

***“Worshipping Through The Word!”***  
***Nehemiah 8:1-8***

**Introduction:**

1. What Is Worship?
  - If You Ask Many Church-Going People Today, You Will Probably Get Many Different Answers!
    - Most Would Probably Say That Worship Has To Do With Music / Bands / An Atmosphere Where You “Feel” Close To God While You Sing!
    - We Will Find A Completely Different Understanding Of Worship In Nehemiah Tonight!
2. Remember: Nehemiah Led The People Of Jerusalem & Judah To Complete The Wall In Record Time!
  - But Noone Felt Compelled To Live Inside Those Walls!
  - Called Together An Assembly In Chapter 7, To Convince & Encourage The People To Make Jerusalem Their Home Once Again!
  - And It Worked! Here In Chapter 8, We Find The People Again “Gathered” Together ***Inside*** The Walls Of Jerusalem!
    - And This Time, They Come Together Not For Work / Not For A Census / But For Worship!
  - And Throughout This Passage, We Find At The Center Of Worship:
    - Not Music / Bands / Singing!
    - But The Word Of God!
3. We Need To Remember That God Has Intended For His People To Worship Him Through His Word!
  - Worship Is Not External – It Is Internal! It Is A Response In Your Heart To What You Learn About God Through His Word!
  - This Is Why: The Center Of Worship Is The Word!
    - Then & Now! There & Here!
    - Some Very Interesting Parallels To What We Ought To Do In Our Worship Services Today!

\* When We Worship Through The Word, There Will Be:

1. ***An Assembly For God’s Word!***
  - 8:1-2 - “And all the people gathered themselves together as one man into the street that was before the water gate; and they spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the LORD had commanded to Israel. / And Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation both of men and women, and all that could hear with understanding, upon the first day of the seventh month!”
    - In Chapter 7, The People Learned That Their Ancestors Had Returned From Babylon Around 100 Years Earlier As One People! But Over The Years, They Had Gone Their Own Ways & Started Doing Their Own Things! But Here In Chapter 8, We Find One Thing That Reunited These People Together “As One Man” – The Word Of God!
    - This Ought To Be Our “Common Ground” As Well!
  - Unified As One People!
    - “As One Man!” – As One Body! Unified In Purpose & Practice! Exactly What The Church Is To Look Like As We Gather Together!
    - Romans 12:4-5 - “For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: / So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another!”
  - Unified Into One Place!
    - “Into The Street That Was Before The Water Gate!”
    - A Plaza Or Square - Symbol Of A Place Of Cleansing & Commitment - “Where Justice Was Administered & Oaths Were Taken!”
    - Hebrews 10:25 - “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together!”
  - Unified For One Purpose!
    - “Bring The Book!”
    - Ezra - Ezra 7:6 - “A Ready Scribe In The Law!”
    - Ezra & The People Understood That The Center Of Worship Is The Word!
  - Unified With One Priority!
    - “Lord Had Commanded!”
    - They Wanted To Learn / Change / Grow! They Wanted To Hear & Heed! To Obey! Our Priority?

- Unified With One Preparation!
  - “Congregation Both Of Men And Women, And All That Could Hear With Understanding!” (Probably Children)
  - Points To The Fact That Both The Preacher (Ezra) & The People Were Prepared To Worship Through The Word!
    - The Preacher Is Expected To Be Prepared!
    - What About The Hearers? The People?
  - The People Were Prepared As Well!
    - Would Have Taken Great Preparation For This – To Bring Their Families From The Outlying Villages & Homes! “Great Pains!” What Have We Gone Through To Prepare For This Day?
    - What Would Happen If The Preacher Didn’t Show?
      - Send For Him? Another? Leave?
  - They Needed To Be Prepared, Because The “Seventh Month” Was An Important Month!
    - Feast Of Trumpets / Day Of Atonement / Feast Of Tabernacles! Time Of National & Spiritual Renewal & Revival!
- They Knew That This Renewal Could Only Come Through The Word Of God!
  - So They Assembled Together To Worship Through The Word!

\* When We Worship Through The Word, There Will Be:

2. ***An Attention To God’s Word!***

- 8:3-4 - “And he read therein before the street that was before the water gate from the morning until midday, before the men and the women, and those that could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law. / And Ezra the scribe stood upon a pulpit of wood, which they had made for the purpose; and beside him stood Mattithiah, and Shema, and Anaiiah, and Urijah, and Hilkiah, and Maaseiah, on his right hand; and on his left hand, Pedaiah, and Mishael, and Malchiah, and Hashum, and Hashbadana, Zechariah, and Meshullam!”
  - An Example Is Given Here Of Both The Actions & Attitudes Of Worshiping Through The Word!
  - The Word Of God Was The Focus! It Was Read!
- Read Publically!
  - “Before The Street!”
  - “In Front” Of The People!
- Read Persistently!
  - “From The Morning Until Midday!”
  - Nearly A 6 Hour Service! From Dawn Till Noon!
  - But The People Were Eager To Hear The Word Of God!
  - Brevity Was Not The Key – Clarity Was!
- Read Passionately!
  - “Ears Of The People Were Attentive!”
  - They Had “Ears To Hear” & Were “Eager To Hear!”
  - Important To Them! Food For Hunger / Water For Thirst!
- Read Prominently!
  - “Stood Upon A Pulpit Of Wood!”
  - Ezra “Stood” To Show His Reverence For & The Authority Of The Law Of God!
  - “Pulpit” - Platform - So People Could See & Hear The Preacher!
- Read Prepared!
  - Principle Of Preparation - Seen Already - Two-Fold!
  - Preparation Of The Public / People!
  - Preparation Of The Preacher!
  - Ezra Was Ready As Well! Had A Well-Designed Plan To ***Proclaim & Explain*** The Word Of God!
- Read Purposefully!
  - “Made For The Purpose!”
  - The Purpose For The Pulpit Was For God’s Word To Be Proclaimed & Explained! Nothing Else!

- 13 Other Teachers Were Available Next To Ezra!
  - To Show The People Their Agreement!
  - To Serve The People!
  - To Share With The People What The Lord Was Teaching & Had Taught Them! Prepared Also!
- They Knew The Importance Of Understanding The Word Of God!
  - So They Paid Attention, So They Could Worship Through The Word!

\* When We Worship Through The Word, There Will Be:

**3. *An Admiration For God's Word!***

- 8:5-6 - "And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people; (for he was above all the people;) and when he opened it, all the people stood up: / And Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God. And all the people answered, Amen, Amen, with lifting up their hands: and they bowed their heads, and worshipped the LORD with their faces to the ground!"
  - We See That The Word Of God Was Important To Both The Preacher & The People! Central To Worship! Seen In:
    - The Handling Of God's Word!
      - "Opened The Book In The Sight Of All The People!"
      - Ezra Showed How Important God's Word Was To Him When He "Opened The Book!"
        - Not About Him! His Personality / His Opinions / His Delivery / But About His God!
        - When Preachers / Teachers Do Not "Open The Book" They Show What Is Important To Them!
    - The Honoring Of God's Word!
      - "All The People Stood Up!"
      - The People Showed How Important God's Word Was To Them! This Was Natural & Instinctive!
      - Not For An Important Person, But An Important Event – The Preaching Of God's Word!
      - **IE:** Standing At Other Events - Concerts / Games! With Anticipation & Excitement! Pacers Game!
      - Do We Admire & Honor God's Word In This Way?
        - After All, **This** Is How God Speaks With Us! **This** Is How We Encounter God! **This** Is How We Even Know Who & How To Worship! **This** Is Why We Are Here! **This** Is To Be The Very First Item Of Business On The Church's Agenda! Acts 2:42 - "They Continued Stedfastly In The Apostles Doctrine!"
    - The Hallowing Of God's Word!
      - Responded In Worship To The Word Of God!
      - The Preacher Worshiped: "Blessed The Lord!"
      - The People Worshiped!
      - Through Their Dedication!
        - "Answered: Amen! Amen!"
      - Through Their Devotion!
        - Motions Of Devotion! "Lifting Up Their Hands!"
        - Symbol Of Dependence & Surrender! Emotion!
      - Through Their Dejection! And Humility!
        - "Bowed Their Heads" / "Faces To The Ground!"
  - They Responded To The Word Of God!
    - Through Admiration & Worship Based On The Word Of God!

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**4. *An Application Of God's Word!***

- 8:7-8 - "Also Jeshua, and Bani, and Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodijah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, and the Levites, caused the people to understand the law: and the people stood in their place. / So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading!"
  - Another 13 Men, As Well As The "Levites," Had An Important Role As Well – To Make Sure

The People Understood God's Word & Were Able To Apply It To Their Own Lives!

- Order Of Service: Ezra Read / Those On The Platform Explained / Those On The Ground Applied!
- Personal Application!
  - This Group Of Men Were Sufficient In Number To Make Sure Every Person (Man / Woman / Child) Understood! Answer Questions!
- Practical Application!
  - "Caused The People To Understand!"
  - Process: Proclamation / Explanation / Application!
  - What The Word Maintains / Means / Matters!
  - Application - Major Emphasis - Seen Later In Chapter 8!
- Pervasive Application!
  - All Of The People Remained There Until They Did Understand! Knew That What They Heard Was About Them & For Them!
- Pure Application!
  - 8:8 - A Summary Of What Was Done At This Worship Service!
  - The Purpose Was The Purity Of God's Word!
  - The Content Of The Message Was Pure!
    - Ezra - Read - "Distinctly" - Loud & Clear!
  - The Commentary On The Message Was Pure!
    - Expositors - "Gave The Sense!"
    - Providing Insight Into The Meaning Of God's Word!
  - The Comprehension Of The Message Was Pure!
    - Levites - "Pastors" - "Caused Them To Understand The Reading!"
    - Not Just Hearers, But Doers! (James 1:22)
- This Is The Most Important Part Of The Message!
  - Because Only Through Proper, Personal, Practical & Pure Application, Can We Truly Worship Through The Word!

**Conclusion:**

1. The Word Of God Is To Be Central To Our Worship!
  - It Was For Ezra & Nehemiah – It Must Be For Us!
2. Is It?
  - Do We Assemble For God's Word?
  - Do We Pay Attention To God's Word?
  - Do We Admire God's Word?
  - Do We Apply God's Word?
3. This Is How We Worship Through The Word!

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