

Nehemiah 13:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then I testified against them, and said unto them, Why lodge ye about the wall? if ye do so again, I will lay hands on you. From that time forth came they no more on the sabbath.

Analysis

Then I testified against them, and said unto them, Why lodge ye about the wall? if ye do so again, I will lay hands on you. From that time forth came they no more on the sabbath.

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. Jerusalem's wall (chomah, חומָה) provided security, dignity, and testimony to God's faithfulness. 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

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

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

בְּשַׁבָּתִים

Additional Cross-References

1 Peter 2:14 (Parallel theme): Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well.

Ezra 7:26 (Parallel theme): And whosoever will not do the law of thy God, and the law of the king, let judgment be executed speedily upon him, whether it be unto death, or to banishment, or to confiscation of goods, or to imprisonment.

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