

“God’s Work in Our Hearts Through the Word”

Nehemiah 8:1-8

CONTEXT IN THE BOOK OF NEHEMIAH

1. The wall was finished. Neh 6:15-16

2. The work was not finished. Neh 6:17-7:4

- They still faced criticism and political maneuvering by Tobiah and his cohorts. 6:17-19
- They still had to guard the city from enemy attack. 7:3
- There were not enough people to inhabit the city. 7:4

GOD’S WORD IN THE COMMUNITY OF CORPORATE WORSHIP

1. Who was assembled? v.1-2

- Ezra the scribe and priest. Ref. Ezra 7:6
- “all the people” (6 X’s in this text) Men, women, and ‘all who could understand.’
- God Himself. v.1 “...that the LORD had commanded Israel.” & v.6

2. The logistics of worship. v.3-4

- Priority: “from early morning until midday” v.3a
- Posture: “the ears of all the people were attentive to the Book of the Law” v.3b
- Pulpit. v.4a A wooden structure from which Ezra could read God’s Word.
- Protection. v.4b Presumably, these were fellow spiritual leaders around Ezra.

3. How God’s people participated. v.5-8

- All the people stood in reverence for God’s Word. **v.5**
- God’s people actively engaged their minds and bodies—God was meeting with them in His Word! **v.6**
 - They answered with their voices: “Amen, Amen!” (Amen = “So be it!” “It is true!”)
 - They lifted up their hands. They bowed their heads and worshiped.
- God’s people learned. **v.7-8** The Levites “gave the sense” – made sense of God’s Word for the people.

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

1. The “Berean principle.” Acts 17:11: “they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.”

2. The Word of God through the seasons of life. Psalm 1: “He will be like a tree planted by streams of water.”

3. A farmer always eats. 2 Tim 2:6: It is the hard-working farmer who ought to have the first share of the crops.

→ Rev. 19:13: He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God.

“Our spiritual forefathers were informed by their culture, as we are. For the Hebrew, emotion inevitably expressed itself in physical attitude. This was because the self was conceived as a unity to a far greater extent than in most modern western culture, where there has been, in many reaches of the Church, a reaction against externalism in religion and a concentration upon inwardness. This is well and good apart from the constant danger that, when outward expression of emotion has been abolished, the vaunted inner passion can well be gone before anyone—including the person concerned—has noticed!”
-J.G. McConville, Commentary

“The Bible is the rock on which our Republic rests.” -Andrew Jackson, 7th President of these United States