

Front Slide

I. Slide1 **Announce:**

A. Next Wed Night: Carnitas, rice, beans.

II. Slide2 **Intro: Front Slide**

A. Ever Front Slide? *What is it?* the opp of backslide.

1. Hosea first said, *My people are bent on **backsliding** from Me. Though they call to the Most High, None at all **exalt** Him.* 11:7 and later God reveals *I will heal their **backsliding**, I will love them freely, For My anger has turned away from him.* 14:4

B. *Last chapter...An incredible chapter:* after fasting, separation, confession, reading of the word, & worship; came a long prayer of **recommitment & covenant** with God.

1. Well the end of **ch.9** & all of **ch.10** is a long awaited **Front-Slide**.

C. **Story:** A man in 1 church would pray at the end of *every* one of his prayers, *Lord, clean the cobwebs out of my life*. One of the members of the church became weary of hearing this *insincere request* week after week, **because** he **saw no change** in the petitioner's life. **So**, next time he heard the man pray, *Lord, clean the cobwebs out of my life*, he quickly added, *And while you're at it Lord, kill the spider*.

1. It's one thing to **pray** a passionate prayer like that of **ch.9**, & quite another to **live an obedient life** after we say *amen*. [**Prayer:** kill the spiders in our life]

III. Slide3 **THE SIGNERS (1-27)**

A. The most famous signature on the Declaration of Independence is that of John Hancock, who, as President of Congress, presumably signed first. Hancock's large, flamboyant signature became iconic, and John Hancock emerged in the United States as an informal synonym for "*signature*".

B. We have here **Nehemiah** heading this list & **84 people** putting their seal upon it.

[Priests (2-8), Levites (14-27), Leaders (9-13), & many other citizens (28)]

1. I call to your attention only one name in vs.15...once again we have *Buni from the tribe of thumper* again :)

C. **Putting a seal on a document was a serious matter**. It was taking a solemn oath before **God**.

1. Numb.30:2 **If a man makes a vow to the LORD, or swears an oath to bind himself by some agreement, he shall not break his word; he shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth.**

- D. Should believers today bind themselves w/oaths as we walk with the Lord & serve Him?
1. **Probably not.** Our relationship is as **a child to a Father**.
 - a) Do you have your kids sign oaths & vows to you? (Get it in writing sometimes for clarification is fine **but** hopefully that's the **exception & not** the **norm** in your relationship)
 - b) Our Father wants our **obedience** to be based on **love (not contracts)**
 2. Can you think of any NT examples of believers taking oaths of **obedience** to the Lord?
 - a) Our **obedience** should be **a joyful response** to what He **has done** for us.
 - b) The reason Christ came is not because man was a **promise keeper** **but** because man was a **covenant breaker**.
 - (1) He gave us **The list of 10** to show us we **would** fall short of doing it ourselves.
 - (2) Jesus came to show, *you couldn't keep them, but I kept them. You failed at all of them in one way or another, I have fulfilled all of them, one way & another.*
 3. We don't succeed as Christians because we **make** promises to God, **but** because we **believe** the promises of God & **act** upon them. (www)
 - a) **So** don't base your **obedience** on **fear...God will judge me if I don't do it, but** base your **obedience** on His **love for what He has done. The love of Christ compels us.**
 4. Mt.5:33-37 **do not swear at all...but let your yes be yes, & your no, no.**
- E. Warren Wiersbe said it best, **We need not give faith promises or pledges. We must so love the Lord that generous giving will be a normal & joyful part of our lives.**

IV. Slide4 **THE PROMISES (28-39)**

- A. He records **6 promises** they made to God.
- B. Slide5a [1] **They will not intermarry with non-Jews** (28-30)
- C. **Separation is** simply *total devotion to God, no matter what the cost.*
 1. The things they name were obviously the things **they were lax in.**
 2. Always note **from** & **to** when talking about separation.
- D. Separation can best be seen when a man & woman marry.
 1. They separate themselves from all other possible mates & give themselves completely to each other. (At least it's supposed to be this way)
- E. (30) **Ask:** What was the danger of **mixed marriages?** (The loss of faith)
 1. **Example:** But King Solomon loved many foreign women, as well as the daughter of Pharaoh: women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites,

Sidonians, and Hittites; from the nations of whom the LORD had said to the children of Israel, You shall not intermarry with them, nor they with you. Surely they'll turn away your hearts after their gods. Solomon clung to these in love.

2. How did the loss of faith come?

a) It would be hard observing the dietary laws (every meal).

b) Annual feasts (he/she couldn't go).

c) He or she would be continually ceremonially unclean.

(1) There would be constant conflict, then occasional compromise, & finally complete conformity.

3. Why did they do it then? Some for social status, or to get ahead in business, some maybe thinking they'd convert their mate (missionary dating).

a) Often we hear it is said, *As long as we love each other it will work out.* But the question isn't whether you can get it to **work out**, but *will this marriage glorify God & thus enjoy God's best blessing.*

F. Slide5b [2] They will obey all the Sabbath laws (31)

G. (31) Ask: Why was foregoing the 7th years produce a biggy for them?

1. That is what kicked them out of the land that they just returned to.

2. It must have taken great faith to trust God for your produce to last all the way through 2 years. Or at Jubilee...3 years (esp thru the economic depression they were going through)

H. Where in the NT does the Lord call us to this same faith/trust?

1. Read Mt.6:25-34 NLT

I. Slide5c [3] They will take care of the Temple (32, 34, 39)

J. The things they name were obviously the things they were lax in.

1. What would be on your list?

K. We will not neglect the house of our God – Used 9 times here, referring to the restored temple.

1. The focus of most of these commitments is summed up in this last phrase.

L. But wait, God doesn't live in the houses we build Him does He?

1. G.Cambell Morgan said, *whereas the house of God today is no longer material but spiritual, the material is still a very real symbol of the spiritual.*

When the church of God in any place in any locality is careless about the material place of assembly, the place of its worship & its work, it is a sign & evidence that its life is at a **low ebb**.

2. **So, no**, God doesn't live in the houses in which we meet for worship. **But**, the way we care for those buildings indicates what we **think** of our God.
3. Haggai 1:8,9 **Now go up into the hills, bring down timber, & rebuild my house. Then I will take pleasure in it and be honored, says the Lord. 9 You hoped for rich harvests, but they were poor. And when you brought your harvest home, I blew it away. Why? Because my house lies in ruins, says the Lord of Heaven's Armies, while all of you are busy building your own fine houses.**
 - a) **Can't we fix up our homes? Sure**, just don't leave the other *undone*.
4. **Ask: What is your thoughts on church buildings?**
 - a) Here are some comments as I gathered from studying Architectonics churches throughout history: Big Cathedrals were to show **who God is**. They were to make you feel small. You walk in, you gasp. Roomy, enormous, light, color, *echo 'y*. Bible stories in stain glass. Bible characters carved into wood or sculpted into stone. It's scholasticism in stone. A copy of heaven, Number, measure, weight, rhythmically ordered. The church reflects the bosom of nature.
 - b) **I believe whatever building the Lord gives you, you can take care of the best you can.** (Battery factory)
 - c) The Lord has blessed us with a great facility. I'm excited to clean it up in a couple weeks.
 - d) **If you designed a church, as we did, what would you add & what would you subtract, & why?**

M. **Slide5d [4] They will observe all the sacred festivals** (33)

N. **Slide5e [5] They will dedicate to the Lord the firstborn of their sons and animals** (36)

1. **Why the emphasis on 1st things?** 1st fruits as opposed to *left-over fruits*.

O. **Slide5f [6] They will pay their tithes** (35, 37–38)

P. **Tithe & Time** are 2 other areas to not neglect in the house of God. **Or Stewardship & Service.**

1. **Stewardship**

2. (32,33) **Temple tax** dropped to 1/3 cuz of hard times. Back to $\frac{1}{2}$ *shekel* in Jesus time.

- a) Sanctified common sense here. *Dropping of the tax didn't alter the meaning of the tradition or lesson the devotion of the people.*
- b) **We** must not put on ourselves **burdens** that God never expected us to carry, **nor** shall we look for the **easiest & least** demanding way to serve the Lord.

3. **Service**

- 4. (34) **Wood offering** – Anyone could help here. [What could I do???]
 - a) Ask yourself, ask the Lord, **What have You gifted me with? What have I at my disposal in which I could help?** Help w/pews on 31st, a wood offering :)

Q. **Slide5gblank** Don't neglect God's house (your body is the temple)

- 1. But let's remember, **our churches** definitely represent **Gods House** to others all around the globe.
- 2. *We need not give faith promises or pledges. We must so love the Lord that generous giving will be a normal & joyful part of our lives.*
- 3. **Slide6** Sir Winston Churchill said, *We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.*