

The Great Assembly

After experiencing a great physical restoration in Jerusalem, a great spiritual one occurred (Nehemiah 8:1-18). It took place in front of the Water Gate. The people of Israel formed a great assembly and listened to Ezra read the word of God.

Consider three attitudes the people had towards God's word.

They craved it.

- They asked for it to be read by Ezra (Nehemiah 8:1).
- They listened to the reading carefully (Nehemiah 8:2). This great assembly included men, women, and children.
- They sought to understand it (Nehemiah 8:8). They worked together to get an accurate interpretation of what God's law was saying.
- They did these things for a long time (Nehemiah 8:3). These families were assembled to hear God's word read for about six hours!
- Do we also have a strong craving for God's word (1 Peter 2:1-3)? Do we do daily Bible reading? Do we prepare for and come to Bible classes? Are we excited about hearing preaching from the Bible? Are we carving out time to read the Bible with the people we love?

They were awed by it.

- They were attentive to it because they knew the source of the reading was God (Nehemiah 8:1).
- They stood up during the reading (Nehemiah 8:5). This was out of respect and reverence.
- They were touched by it (Nehemiah 8:6-12). They mourned, cried, and worshipped. They were touched by the reality that they had failed to obey God's word.
- Are we awed by God's word? Are we awed because of its source (2 Timothy 3:16-17)? Do we respect it? Do we listen carefully whenever it is read and taught because it comes from our Creator? Do we handle it accurately (2 Timothy 2:15)? Do we always strive to grow in it (1 Peter 2:2)?

They obeyed it.

- After gathering to hear God's word read the next day, the people made a discovery. They discovered that as a nation that had not observed the Feast of Booths since the days of Joshua! This was an important feast day for the Jews.
- During this feast, God wanted Israel to dwell in booths (tents) for a week to remember when their ancestors wandered in the wilderness for forty years. Once the people made this discovery, they began preparing to observe the feast (since the ordained time for observing it was fast approaching).
- What about us? What are we going to do with the commandments of Jesus? What will we do with commandments like Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Matthew 5:43-48; 18:15-17; and Ephesians 4:32? The proper response to God's word is simple obedience!

Conclusion:

How are you going to respond to God's word this morning?