

# STRENGTHENED

O GOD, STRENGTHEN MY HANDS

NEHEMIAH 6:9

Sunday Morning, June 15, 2025 » Pastor Josiah Kagin

**Message Title: Retaking the Lead**

**Message Text: Nehemiah 13**

## Introduction:

Nehemiah's term as governor in Jerusalem concluded at the end of chapter 12. He returned to Persia and continued to serve King Artaxerxes as a cupbearer. No doubt this was a difficult transition for him. However, when he journeyed East from Jerusalem, he left having been prospered by God to see the walls of Jerusalem restored and the people revived. For nearly a months time, the people had gathered to read the Word of God. They had even publicly covenanted that they would obey it. While we are not certain how long Nehemiah was in Persia, we do know that some serious compromises were made among the people of God in at least three main areas. As Nehemiah returns to Jerusalem and sees the condition of the people, he boldly and even aggressively retakes the lead and calls the people back to God.

## 1. To Recommit to \_\_\_\_\_ (1-14)

*Nehemiah 13:1-14 On that day they read in the book of Moses in the audience of the people; and therein was found written, that the Ammonite and the Moabite should not come into the congregation of God for ever; 2 Because they met not the children of Israel with bread and with water; but hired Balaam against them, that he should curse them: howbeit our God turned the curse into a blessing 3 Now it came to pass, when they had heard the law, that they separated from Israel all the mixed multitude.*

*4 And before this, Eliashib the priest, having the oversight of the chamber of the house of our God, was allied unto Tobiah: 5 And he had prepared for him a great chamber, where aforetime they laid the meat offerings, the frankincense, and the vessels, and the tithes of the corn, the new wine, and the oil, which was commanded to be given to the Levites, and the singers, and the porters; and the offerings of the priests. 6 But in all this time was not I at Jerusalem: for in the two and thirtieth year of Artaxerxes king of Babylon came I unto the king, and after certain days obtained I leave of the king: 7 And I came to Jerusalem, and understood of the evil that Eliashib did for Tobiah, in preparing him a chamber in the courts of the house of God. 8 And it grieved me sore: therefore I cast forth all the household stuff of Tobiah out of the chamber. 9 Then I commanded, and they cleansed the chambers: and thither brought I again the vessels of the house of God, with the meat offering and the frankincense.*

*10 And I perceived that the portions of the Levites had not been given them: for the Levites and the singers, that did the*

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*work, were fled every one to his field. 11 Then contended I with the rulers, and said, Why is the house of God forsaken? And I gathered them together, and set them in their place. 12 Then brought all Judah the tithe of the corn and the new wine and the oil unto the treasures. 13 And I made treasurers over the treasures, Shelemiah the priest, and Zadok the scribe, and of the Levites, Pedaiah: and next to them was Hanan the son of Zaccur, the son of Mattaniah: for they were counted faithful, and their office was to distribute unto their brethren. 14 Remember me, O my God, concerning this, and wipe not out my good deeds that I have done for the house of my God, and for the offices thereof.*

**A GATHERING TO HEAR GOD’S WORD (1-3)** — They heard the Word and obeyed by separating from those from Ammon and Moab.

*2 Corinthians 6:17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,*

**AN UNFAITHFUL SPIRITUAL LEADER (4-9)** — The High Priest, Eliashib, maintained a good relationship with Tobiah the Ammonite who had been an enemy of God’s people. He gave Tobiah living space in the Temple chambers.

**TIME FRAME:** Nehemiah’s term in Jerusalem was nearly twelve years from 444BC - 433BC. (*Nehemiah 13:6-7*)

**QUOTE:** Tobiah never lacked audacity. Where even a toe-hold in the temple would have been a conquest, he obtains a room the size of a small warehouse, and has it cleared for him by the religious authorities themselves. —Kidner

**THE MINISTRY OF GOD’S HOUSE DIMINISHED (10-13)** — Eliashib’s decision caused the Levites to have to leave the work of God to focus on supporting themselves and directly hindered the continuation of the ministry.

**THE RESTORATION OF MINISTRIES (11-13)**

**A PRAYER FOR GOD TO TAKE ACCOUNT (14)** — Nehemiah prayed that God would always remember his actions.

## **2. To Remember the \_\_\_\_\_ (15-22)**

*Nehemiah 13:15–22 In those days saw I in Judah some treading wine presses on the sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and lading asses; as also wine, grapes, and figs, and all manner of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the sabbath day: and I testified against them in the day wherein they sold victuals. 16 There dwelt men of Tyre also therein, which brought fish, and all manner of ware, and sold on the sabbath unto the children of Judah, and in Jerusalem. 17 Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said unto them, What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the sabbath day? 18 Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city? yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the sabbath. 19 And it came to pass, that when the gates of Jerusalem began to be dark before the sabbath, I commanded that the gates should be shut, and charged that they should not be opened till after the sabbath: and some of my servants set I at the gates, that there should no burden be brought in on the sabbath day. 20 So the merchants and sellers of all kind of ware lodged without Jerusalem once or twice. 21 Then I testified against them, and*

*said unto them, Why lodge ye about the wall? if ye do so again, I will lay hands on you. From that time forth came they no more on the sabbath. 22 And I commanded the Levites that they should cleanse themselves, and that they should come and keep the gates, to sanctify the sabbath day. Remember me, O my God, concerning this also, and spare me according to the greatness of thy mercy.*

**THE PRIORITY OF BUSINESS (15-22)** — The Jewish people forsook the Sabbath day in order to do their regular business.

**THE RESTORATION OF THE SABBATH (17-22)** — Nehemiah led the people to remember the Sabbath day and to keep it holy.

**DEFINITION—SABBATH:** to cease, rest, complete rest, desist

**NOTE** — Jerusalem had been destroyed because they disregarded the Sabbath. (*Jeremiah 17:27*)

**A PRAYER FOR PROTECTION (17-22)** — Nehemiah sought God's protection and mercy.

*Acts 20:7 And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.*

*Revelation 1:10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet,*

### 3. To Renew their \_\_\_\_\_ (23-31)

*Nehemiah 13:23–31 In those days also saw I Jews that had married wives of Ashdod, of Ammon, and of Moab: 24 And their children spake half in the speech of Ashdod, and could not speak in the Jews' language, but according to the language of each people. 25 And I contended with them, and cursed them, and smote certain of them, and plucked off their hair, and made them swear by God, saying, Ye shall not give your daughters unto their sons, nor take their daughters unto your sons, or for yourselves. 26 Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things? yet among many nations was there no king like him, who was beloved of his God, and God made him king over all Israel: nevertheless even him did outlandish women cause to sin. 27 Shall we then hearken unto you to do all this great evil, to transgress against our God in marrying strange wives? 28 And one of the sons of Joiada, the son of Eliashib the high priest, was son in law to Sanballat the Horonite: therefore I chased him from me. 29 Remember them, O my God, because they have defiled the priesthood, and the covenant of the priesthood, and of the Levites. 30 Thus cleansed I them from all strangers, and appointed the wards of the priests and the Levites, every one in his business; 31 And for the wood offering, at times appointed, and for the firstfruits. Remember me, O my God, for good.*

**AN ISSUE OF INTERMARRIAGE WITH THE HEATHEN (23-25)** — God's people began to marry the women of Ashdod, Ammon and Moab.

*Deuteronomy 7:3–4 Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. 4 For they will*

*turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the Lord be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly.*

*Amos 3:3 Can two walk together, except they be agreed?*

#### AN ILLUSTRATION FROM HISTORY (26-27)

*Nehemiah 13:26-27 Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things? yet among many nations was there no king like him, who was beloved of his God, and God made him king over all Israel: nevertheless even him did outlandish women cause to sin. 27 Shall we then hearken unto you to do all this great evil, to transgress against our God in marrying strange wives?*

A DEFILED PRIEST (28-29) — Eliashib's son, Joiada, married Sanballat the Horonite's daughter.

A DEVOTION TO PURITY (30-31) — Nehemiah removed all the foreigners, reappointed managers over the wards of the priests, the Levites and the resources so that every job was assigned.

DEFINITION—CLEANSED: to purge; to remove something offensive or undesirable; often through destruction.

A PRAYER FOR BLESSING (31) — Nehemiah requested that the Lord would remember him and reward him accordingly.

*Psalms 24:3-5 Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who shall stand in his holy place? 4 He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; Who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, Nor sworn deceitfully. 5 He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, And righteousness from the God of his salvation.*

*1 Peter 2:9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:*

*2 Corinthians 6:14 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?*

## Conclusion

*Joshua 24:15 And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.*

