

# 'Building Blocks of Faith Series'

## Sermons in the Book of Nehemiah

### Message 18 - 'What Follows 'Amen'? (2) Nehemiah 10:28 - 31



There has been a mighty reviving amongst the Lord's people in the day of Nehemiah that began with a returning to the Word of God, and as the Spirit moved, conviction and repentance. When they heard the Word of God it was to them as though the Lord Himself was speaking directly to them. We have been considering their response to this great movement, in other words, what followed Amen. Their first reaction was to place themselves under the authority of the Scriptures. They sought to bring their lives into line with the teaching of the Word. In these verses, we can see a further response:

**-They Sought to Separate themselves unto the Lord** - This is never an easy thing to address, but separation from the world is an essential aspect in the Christian life. When we speak of separation, what is the principle? It is the separation that comes with being totally devoted to God. Along with this is a commitment and willingness to do this irrespective of the cost. The Jews separated from those around them, and set themselves to live for Lord and in accordance with His Word. They did this as a people of God together.

**Marriage** - There is a very clear warning in these verses about mixed marriages, in the sense of Jew and non-Jew, or for the new covenant, believer and unbeliever. The concern is not racial, it is religious. There is a reason why marriage and the family head the list of commitments here. The family is the basic unit of society, godly or otherwise. As Christians, we must defend the family despite the many attempts to tear it apart. It is for the good of the country, and the Scriptures speak of the importance of the family.

**Sabbath Day** - This was a sign to the rest of the world that the Jews were different, and that they had a special calling. The Sabbath had not specific rules in its observation, but there was a necessary abstinence from all unnecessary work. They also adhered to the Sabbatical Year as set forth in Leviticus 25. This was a great step of faith as it would require trusting God to provide two years of food, but God promised to provide. After seven Sabbatical Years, the people were called to observe a Jubilee Year, and this would actually mean trusting God for three years of food provision. This desire to observe the Sabbatical Year was indeed a great step of faith. Even moreso when we consider the poverty of the nation, and the people, they were poor, and the nation faced economical and agricultural depression. So, you can see, this was no easy decision! The key principle to realise is this that God ordained the Sabbath, not at Mount Sinai with the giving of the Law, but it is a creation ordinance. This clearly would seem to state that as long as Creation is in effect and is sustained, the Sabbath is also in effect. We have not been commanded to observe a passive Sabbath in the sense that we have been given this precious day to dwell upon the Lord's work on behalf of sinners. The Lord's Day should be a day of worship and an opportunity to focus on things of worth, things of a great God, and a glorious future for the believer in Christ. How do you use your Sabbath? Do you enjoy the fruits of the Lord's Day? The Lord has given it for our good. Do we observe a few formal moments in church before spending the rest of the day as the rest of the week?



## Penzance Baptist Church

'Upholding the Ordinary Means of Grace'

Pastor Jonathan Stobbs