

## Nehemiah 13 – Thursday, November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2017

**Nehemiah 13** -- 1 On that day they read from the Book of Moses in the hearing of the people, and in it was found written that no Ammonite or Moabite should ever come into the assembly of God, 2 because they had not met the children of Israel with bread and water, but hired Balaam against them to curse them. However, our God turned the curse into a blessing. 3 So it was, when they had heard the Law, that they separated all the mixed multitude from Israel.

- The chapter begins with what appears to be a gap of time between the previous chapter, which some believe were a few years.
- On that day, they read from the Book of Moses, specifically in Deuteronomy 23:3-6 concerning the Ammonites and Moabites.
- Both had conspired against the Israelites with the intent of annihilating the Israelites, but God, intervened and thwarted them.

Deuteronomy 23:3–5 (NKJV) — 3 “An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter the assembly of the LORD; even to the tenth generation none of his descendants shall enter the assembly of the LORD forever, 4 because they did not meet you with bread and water on the road when you came out of Egypt, and because they hired against you Balaam the son of Beor from Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse you. 5 Nevertheless the LORD your God would not listen to Balaam, but the LORD your God turned the curse into a blessing for you, because the LORD your God loves you.

- If you were to ask me what I thought was one of the most fascinating accounts in all scripture this would be at the top of the list.
- Namely, that of what’s recorded in the book of Numbers, about that which we have referenced here in the book of Nehemiah.
- I’m hoping you’ll kindly indulge me as I briefly share with you the profound significance of this and it’s application to us in Christ.

|   |   |
|---|---|
| JUDAH TO THE EAST – 186,400 (NUMBERS 2:1-9) | EPHRAIM TO THE WEST – 108,100 (NUMBERS 2:18-24) |
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| REUBEN TO THE SOUTH – 151,450 (NUMBERS 2:10-17) | DAN TO THE NORTH – 157,600 (NUMBERS 2:25-34) |
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- Here we have a fascinating picture ever so beautifully woven into the fabric of Revelation where we have the heavenly scene.

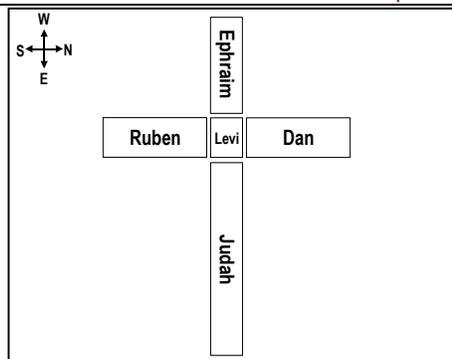
Rev 4:6-7 In the center, around the throne, were four living creatures, and they were covered with eyes, in front and in back. The first living creature was like a lion, the second was like an ox, the third had a face like a man, the fourth was like a flying eagle.

- Consider the comparisons between the scene that we have with the Israelites in Numbers and what we also have in Revelation.

| NUMBERS  | REVELATION  |
|--|---|
| The Tabernacle is at the center                            | The Throne is at the center                       |
| Four groups of three tribes from front to back             | Four living creations with eyes in front and back |
| The first is led by Judah whose standard was a lion        | The first creature was like a lion                |
| The tribe of Ephraim had a standard with an ox             | The second creature was like an ox                |
| The tribe of Reuben had a standard with a man              | The third creature had a face like a man          |
| The fourth group is led by Dan whose standard was an eagle | The fourth creature was like a flying eagle       |

|                   | JUDAH          | EPHRAIM       | REUBEN            | DAN              |
|-------------------|----------------|---------------|-------------------|------------------|
| <b>CAMP</b>       | East           | West          | South             | North            |
| <b>FACE</b>       | Lion           | Ox            | Man               | Eagle            |
| <b>GOSPEL</b>     | Matthew        | Mark          | Luke              | John             |
| <b>JESUS</b>      | Messiah – Said | Servant – Did | Son of Man – Felt | Son of God - Was |
| <b>WRITTEN TO</b> | Jew            | Roman         | Greek             | Church           |

- This is where it gets really exciting; the scene in Numbers and in Revelation, points to the finished work of Christ on the cross.
- The camp of four groupings of three tribes each would have formed the shape of a cross with the tabernacle right in the center.



- It’s for this reason that Balaam could not pronounce a curse upon the Israelites, because it foreshadowed the cross of Christ. In other words, it’s because Jesus Christ took upon Himself the curse of man’s sin; we are no longer under the curse of the law.

Galatians 3:13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: “Cursed is everyone who is hung on a pole.”

- There’s one more thing I want to point out before we move on and it has to do with a curse coming upon them because of them.
- Sadly, Balak succeeds in his goal of cursing the Israelites but Balaam doesn’t bring it upon them, they bring it upon themselves.

Revelation 2:14 - Nevertheless, I have a few things against you: You have people there who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin by eating food sacrificed to idols and by committing sexual immorality.

4 Now before this, Eliashib the priest, having authority over the storerooms of the house of our God, was allied with Tobiah. 5 And he had prepared for him a large room, where previously they had stored the grain offerings, the frankincense, the articles, the tithes of grain, the new wine and oil, which were commanded to be given to the Levites and singers and gatekeepers, and the offerings for the priests. 6 But during all this I was not in Jerusalem, for in the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes king of Babylon I had returned to the king. Then after certain days I obtained leave from the king, 7 and I came to Jerusalem and discovered the evil that Eliashib had done for Tobiah, in preparing a room for him in the courts of the house of God. 8 And it grieved me bitterly; therefore I threw all the household goods of Tobiah out of the room. 9 Then I commanded them to cleanse the rooms; and I brought back into them the articles of the house of God, with the grain offering and the frankincense.

- I don't know if it's possible to overstate the importance of the principle that's woven into the fabric of what Nehemiah did here.
- Specifically, that of the Tobiah's we allow into our lives as the temple of the Holy Spirit, and in so doing grieve or quench Him.
- I'll take it a step further and suggest that this applies not only to Tobiah's taking up residence in our lives but the church as well.

10 I also realized that the portions for the Levites had not been given them; for each of the Levites and the singers who did the work had gone back to his field. 11 So I contended 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 all Judah brought the tithe of the grain and the new wine and the oil to the storehouse. 13 And I appointed as treasurers over the storehouse 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 considered faithful, and their task was to distribute to their brethren. 14 Remember me, O my God, concerning this, and do not wipe out my good deeds that I have done for the house of my God, and for its services!

- Here we're told that the Levites had to forsake their service in the temple because the people stopped the giving of their tithes.
- As such, he confronts the leaders so as to set everything back in order even appointing treasurers to oversee the storehouse.
- It's what he prays in verse 14 that grabs my attention because he knows his righteous stand has made some powerful enemies.

15 In those days I saw people in Judah treading wine presses on the Sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and loading donkeys with wine, grapes, figs, and all kinds of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the Sabbath day. And I warned them about the day on which they were selling provisions. 16 Men of Tyre dwelt there also, who brought in fish and all kinds of goods, and sold them on the Sabbath to the children of Judah, and in Jerusalem. 17 Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said to them, "What evil thing is this that you do, by which you profane the Sabbath day? 18 Did not your fathers do thus, and did not our God bring all this disaster on us and on this city? Yet you bring added wrath on Israel by profaning the Sabbath." 19 So it was, at the gates of Jerusalem, as it began to be dark before the Sabbath, that I commanded the gates to be shut, and charged that they must not be opened till after the Sabbath. Then I posted some of my servants at the gates, so that no burdens would be brought in on the Sabbath day. 20 Now the merchants and sellers of all kinds of wares lodged outside Jerusalem once or twice. 21 Then I warned them, and said to them, "Why do you spend the night around the wall? If you do so again, I will lay hands on you!" From that time on they came no more on the Sabbath. 22 And I commanded the Levites that they should cleanse themselves, and that they should go and guard the gates, to sanctify the Sabbath day. Remember me, O my God, concerning this also, and spare me according to the greatness of Your mercy!

- This reminds me of what Jesus did when He turned over the moneychanger's tables because they were profaning the temple.
- To me, this speaks to how it is that judgment will begin in the house of God, such that, it begins with us as the temple of God.

1 Peter 4:17 - For it is time for judgment to begin with God's household; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God?

23 In those days I also saw Jews who had married women of Ashdod, Ammon, and Moab. 24 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. 25 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. 26 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. 27 Should we then hear of your doing all this great evil, transgressing against our God by marrying pagan women?" 28 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. 29 Remember them, O my God, because they have defiled the priesthood and the covenant of the priesthood and the Levites. 30 Thus I cleansed them of everything pagan. I also assigned duties to the priests and the Levites, each to his service, 31 and to bringing the wood offering and the firstfruits at appointed times. Remember me, O my God, for good!

- The chapter ends and with it our study of Nehemiah, but not before leaving us with a powerful character study of a godly man.
- You'll forgive the bluntness of how I say this, but absent modern day Nehemiah's, the church today may fall prey to the profane.