

king's chapel

Community Group Discussion Guide

Week of May 10, 2015

This Week's Focus: The returned exiles enter into a firm covenant aka "agreement" to keep the covenant with God that they are already in.

This Week's Text: Nehemiah 10

The gospel frees us to confess our sins without fear of condemnation. **Michael Horton**

"Again, you have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not break your oath, but keep the oaths you have made to the Lord.' But I tell you, Do not swear at all: either by heaven, for it is God's throne; or by the earth, for it is his footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King. And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make even one hair white or black. Simply let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No'; anything beyond this comes from the evil one." **Matthew 5:33-37**

Related Texts: Matthew 5:33-37; 2 Corinthians 6:14, 9:6-15; 1 Peter 3:1-2; Exodus 22:28-29, 34:20; Numbers 18:15; Galatians 3:10-14

Observations and Questions for Discussion:

- What did you find most illuminating about this week's text/sermon?
- What is the story unfolding in this chapter? What is its context within the rest of Ezra-Nehemiah?
- Nehemiah 9:38 states that the leaders of Israel "make a firm covenant in writing." Is Israel establishing a new covenant with God? Can sinful humans make an abiding covenant with a holy God? How does this covenant compare with and relate to the covenants already established by God with his people Israel?
- What motivated the people of Israel to dedicate themselves to "observe and do all the commandments of the LORD our Lord and his rules and his statutes?" [Verse 29] Why was it important that they establish this formal oath even though they were incapable of remaining faithful to their commitments?
- What is the Day of Atonement? Why is it important that this event took place prior to the composition of this covenant? Discuss how this order of events is a good reminder of the order of events in our salvation.
- Whose name is first on the list of signers? Reference verse 1. Why is this significant?

- According to verses 28-30, the people of Israel committed themselves to be separated from “the peoples of the lands.” Why did God command Israel to live in a recognizably different way from their surrounding neighbors? What did he not mean by this command? Explain how our Christian distinctiveness can influence our neighbors to see the glory of God. Reference Matthew 5:16 and 1 Peter 2:9-12.
- What are two reasons why Christians should not marry unbelievers? Reference 2 Corinthians 6:14, Nehemiah 13:26, and 1 Kings 11:1-5.
- The second commitment that the people made was to honor the Sabbath day. Reference verse 31. What is the Sabbath?
 - Discuss the following four elements that make the Sabbath distinct from the rest of the days of the week: honor and worship of God, rest from work, declaration of truth, and trust in God.
 - How does abiding by the principle of the Sabbath evidence our devotion to, as well as our faith and trust in, God?
- Verse 39 sums up the fourth and final aspect of Israel's oath; “We will not neglect the house of our God.” How important was temple life for the people of Israel and why?
- Discuss the following 6 principles of giving to the work of God:
 - Responsible Giving
 - Obedient Giving
 - Systematic and Proportional Giving
 - Sacrificial Giving
 - Prescribed Giving
 - Redemptive Giving
- What is the Law of Redemption? Reference Exodus 22:29, Exodus 34:20, and Numbers 18:15. Why was it necessary that the firstborn son be consecrated to God? In other words, why did every family owe God their firstborn son?
- Inevitably, the people of Israel failed in their efforts to remain faithful to their covenant and God's covenant. In so doing, they “entered into a curse”. [Verse 29] Discuss and rejoice in the fact that Jesus became a curse for us and redeemed us by his blood. Reference Galatians 3:10-13.
- How does Nehemiah 10 point to Jesus and the mission of his Church?

Next Week's Text: Nehemiah 11 and 12