

## ASHDODITES

[ASH dahd] (fortress)- one of the five principal Philistine cities <1 Sam. 6:17>, with military and economic significance enhanced by its location on the main highway between Egypt and Syria. Joshua and the Israelites drove the Canaanites out of the hill country of Judah, but the Anakim- A group of Canaanites- remained in Ashdod, Gaza, and Gath <Josh. 11:22>. During the time of Eli and Samuel, the ark of the covenant accompanied Israel's army <1 Sam. 4:3>. When the Philistines defeated Israel, they took the ark to the temple of Dagon in Ashdod <1 Sam. 5:1-7>. Uzziah, the powerful king of Judah, captured Ashdod <2 Chr. 26:6>. The prophet Amos predicted the destruction of the city because of its inhumane treatment of Israelites <Amos 1:8; 3:9>. When Sargon, king of Assyria, destroyed Ashdod in 711 B. C., he fulfilled this prophecy <Is. 20:1>.

## AMMONITES

[AM muhn ites]- a nomadic race descended from Ammon, Lot's son, became enemies of the people of Israel during their later history. During the days of the Exodus, the Israelites were instructed by God not to associate with the Ammonites <Deut. 23:3>. The rift between the two peoples continued across several centuries. In the days of the judges, Eglon, king of Moab, enlisted the aid of the Ammonites in taking Jericho from the Hebrew people <Judg. 3:13>. In Saul's time, Nahash, the Ammonite king, attacked Jabesh Gilead. Saul responded to the call for help and saved the people of Jabesh Gilead from being captured by Nahash <1 Sam. 11:1-11>. Later in the history of the Israelites, Ammonites were among the armies allied against King Jehoshaphat; God caused confusion among them, and they destroyed themselves <2 Chr. 20:1-23>. The prophets of the Old Testament often pronounced God's judgment against the Ammonites <Jer. 9:26; Amos 1:13-15>.

## MOABITES

[MOE abb] (perhaps of my father)- Moab was a son of Lot by an incestuous union with his older daughter <Gen. 19:37>. The Israelite tribes of Reuben and Gad settled the northern part of the territory of Moab. During most of Israel's history, the Moabites were Israel's enemies. Sihon's Amorite kingdom annexed much of Moab shortly before the Israelite conquest of Canaan <Num. 21:17-29>. After the Israelites defeated Sihon, Balak, the king of the relatively weak Moabites, joined with the Midianites in hiring the prophet-magician Balaam to curse Israel so the Israelites could be defeated <Num. 22:1-20>. Balaam's mission failed, but when the Israelites camped in Moab just before crossing the Jordan River, the women of Moab enticed the Israelites into a form of idolatry that involved ritual sexual immorality. This resulted in God's judgment against Israel <Num. 25:1-9>.

(adapted from Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary (C) 1986)



COMMUNITY UNDER CONSTRUCTION

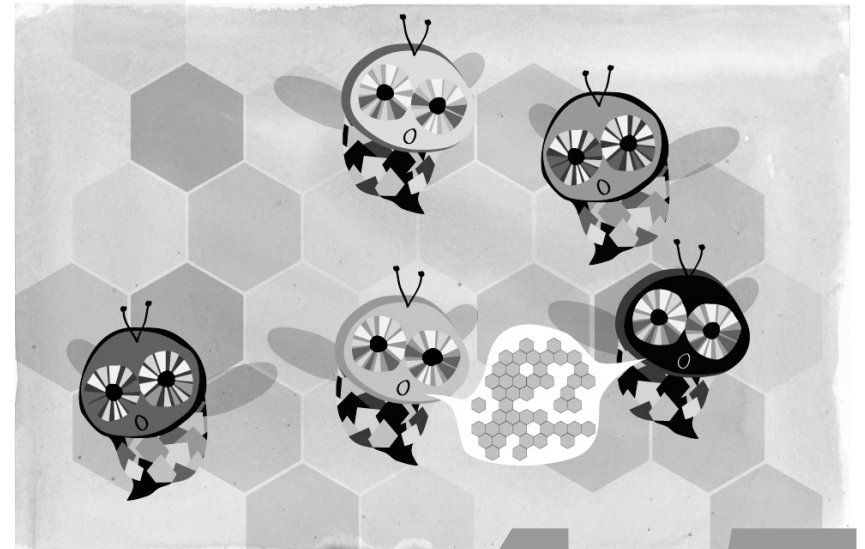
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St Michael's North Carlton

Nehemiah 13:23-31

Family & Fighting



Studies in

the Book of Nehemiah

15

## Study 15– Families & Fighting

When God established a covenant with the people of Israel through Moses there were several signs and symbols that marked God’s love for them and God’s promise to the world through them: guidance for living and knowledge of God (the Law or Torah), a place to meet with God (the Tabernacle/ Temple), ministers to help them worship God (Levites, Priests), and a day that to set aside for devotion to God (The Sabbath). In Nehemiah chapter 13 all four of those markers of God’s covenant community are noted as having been defiled by the people:

- ⇒ God’s Word had been disobeyed (vss. 1-3)
- ⇒ The temple had been desecrated (vss. 4-9)
- ⇒ The ministers had been neglected (vss. 10-11)
- ⇒ The Sabbath was replaced by work (vss. 15-22)

Nehemiah exposed the sins of the people evident in both the temple and marketplace. All this took place despite their vow and promise to be devoted to God in this new era of freedom from exile and the gracious rebuilding of their community. In the following verses note Nehemiah’s attention turns to the household and family. Another covenant vow has been broken, including marriages with people from godless and idolatrous nations.

### Nehemiah 13:23-31

- 23 Moreover, in those days I saw men of Judah who had married women from Ashdod, Ammon and Moab.
- 24 Half of their children spoke the language of Ashdod or the language of one of the other peoples, and did not know how to speak the language of Judah.
- 25 I rebuked them and called curses down on them. I beat some of the men and pulled out their hair. I made them take an oath in God's name and said: "You are not to give your daughters in marriage to their sons, nor are you to take their daughters in marriage for your sons or for yourselves.
- 26 Was it not because of marriages like these that Solomon king of Israel sinned? Among the many nations there was no king like him. He was loved by his God, and God made him king over all Israel, but even he was led into sin by foreign women.
- 27 Must we hear now that you too are doing all this terrible wickedness and are being unfaithful to our God by marrying foreign women?"

(cont’d...)

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- 28 One of the sons of Joiada son of Eliashib the high priest was son-in-law to Sanballat the Horonite. And I drove him away from me.
- 29 Remember them, O my God, because they defiled the priestly office and the covenant of the priesthood and of the Levites.
- 30 So I purified the priests and the Levites of everything foreign, and assigned them duties, each to his own task.
- 31 I also made provision for contributions of wood at designated times, and for the firstfruits. Remember me with favor, O my God. (NIV)



### BACKGROUND READING (OPTIONAL)

Ezra 1-6; Nehemiah 1-2; 2 Chronicles 36; Daniel; Jeremiah 21-52; Ezekiel 26-30; Haggai; Zechariah.