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Bring the Book of the Law

Nehemiah 7-8

Key Dates in the Period of the Return and Restoration*

- 538/37 B.C.** first return of the Jews under Zerubbabel (Ezra 1-2)
- 537/36 B.C.** the altar built and the foundation laid (Ezra 3)
- 536-520 B.C.** the work on the temple ceases (Ezra 4)
- 520 B.C.** the preaching of Haggai (1-2) and Zechariah (1-6)
- 520 B.C.** the temple construction resumes (Ezra 5)
- 518 B.C.** the preaching of Zechariah (Zechariah 7-14)
- 516/15 B.C.** the temple is completed (Ezra 6)
- 486 B.C.** the Jews opposed in the beginning of Xerxes (Ezra 4:6)
- 483 B.C.** Xerxes holds a feast (Esther 1)
- 479 B.C.** Esther is made queen (Esther 2)
- 474/73 B.C.** Haman plans to kill the Jews (Esther 3-10)
- 464-423 B.C.** the Jews opposed in Artaxerxes' reign (Ezra 7:7ff)
- 458/57 B.C.** the second return of the Jews under Ezra (Ezra 7-10)
- 445-433 B.C.** Nehemiah returns & rebuilds the walls (Neh. 1-12)
- 433-432 B.C.** Nehemiah's recall and return (Nehemiah 13)
- 432-425 B.C.** the preaching of Malachi (1-4)

* all dates are approximate

Nehemiah 7-8

- Nehemiah protects the people in Jerusalem (7:1-73)
- Ezra reads the law of God in Jerusalem (8:1-18)

The Book of the Law

- **Examination** – What does the text say? (8:1-6)
- **Interpretation** – What does the text mean? (8:7-8)
- **Application** – How does the text apply to me today? (8:9-18)

The Perfect Worship Service

- Is it possible to have a perfect worship service? One where all the attendees have proper attitudes and actions?
- Nehemiah 8 records such a service

All the People...

- **United (v. 1)** – “gathered ... together as one man”
- They wanted to gather for the same purpose; all present (Psa. 133:1; Acts 2:42, 46; Eph. 4:3)
- United families (v. 2)
- No stragglers, absentees

All the People...

- **Zealous (v. 1)** – “bring the book of the law”
- They wanted to come hear the word of God (Psa. 122:1)
- No coming for the wrong reasons

All the People...

- **Attentive (v. 3)** – “the ears of all the people were attentive”
- They wanted to pay attention to the message for about 6 hours; time was not an issue (1 Sam. 3:10; Lk. 8:18; Acts 17:11; 20:7-9)
- No playing, no distractions, no hurried attitude, no clock-watching

All the People...

- **Prepared (v. 4)** – “stood upon a pulpit of wood which they had made for the purpose”
- They wanted to be ready and prepared for the purpose of worship (Acts 10:33)
- No throwing together a last-minute service; not ill-prepared; not dragging in late and tired

All the People...

- **Reverent (v. 5)** – “and when he opened it, all the people stood up”
- They wanted to offer a service worthy of an Almighty God and focused on him (Hab. 2:20; 1 Cor. 14:40; Heb. 12:28)
- No irreverence; no playing, sleeping, socializing, etc.

All the People...

- **Active (v. 6)** – “all the people answered, Amen”
- They wanted to participate and be active (Eph. 5:19)
- No pew warmers, spectators, etc.

All the People...

- **Taught (v. 7-8)** – “caused the people to understand the law”
- They wanted to really know what they were hearing; they wanted plain preaching (Acts 8:34; Eph. 5:17)
- No reading without explanation; no “going through the motions”

All the People...

- **Tenderhearted (v. 9)** – “all the people wept”
- They wanted to show their remorse for their lack of obedience (Mt. 5:4; Acts 2:37)
- No hard hearts, no uncaring hearers

All the People...

- **Joyous (v. 10-12)** – “the joy of Jehovah is your strength”
- They wanted to be happy after understanding God’s word (Psa. 119)
- No leaving upset, unmoved, bored, etc.

All the People...

- **Changed (v. 13-18)** – “So the people went forth ... they kept the feast”
- They wanted to hear and do God’s word; willing to change (Jas. 1:22-27)
- No leaving unchanged or unmoved; no satisfaction with the status quo; no apathy or indifference

The Perfect Worship Service

- Is your worship here really meaningful?
- Do you look forward to coming back?
- What is your attitude & action during the worship service?