

ENTERTAINING THE ENEMY

Neh. 13 On that day the Book of Moses was read aloud in the hearing of the people and there it was found written that no Ammonite or Moabite should ever be admitted into the assembly of God,² because they had not met the Israelites with food and water but had hired Balaam to call a curse down on them. (Our God, however, turned the curse into a blessing.)³ When the people heard this law, they excluded from Israel all who were of foreign descent.

⁴ Before this, Eliashib the priest had been put in charge of the storerooms of the house of our God. He was closely associated with Tobiah,⁵ and he had provided him with a large room formerly used to store the grain offerings and incense and temple articles, and also the tithes of grain, new wine and oil prescribed for the Levites, singers and gatekeepers, as well as the contributions for the priests.

⁶ But while all this was going on, I was not in Jerusalem, for in the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes king of Babylon I had returned to the king. Some time later I asked his permission⁷ and came back to Jerusalem. Here I learned about the evil thing Eliashib had done in providing Tobiah a room in the courts of the house of God.⁸ I was greatly displeased and threw all Tobiah's household goods out of the room.⁹ I gave orders to purify the rooms, and then I put back into them the equipment of the house of God, with the grain offerings and the incense.

This is a month of self improvement. It has been good for us to fast and read the word. Like Israel in v1 when the Word was read we discovered that we have become friendly to the enemy. Tobiah in this text is like the devil. Beware of how subtle he is.

I. Why Tobiah was forbidden to worship with Israel-

A. He was Ammonite v4

v1 On that day the Book of Moses was read aloud in the hearing of the people and there it was found written that no Ammonite or Moabite should ever be admitted into the assembly of God,

He was a descendant of those who **refused to give Israel bread and water** in the wilderness journey. Instead they hired Balaam to **curse them**, which he could not do.

B. Tobiah lived up to his heritage

1. He hated Israel

Neh. 2 ¹⁰ When Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite official heard about this, they were very much disturbed that someone had come to promote the welfare of the Israelites.

2. He mocked Israel

Neh. 2 ¹⁹ But when Sanballat the Horonite, Tobiah the Ammonite official and Geshem the Arab heard about it, they mocked and ridiculed us. "What is this you are doing?" they asked. "Are you rebelling against the king?"

Neh. 4³ Tobiah the Ammonite, who was at his side, said, “What they are building—if even a fox climbed up on it, he would break down their wall of stones!”

3. He had great anger against the work of the Jews.

Neh. 4⁷ But when Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabs, the Ammonites and the men of Ashdod heard that the repairs to Jerusalem’s walls had gone ahead and that the gaps were being closed, they were very angry. ⁸ They all plotted together to come and fight against Jerusalem and stir up trouble against it.

The enemy is angry because “the gaps” are being closed. This meant that he could not gain access to Jerusalem and the temple.

They were being shut out. If you want to make the devil mad start closing the entrances he has into your life.

II. Tobiah’s plots or methods of bringing us down

A. Stir up trouble against us- Neh 4 7

He accused Nehemiah with the following....

v6.. the Jews are plotting to revolt

... according to these reports you are about to become their king

v7 even appointed prophets to make this proclamation about you in Jerusalem

B. Make attempts on (our) Nehemiah’s life –Neh 6 1-2

C. Distract him (or us) from the work by getting him away from it would cause the work to stop.- Neh 6 4

He invited him to meet with him in another city away from Jerusalem.

D. False prophecy

¹⁰ One day I went to the house of **Shemaiah** son of Delaiah, the son of Mehetabel, who was shut in at his home. He said, “**Let us meet in the house of God, inside the temple, and let us close the temple doors, because men are coming to kill you—by night they are coming to kill you.**”

¹¹ But I said, “Should a man like me run away? Or should one like me go into the temple to save his life? I will not go!” ¹² **I realized that God had not sent him, but that he had prophesied against me because Tobiah and Sanballat had hired him.**

E. He wanted to destroy Nehemiah’s credibility.

¹³ He had been hired to intimidate me so that I would commit a sin by doing this, and then they would give me a bad name to discredit me.

III. Tobiah gains entrance to a forbidden place.

Neh. 13 7 ... Here I learned about the evil thing Eliashib had done in providing Tobiah a room in the courts of the house of God

A. When did he gain entrance?

Neh. 13 6 But while all this was going on, I was not in Jerusalem, for in the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes king of Babylon I had returned to the king.

B. How did he gain entrance?

Neh. 13 4.... Eliashib the priest had been put in charge of the storerooms of the house of our God. He was closely associated with Tobiah,

The priest, Eliashib, was associated with him!

C. Why did he do it?

The room he occupied was the place where the tithe was stored.

Neh. 13 5....a large room formerly used to store the grain offerings and incense and temple articles, and also the tithes of grain, new wine and oil prescribed for the Levites, singers and gatekeepers, as well as the contributions for the priests.

He would sabotage the blessing of God! He would devour or weaken the lively hood of the priest. He would destroy the work from within!

IV. How we are to deal with our Tobiah

A. Throw him and his stuff out of the holy place.

v 8 . 8 I was greatly displeased and threw all Tobiah's household goods out of the room.

Get rid of the porno, the bad music, sorcery, the foul movies, unholy relationships that drag you down, etc. Anything that makes the enemy comfortable, get rid of it!

B. Cleanse the temple.

9 I gave orders to purify the rooms....

Get the blood of Jesus, the water of the Holy Ghost, and the fuller soap of God's word and cleanse where the enemy has been in your life.

C. Restore what was taken away

v 9.... then I put back into them the equipment of the house of God, with the grain offerings and the incense.

- A. Worship
- B. Praise
- C. Offerings