

Nehemiah 10:32-39 – Godly Christians Support Worship

TSK, HebrewLexicon, Gaebelein, Handfuls, Armstrong, Trapp, Poole, Henry, JFB, Gill, Geneva, Clarke, Delitzsch, Barnes, Expositor, Eclectic Beloved in the Lord: God's people showed their dedication by vowing to **not marry non-believers**, to **keep the Sabbath**, and to **help the poor**. With these things in place, the people then could do the work God called them to do... worship him and build his kingdom. **Now the Jews started getting into the details, giving 4 specific things they would do to support worship and build the kingdom.**

Our headings are:

The temple gift

The temple wood

The temple offerings

The temple tithes

Our goals are: **That you will see the need for and play your part in the proper worship of your Savior and building his kingdom.**

The Temple gift

32 Also we made ordinances for ourselves, to **exact from ourselves yearly one-third of a shekel** for the service of the house of our God: 33 **for the showbread**, for the regular **grain offering**, for the regular **burnt offering** of the Sabbaths, the New Moons, and the set feasts; for the **holy things**, for the **sin offerings** to make atonement for Israel, and all the work of the house of our God.

1. In order to worship God and to build his kingdom, the Jews passed laws to require God's people to pay the temple tax.

The temple tax was a token of "ransom." This money was used for the needs of the temple. One-third shekel was 4-5 grams. None of this was used to support the priests of the Levites. But this was only done when there was a census. Exodus 30:13. **By the way, the 1st time was ½ shekel, but now they were poor.** Exodus 30. And they were also paying tribute to a foreign king at this time.

2. Specifically this money was used for

a. The showbread. Two rows of 6 flatbreads were put in the temple to remind Israel of God's promise to provide.

b. The regular grain offering.

c. The regular burnt offering for the Sabbaths, New Moons, and other set feasts.

These 3 things pictured the work of Jesus directly as the Bread of Life and the sacrifice of Jesus outside of Jerusalem.

d. The holy things. Things used in worship...likely, utensils.

e. The sin offerings, which made atonement for sins. This word literally means to "make a covering," or to "cover for sins." This, of course, is Jesus' work.

f. The work of the house of God. Worship was essential. Josiah used this money to repair the temple. (2Chronicles 24) Even foreign Jews in the New Testament did this. Matthew 17.

3. Lessons:

a. Don't expect any blessing from God if you ignore his worship or treat it with contempt, as if it were insignificant. It is the most important thing you can do in your life. **Don't cry to get a cheap religion.** God determines how you worship and support it. Don't expect God to bless your children if you don't train them to be in and regularly worship God.

b. Your worship must be supported by you financially. If you are able, do it. If are doing it, continue. If you don't have to give, pray God will provide for you! This is the means God has ordained to sustain his work.

c. Count it a privilege, not a burden, to financially support the work of God, not only at New Horizon, but wherever God presents that opportunity.

d. Condemn those who abuse God's people by guilt-manipulating them or making false promises to them so they would send money to support their lavish lifestyles.

The Temple Wood

34 We cast lots among the priests, the Levites, and the people, **for bringing the wood offering** into the house of our God, **according to our fathers' houses, at the appointed times year by year**, to burn on the altar of the LORD our God as it is written in the Law.

1. In order to worship God better and to build his kingdom, the Jews cast lots among the priests, Levites, and people (to let God determine) who would bring the wood for the sacrifices at the temple and when they would do so.

All had to be involved. (Casting lots was used for many things, including who would get which land when Israel entered Canaan.) Wood was not readily available, so this was a big commitment. And they had not chainsaws or pick-up trucks. Then the wood would have to be "wormed" by the priests to make sure it was clean.

2. While the Jews had a historical festival for wood burning, but this wood was used for burning of sacrifices to God.

“Offering” is the word “Qurban,” a commonly used word by Muslims.

3. Lessons:

a. The work of the church and the building of your Savior’s kingdom is much more than giving some money; it is getting personally involved.

b. What are you doing for Jesus’ kingdom, the one who gave you everything you have and wrote your name in heaven? Everyone has to be doing something! Consider that **even regular church attendance is something!**

c. Be humble enough to do whatever God presents for you to do and whatever you are able to do.

d. Do you see why we have a chart someone prepared so you could sign up to perform different functions in the church? All of that helps to play a part for the proper functioning of the church.

The temple Offerings

35 And we made ordinances to **bring the firstfruits of our ground and the firstfruits of all fruit of all trees**, year by year, to the house of the LORD; 36 to **bring the firstborn of our sons and our cattle**, as it is written in the Law, and the firstborn of our herds and our flocks, to the house of our God, to the priests who minister in the house of our God; 37 to **bring the firstfruits of our dough, our offerings, the fruit from all kinds of trees, the new wine and oil**, to the priests, to the storerooms of the house of our God; and to **bring the tithes** of our land to the Levites, for the Levites should receive the tithes in all our farming communities.

1. To worship God better and to build his kingdom, the Jews passed a law to bring their firstfruits to God.

This they would do yearly and bring 2% of the firstfruits. They would bring these to the priests and their Levite assistants so they would have enough supplies in order to do the work God called them to do.

2. Which firstfruits did they bring?

a. Firstfruits of the ground and their fruit trees. The Jews brought produce from 7 plants to God. “Dough” meant “bread.” This was used to feed the spiritual leaders and also offered up as wave offerings.

b. Firstfruits of their sons and animals. Exodus 13:13. The firstfruits could only be avoided if that firstborn was unacceptable. So a donkey was substituted with a clean animal. A firstborn son was substituted with an animal.

c. Firstfruits of the plants – of grain, of grapes – wine (not grape juice), of oil from the olive tree.

d. Tithes. This was used to support the Levites who then supported the priests.

3. Lessons:

a. None of you has any mango trees or cows to bring your spiritual leaders some fresh fruit and raw milk, but what would be the application for today? *But with jobs, it is easier to bring your gifts to God.* You don’t have to pull a bull to the parking lot...or a couple of goats.

b. It is not only the best that must be given to God; it must be the first too! He is worthy of it all!

c. Don’t celebrate ministers who have to do tentmaking! That is a black spot on the people of God.

This applies also to those who have to work to be trained for ministry. They should not have to work and study. They need to be dedicated to their studies.

2 Chronicles 31:4 Moreover he commanded the people who dwelt in Jerusalem to **contribute support for the priests and the Levites, that they might devote themselves to the Law of the LORD.**

d. Tithing a covenant obligation but yet it was voluntarily brought. There is no punishment for someone who doesn’t tithe. Tithing is a moral obligation. So the elders don’t want to see your T4. God doesn’t

want a reluctant offering. Just remember who gave you everything you have.

The Temple Tithe

38 And the priest, the descendant of Aaron, shall be with the Levites when the Levites **receive tithes**; and the Levites shall bring up a **tenth of the tithes** to the house of our God, to the rooms of the storehouse. 39 For the children of Israel and the children of Levi shall bring the offering of the grain, of the new wine and the oil, to the storerooms where the articles of the sanctuary are, where the priests who minister and the gatekeepers and the singers are; **and we will not neglect the house of our God.**

1. To worship God better and to build his kingdom, the Levites who received the tithe from the people, would tithe of that tithe to the priests.

(All priests were Levites, but not all Levites were priests.)

2. The excess of the tithes of the tithes were then stored for hard times.

Worship was so important that preparation had to be made to continue to worship during hard times.

3. The tithe was made up of the different produces of the people, but one can imagine the excess was sold to earn money to buy other necessities.

4. The people then promised to do all this and not neglect the house (worship) of God.

5. Lessons:

a. There are some people who vociferously object to tithing today (John MacArthur, for instance) arguing that that was never God's standard for giving, but they are wrong. See tithing in place with Abraham, before the law was on the radar, after Moses, after captivity (Malachi 3) and while the Lord was on earth. Look at what the Savior said.

Matthew 23: 23 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, **without leaving the others undone.**

Jesus affirmed the duty to tithe, even while reminding them the Jews there were other more important things as justice, mercy, and faith.

b. You are not showing kindness to pastors when you tithe; you are giving them their due. That is the Word of God.

Conclusion:

The Jews made (or restored) laws to bring the temple assessment so the temple work could continue. They committed to each bringing wood, in turn, to make sure there was enough for sacrifices. They also brought all the offerings and tithes that were required so the proper sacrifices could be made. And of all those gifts given the Levites, they had to tithed of their tithes so the priests would be provided for.

Brothers and sisters in the Lord Jesus:

1. Identify what the common duties are and fulfill them so the church can be healthy, strong, and able to worship and reproduce.

2. Develop special gifts the Lord has given to you so you can excel in that particular area, whatever they are.

3. Remember, your ability to do these things do not originate in you. They come and grow in you because you were redeemed by the Lord Jesus on the cross. This is what brought that change of life to you.

Finally, if you are not a Christian, you can't worship God. But you must worship God. If you want to worship God, you have to ask him to change you and make you his child first! He will do that! He promised! Anyone who desires to come to him, he welcomes.