

Nehemiah 13:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And it came to pass, that when the gates of Jerusalem began to be dark before the sabbath, I commanded that the gates should be shut, and charged that they should not be opened till after the sabbath: and some of my servants set I at the gates, that there should no burden be brought in on the sabbath day.

Analysis

And it came to pass, that when the gates of Jerusalem began to be dark before the sabbath, I commanded that the gates should be shut, and charged that they should not be opened till after the sabbath: and some of my servants set I at the gates, that there should no burden be brought in on the sabbath day.

This verse within Nehemiah 13 addresses themes of reform, confronting compromise, vigilance, finishing well. Nehemiah's return from Persia reveals backsliding, requiring renewed reforms in areas previously addressed—showing constant vigilance's necessity. City gates were strategic both defensively and administratively, controlling access and serving as centers of commerce and justice. This passage demonstrates biblical principles applicable across both testaments—God's sovereignty combined with human responsibility, faith expressed through obedient action, and the necessity of both individual and corporate commitment to covenant faithfulness. Nehemiah models leadership that combines vision, prayer, courage, integrity, and perseverance amid sustained opposition.

Historical Context

Nehemiah's account occurs during Persian imperial dominance (539-331 BC), specifically 445-433 BC under Artaxerxes I. Nehemiah's final reforms address recurring covenant violations, demonstrating the ongoing challenge of maintaining spiritual commitment across generations. The Persian period was crucial transitional time when Jewish identity shifted from monarchical nationalism to Torah-centered covenantal community. Without political independence, the people's cohesion depended on shared scripture, temple worship, and covenant obedience. This established patterns persisting through the Second Temple period into New Testament times. Understanding this context illuminates Jesus's ministry among a people shaped by these reforms and challenges.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does regular engagement with Scripture transform understanding of God and His will for your life?
2. What specific commitments do you need to make (or renew) regarding Bible reading, worship, and obedience?
3. How can the principles demonstrated in this passage inform your response to current challenges in your life or church?

Interlinear Text

כָּאֲשֶׁר	וַיְהִי	צָלָלָו	הַשְּׁעָרִים		
H834	H1961				
began to be dark			And it came to pass that when the gates		
		H6751			
			H8179		
הַדָּלֶת	וְהָיָה	וְהָיָה	וְהָיָה	וְהָיָה	וְהָיָה
H1817	H5462	H559	H7676	H6440	H3389
that the gates	should be shut	I commanded	on the sabbath	before	of Jerusalem
אֲחֵר	עַד	וְהָיָה	וְהָיָה	וְהָיָה	וְהָיָה
H310	H5704	H6605	H3808	H834	H559
till after		that they should not be opened			I commanded
עַל	וְהָיָה	וְהָיָה	וְהָיָה	וְהָיָה	וְהָיָה
H5921	H5975	H5288	H7676	H1817	H3389
set	and some of my servants	on the sabbath			
יָבֹאוּ	וְהָיָה	וְהָיָה	וְהָיָה	וְהָיָה	וְהָיָה
H935	H3808	H8179	H559	H5462	H1817
be brought in		And it came to pass that when the gates			
וְהָיָה	וְהָיָה	וְהָיָה	וְהָיָה	וְהָיָה	וְהָיָה
H7676	H3117	H4853	H559	H5462	H1817
on the sabbath	day	that there should no burden			

Additional Cross-References

Leviticus 23:32 (Parallel theme): It shall be unto you a sabbath of rest, and ye shall afflict your souls: in the ninth day of the month at even, from even unto even, shall ye celebrate your sabbath.