

## **Nehemiah 9:38 & 10:28-32    Covenanting**

The rebuilding project in Jerusalem ends with a recommitment to the covenant between God and his people. But what is a covenant and what does it mean for us?

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The sermon this week looked at the people of God recommitting themselves to the covenants they made with God under Abraham and Moses. This was a key moment as the covenants between God and His people were formative to the history and identity of Israel. They signified protection, belonging, obedience and kingship. Within the context of these covenantal agreements, the community in Jerusalem made a commitment to hold up their end through following the laws of Moses, resisting idolatry, following practices of Sabbath and tithing to the house of God.

The sermon then shifted to looking at the New Covenant, which encapsulates all of the promises of God from the Old Testament into one new covenant. It promises the forgiveness of sins and the law of God being written on the heart through the sacrifice and resurrection of Jesus.

So today we have the opportunity to recommit, like Nehemiah, to our part of the covenant. What does that look like? Being a people of God who are different, set apart, distinguished by their Christlikeness. And distinction means embracing the parts of the Bible that we find harder to apply. But through distinction we can offer something different and beautiful, a better way of living.

### **Questions**

1. What is the silliest thing you've ever agreed to and then regretted that commitment afterwards?
2. Do you agree with Nathanael's opening point that we don't value commitment any more, so covenants are harder to wrap our heads around?
3. Why is understanding the language of "covenant" so important for us?
4. What do you think the church in Scotland needs to recommit to in the same way that Israel chose specific issues in the passage?
5. How can we offer something truly distinct and different to the culture around us?