

A Spiritual Awakening - Nehemiah 8

When was the last time you stood for 6 hours for anything? By choice?

What would be of such importance that you would respond as these Jews did here in Neh. 8 – with such desire, such commitment, such reverence?

The people of God came together in one place, with one voice, & told Ezra, the priest & scribe, **to bring out the Word of God and read it to them!**

Ezra & the Book of the Law, had been in their midst for the last 13 years, but the people were no longer willing to have what had been confined to the private study of learned men stay there any longer! **They wanted it public!**

They were so hungry to hear the Word of God that everything else was set aside! It was of utmost importance to them, their lives, families, city, future

No matter the cost, they wanted to know what God had declared to them, & what He commands of them in their day as a people, as God's people!

To this point, Nehemiah had led the rebuilding of the wall around Jerusalem, **now Ezra is about to lead the spiritual revival of the nation!**

This chapter in the book of Nehemiah reveals the beginning of a time of covenant renewal and spiritual awakening amongst God's people!

For whenever there is a renewed reverence for God, a willingness to make the Word of God central to all beliefs & practice, & when obedience to God & His Word results, **a time of spiritual awakening is happening!**

Consider the Reformation (16th Cent.) & the Great Awakening (18th Cent.)

Now consider Nehemiah 8:

- **When the Word of God began to be read, they stood out of reverence!**
- When the Word of God was read, they listened attentively from early morning until midday – approx. 6 hours! They couldn't get enough!
- **When the Word of God was read the people responded with obedience!**

The formula is consistent & the result of spiritual revival is the same, therefore we can trust that a time of awakening can happen today as well!

What can we learn today, from this spiritual awaking in Nehemiah 8?

- 1) All the people - men, women, children, anyone who could understand what was being said, came to hear the public reading and teaching of the Word of God – Vs. 2! **It starts with a hunger for God's Word!**
- 2) They also came to worship & bless the Lord – Vs. 6.
Authentic worship is a true sign of spiritual awakening!
- 3) Those called & gifted to give explanation to the Word of God, helped the people to understand it – Vs. 7-8. This is crucial in our day as well!
- 4) The truth of God's Word revealed the sin of the people, but it also revealed God's grace & the opportunity for repentance & obedience!
Repentance & obedience are essential, but God's grace makes it possible!
- 5) Times of spiritual awakening always result in great joy found in the Lord.

Vs. 10 - The "joy of the Lord" is a joy only found by being in relationship/communion with God!

The strength, which is the result of such joy, is found in a God who is a refuge, a place of safety, protector! **The booths served as a reminder!**

The people in Neh. 8 realized that they needed more than a wall, they needed God in their lives! Do we? Do we find our joy & strength in Him?

- 6) **Times of spiritual awakening result in generosity & giving to those in need!**
The people celebrated God's goodness, & they provided for those who couldn't so that all God's people could celebrate God together!
- 7) **Times of spiritual awakening always result in a time of renewed obedience to God and His Word!** Vs. 14-17!

Nehemiah 8 reveals a people devoted to the preaching & teaching of the Word of God, to public praise – rejoicing in the Lord together, to giving to those in need, and to striving for obedience to God's Word!

It's as if the Israelites caught on to the vision & strategies that we have here @ BRC! Or maybe we both have just caught a glimpse of God's formula for spiritual renewal/revival/awakening for His people in this world!

If we want to see a spiritual awakening in our day/church/city/country/world, **it needs to start right here with us!** Will we be a Neh. 8 church?

3-4-18 A Spiritual Awakening - Nehemiah 8

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