



Midweek Study

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REBUILDING my BROKEN WORLD



Through Nehemiah

Rediscovering God's Word

Nehemiah 8:1-8

Amos 8:11 – “Behold, the days are coming,” says the Lord GOD, “That I will send a famine on the land, Not a famine of bread, Nor a thirst for water, But of hearing the words of the LORD.

1. Do We Have a SPIRITUAL HUNGER for God's Word?

At the end of chapter 7, the walls were up and the offering was given. The job was completed. They were secure and they were housed, but something was missing. They had the building, but they needed life to go into the building. They were still hungry, not for a bigger building, but for the Word of God. Nehemiah had helped to build the building, but he needed another to come in and give spiritual food for the hungry people.

1) Their ATTENDANCE was UNIFIED.

(v.1) – “all the people **[50,000]** gathered together as one man”

(v.2) – “assembly of men and women and all who could hear with understanding” (TEV says, “and the children who were old enough to understand”)

(v.3) – “Then he read from it... before the men and women and those who could understand”

2) Their ATTENTION was UNDIVIDED.

(v.3) – “and the ears of all the people were attentive to the Book of the Law.”

3) Their APPETITE was UNQUENCHABLE.

(v.1) – “THEY TOLD EZRA to bring the Book of the Law of Moses.” [FUNNY: Here they are demanding the first five books of the Bible! They said, “Bring us Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, and bring it right now!” One man jokingly asked, “How many of you came to church this morning, thinking, **“I demand LEVITICUS!”**]

(v.3) – “They read from it from morning until midday”

*Your appetites become your demands. Gain an appetite for the Word of God. **Jeremiah 15:16, “Your words were found and I ate them, and Your words became for me a joy and the delight of my heart...”***

Do You HUNGER for the Word of God Desperately?

2. Do We Have a **SYMBOLIC RESPECT** for God's Word?

Symbols are important. We hold our hands over our hearts to show respect to the American flag.

1) The Man of God was Respected.

(v.4) – “Ezra stood on a **platform** of wood which they had made for the purpose.” [KJV – pulpit; NASB – podium]

(v.5) – “... [Ezra] was standing above all the people...” [see also Ezra 7:10]

2) The Word of God was Respected.

...By the People

(v.5) – “...and when he opened it, all the people stood up.”

(v.7) – “...and the people stood in their place.”

...By Ezra and the Guys Whose Names We Can't Pronounce

(v.7) – “...they helped the people to understand the Law.”

(v.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.”

Verse 8 is the key verse of our text. Three things are emphasized.

1. Ezra and those with him read distinctly (NIV, “making it clear”)
2. They gave the sense (NIV, “giving the meaning”)
3. They helped them understand the reading (Understanding is emphasized in vs. 2, 3, 7, 8, 12).

A thousand years had passed since Moses first wrote Deut.

1) Does a thousand years do something to a language?

2) Try reading a 1611 King James Bible & get back to me; that's just 400 years!

3) The English of a thousand years ago doesn't look anything like the English to today.

We need new translations of the Bible, not because the Bible changes, but because our language changes. Suppose you had to use John Wycliffe's Version of the Bible, the oldest version in English. How much of this passage would you understand *if you did not already know it from another version?*

alle ye that traueilen & teen chargid come to me & I schal fulfille you. take ye my yok on you & lerne ye of me for I am mylde and meke in herte: and ye schulen finde rest to youre soulis/ for my yok is softe & my charge liyt.

Wycliffe's translation goes back about 600 years (1382); but between Moses' writing of the Law and Ezra's reading of the Law, a thousand years had elapsed!

Good and faithful Bible teachers seek to answer these questions:

- 1) **What does this passage say?** (the process of observation)
- 2) **What does this passage mean?** (the process of interpretation)
- 3) **What does this passage mean to me?** (the process of application)