

Nehemiah, part 9:
“The Joy of the Lord Is Your Strength”
Nehemiah 8:1-12

Ezra’s preaching and the outbreak of revival.

1. The Word Preached

(1) The Occasion v. 1

- **The first day of the seventh month: Rosh Hashana**
 - The first day of the civil year
 - Five days after the completion of the wall
- **A large gathering of the people in the open square**
 - cf. Ezra 3:1 – A similar gathering many years previous; restoration of sacrificial worship
 - Perhaps Ezra re-instituted the same

(2) The Unique Arrangements

- **Ezra – the priest and scribe – brings the Book of the Law – The Pentateuch**
 - A large elevated platform erected – a “preaching platform” (4)
 - Ezra and others led and ministered the Word of God
- **The Scriptures are Read and Preached** *“So they read distinctly (aloud) from the book, in the Law of God; and they gave the sense, and helped them to understand the reading.”*
 - The public reading of the Word
 - The preaching of the Word

(3) The Attentiveness of the People to the Word of the LORD

- **Hunger for the Word:** *“he read from it in the open square...from morning until midday*
v. 3 *...and the ears of all the people were attentive to the Book of the Law.”*
- **Worship** v. 6 *“And Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God.
Then all the people answered, ‘Amen, Amen!’ while lifting up their hands.
And they bowed their heads and worshiped the LORD
with their faces to the ground.”*
- **Reverence for the Word** v. 5 *“And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people
...and when he opened it, all the people stood up.”*

2. The Word Received

(1) The Initial Work in the Hearts of God’s People: Mourning and Weeping

- **They are deeply moved!** *“...all the people wept when they heard the words of the Law.”*
 - Convicted of sin
 - Humbled by God’s goodness and mercy toward His covenant people

(2) The Perfected Work in the Hearts of God’s People: Great Rejoicing!

- **The Admonition of the Leaders** vv. 9-10 *“This day is holy to the LORD your God;
do not mourn nor weep.”*
 - The holiness of the day calls for rejoicing, feasting, giving of gifts, and celebration! *“Go your way, eat the fat, drink the sweet, and send portions to those for whom nothing is prepared; for this day is holy to our LORD.*
- A full reception of the Word of God does not end with sorrow, but culminates in great rejoicing! *“Do not sorrow,
for the joy of the LORD is your strength.”*

- *Full spiritual strength* is best seen and evidenced in this: A rejoicing in the Lord

- **The Response of the People** v. 11 *“And all the people went their way to eat and drink, to send portions and rejoice greatly, because they understood the words that were declared to them.”*

Further Application: