

## Nehemiah 10:1-39 – The Oath

In the seventh month, the people of Israel had three different occasions when they listened to God's Word publicly read. The three times were the Feast of Trumpets, the Feast of Booths and a non-feast day three days after the end of the Feast of Booths. As a result of hearing God's Word they worshiped God and confessed their sins. After confessing their sins they agreed to make a covenant. The covenant was sealed and signed by some of Israel's princes, Levites and priests.

**Read Nehemiah 10:1-27 on your own.**

These verses contain the names of people who signed the covenant document. Nehemiah was listed first. The remaining people who signed the covenant were from the priests, Levites and chiefs of the people. It is surprising that Ezra's name was not on the list. (10:1-27)

**Read Nehemiah 10:28-31.**

According to verse 28 who else entered into this covenant? (10:28)

The covenant involved an oath and a curse. The curse involved the bad things that would happen to them if they did not keep the covenant. In verse 29 what did the oath involve in general? (10:29)

What specifically did they commit to in verse 30? Had they followed this rule since coming from exile? See Ezra 9:1-2, 10:2-5, Nehemiah 6:18. (10:30)

What did the people commit to in verse 31? Historically, how well did Israel keep the Sabbath and the Sabbatical years? Compare Israel's keeping of the Sabbath up to this point in time with how the Pharisees' kept the Sabbath in the New Testament. (10:31)

**Read Nehemiah 10:32-39.**

In verse 32 the people committed to giving a third of a shekel for the service of the house of God. In Exodus 30:13-16, each person was required to give an offering of a half shekel. Some attribute the difference in the amounts to different monetary systems. (10:32)

From verse 33, what was specifically involved in the service of the house of God? (10:33)

From verse 34, what did they commit to in order to maintain the altar of God? The law of Moses mentioned the necessity of the wood for the altar but it did not say who was responsible to provide the wood. (10:34)

Verses 35-39 contain the various tithes and offerings which were required by the law of Moses. What vegetation was included in verse 35?

What living creatures were included in verse 36?

What were the tithes and offerings used for? What would happen if the people did not give their tithes and offerings? See Numbers 18:21-24. Who collected the tithes? (10:37)

Verse 38 talks about the tithing of the tithe. Who received this? See Numbers 18:25-28.

At the end of verse 39, what was the people's pledge? The pledge sounds great but the challenge is in keeping the pledge. Can you remember some specific examples of people in the Bible failing to keep their pledge? How long did it take Israel to break their pledge (Exodus 24) which they made when Moses first presented them with the law? How long did it take Peter to break his pledge to Jesus at the Last Supper? There is discussion about when this chapter actually took place. Some people say that this covenant occurred during Nehemiah's second stay in Jerusalem. They say this because they don't think that the people would break their oath in the time between Nehemiah's first and second stays. We will see what the people did in Nehemiah chapter 13. These scholars may need to leave their ivory towers once in a while and experience the real world. The real world is full of sinners who don't keep their pledges and oaths. Or maybe they could just read the Old Testament. It is full of people breaking covenant with God. But God remains faithful.