



Day 1

Sermon Sentence: It was God, not you or your power!

Memory Verse: Deuteronomy 4:7

Nehemiah 8:8-18

Nehemiah 8:8

The chaos of rebuilding the wall around Jerusalem is finished, the Temple has also been rebuilt. So what is next for the Israelites, God's chosen people? When we look at the Israelites returning from exile, it is very important that we don't lose site of the fact of why they were in exile to begin with. The Israelites had strayed from the covenant relationship that they had agreed to with God. This covenant relationship had many blessings when the Israelites were faithful but also contained many curses for the times that they were not. This lack of faithfulness caused God to scatter the Jews into exile throughout the surrounding nations. Now that the exile has ended and the Jews are returning to their homeland it is time for them to take stock on what went wrong in the first place. The Book of the Law is read so all the people can hear and understand and this of course brings the Israelites to a point of repentance and sorrow as it becomes evident just how sinful and rebellious they have been to God's covenant.

- What are your thoughts on what it means to be in a covenant relationship with God like Israel in the Old Testament?
- Why is this next step so important to them as a nation? What would happen if they did not come to the realization of the need for this step?
- What is the nature of the covenant relationship with God under the New Testament, New Covenant?
- What happens when a Christian is not in proper standing under this covenant?
- What is life like for a Christian that is in right standing with God under this covenant?



Day 2

Sermon Sentence: It was God, not you or your power!

Memory Verse: Deuteronomy 4:7

Nehemiah 8:9-10

The reaction of the people to God's law is typical for lives that are being lived in opposition to His law. Guilt and repentance often are displayed as sorrow as people mourn their sinfulness before a Holy God. Nehemiah however, is looking at the picture from a different perspective. He is viewing it from the celebratory mood because he realizes that only by the grace of God they have been allowed to return to their homeland and by God's plan and God's strength they have accomplished the work placed before them! The exiles probably were not all that familiar with the Feasts of the Lord so Nehemiah instructs them that it is the time of the Feast of Tabernacles and that they should celebrate their deliverance from slavery and the return to their homes through this Feast.

- What are your thoughts on the reaction of the people to the reading of God's law?
- How is this similar to how we react to sin in our lives and what is the proper response to sin in our lives once we are convicted of it by the law?
- What are your thoughts on Nehemiah's perspective and how he feels they should celebrate and not mourn on this holy day?
- Do you feel God would rather the Israelites mourn in their guilt or celebrate in the victory they just experienced at His hand? Explain.



Day 3

Sermon Sentence: It was God, not you or your power!

Memory Verse: Deuteronomy 4:7

Leviticus 23-33-43

Nehemiah 8:13-18

The Feast of Tabernacles

In the Book of Nehemiah, the Israelites have joined back into their covenant relationship at the appointed time of a feast known as the Feast of Tabernacles. This is one of the 7 appointed feasts listed in Leviticus 23 to be celebrated throughout the year on the Jewish calendar. The Feast of Tabernacles has a historic significance and is thought to have a future significance during the Millennial Reign of Christ after Armageddon. During this time in the Old Testament, this feast served to remind the Israelites of their deliverance from captivity in Egypt. It is a celebratory feast of sharing food and joy among each other and the temporary shelters were to serve as a reminder of how they lived during this deliverance.

- What are your thoughts on the Feast of Tabernacles as described in Leviticus?
- If you desire to go further, read the entire chapter of Leviticus 23 to see all seven of the Lord's feasts. Understand that the feasts are a blueprint of God's plan of salvation and try to determine where we are in the timeline. What feast will signify the end of the Church era?
- What is so wonderful about the timing of this feast in the story of Nehemiah? What are the similarities that the Israelites would have been able to relate to as compared to the Exodus story?
- In furthering your understanding of this feast can you better relate to Nehemiah's position that this should be a time of joy and not mourning? Why or why not?



Day 4

Sermon Sentence: It was God, not you or your power!

Memory Verse: Deuteronomy 4:7

Deuteronomy 8

Nehemiah 8:11-12

Nehemiah and the Levites want to give the Israelites the proper perspective on the word. Their perspective should be one of obedience born out of joy not a dreary response to the written rules of God because of a sense of duty. Of course they had to repent of their faithlessness to get back into the covenant relationship with God but once there the joy of all that God had done for them should make them see that the rules of the covenant that was placed before them was not burdensome but rather a prescription for a successful life with God as their provider and protector. The Old Covenant was described as a covenant of letters (2 Corinthians 3:6) but it was always meant to represent the character of God as later expressed by the Spirit rather than letter under the New Covenant.

- What are your thoughts on Deuteronomy 8 concerning the covenant instructions of the Lord. Can you see where all the blessings of God were meant to bring the obedience of the Israelites?
- Why does the covenant have such harsh penalties when the Israelites remain out of the covenant relationship. Is it the same for a Christian? How is it the same and how is it different?
- What are your thoughts on obedience because of joy? Does all that God has done in your life make you want to be more obedient to His ways?
- What is different between life under the letter of law versus life through the Spirit as in the New Testament. Why does one condemn and the other bring life?



Day 5

Sermon Sentence: It was God, not you or your power!

Memory Verse: Deuteronomy 4:7

James 1:22–25

The main theme of this week's sermon is that we should be obedient to the Lord not because of obligation (although that is sometimes the case) but more out of joy for all that He has done for us! As Christians we have the privilege of living in the most blessed time in the Bible, The Church Age. No other age in the Biblical story has seen the richness of blessings poured out freely as God has done for His Church. When we take stock of what God has done to save us and what He has also worked through each of our individual lives it should bring a sense of joy that makes serving the Lord and living for the Lord something we view as a pleasure and not a burdensome duty. God's commands are not burdensome (1 John 5:3) and are designed to help us live a fruitful life apart from the death brought by sin.

Life Application:

- Remember where you came from so you can keep moving forward.
- Remember what was provided so you can trust in the future. (Deuteronomy 8)
- Remember what it cost so we could experience the victory.

Take It Home:

- Experience the greatest victory and leave here celebrating.
- Celebrate what God has done in your life.
- There are always going to be valleys, but remember to celebrate when God brought you to the mountain top.