

ARISE AND BUILD

Neh. 2:20

Neh. 2:20 Then answered I them, and said unto them, The God of heaven, he will prosper us; therefore **we his servants will arise and build:** but ye have no portion, nor right, nor memorial, in Jerusalem.

Our theme this year is *“Arise and Build.”* We have been considering the Book of Nehemiah which is a perfect example in implementing our theme. Too often believers get stuck in a rut and must break out of the mundane routine of their *“comfort zone”* and *“Arise and Build”* a new direction for their lives. Such is the case for Nehemiah.

- ❖ An incident created a burden within his heart that made him uncomfortable in his comfort zone.
- ❖ After much prayer, Nehemiah abandoned his *“career path”* and stepped out by faith to fulfill the new mission that God had laid upon his heart.
- ❖ When Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem to begin his mission of building the wall around the city, he encountered struggles without and within that hindered the work.
- ❖ While handling the challenges of the mission, Nehemiah exhibited wonderful principles of leadership.

I. THE INQUIRY OF THE SITUATION, 1:1-3

II. THE INTERCESSION OF THE SERVANT, 1:4-11

III. THE INVOLVEMENTS OF THE SOVEREIGNS, 2:1-20

IV. THE INDIVIDUAL SPECIFICATIONS, 3:1-31

V. THE INTRICATE STRUGGLES, 4:1-6:19

VI. THE INCLUSION FOR SPIRITUALITY, 7:1-10:39

A. The Beloved Congregation, 7:1-73

B. The Bible Conference, 8:1-18

❖ The Assembling of the Congregation, 8:1-4

- In the midst of the challenges, Nehemiah recognized the need for spiritual revival.
- Believers can get so busy in the minutia of the ministry that we neglect fellowship with the Lord.
- Nehemiah gathered the congregation together to hear the Word of God.

❖ The Attention of the Congregation, 8:5-8

- The Word of God received preeminence – “...Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people...all the people stood up:”
- The emphasis with the preaching was to be understood – “...caused the people to understand the law...gave the sense, and caused *them* to understand the reading.”

❖ The Advice to the Congregation, 8:9-12

- Turn your conviction into rejoicing – “...For all the people wept, when they heard the words...for **the joy of the LORD is your strength.**”

❖ The Action of the Congregation, 8:13-18

- The congregation was obedient, remembering their deliverance from Egypt, and rejoicing in the Lord – “...there was very great gladness.”

Several weeks ago, we began seeing his “inclusion for spirituality,” starting with the “Beloved Congregation” and last month saw the importance of the “Bible Conference.” This morning, we will observe the “Bitter Confession” in chapter 9.

C. The Bitter Confession, 9:1-10:39

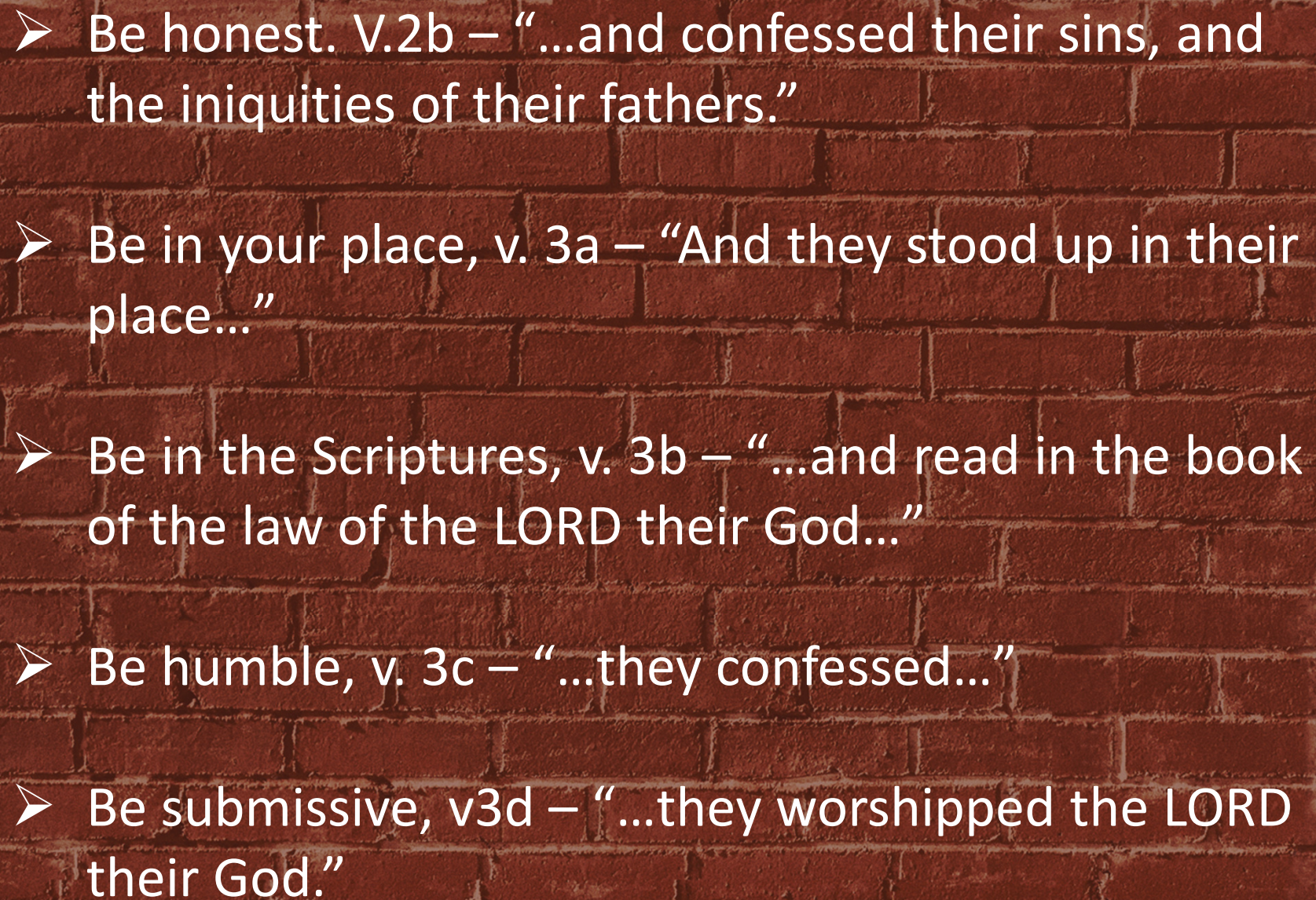
1. The preparations for prayer 9:1-4

Neh. 9:1 Now in the twenty and fourth day of this month the children of Israel **were assembled** with fasting, and with sackclothes, and earth upon them.

2 And the seed of Israel **separated themselves from all strangers**, and stood and **confessed their sins, and the iniquities of their fathers**.

3 And they stood up **in their place, and read in the book of the law of the LORD their God** *one* fourth part of the day; and *another* fourth part **they confessed, and worshipped the LORD their God**.

- Be in church, v. 1 – They “...were assembled with fasting...”
- Be separated, v. 2a – “...separated themselves from all strangers...”

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- Be honest. V.2b – “...and confessed their sins, and the iniquities of their fathers.”
 - Be in your place, v. 3a – “And they stood up in their place...”
 - Be in the Scriptures, v. 3b – “...and read in the book of the law of the LORD their God...”
 - Be humble, v. 3c – “...they confessed...”
 - Be submissive, v3d – “...they worshipped the LORD their God.”

2. Praise and confession 9:4-31

❖ The prayer begins with praise for the Creator, vs. 4-6.

Neh. 9:4 Then stood up upon the stairs, of the Levites, Jeshua, and Bani, Kadmiel, Shebaniah, Bunni, Sherebiah, Bani, *and* Chenani, and **cried with a loud voice unto the LORD their God.**

5 Then the Levites, Jeshua, and Kadmiel, Bani, Hashabniah, Sherebiah, Hodijah, Shebaniah, *and* Pethahiah, said, **Stand up *and* bless the LORD your God for ever and ever: and blessed be thy glorious name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise.**

6 **Thou, *even* thou, *art* LORD alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all *things* that *are* therein, the seas, and all that *is* therein, and thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee.**

❖ The prayer continues with confession about their fathers' sins, vs. 7-17.

Neh. 9:16 **But they and our fathers dealt proudly, and hardened their necks, and hearkened not to thy commandments,**

17 And **refused to obey, neither were mindful of thy wonders that thou didst among them;** but hardened their necks, and in their rebellion appointed a captain to return to their bondage: but **thou art a God ready to pardon, gracious and merciful,** slow to anger, and of great kindness, and forsookest them not.

❖ Confession of sin is a by-product of fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

❖ Fellowship with the Lord produces conviction, confession and commitment to Christ.

1 Jn. 1:3 That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, **that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.**

4 And these things write we unto you, **that your joy may be full.**

5 This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

6 **If we say that we have fellowship with him**, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:

7 But **if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship** one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

8 **If we say that we have no sin**, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

9 **If we confess our sins**, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

10 **If we say that we have not sinned**, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

❖ The prayer reviewed the history of Israel's exodus from Egypt and the abundance of God's mercy and grace, vs. 18-31.

Neh. 9:18 Yea, when they had made them a molten calf, and said, This *is* thy God that brought thee up out of Egypt, and had wrought great provocations;

19 Yet **thou in thy manifold mercies forsookest them not in the wilderness:** the pillar of the cloud departed not from them by day, to lead them in the way; neither the pillar of fire by night, to shew them light, and the way wherein they should go.

20 Thou gavest also thy good spirit to instruct them, and withheldest not thy manna from their mouth, and gavest them water for their thirst.

21 **Yea, forty years didst thou sustain them in the wilderness, so that they lacked nothing; their clothes waxed not old, and their feet swelled not.**

25 And they took strong cities, and a fat land, and possessed houses full of all goods, wells digged, vineyards, and oliveyards, and fruit trees in abundance: **so they did eat, and were filled, and became fat, and delighted themselves in thy great goodness.**

26 Nevertheless they were disobedient, and rebelled against thee, and cast thy law behind their backs, and slew thy prophets which testified against them to turn them to thee, and they wrought great provocations.

27 Therefore thou deliveredst them into the hand of their enemies, who vexed them: **and in the time of their trouble, when they cried unto thee, thou heardest them from heaven;** and according to thy manifold mercies thou gavest them saviours, who saved them out of the hand of their enemies.

28 But after they had rest, they did evil again before thee: therefore leftest thou them in the hand of their enemies, so that they had the dominion over them: yet when they returned, and cried unto thee, thou heardest *them* from heaven; **and many times didst thou deliver them according to thy mercies;**

31 Nevertheless for thy great mercies' sake thou didst not utterly consume them, nor forsake them; for thou art a gracious and merciful God.

❖ The history lesson is a review of man's sinful rebellion, and God's gracious mercy.

3. Petition and confession vs. 32-37

Neh. 9: 32 Now therefore, **our God, the great, the mighty, and the terrible God, who keepest covenant and mercy**, let not all the trouble seem little before thee, that hath come upon us, on our kings, on our princes, and on our priests, and on our prophets, and on our fathers, and on all thy people, since the time of the kings of Assyria unto this day.

33 **Howbeit thou art just in all that is brought upon us; for thou hast done right, but we have done wickedly:**

34 Neither have our kings, our princes, our priests, nor our fathers, kept thy law, nor hearkened unto thy commandments and thy testimonies, wherewith thou didst testify against them.

35 For **they have not served thee** in their kingdom, and in thy great goodness that **thou gavest them**, and in the large and fat land which thou gavest before them, neither turned they from their wicked works.

36 **Behold, we are servants this day**, and *for* the land that **thou gavest** unto our fathers to eat the fruit thereof and the good thereof, **behold, we are servants** in it:

37 And it yieldeth much increase unto the kings whom **thou hast set over us because of our sins**: also they have dominion over our bodies, and over our cattle, at their pleasure, and **we are in great distress**.

- ❖ This passage reiterates man's rebellion, sins, and lack of service to God.
- ❖ During Israel's rebellion, God gave them many blessings, along with His mercy.

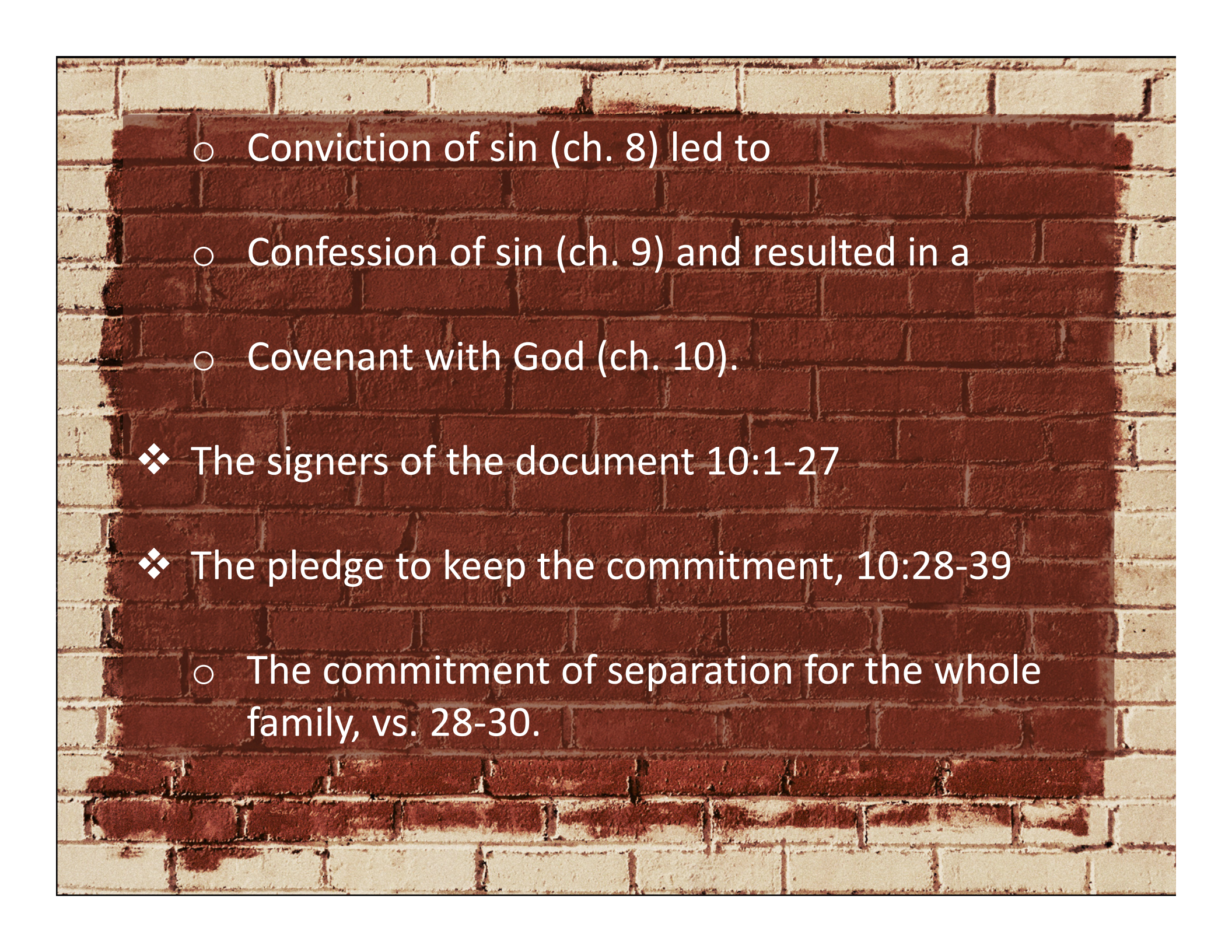
4. Promise and commitment, v. 38

Neh. 9:38 And because of all this we make a sure *covenant*, and write *it*; and our princes, Levites, and priests, seal *unto it*.

- ❖ The commitment is verified by “putting it in writing.”

5. Personal and Congregational, 10:1-39

- ❖ Nehemiah explained the agreement he previously referred to in 9:38 in this chapter:

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- Conviction of sin (ch. 8) led to
 - Confession of sin (ch. 9) and resulted in a
 - Covenant with God (ch. 10).
 - ❖ The signers of the document 10:1-27
 - ❖ The pledge to keep the commitment, 10:28-39
 - The commitment of separation for the whole family, vs. 28-30.

Neh. 10:28 And the rest of the people, the priests, the Levites, the porters, the singers, the Nethinims, and **all they that had separated themselves from the people of the lands unto the law of God, their wives, their sons, and their daughters, every one having knowledge, and having understanding;**

29 They clave to their brethren, 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 judgments and his statutes;**

30 And that **we would not give our daughters unto the people of the land, nor take their daughters for our sons:**

- The commitment of dedication to Scriptural priorities, v. 31

Neh. 10:31 And *if* the people of the land bring ware or any victuals on the sabbath day to sell, **that we would not buy it of them on the sabbath, or on the holy day:** and *that* we would leave the seventh year, and the exaction of every debt.

- The commitment of financial priorities, vs. 32-39

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

33 For the shewbread, and for the continual meat offering, and for the continual burnt offering, of the sabbaths, of the new moons, for the set feasts, and for the holy *things*, and for the sin offerings to make an atonement for Israel, **and for all the work of the house of our God.**

34 And we cast the lots among the priests, the Levites, and the people, for the wood offering, **to bring it into the house of our God**, after the houses of our fathers, at times appointed year by year, to burn upon the altar of the LORD our God, as *it is* written in the law:

35 And **to bring the firstfruits** of our ground, and the firstfruits of all fruit of all trees, year by year, unto the house of the LORD:

36 Also the firstborn of our sons, and of our cattle, as *it is* written in the law, and the firstlings of our herds and of our flocks, **to bring to the house of our God**, unto the priests that minister in the house of our God:

37 And *that* we should bring the firstfruits of our dough, and our offerings, and the fruit of all manner of trees, of wine and of oil, unto the priests, to the chambers of **the house of our God**; and **the tithes** of our ground unto the Levites, that the same Levites might have the tithes in all the cities of our tillage.

38 And 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 unto the house of our God**, to the chambers, into the treasure house.

39 For the children of Israel and the children of Levi shall bring the offering of the corn, of the new wine, and the oil, unto the chambers, where *are* the vessels of the sanctuary, and the priests that minister, and the porters, and the singers: and **we will not forsake the house of our God**.

"Sir Winston Churchill said, 'We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.'" Wiersbe, Warren W. *The Bible Exposition Commentary/History*. p. 688. Colorado Springs, Colo.: Cook Communications Ministries, 2003.

Conclusion

Nehemiah was concerned about the spiritual relationship of the people while they were in the midst of a building program. The Word of God produced conviction, which led to confession, and then a commitment to Scriptural principles and priority.

❖ Life is a perpetual challenge to stay spiritual while providing the practical.

Mt. 6:25 Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. **Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? ...**

31 Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

32 (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for **your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.**

33 But **seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.**