

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

SEPTEMBER 19TH, 2021 // BOOK OF NEHEMIAH

THE OATH (NEHEMIAH 10:1-29)

CH. 9 ENDS WITH REVIVAL

The people of God had come to a place of decision, realizing who God is and who they are. Their prayer was one of realization and repentance. In response, the people of God made a vow or oath to uphold what they had heard concerning the Word of God.

- This type of commitment would have been a very serious thing.

OATH

The laws concerning vows or oaths is contained in Numbers 30 and if a man breaks his vow and does not do everything he said, then he possibly brings God's judgment upon himself.

- Jesus warns us about empty oaths in Matt. 5:33-37 and 23:16-22. Solomon gives a similar warning in Ecc. 5:1-7.

They would have known how important covenants were to God. They remembered the covenants God made with Abraham, that promised a nation and the Messiah would come from him, and the covenant made with Moses and the nation of Israel.

- But the greatest covenant was yet to come!

WHO SIGNED THE COVENANT?

The first signatures were Nehemiah's followed by the priest (v.1-8).

- The next list of names, were the Levites who signed the covenant (v.9-13).
- Finally, we see the names of the civic leaders that signed the covenant (v.14-27).
- 84 leaders in total were willing to put their name on the line for the covenant with God.

The leaders mentioned in this list were not the only one's who entered this covenant. They signed up, putting their name on the line, to lead the people of God in fulfilling the oath.

- Following the lead of these 84 leaders, everyone "who had knowledge and understanding," also made the covenant with God.

MARRIAGE (NEHEMIAH 10:30)

COMMITMENT #1 - ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

In this time period the parents would have made the decision for their kids concerning marriage.

- The reason they would not have given their children to be married to "surrounding peoples" was not about the mixing of races but the mixing of beliefs. This verse is not a condemnation on inner-racial relations!

This commitment not to marry people of the surrounding idolatrous pagan nations would ensure that Jews, who were under the law of Moses, would remain set apart or different from the Gentiles.

- The danger of the Jews losing their faith and abandoning their spiritual heritage also existed in these mixed marriages.

UNEQUALLY YOKED

2 Cor. 6:14-7:1, brings the heart of this commitment to the NT. "Do not be yoked together with those who do not believe."

- This is because the believer will be in constant conflict with their spouse, then they will give way to the occasional compromise and finally complete conformity.

The concept of "unequal yoke" comes from Deut. 22:10, "Do not plow with an ox and a donkey together."

- Because one was considered clean and one was not, it would have been wrong to tie these together. Plus, the two opposite natures of the animals would not work well together.

BUSINESS PRACTICES (NEHEMIAH 10:31)

NO WORK ON THE SABBATH

Under the OT law, God said that no one could buy or sell anything on the Sabbath day. Up until this point, they had been breaking this law, but now they made a covenant with God to obey it.

- This was a covenant to only make money in ways that were obedient and glorifying to God.

DEEPER SPIRITUAL ISSUE

It used to be normative in America, and still is in most of the world, that businesses were closed on Sunday. The decision to now stay open 7 days instead of 6, was a symptom of a deeper spiritual problem: greed.

- Likewise, the disobedience in the OT towards observing the Sabbath, was a symptom of their rebellion against God.

FAITH IN ACTION

Leaving "the land uncultivated in the seventh year and cancelling every debt" was a tremendous step of faith. No crops or income for a year could have forced them into agricultural and economic depression.

- This is a perfect illustration of Matt. 6:33, "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you."

HIS WORK (NEHEMIAH 10:32-39)

SUPPORTING HIS WORK

They committed to bring the firstborn and first fruits, and the tithe (10% of the produce of their land) to support the work of God.

- They are agreeing to do two things: to give as God had commanded (the firstborn, first-fruits, and the tithe), and to give as needed for the ministry of the temple.

Though we do not provide animals, grain, and wood for the church to worship the Lord, we do have to help maintain the work of the ministry.

- This means we support those in ministry (Luke 10:7), we share with those in need (1 Cor. 16:1-3), and we are good stewards of all that God gives us.

We don't give to earn God's favor, but we give **so that the Gospel may be sent out to the whole world.**

- **God does not owe us anything**, but everything He gives us is to be used for His Glory and His Purpose. He is a gracious giver, and **we can never out-give God!**

A NEW COVENANT

- **Before Jesus willingly laid his life down on the cross, He told the disciples He was making a new covenant in His Blood.**
- **In this covenant of grace, God sets the terms and offers it for us to accept.**
- **We do not set the terms of this covenant, and if we accept, we must totally submit to God's terms.**

FEAR OF COMMITMENT

- **There is a fear to commit to the Word. The state of our nation and world has shown that we have abandoned truth.**
- **There is a fear of commitment in our relationships. Divorce has been in a decline over the last 10 years, but so has the marriage rates!**

HONORING GOD IN OUR RELATIONSHIPS

- **Are we honoring God with our Romantic Relationships?**
- **If single, that means keeping yourself only for God until He brings you together with the person He has for you. Are you honoring God in the waiting?**
- **If married, are you honoring God in how you treat your spouse?**

HONORING GOD IN OUR JOBS

- **Do we honor God with our finances? Are we willing to follow his rules, not whatever works or what everybody else is doing?**
- **What are we seeking, the kingdom of God or financial gain?**
- **What would our coworkers/employees say about us? Do we work in a way that sheds a positive light on God?**

HONORING THE WORK OF GOD

- Are we honoring God in the support of His work?
- Are we active in advancing the Gospel and making disciple makers, or are we just consumers of the work?
- Are you reluctant to give as the Bible commands?
- Giving is a great blessing but we must be aware of three temptations when giving:
 1. Giving with the wrong motive, out of a sense of duty, fear, or greed.
 2. Thinking we can do what we please with the remaining 90%.
 3. Giving financially while failing to give relationally to the Lord.