

The Covenant Commitment (Part 1 of # 27)

Nehemiah 10: 1-39

The parenthetical passages on worship have been encouraging and challenging to me and I hope they have been to you as well. Tonight we come to [Chapter 10](#), which is a continuation of the parenthesis in Nehemiah on worship. To fully appreciate our text, we need to look back to the conclusion of [Chapter 9](#). Neh.9:38 – [And because of all this we make a sure covenant, and write it; and our princes, Levites, and priests, seal unto it.](#) This reveals the attitude of the people in Jerusalem. They had devoted themselves to hearing and responding to the Word of God. They have offered a sincere prayer unto the Lord that recognized His deity and their iniquity. At the close of the prayer, because of all they had experienced, they made a covenant with the Lord. As we approach Chapter 10 we find those who [sealed](#) the covenant, revealing their commitment to it.

You might wonder what all of this means and how it would apply to us. I would like to encourage you to seek the truths that are revealed in this passage. We have read of a people who didn't just worship the Lord for a period of time and then return to their old way of living. These passages in Nehemiah record a genuine spiritual renewal among God's people. The events they encountered changed their lives. This wasn't thoughtless, empty prayer or worship. They were sincere in their renewal and were willing to seal a covenant in order to show their dedication. The people were sincere in seeking the Lord and were committed to walking with Him. Let's look at the [aspects of their dedication](#) as we think on: [The Covenant Commitment](#).

I. The Approval of the Covenant (1-27) – Here we find those who signed the covenant. Notice:

A. The Political Leaders (1) – [Nehemiah the Tirshatha](#), or governor, is the first one mentioned to have signed the covenant. Clearly this is the Nehemiah that we have studied so much about. Others were named Nehemiah, but the distinction of governor separates him from the others. Many believe that [Zidkijah](#) was listed along with Nehemiah due to his close association with Him, possibly serving as Nehemiah's scribe.

- The significance is that we see those who were in places of governmental authority approving the covenant to walk with the Lord. Wouldn't it be a blessing if our political leaders agreed to walk with the Lord? Our elected officials used to understand the importance of governing in a way that pleased the Lord. They used to look to God's Word for direction. I fear that those days have passed, but we ought to pray that God would raise up some in government that fear Him and desire to pass legislation in accordance with His Word. [Ps.33:12a – Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord](#): God has been abandoned by most in government, but apart from Him we will surely fall.

B. The Spiritual Leaders (2-13) – Here we find the priests and Levites listed who also signed the covenant. Now, one might assume that this would have gone without saying, but the spiritual decline in Judah that led to their captivity was due in large part to the spiritual decline of the spiritual leaders. In fact, it is good to see that the priests and Levites agreed to serve the Lord. If anyone should have agreed, they should have.

- I would say that we need spiritual leaders that are committed to walking with the Lord more than we need politicians that do! It is futile to expect our government to pass legislation that agrees with the Word if we lack leaders within the church who are willing to follow the Lord. I have said before that many of the problems we face in America are related to a lack of preaching and leadership on the part of pastors. If a man is unwilling to preach the Word of God without apology and live according to it, he isn't qualified to lead God's people at the local church! I would not sit under a man who refused to preach the Word in an effort to benefit the church. The church needs men of God who will take a stand for the Lord and challenge others to do the same!

C. The Social Leaders (14-27) – The last group listed to sign the covenant were the chief of the people, the leaders within society. These were men who had the ability to influence others within Jerusalem. We find that all who held influence over the people agreed to the covenant.

- The average Christian can identify with this group. You may not be in a management position, but we all have the ability to influence others. Wouldn't it be great if all of God's people determined to follow the Lord in a way that influenced and encouraged others to do the same? Wouldn't it be wonderful if all who knew us noticed our commitment to the Lord in a consistent way? We must take advantage of the opportunities we have to be a godly influence.
- While I am here, allow me to address the men. I want to emphasize the importance of godly leadership on the part of men among the church. We are expected to provide leadership within our families and within the church. God has ordained it to be that way. I am not seeking to belittle the women; in fact, I am very thankful for their contributions. The average church has a larger percentage of faithful women than men, and most would have to close their doors if the women stopped coming. But, that doesn't release men from their responsibilities. The men ought to take the lead. We will give account of the leadership we provided in the home, our churches, and communities.

I. The Approval of the Covenant (1-27)

II. The Acceptance of the Covenant (28-29) – These verses reveal the response of the people to the covenant and the commitment to it as well. Consider:

A. The Support of the People (28) – *And the rest of the people, the priests, the Levites, the porters, the singers, the Nethinims, and all they that had separated themselves from the people of the lands unto the law of God, their wives, their sons, and their daughters, every one having knowledge, and having understanding;* This wasn't a half-hearted effort. It wasn't something that a few of the leaders had proposed and submitted to. The acceptance of the covenant was supported by all the people within Jerusalem. There may not have been 100% commitment, but the majority of the people accepted and supported the renewed commitment to the Lord.

- It is also interesting to note that all of the people were not Israelites. Some of them were those who *had separated themselves from the people of the lands unto the law of God*. These were people who had heard the Word of God and embraced Him as the true and living God. They had turned from the idolatry of their people and committed to serve the Lord.
- This is what I desire for our church and our nation. I know that my relationship with the Lord is not dependent upon others, but I also know that we will never experience revival and a spiritual renewal in our land until God's people get earnest with Him. That is not to say that I expect everyone to seek the Lord. That is unlikely to happen even in our congregation; but if we are to experience God in great and mighty ways, we must seek Him corporately.
- I wonder what would happen on Sunday morning if the majority of Fellowship came with an earnest desire to seek the Lord and experience revival. I honestly believe we would begin to experience revival. God promises that in His Word.

B. The Steadfastness of the People (29) – *They clave to their brethren, their nobles, and entered into a curse, and into an oath, to walk in God's law, which was given by Moses the servant of God, and to observe and do all the commandments of the Lord our Lord, and his judgments and his statutes;* As we discovered, this was not a half-hearted effort on the part of the people. This reveals their submission. The people *clave* to one another. This has the idea of "*strengthening, to prevail, to be firm and courageous, to hold fast and withstand.*" The people had not made an empty promise. They had given their word and they would stand fast with the leadership in serving the Lord. There was no opposition to the covenant. We don't find a "clique" trying to discourage the people or lead them in another direction. All the people were committed to serving the Lord.

- Many in our day lack that commitment and steadfastness. They may start out strong, genuinely meaning well, but when opposition or hindrances come, they seem to lose their desire. Many today sense the need for biblical change in America, but few are actually willing to take a stand. Many are aware of the need to reach the lost, but very few are willing to be evangelistic. We talk about church growth, but few take the initiative to invite someone to church.

- I would like to challenge us this evening. There is no end to the work of the Lord. It isn't something that we eventually accomplish all there is to do. As long as we live in this world, there is a work for us to do. We tend to think that someone else will do it if we don't, but I am certain that is not the case. The world isn't going to do the Lord's work, and I don't believe others will be accountable to accomplish that which the Lord has called us to do. There is a work for each of us, and we are responsible to fulfill that obligation.

C. The Sincerity of the People (29) – They clave to their brethren, their nobles, and entered into a curse, and into an oath, to walk in God's law, which was given by Moses the servant of God, and to observe and do all the commandments of the Lord our Lord, and his judgments and his statutes; This was not a casual decision made in a nonchalant way. The people entered into a curse and an oath with the Lord. That reveals the sincerity of their commitment. They promised to serve the Lord faithfully, and even agreed to suffer the consequences if they failed to keep the covenant. They were fully aware of the seriousness of their commitment.

- I thank the Lord that I live in the day of grace. I rejoice that He offered what I could never deserve and withheld what I did deserve. But, I fear that many lack genuine sincerity in serving the Lord. Many have a “take it or leave it” attitude when it comes to serving the Lord. They really don't sense the sincerity that is required. I honestly believe that few ever think about God's judgment for sin.

- Throughout the Bible we find the Lord dealing with people individually and nationally because of sin. We would be arrogant and foolish to assume that it could never happen to America. Churches have lost their power and conviction because they lack sincerity and commitment. We need to understand the gravity of our labor for the Lord. We are expected to live in a way that pleases the Lord, seeking to be used of Him and reach others. Serving the Lord isn't something we can accomplish once or twice a week. We must be submitted to His will every day!

I had intended to finish this chapter tonight, but as I began to study the Lord began to speak to my heart. There was just too much to get through this evening. We will continue next week.

This has been a challenging study. It has spoken to me and I believe it has spoken to others. Are we as committed to the Lord as we should be? Are we completely surrendered to Him? I am sure that each of us could be more productive and sincere in our efforts for the Lord. I pray that He will continue to deal with our hearts and lead us in His way. We need His guidance and strength to prevail. If there is a need in your life, Jesus is the answer!