

Nehemiah 10:1-39 – Study Leader’s Questions

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Nehemiah 10:1-39 – Answers to Questions

See Dr Ruckman's commentary *The Books of Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther* pp 301-312 and the *Ruckman Reference Bible* pp 708-709 for detailed comments, especially on the recurrence of Old Testament names; "**Jeremiah,**" "**Obadiah,**" "**Daniel,**" "**Baruch,**" "**Benjamin,**" "**Adonijah,**" "**Zadok**" Nehemiah 10:2, 5, 6, 7, 16, 21 indicating a future return of Old Testament times and the full restoration of Israel.

1. What was done by the people named in Nehemiah 10:1-27? What is the significance of this act?

They "**separated themselves from the people of the lands unto the law of God**" according to "**knowledge, and...understanding**" Nehemiah 10:28. See also:

"And the children of Israel, which were come again out of captivity, and all such as had separated themselves unto them from the filthiness of the heathen of the land, to seek the LORD God of Israel, did eat" Ezra 6:21.

"Which thou hast commanded by thy servants the prophets, saying, The land, unto which ye go to possess it, is an unclean land with the filthiness of the people of the lands, with their abominations, which have filled it from one end to another with their uncleanness" Ezra 9:11

(!) Today it is called 'multi-culturalism.' The separation is significant because:

- God commanded it, Ezra 9:10, 11, 12, 13, that they not "**join in affinity with the people of these abominations**" Ezra 9:14 in order that "**the holy seed**" not be mingled "**with the people of those lands**" Ezra 9:2, especially with respect to idolatrous worship, against the First Commandment "**Thou shalt have no other gods before me**" Exodus 20:3 and interracial marriage. See Exodus 23:32, 33, Deuteronomy 7:3, 4, 5.

"For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods; and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father" 1 Kings 11:4.

- God chose Israel to be a holy people, not an unclean people like "**the heathen of the lands.**" "**For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth**" Deuteronomy 7:6.

- God chose Israel to be His "**peculiar treasure**" Exodus 19:5, Psalm 135:4 to keep His commandments.

"For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God, and the LORD hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth" Deuteronomy 14:2.

"And the LORD hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar people, as he hath promised thee, and that thou shouldest keep all his commandments" Deuteronomy 26:18.

God commands the same for the Christian today, to be separated, though not isolated from the world and unto Himself as "**a peculiar people**" 1 Peter 2:9.

"And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" 2 Corinthians 6:16-18. See also Leviticus 26:12.

2. What do the four phrases used to describe the Word of God mean (Nehemiah 10:29)?

2.1. The Law

“**The law**” as Nehemiah 10:29 indicates is “**the law of Moses**” mentioned 21 times in the scripture, 14 times in the Old Testament, 7 times in the New Testament; Joshua 8:31, 32, 23:6, 1 Kings 2:3, 2 Kings 14:6, 23:25, 2 Chronicles 23:18, 30:16, Ezra 3:2, 7:6, Nehemiah 8:1, Daniel 9:11, 13, Malachi 4:4, Luke 2:22, 24:44, John 7:23, Acts 13:39, 15:5, 28:23, 1 Corinthians 9:9. “**The law of Moses**” became transcribed as “**the book of the law.**” This expression occurs 14 times in scripture; Joshua 8:31, 34, 23:6, 24:26, 2 Kings 14:26, 22:8, 11, 2 Chronicles 17:9, 34:15, Nehemiah 8:1, 3, 18, 9:3, Galatians 3:10. “**The law**” therefore becomes a part of the scripture as the Lord Jesus Christ explained in Luke 24:27, 44.

“And beginning at *Moses and all the prophets*, he expounded unto them *in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.*”

“And he said unto them, *These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.*”

2.2. The Commandments

The expression “**the commandments**” occurs 47 times in scripture. All but 3 occurrences, Matthew 15:9, Mark 7:7, Colossians 2:22, refer, in some form, to “**the commandments of the LORD**” as in Nehemiah 10:29. This particular expression occurs 24 times in scripture; Leviticus 4:2, 13, 22, 27, 5:17, Numbers 15:39, Deuteronomy 4:2, 6:17, 8:6, 10:13, 11:27, 28, 28:9, 13, Judges 2:17, 3:4, 1 Kings 18:18, 2 Kings 17:16, 19, 1 Chronicles 28:8, 2 Chronicles 24:20, Ezra 7:11, Nehemiah 10:29, 1 Corinthians 14:37. “**The commandments of the LORD**” refer to God’s directives that must be kept such that the individual sins by not keeping them.

“Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, *If a soul shall sin through ignorance against any of the commandments of the LORD concerning things which ought not to be done, and shall do against any of them*” Leviticus 4:2. See also Leviticus 4: 13, 22, 27, 5:17.

The same strictures apply in *both* Testaments as the context of 1 Corinthians 14:37 shows, in which Paul is giving commandments i.e. rules, not suggestions.

“Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge” 1 Corinthians 14:29.

“Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law” 1 Corinthians 14:34.

“If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord” 1 Corinthians 14:37.

“Let all things be done decently and in order” 1 Corinthians 14:40.

That should be the first rule of any church. It was always one of the only two rules of early Navigator conferences:

“Let all things be done decently and in order” 1 Corinthians 14:40.

“Let all your things be done with charity” 1 Corinthians 16:14.

2.3. *The Regulations, ordinances*

The word is “**judgments.**” The Lord’s “**judgments**” are largely the punishments that He inflicts for wrongdoing e.g. disobedience to His commandments. The word “**judgments**” occurs 127 times in the scriptures. Its early use shows how it largely represents God’s punishments.

“Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments” Exodus 6:6.

“But Pharaoh shall not hearken unto you, that I may lay my hand upon Egypt, and bring forth mine armies, and my people the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great judgments” Exodus 7:4.

“Now these are the judgments which thou shalt set before them” Exodus 21:1.

Exodus 21 sets forth many judgments that God gave Israel to implement i.e. ***“Ye shall do my judgments, and keep mine ordinances, to walk therein: I am the LORD your God”*** Leviticus 18:4.

Exodus 21:2-11, i.e. 10 verses, deal with judgments on fair treatment of servants, including a man’s own daughter who may be sold as a bond servant. Exodus 21:12-36, i.e. 25 verses, deal with judgments for wrongdoing.

“He that smiteth a man, so that he die, shall be surely put to death” Exodus 21:12.

“And he that smiteth his father, or his mother, shall be surely put to death” Exodus 12:15.
Stephen aka Nic Seddon please note.

See:

www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/news/9814823.Seaham_man_charged_with_murder_of_parent_s/.

“Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, Burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe” Exodus 21:24-25.

See also:

“The land also shall be left of them, and shall enjoy her sabbaths, while she lieth desolate without them: and they shall accept of the punishment of their iniquity: because, even because they despised my judgments, and because their soul abhorred my statutes” Leviticus 26:43.

“For the Egyptians buried all their firstborn, which the LORD had smitten among them: upon their gods also the LORD executed judgments” Numbers 33:4.

“Judgments are prepared for scorners, and stripes for the back of fools” Proverbs 19:29.

“And I will utter my judgments against them touching all their wickedness, who have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, and worshipped the works of their own hands” Jeremiah 1:16.

“Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I, even I, am against thee, and will execute judgments in the midst of thee in the sight of the nations” Ezekiel 5:8. See Ezekiel 5:10, 15, 11:9, 14:21, 16:41, 23:24, 25:11, 28:22, 26, 30:14, 19.

“If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church” 1 Corinthians 6:4, noting the context.

“Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest” Revelation 15:4, noting the context.

“For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy. And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments” Revelation 16:6-7.

“For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand” Revelation 19:2. These verses show that the main emphasis on judgments where these are explained in the scriptures is punishment.

2.4. *The Decrees, statutes?*

The word “*statutes*” occurs 132 times in scripture, almost always with respect to God’s statutes (2 Kings 17:19, Micah 6:16 are exceptions), 117 times with the word “*judgments*,” God intended that Israel implement both. However, in contrast to the term “*judgments*,” “*statutes*” consist of, or are associated with, how rewards for right-doing through obeying God’s commandments may be obtained. For example:

“If ye walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them; Then I will give you rain in due season, and the land shall yield her increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit” Leviticus 26:3-4.

“And her father hear her vow, and her bond wherewith she hath bound her soul, and her father shall hold his peace at her: then all her vows shall stand, and every bond wherewith she hath bound her soul shall stand...These are the statutes, which the LORD commanded Moses, between a man and his wife, between the father and his daughter, being yet in her youth in her father’s house” Numbers 30:4, 16, i.e. respect for a woman’s word afforded in the Old Testament by statute.

“Thou shalt keep therefore his statutes, and his commandments, which I command thee this day, that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee, and that thou mayest prolong thy days upon the earth, which the LORD thy God giveth thee, for ever” Deuteronomy 4:40.

“And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them: That his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment, to the right hand, or to the left: to the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he, and his children, in the midst of Israel” Deuteronomy 17:19-20.

“For who will hearken unto you in this matter? but as his part is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his part be that tarrieth by the stuff: they shall part alike. And it was so from that day forward, that he made it a statute and an ordinance for Israel unto this day” 1 Samuel 30:24-25.

“And it shall be, if thou wilt hearken unto all that I command thee, and wilt walk in my ways, and do that is right in my sight, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as David my servant did; that I will be with thee, and build thee a sure house, as I built for David, and will give Israel unto thee” 1 Kings 11:38.

“The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes” Psalm 19:8.

“That they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God” Ezekiel 11:20.

“Yet say ye, Why? doth not the son bear the iniquity of the father? When the son hath done that which is lawful and right, and hath kept all my statutes, and hath done them, he shall surely live” Ezekiel 18:19.

“But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die” Ezekiel 18:21.

“If the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die” Ezekiel 33:15.

Note that some statutes appear to have a negative emphasis i.e. like judgments but a good result was the intention.

“Do not drink wine nor strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations: And that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean” Leviticus 10:9-10. Note also the following with respect to blessings afforded to the priests by statute.

“The heave shoulder and the wave breast shall they bring with the offerings made by fire of the fat, to wave it for a wave offering before the LORD; and it shall be thine, and thy sons’ with thee, by a statute for ever; as the LORD hath commanded” Leviticus 10:15.

3. What did they promise to do in Nehemiah 10:30? In what ways should we follow their example?

They promised to abide by Deuteronomy 7:3-4. See *Question 1* and Exodus 34:12-16.

“Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly.”

The example of Deuteronomy 7:3-4, Nehemiah 10:30 is followed according to 2 Corinthians 6:14-15. The reasons are self-explanatory.

“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?” See also 1 Corinthians 7:12-16 with respect to Paul’s guidance on unequal yokes.

4. What promises did they make in Nehemiah 10:31? In what ways should we follow their example?

They promised to observe the weekly Sabbath according to Exodus 20:10, 23:12, Leviticus 23:3, Deuteronomy 5:12, 13, 14 and the seventh-year Sabbath according to Exodus 23:10, 11, Leviticus 25:2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 together with the cancellation of debt except for foreigners, Deuteronomy 15:1, 2, 3. Christians have followed the principle of observing ***“the holy day”*** since apostolic times, though as the first day of the week, not the seventh.

“And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight” Acts 20:7. ***“The first day”*** of course is that of the Lord’s resurrection.

“Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils” Mark 16:9. See also Matthew 28:1, Mark 16:2, Luke 24:1, John 20:1. However, observance of the first day of the week as ***“the holy day”*** is appropriate for Christians because it *predates* the observance of the seventh day, in the very chapter of scripture that pictures the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ, Exodus 12:22.

“And in the first day there shall be an holy convocation, and in the seventh day there shall be an holy convocation to you; no manner of work shall be done in them, save that which every man must eat, that only may be done of you” Exodus 12:16.

5. What areas of life were affected by their covenant with God?

All of them, such that they sought to glorify God; religious, Nehemiah 10:29, social, Nehemiah 10:30, commercial, Nehemiah 10:31, ecclesiastical, Nehemiah 10:32, 33, 34, agricultural, Nehemiah 10:35, 36, 37, 38, 39. It should be the same for the Christian.

“Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God” 1 Corinthians 10:31.

“And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him” Colossians 3:17.

“And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ” Colossians 3:23.

6. *In what concrete ways did the people plan to show their devotion to God (Nehemiah 10:39)? In what ways should we follow their example?*

They pledged to bring offerings for ***“the priests that minister, and the porters, and the singers.”*** Paul sets out the Christian’s equivalent responsibility as follows, with respect to the ministry of scriptural giving to sustain ***“they which preach the gospel.”***

“Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock? Say I these things as a man? or saith not the law the same also?..For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen? Or saith he it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written: that he that ploweth should plow in hope; and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope. If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?...Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel” 1 Corinthians 9:11, 13-14.

“But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work” 2 Corinthians 9:6-8.

“Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things” Galatians 6:6.

7. *Why does God desire the first and best of our resources (Nehemiah 10:35-37)?*

David explains why. In the following respect, **“all things come of thee,”** God gave His First and Best. God wants His people to be holy like Him in both Testaments. The ministry of giving is an encouragement to that purpose.

“But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee” 1 Chronicles 29:14.

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” John 3:16.

“Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift” 2 Corinthians 9:15.

“For I am the LORD that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy” Leviticus 11:45.

“Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy: for I the LORD your God am holy” Leviticus 19:2.

“And ye shall be holy unto me: for I the LORD am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine” Leviticus 20:26.

“Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy” 1 Peter 1:16.

Israel, intended as **“a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation”** Exodus 19:6, typifies the Church, which is **“a royal priesthood, an holy nation”** 1 Peter 2:9 *and everlasting*, **“Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen”** Ephesians 3:21 Therefore the nation of Israel *must* be **“a special people”** Deuteronomy 7:6 *and last forever*, which Israel will, Jeremiah 31:35-37, 33:19-26.

8. *What principles from Israel’s covenant with God are applicable today?*

See Nehemiah 10:29 for the scope of this covenant, described as **“a curse, and...an oath.”** For present-day applicability to the Christian, see *Questions 3, 4, 5, 6, 7* with respect to separation, worship, service and doing **“all to the glory of God”** and holy living. The final aspect of the covenant is **“to walk in God’s law...and to observe and do all the commandments of the LORD our Lord, and his judgments and his statutes.”** The same is binding on a Christian with respect to **“all the counsel of God”** Acts 20:27:

“And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” Ephesians 6:17. This verse should be memorised.

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord” Colossians 3:16. This verse should be memorised.

“For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe” 1 Thessalonians 2:13. This verse should be memorised.

“Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus” 2 Timothy 1:13. This verse should be memorised.

“But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves” James 1:22. This verse should be memorised.

“As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby” 1 Peter 2:2. This verse should be memorised.