



# VICTORIOUS CHRISTIAN MINISTRY

## Weekly Bible Study - 12:09:2012

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### **Study 38: RIGHTEOUS INDIGNATION OVER SACRILEGIOUS COMPROMISE**

***Nehemiah 13:4-9***

Our text deals with Nehemiah's anger over the compromise of a priest. Tobiah was a strong opponent of the Jews throughout the period of the building work (Nehemiah 2:19, 4:1-3,6-8; 6:1-4,9-13,17-19), and there has been no evidence of his repentance or change of attitude towards the Jews. Through intermarriage and compromise of the nobles (Nehemiah 6:17-19) Tobiah found favour with Eliashib the priest. Eliashib prepared a great chamber in the temple as a residential home for Tobiah. This was a sacrilegious compromise that negatively affected the service of the temple. Eliashib probably valued his relationship with Tobiah much more than temple services to God. Nehemiah's anger over the compromise is manifested by displacing Tobiah from the temple, and restoring the vessels and normal temple services. This study considers the causes, consequences and cure of compromise.

#### **1. CAUSES OF COMPROMISE:**

*Nehemiah 13:4*

Eliashib "was allied unto Tobiah". More often than not, the causes of compromise start with relationships. Tobiah got close to the nobles after the victory of the Jews, and won the confidence of Eliashib the priest. Perhaps Tobiah's personality and marriage relationships with the Jews could have appealed to Eliashib more than his character and sense of values – thereby resulting in the compromise. Some common causes of compromise include:

1. having respect of persons (Proverb 28:21),
2. desire for secular acceptance and worldly recognition in entertainment, business, career, education, dressing, furnishings,
3. self comparison,
4. imitation of the Janes and Joneses,
5. pleasing human beings irrespective of the cost (Galatians 1:10),
6. partnerships for financial reasons (2 Chronicles 18:1-3; 19:1-2; 20:35-37);
7. application of natural human wisdom for political advantage (I Kings 11 1-4; 12:26-33 compare with 11:29-31,38-40; Ecclesiastes 7:29).
8. Fear of commitment,
9. following lines of least resistance
10. not seeking counsel from God (2 Chronicles 16:1-9).
11. Bad company (I Corinthians 15:33)

#### **2. CONSEQUENCES OF COMPROMISE:**

*Nehemiah 13:5,10,11; 2 Chronicles 18; 20:37; 16:9, Joshua 7, 1 Corinthians 15:33*

Evil reigns in high places when godly men compromise on basic Christian principles. The chamber, originally built as a store, was changed into Tobiah's living room.

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Consequently, its function has been adversely affected leading eventually to the forsaking of temple services by the Levites. This compromise set in motion a chain reaction that eventually affected worship, ministration and the spiritual life of the nation, if not reversed on time. This is usually a step away from defeat, disaster, and divine wrath as well as the withdrawal of the presence and power of God. Where there is compromise, corruption is generally not lacking.

### 3. CURE FOR COMPROMISE:

*Nehemiah 13:6-9,11; Numbers 25:6-11; Isaiah 58:1; 56:10; 1 Kings 21:20-25; Matthew 21:12-13, Ephesians 4:26*

Eliashib's compromise was greeted by silence by the people probably because of either their ignorance, fear of the priests or simply having their spiritual senses dulled through unequal yoke. The fear of man brings a snare (Proverbs 29:25). Silence and indifference are subtle ways of condoning compromise. Society is often characterised by the silent majority who will say nothing for fear of hurting the feelings of offenders. But God is displeased by "dumb dogs that cannot bark" (Isaiah 56:10). The following statements point out the dangers of silence in the face of evil:

1. Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about the things that matter – Martin Luther
2. As we must account for every idle word, so must we account for every idle silence – Benjamin Franklin
3. You are not only responsible for what you say, but also for what you do not say – Martin Luther.
4. Oppression can only survive through silence – Carmen de Monteflores.
5. The ultimate tragedy is not the oppression and cruelty by the bad people but the silence over that by the good people – Martin Luther King.

Nehemiah would have recognised that evil triumphs when good men do nothing. First, he was displeased and angry at the compromise. The only way to be angry and not sin is to be angry at sin and compromise. Next, he took a decisive and commendable action to oust the wicked as well as cleanse the temple. He dared to try! It is action that reveals our true nature and commitment. "A king that sitteth in the throne of judgment **scattereth** away all **evil** with his eyes" (Proverbs 20:8). Cases abound in the scripture of those who manifested anger and took corrective measures against sin and compromise.