

NEHEMIAH SETS THE EXAMPLE. NEH. 5:14-19. 11/24/24. #08.

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14Moreover, from the time that I was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah, from the twentieth year until the thirty-second year of King Artaxerxes, twelve years, neither I nor my brothers ate the governor's provisions. **15**But the former governors who *were* before me laid burdens on the people, and took from them bread and wine, besides forty shekels of silver. Yes, even their servants bore rule over the people, but I did not do so, because of the fear of God. **16**Indeed, I also continued the work on this wall, and we did not buy any land. All my servants *were* gathered there for the work. **17**And at my table *were* one hundred and fifty Jews and rulers, besides those who came to us from the nations around us. **18**Now *that* which was prepared daily *was* one ox *and* six choice sheep. Also fowl were prepared for me, and once every ten days an abundance of all kinds of wine. Yet in spite of this I did not demand the governor's provisions, because the bondage was heavy on this people. **19**Remember me, my God, for good, *according to* all that I have done for this people.
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1. Nehemiah as governor

- a. 1st mention that Neh. had been appointed governor
 - a1. Neh. served as gov. from April 445 BC to April 433 BC
 - a2. He returned as gov. after reporting to the Persian king (Neh. 13:6f)
- b. As gov. Neh. was entitled to a stipend, but he refused to take the stipend
 - a1. The stipend amounted to 40 shekels of silver daily with other perks
 - a2. Governors were expected to entertain lavishly & the population bore the cost
- c. Previous governors had taken full allowances
 - a1. As under Solomon, the people bore heavy taxation & other burdens
 - a2. Even the servants of the governors took advantage of the people & ruled over them

2. Nehemiah takes pity on the people

- a. Neh. refused to take any provisions
 - a1. He paid for everything himself
 - a2. 150 Jews + hundreds of dignitaries dined at Neh.'s table daily
- b. Neh. & his servants refused to buy land

- a1. Land speculation had moved the poor off their land
 - a2. Neh. sought to protect the people
 - c. Neh. mentions 2 reasons for his actions
 - a1. He feared God (Jm. 4:17 those who know to do good, but do not do it, it is sin)
 - a2. He had compassion on the poor of the land
 - b1. He did not see them as subjects
 - b2. They were his fellow brethren
 - d. Neh. exhibited the 2 greatest commandments: to love God with all one's heart, mind, & soul & to love one's neighbor as oneself
 - e. Even though Neh. was entitled to his proportion, he declined to take it
 - a1. The provisions were substantial: 1 ox, 6 sheep, bread, wine, & poultry everyday
 - a2. Neh. did not consider his lack of income a loss, but a gift to the poor for God
 - a3. Neh. supported his servants, who also worked on the wall, from his own funds
 - f. By declining to take his entitlement, Neh. demonstrated that he was working for God & not self
 - a1. Nothing wrong with being properly paid (a workman is worthy of his wages)
 - a2. Lk. 12 those who are able to be generous to the needy are blessed by forgoing their due
- 3. Heavenward focus**
- a. Neh. asks God to remember him for his compassion on the people
 - a1. Neh. looked to the Lord for his reward
 - a2. Neh. did not focus on earthly gain
 - b. Neh. 13:22 Neh. once again asked the Lord to remember him after he returned & found that the people had relapsed into sin
 - a1. Neh. worked for the Lord & the good of the people, not for their gratitude or loyalty
 - a2. Often the people you help do not acknowledge or appreciate it (Hos. 13)
 - c. Serving the Lord must be its own reward