

Restoring the Word *Chapter 8*



The Making of a Revival

“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....”

Nehemiah 8:1

Introduction: While Nehemiah was building the wall Ezra had continued to live in Jerusalem. Now after 14 years he is called before the people to read from the Torah. His act is a ‘call’ to the Word of God that results in a national revival.

What would it take TODAY for a personal and national revival?

A. Prayer *Neh 8:6*

Prayer is the backbone of a revival. . . . Instead of substituting new ideas such as religious films or social entertainments, why not really try the God-given method for revivals: “Pray without ceasing”? *JOHN W. BASHAM*

1. Ezra blessed the Lord before he started to read the Torah.
2. The people join the prayer and shout “Amen, Amen!”
3. The people worshiped God—lifting up their hands, bowing their heads and finally falling on their faces. “*If my people...*” *2 Chr 7:14*

B. Reading God’s Word Publically *Neh 8:1-6*

A new world will arise out of the religious mists when we approach our Bible with the idea that it is . . . a book which is now speaking. *A. W. TOZER (1897–1963)*

1. Gathering for the Word At the completion of the wall project—the people gather at the Water Gate to hear Ezra read from the Torah.
2. Ears to hear with! This was a critical phrase as Ezekiel had prophesied that captivity was coming because they had ears to hear but did not hear. *Ezekiel 12:2*
3. The Living Word! Jesus was the living Word—the divine logos and one of His favorite sayings was, “*He who has ears to hear, let him hear!*” *Matt 11:15*

C. Preaching and Teaching God’s Word *Neh 8:7-8*

The world is my parish. *JOHN WESLEY (1703–1791)*

A prepared messenger is more important than a prepared message.
Robert Boyd Munger (1910–)

1. Teaching the Word As Ezra read the Torah there were a group of Torah-teachers including the Levites who helped the people understand the Word. (*The birth of Bible teaching*)
2. Giving the Meaning These teachers gave the ‘sense’ [Heb ‘insight’] and understanding of the Torah.
3. Preaching and Revival All great revivals in history came about because of, or were furthered by, the preaching of the Word. *Romans 10:14-15*

D. Sorrow Over Sin *Neh 8:9-12*

Revival is God’s finger pointed right at me. *WILBERT L. MCLEOD*

1. As the Torah was read and explained the people became convicted of their sin and started to weep. They were also weeping because of hearing the truth of God for the first time in years. Godly sorrow and repentance is a critical part of revival.

“O most glorious God...remember that I am but dust, and remit my transgressions, negligence's and ignorance's, and cover them all with the absolute obedience of thy dear Son, that those sacrifices—of sin, praise and thanksgiving—which I have offered may be accepted by thee, in and for the sacrifice of Jesus Christ offered upon the cross for me...Direct my thoughts, words and work; wash away my sin in the immaculate blood of the Lamb; and purge my heart by the Holy Spirit.”

*George Washington's
Prayer Journal*

E. Living the Word :13-18

A religious awakening that does not awaken the sleeper to love has roused him in vain.
JESSAMYN WEST (1907–)

1. The 2nd Day All the heads of households got together with the teachers to hear Ezra—they wanted more.
2. The Feast of Tabernacles When they heard and understood about this great feast they immediately started making preparations.
3. Obedience Everyone who had returned from captivity celebrated the feast.
4. Gladness The nation had not celebrated the FULL feast since the days of Joshua. (*900 years*)
5. Return to Truth This was a great revival and return to the truth of God.

***Might we and our nation
return to the truth of the
living God!***

Nehemiah Eight

Reading God's Word Publically

: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. **: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. **: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. **: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, Anaiah, Urijah, Hilkihah, and Maaseiah; and at his left hand Pedaiah, Mishael, Malchijah, Hashum, Hashbadana, Zechariah, and Meshullam. **: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.

Prayer

: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.

Preaching and Teaching God's Word

: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. **: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.

Sorrow Over Sin

: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 to the LORD your God; do not mourn nor weep." For all the people wept, when they heard the words of the Law. **: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." **:11** So the Levites quieted all the people, saying, "Be still, for the day is holy; do not be grieved." **: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.

Living The Word—The Feast of Tabernacles *

: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. **: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, **: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." **: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. **: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. **: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.

* See Zechariah 14:6 For the celebration of the feast after the return of the Messiah.