

- Order of Service -

Call to Worship

Welcoming Prayer

Reading Nehemiah 7:73-8:12

- Hymn sing

Announcements and Prayer requests

Greeting

Message in the Word -

God's Word is Effective

The reviving power of God's Word

Nehemiah 7:73-8:12

Sending prayer

Communion & Pot-Luck after main service

You may notice we don't pass an offering plate

We invite you to participate in the ministry, and the offering box in the foyer is for your gifts and offerings for the Lord's work.

- 2 Corinthians 9:7-8, Galatians 6:6 -

Grace Bible Fellowship

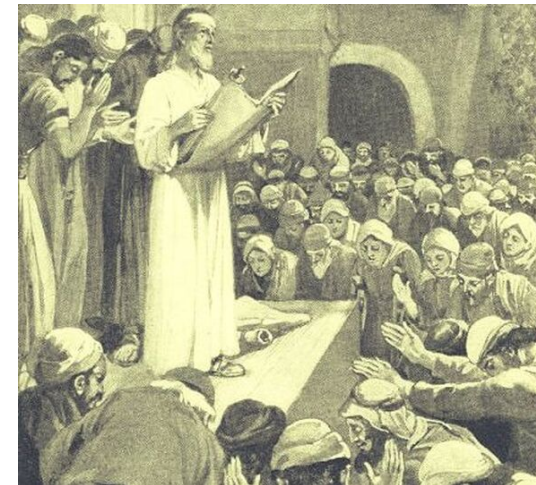
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GRACE
BIBLE FELLOWSHIP
love. truth. grace.

“We are identified with Jesus Christ in his crucifixion, death, burial, resurrection, ascension, and heavenly seating”



- Teaching -

Eric Peterman

God's Word is Effective

The reviving power of God's Word

Nehemiah 7:73-8:12

- August 6th, 2023 -

God's Word is Effective
The reviving power of God's Word
Nehemiah 7:73-8:12

What does a genuine, Biblically grounded, Spirit-driven revival of a people look like? There have been revivals of different kinds in history. America has had several. Wales had one. Europe during the Reformation period. Some obviously driven by the Spirit using His Word to pierce and change minds and hearts and lives. Some driven more by manipulation and crowd dynamics, and now social media. One thing remains certain: Real change, genuine transformation of a people begins with a small group of people whose hearts burn with desire to know God and spread His fame via sharing His Word!

Let us at Grace Bible Fellowship be such people!

The year is 445BC. The grandchildren of the people of Judah that had been carried off into captivity in Babylon had, by God's promise and good sovereignty, been gradually restored to Jerusalem and Judah. (The 1st wave of exiles returned, led by Zerubbabel in 538, the 2nd wave by Ezra in 458, and the 3rd wave by Nehemiah in 445) But the city wall was yet in ruins, Jerusalem was defenseless and subject to abuse by very bad neighbors, so Nehemiah at the command of **Artaxerxes** of Persia had set about to rebuild it.



In doing so, in a short period of time, Nehemiah had **faced 8 serious challenges, and a hellish trinity of opposers:**

1. Ridicule (2:9, 4:1-3)
2. Wrath (4:1, 6-9)
3. Discouragement (4:10)
4. Fear (4:11-23)
5. Internal Strife (5:1-5)
6. Laziness (4:10)
7. Satanic subtlety (6:1-8) compromise
8. Lying prophets (6:10-14)

Hellish trinity

- Sanballat (governor of Samaria)
- Tobiah (Ammonite leader)
- Geshem (Arab chief)

But at last, after 52 round-the-clock days of work and standing guard, in the late Summer, early Fall, October-September (7th month, the month of Tishri), the wall was up, the city secure. Ezra had returned at the command of Artaxerxes in 458 to teach people the Law of God. When he arrived the spiritual and moral state of the people was deplorable and ignorant. So over the 13 years since, the people had been occupied with survival and rebuilding things while Ezra had taught them the ways of God via the Law and the Prophets.

Now Ezra, the teacher of the Law and a priest, was a descendant of Aaron, by Aaron's 3rd son, Eleazar. He had prayerfully taught the returnees from the east, and so effective and transformative was his ministry that when Nehemiah arrived he was able to appeal to them in their growing maturity, to undertake a 2 month project to rebuild the Wall.

8:1 The effectiveness of Ezra's ministry in the Word continued after the Wall was done, so that they now gathered to hear the Law in its fullness from the sacred scrolls. **It was the people themselves that asked for the full teaching of the Law**, and v4 says that "they" had built a platform (NASB has *podium*, but it was a wood platform large enough for Ezra and 13 others) for just this purpose. *That much wood and effort shows keen interest and investment in hearing the Word!*

The crowd would have numbered between 30,000 to 50,000 people! The men gathered on the podium then spread out among the people from time to time and translated and explained what Ezra had read (possibly from Hebrew to Aramaic).

Notice several things about the attitude of the people:

- They *asked for the instruction*
- They *build the platform out of expensive materials*
- v4, They were *attentive to the reading* of the Word
- v5, The people *stood in reverence and readiness*
- v6, The people loudly *Amen'd* Ezra's prayer, and they readily, from the heart, engaged in acts of worship and awe
- v7, The people did not mill around as in a normal crowd, but remained in their places (did not let their mind or attention waver)
- v8, They had apparently given substantially and faithfully to the ministry of the Levite priests and scribes, because *each one had his own copy of the Law* to go among the people and explain it! An extraordinary treasure in those days!
- V8, The people *heeded the careful expository teaching*.
- V9, The people *wept in response* to hearing and knowing God's word. They responded with their mind and heart.
- V12, The people were so overcome by the joy of the Lord that they celebrated with a great feast, *because they understood the words which had been made known to them!*

We as believers are reminded of the words of our Lord, in John 6:33

"It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life."

Revival begins in the heart toward God, not in the actions of a crowd.