

## People of the Book      Nehemiah 8

- We need understand the Word of God (Neh. 8:1-8)
- We need rejoice in the Word (Neh. 8:9-12)
- We need obey the Word (Neh. 8:13-18)

## People of the Book      Nehemiah 8

### 1. WE NEED TO HEAR/ READ AND UNDERSTAND THE WORD OF GOD (NEH. 8:1-8)

- The Bible is not a “magic book” that changes people or circumstances because somebody reads it or recites it.( cf modern Prayer of jabez movement )
- *God’s Word must be understood before it can enter the heart and release its life-changing power.* Note that four times in this chapter you can find “understanding” mentioned

*(vv. 2-3, 7-8, 12-13).*

- The setting here Tishri - 1st day seventh month = 8th October 445BC

**New year’s day in the Jewish civil calendar - Rosh Hashanah - Feast of Trumpets – Traditionally the Day of Memorial or Remembrance, and the day of judgment, God appears in the role of King, remembering and judging each person individually according to his/her deeds, and making a decree for each person for the following year. The previous month Elul ..... is a month of reflection and repentance.**

↳ Jews celebrated the Feast of Trumpets on the first day, the Day of Atonement on the tenth day, and the Feast of Tabernacles from the fifteenth day to the twenty-first day (Lev. 23:23-44)

**Yom Kippur is the holiest day of the year for Jews. Its central theme is atonement and reconciliation.**

**Tabernacles celebrates the time in the wilderness and the deliverance from Egypt... it is anticipatory of final judgement and of the coming of Messiah..... which is why the triumphal entry into Jerusalem included traditions associated with Tabernacles.**

Only those people old enough to understand the Scripture were permitted to be in the assembly (v. 3). ..cf Baptism in our own tradition.

☐ Notice the pulpit and the public reading of the word .v5

## 2. WE NEED TO REJOICE IN THE WORD (NEH. 8:9-12)

- As Ezra read and explained the Word, the assembly's first response was one of conviction and grief.
- They mourned over their sins, (**Rom. 3:20 no one will be declared righteous in God's sight by the works of the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of our sin.**). The law can't save us; it can only convince us that we need to be saved and then point us to Jesus Christ the Saviour (**Gal. 3:24 So the law was our guardian until Christ came that we might be justified by faith.**).
- The Jews would be preparing for the annual Day of Atonement [10th], were the Lord would deal with their sins (Lev. 16); so they should have been anticipating rejoicing in His forgiveness. On the Jewish calendar, the Feast of Tabernacles (Succoth) follows the Day of Atonement, giving God's people an entire week of happy celebration (23:26-44). The sequence is important: first conviction, then cleansing, and then celebration.
- The Reformation for which we are celebrating the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year came about because the people and the church had moved away from understanding and rejoicing in the word of God ..... The cry was **By Grace Alone – through Faith Alone in Christ Alone. ....**

## 3. OBEY THE WORD (NEH. 8:13-18)

### FRANCIS CHAN CLIP

- *Obligation* and *appreciation* are certainly strong motives for serving the Lord, but *celebration* is even stronger. When we obey the Lord and serve Him because we rejoice in Him, then our service will be a delight and not a drudgery.
- The old Bible commentator Matthew Henry wrote, "Holy joy will be oil to the wheels of our obedience."
- To a believer without joy, God's will is punishment; but to the believer who is happy in the Lord, God's will is nourishment (**John 4:34 'My food,' said Jesus, 'is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.**). The Jews still had work to do in their city, and they needed the joy of the Lord to give them the strength to do it.

## Finally, the Truth on National TV.

Billy Graham's daughter was being interviewed on the Early Show and Jane Clayson asked her "How could God let something like this happen?" (regarding the attacks on Sept. 11).

Anne Graham gave an extremely profound and insightful response. She said I believe that God is deeply saddened by this, just as we are, but for years we've been telling God to get out of our schools, to get out of our government and to get out of our lives. And being the gentleman that He is, I believe that He has calmly backed out. How can we expect God to give us His blessing and His protection if we demand that He leave us alone?"

In light of recent events...terrorists attack, school shootings, etc. Let's see, I think it started when Madeline Murray O'Hare (she was murdered, her body was found recently) complained she didn't want any prayer in our schools, **and we said OK.**

Then, someone said you better not read the Bible in school... The Bible that says thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not steal, and love your neighbour as yourself. **And we said, OK.**

Then, Dr. Benjamin Spock said we shouldn't spank our children when they misbehave because their little personalities would be warped and we might damage their self-esteem (Dr. Spock's son committed suicide) And we said, an expert should know what he's talking about **so we said OK.**

Then, someone said teachers and principals better not discipline our children when they misbehave. And the school administrators said no faculty member in this school better touch a student when they misbehave because we don't want any bad publicity, and we surely don't want to be sued (There's a big difference between disciplining and touching, beating, Smacking, humiliating, kicking, etc.) **And we said, OK.**

Then someone said, let's let our daughters have abortions if they want, and they won't even have to tell their parents. And we said, OK. Then some wise school board member said, since boys will be boys and they're going to do it anyway, let's give our sons all the condoms they want, so they can have all the fun they desire, and we won't have to tell their parents they got them at school. **And we said, OK.**

Then some of our top elected officials said it doesn't matter what we do in private as long as we do our jobs. And agreeing with them, we said it doesn't matter to me what anyone, including the President, does in private as long as I have a job and the economy is good.

And then someone said let's print magazines with pictures of nude women and call it wholesome, down-to-earth appreciation for the beauty of the female body. **And we said, OK.**

And then someone else took that appreciation a step further and published pictures of nude children and then stepped further still by making them available on the internet. **And we said OK,** they're entitled to their free speech.

And then the entertainment industry said, let's make TV shows and movies that promote profanity, violence,

and illicit sex. And let's record music that encourages rape, drugs, murder, suicide, and satanic themes. And we said it's just entertainment, it has no adverse effect, and nobody takes it seriously anyway, **so go right ahead.**

Now we're asking ourselves why our children have no conscience, why they don't know right from wrong, and why it doesn't bother them to kill strangers, their classmates, and themselves.

Probably, if we think about it long and hard enough, we can figure it out. I think it has a great deal to do with **"WE REAP WHAT WE SOW."**

**Funny** how simple it is for people to trash God and then wonder why the world's going to hell.

**Funny** how we believe what the newspapers say, but question what the Bible says.

**Funny** how everyone wants to go to heaven provided they do not have to believe, think, say, or do anything the Bible says.

**Funny** how someone can say "I believe in God" but still follow Satan who, by the way, also believes in God.

**Funny** how we are quick to judge but not to be judged.

**Funny** how you can send a thousand 'jokes' through e-mail and they spread like wildfire, but when you start sending messages regarding the Lord, people think twice about sharing.

**Funny** how the lewd, crude, vulgar and obscene pass freely through cyberspace, but the public discussion of God is suppressed in the school and workplace.

**Funny** how someone can be so fired up for Christ on Sunday, but be an invisible Christian the rest of the week.

**Are you laughing?**