

Watchman Part 4

“36 'But see, we are slaves today, slaves in the land you gave our forefathers so they could eat its fruit and the other good things it produces. 37 Because of our sins, its abundant harvest goes to the kings you have placed over us. They rule over our bodies and our cattle as they please. We are in great distress. 38 'In view of all this, we are making a binding agreement, putting it in writing, and our leaders, our Levites and our priests are affixing their seals to it.” (Nehemiah 9:36-38 NIV)

After they rebuild the walls around Jerusalem, the people gathered together, they fasted and confessed their sins to God. They prayed to the Lord and utter to Him their real situation and their suffering and they reached a fact that they are slave and ruled and oppressed by others in the land that God had given to them. They concluded that their sins were the reason for their abundant harvest had to go to others. Are you realizing and able to see that your harvest and what God had ordained for you to have is going to others because of your sins. The watchman can see clearly the cause and the effect of people suffering and why they are not able to enjoy the harvest of God; when the covenant with God is broken then blessings are far away. And the following they did to revive their covenant with God ***“In view of all this, we are making a binding agreement, putting it in writing, and our leaders, our Levites and our priests are affixing their seals to it.” (Nehemiah 9:38)***

All the people including Nehemiah and the rest of the leaders sign the covenant: ***“28 We, the people of Israel, the priests, the Levites, the Temple guards, the Temple musicians, the Temple workers, and all others who in obedience to God's Law have separated themselves from the foreigners living in our land, we, together with our wives and all our children old enough to understand, 29 do hereby join with our leaders in an oath, under penalty of a curse if we break it, that we will live according to God's Law, which God gave through his servant Moses; that we will obey all that the Lord, our Lord, commands us; and that we will keep all his laws and requirements.” (Nehemiah 10:28-29)*** The following was agreed upon

1- Watch that no intermarriage with the non believers: “30 We will not intermarry with the foreigners living in our land.” (Nehemiah 10:30) Watch that you do not approve or support marriages that are not ordained of God.

2- Watch to observe the Sabbath: “31 If foreigners bring grain or anything else to sell to us on the Sabbath or on any other holy day, we will not buy from them.” (Nehemiah 10:31a) Watch that you and those under your care would observe on weekly bases the day of worship and the day of rest.

3- Watch The Holy Spirit when He will lead you to cancel the debt of those who borrowed money from you: “Every seventh year we will not farm the land, and we will cancel all debts.” (Nehemiah 10:31b)

4- Watch that tithing, various kinds of offerings and the first fruit is brought to God’s church: “32 Every year we will each contribute one-eighth of an ounce of silver to help pay the expenses of the Temple. 33 We will provide for the Temple worship the following: the sacred bread, the daily grain offering, the animals to be burned each day as

sacrifices, the sacred offerings for Sabbaths, New Moon Festivals, and other festivals, the other sacred offerings, the offerings to take away the sins of Israel, and anything else needed for the Temple. 34 We, the people, priests, and Levites, will draw lots each year to determine which clans are to provide wood to burn the sacrifices offered to the Lord our God, according to the requirements of the Law. 35 We will take to the Temple each year an offering of the first grain we harvest and of the first fruit that ripens on our trees. 36 The first son born to each of us we will take to the priests in the Temple and there, as required by the Law, dedicate him to God. We will also dedicate the first calf born to each of our cows, and the first lamb or kid born to each of our sheep or goats. 37 We will take to the priests in the Temple the dough made from the first grain harvested each year and our other offerings of wine, olive oil, and all kinds of fruit. We will take to the Levites, who collect tithes in our farming villages, the tithes from the crops that grow on our land. 38 Priests who are descended from Aaron are to be with the Levites when tithes are collected, and for use in the Temple the Levites are to take to the Temple storerooms one-tenth of all the tithes they collect. 39 The people of Israel and the Levites are to take the contributions of grain, wine, and olive oil to the storerooms where the utensils for the Temple are kept and where the priests who are on duty, the Temple guards, and the members of the Temple choir have their quarters.” (Nehemiah 10:32-39a) There are various kinds of collection to cover various needs. We can emphasise on the following points:-

- A- ***The first fruit:*** That can be your first salary, or first income or the first increase of every increase, or the first salary or income of each year.
- B- ***Various offerings:*** In addition to the tithes and the first fruit there are various offerings and contribution to meet the needful things for worship and for the place of worship and its maintenance.
- C- ***Tithing is required from everyone:*** Even the priest and the Levites are required to tithe. Even the pastor and the leader of the church should tithe his income and whatever he receives ***“the Levites are to take to the Temple storerooms one-tenth of all the tithes they collect.” (Nehemiah 10:32-38b)***

5- Watch that in no way that the house of God will be neglected: “We will not neglect the house of our God.” (Nehemiah 10:39b) God and His church should be put first and whatever required need to be met first. The people realized that their negligence to the house of God (the church and their ministries) was the reason for their suffering and for others to take away the blessings that God had ordained for them.

My dear and Beloved: “17 'They will be mine," says the LORD Almighty, 'in the day when I make up my treasured possession. I will spare them, just as in compassion a man spares his son who serves him. 18 And you will again see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between those who serve God and those who do not.” (Malachi 3:17-18) Apply the message in your life and watch that you will do your best to support God’s service in His church, as you agree to pray.

My Prayer: Father God I come before you in the name of Jesus who died on the Cross for my sins and rose from the dead to give me eternal life. Lord I commit myself to abide with your word in doing your will and whatever you had planned for me. Lord I put in your service everything that you had given to me in order that your ministry and your church will go forward in reaching the loss, this is my prayer in Jesus name Amen.