

WCKaiser Notes on Nehemiah from Summer '99 at Cannon Beach Conference Center

Nehemiah 8. Revival.

Opening Prayer from Psalm 85:6 "Will you not revive us again, that your people may rejoice in you?"

Two main features of the revival under Nehemiah

- 1) Proclamation of God's word - the people had a hunger and thirst for God's Word.
- 2) People are mobilized to carry out the purposes of God.

WCK divided the chapter into 3 sections.

1. A New Hunger for God's Word (vs. 1-8)
2. A New Response to God's Word (vs. 9-12).
3. A New Submission to God's Word (vs. 13-18).

1. A New Hunger for God's Word (vs. 1-8)

- Nehemiah brings Ezra the priest to bring the Book of the Law of Moses.
Nehemiah knew his limitations - needed a priest who could teach the people God's word.
- The people had seen God at work through the process of rebuilding the wall - now there was a hunger to better understand this God and his ways.
- First day of the seventh month: (WCK saw this as an anticipation of the resurrection - I missed how he made this connection.
- People stood for the reading of God's word. Shows their respect. We need a good theology of worship in our day.
- The Levites read and interpreted so that the people understood what God wanted.

2. A New Response to God's Word (vs. 9-12)

- The Word of God effected the people's emotions. The people were weeping and mourning at how far short they had fallen from living up to God's standards.
- Nehemiah tells the people not to mourn and weep, but rather to celebrate and send gifts. There is joy now because they understand God's word. The understanding of God's word should bring joy. Consequently, they send gifts and food to others as an expression of their joy.

"Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength." (Neh. 8:10c)

WCK "The strength of an individual is found in our relationship with Christ."

3. A New Submission to God's Word (vs. 13-18)

People proceed to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles (see Lev. 23:33-43 for background). Having heard the reading of God's Law, they begin to obey it. The Feast had probably not been celebrated for many years. Feast of Tabernacles is a depiction of how Israel was to depend on God. Recounts the provision during the wilderness journey. God had provided manna, water, protection etc. in the wilderness. Also a festival at the end of the harvest season - to remind the people that the bounty of the land came from the hand of God. Throughout this celebration, the people continue to hunger for God's word (vs. 18).