



Rice Memorial MBC

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## **Sanctifying the Lord's Day**

Definitions in **bold** letters are from **Strong's** Exhaustive Concordance  
Other definitions are from **Webster's** Dictionary, 1828 Edition  
or Roget's Thesaurus – **August 25, 2013**

**Worship with us** at **3201 Mary St** until we rebuild our sanctuary at 802 W. 15<sup>th</sup>,  
... We're just behind Kaufman's Lumber Company in Little Rock Arkansas

### **Nehemiah 13:15-22**

**Introduction:** Nehemiah, having finished what he undertook for the fencing and filling of the holy city, returned to the king his master, who was not willing to be long without him, as appears (Nehemiah 13:6). But, after some time, he obtained leave to come back again to Jerusalem, to redress grievances, and **purge out** some **corruptions** which had crept in his absence; and very active he was in reforming several abuses, which here we have an account of. (Source: *The Matthew Henry Commentary on the whole Bible classic.studylight.org/com/mhc*)

**Intro cont.** The law is read, which commands that the Ammonite and Moabite should be separated from the congregation, on which they separate all the mixed multitude, 1-3. Eliashib the high priest having not only joined opinion with Sanballat, but being also allied to Tobiah the Ammonite, and having given him some of the chambers in the court of the house of God, 4,5; Nehemiah casts out the goods of Tobiah, and **purifies** the chambers, 6-9. He rectifies several evils; and the people bring the tithes of all things to the treasuries, 10-12. He appoints treasurers, 13,14; finds that the Sabbaths had been greatly profaned by buying and selling, and rectifies this abuse, 15-22; finds Jews that had married **strange wives**; against whom he testifies, and expels one of the priests who had married the daughter of Sanballat the Horonite, 23-29. He cleanses them from all strangers, makes a final regulation, and **prays** for God's mercy to himself, 30,31.

(Source: *The Adam Clarke Commentary classic.studylight.org/com/acc/*)

**Intro cont.** After Nehemiah, there would be no more prophets until **John the Immerser**; their king had been taken away from them by the Lord; and they would never have another; the whole racial nation, with the exception of a tiny **"righteous remnant"** sank rapidly and irrevocably into that state of 'judicial **hardening**' foretold by Isaiah. Israel had stopped their ears, closed their eyes, and hardened their hearts; and, from that state of spiritual oblivion, there could be no recovery until **the Christ** should come; and the vast majority of them failed to seize even that opportunity.

(Source: *Coffman Commentaries on the Old & New Testament classic.studylight.org/com/bcc/*)

**Nehemiah 13:15-16**, 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 (bear witness)** against them in the day wherein they **sold victuals**.

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.

**NOTE:** Here is another instance of that blessed **reformation** in which **Nehemiah** was so active. He revived **sabbath-sanctification**, and maintained the authority of the fourth commandment; and a very good deed this was for the house of God and the offices thereof, for, where holy time is over-looked and made nothing of, it is not strange if all **holy duties** be neglected. Here is,

I. A remonstrance of the abuse. The law of the sabbath was very strict and much insisted one, and with good reason, for religion is never in the throne while **sabbaths** are trodden under foot. But Nehemiah discovered even in Judah, among those to whom sabbaths were given for **a sign**, this law wretchedly violated. His OWN eyes were his informers. Magistrates who are in care to discharge their duty aright will as much as may be *see with their own eyes*, and *accomplish a diligent search* to find out that which is evil. To his great **grief** it appeared that there was a general profanation of the sabbath, that holy day, even in Jerusalem, that holy city, which was so lately **dedicated to God**. 1. The husbandmen trod their wine-presses and brought home their corn on that day (Nehemiah 13:15), through there was an express command that *in earing-time, and in harvest-time, they should rest* on the sabbaths (Exodus 34:21), because then they might be tempted to take a greater liberty, and to fancy that God would indulge them in it. 2. The carriers *loaded their asses with all manner of burdens*, and made no scruple of it, though there was a particular proviso in the law for the **cattle resting** (Deuteronomy 5:14)

**Deuteronomy 5:14**, But the **seventh day** is the **Sabbath (intermission [REST])** of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do ANY work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; that thy manservant and thy maidservant may **rest** as well **as thou**.

...and that they should *bear no burden on the sabbath day*, Jer. 17:21. 3. The hawkers, and peddlers, and petty chapmen, that were men of Tyre, that famous trading city, *sold all manner of wares* on the sabbath day (Nehemiah 13:16); and the children of Judah and Jerusalem had so little grace as to buy of them, and so **encourage them** in making our Father's day a **day of merchandise**, contrary to the law of the fourth commandment, which forbids the *doing any manner of work*.

(Source: *The Matthew Henry Commentary on the whole Bible classic.studylight.org/com/mhc*)

**Thought 1.** During Jesus ministry, God showed what the Pharisees of his time believed about the Sabbath was not what he had commanded. To make plain this point, God, who was doing the work through Jesus, healed a number people on the Sabbath day.

**John 14:10**, Believest thou not that I am IN the Father, and the **Father IN me?** the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the **Father** that **dwelleth in me, HE doeth the works**.

**Luke 13:10-17**, And he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath. And, behold, there was a woman which had a **spirit** of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself. And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art **loosed** from thine infirmity. And he laid his hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God. And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had **healed** on the **sabbath day**, and said unto the people, There are **six days** in which men ought to WORK: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath day. The Lord then answered him, and said, Thou **hypocrite**, doth not each one of you on **the sabbath** loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering? And ought not this woman, being a daughter of **Abraham**, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day? And when he had said these things, all his adversaries were **ashamed**: and all the People rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him.

**Mark 3:1-6**, And he entered again into the synagogue; and there was a man there which had a **withered hand**. And they watched him, whether he would **heal him** on the **sabbath day**; that they might **accuse him**. And he saith unto the man which had the withered hand, Stand forth. And he saith unto them, **Is it lawful** to do good on the sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill? But they held their peace. And when he had looked round about on them with **anger**, being **grieved** for the hardness of their hearts, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it out: and his hand was restored whole as the other. And the Pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him.

**Nehemiah 13:17**, Then I **CONTENDED** with the nobles of Judah...

**Contended defined 7378, to toss, i.e. grapple (WRESTLE); mostly fig., i.e. CHIDE.**

Chide, 1. To SCOLD at; to REPROVE (convince of a fault, or to make it manifest.); to utter words in anger, or by way of disapprobation (disapproval); to rebuke; as, to chide one for his faults. 2. To blame; to reproach; as, to chide folly or negligence.

**Nehemiah 13:17-18**...and **said** unto them, What evil thing is this that ye do, and **profane** the sabbath day? 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 (break, pollute)** the **sabbath**.

**NOTE:** Those that are **JEALOUS** for the honour of God cannot bear to see his sabbath profaned. Observe in what method this good man proceeded in his zeal for the sabbath. (Source: *The Matthew Henry Commentary on the whole Bible classic.studylight.org/com/mhc*)

Jealous, solicitous (eager, keen; fervent) to defend the honor of; concerned for the character of. I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts.

**1 Kings 19:14, 18**, And he said, I have been **very jealous** for the LORD God of hosts: because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even **I only, am left**; and they seek my life, to take it away.  
...Yet I have left me **seven thousand** in Israel, all the **knees** which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him.

**Nehemiah 13:19**, 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.

**NOTE:** These words take account of the Jewish custom of counting every day from SUNSET to SUNSET; thus **the sabbath**, as we would reckon time, actually **began** at **sundown** on the preceding day. The Jews grounded this practice on the Genesis account of creation, where the successive days are listed after the formula, There was **evening** and **morning**... (Source: *Coffman Commentaries on the Old & New Testament classic.studylight.org/com/bcc/*)

**Genesis 1:5**, And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.

**NOTE:** He took care to prevent the profanation of the sabbath, as one that aimed only at reformation. If he could reform them, he would not punish them, and, if he should punish them, it was but that he might reform them. This is an example to **magistrates** (public civil officer: governor, mayor, etc.) to be heirs of **restraint**, and prudently to use the bit and bridle, that there may be no occasion for the lash. (1.) He **ordered** the gates of Jerusalem to be kept shut from the evening before the sabbath to the morning after, and set his own

servants (whose care, courage and honesty, he could confide in) to watch them, that no burdens should be brought in on the sabbath day, nor late the night before, nor early in the morning after, lest sabbath time should be encroached upon...

(Source: *The Matthew Henry Commentary on the whole Bible classic.studyilight.org/com/mhc*)

**Nehemiah 13:20-21**, So the merchants and **sellers** of all kind of ware lodged without Jerusalem once or twice. 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.

**NOTE:** Those that came in to worship in the courts of the temple were no doubt admitted to pass and re-pass, but none that came **to sell goods**; they were forced to lodge without the city (Nehemiah 13:20), where no doubt they wished the sabbath were gone, that they might sell corn. (2.) He threatened those who came with goods to the gates, who pressed hard for entrance, telling them that, if they came again, he would certainly **lay hands on them** (Nehemiah 13:21), and this deterred them from coming any more. Note, If reformers will but put on resolution, more may be done towards the breaking of bad customs than they can imagine. Vice connived at is indeed a daring thing, and will bid defiance to counsel and reproof; but it may be made cowardly, and will be so when magistrates make themselves a **terror to it**. The king that sits on the throne of judgment scatters away all evil with his eyes. (3.) He charged the Levites to take care about the due sanctifying of the sabbath, that they should cleanse themselves in the first place, and so give a good example to the people, and that they should some of them come and keep the gates...

(Source: *The Matthew Henry Commentary on the whole Bible classic.studyilight.org/com/mhc*)

**NOTE:** I will lay hands on you I will **imprison** every man of you. This had the desired effect; they came no more.

(Source: *The Adam Clarke Commentary classic.studyilight.org/com/acc/*)

**Romans 13:1-5**, Let every soul be subject unto the higher **powers (authority)**. For there is no **power (authority)** but of God: the **powers (authority)** that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the **powers (authority)**, resisteth the **ordinance (institution)** of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a **terror to good works**, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? DO that which is GOOD, and thou shalt **have praise** of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, **a revenger** to execute wrath upon him that **doeth evil**. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.

**Nehemiah 13:22**, And I **commanded** the Levites that they should **cleanse** themselves, and that they should come and keep the gates, to **sanctify (keep holy [devoted, reverent, pure])** the **sabbath day**. Remember me, O my God, concerning this also, and spare me according to the greatness of thy mercy.

**NOTE:** New Testament Scripture does not require Christians to observe the Jewish Sabbath, for every day should be holy for us. Nevertheless, the early church established the **first day** of the week to remember Jesus' resurrection by **REST** and **worship** (Acts 20:7, 1 Cor. 16:2). This tradition, combined with God's original principle of resting one day of every seven, should guide us.

(Source: *The Bible Expositor and Illuminator, Union Press Publication-Christian Life Series*)

**Thought 1.** Nehemiah knew what the law said about obeying God and being blessed by him because of obedience. So, he was asking that his obedience be rewarded according to God's word.

**Deuteronomy 28:1-2**, And it shall come to pass, **IF** thou shalt **hearken (obey)** diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to OBSERVE and to DO all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the LORD thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth: And all these **BLESSINGS** shall come on thee, and overtake thee, IF thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God.

**Deuteronomy 28:15**, But it shall come to pass, **IF** thou wilt not **hearken (be obedient)** unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to DO all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these **CURSES** shall come upon thee and overtake thee:

**Thought 2.** Remember, Eli? He was judged along with his sons worthy of death, and died because of sin. In the eyes of God, Eli's sin was he did NOT correct his sons as they sinned.

**1 Samuel 2:12, 17, 22-24, 27-35**, Now the sons of Eli were sons of Belial; they knew not the LORD. ...Wherefore the sin of the young men was very great before the LORD: for men abhorred the offering of the LORD. ...Now Eli was very old, **and heard** ALL that his sons did unto all Israel; and how they **lay with** the **women** that assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And he said unto them, Why do ye such things? for **I hear of** your **evil** dealings by all this people. Nay, my sons; for it is no good report that I hear: ye make the LORD'S people to transgress.

...And there came a **man of God** unto **Eli**, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Did I plainly appear unto the house of thy father, when they were in Egypt in Pharaoh's house? And did I choose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to offer upon mine altar, to burn incense, to wear an ephod before me? and did I give unto the house of thy father all the offerings made by fire of the children of Israel? Wherefore kick ye at **my sacrifice** and at **mine offering**, which **I have commanded** in my habitation; and honourest thy sons above ME, to make yourselves fat with the chiefest of all the offerings of Israel MY people? Wherefore the LORD God of Israel saith, I said indeed that thy house, and the house of thy father, should walk before me for ever: but now the LORD saith, Be it far from me; for them that **honour (glorify)** me I will **honour (glorify)**, and they that **despise** (treat with DISRESPECT) me shall be lightly esteemed.

Behold, the days come, that I will CUT OFF thine arm, and the arm of thy father's house, that there shall not be an old man in thine house. And thou shalt see an enemy in my habitation, in all the wealth which God shall give Israel: and there shall not be an old man in thine house for ever. And the man of thine, whom I shall not cut off from mine altar, shall be to consume thine eyes, and to grieve thine heart: and all the increase of thine house **shall die in the flower of their age**. And this shall be a sign unto thee, that shall come upon thy two sons, on Hophni and Phinehas; in one day they **shall die** BOTH of them. And I will raise me up **a faithful priest**, that **shall DO** according to that which is in MINE heart and in my mind: and I will build him a sure house; and he shall walk before mine anointed for ever.

**Thought 3.** Today, God is holding us pastors of HIS flock accountable for the sin that he reveals to US in HIS congregation. And like Nehemiah did, the Lord wants US to deal with it according to his word. So, those of us who know the danger of not obeying the scriptures to correctly OVERSEE God's flock, obey him, just like Paul did. Because, like Nehemiah and Paul, we too want God to remember our work in obedience to him.

**Hebrews 6:10** ...God is not unrighteous to **forget** your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.

**Hebrews 13:17**, Obey them that have the RULE over you, and submit (yield) yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must **give account**, that they may do it with **JOY** and not **with GRIEF**: for that is unprofitable for YOU.