

Nehemiah

Return to Me

Teaching Series by Pastor Trey Graham

They [visitors] said to me, “The remnant there in the province who survived the captivity are in great distress and reproach, and the wall of Jerusalem is broken down and its gates are burned with fire.” Nehemiah 1:3

When I heard these words, I sat down and wept and mourned for days; and I was **fasting** and **praying** before the God of heaven.

Nehemiah 1:4

Nehemiah prayed... “Remember the word which You commanded Your servant Moses, saying, ‘If you are unfaithful I will scatter you among the peoples; but if you **return to Me** and keep My commandments and do them, though those of you who have been scattered were in the most remote part of the heavens, I will gather them from there and will bring them to the place where I have chosen to cause My name to dwell.’”

Nehemiah 1:8-9

Last week...

What might happen if we were able
to learn God's mission for our lives,
obey His call, inspire others, work
hard, overcome obstacles and
ignore the doubters?

So **the wall was completed** on the twenty-fifth of the month Elul, **in fifty-two days**. Nehemiah 6:15

TIMELINE

- *Now it happened in the month **Chislev** [**late November – early December**], in the twentieth year, while I was in Susa the capitol, that Hanani, one of my brothers, and some men from Judah came ... Nehemiah 1:1a
- *And it came about in the month **Nisan** [**March/April**], in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, that wine was before him... Nehemiah 2:1a
- *Nehemiah's trip to Jerusalem took 2-3 months (**April or May to June or July**)
- *Construction work must have begun on 3rd day of **Av** [**late July**]
- *Wall was completed on the twenty-fifth of the month **Elul** [**late September**], 10 months after Nehemiah learned of the problem & after 2 months of work

What could God do in our lives
in just 52 days?

52 days from last Sunday is
Wednesday, October 12, 2022.

What will you ask God to help you
achieve or overcome in the next 52 days?

Nehemiah Chapter 7

Now when the wall was rebuilt and
I had set up the doors, and the
gatekeepers and the singers and the
Levites were appointed,
Nehemiah 7:1

*The singers and the Levites appointed to assist the priests had,
in ordinary times, nothing to do with the service of watching.

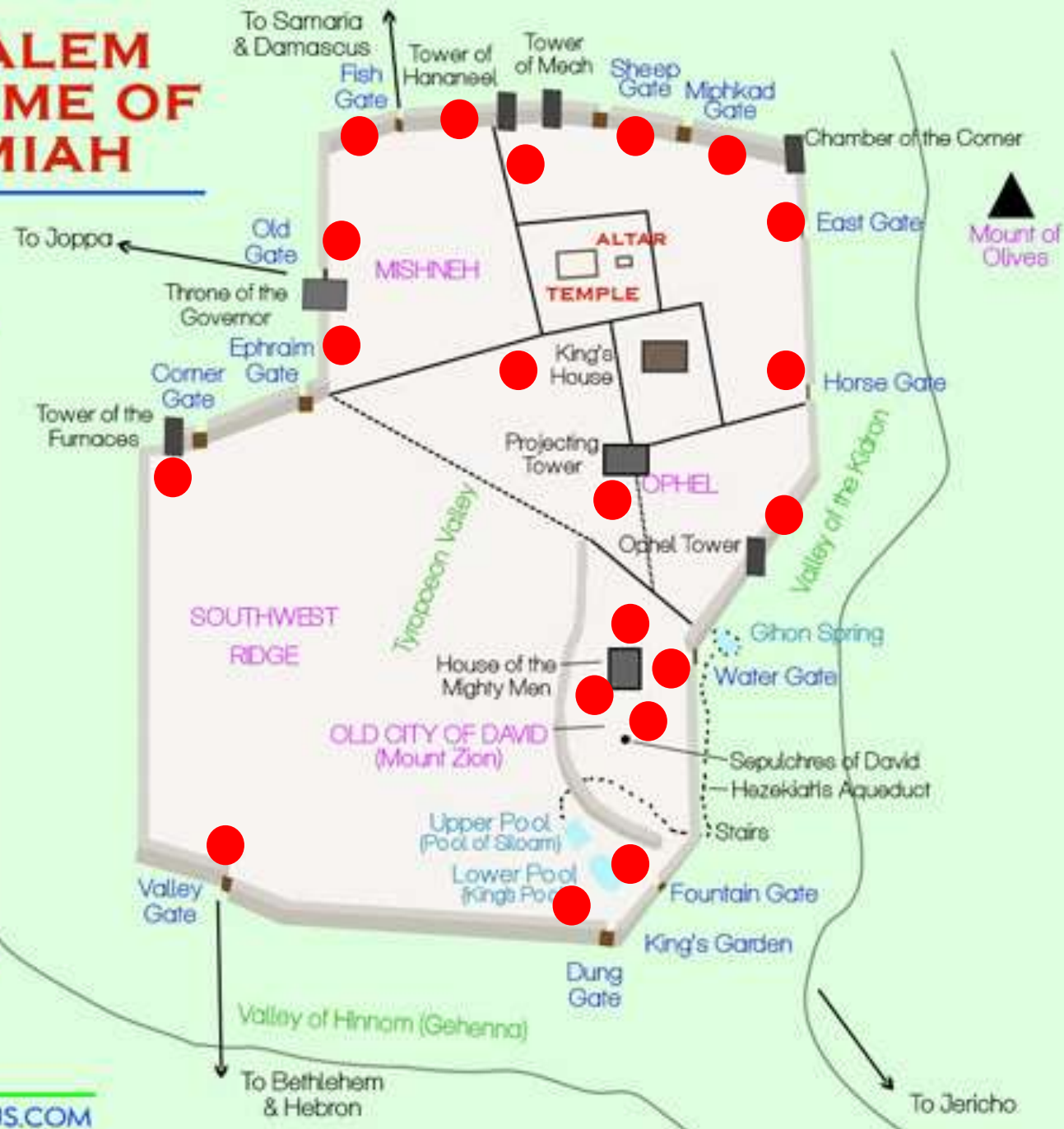
– Commentary on the Old Testament

JERUSALEM IN THE TIME OF NEHEMIAH

C. 445 B.C.

BOOK OF NEHEMIAH

Nehemiah was governor of Judah under Artaxerxes I of Persia. He rebuilt Jerusalem during the Second Temple period.



This was a 360-degree construction project. The descriptions begin with locations in the northeast and move counter-clockwise.

then I put Hanani my brother, and Hananiah the commander of the fortress [in service to King Artaxerxes], in charge of Jerusalem, for **he was a faithful man and feared God more than many.**

Nehemiah 7:2

that Hanani, one of my brothers, and some men from Judah came; and I asked them concerning the Jews who had escaped and had survived the captivity, and about Jerusalem. Nehemiah 1:2

*How was Hanani's faith strengthened as he saw the wall completed? He initially brought the bad news to Nehemiah and observed the entire process.

Then I said to them, “Do not let the gates of Jerusalem be opened until the sun is hot, and while they [doorkeepers] are standing guard, let them shut and bolt the doors. Also appoint guards from the inhabitants of Jerusalem, **each at his post**, and **each in front of his own house**.” Now the city was large and spacious, but the people in it were few and the houses were not built. Nehemiah 7:3-4

*The last clause does not say that there were no houses at all, for the city had been re-inhabited for ninety years; but only that houses had not been built in proportion to the size of the city, that there was still much unoccupied space on which houses might be built. – Commentary on the Old Testament

Nehemiah appointed:

- 1. Temple servants** - gatekeepers, singers, and Levites who are to keep the Temple worship in proper order.
- 2. Mayor of Jerusalem** - his brother Hanani, who had first brought word of Jerusalem's problems to Nehemiah while in Susa (Nehemiah 1:2-3).
- 3. Commander of Jerusalem's Defense** - Hananiah, a God-fearing man of integrity. This fortress or citadel seems to have been located adjacent to the Temple (Nehemiah 2:8), perhaps the Tower of Hananel (Nehemiah 3:1).
- 4. Gate-Keepers** - given instructions not to open the doors at night and to guard them to make sure no one gets in or out at night.
- 5. Guards** - some have regular posts during the daytime to prevent against attack. Others seem to be Neighborhood Watch guards, who post someone to guard the area around their homes.

Then my God put it into my heart [inspired me] to assemble the nobles, the officials and the people to be enrolled by genealogies [to increase the population of Jerusalem]. Then I found the book of the genealogy of those who came up first in which I found the following record: These are the people of the province who came up from the captivity of the exiles whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away, and who returned to Jerusalem and [the Persian province of] Judah [by edict of King Cyrus], each to his [ancestral] city, who came with [governor] Zerubbabel, [high priest] Jeshua, Nehemiah, Azariah, Raamiah, Nahamani, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispereth, Bigvai, Nehum, Baanah. The number of men of the people of Israel: Nehemiah 7:5-7

the sons of Parosh, 2,172; the sons of Shephatiah, 372; the sons of Arah, 652; the sons of Pahath-moab of the sons of Jeshua and Joab, 2,818; the sons of Elam, 1,254; the sons of Zattu, 845; the sons of Zaccai, 760; the sons of Binnui, 648; the sons of Bebai, 628; the sons of Azgad, 2,322; the sons of Adonikam, 667; the sons of Bigvai, 2,067; the sons of Adin, 655; the sons of Ater, of Hezekiah, 98; the sons of Hashum, 328; the sons of Bezai, 324; the sons of Hariph, 112; the sons of Gibeon, 95; Nehemiah 7:8-25

the men of Bethlehem and Netophah, 188; the men of Anathoth, 128; the men of Beth-azmaveth, 42; the men of Kiriath-jearim, Chephirah and Beeroth, 743; the men of Ramah and Geba, 621; the men of Michmas, 122; the men of Bethel and Ai, 123; the men of the other Nebo, 52; the sons of the other Elam, 1,254; the sons of Harim, 320; the men of Jericho, 345; the sons of Lod, Hadid and Ono, 721; the sons of Senaah, 3,930.

Nehemiah 7:26-38

The priests: the sons of Jedaiah of the house of Jeshua, 973; the sons of Immer [the sixteenth order of priests in 1 Chronicles 24:14] , 1,052; the sons of Pashhur, 1,247; the sons of Harim, 1,017. The Levites: the sons of Jeshua, of Kadmiel, of the sons of Hodevah, 74. The singers: the sons of Asaph, 148. The gatekeepers: the sons of Shallum, the sons of Ater, the sons of Talmon, the sons of Akkub, the sons of Hatita, the sons of Shobai, 138.

Nehemiah 7:39-45

Who cares
about all the
names and
numbers?

2022 MELISSA CARDINALS								
#	NAME	GRADE	POS		#	NAME	GRADE	POS
0	Kennedy Brantley	11	WR/DB		33	Jayson Cave	12	LB
1	Jayvon Smith	12	WR		34	Micah Finan	11	LB
2	Nigel Smith	11	DL		40	Alex Ruiz	11	LB
3	Dalton Wittwer	12	LB		44	Alex Secreto	12	LB
4	Clark Packard	12	WR/DB		48	Lance Riley	12	DL
5	Jackson Ford	11	TE/DL		50	Luke Demel	11	OL
6	Trever Ham	11	QB		52	Hayden Solomon	11	DL
7	Gunnar Wilson	11	TE/LB		53	Jason Anunobi	11	LB
8	Jacob Fields	12	WR/DB		54	Miles O'Neal	11	LB
9	Karson Maynard	11	WR		55	Jacob Wasserman	10	OL
10	Lincoln Dunn	11	WR		60	Nico Benjumea	12	K
11	Tatem Thompson	12	QB		62	Andrew Pressley	12	DL
12					63	Connor Vidmar	12	DL
13	Jacob Kusano	12	WR		64	Waad Basil	12	DL
14	Oran Abel	11	DL		65	Parrell Stephens	11	DL
15	Jake Potucek	10	DB		69			
16					70	Trevor Goosby	12	OL
17	Dumi Gatson	9	DB		71	Kai Floyd	12	DL
18	Caleb Otlewski	12	LB		72	Ajay Cole	11	OL
19	Cody Scanland	11	WR/DB		73	Ezekiel Stephens	12	DL
20					74	Graceson Spann	10	OL
21	Nathan Adejokun	11	RB		75	Carson Sarrett	12	OL
22	Jacob Nye	10	WR/DB		76	Brandon Ward	12	OL
23	Josh Nicholas	12	DB		77	Jake Brown	10	OL
24					78	Owen Hollenbeck	10	OL
25	Landen Brandow	11	LB		80	Christian Herrero	12	WR
28	Josh Nascimento	11	RB/LB		84	Ryder Granger	11	DB
30	Connor Betts	11	DB		88	Kash Leavell	11	TE
31	Paxton Cox	11	DB		90	Aiden Pintor	12	K
32	Bishop Curry	11	RB/DB		99			

The temple servants: the sons of Ziha, the sons of Hasupha, the sons of Tabbaoth, the sons of Keros, the sons of Sia, the sons of Padon, the sons of Lebana, the sons of Hagaba, the sons of Shalmai, the sons of Hanan, the sons of Giddel, the sons of Gahar, the sons of Reaiah, the sons of Rezin, the sons of Nekoda, the sons of Gazzam, the sons of Uzza, the sons of Paseah, the sons of Besai, the sons of Meunim, the sons of Nephushesim, the sons of Bakbuk, the sons of Hakupha, the sons of Harhur, the sons of Bazlith, the sons of Mehida, the sons of Harsha, the sons of Barkos, the sons of Sisera, the sons of Temah, the sons of Neziah, the sons of Hatipha.

Nehemiah 7:46-56

The sons of Solomon's servants: the sons of Sotai, the sons of Sophereth, the sons of Perida, the sons of Jaala, the sons of Darkon, the sons of Giddel, the sons of Shephatiah, the sons of Hattil, the sons of Pochereth-hazzebaim, the sons of Amon.

Nehemiah 7:57-59

All the temple servants and the sons of Solomon's servants [prisoners of war?] were 392. These were they who came up from Tel-melah, Tel-harsha, Cherub, Addon and Immer; but they could not show their fathers' houses or their descendants, whether they were [citizens] of Israel: the sons of Delaiah, the sons of Tobiah, the sons of Nekoda, 642. Nehemiah 7:60-62

Of the priests: the sons of Hobaiah, the sons of Hakkoz, the sons of Barzillai, who took a wife of the daughters of Barzillai, the Gileadite, and was named after them. These searched among their ancestral registration, but it could not be located; therefore they were considered unclean and excluded from the priesthood. The governor said to them that they should not eat from the most holy things [sacrifices] until a [high] priest arose with Urim and Thummim [see Exodus 28:30].
Nehemiah 7:63-65

The whole assembly together was 42,360, besides their male and their female servants, of whom there were 7,337; and they had 245 male and female singers [employed for praises and lamentations]. Their horses were 736; their mules, 245; their camels, 435; their donkeys, 6,720.

Nehemiah 7:66-69

Some from among the heads of fathers' households gave to the work. The governor gave to the treasury 1,000 gold drachmas, 50 basins, 530 priests' garments. Some of the heads of fathers' households gave into the treasury of the work 20,000 gold drachmas and 2,200 silver minas [60 shekels each]. That which the rest of the people gave was 20,000 gold drachmas and 2,000 silver minas and 67 priests' garments. Now the priests, the Levites, the gatekeepers, the singers, some of the people, the temple servants and all Israel, lived in their cities. And when the seventh month [Tishri] came, the sons of Israel were in their cities. Nehemiah 7:70-73

*Nehemiah's list is similar to list in Ezra 2

- Cyrus the Great (550–530 BC) introduced coins to the Persian Empire after 546 BC, following his conquest of Lydia and the defeat of its king Croesus, who had put in place the first coinage in history.
- Darius I (521–486 BC) introduced a new thick gold coin which had a standard weight of 8.4 grams, equaling in value 20 silver coins. The gold used in the coins was of very high quality and it bore the image of the Persian king or a great warrior armed with a bow and arrow.

Source: Wikipedia



Nehemiah Chapter 8

What is more important?

Hands or Heart? Logistical or Spiritual?

The narrative of ch. 7 is not resumed until ch. 11. In between come three important chapters which deal with the spiritual restoration of the community under the shared leadership of both Ezra and Nehemiah. If ch. 7 has already shown that bricks and mortar are not in themselves sufficient to secure the future, then these chapters further indicate that it is not enough either just to fill the city with people of any sort. Only a people which has experienced God's redemption and renewal, a people to whom is entrusted the law of God (ch. 8), who recognize their dependence upon Him (ch. 9) and who are fully committed to a life of faithful obedience (ch. 10) can ensure that the institutional structures which have been set in place serve their true purpose.

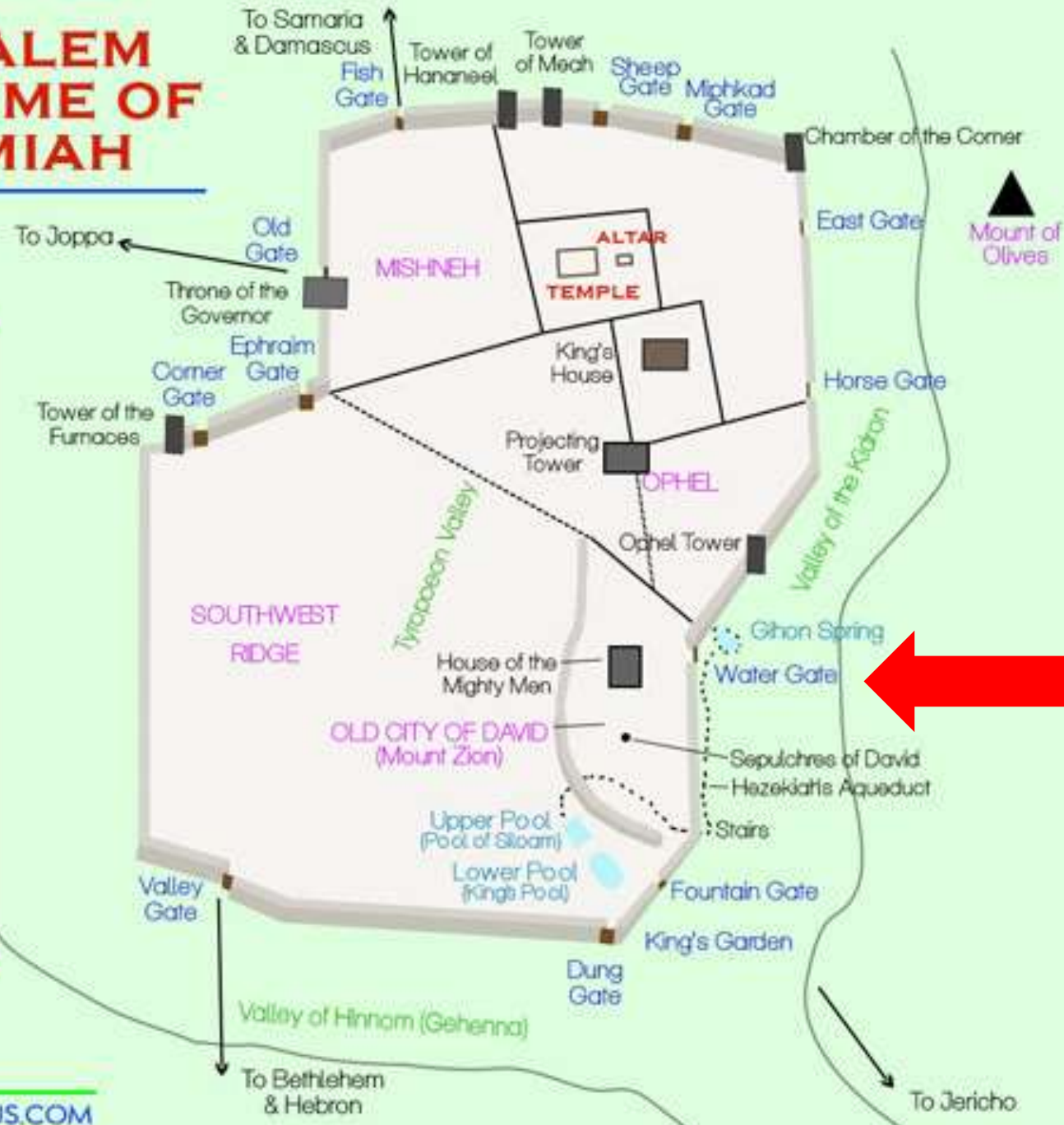
And all the people gathered as one man [in unity] at the square which was in front of the Water Gate, and they [people of Israel] asked Ezra the scribe to bring the book [scroll] of the law [תּוֹרָה torah] of Moses which the Lord had given to Israel. Then Ezra the priest [descendant of Aaron/Eleazar/Phinehas] brought the law before the assembly of men, women and all who could listen with understanding, on the first day of the seventh month [Tishri... September/October]. Nehemiah 8:1-2

JERUSALEM IN THE TIME OF NEHEMIAH

C. 445 B.C.

BOOK OF NEHEMIAH

Nehemiah was
governor of
Judah under
Artaxerxes I
of Persia.
He rebuilt
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during the
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**Water
Gate**

Why did the people want to hear the Torah?

The motive for this request is undoubtedly to be found in the desire of the congregation to keep the new moon of the seventh month, as a feast of thanksgiving for the gracious assistance they had received from the Lord during the building of the wall, and through which it had been speedily and successfully completed, in spite of the attempts of their enemies to obstruct the work. This feeling of thankfulness impelled them to the hearing of the Word of God for the purpose of making His law their rule of life.

Why was this day significant?

Again the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, “Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, ‘**In the seventh month [Tishri] on the first of the month** you shall have a rest, a reminder by blowing of trumpets, a holy convocation. You shall not do any laborious work, but you shall present an offering by fire to the Lord.’ ”

Leviticus 23:23-25

Now **in the seventh month, on the first day of the month**, you shall also have a holy convocation; you shall do no laborious work. It will be to you a day for blowing trumpets.

Numbers 29:1

He [Ezra] read from it before the square which was in front of the Water Gate from early morning [daybreak] until midday [about six hours], in the presence of men and women, those who could understand; and all the people [40,000-50,000] were attentive to the book of the law [תּוֹרָה torah]. Ezra the scribe stood at a wooden podium which they had made for the purpose. And beside him stood Mattithiah, Shema, Anaiah, Uriah, Hilkiah, and Maaseiah on his right hand; and Pedaiah, Mishaël, Malchijah, Hashum, Hashbaddanah, Zechariah and Meshullam on his left hand. Nehemiah 8:3-4

Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people [not just the religious leaders] for he was standing above all the people; and when he opened it, **all the people stood up**. Then **Ezra blessed the Lord the great God** [יְהוָה הָאֱלֹהִים הַגָּדוֹל]. And all the people answered, “Amen, Amen!” while lifting up their hands; then **they bowed low and worshiped the Lord with their faces to the ground**. Nehemiah 8:5-6

Also Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodiah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, the Levites, **explained** the law [תּוֹרָה torah] to the people while the people remained in their place.

They read from the book, from the law [תּוֹרָה torah] of God, translating to give the sense **so that they understood the reading.**

Nehemiah 8:7-8

The passage shows a strong emphasis on understanding. The whole occasion is designed to help the people grasp what the Law (Torah) teaches.

- Two teams of thirteen people each are ready. One team reads from the platform; the other mingles among the people to explain what they are hearing.
- "All who were able to understand" (Nehemiah 8:2).
- "Others who could understand" (8:3b).
- "All the people listened attentively (8:3c).
- The Levites ... helped the people to understand the Law (8:7a).
- "Making it clear and giving the meaning so that the people could understand what was being read" (8:8).
- "They now understood the words that had been made known to them" (8:12b).

Then Nehemiah, who was the governor, and Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, “**This day is holy to the LORD your God; do not mourn or weep.**” For **all the people were weeping when they heard the words of the law** [תּוֹרָה torah].

Nehemiah 8:9

For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation, but the sorrow of the world produces death. 2 Corinthians 7:10

Then he [Nehemiah] said to them, “Go, eat of the fat, drink of the sweet, and send portions to him who has nothing prepared [less wealthy people]; for **this day is holy to our Lord**. Do not be grieved, for **the joy** [חֵדְוָה chedvah] **of the LORD is your strength** [מָעוֹז maoz].” Nehemiah 8:10

- For You have been a defense [מָעוֹז maoz] for the helpless, a defense for the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shade from the heat; for the breath of the ruthless is like a rain storm against a wall. Isaiah 25:4
- The Lord is good, a stronghold [מָעוֹז maoz] in the day of trouble, and He knows those who take refuge in Him. Nahum 1:7

Do not be grieved, for the **joy** [חֵדְוָה chedvah] of the LORD is your strength [מָעוֹז maoz].”

Nehemiah 8:10

So the ransomed of the Lord will return and come with **joyful** shouting to Zion, and everlasting **joy** will be on their heads. They will obtain gladness and **joy**, and sorrow and sighing will flee away. Isaiah 51:11

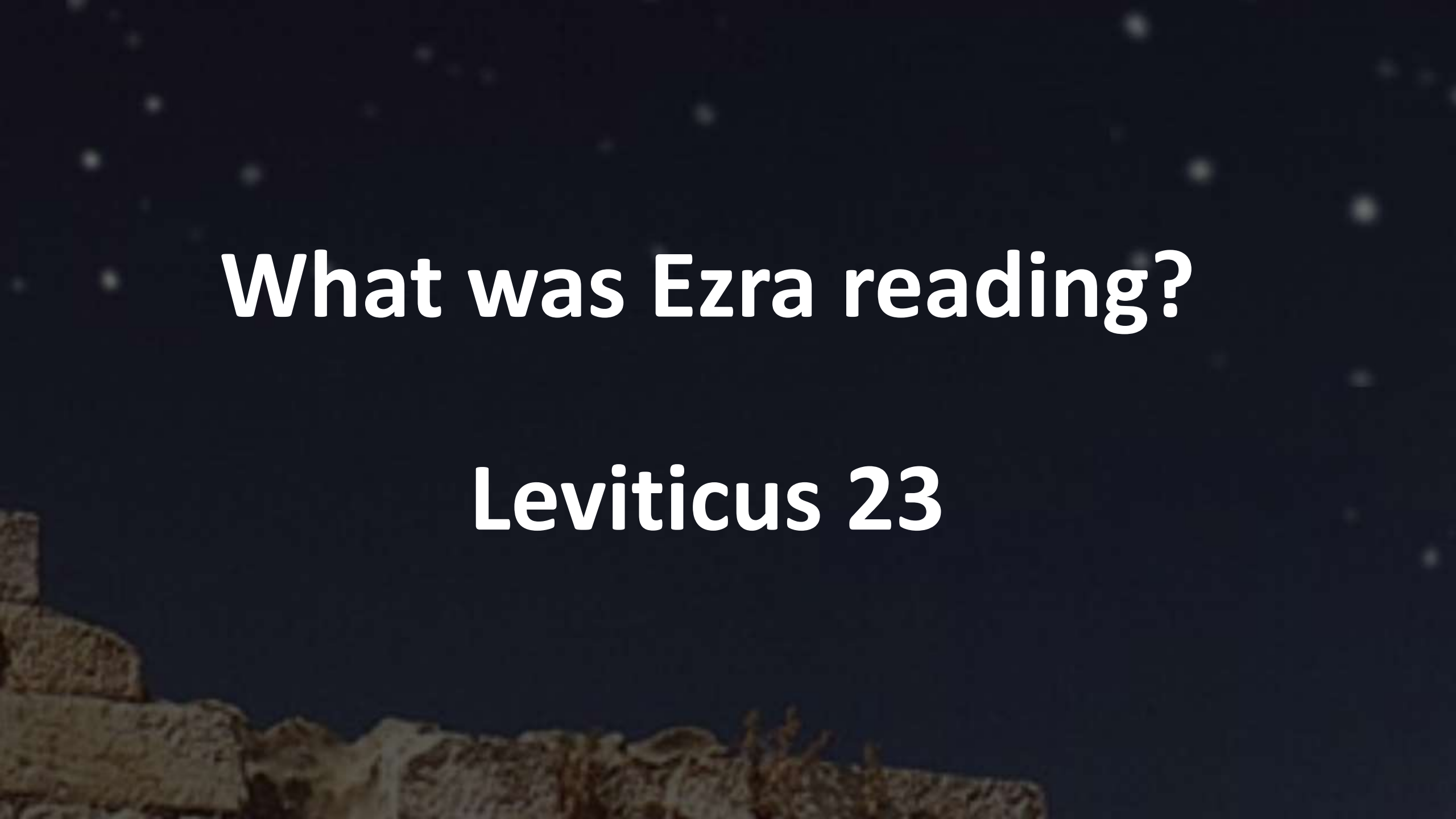
So the Levites calmed all the people, saying, “Be still, for the day is holy; do not be grieved.” All the people went away to eat, to drink, to send portions and to celebrate a great festival, **because they understood the words which had been made known to them.** Nehemiah 8:11-12

*Why is Bible teaching and studying so important?

*Why is First Melissa a Bible-teaching church?

Then on the second day the heads of fathers' households of all the people, the priests and the Levites were gathered to Ezra the scribe that they might gain insight into the words of the law [תּוֹרָה torah]. They found written in the law [תּוֹרָה torah] how the LORD had commanded through Moses that **the sons of Israel should live in booths during the feast of the seventh month**. So they proclaimed and circulated a proclamation in all their cities and in Jerusalem, saying, "Go out to the hills, and bring olive branches and wild olive branches, myrtle branches, palm branches and branches of other leafy trees, to make booths, as it is written."

Nehemiah 8:13-15



What was Ezra reading?

Leviticus 23

Sukkot/Feast of Booths

Again the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, “Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, ‘On the fifteenth of this seventh month [Tishri] is the **Feast of Booths** [Sukkot סֻכּוֹת] for seven days to the Lord. On the first day is a holy convocation; you shall do no laborious work of any kind. For seven days you shall present an offering by fire to the Lord. On the eighth day you shall have a holy convocation and present an offering by fire to the Lord; it is an assembly. You shall do no laborious work.” Leviticus 23:33-36

Sukkot/Feast of Booths

“These are the appointed times of the Lord which you shall proclaim as holy convocations, to present offerings by fire to the Lord—burnt offerings and grain offerings, sacrifices and drink offerings, each day’s matter on its own day— besides those of the sabbaths of the Lord, and besides your gifts and besides all your votive and freewill offerings, which you give to the Lord. On exactly the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the crops of the land, **you shall celebrate the feast of the Lord for seven days**, with a rest on the first day and a rest on the eighth day.” Leviticus 23:37-39

Sukkot/Feast of Booths

“Now on the first day you shall take for yourselves the foliage of beautiful trees, palm branches and boughs of leafy trees and willows of the brook, and you shall rejoice before the Lord your God for seven days. You shall thus celebrate it as a feast to the Lord for seven days in the year. It shall be a perpetual statute throughout your generations; you shall celebrate it in the seventh month. **You shall live in booths** סֹכֶת for seven days; all the native-born in Israel shall live in **booths**, so that your generations may know that I had the sons of Israel live in **booths** when I brought them out from the land of Egypt. I am the Lord your God.’ ” So Moses declared to the sons of Israel the appointed times of the Lord. Leviticus 23:40-44

“Now on the first day you shall take for yourselves the foliage of beautiful trees (etrog), palm branches (lulav) and boughs of leafy trees (hadas) and willows of the brook (aravah), and **you shall rejoice** [verb שמח *samach*] before the Lord your God for seven days.”
Leviticus 23:40



- 1. Etrog (citron fruit) 2. Lulav (frond of date palm)**
3. Hadas (myrtle bough) 4. Aravah (willow branch)

Why these four?

Etrog symbolizes the heart (wisdom).

Lulav symbolizes the backbone (uprightness).

Hadas symbolizes the eyes (enlightenment).

Aravah symbolizes the lips (prayer).



- 1. Etrog (citron fruit) 2. Lulav (frond of date palm)**
3. Hadas (myrtle bough) 4. Aravah (willow branch)

Deuteronomy 16

The Lord said to Moses, “You shall celebrate the **Feast of Booths** (Sukkot סֻכּוֹת) **seven days** after you have gathered in from your threshing floor and your wine vat; and you shall **rejoice** in your feast, you and your son and your daughter and your male and female servants and the Levite and the stranger and the orphan and the widow who are in your towns. **Seven days you shall celebrate a feast to the Lord your God** in the place which the Lord chooses, because the Lord your God will bless you in all your produce and in all the work of your hands, so that you will be altogether **joyful**.” Deuteronomy 16:13-15

“Three times in a year all your males shall appear before the Lord your God in the place which He chooses, at the **Feast of Unleavened Bread** (Pesach פֶּסַח) and at the **Feast of Weeks** (Shavuot שָׁבוּעוֹת) and at the **Feast of Booths** (Sukkot סֻכּוֹת), and they shall not appear before the Lord empty-handed. Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord your God which He has given you.” Deuteronomy 16:16-17

So the people went out and brought them and **made booths** [סֻכּוֹת *sukkot*] **for themselves**, each on his roof, and in their courts and in the courts of the house of God, and in the square at the Water Gate and in the square at the Gate of Ephraim. The entire assembly of those who had returned from the captivity **made booths and lived in them**. The sons of Israel had indeed not done so [as an entire nation] from the days of Joshua the son of Nun to that day. And **there was great rejoicing**. Nehemiah 8:16-17

סוכה sukkah booth



Coming in 6 Weeks

We will learn a lot more about the **Feast of Booths**, Sukkot, on Sunday, October 9.

FYI...

After these things Jesus was walking in Galilee, for He was unwilling to walk in Judea because the Jews were seeking to kill Him. Now the feast of the Jews, the **Feast of Booths**, was near. John 7:1-2

He [Ezra] read from the book of the law of God daily, from the first day to the last day. And they celebrated the feast seven days [15-21 Tishri], and on the eighth day [22 Tishri] there was a solemn assembly according to the ordinance. Nehemiah 8:18

* The sequence in Nehemiah chapter 8 is striking: **intellectual** response to the Word (v. 1–8), **emotional** response to the Word (v. 9–12), and **volitional** response to the Word (v. 13–18). – Bible Knowledge Commentary

Nehemiah

Return to Me

Teaching Series by Pastor Trey Graham

I will give them a heart to know Me,
for I am the Lord; and they will be
My people, and I will be their God,
for they will **return to Me** with their
whole heart. Jeremiah 24:7