

Nehemiah 8

The Word of God

Nehemiah 8:1-2 And all the people gathered as one man into the square before the Water Gate. And they told Ezra the scribe to bring the Book of the Law of Moses that the LORD had commanded Israel. 2 So Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly, both men and women and all who could understand what they heard, on the first day of the seventh month.

- The Feast of Trumpets marked the beginning of ten days of consecration and repentance before God. It is one of seven Jewish feasts or festivals appointed by the LORD and one of three feasts that occur in the autumn. The Feast of Trumpets began on the first day (at the new moon) of the seventh month. Its name comes from the command to blow trumpets (Leviticus 23:24; Numbers 29:1-6). It is also called Rosh Hashanah, which means “Head of the Year,” because it marks the beginning of the Jewish civil calendar. During this celebration, no kind of work was to be performed, but burnt offerings and a sin offering were to be brought before the Lord.
- The Feast of Trumpets was important for several reasons. First, it commemorated the end of the agricultural and festival year. Also, the Day of Atonement fell on the tenth day of this month, and the Festival of Booths began on the fifteenth day. The blowing of the trumpets on first day of the month heralded a solemn time of preparation for the Day of Atonement; this preparation time was called “Ten Days of Repentance” or the “Days of Awe.” The trumpet sound was an alarm of sorts and can be understood as a call to introspection and repentance.

Deuteronomy 31:9-13 Then Moses wrote this law and gave it to the priests, the sons of Levi, who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and to all the elders of Israel. 10 And Moses commanded them, “At the end of every seven years, at the set time in the year of release, at the Feast of Booths, 11 when all Israel comes to appear before the LORD your God at the place that he will choose, you shall read this law before all Israel in their hearing. 12 Assemble the people, men, women, and little ones, and the sojourner within your towns, that they may hear and learn to fear the LORD your God, and be careful to do all the words of this law, 13 and that their children, who have not known it, may hear and learn to fear the LORD your God, as long as you live in the land that you are going over the Jordan to possess.”

1. Authority the Word of God.

Nehemiah 8:3-4 And he read from it facing the square before the Water Gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of the men and the women and those who could understand. And the ears of all the people were attentive to the Book of the Law. 4 And Ezra the scribe stood on a wooden platform that they had made for the purpose. And beside him stood Mattithiah, Shema, Anaiyah, Uriah, Hilkiah, and Maaseiah on his right hand, and Pedaiyah, Mishael, Malchijah, Hashum, Hashbaddanah, Zechariah, and Meshullam on his left hand.

2. Desiring the Word of God.

Nehemiah 8:5-6 And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was above all the people, and as he opened it all the people stood. 6 And Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God, and all the people answered, “Amen, Amen,” lifting up their hands. And they bowed their heads and worshiped the LORD with their faces to the ground.

3. Responding to the Word of God.

Nehemiah 8:7-8 Also Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodiah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, the Levites, helped the people to understand the Law, while the people remained in their places. 8 They read from the book, from the Law of God, clearly, and they gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading.

4. Understanding the Word of God.

- Historical meaning: after the building of the walls, rebuilding and re-inhabiting Jerusalem, reading of the 5 books of Moses or portions of the Mosaic Law
- Doctrinal meaning: The Word of God is central to our lives
- Application: We are to desire the Word of God... we are to make the Word of God understandable... we are to rejoice in the Word of God and His grace and mercy

Nehemiah 8:9-12 And Nehemiah, who was the governor, and Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, "This day is holy to the LORD your God; do not mourn or weep." For all the people wept as they heard the words of the Law. 10 Then he said to them, "Go your way. Eat the fat and drink sweet wine and send portions to anyone who has nothing ready, for this day is holy to our Lord. And do not be grieved, for the joy of the LORD is your strength." 11 So the Levites calmed all the people, saying, "Be quiet, for this day is holy; do not be grieved." 12 And all the people went their way to eat and drink and to send portions and to make great rejoicing, because they had understood the words that were declared to them.

5. Rejoicing in the Word of God.

- The JOY of the Lord is your strength.
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Nehemiah 8:13-15 On the second day the heads of fathers' houses of all the people, with the priests and the Levites, came together to Ezra the scribe in order to study the words of the Law. 14 And they found it written in the Law that the LORD had commanded by Moses that the people of Israel should dwell in booths during the feast of the seventh month, 15 and that they should proclaim it and publish it in all their towns and in Jerusalem, "Go out to the hills and bring branches of olive, wild olive, myrtle, palm, and other leafy trees to make booths, as it is written."

Nehemiah 8:16-18 So the people went out and brought them and made booths for themselves, each on his roof, and in their courts and in the courts of the house of God, and in the square at the Water Gate and in the square at the Gate of Ephraim. 17 And all the assembly of those who had returned from the captivity made booths and lived in the booths, for from the days of Jeshua the son of Nun to that day the people of Israel had not done so. And there was very great rejoicing. 18 And day by day, from the first day to the last day, he read from the Book of the Law of God. They kept the feast seven days, and on the eighth day there was a solemn assembly, according to the rule.

6. Obeying the Word of God.