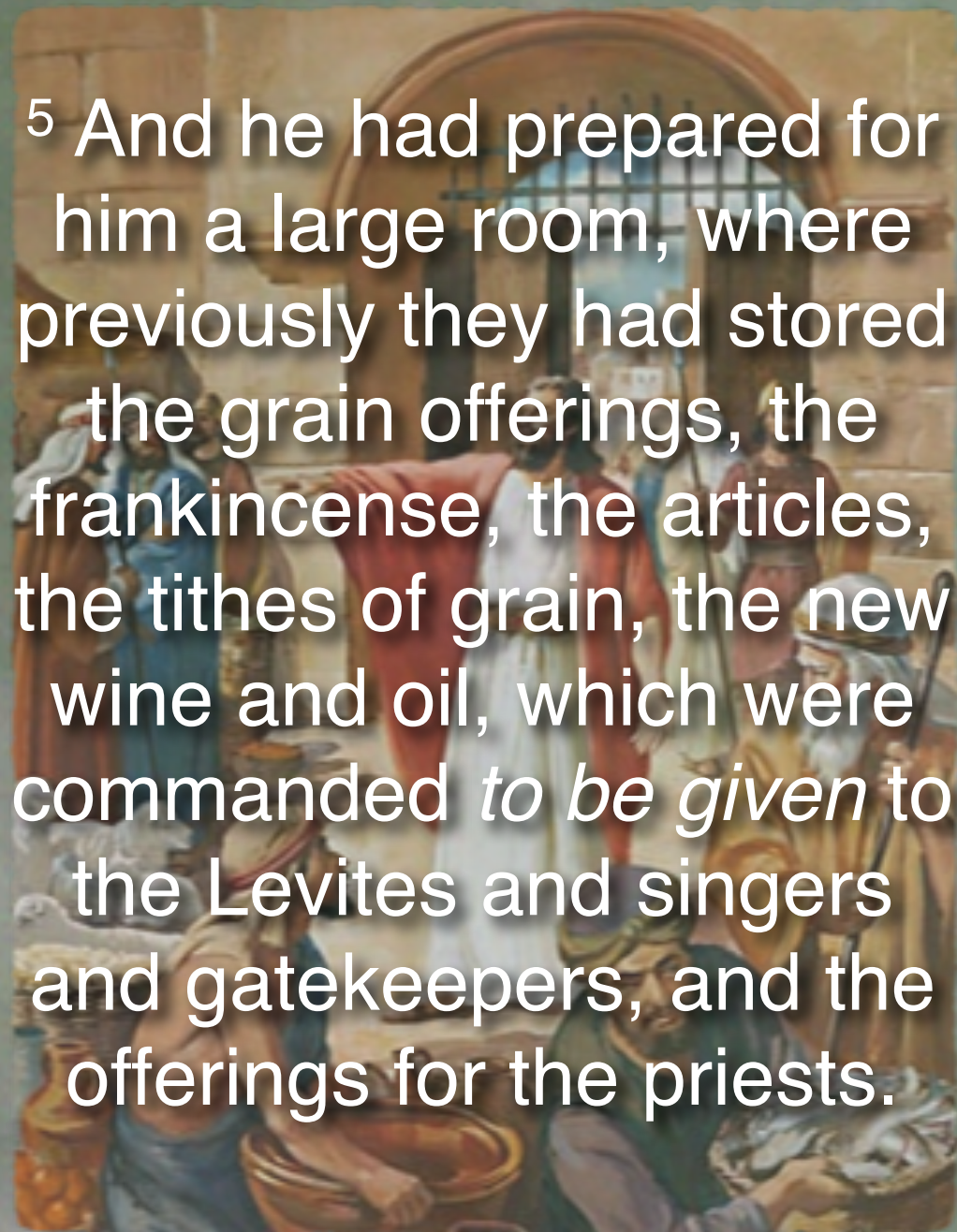


⁴ Now before this, Eliashib the priest, having authority over the storerooms of the house of our God, was allied with Tobiah.

- ◆ 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)

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Disrespect For God's House



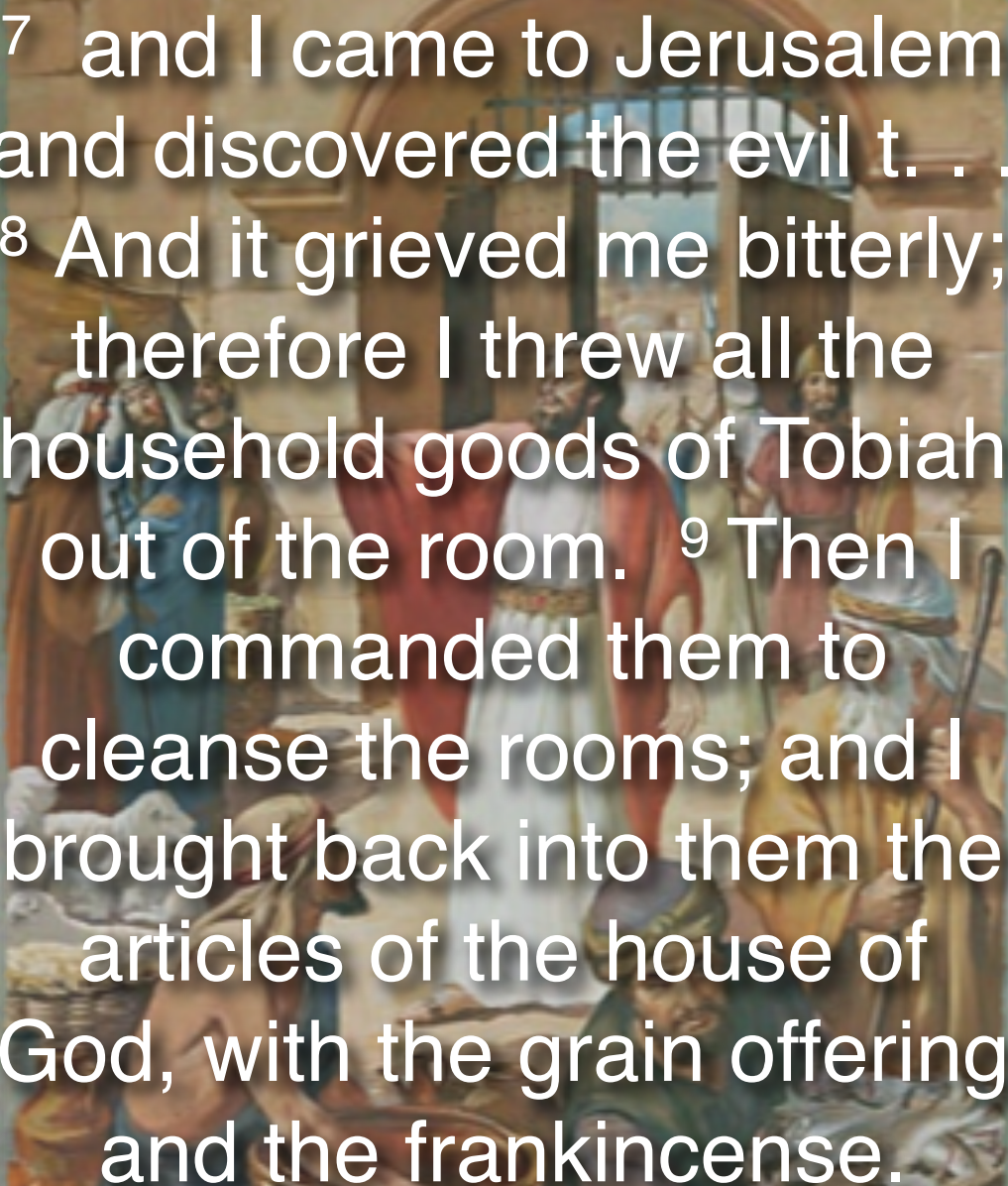
⁵ And he had prepared for him a large room, where previously they had stored the grain offerings, the frankincense, the articles, the tithes of grain, the new wine and oil, which were commanded *to be given* to the Levites and singers and gatekeepers, and the offerings for the priests.

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)

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⁷ and I came to Jerusalem and discovered the evil t. . .
⁸ And it grieved me bitterly; therefore I threw all the household goods of Tobiah out of the room. ⁹ Then I commanded them to cleanse the rooms; and I brought back into them the articles of the house of God, with the grain offering and the frankincense.

The temple needed to be
“cleansed” - 13:6-9

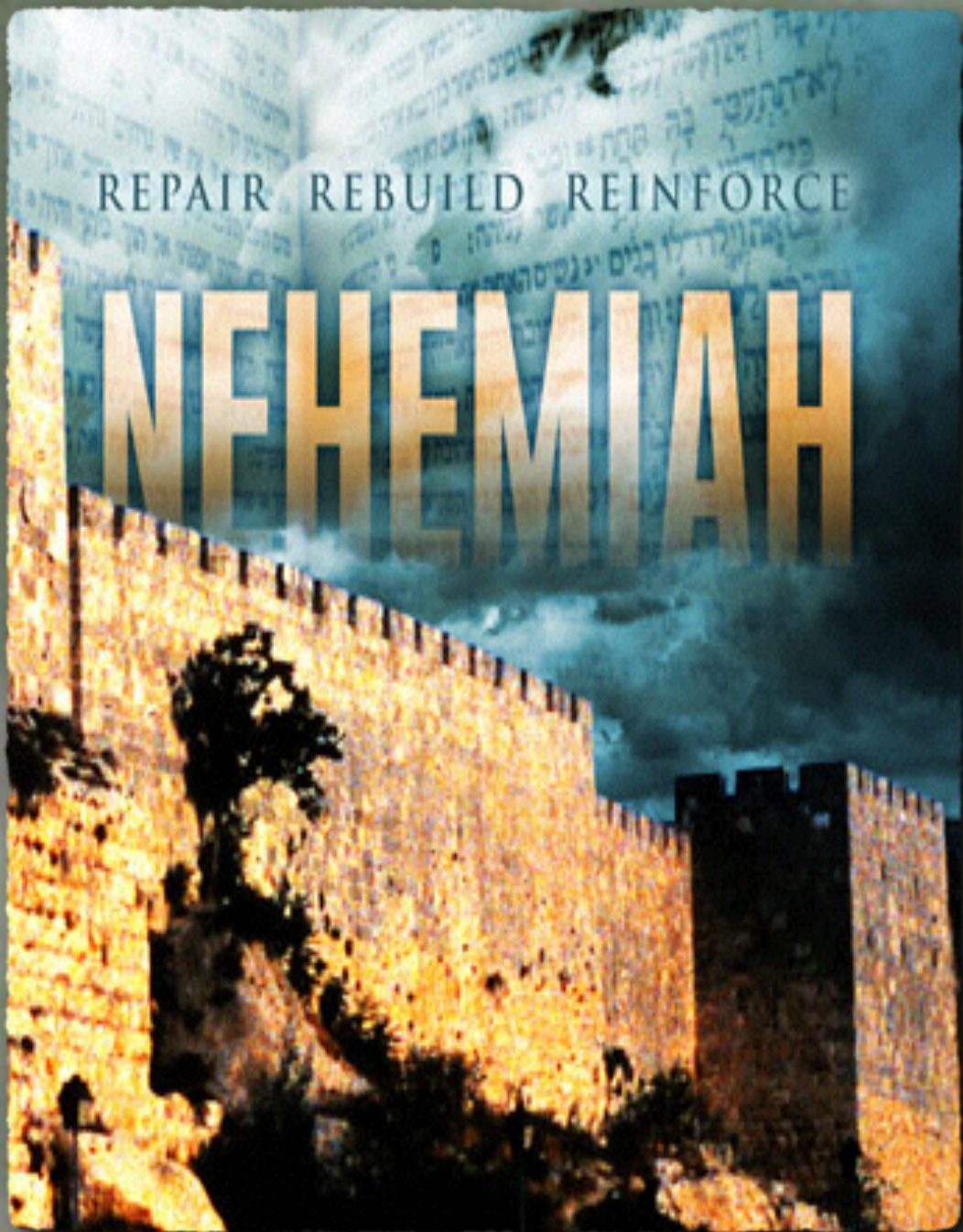
- ◆ Required proper attitude – (7,8; Ezr. 9:3, 4; 10:1; Ps. 69:9; 119:139)
- ◆ Required ALL things “common” cast out – (vs. 8; 2 Ch. 29:5, 15–19; Mar. 11:15–17; Jno. 2:13–17; 1 Cor 5; 11:21,22,34; Lev 10:1–4).
- ◆ Required the temple articles and offerings that belonged there be restored. (9; 10:37; 12:47)

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Areas of Needed Application Today

- ◆ 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)



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Disrespect For God's House

No wonder
It's Running
Hot

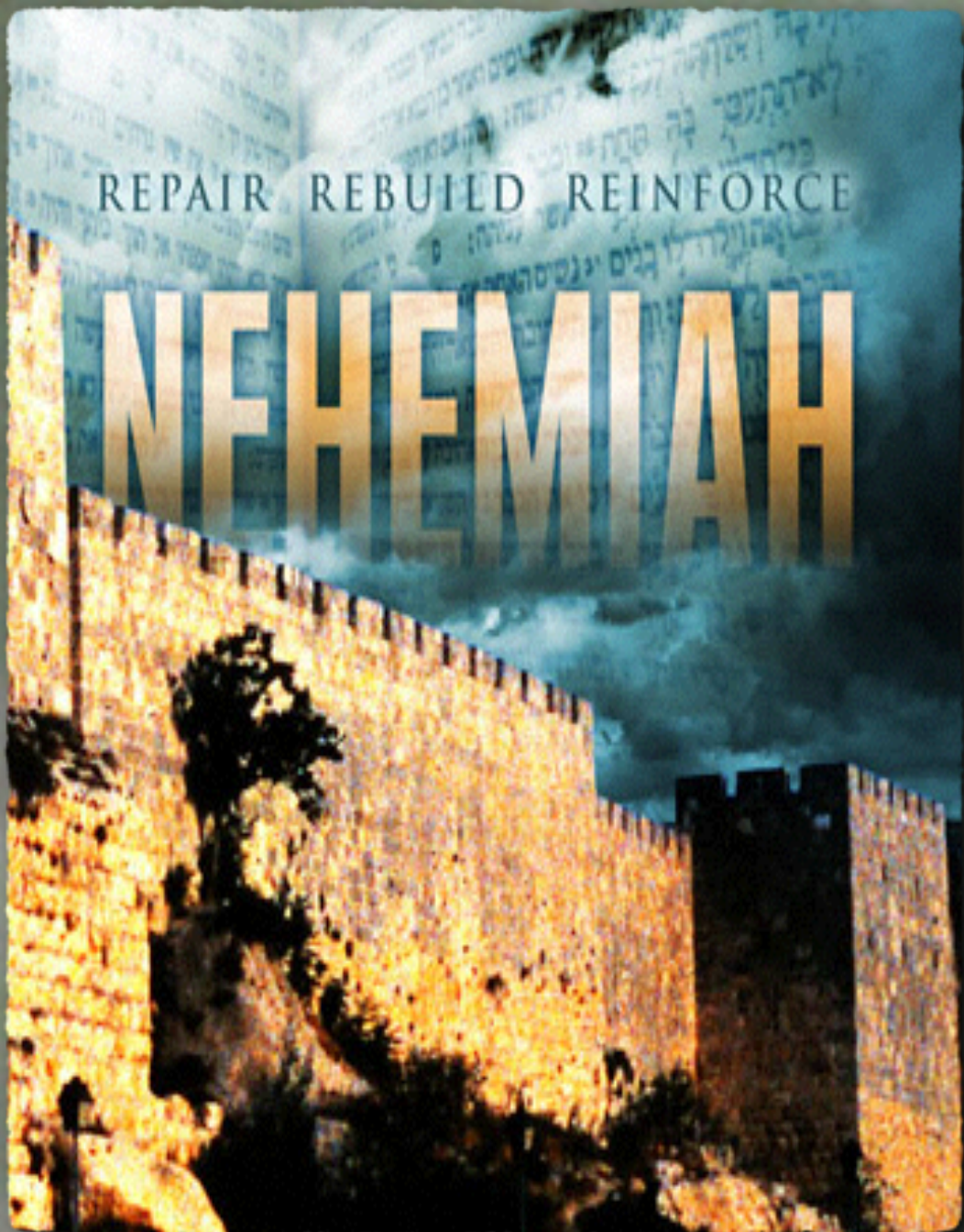


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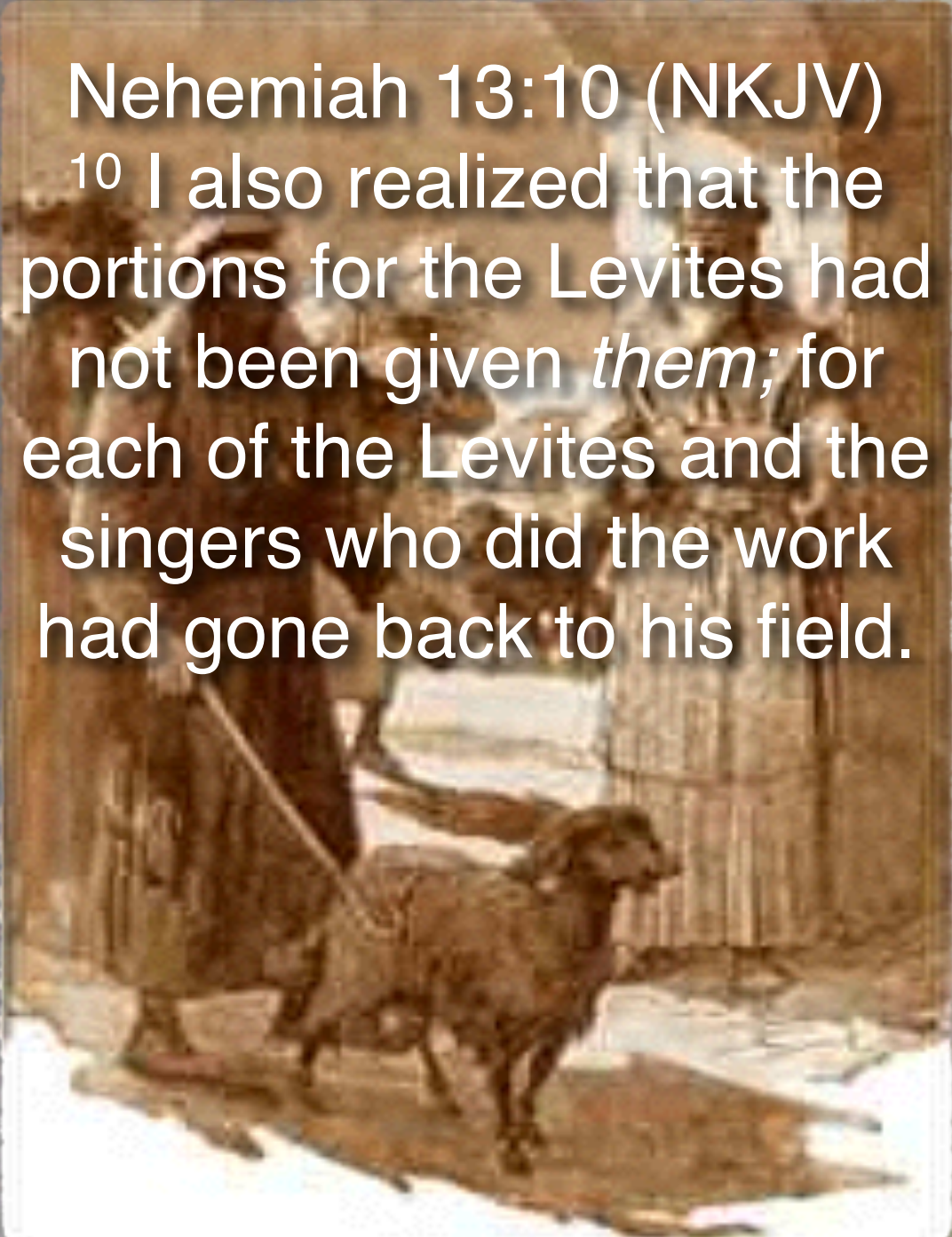
Areas of Needed Application Today

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



“WHY IS THE **HOUSE OF GOD** FORSAKEN?”

Materialistic Priorities



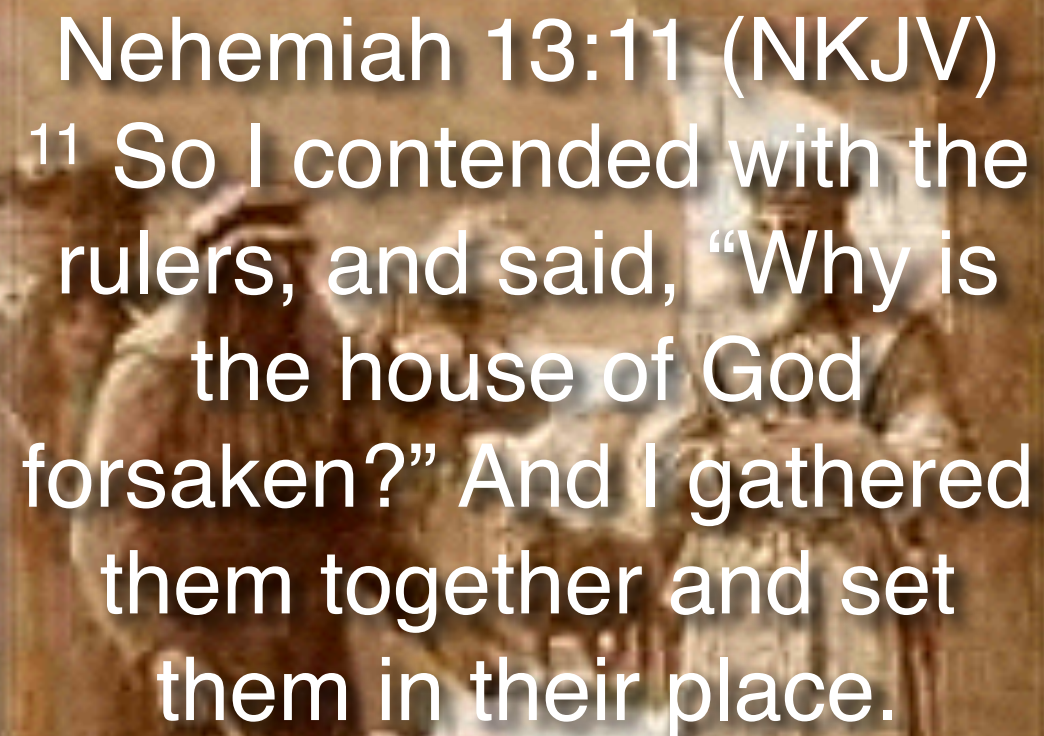
Nehemiah 13:10 (NKJV)
¹⁰ I also realized that the portions for the Levites had not been given *them*; for each of the Levites and the singers who did the work had gone back to his field.

Neglect 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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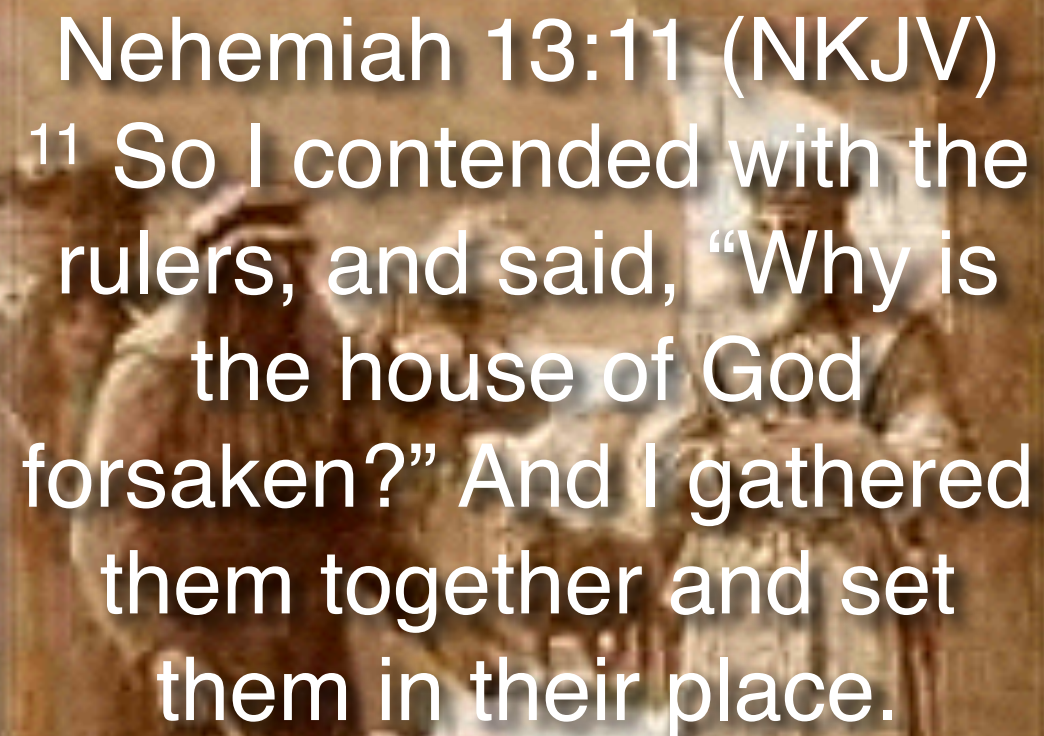
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Neglect support for those serving - **13:10-14**

- ◆ 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)

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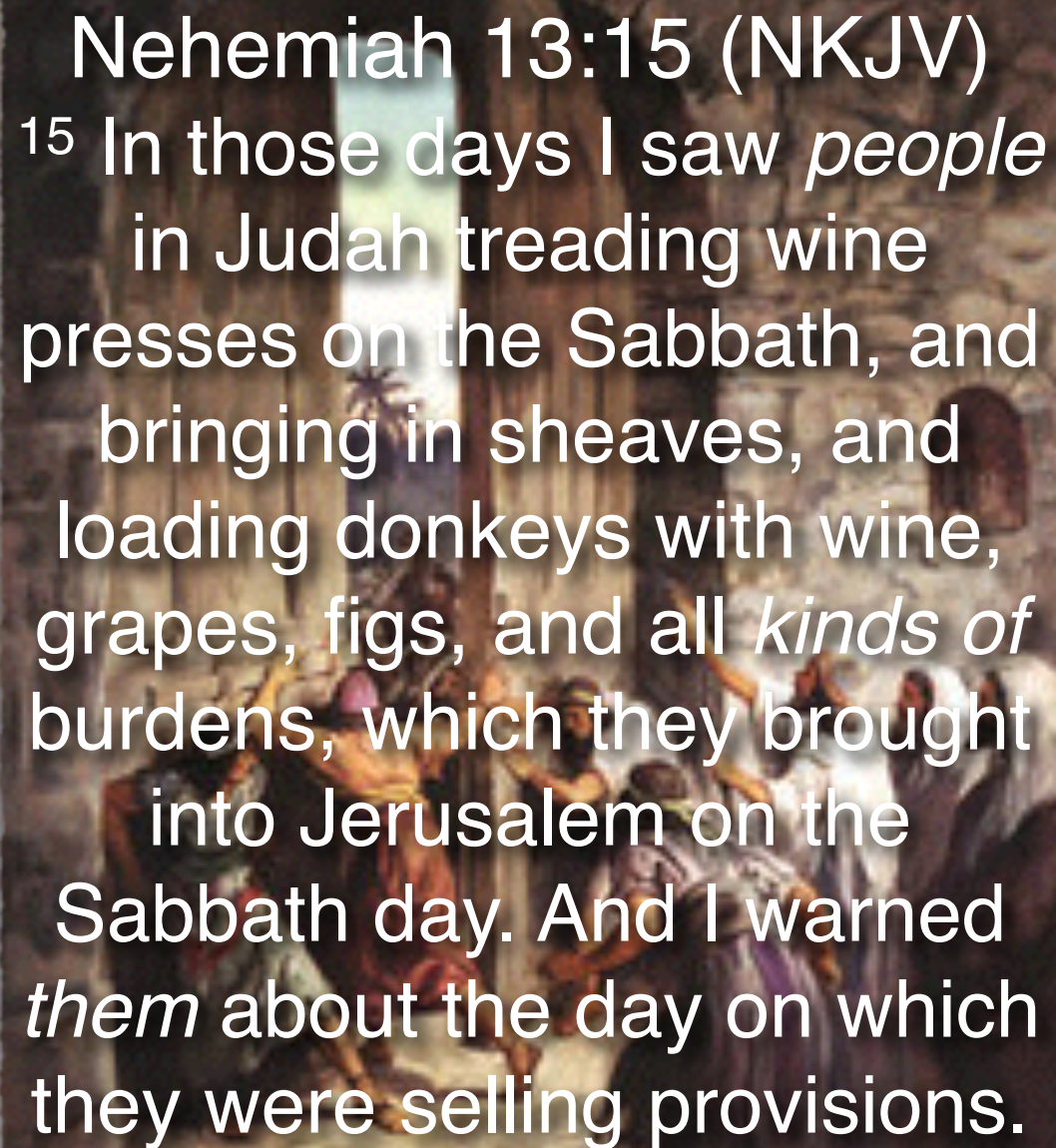
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Neglect support for those serving - **13:10-14**

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

“WHY IS THE **HOUSE OF GOD** FORSAKEN?”

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Nehemiah 13:15 (NKJV)
¹⁵ In those days I saw *people* in Judah treading wine presses on the Sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and loading donkeys with wine, grapes, figs, and all *kinds of* burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the Sabbath day. And I warned *them* about the day on which they were selling provisions.

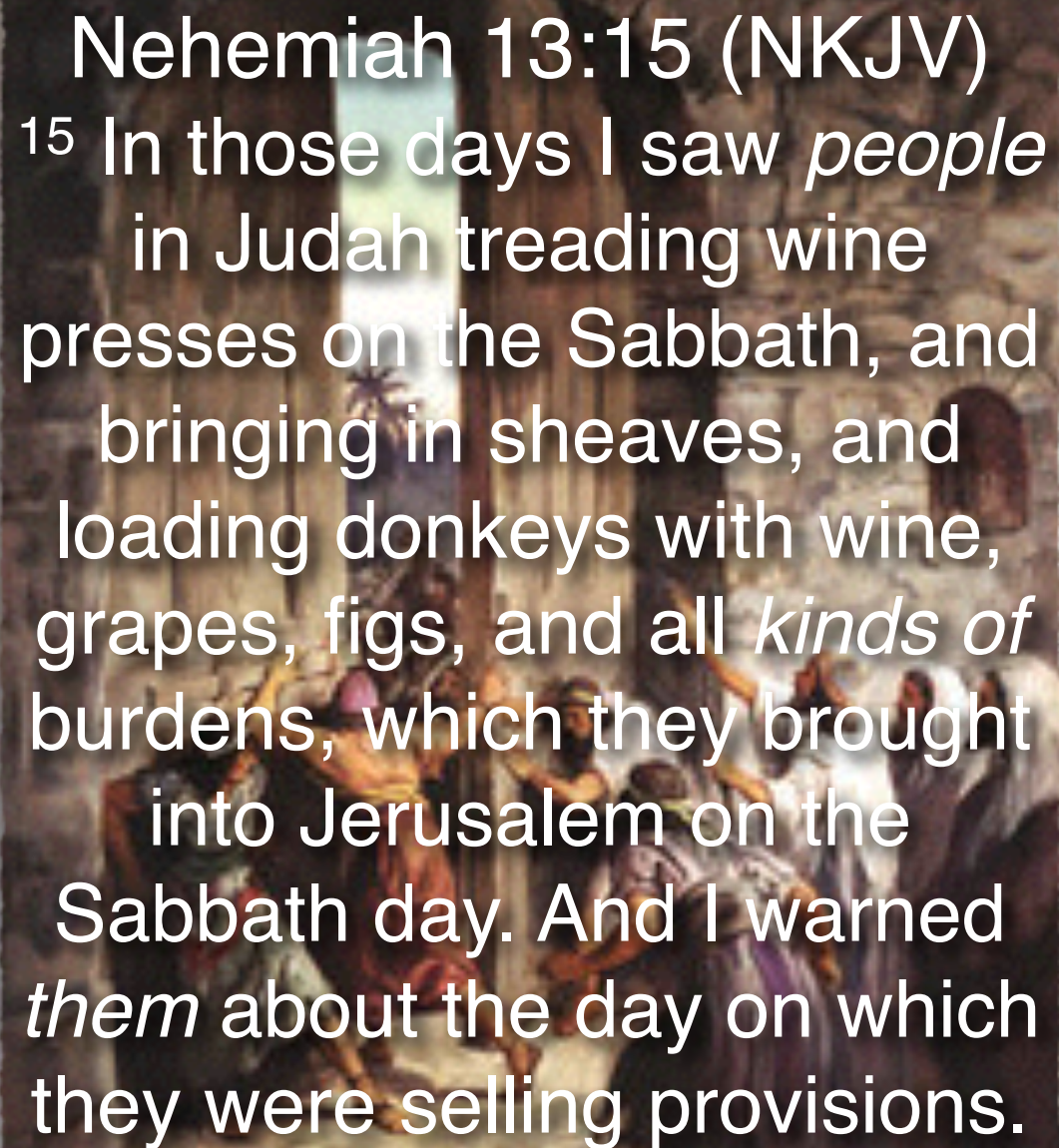
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Neglect of Worship - 13:15-22

- ◆ 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).

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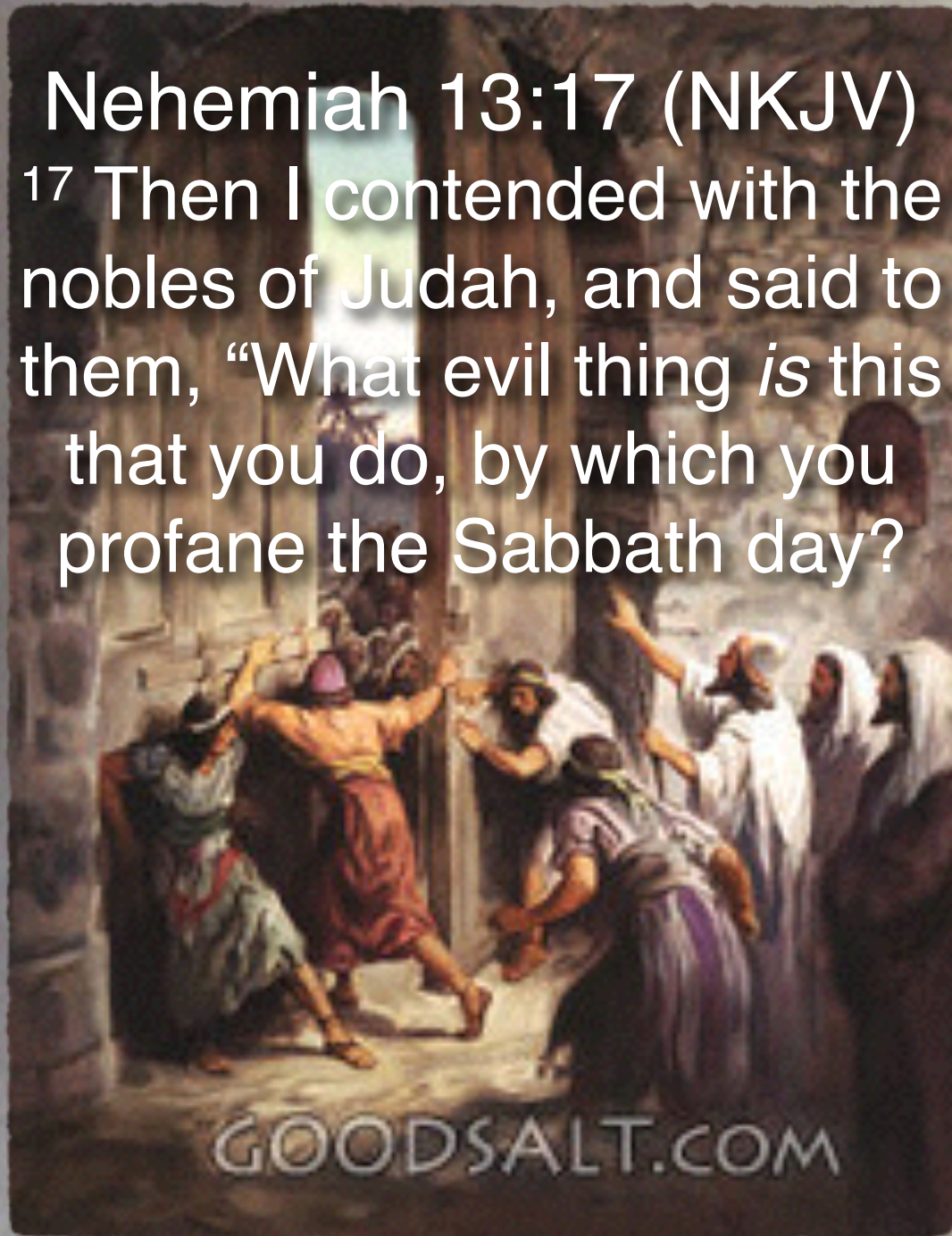
Neglect of Worship - 13:15-22

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

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Nehemiah 13:17 (NKJV)
17 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?”



Neglect of Worship - 13:15-22

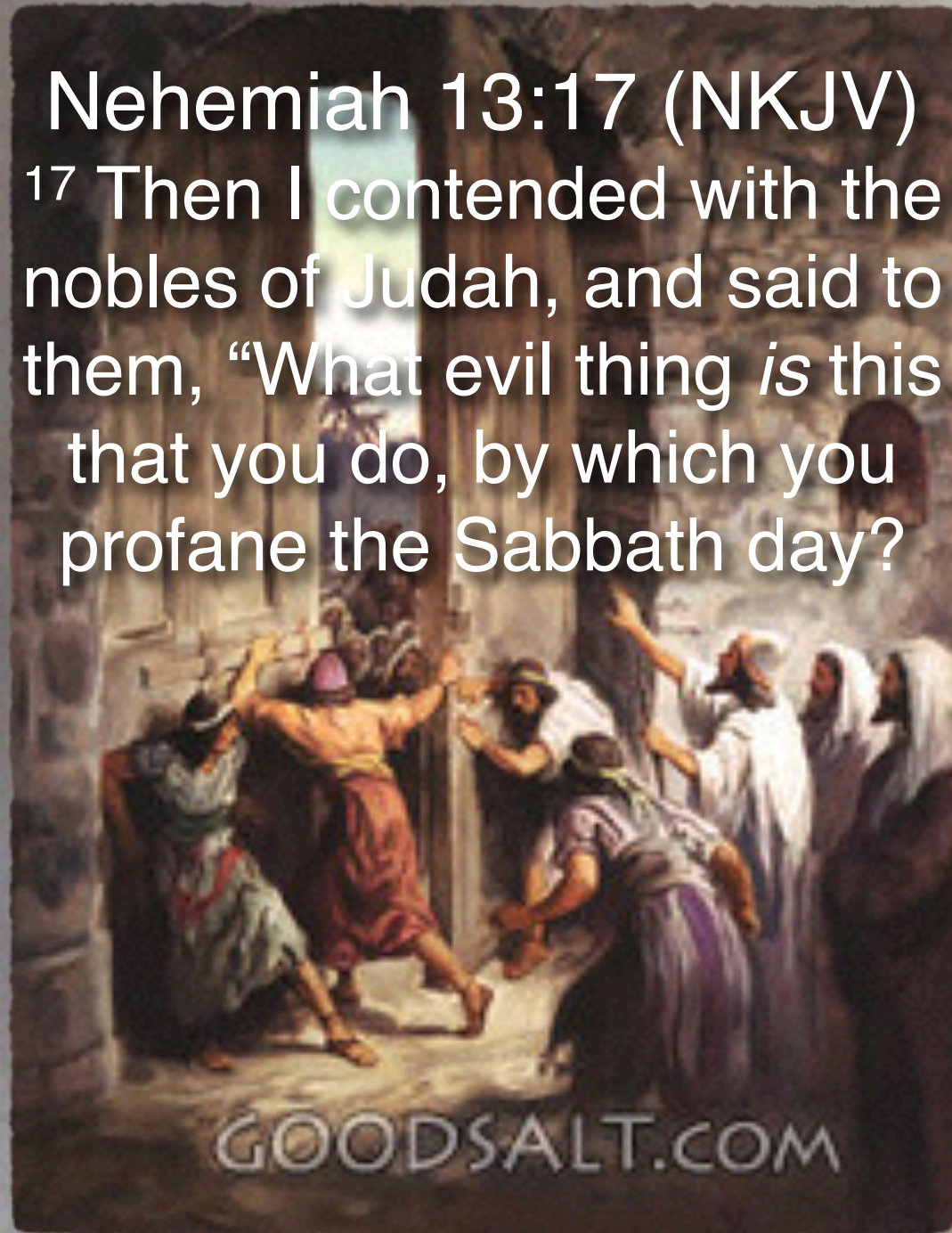
- ◆ Nehemiah met the problem with both rebuke & action (17-22; cf. vv. 11–13).
- ◆ Called it what it was - EVIL - one of the sins for which they were exiled - (17,18; cf. Jer. 17:19–27)
- ◆ Nehemiah had the city doors shut on the Sabbath - (19)

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Neglect of Worship - 13:15-22

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- ◆ Guards were posted to see no merchandise was brought in. (19)
- ◆ Some merchants stayed all night outside the walls. Nehemiah threatened to use force. (20,21)
- ◆ He had the Levites to help guard the gates (30; cf. 7:1; 11:19).
- ◆ Again he asked **God** to help - (22)

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Materialistic Priorities

Areas of Needed Application Today



- ◆ God's house, God's work should be more valuable & important 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)

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Areas of Needed Application Today



- ◆ 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? Do we use work as an excuse? Do we feel the need to work in order to provide necessities or . . . ?

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Areas of Needed Application Today

- ◆ Many today would prefer to do other activities on Sundays - (*golf, fishing, shopping, family outings, yard work, TV, etc.*)
- ◆ A priority problem; a heart problem! (Mark 12:29-31; Heb 10:24,25; Mat 6:19-24; 1 Jn 2:15-17)



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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)



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Married To The Enemy - (13:23-29)



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

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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)



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Areas of Needed Application Today

- ◆ Beware of compromising companionships (Prov. 1:8ff; 4:14; Psa. 1:1; 1 Cor. 15:33)
- ◆ Note – it is NOT a sin, in and of itself, to be married to an unbeliever - (2 Cor 6:14-7:1; 1 Cor. 7:12-16) - But - How can a Christian rationally justify marrying someone who is not?




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Areas of Needed Application Today

- ◆ Children are not as grounded in the scriptures as they need to be - thus many of them are much more familiar with the “worlds” language than God’s word. - (Eph 5:4-7; 6:1-4; 1 Pet 4:11)



A church building with a steeple is silhouetted against a dramatic sky at sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a bright glow and long shadows. The clouds are dark and textured, with some light breaking through near the horizon. The church has a dark roof and several windows are visible.

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Disrespect For God's House

Materialistic Priorities

Hearts Corrupted By The World

THE *HOUSE OF GOD* WILL **NOT** BE FORSAKEN?



- ◆ When God's people have a Deep & Abiding respect & zeal for His house – the church!
- ◆ When God's people truly focus upon & prioritize spiritual things!
- ◆ When God's people maintain their holy distinction from the world and false religions!

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Nehemiah 13

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Prepared June 26-28, 2014 – Preached June 29, 2014

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Haggai 1:2-9 (NKJV)

² “Thus speaks the Lord of hosts, saying: ‘This people says, ‘The time has not come, the time that the Lord’s house should be built.’” ³ Then the word of the Lord came by Haggai the prophet, saying,



Haggai 1:2-9 (NKJV)


4 “Is it time for you
yourselves to dwell in your
paneled houses, and this
temple to lie in ruins?” 5

Now therefore, thus says
the Lord of hosts: “Consider
your ways!



Haggai 1:2-9 (NKJV)

⁶ “You have sown much, and bring in little; You eat, but do not have enough; You drink, but you are not filled with drink; You clothe yourselves, but no one is warm; And he who earns wages, Earns wages to put into a bag with holes.” ⁷ Thus says the Lord of hosts: “Consider your ways!



Haggai 1:2-9 (NKJV)

⁸ Go up to the mountains and bring wood and build the temple, that I may take pleasure in it and be glorified," says the Lord. ⁹ "You looked for much, but indeed it came to little; and when you brought it home, I blew it away. Why?" says the Lord of hosts. "Because of My house that is in ruins, while every one of you runs to his own house.