

Nehemiah 10:28-31 – Wholehearted Commitment to the Lord

Gill, TSK, HebrewLexicon, Armstrong, Gaebelin, Trapp, Poole, Henry, Delitzsch, JFB, Handfuls, Geneva, Clarke, Barnes, Expositor, Brothers and Sisters in the Lord: **The task God has given to his church is impossible to achieve by human strength.** You need superhuman strength to fulfill your duties. You need superhuman strength to be a good husband, wife, friend, Christian, employee, or teacher. So you have to go to the one who will give you this superhuman strength.

But to get the things you need to do the things you ought, you have to wholly commit yourself to the Lord. And that was exactly what the Jews had to **come to terms** with **and do!** They had sinned grievously and for 300 years they were in turmoil, but now they had come back to Jerusalem – God brought them back – and now they had to rebuild the temple, restore worship, ready themselves for the coming of the Savior, and raise-up his kingdom. **This wholehearted commitment was their starting point.** Hear about this today.

Our headings are:

The People of the Oath

The Principles of the Oath

The Particulars of the Oath

Our goals are: **That you and others will commit yourself to fulfilling your task to help build the kingdom so your Savior will be glorified.**

People of the Oath

28 Now the rest of the people — **the priests, the Levites, the gatekeepers, the singers, the Nethinim, and all** those who had **separated themselves** from the peoples of the lands to the Law of God, their wives, their sons, and their daughters, everyone who had knowledge and understanding —

1. The Jews came together in unity to make an oath to God Almighty who was also their Covenant God, Yahweh.

Yet, this **was not really a new oath.** This was what they promised God at Sinai. It was a new iteration of the same covenant.

2. The Jews who came together from all walks of life, starting with the rulers.

Priests, Levites (who served the priests), gatekeepers, singers, Nethinim (who served mostly the Levites) – temple servants, other Jews, **and converts** came together. **Converts were always welcomed and would separate from their past wicked lives:** Araunah, Jethro, Jael, Rahab, Ruth, etc.

Exodus 12:48 "And when a stranger dwells with you and wants to keep the Passover to the LORD, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as a native of the land. For no uncircumcised person shall eat it.

In the New Testament there were proselytes from many, many countries, triggered by the diaspora of 722BC and 586BC.

Acts 2:10 "Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes,

The Great Wall was torn down long ago! Ephesians 2.

3. Lessons:

a. We live in a society that focuses on “me,” and not on “us,” as God’s covenant people. While we do have individual standing before God, he has appointed us a congregation and a kingdom so we can work together to advance his cause!

b. Those who are citizens of the commonwealth of Israel must separate themselves from the ordinary things and people of the world. Don’t be too close to them. You have different goals in mind. Yours is to build the kingdom of the Savior.

c. Living apart from the wicked is not just commanded, living apart from them is beneficial.

2 Corinthians 6:17 Therefore "Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you."

Unity of the faith gives you a common goal.

d. God’s people are made up of people from all walks of life. If slaves and masters are in the same kingdom, so are all men!

1 Timothy 6:2 And those who have believing masters, let them not despise them because they are brethren, but rather serve them because those who are benefited are believers and beloved. Teach and exhort these things.

e. There is nothing like a leader setting an example for his people. He never says, “Do as I say, not as I do!”

Principles of the Oath

29 these joined with their brethren, their nobles, and **entered into a curse and 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 ordinances and His statutes:

1. The Jews from all different backgrounds and levels of society came (joined) together to make this oath to walk in God's Law.

They would make an oath to follow God's commandments, ordinances, and statutes.

2. The Jews then promised if they didn't follow God's law, God would be justified in cursing them.

This drew their minds back to Deuteronomy 28-29 and the two mountains, Gerizim and Ebal, where God gave the Jews the blessings of keeping his law and the cursings for not keeping his law. God even commanded them to sing about this!

Psalm 119:105 Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path. 106 **I have sworn and confirmed That I will keep Your righteous judgments.**

Psalms 119:4 **You have commanded us To keep Your precepts diligently.**

3. These laws to which they were covenanting were the moral laws-10 commands, the national laws, and the ceremonial laws.

Moral laws – permanent. Civil laws – principles. Ceremonial laws – pictures.

4. A curse is not vulgar language-like we might say today; vulgar language is bad, but it is not bad as a curse.

A curse is an "adjuration" or an "imprecation" for very serious punishment from God.

5. Lessons:

a. Don't ever tell someone, "Go to hell." That is the worst thing in human existence you can say to your fellow man. This is asking God to send him to a place of eternal torment.

b. The law could not just be written on paper or on scroll; the law had to be written in man's heart! Do you see the need to evangelize? Simple external moral obedience, without faith and without the desire to please the Savior has no saving value.

Particulars of the Oath

30 We **would not give our daughters as wives to the peoples of the land**, nor take their daughters for our sons; 31 if the peoples of the land brought wares or any grain to sell on the Sabbath day, **we would not buy it from them on the Sabbath**, or on a holy day; and we would **forego the seventh year's produce** and the exacting of every debt.

1. The Jews promised not to be involved in improper marriages again because they knew the danger this caused to the glory of God and the good of the nation as a whole.

Ezra spoke of this at length in Ezra 10. This was one of the pits Israel had fallen into in the past when they entered Canaan. There was always been an affinity to do this in Israel. There is an affinity to do this today. **How could children be raised well when there are trained in 1 true God and one false god? How could a Jewish Christian man present his wife blameless (help sanctify her) if she were not a believer?** How could the **work of Christ be advanced when husband and wife don't have the same goals?**

2. The Jews promised not to desecrate the Sabbath again because they knew how this robbed God of worship and it robbed man of physical and spiritual rest.

The Sabbath was God's law at creation, **before the law** was given (Exodus 16), **after the law was given, before Assyrian captivity**, and **before the Babylonian captivity**. Consider some of the warnings for Israel before Assyrian captivity, in-between the captivities, and just before the Babylonian captivity.

(Sabbath-breaking was one of the major reasons for captivity.)

Amos 8: 4 Hear this, you who swallow up the needy, And make the poor of the land fail, 5 Saying: "**When will the New Moon be past, That we may sell grain? And the Sabbath, That we may trade wheat...?**"

Isaiah 56: 6 "Also the sons of the foreigner Who join themselves to the LORD, to serve Him, And to love the name of the LORD, to be His servants — **Everyone who keeps from defiling the Sabbath, And holds fast My covenant — 7 Even them I will bring to My holy mountain, And make them joyful in My house of prayer.** Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices Will be accepted on My altar; For My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations."

Jeremiah 17:19 Thus the LORD said to me: "Go and stand in the gate of the children of the people, by which the kings of Judah come in and by which they go out, and in all the

gates of Jerusalem; 20 "and say to them, 'Hear the word of the LORD, you kings of Judah, and all Judah, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, who enter by these gates. 21 'Thus says the LORD: "**Take heed to yourselves, and bear no burden on the Sabbath day, nor bring it in by the gates of Jerusalem; 22 "nor carry a burden out of your houses on the Sabbath day, nor do any work, but hallow the Sabbath day, as I commanded your fathers.**

3. The Jews promised to show compassion to their fellow Jews so they could do the work of advancing Christ's cause and the nation of Israel.

The 7th year was a year of rest for the land. So even the animals had release.

Exodus 23:11 "but the seventh year you shall let it rest and lie fallow, that the poor of your people may eat; and what they leave, the beasts of the field may eat. In like manner you shall do with your vineyard and your olive grove.

The 7x7th year (49th) Year of Jubilee prefigured the grace and reign of the Lord Jesus.

Deuteronomy 15:2 "And this is the form of the release: Every creditor who has lent anything to his neighbor shall release it; he shall not require it of his neighbor or his brother, because it is called the LORD'S release.

4, Lessons:

a. It is all too common to listen to the voice of the one who does not walk in the way of the Lord, hence God's warning: Don't marry non-believers.

b. The Sabbath wasn't given to restrict your freedom. The Sabbath was given for your liberation – your liberation from daily work, so you can think of heaven and work in Christ's kingdom.

Moreover, the Sabbath is a market day for souls; it is not a market day for shoes.

c. Learn to be generous with the poor. When you do, God promises to bless you.

Deuteronomy 15:6 "For the LORD your God will bless you just as He promised you; you shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow; you shall reign over many nations, but they shall not reign over you.

d. A lying tongue can fall and crush your soul! So speak the truth when it is required.

e. This oath taking was done to promote proper worship, even as they prepared for Messiah to come.

Conclusion:

The Jews from all walks of life gathered together as one to renew the covenant God had made with them at Mt. Sinai. They vowed to keep his moral, national, and ceremonial law, and renewed their vows in 3 specific areas. They would **avoid improper marriages**, they would **honor the Sabbath Day**, and they would **treat their brothers kindly.**

Brothers and sisters in the Lord Jesus:

1. Covenant to keep God's laws. Psalms 119:115 *Depart from me, you evildoers, For I will keep the commandments of my God!*

2. Confer with others and join with them to renew your covenant vows. Help each other keep the covenant. Correct each other when you fail. Take correction when you err.

3. Christ makes you do it. He voluntarily kept God's covenant (like he walked between the cut animals for Abraham) and took the punishment when he died on the cross.

Finally: Do you want the Covenant Keeper to keep the Covenant in your place and take your place? Then ask God to count Jesus' work as yours! You will have eternal life.