

Connect360: Leading by Example

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- *Lesson Eleven in the Connect360 unit “Kingdom Assignment: The Relentless Pursuit of Obedience” focuses on Nehemiah 10:28-30.*

Why did Nehemiah and the leaders challenge the Hebrews to sign an agreement in writing?

First, I believe it showed their commitment to God. They separated themselves from foreigners and joined together, “taking on themselves a curse and an oath to walk in God’s law, which was given through Moses, God’s servant, and to keep and to observe all the commandments of God our Lord, and His ordinances and His statutes” (Nehemiah 10:29).

The oath was made to be faithful to God. This verse has been misused by autocratic leaders and groups who take a curse and oath to be loyal to a leader or a group.

Nehemiah didn’t ask for loyalty to himself. The people were committing themselves to be loyal to the commandments and ordinances of God.

Leaders must be careful not to manipulate people into following the leaders’ own personal agendas.

Second, the document was a testimony to the nations.

Opposition had come from neighboring people attempting to prevent the reestablishment of Jerusalem. A strong Jerusalem was a threat to neighbors because other people bring other gods.

Many in the region believed in a plurality of gods who reigned over local areas and people groups.

Even the Hebrews wanted a god they could see. Although *Yahweh* God just had led them miraculously out of slavery, they built a golden calf.

Solomon had asked God for wisdom. At the dedication of the Temple he prayed, “O Lord, the God of Israel, there is no god like you in heaven or on earth, keeping covenant and *showing* lovingkindness to your servants who walk before you with all their heart” (2 Chronicles 6:14).

Yet even after God’s blessings, he foolishly married many wives of other nations and gods, and idolatry spread throughout the land.

Third, it was a resolution for themselves. The act of signing a document proved the people’s sincerity and intention.

The New Testament act of baptism is a public confession of sin and recognition that we are buried with Christ in baptism and raised to walk in a new life.

Vows are made at a wedding ceremony and usually rings are given to express sincerity and promise faithfulness.

Similarly, the Hebrew people’s signed document was a physical document promising faithfulness to the covenant. Good intentions are strengthened by public declarations, providing a tangible visible memory during discouraging days.

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