

From Ruin to Revival

A Study of the Book of Nehemiah

LESSON TEN Introduction: Thousands of people in America visit their psychological counselors on a weekly or a biweekly basis. Yet one thing that is obviously lacking is **genuine change** in people's lives. The truth is that people do not really want to change their lives or give up theirs sins. They are looking for someone to talk them through their dilemmas and **sooth their troubled conscience**.

Revival will never occur this way! Remember revival is a three-step process: (1) **communication** of the Word of God, (2) **confession** of the people's sin, and (3) a **genuine change of life**. This last step is what Nehemiah 10 is all about. The people had come to a place of decision, and now, collectively, the nation was going to do something about it. It is Israel's formal commitment to change, expressed in the form of a **covenant**.

"And because of all this we make a sure covenant, and write it; and our princes, Levites, and priests, seal unto it" (9:38). It is worth noting that to "make a sure covenant" is literally to **"cut** a covenant." In the ancient world, covenants were almost always cut, because an animal was sacrificed as part of the agreement. In other words, a covenant always **costs something**!

1. The **Signers of the Covenant**.

- a. The **Civil Authority** (v.1)
- b. The **Priesthood** (v.2-8)
- c. The **Levites** (v.9-13)
- d. The **Nobles** (v.14-27)

2. The **Substance of the Covenant**.

- a. The **Authority** of the Bible (v.28-29).
- b. The Importance of the **Temple** (v.39b).
- c. The **Responsibility** of the People (v.30ff).

3. The **Stipulations of the Covenant**.

- a. There was a commitment to **family separation** (v.30)

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- b. There was a commitment to **business integrity** (v.31)
- c. There was a commitment to **church support** (v.32-39)
 - i. The **Tax** for the Temple (v.32-33)
 - ii. The **Provisions** for the Temple (v.34-35)
 - iii. The Pledge of the **Firstborn** (v.36)
 - iv. The **Tithe** for the Treasury (v.37-39)
- 4. **The Significance of a Covenant.**
 - a. It publicly affirms our **intentions**.
 - b. It clearly records our **decision**.
 - c. It immediately holds us **accountable**.

Conclusion: This covenant is different than many in the Bible, because this one began with man. It is Israel formally and publicly promising God to live a changed life. As we have learned, covenants can be very useful in the lives of believers. What covenants have you made with the Lord? **Salvation, baptism, church membership, ordination, marriage, etc.**