

Nehemiah 8

King James Version (KJV)

8 And all the people gathered themselves together as one man into the street that was before the water gate; and they spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the LORD had commanded to Israel. (There were many holidays in the 7th month. The people asked Ezra to teach them God's Word)

Deuteronomy-31:11-13 (Priests used to read the Torah to the people on these holidays. This is how God wants us to worship today as well. HE wants us to read and learn His Word – not to go to some service once a week and listen to some preacher read a sermon that he wrote)

²And Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation both of men and women, and all that could hear with understanding, upon the first day of the seventh month. (They had not heard the Word of God throughout the 70 year captivity. Most people couldn't read or write)

³And he read therein before the street that was before the water gate from the morning until midday, before the men and the women, and those that could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law. (This is how a worship service should be today as well – God's Word read chapter by chapter, verse by verse. Instead, modern churches fill the service with traditions of men and a sermon written by preachers)

Leviticus-23 (A holy convocation)

⁴And Ezra the scribe stood upon a pulpit of wood, which they had made for the purpose; and beside him stood Mattithiah, and Shema, and Anaiah, and Urijah, and Hilkiah, and Maaseiah, on his right hand; and on his left hand, Pedaiah, and Mishael, and Malchiah, and Hashum, and Hashbadana, Zechariah, and Meshullam. (14 priests, including Ezra)

⁵And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people; (for he was above all the people;) and when he opened it, all the people stood up: (They stood up out of respect for God's Word, and also to better pay attention)

⁶And Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God. And all the people answered, Amen, Amen, with lifting up their hands: and they bowed

their heads, and worshipped the LORD with their faces to the ground.
(Amen = that is truth)

⁷Also Jeshua, and Bani, and Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodijah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, and the Levites, caused the people to understand the law: and the people stood in their place. (These Levites were Bible teachers, not priests. All priests were Levites, but not all Levites were priests)

⁸So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading. (distinctly = to divide and explain the meaning of God's Word; to teach it with understanding) 2Timothy-2:15

⁹And Nehemiah, which is the Tirshatha, and Ezra the priest the scribe, and the Levites that taught the people, said unto all the people, This day is holy unto the LORD your God; mourn not, nor weep. For all the people wept, when they heard the words of the law. (Tirshatha was the governor of Jerusalem; Ezra was a priest; Nehemiah was a prince of Judah)

(people wept - because they realized they were not living the way God had intended for them. Many were hearing God's Word for the first time)

¹⁰Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our LORD: neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the LORD is your strength. (fat = surplus – better translation; give your food surplus to the poor. Be happy. You are learning the Word of God)

(The joy of the Lord is your strength – A good lesson to remember in our daily lives)

¹¹So the Levites stilled all the people, saying, Hold your peace, for the day is holy; neither be ye grieved. (Be happy. God loves you and has redeemed you out of captivity)

¹²And all the people went their way to eat, and to drink, and to send portions, and to make great mirth, because they had understood the words that were declared unto them. (They began to learn the Word of God)

¹³ And on the second day were gathered together the chief of the fathers of all the people, the priests, and the Levites, unto Ezra the scribe, even to understand the words of the law. (They continued to study God's Word)

¹⁴ And they found written in the law which the LORD had commanded by Moses, that the children of Israel should dwell in booths in the feast of the seventh month: (This feast <Succoth, the feast of booths> had long been forgotten down through the generations)

¹⁵ And that they should publish and proclaim in all their cities, and in Jerusalem, saying, Go forth unto the mount, and fetch olive branches, and pine branches, and myrtle branches, and palm branches, and branches of thick trees, to make booths, as it is written. Leviticus-23:34->on, Deuteronomy-16:13

¹⁶ So the people went forth, and brought them, and made themselves booths, every one upon the roof of his house, and in their courts, and in the courts of the house of God, and in the street of the water gate, and in the street of the gate of Ephraim.

¹⁷ And all the congregation of them that were come again out of the captivity made booths, and sat under the booths: for since the days of Jeshua the son of Nun unto that day had not the children of Israel done so. And there was very great gladness. (Jeshua = Joshua; Joshua lived over a thousand years before. They had made booths since then, but not in such abundance)

¹⁸ Also day by day, from the first day unto the last day, he read in the book of the law of God. And they kept the feast seven days; and on the eighth day was a solemn assembly, according unto the manner. (They were making things right with God)