**November 28, 2021 – “**Awaiting Advent by walking in the Word”

**Scripture:** Nehemiah 10

Those who sealed it were:

Nehemiah the governor, the son of Hakaliah.

Zedekiah, **2**Seraiah, Azariah, Jeremiah,

**3**Pashhur, Amariah, Malkijah,

**4**Hattush, Shebaniah, Malluk,

**5**Harim, Meremoth, Obadiah,

**6**Daniel, Ginnethon, Baruch,

**7**Meshullam, Abijah, Mijamin,

**8**Maaziah, Bilgai and Shemaiah.

These were the priests.

**9**The Levites:

Jeshua son of Azaniah, Binnui of the sons of Henadad, Kadmiel,

**10**and their associates: Shebaniah,

Hodiah, Kelita, Pelaiah, Hanan,

**11**Mika, Rehob, Hashabiah,

**12**Zakkur, Sherebiah, Shebaniah,

**13**Hodiah, Bani and Beninu.

**14**The leaders of the people:

Parosh, Pahath-Moab, Elam, Zattu, Bani,

**15**Bunni, Azgad, Bebai,

**16**Adonijah, Bigvai, Adin,

**17**Ater, Hezekiah, Azzur,

**18**Hodiah, Hashum, Bezai,

**19**Hariph, Anathoth, Nebai,

**20**Magpiash, Meshullam, Hezir,

**21**Meshezabel, Zadok, Jaddua,

**22**Pelatiah, Hanan, Anaiah,

**23**Hoshea, Hananiah, Hasshub,

**24**Hallohesh, Pilha, Shobek,

**25**Rehum, Hashabnah, Maaseiah,

**26**Ahiah, Hanan, Anan,

**27**Malluk, Harim and Baanah.

**28**“The rest of the people—priests, Levites, gatekeepers, musicians, temple servants and all who separated themselves from the neighboring peoples for the sake of the Law of God, together with their wives and all their sons and daughters who are able to understand— **29**all these now join their fellow Israelites the nobles, and bind themselves with a curse and an oath to follow the Law of God given through Moses the servant of God and to obey carefully all the commands, regulations and decrees of the Lord our Lord.

**30**“We promise not to give our daughters in marriage to the peoples around us or take their daughters for our sons.

**31**“When the neighboring peoples bring merchandise or grain to sell on the Sabbath, we will not buy from them on the Sabbath or on any holy day. Every seventh year we will forgo working the land and will cancel all debts.

**32**“We assume the responsibility for carrying out the commands to give a third of a shekel[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=nehemiah+10&version=NIV#fen-NIV-12582b)] each year for the service of the house of our God: **33**for the bread set out on the table; for the regular grain offerings and burnt offerings; for the offerings on the Sabbaths, at the New Moon feasts and at the appointed festivals; for the holy offerings; for sin offerings[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=nehemiah+10&version=NIV#fen-NIV-12583c)] to make atonement for Israel; and for all the duties of the house of our God.

**34**“We—the priests, the Levites and the people—have cast lotsto determine when each of our families is to bring to the house of our God at set times each year a contribution of wood to burn on the altar of the Lord our God, as it is written in the Law.

**35**“We also assume responsibility for bringing to the house of the Lord each year the firstfruits of our crops and of every fruit tree.

**36**“As it is also written in the Law, we will bring the firstborn of our sons and of our cattle, of our herds and of our flocks to the house of our God, to the priests ministering there.

**37**“Moreover, we will bring to the storerooms of the house of our God, to the priests, the first of our ground meal, of our grain offerings, of the fruit of all our trees and of our new wine and olive oil. And we will bring a tithe of our crops to the Levites, for it is the Levites who collect the tithes in all the towns where we work. **38**A priest descended from Aaron is to accompany the Levites when they receive the tithes, and the Levites are to bring a tenth of the tithes up to the house of our God, to the storerooms of the treasury. **39**The people of Israel, including the Levites, are to bring their contributions of grain, new wine and olive oil to the storerooms, where the articles for the sanctuary and for the ministering priests, the gatekeepers and the musicians are also kept.

“We will not neglect the house of our God.”

**BIG IDEA:** As we await the Advent of the King, walk in the Word of the King!

**Overview:**

The first Sunday in Advent. The term advent is taken from the Latin word “adventus”, which has a double meaning. It looks back to the birth of Christ and celebrates the miracle of God stepping into the world to seek and save the lost. Advent also looks ahead to the future – Christ’s second arrival when Jesus will exercise his royal rule over the all the earth and when our redemption will be complete. That’s the hope of advent. Pastor Randy defined hope as “our confident expectation of a guaranteed tomorrow that changes how I live today.”

In view of Christ’s advent, what sort of people ought we to be? At the close of Ezra’s prayer in Nehemiah 9, he says “Because of all this we make a firm covenant in writing…”, which sets the stage for Nehemiah 10. Nehemiah 10 is a signing ceremony where Israel as a nation commits to walk in the Lord. Verses 1 – 27 list the signatories, and verses 29 – 39 set forth the stipulations of the contract. The three stipulations are centered on time, money and worship. Nehemiah 10 is an invitation to make God our most important treasure – our WHOLE life – as we await the coming of King Jesus.

Pastor Randy closed by challenging us to consider what walking in the word of the Lord might look like:

* + Worship full
  + Spend less
  + Give more
  + Love all

**Questions:**

* What is Biblical hope? How is that different than how a non-Christian would define hope?
* Pastor Randy talked about a quick claim deed – a legal document surrendering all your rights to something. Similarly, a decision to follow Christ is a commitment to surrendering your WHOLE life to Christ. Is there anything that you’re still holding on to – an area of your life you’re trying to keep from him?
* The first stipulation laid out in Nehemiah 10 is Sabbath. How does/would seeing Sabbath as a gift affect your walk with God. Is the present pace of your life sustainable?
* Nehemiah 10: 31 says “…Every seventh year we will forgo working the land and will cancel all debts.” God’s economic structure for Israel, which you can read more about in Deuteronomy 15 and Leviticus 25, provided relief and embedded generosity into community life. How do these principles apply to us today?
* What are you most prone to worship outside of Jesus? Is there someone in your life who can help keep you accountable to focusing on Christ?
* What’s the difference between being a fan of Christ and a follower of Christ? How does that affect the church community?
* As Pastor Randy said, “True joy comes by obeying God.” Why can that be so hard to believe and put into practice?
* In Pastor Randy’s challenge to “worship full, spend less, give more, and love all” does one stand out as more challenging to you in this season? Why? Spend time sharing practical ways you might apply this challenge to your life.
* Spend time in prayer – praying over each other’s specific concerns and praises.