

The book of



chapter

8



Day 1

1. This is one of my favorite chapters...okay I know I say that a lot. I love it because it is filled with restoration and joy. Please read the chapter at least twice before starting to answer the questions. You might even like to make some of your own notes as you read it.

2. In this chapter God's people show they have a true heart to learn and understand. Look at Nehemiah 8:1; how are the hearts of the people described?

3. Read Acts 1:14, Romans 15:6, Acts 15:22, Ephesians 4:2-3. What word would describe the heart of the believers in the early church?

4. When I read Nehemiah 8:1, I was reminded of Philippians 2:1-4. What similar encouragement was given to the Philippian believers?

Did you glean any further insight for carrying out God's work as one?

5. In Nehemiah 8, where were the people gathered to hear God's word read to them?

6. Let's not miss the symbolism. We talked about the importance of gates in our study of Nehemiah 3. The purpose of a gate is to provide entrance when open and protection when they are closed. This gate would have been one of the most used gates in the city. Just outside this gate was the Gihon Spring, the main water source for the people of Jerusalem.

Read John 4:10, 13-14; 10:9; 14:6, write down what you learn that would be symbolic of Ezra reading God's word at this location. Why do you believe the Water Gate is mentioned?

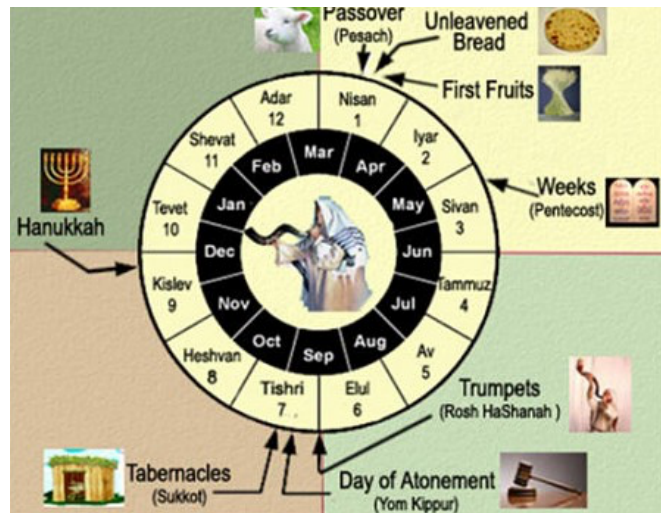
a. John 4:10, 13-14

b. John 10:9

c. John 14:6

7. In just the first three verses of Nehemiah 8, we have seen the people gathered as one, united in purpose. They have chosen the right man to teach God's word. They have gathered at the place in the city known to be a place of refreshment. They have come with a desire to listen and understand, and they are not in a hurry to return home. Would you say this describes most church services today?

8. Ezra was asked to bring out the Law of Moses and teach the people gathered. What day and month are mentioned in Nehemiah 8:2?



9. How long did Ezra spend teaching the people that day?

What does that reveal about the heart of the people?

10. A special platform had been built for the reading of God's word. Who were the leaders on Ezra's right, and who was on his left?

Left

Ezra

Right



Day 2

11. I enjoy looking up the meaning of Hebrew names mentioned in the Bible. After reading the meaning of their names, who do you believe was on the mind and heart of their parents when they named these men?

On Ezra's right

- a. Mattithiah, "Gift of Jehovah"
- b. Shema, "Hear"
- c. Anaijah, "Jehovah has answered"
- d. Uriah, "Jehovah is my light"
- e. Hilkiah, "My portion is Jehovah"
- f. Maaseiah, "Work of Jehovah"

On Ezra's left

- a. Pedaiah, "Jehovah has ransomed"
- b. Mishael, "Who is what God is"
- c. Malkijah, "My king is Jehovah"
- d. Hashum, "Rich"
- e. Hashbaddanah, "Considerate judge"
- f. Zechariah, "Jehovah remembers"
- g. Meshullam, "Friend"

12. What does it imply about the size of this platform knowing at least fourteen men were standing up there?

Let's do the math if each man was allotted 30" to stand. And if only these 14 men were on the platform. What do we know about the size of this structure?

13. How did the people respond to Ezra's teaching?

"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 _____ to the Book of the Law." (Neh. 8:3)

14. What do you believe it means to listen attentively?

How important is the way we listen as the Word of God is being shared?

What are some things that might distract people in a church service?

15. There is a difference between hearing and listening. When I was a child, my mother would take my face in her hands and say, “You might be hearing me, but you’re not listening to me”. *Hearing* is a passive act that requires one sense and simply has to do with the perception of sound. It may or may not involve concentration. (Ask any mother of toddlers, she may hear them, but she is not concentrating on their chatter.) Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines listening as “to hear something with thoughtful attention.” Listening is an active process that requires multiple senses. Listening is a choice. What can be done to improve our listening skills?

How might we teach our children to be good listeners?

What is the best way to help someone learn?

According to Matthew 11:29, what was Jesus’ teaching style?

Matthew 11:29 (MSG) *“Walk with me and work with me - watch how I do it...”*

16. Why do you suppose they built the platform large enough for the leaders to join Ezra?

17. Nehemiah 8:5-6 paints a beautiful picture of corporate worship. The man of God leads the people in adoration and praise then the people respond in humble agreement. What is the posture of your heart when someone is reading the word of God?

Very often our pastor will ask the congregation to stand in honor of God’s word.

18. What was the response of the people (verse 6) to all Ezra shared that day? What do you believe was the level of their commitment?

19. Ezra was not the only one teaching that day. Read Nehemiah 8:7 again; who helped Ezra instruct the people?

20. There are many things that factor in when choosing a church home. What were some of the things you looked for when searching for a place for your family to worship?

21. In Nehemiah 8:6 we see the people in a posture of humility, “with their faces to the ground.” In Nehemiah 8:9, we see the people “weeping as they listened.” Then in verse 10-11 they were so upset they had to be calmed and instructed twice, “do not grieve.” Nehemiah, Ezra, and the Levites declared the day a holy day. They commanded the people, “Do not weep.” Why such sadness?

What do you believe was causing the people to grieve?

22. They had a heart to follow God’s commands and laws. They were ready to repent and obey. Today we call this a revival. Have you ever been a part of a service when a real revival broke out among the people?

Just recently, I read an article about the revival that broke out at Asbury college in Kentucky. The University’s President, Kevin Brown stated, “since the first day, there have been countless expressions and demonstrations of radical humility, compassion, confession, consecration, and surrender unto the Lord. We are witnessing the Fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.”

The article went on to say, “Lines of people are long and wrap around the Asbury campus for blocks. Hoods, hats, and blankets adorn bodies of all ages and ethnicities. Expectancy is in the winter air; there is a sense that people are looking for something and they are willing to wait until they find it - no matter how long it takes.” This sounds like revival to me.

23. Nehemiah declares a day of celebration. The people have humbled their hearts before God in repentance. Nehemiah now sends them home to eat together and rejoice. Nehemiah 8:10 states “This day is holy to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the _____ of the _____ is your _____.”



24. Take a few minutes and ponder the end of verse 10. Think about this joy. When we are in our trespasses and sins, we are enemies of God. When we repent and are restored, we have access into the very presence of God. How would you describe the joy of the Lord?

25. The word “strength” is the Hebrew word meaning “a place or means of safety, protection, refuge, or stronghold.” The root word of strength means “to be strong, prevail; to make firm, strengthen.” The joy of the Lord is a reason to rejoice. It stems from an inner strengthening because of our relationship with Him. Are you experiencing the joy of the Lord?

26. Not only were the people sent home to celebrate this holy day, but they were instructed “to send portions of food and celebrate with great joy.” Who do you believe they were to share food with?

27. Are there ways we can honor God by sharing with those who have less today? List a few.

Day 4

28. Nehemiah 8:13 we see the heads of the families gathered with the priests and Levites to give their attention to the word of God. The priests and Levites were the spiritual leaders for the nation of Israel. Why do you believe the heads of the families were the ones present that day?

John Maxwell said, “Everything rises and falls on leadership.

If you wouldn’t follow yourself, why should anyone else?”

One more quick John Maxwell quote, “A leader is one who knows the way, goes the way, and shows the way.”

29. What are some of the God given responsibilities of a head of the family?



30. While we are still thinking about the head of the family, read and comment on the verses below.

- a. Mark 10:45
- b. 1 Samuel 3:12-13
- c. Ephesians 5:1
- d. Ephesians 5:22-24
- e. Ephesians 5:25-28
- f. Colossians 3:18-20

31. This role of head of the family is never to be one of a dictator but one of “servant leader.” A servant leader seeks to invest himself in the lives of his family. Read Matthew 20:26-28, what did Jesus teach concerning the role of one who would be a leader?

Who is the example to be followed?

32. Let’s read one more verse on this role of a servant leader. One day while Jesus was teaching someone asked, “Of all the commandments, which is the most important?” He answered, “The most important one is ...Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.” Even though the people questioning him had only asked for one, he gave a second, read Mark 12:30-31. How does this pertain to being a servant leader?

33. Remember it is not our responsibility to judge others on how they are leading. Read 1 Timothy 2:1-4 and Romans 13:1, what are we instructed to do for those who are leaders over us?

34. One way to lead well is to give what we desire to receive. This is the principle of sowing and reaping. What seeds are you planting that have the potential for a harvest of godliness?

When you see something that is pleasing and good are you poised and ready to praise the effort?

35. Nehemiah 8:13-15 tell us on the second day of the month of Tishri the heads of the families, the priests, and the Levites, gathered to listen to Ezra. What holiday were they reminded of as Ezra read God's word?

36. Read Deuteronomy 16:16 and Leviticus 23:33-36; how important is the Feast of Tabernacles?

37. After reading Deuteronomy 16:16 and Leviticus 23:33-36 list the facts you saw concerning the Feast of Tabernacles. (Or another name is the Feast of Booths)

Day 5

38. This holiday was enjoyed by all. Nehemiah said this holiday had never been celebrated like this. Why do you believe there was such a tremendous turnout and celebration?

39. How many days did the celebration last?

40. What happened on the final day of this celebration?

41. In stark contrast to the hardship of slavery, this festival emphasizes rest and peace as it meets the needs of all people, including strangers, widows, and the poor. What benefit did this celebration have for the Israelites as they participated?

42. Read John 7:1-13, what do you learn here concerning this holiday? Was this an important holiday for Jesus?

43. Read 2 Corinthians 5:1-2. What might the booths the Israelites lived in during the Feast of Tabernacles compare to for believers today?

44. Read 1 Corinthians 15:50-58. These verses also speak to the temporary dwelling we are living in today. What do you see in these verses concerning our temporary dwelling that should give us all hope and a reason to celebrate?

45. Looking back over the last few chapters you have read in Nehemiah what is your takeaway?

46. What have you seen concerning God's character?

47. Were you challenged by what you have seen in this chapter?

In what way were you challenged?

Biblical References

Day 1

Question 3 - Acts 1:14

They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.

Romans 15:6

⁶ so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Acts 15:22

² Then the apostles and elders, with the whole church, decided to choose some of their own men and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. They chose Judas (called Barsabbas) and Silas, men who were leaders among the believers.

Ephesians 4:2-3

² Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. ³ Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.

Question 4 - Philippians 2:1-4

Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, ² then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. ³ Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, ⁴ not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

Question 6 - John 4:10; 13-14

¹⁰ Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water."

¹³ Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴ but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

John 10:9

⁹ I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out, and find pasture.

John 14:6

⁶ Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

Day 2

Question 15 - Matthew 11:29

²⁹ Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

Question 30 - Mark 10:45

⁴⁵For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Samuel 3:12-13

In that day I will perform against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end.¹³ For I told him that I would judge his family forever because of the sin he knew about; his sons blasphemed God, and he failed to restrain them.

Ephesians 5:1

¹Follow God’s example, therefore, as dearly loved children

Ephesians 5:22-24

²²Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. ²³For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. ²⁴Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

Ephesians 5:25-28

²⁵Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her ²⁶to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, ²⁷and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. ²⁸In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.

Colossians 3:18-20

¹⁸Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. ¹⁹Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them. ²⁰Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.

Question 31 - Matthew 20:26-28

²⁶Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, ²⁷and whoever wants to be first must be your slave— ²⁸just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Question 32 - Mark 12:30-31

³⁰“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.” ³¹The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.”

Question 33 - 1 Timothy 2:1-4

I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people— ²for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. ³This is good, and pleases God our Savior, ⁴who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.

Romans 13:1

Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God.

Question 36 - Deuteronomy 16:16

¹⁶ Three times a year all your men must appear before the LORD your God at the place he will choose: at the Festival of Unleavened Bread, the Festival of Weeks and the Festival of Tabernacles. No one should appear before the LORD empty-handed:

Leviticus 23:33-36

³³ The LORD said to Moses, ³⁴ “Say to the Israelites: ‘On the fifteenth day of the seventh month the LORD’s Festival of Tabernacles begins, and it lasts for seven days. ³⁵ The first day is a sacred assembly; do no regular work. ³⁶ For seven days present food offerings to the LORD, and on the eighth day hold a sacred assembly and present a food offering to the LORD. It is the closing special assembly; do no regular work.’”



Question 42 - John 7:1-13

After this, Jesus went around in Galilee. He did not want to go about in Judea because the Jewish leaders there were looking for a way to kill him. ² But when the Jewish Festival of Tabernacles was near, ³ Jesus’ brothers said to him, “Leave Galilee and go to Judea, so that your disciples there may see the works you do. ⁴ No one who wants to become a public figure acts in secret. Since you are doing these things, show yourself to the world.” ⁵ For even his own brothers did not believe in him. ⁶ Therefore Jesus told them, “My time is not yet here; for you any time will do. ⁷ The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify that its works are evil. ⁸ You go to the festival. I am not going up to this festival, because my time has not yet fully come.” ⁹ After he had said this, he stayed in Galilee. ¹⁰ However, after his brothers had left for the festival, he went also, not publicly, but in secret. ¹¹ Now at the festival the Jewish leaders were watching for Jesus and asking, “Where is he?” ¹² Among the crowds there was widespread whispering about him. Some said, “He is a good man.” Others replied, “No, he deceives the people.” ¹³ But no one would say anything publicly about him for fear of the leaders.

Question 43 - 2 Corinthians 5:1-2

For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. ² Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed instead with our heavenly dwelling,

Question 44 - 1 Corinthians 15:50-58

⁵⁰ I declare to you, brothers and sisters, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. ⁵¹ Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed— ⁵² in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. ⁵³ For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. ⁵⁴ When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: “Death has been swallowed up in victory.” ⁵⁵ “Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?” ⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. ⁵⁷ But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁵⁸ Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

