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NEHEMIAH 10: 1 Now those who sealed were: Nehemiah the governor, the son of Hacaliah, and Zedekiah,

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The names of those who sealed the covenant, vv. 1-27. All solemnly promise not to have affinity with the people of the land, Neh 10:28-30; to observe the Sabbaths, Neh 10:31; to provide for the sanctuary according to the law, Neh 10:32-36; and to pay the regular tithes for the support of the priests, Levites, and other officers of the temple, Neh 10:37-39.

Verse 1

Now those that sealed - Four classes here seal. Nehemiah first, as their governor. And after him, secondly, The priests, Neh 10:2-8. Thirdly, The Levites, Neh 10:9-13. Fourthly, The chiefs of the people, Neh 10:14-27.

It is strange that, among all these, we hear nothing of Ezra, nor of the high priest Eliashib. Nor are any of the prophets mentioned, though there must have been some of them at Jerusalem at this time.

The whole of this chapter, the two first verses excepted, is wanting in the Arabic; the word Pashur of the third verse is retained; and the rest of the chapter is summed up in these words, and the rest of their assembly.

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NEHEMIAH 10: 2 Seraiah, Azariah, Jeremiah,

NEHEMIAH 10: 3 Pashhur, Amariah, Malchijah,

NEHEMIAH 10: 4 Hattush, Shebaniah, Malluch,

NEHEMIAH 10: 5 Harim, Meremoth, Obadiah,

NEHEMIAH 10: 6 Daniel, Ginnethon, Baruch,

NEHEMIAH 10: 7 Meshullam, Abijah, Mijamin,

NEHEMIAH 10: 8 Maaziah, Bilgai, Shemaiah; these were the priests.

NEHEMIAH 10: 9 The Levites: namely, Jeshua the son of Azaniah, Binnui of the sons of Henadad, Kadmiel;

NEHEMIAH 10: 10 and their brothers, Shebaniah, Hodiah, Kelita, Pelaiah, Hanan,

NEHEMIAH 10: 11 Mica, Rehob, Hashabiah,

NEHEMIAH 10: 12 Zaccur, Sherebiah, Shebaniah,

NEHEMIAH 10: 13 Hodiah, Bani, Beninu.

NEHEMIAH 10: 14 The chiefs of the people: Parosh, Pahathmoab, Elam, Zattu, Bani,

NEHEMIAH 10: 15 Bunni, Azgad, Bebai,

NEHEMIAH 10: 16 Adonijah, Bigvai, Adin,

NEHEMIAH 10: 17 Ater, Hezekiah, Azzur,

NEHEMIAH 10: 18 Hodiah, Hashum, Bezai,

NEHEMIAH 10: 19 Hariph, Anathoth, Nobai,

NEHEMIAH 10: 20 Magpiash, Meshullam, Hezir,

NEHEMIAH 10: 21 Meshezabel, Zadok, Jaddua,

NEHEMIAH 10: 22 Pelatiah, Hanan, Anaiah,

NEHEMIAH 10: 23 Hoshea, Hananiah, Hasshub,

NEHEMIAH 10: 24 Hallohesh, Pilha, Shobek,

NEHEMIAH 10: 25 Rehum, Hashabnah, Maaseiah,

NEHEMIAH 10: 26 and Ahiah, Hanan, Anan,

NEHEMIAH 10: 27 Malluch, Harim, Baanah.

NEHEMIAH 10: 28 The rest of the people, the priests, the Levites, the porters, 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—

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Verse 28

And the rest of the people - All had, in one or other of the classes which sealed, their representatives; and by their sealing they considered themselves bound.

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NEHEMIAH 10: 29 they joined with their brothers, their nobles, and entered into a curse, and into 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;

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Verse 29

They clave to their brethren - Though they did not sign this instrument, yet they bound themselves under a solemn oath that they would fulfill the conditions of the covenant, and walk according to the law of Moses.

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NEHEMIAH 10: 30 and that we would not give our daughters to the peoples of the land, nor take their daughters for our sons;

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Verse 30

Not give our daughters - Make no affinity with the people of the land.

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NEHEMIAH 10: 31 and if the peoples of the land bring wares or any grain on the Sabbath day to sell, that we would not buy of them on the Sabbath, or on a holy day; and that we would forego the seventh year, and the exaction of every debt.

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Verse 31

Bring ware - We will most solemnly keep the Sabbath. Leave the seventh year - We will let the land have its Sabbath, and rest every seventh year. See on Exo 23:10-11 (note).

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NEHEMIAH 10: 32 Also we made ordinances for ourselves, to charge ourselves yearly with the third part of a shekel for the service of the house of our God;

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Verse 32

Charge ourselves yearly with the third part of a shekel - According to the law, every one above twenty years of age was to give half a shekel to the sanctuary, which was called a ransom for their souls. See Exo 30:11-16. But why is one third of a shekel now promised instead of the half shekel, which the law required? To this question no better answer can be given than this: the general poverty of the people, occasioned by their wars, overthrows, heavy tributes, etc., in the land of their captivity: and now on their return, having little property, it was impossible for them to give more; and we know, from the terms of the law in this case, that the poor and the rich were obliged to give alike, because it was a ransom for their souls; and the souls of the poor and the rich were of like value, and stood equally in need of redemption; for all were equally fallen, and all had come equally short of the glory of God.

Though only a third part of a shekel was given at this time, and probably for the reason above assigned, yet when the people got into a state of greater prosperity, the half shekel was resumed: for it is clear that this sum was paid in the time of our Lord, though not to the temple, but to the Roman government. Hence when those who collected this as a tribute came to our Lord, it was for the διδραχμα, didrachma, which was half a shekel; and the coin with which our Lord paid for himself and Peter was a stater, which contained exactly two half shekels. See Mat 17:24-27.

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NEHEMIAH 10: 33 for the show bread, and for the continual meal offering, and for the continual burnt offering, for the Sabbaths, for the new moons, for the set feasts, and for the holy things, and for the sin offerings to make atonement for Israel, and for all the work of the house of our God.

NEHEMIAH 10: 34 We cast lots, the priests, the Levites, and the people, for the wood offering, to bring it into the house of our God, according to our fathers' houses, at times appointed, year by year, to burn on the altar of the LORD our God, as it is written in the law;

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Verse 34

Cast the lots - for the wood-offering - There does not appear to have been any wood-offering under the law. It was the business of the Nethinim to procure this; and hence they were called hewers of wood and drawers of water to the congregation. But it is very likely that after the captivity few Nethinim were found; for as such, who were the descendants of the Gibeonites, were considered only as slaves among the Israelites, they would doubtless find it as much, if not more, their interest to abide in the land of their captivity, than to return with their former masters. As there was not enough of such persons to provide wood for the fires of the temple, the people now cast lots, not who should furnish the wood, but what class or district should furnish it at a particular time of the year, so that there might be a constant supply. One district furnished it for one whole year, or for the first month or year; another, for the second month or year; and so on. Now the lot was to determine which district should bring the supply on the first month or year; which on the second; and so on. When the wood was brought, it was delivered to the Levites: they cut, prepared, and stacked it; and when wanted, delivered it to the priests, whose business it was to lay it upon the altar. Perhaps this providing of the wood was done only once a year by one district, the next year by another district, and so on: and this bringing the wood to the temple at last became a great day; and was constituted into a feast, called by Josephus *Ἐυλοφορία*, the carrying of the wood. - See De Bell. Jud. lib. ii., cap. xvii., sec. 6, p. 194. This feast is not mentioned in the sacred writings: then there was no need for such an institution, as the Nethinim were sufficiently numerous.

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NEHEMIAH 10: 35 and to bring the first fruits of our ground, and the first fruits of all fruit of all kinds of trees, year by year, to the LORD's house;

NEHEMIAH 10: 36 also the firstborn of our sons, and of our livestock, as it is written in the law, and the firstborn of our herds and of our flocks, to bring to the house of our God, to the priests who minister in the house of our God;

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#### Verse 36

Also the first-born - See this law, and the reasons of it, Exo 13:1-13. As by this law the Lord had a right to all the firstborn, instead of these he was pleased to take the tribe of Levi for the whole; and thus the Levites served at the tabernacle and temple, instead of the first-born of all the tribes.

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NEHEMIAH 10: 37 and that we should bring the first fruits of our dough, and our wave offerings, and the fruit of all kinds of trees, the new wine and the oil, to the priests, to the rooms of the house of our God; and the tithes of our ground to the Levites; for they, the Levites, take the tithes in all the cities of our tillage.

NEHEMIAH 10: 38 The priest the son of Aaron shall be with the Levites, when the Levites take tithes: and the Levites shall bring up the tithe of the tithes to the house of our God, to the rooms, into the treasure house.

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#### Verse 38

Tithe of the tithes - The tithes of all the produce of the fields were brought to the Levites; out of these a tenth part was given to the priests. This is what is called the tithe of the tithes. The law for this is found, Num 18:26.

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NEHEMIAH 10: 39 For the children of Israel and the children of Levi shall bring the wave offering of the grain, of the new wine, and of the oil, to the rooms, where are the vessels of the sanctuary, and the priests who minister, and the porters, and the singers. We will not forsake the house of our God.

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Verse 39

We will not forsake the house of our God - Here was a glorious resolution; and had they been faithful to it, they had been a great and good people to the present day. But what is implied in, We will not forsake the house of our God? I answer: -

- I. The Church of God is the house of God; there he has his constant dwelling-place.
- II. True believers are his family in this house; and this family consists of,
  1. Fathers and mothers;
  2. Young persons;
  3. Little children; And
  4. Servants.
- III. The ministers of the word of God are the officers and overseers of this house and family.
- IV. The worship of God is the grand employment of this family.
- V. The ordinances of God are the food of the members of this family; or the means of their spiritual support.
- VI. Those who do not forsake the house of their God are those,
  1. Who continue in the faith;
  2. Who grow in grace;
  3. Who labor in the vineyard;
  4. Who bring forth fruit;
  5. Who conscientiously attend all the ordinances; and
  6. Who take care that the offerings of the house of God shall be duly made, providing for those who labor in the word and doctrine.

Reader,

1. Art thou of this house?
2. Art thou in this house?
3. To what part of the family dost thou belong?

4. Art thou still an infant in this house?
5. Dost thou attend the ordinances of this house?
6. Hast thou forsaken this house?

These questions are of great importance; answer them as in the sight of God.