

Ministry & The Work of God: 15

Why Is The House of God Forsaken?

Nehemiah 13

Nehemiah returns to Babylon (vs 6)

- about a year? - the Law permitted a man to redeem his house within a year (Leviticus 25.29)
- Jerusalem was left restored to its' rightful position.

Nehemiah returns to Jerusalem he discovers:

- Eliashib the priest allied himself with Tobiah (vs 4)
- Eliashib had cleared out a large storeroom in the Temple and allows Tobiah to move in (vs 5)
- This was an evil (vs 7) – a complete disregard for the Law (vs1) – Tobiah was an Ammonite (Nehemiah 2.19) and he entered the holy House of God.
- The Levites were not being supported (vs 10-13) – this was established in Nehemiah 12.47 – the Levites had gone back to the field to work

Nehemiah's actions:

- He throws out Tobiah (vs 8) – He cleanses the Temple and replaces the articles.
- He gathers in the tithes and offerings (vs 12) - puts them in the storehouse
- He appoints faithful men (vs 13) to this ministry

Why is the House of God forsaken? (vs11)

The people had committed themselves to follow after and serve God, and walk in His ways. (Chapter 10)

Those that were responsible for their care had neglected them and **forsaken** the things of God.

God's people soon followed in their example.

1. They had profaned the Sabbath day by working (vs 15-22)
 - treading the wine-presses
 - harvesting the sheaves
 - loading their donkeys for market, and selling the wares.
2. They were giving their sons and daughters in marriage to Gentile nations - Ammonites, Moabites and Philistines (vs 23-28)

Those priests in charge had **forsaken** the things of God, the reforms of Nehemiah, and allowed the people to sin.

Nehemiah cleanses the people of everything pagan and assigns new duties to the priests and Levites. (vs 30)

The work of God

- needs faithful men of vision and purpose
- does not need 'irresponsible shepherds' (Zechariah 11.17; Jeremiah 23.1-4; Ezekiel 34).

Jesus warns against those who allow the sheep to stumble – (Matthew 18.6; Mark 9.42).

Hebrews 10.25

We are urged not to forsake the gathering of ourselves together – some had got into this habit.

Why did God say this?

- It wasn't to keep His House filled
- It wasn't to prevent or stop us from other things.

When we come together we receive everything we need to live

- spiritual food
- encouragement
- fellowship
- building up

We cannot get these on our own - we need each other, we need the care of the shepherd that God has appointed over us.

Now is not the time to forsake coming together.

If we forsake 'the gathering of ourselves together' we soon begin to grow cold and forsake other things – eventually we go away from God.

Lessons:

1. Do not let any ungodly thing inhabit your life, ministry, service or work for God
2. Do not forsake the 'House of God' – the things of God, that includes the care of His people
3. Let us not forsake the commandments of God
4. Let us not forsake the gathering of ourselves together