

NEHEMIAH CHAPTERS 7 & 8 - “The Captives Who Returned to Jerusalem; Ezra Reads the Law; The Feast of Tabernacles”!

OBSERVATION

Monday 7:00pm, H 105 (1st floor, High School--foot of stairs, behind the gym, by the vending machine area), Tuesday 7:00am, Family, Room, CCCM – **Phil Twente, cell #714 425 9221**; email – ptwente@gmail.com For past studies, audio plus notes, go to: www.ptwente.com Click on “Bible Studies” on the left column. References include commentaries by numerous pastor/teachers.

INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

EZRA – BOOK OF RESTORATION; NEHEMIAH – BOOK OF RECONSTRUCTION

Nehemiah 8:1-18 - THE SPIRIT OF GOD, WORKING THROUGH THE WORD OF GOD, BRINGS REVIVAL

J. Edwin Orr defined revival as: “The Spirit of God working through the Word of God, in the lives of the people of God.” Chapter 8 is a great example of this.

EZRA READS THE LAW

Neh 8:8 So they read distinctly from the book, in the Law of God; and they gave the sense, and helped them to understand the reading

Nehemiah 8:8 is probably the greatest single verse in the Old Testament for expositional teaching of the Bible!

In the New Testament - 1 Timothy 4:13 “Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.

Three things! “REA” -- Reading Explaining; Applying! “READ DISTINCTLY”, “GAVE THE SENSE”, AND “HELPED THEM UNDERSTAND”! Reading, the explaining the passage and then the Applying of the Scripture.

v. 8a. They read distinctly:

- The preacher **must speak in a clear, easy-to-understand way**. His main goal is **to make the people understand**, not to impress or entertain them.

v.8b They gave the sense

- The preacher **must communicate the sense of the passage of Scripture**, and not his own agenda or favorite personal topics. The people must leave **understanding God’s Word better**, not understanding the preacher’s opinions better.

v. 8c Helped the people to understand the Law: It is important to see why God’s people need special help in understanding God’s Word.

- **First, because the things of God are spiritually discerned** and not intellectually discerned. The Holy Spirit uses gifted teachers to bring spiritual discernment to us, helping us to understand what God’s Word says.
- **Second – context:** because **it was first written in a different language, in a different culture, in a different place, and at a far distant time**. Teachers help us **understand it all in our own day**.
- **Third, because our minds are often slow to understand things that will convict our hearts**. We often need it spelled right out to us.
- **Understanding** needs to be the first goal of any preacher or teacher. When I stand to teach God’s people, there are some things that I always need to remember:
 - If you leave knowing helpful hints to a better life, but do not have a greater understanding of God’s Word, the teacher has failed.
 - If you leave having been amused by humor, entertained by anecdotes, or captivated by dramatic stories, but do not have a greater understanding of God’s Word, the teacher has failed.
 - If you leave motivated to action, or praying a prayer, but it is not based on a greater understanding of God’s Word, the teacher has failed.
 - If you leave admiring the teacher, but do not have a greater understanding of God’s Word, the teacher has failed. - and will be accountable before God for their failure.

Reading is good, and preaching good, but expounding brings the reading and the preaching together, thereby making the reading more intelligible and the preaching more convincing.

TIME LINE – BOOKS OF EZRA – (“Bible Hub” online)

537 BC	The Proclamation of Cyrus	Ezra 1
537 BC	The Exiles Return	Ezra 2
535 BC	Temple Work Begins (70 yrs. from 605BC)	Ezra 3
534 BC	Adversaries Hinder Temple Work	Ezra 4
534 BC	Artaxerxes Orders Work Stopped	Ezra 4:17
520 BC	Tattenai’s Letter to Darius	Ezra 5
520 BC	Temple Work Resumed by Darius’ Decree	Ezra 6
(Books of Haggai & Zechariah occur here)		
515 BC	Completion and Dedication of the Temple	Ezra 6:16
(Book of Esther occurs here)		

BOOK OF ESTHER (about 60 yrs. from 1st return)

483 BC	Queen Vashti Deposed	Esther 1
478 BC	Esther Becomes Queen	Esther 2
478 BC	Mordecai Thwarts a Conspiracy	Esther 2:21
474 BC	Haman Seeks Revenge on the Jews	Esther 3
473 BC	Mordecai Informs Esther of Haman’s Plot	Esther 4
473 BC	Esther Prepares a Banquet	Esther 5
473 BC	The King Honors Mordecai	Esther 6
473 BC	Haman Is Hanged	Esther 7
473 BC	Xerxes’ Edict on Behalf of Esther & Jews	Esther 8
472 BC	Purim Instituted	Esther 9
472 BC	Xerxes’ Tribute to Mordecai	Esther 10
458 BC	Ezra to Jerusalem (147 years from 605; 79 years from 1 st return; 57 years from last verse of chapter 6!)	Ezra 7
458 BC	Ezra Commissioned by Artaxerxes	Ezra 7:11
457 BC	Families Return to Jerusalem with Ezra	Ezra 8
457 BC	Ezra’s reforms (80 yrs. from 1 st return)	Ezra 9
456 BC	Ezra’s Prayer About Intermarriage	Ezra 10

BOOK OF NEHEMIAH (about 100 years from 1st return)

445 BC	Nehemiah’s Prayer for the Exiles	Nehemiah 1
444 BC	Artaxerxes Sends Nehemiah to Jerusalem	Nehemiah 2
444 BC	Builders of the Walls Named	Nehemiah 3
444 BC	Builders Overcome Ridicule	Nehemiah 4
444 BC	Nehemiah Abolishes Debt and Bondage	Nehemiah 5
444 BC	Sanballat’s Plot	Nehemiah 6
444 BC	Completion of the Wall	Nehemiah 6:15
444 BC	Census of Returned Exiles	Nehemiah 7
444 BC	Ezra Reads the Law	Nehemiah 8
444 BC	Israelites Fast and Repent	Nehemiah 9
444 BC	Israelites Seal the Covenant	Nehemiah 10
444 BC	People Settle in Jerusalem	Neh. 11, 12
432 BC	Nehemiah Restores Laws	Nehemiah 13

Kings of Persia in Ezra-Nehemiah:

Cyrus (539-530-9yrs); Darius I (522-486-36yrs); Xerxes (Ahasueres 485-464-21yrs); Artaxerxes I (464-423-41yrs)

NEHEMIAH CHAPTERS 7 & 8 - "The Captives Who Returned to Jerusalem; Ezra Reads the Law; The Feast of Tabernacles"!

OBSERVATION

Monday 7:00pm, H 105 (1st floor, High School--foot of stairs, behind the gym, by the vending machine area), Tuesday 7:00am, Family, Room, CCCM – **Phil Twente, cell #714 425 9221**; email – ptwente@gmail.com For past studies, audio plus notes, go to: www.ptwente.com Click on "Bible Studies" on the left column. References include commentaries by numerous pastor/teachers.

INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

NEHEMIAH S 7 & 8

Neh 7:1 Then it was, when the wall was built and I had hung the doors, when the gatekeepers, the singers, and the Levites had been appointed, Neh 7:2 that I gave the charge of Jerusalem to my brother Hanani, and Hananiah the leader of the citadel, for he was a faithful man and feared God more than many.

Neh 7:3 And I said to them, "Do not let the gates of Jerusalem be opened until the sun is hot; and while they stand guard, let them shut and bar the doors; and appoint guards from among the inhabitants of Jerusalem, one at his watch station and another in front of his own house."

The Captives Who Returned to Jerusalem;

Neh 7:4 Now the city was large and spacious, but the people in it were few, and the houses were not rebuilt.

Lists of Returned Exiles

Neh 7:5 Then my God put it into my heart to gather the nobles, the rulers, and the people, that they might be registered by genealogy. And I found a register of the genealogy of those who had come up in the first return, and found written in it:

Neh 7:6 These are the people of the province who came back from the captivity, of those who had been carried away, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away, and who returned to Jerusalem and Judah, everyone to his city.

Neh 7:7-65 Those who came with Zerubbabel were Jeshua, Nehemiah, Azariah, Raamiah, Nahamani, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispereth, Bigvai, Nehum, and Baanah. The number of the men of the people of Israel: [8] the sons of Parosh, two thousand one hundred and seventy-two; [9] the sons of Shephatiah, three hundred and seventy-two; [10] the sons of Arah, six hundred and fifty-two; [11] the sons of Pahath-Moab, of the sons of Jeshua and Joab, two thousand eight hundred and eighteen; [12] the sons of Elam, one thousand two hundred and fifty-four; [13] the sons of Zattu, eight hundred and forty-five; [14] the sons of Zaccai, seven hundred and sixty;

v. 1 ... wall was built: Everything was in order - both practically and spiritually the work was completed and set right. The singers and the Levites were there to lead the people in worshipping God with greater glory and freedom than ever before.

v. 2 ...charge of Jerusalem: Nehemiah wasn't in this for political position. Having completed the work, he would let God use him in Jerusalem, but to stay in authority. *Hanani*, Nehemiah's brother, having shown initiative and concern made him well qualified to govern. *Hananiah...faithful man...feared God*, was the co-leader of Jerusalem. His character was what God needs in a person to use them greatly.

v. 3 Because of limited population and the need to be observant of all those coming into the city, the gates were to be opened only the middle portion of the day and guarded by watchmen set on the walls. A glorious victory, the walls were rebuilt. Yet, the walls needed diligent watchmen and guarding. Entrants to the city

v. 4 Because the city within the walls was sparsely populated, the measures of being especially watchful with its inhabitants taking an active role in security was implemented.

v. 5 ...God put it into my heart: Before Jerusalem could grow, he needed to know who lived where. God had done a great work in rebuilding the gates and walls. Now in the repopulating the city, **Nehemiah wanted to make sure the incoming inhabitants had a pure Jewish genealogy.** So, he took a census and looked at the registry first written by Ezra in **Ezr 2:1-70. He wanted to make sure only Jews would inhabit the city. Cf. - Neh 2:20b "The God of heaven Himself will prosper us; therefore we His servants will arise and build, but you have no heritage or right or memorial in Jerusalem."**

vs. 6-73 The citizens of Jerusalem who returned from the Babylonian captivity. **These are the people . . . who returned to Jerusalem and Judah:** This list was important because each of these people were important to God, in that they did what so few of their fellow Jews did - they took the trouble to return back to the promised land after they had already set down roots for seventy years in the Babylonian empire. **These are the people:** Since only about 2% of the Jews who were carried away into exile by the Babylonians came back, these one who did have the pioneer spirit are worthy of mention - and they are mentioned *twice* in God's eternal word (**Nehemiah 7** :Here and in **Ezra 2**). Who the people were was important (Nehemiah 7 :specific names were mentioned). What families they came from was important. Their gifts to support the work were important (Nehemiah 7 :they are specifically listed towards the end of the chapter).

v. 1 Nehemiah continues to demonstrate his gift of leadership. His initial assignment of constructing Jerusalem's walls has now been completed! He now goes about organizing the city, appointing gatekeepers, singers and Levites. He will be governor for a period of about 12 years. **As you complete a step or steps in doing God's work, as Nehemiah did, are you continuing to be alert and available to what He is calling you to do next?**

v. 2 Notice the leadership characteristics mentioned – **faithfulness and fearing God. Are those two important to us as we look at ourselves right now? We need to continue being watchful even at times of "mountaintop experiences"!**

v. 3 In the Christian life, often a victory is won and later lost because there was no guard. An enemy may come in because we are not be watchful or seeing clearly. **How are our walls? Do we allow anything to come in under cover of darkness, or is everything exposed to His light?**

v. 4 Would they and we not be more concerned about the security of our own families and homes than anyone else?

v. 5 Even during and following mountaintop victorious, mountaintop situations, notice the continuing need for seeking and doing the Lord's will in continuing the work.

v. 6 We see the forward planning of Nehemiah in determining who really were of pure Jewish descent. In bringing the outlying Jews back into the city, a little later, we see in **Neh 11:1**, lots were cast to bring back one tenth of them.

NEHEMIAH CHAPTERS 7 & 8 - “The Captives Who Returned to Jerusalem; Ezra Reads the Law; The Feast of Tabernacles”!

OBSERVATION

Monday 7:00pm, H 105 (1st floor, High School--foot of stairs, behind the gym, by the vending machine area), Tuesday 7:00am, Family, Room, CCCM – Phil Twente, cell #714 425 9221; email – ptwente@gmail.com For past studies, audio plus notes, go to: www.ptwente.com Click on “Bible Studies” on the left column. References include commentaries by numerous pastor/teachers.

INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

[15] the sons of Binnui, six hundred and forty-eight; [16] the sons of Bebai, six hundred and twenty-eight; [17] the sons of Azgad, two thousand three hundred and twenty-two; [18] the sons of Adonikam, six hundred and sixty-seven; [19] the sons of Bigvai, two thousand and sixty-seven; [20] the sons of Adin, six hundred and fifty-five; [21] the sons of Ater of Hezekiah, ninety-eight; [22] the sons of Hashum, three hundred and twenty-eight; [23] the sons of Bezai, three hundred and twenty-four; [24] the sons of Hariph, one hundred and twelve; [25] the sons of Gibeon, ninety-five; [26] the men of Bethlehem and Netophah, one hundred and eighty-eight; [27] the men of Anathoth, one hundred and twenty-eight; [28] the men of Beth Azmaveth, forty-two; [29] the men of Kirjath Jearim, Chephirah, and Beeroth, seven hundred and forty-three; [30] the men of Ramah and Geba, six hundred and twenty-one; [31] the men of Michmas, one hundred and twenty-two; [32] the men of Bethel and Ai, one hundred and twenty-three; [33] the men of the other Nebo, fifty-two; [34] the sons of the other Elam, one thousand two hundred and fifty-four; [35] the sons of Harim, three hundred and twenty; [36] the sons of Jericho, three hundred and forty-five; [37] the sons of Lod, Hadid, and Ono, seven hundred and twenty-one; [38] the sons of Senaah, three thousand nine hundred and thirty. [39] The priests: the sons of Jedaiah, of the house of Jeshua, nine hundred and seventy-three; Neh 7:[40] the sons of Immer, one thousand and fifty-two; [41] the sons of Pashhur, one thousand two hundred and forty-seven; [42] the sons of Harim, one thousand and seventeen. [43] The Levites: the sons of Jeshua, of Kadmiel, and of the sons of Hodevah, seventy-four. [44] The singers: the sons of Asaph, one hundred and forty-eight. [45] The gatekeepers: the sons of Shallum, the sons of Ater, the sons of Talmon, the sons of Akkub, the sons of Hatita, the sons of Shobai, one hundred and thirty-eight. [46] The Nethinim: the sons of Ziha, the sons of Hasupha, the sons of Tabbaath, [47] the sons of Keros, the sons of Sia, the sons of Padon, [48] the sons of Lebana, the sons of Hagaba, the sons of Salmai, [49] the sons of Hanan, the sons of Giddel, the sons of Gahar, [50] the sons of Reaiah, the sons of Rezin, the sons of Nekoda, [51] the sons of Gazzam, the sons of Uzza, the sons of Paseah, [52] the sons of Besai, the sons of Meunim, the sons of Nephishesim, [53] the sons of Bakbuk, the sons of Hakupha, the sons of Harhur, [54] the sons of Bazlith, the sons of Mehida, the sons of Harsha, [55] the sons of Barkos, the sons of Sisera, the sons of Tamah, [56] the sons of Nezia, and the sons of Hatipha. [57] The sons of Solomon's servants: the sons of Sotai, the sons of Sophereth, the sons of Perida, [58] the sons of Jaala, the sons of Darkon, the sons of Giddel, [59] the sons of Shephatiah, the sons of Hattil, the sons of Pochereth of Zebaim, and the children of Amon [60] All the Nethinim, and the sons of Solomon's servants, were three hundred and ninety-two. [61] And these were the ones who came up from Tel Melah, Tel Harsha, Cherub, Addon, and Immer, but they could not identify their father's house nor their lineage, whether they were of Israel: [62] the sons of Delaiah, the sons of Tobiah, the sons of Nekoda, six hundred and forty-two; [63] and of the priests: the sons of Habaiah, the sons of Koz, the sons of Barzillai, who took a wife of the daughters of Barzillai the Gileadite, and was called by their name. [64] These sought their listing among those who were registered by genealogy, but it was not found; therefore they were excluded from the priesthood as defiled. [65] And the governor said to them that they should not eat of the most holy things till a priest could consult with the Urim and Thummim.

Totals of People and Gifts -
 Neh 7:66-73 *Altogether the whole assembly was forty-two thousand three hundred and sixty, [67] their male and female servants, of whom there were seven thousand three hundred and thirty-seven; and they had two hundred and forty-five men and women singers. [68] Their horses were seven hundred and thirty-six, their mules two hundred and forty-five, [69] their camels four hundred and thirty-five, and donkeys six thousand seven hundred and twenty. [70] And some of the heads of the fathers' houses gave to the work. The governor gave to the treasury one thousand gold drachmas, fifty basins, and five hundred and thirty priestly garments. [71] Some of the heads of the fathers' houses gave to the treasury of the work twenty thousand gold drachmas, and two thousand two hundred silver minas. [72] And that which the rest of the people gave was twenty thousand gold drachmas, two thousand silver minas, and sixty-seven priestly garments. [73] So the priests, the Levites, the gatekeepers, the singers, some of the people, the Nethinim, and all Israel dwelt in their cities. When the seventh month came, the children of Israel were in their cities.*

v. 39 The category of *the priests*.

v. 43 *The Levites*.

v. 46 *The Nethinim*:

v. 57 *The Sons of Solomon's servants*.

vs.63- 64 Nehemiah's prayer, asking God to remember his good deeds. 64c. **These sought their listing among those who were registered by genealogy, but it was not found:** Some could not be priests until their lineage was determined. In the Old Testament, one could not be a priest unless it was established that they descended from Aaron, the brother of Moses, and the first high priest over Israel.

v. 73 **When the seventh month came, the children of Israel were in their cities:** This list flows beautifully after the completion of the work, because it reminds us that the work was really all about these people. The walls were important; **what was more important was the benefit the walls could have in the lives of God's people; enabling them to live in peace and security; teaching them to work hard, work together, work through adversity and attack, and work till the job is done.**

Neh 7:66 *Altogether the whole assembly was forty-two thousand three hundred and sixty.*
Ezr 2:64 *The whole assembly together was forty-two thousand three hundred and sixty.*

v. 73 When the seventh month came, the children of Israel were in their cities: The seventh month is a significant because of the feasts held in that month:
Feast of Trumpets (Rosh Ha-shanah), 1st day of the 7th mo. (Ethaniam / Tishri) Lev 23:24, Num 29:1

Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur), The 10th day of the 7th mo. (Ethaniam / Tishri) Lev 23:27, Num 29:7, Lev 16

Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkoth) - An eight day feast of ingathering. THE LAST OF THREE COMPULSORY PILGRIMAGE FEASTS:

Travel to the Sanctuary in Jerusalem required of all men, to present themselves before the Lord (Exo 23:14,17, Exo 34:22, Deut 16:16).

The **first day** was the **15th day** of the 7th mo. (Ethaniam / Tishri) Exo 34:22, Lev 23:34-36, 39-43, Num 29:12

The **7th day** of the **Feast of Tabernacles, Festival of Willows (Hoshana Rabbah), 21st day** of the seventh mo.

The **8th day** of the **Feast of Tabernacles (Shemini Atzeret), 22nd day** of the seventh mo.

NEHEMIAH CHAPTERS 7 & 8 - "The Captives Who Returned to Jerusalem; Ezra Reads the Law; The Feast of Tabernacles"!

OBSERVATION

Monday 7:00pm, H 105 (1st floor, High School--foot of stairs, behind the gym, by the vending machine area), Tuesday 7:00am, Family, Room, CCCM – Phil Twente, cell #714 425 9221; email – ptwente@gmail.com For past studies, audio plus notes, go to: www.ptwente.com Click on "Bible Studies" on the left column. References include commentaries by numerous pastor/teachers.

INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

NEHEMIAH CHAPTER 8 - Ezra Reads the Law ("Through the Bible Revival!" Characterized by profound respect by all the people for God's Word!);

Neh 8:1 Now all the people gathered together as one man in the open square that was in front of the Water Gate; and they told Ezra the scribe to bring the Book of the Law of Moses, which the LORD had commanded Israel.

Neh 8:2 So Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly of men and women and all who could hear with understanding on the first day of the seventh month.

Neh 8:3 Then he read from it in the open square that was in front of the Water Gate from morning until midday, before the men and women and those who could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive to the Book of the Law.

Neh 8:4 So Ezra the scribe stood on a platform of wood which they had made for the purpose; and beside him, at his right hand, stood Mattithiah, Shema, Anaijah, Urijah, Hilkiyah, and Maaseiah; and at his left hand Pedaiah, Mishael, Malchijah, Hashum, Hashbadana, Zechariah, and Meshullam.

Neh 8:5 And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was standing above all the people; and when he opened it, all the people stood up.

Neh 8:6 And Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God. Then all the people answered, "Amen, Amen!" while lifting up their hands. And they bowed their heads and worshiped the LORD with their faces to the ground.

Neh 8:7 Also Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodijah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, and the Levites, helped the people to understand the Law; and the people stood in their place.

v. 1 They realized that their greatest defense was not just physical protection. They recognized the greatest defense that God's people can have in this world to turn back to God, to know the authority of God in their lives; **to know the word of God and to obey the word of God!** Hearing God's Word sparks revival....*all...gathered together...Watgate (John 15:3; Eph. 5:26...bring the book of the Law:* We see the Spirit of God was at work even before the reading of God's Word. People do not gather *together as one man* for the things of God unless the Spirit of God has moved them, and they do not desire God's Word unless the Spirit of God has moved them.

v. 2 Ezra the scribe ...the priest: Ezra, a godly man devoted to the word of God was the man responsible for having the temple rebuilt, and for returning God's people to worship. Nehemiah, in all his work of rebuilding the walls, just carried on the work Ezra had begun. **All who could hear with understanding:** Everyone, even if under age, who could understand it needed to hear it.

v. 3 ...book of the Law of Moses: The Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible, was Israel's instruction manual for how to walk before God. **...read from it in the open square:** Ezra read God's Word from daylight to mid-day., about six hours and the people listened! Moved by the Spirit God's people were attentive to His word!

v. 4 How God's Word was received. **... Ezra . . . stood on a platform:** A wooden platform so the Word of God could be heard. They did practical things so God's Word would have the greatest effect. **...right hand ...left hand:** On both sides of Ezra were men who were supporting him in his ministry of teaching God's Word.

v. 5 ...opened ...all...stood up: Recognizing it for what it was, they had a *respect* for God's Word. They recognized and honored it for what it was - the Word of God, not the word of man.

v. 6 Then all ... answered: This work of the Word of God and the Spirit of God had three immediate results: • The people *thanked God* by saying **Amen, Amen** when Ezra blessed the Lord! They prayed, by lifting up their hands! • They worshipped, by bowing down before Him!

v. 7 God's Word is presented so the people may understand. **...read distinctly:** The preacher must speak in a clear, easy-to-understand way. His main goal is to make the people understand, not to impress or entertain them. Special men were appointed to help the people *understand* God's Word. Without understanding it would do little good.

v. 1 . God gave Ezra ability and authority, and then the people gave him opportunity and invitation. **bring the book of the Law** – always the beginning of something very good things, **spiritually. It begins with the Word!** I can't begin to know Him, unless I am literate with the Word of God! What wonderful words! No words better for those. We need to cooperate and flow with the work of God's Spirit if the Word of God is going to do its full work in us who love God and His Word, supremely! They wanted the opinion of God, not the opinion of man!

v. 2 We see here that **all who could hear with understanding** came together in one large assembly in front of the Watgate, because they had a hunger for God and wanted to hear from Him and to know Him. **To be washed by the Water by the Word! Does that describe us?**

v. 3 The platform was big enough to hold fourteen people for the long hours of reading and explaining. The men, probably priests, stood with Nehemiah to show agreement. Everything points to the people showing great respect for His word! **Can you imagine standing for six hours being attentive to hearing the Word of God being read?**

v. 4 There are practical things we can do also to help God's Word have the greatest effect. But by far, the greatest preparation must happen in the heart. We must come, willing to forget about ourselves and our own agenda, and submit ourselves to God's Word - not the preacher's word, but God's Word.

v. 5 This is evidence of two things. First, that the Spirit of God is at work; second, that something good is going to happen.

v. 6 Notice the sense of privilege of opening up the Word! **"Amen, Amen!" while lifting up their hands. And they bowed their heads and worshiped the LORD with their faces to the ground.**

v. 7 Has the Lord given you a gift of teaching or a gift of helping others to understand His word? A great gift to help others to better comprehend God through His word!

NEHEMIAH CHAPTERS 7 & 8 - "The Captives Who Returned to Jerusalem; Ezra Reads the Law; The Feast of Tabernacles"!

OBSERVATION

Monday 7:00pm, H 105 (1st floor, High School--foot of stairs, behind the gym, by the vending machine area), Tuesday 7:00am, Family, Room, CCCM – Phil Twente, cell #714 425 9221; email – ptwente@gmail.com For past studies, audio plus notes, go to: www.ptwente.com Click on "Bible Studies" on the left column. References include commentaries by numerous pastor/teachers.

INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

Neh 8:8 So they read distinctly from the book, in the Law of God; and they gave the sense, and helped them to understand the reading.

This Day Is Holy

Neh 8:9 And Nehemiah, who was the governor, Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, "This day is holy (more than just a feast day, but "holy" because of the people asking to know God by knowing His word!) to the LORD your God; do not mourn nor weep." For all the people wept, when they heard the words of the Law.

Neh 8:10 Then he said to them, "Go your way, eat the fat, drink the sweet, and send portions to those for whom nothing is prepared; for this day is holy to our Lord. Do not sorrow, for the joy of the LORD is your strength."

Neh 8:11 So the Levites quieted all the people, saying, "Be still, for the day is holy; do not be grieved."

Neh 8:12 And all the people went their way to eat and drink, to send portions and rejoice greatly, because they understood the words that were declared to them.

The Feast of Tabernacles!

Neh 8:13 Now on the second day the heads of the fathers' houses of all the people, with the priests and Levites, were gathered to Ezra the scribe, in order to understand the words of the Law.

v. 8 Helped...to understand... (Expositional teaching) It is important to see why God's people need special help in understanding God's Word. After hearing, the people must leave understanding God's Word better, not understanding the preacher's opinions better. Let those that **read and preach** the word **learn also to deliver themselves distinctly**, as those who understand what they say and are affected with it themselves, and who desire that those they speak to may **understand it, retain it, and be affected with it**. It is a snare for a man to devour that which is holy. Three most important things in teaching God's word – **Reading; Explaining; Applying!**

v. 9 Response to God's Word makes revival flow. *All the people wept, when they heard the words of the Law:* The Word of God was doing its intended work. *Do not mourn nor weep:* It is a good thing to be sad under the conviction of the Holy Spirit through the Word of God; however, if the sense of conviction is greater than the sense that God is doing a good and holy work, then tears are not good. Our sin should never be considered bigger than our knowledge of Jesus as our savior. We are great sinners, but He is a greater Savior. The difference between conviction (drawing to) and condemnation (pushing away). The Holy Spirit always draws us to God! Cf. 1 John 1:9

v. 10 the joy of the Lord is your strength - even when you are being convicted of sin. When we are convicted of sin we know that God is doing a work in us, so we can be glad and take joy. Our emotions are not beyond our control; we can do God's will even when we don't feel like it. We are not to live below the joy He has for us!

v. 11 We must not be merry when God calls to mourning, so we must not frighten and afflict ourselves when God gives us occasion to rejoice. Even sorrow for sin must not grow so excessive as to hinder our joy in God and our cheerfulness in his service.

v. 12 The people choose to rejoice. *They understood the words that were declared to them:* They went away praising God, because understanding God's Word brings such a sweet sense of joy. Cf. - Act 8:8 And there was great joy in that city.

v. 13 The leaders got together the second day for more study of God's Word. *The heads of the fathers' houses of all the people, with the priests and Levites:* Leaders have a special need to understand and walk in God's Word.

v. 8 Three things! "REA" -- "READ DISTINCTLY", "GAVE THE SENSE", AND "HELPED THEM UNDERSTAND"! **Reading, the Explaining the passage and then the Applying of the Scripture.**

v. 9 This day is holy... all the people wept ... This day was holy (it is called a sabbath, Lev 23:36 For seven days you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD. On the eighth day you shall have a holy convocation, and you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD. It is a sacred assembly, and you shall do no customary work on it; 2 Chron 7:9-10 –

Solomon's dedication of the temple! This day is holy to the LORD and therefore was to be celebrated with joy and praise, not as if it were a day to afflict their souls. **How often are you weeping in sorrow, when you know the Lord's will is for you to be joyful?**

vs. 10-11 Do not sorrow, for the joy of the LORD is your strength, our fortress, our restorer!: The people felt sad, because they were aware of their own sin. But they could walk in joy because God was doing a great work!

1 Ch 16:27 Honor and majesty are before Him; Strength and gladness are in His place.

Psa 96:6 Honor and majesty are before Him; Strength and beauty are in His sanctuary.

Zep 3:17 The LORD your God in your midst, The Mighty One, will save; **He will rejoice over you with gladness (joy, mirth, pleasure, rejoicing). He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing."**

Psa 27:1 The LORD is my light and my salvation; Whom shall I fear? The LORD is the strength of my life; Of whom shall I be afraid?

v. 12 How frequently is your life impacted to the degree of sharing with others and rejoicing greatly by your understanding the Word that has been declared to you?

v. 13 The ignorance or disobedience of the leaders, heads of families, the priests and Levites, affects far more than themselves. It dramatically affects everyone!

NEHEMIAH CHAPTERS 7 & 8 - "The Captives Who Returned to Jerusalem; Ezra Reads the Law; The Feast of Tabernacles"!

OBSERVATION

Monday 7:00pm, H 105 (1st floor, High School--foot of stairs, behind the gym, by the vending machine area), Tuesday 7:00am, Family, Room, CCCM – Phil Twente, cell #714 425 9221; email – ptwente@gmail.com For past studies, audio plus notes, go to: www.ptwente.com Click on "Bible Studies" on the left column. References include commentaries by numerous pastor/teachers.

INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

Neh 8:14 And they found written in the Law, which the LORD had commanded by Moses, that the children of Israel should dwell in booths during the feast of the seventh month,

Neh 8:15 and that they should announce and proclaim in all their cities and in Jerusalem, saying, "Go out to the mountain, and bring olive branches, branches of oil trees, myrtle branches, palm branches, and branches of leafy trees, to make booths, as it is written."

Neh 8:16 Then the people went out and brought them and made themselves booths, each one on the roof of his house, or in their courtyards or the courts of the house of God, and in the open square of the Water Gate and in the open square of the Gate of Ephraim.

Neh 8:17 So the whole assembly of those who had returned from the captivity made booths and sat under the booths; for since the days of Joshua the son of Nun until that day the children of Israel had not done so. And there was very great gladness.

Neh 8:18 Also day by day, from the first day until the last day, he read from the Book of the Law of God. And they kept the feast seven days; and on the eighth day there was a sacred assembly, according to the prescribed manner.

TAKE TIME TO BE HOLY – William Longstaff – Dallas Christian Adult Choral Group

1. Take time to be holy, speak oft with thy Lord; Abide in Him always, and feed on His Word. Make friends of God's children, help those who are weak, Forgetting in nothing His blessing to seek.

2. Take time to be holy, the world rushes on; Spend much time in secret, with Jesus alone Abiding in Jesus, like Him thou shalt be; Thy friends in thy conduct His likeness shall see.

3. Take time to be holy, be calm in thy soul, Each thought and each motive beneath His control. Thus led by His Spirit to fountains of love, Thou soon shalt be fitted for service above.

v. 14 And they found written in the Law, which the LORD had commanded by Moses: This was beautiful, simple obedience. Their attitude was that God said it, so we will do it. Even though tradition did not tell them to keep the Feast of Tabernacles (it had not been done since the days of Joshua), but they relied on God's Word, not on tradition. *That the children of Israel should dwell in booths during the feast of the seventh month:* The Feast of Tabernacles was all about remembering how God had blessed and provided for Israel in the wilderness during the Exodus. They could see God's blessing and provision for them right then, and it made something old seem brand new to them.

v. 15 A celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles. The dwelling in booths was to be a reminder to them of the care and protection of God while Israel was journeying from Egypt to Canaan. Now they are hearing the word and respond by obeying it! It's one thing to hear the word and have it bring joy to you, but that joy will soon end unless you obey what you have read and let it have its way with you.

v. 16 The whole assembly were obedient to the word as they read it! How exciting it would have been to read the instructions that at this very date of the calendar they were to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles by building booths and staying in them. Notice as they obeyed, there was very great gladness.

v. 17 And there was very great gladness, because of their great obedience to God's Word! Often we deceive ourselves into thinking the path of gladness is in doing our own thing, but gladness and freedom come only through obedience.

v.18 Day by day, from the first day until the last day, he read from the Book of the Law of God: This revival began by the Spirit of God working through the Word of God. It continued that way also.

v. 14 How wonderful it must have been for the assembly to find the written instructions for keeping of the Feast of Tabernacles at that very moment during the seventh month!

v. 15 Are you thrilled when you get the opportunity to announce and proclaim to your Jerusalem and all their cities, the good news you find in His Word?

v. 16 Are you often having very great gladness, as you meditate on His word and then are obedient to it?

v. 17 Does your very great gladness come from accomplishing things are simply through obedience to God and His word?

v. 18 on the eighth day was a sacred assembly — This was the last and great day of the feast (see on Num 29:35). In later times, other ceremonies which increased the rejoicing were added.

Jesus would cry out - Joh 7:37-39 On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. [38] He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water."

[39] But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.