

I Promise

Nehemiah 9:30-10:39

INTRODUCTION:

1. Israel's basic law governing oaths and vows is found in Numbers 30:2.
2. Ecclesiastes 5:4 says, "When you vow a vow to God, do not delay paying it, for he has no pleasure in fools."
3. Promises are not to be taken lightly.
4. Nehemiah 9:38 says that the people of God made a "sure covenant" (KJV, "firm covenant," ESV) in writing.
 - a. There is no word in the original for "covenant."
 - b. At the heart of the Hebrew root is the idea of certainty and is sometimes translated "faith," "faithfulness," "truly," etc. (cf. Heb. 11:1).
5. Promises are important for two reasons.
 - a. They help us to focus.
 - b. They allow us to express our love.
6. Israel made a binding agreement to follow the Lord wholeheartedly and put it in writing and sealed it.
 - a. Putting a seal on a document is a serious matter because it meant taking a solemn oath before the Lord.
 - b. Those who agreed to this covenant are listed in Nehemiah 10:1-27.

DISCUSSION: They promised...

I. To submit to the Law of God.

- A. "...enter into a curse and an oath to walk in God's Law..." (v. 29).
- B. The people were saying they were willing to submit totally to God's way and were willing for the curses of God to fall on them if they did not.

II. To separate from the world.

- A. "...all who have separated themselves from the peoples of the lands to the Law of God..." (v. 28).
- B. They would stay separated. "We will not give our daughters to the peoples of the land or take their daughters for our sons" (v. 30).
- C. Why?
 1. Clear Biblical warnings
 2. Historical evidence that unequally yoked marriages led to a decline in spiritual health (cf. 13:26)

III. To keep the Sabbath.

- A. Not on the Sabbath, a holy day (v. 31)
- B. God's law about the Sabbath was to be clearly understood.
 1. It was a day that was set aside to honor God.

2. It was a day to rest.
3. It was a day to declare truth.

IV. To support the Lord's work.

- A. Notice the emphasis on "the house of our God" (vv. 32-39).
- B. This passage covers an impressive series of promises to support God's work in a variety of different ways.
- C. There are given some six different examples of the right kind of giving (cf. 1 Cor. 16:1, 2; 2 Cor. 8, 9).
 1. It was responsible giving (vv. 32, 35).
 2. It was obedient giving (vv. 34, 36).
 3. It was planned giving (vv. 32, 34, 35).
 4. It was proportionate giving (vv. 34, 35).
 5. It was sacrificial giving (v. 35).
 6. It was comprehensive giving (v. 36).

CONCLUSION: