

Reading Family Church
Sunday 14th September 2008

Title: 1 in 10

Much has happened in God's story of redemption when we arrive at Nehemiah: Abraham – Moses – Exodus – conquest - kingdom established - divided kingdom - Northern kingdom falls - southern kingdom exile into Babylon – second exodus - rebuilding of temple, city wall & religious life of Jerusalem.

Read Nehemiah 7:1-4 & 11:1-2

Not everyone was cheering that the Temple & city walls had finally been rebuilt. Throughout these building projects, there had been fierce opposition to the temple being built & the wall being finished. The city was still vulnerable, therefore people needed to move and populate the city of David. However, it was risky. So here is what they did:

- #1 The leaders of the people settled in Jerusalem.
- #2 The keen ones volunteered to live there and were commended.
- #3 And then they cast lots to bring in one out of 10 to live in the city.

God's people had to take the next step of faith and populate the city of Jerusalem and God called the majority by 'casting a lot' ^{Pr 16:33}. God had chosen them to move into the city, which wasn't their 'Plan A'.

For the next 430 years God seemed largely silent, but then a virgin gave birth. Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross, was buried, resurrected, and ascended to heaven. He sent the Holy Spirit and his disciples scattered across the globe.

Which is where we come in! We too are in God's big story of redemption – we are sons and daughters of Abraham – we are inheritors of God's promises and blessings to him.

For Nehemiah's generation, the big ask was to settle in Jerusalem. Our role in God's big story is:

- To advance the kingdom of God – to forcefully lay hold of it (Matt 11:12).
- To be the light of the world - a city on a hill that cannot be hidden (Matt 5:14).
- To be like living stones, being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ (2 Peter 2:5).

And for many of us, our role in this big story will involve change and risk and uncertainty. What is God calling you to do?