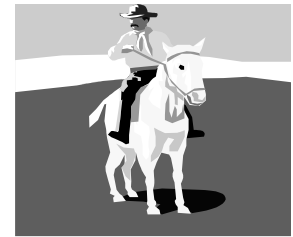


Manifest Destiny

Studies in Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther

Put Up or Shut Up

Introduction to Nehemiah 7-10



Understanding how God's destiny for us is fulfilled.

The 5 Purposes of the Purpose Driven Life

- **Worship**—You were planned for God's pleasure
- **Fellowship**—You were formed for God's family
- **Discipleship**—You were created to become like Christ
- **Ministry**—You were shaped for serving God
- **Evangelism**—You were made for a mission

In a game of poker if you want to be in the game you have to put your money up in the middle of the table, or shut up and pass. In every arena of life mere talk means very little; it's when we actually give up something that the sincerity of our words is demonstrated. The exiles in Israel in Nehemiah 7-10 came to the place where it was time to "put up or shut up". They had to make a commitment that meant something. This involved three aspects. First, they had to attend to God's word. If we are to make a meaningful commitment to God, we must know what He values and thinks. Ezra read God's Word to all of the people gathered in front of the Water Gate, and they listened intently as various

priests circulated to insure that they understood its meaning. Their comprehension was obvious because of the grief they expressed as they heard their numerous violations of the Law. They were encouraged, however, to have joy that day because they were now back home, and delivered by God. They heeded these words, and rejoiced, then celebrated the Feast of Booths—a joyous occasion. A few days later they assembled to next acknowledge God's authority over them as they mourned over their sins and worshipped Him. The long prayer of praise and confession was spoken by the Levites, who recounted God's greatness over all, and especially

over Israel. As a result, Israel lastly entered into a covenant with God to act like His people. Under oath they agreed specifically to refuse to intermarry, to keep the Sabbath holy, and to contribute both to the service of the Temple and to all the offerings required by the Law. Thus, they would not neglect the house of God. Clearly, they understood that it was time to "put up or shut up".

Daily Questions for Nehemiah 7-10

(For answers to questions attend an ABF or go to www.celebrationnet.com/resources/leader resources)

<p>1. Scan 7:5-73. What did God lead Nehemiah to do (v5), and what did he discover (v61-64)? What was the result (v64-65)?</p>	
<p>2. From 8:1-8 what did all Israel do (v1, 3), and what was the focus (v2, 7-8)? What was the attitude towards God's Word (v5-6)? How can we apply this?</p>	
<p>3. Read 8:9-12. How had the people reacted (v9-11), and why do you think they did? What would have been a better reaction (v10), and why (v10)? What does this mean for us?</p>	

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Nehemiah 7-10 Study Questions (cont)

4. In 8:13-18 what did the people do (v15-17), and why (v13-14)? What did this lead to (v17b, 18)?	
5. Based on 9:1-6 what did Israel do after the Feast of Booths (v1-2)? What approach did they use (v3) and what was their initial worship (v6)?	
6. Looking at 9:7-15 what is God praised for in v7-8? List what God is praised for in v9-15.	
7. Using 9:16-31 how did Israel respond to God (v16-17, 18, 26, 28, 29, 30)? How did God respond to them (v17, 19-25, 27, 28-29, 30-31)? What does this teach us?	
8. Read 9:32-38. What did Israel ask for (v32), what did they acknowledge about God (v33), and why (v34-37)? What did they do about it (v38)?	
9. According to 10:1-31 what did Israel first commit to in this covenant (v29, 30, 31)? How serious were they about this covenant (v29)? How would we show our seriousness today?	
10. Looking over 10:32-39 what else did Israel make a commitment to do (v32-33, 34-39)?	
11. From Nehemiah 7-10 summarize the role that the Word, prayer, and a formal commitment played in Israel's return to God. How can you do this?	

Scripture to Remember

*"...this day is holy to our Lord.
Do not be grieved, for the joy
of the Lord is your strength."*

Nehemiah 8:10 (NAS)

Celebration Fellowship

*Reaching—
Restoring—Raising Up*

We're on the web

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Life Group Questions—Bringing Down the Walls (Josh 6)

(Using questions based on today's message, Life Groups meet in homes to build supportive relationships with others at Celebration Fellowship that enable us to grow in Christ.)

1. Let everyone share what has been one of the biggest tests of faith they have had, and why it was.
2. Read Josh 6:1-5. What situation did Israel face, and what was God's promise (v2)? What are some promises you turn to when you face impossible situations?
3. What was God's solution to taking Jericho (v3-5)? What are some of the lessons of faith that you think Israel learned when God's approach worked?
4. Look at Josh 6:22-25. What promise did God fulfill here, and what does this teach us about His nature and trustworthiness?
5. What "crazy" step of faith is God telling you to take regarding a test you are facing? From Joshua 6 why do you think He might be wanting you to do it this way?
6. Discuss anything else important to you from the message today if you have time.