

<sup>23</sup>In those days I also saw Jews *who* had married women of Ashdod, Ammon, and Moab. <sup>24</sup>And half of their children spoke the language of Ashdod, and could not speak the language of Judah, but spoke according to the language of one or the other people. <sup>25</sup>So I contended with them and cursed them, struck some of them and pulled out their hair, and made them swear by God, *saying*, "You shall not give your daughters as wives to their sons, nor take their daughters for your sons or yourselves. <sup>26</sup>Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things? Yet among many nations there was no king like him, who was beloved of his God; and God made him king over all Israel. Nevertheless pagan women caused even him to sin. <sup>27</sup>Should we then hear of your doing all this great evil, transgressing against our God by marrying pagan women?" <sup>28</sup>And *one* of the sons of Joiada, the son of Eliashib the high priest, *was* a son-in-law of Sanballat the Horonite; therefore I drove him from me. <sup>29</sup>Remember them, O my God, because they have defiled the priesthood and the covenant of the priesthood and the Levites. <sup>30</sup>Thus I cleansed them of everything pagan. I also assigned duties to the priests and the Levites, each to his service, <sup>31</sup>and to *bringing* the wood offering and the firstfruits at appointed times. Remember me, O my God, for good!

#### 1. Oft repeated snare

- a. Besides fraternizing with the enemy & Sabbath Day violations, Neh. found that the Jews had intermarried with the pagans around them
  - a1. Jud. 2 the Lord left the pagans in the land to be a snare to rebellious Israel
  - a2. Ezra had found the same sin 30 years earlier
- b. The same sin that ensnared Samson & Solomon was a blight on many in Judah
  - a1. Esau had succumbed to this transgression when he married Hittite women
  - a2. Ahab led Israel into Baal worship by marrying Jezebel from Tyre
- c. Hos. 7 *Ephraim mixed himself with peoples...so aliens devoured his strength...but he did not know it*
  - a1. The mixture of the Jews with pagan women compromised the worship of God & brought judgment down upon them
  - a2. Dt. 7:3 Israel was forbidden to marry foreign wives or give their daughters to foreign men
- d. 2 Cor. 6:14-18 when believers interact socially with unbelievers, romantic interaction becomes common
- e. 2 Tm. 2:22 avoidance of interaction is critical

#### 2. Nehemiah's reaction

- a. Unlike Ezra who internalized his dismay in shock & grief, Neh. exploded in anger
  - a1. Ezra had pulled his own hair out while Neh. pulled out the hair of the offenders
  - a2. Neh. contended with them (chastised, argued, reasoned, & threatened them)
- b. Nehemiah was enraged & took action
  - a1. Unlike Ezra, he did not force those who married pagans to divorce them, probably realizing the devastation done to families by Ezra's actions
  - a2. Neh. sought to stop the practice from continuing going forward
- c. Even Jehoida's son had married Sanballat's daughter
  - a1. Jehoida was the High Priest after Eliashib, who had given Tobiah rooms in the temple
  - a2. Sanballat was Neh.'s most virulent enemy
- d. The people did not take the worship of God & his covenant seriously (they saw nothing wrong with intermixing)
- e. Neh. gave them a history lesson:
  - a1. Solomon was beloved by God & was made king
  - a2. Sol. asked for wisdom to rule the people
  - a3. God gave him wisdom, wealth, & glory
    - b1. The Queen of Sheba traveled 1400 miles to hear Solomon's wisdom
    - b2. Sol.'s fame spread throughout the ancient world
  - a4. Sol. married many foreign women who turned his heart away from God
    - b1. He built shrines for his wives' gods & worshiped them
    - b2. He caused Israel to stumble (Rehoboam was born of an Ammonite princess)
- f. Neh. drove away Sanballat's son-in-law
- g. For the 3<sup>rd</sup> time Neh. asks God to remember him for what he tried to do for this people

#### 3. Clean-up on the temple mount

- a. The priesthood & Levites had been defiled
- b. Again, Neh. removed every defilement & all pagans
- c. Neh. restored the duties of the priests & Levites & reestablished the collection of the offerings & the first fruits
- d. For a 4<sup>th</sup> time he asked God to remember him