

THE POWER OF OBEDIENCE

The priests, the Levites, the gatekeepers, the singers and the temple servants, along with certain of the people and the rest of the Israelites, settled in their own towns. When the seventh month came and the Israelites had settled in their towns, all the people assembled as one man in the square before the Water Gate. They told Ezra the scribe to bring out the Book of the Law of Moses, which the Lord had commanded for Israel. So on the first day of the seventh month Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly, which was made up of men and women and all who were able to understand.

Nehemiah 7:73, 8:1-2 (NIV)

❖ Understanding the Context:

1. Nehemiah finishes the wall by the 7th month (the month of celebration).
2. The 1st day is the feast of trumpets.
3. The 10th day is the day of atonement.
4. The 15th day is the beginning of the feast of tabernacles.

❖ Recognizing the AUTHORITY of God's WORD:

All the people assembled as one man in the square before the Water Gate. They told Ezra the scribe to bring out the Book of the Law of Moses, which the Lord had commanded for Israel. So on the first day of the seventh month Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly, which was made up of men and women and all who were able to understand. He read it aloud from daybreak till noon as he faced the square before the Water Gate in the presence of the men, women and others who could understand. And all the people listened attentively to the Book of the Law. Ezra the scribe stood on a high wooden platform built for the occasion... All the people could see him because he was standing above them; and as he opened it, the people all stood up. Ezra praised the Lord, the great God; and all the people lifted their hands and responded, "Amen! Amen!" Then they bowed down and worshiped the Lord with their faces to the ground.

Nehemiah 8:1-6 (NIV)

1. The people asked to hear from the BIBLE... they were HUNGRY for God's WORD.
2. Ezra read from the SCROLL for SIX HOURS and all the people LISTENED.
3. Ezra, and the people, stood in REVERANCE to GOD'S WORD... and then BOWED DOWN.

➤ Key Truth: When we ACCEPT God's Word as our TRUTH... REVERANCE.

And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is at work in you who believe.

1 Thessalonians 2:13 (NIV)

❖ Responding with REPENTANCE to God's CONVICTION:

The Levites--instructed the people in the Law while the people were standing there. They read from the Book of the Law of God, making it clear and giving the meaning so that the people could understand what was being read. Then Nehemiah the governor, Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who were instructing the people said to them all, "This day is sacred to the Lord your God. Do not mourn or weep." For all the people had been weeping as they listened to the words of the Law.

Nehemiah 8:7-9 (NIV)

1. The Levites were in the CROWD of people to help TEACH them.
2. They MADE CLEAR what God's Word said and what it MEANT.
3. Hearing and understanding God's Word was OVERWHELMING to the people.

➤ Key Truth: When we APPLY God's Word to our LIVES... REPENTANCE.

For the word of God is full of living power. It is sharper than the sharpest knife, cutting deep into our innermost thoughts and desires. It exposes us for what we really are.

Hebrews 4:12 (NLT)

❖ Rejoicing In the FREEDOM That Comes Through FORGIVENESS and FAITH:

On the second day of the month, the heads of all the families, along with the priests and the Levites, gathered around Ezra the scribe to give attention to the words of the Law. They found written in the Law... that the Israelites were to live in booths during the feast of the seventh month and that they should proclaim this word and spread it throughout their towns and in Jerusalem... So the people went out and brought back branches and built themselves booths on their own roofs, in their courtyards, in the courts of the house of God and in the square by the Water Gate and the one by the Gate of Ephraim. The whole company that had returned from exile built booths and lived in them. From the days of Joshua son of Nun until that day, the Israelites had not celebrated it like this. And their joy was very great. Day after day, from the first day to the last, Ezra read from the Book of the Law of God. They celebrated the feast for seven days, and on the eighth day, in accordance with the regulation, there was a solemn assembly.

Nehemiah 8:13-18 (NIV)

1. On the second day, the FAMILY LEADERS stayed for further TEACHING.
2. They discovered their DISOBEDIENCE to all of God's Word and made it RIGHT.
3. They celebrated in HUTS, shared as others had NEED, and heard God's Word.

➤ Key Truth: When we ACKNOWLEDGE God's Word in all we do... REVIVAL.

For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.

1 Peter 1:23 (NIV)

❖ Closing Truth: We all need times of RECOGNITION, REPENTANCE, REVIVAL.

"If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land."

2 Chronicles 7:14 (NIV)