

EZRA READS THE LAW

By Keith Greer

" Now all the people gathered together as one man in the open square that was in front of the Water Gate; and they told Ezra the scribe to bring the Book of the Law of Moses, which the LORD had commanded Israel. So Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly of men and women and all who could hear with understanding on the first day of the seventh month. Then he read from it in the open square that was in front of the Water Gate from morning until midday, before the men and women and those who could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive to the Book of the Law." {Nehemiah 8:1-3}

After the Babylonian exile, Nehemiah, cupbearer of the king of the Persian palace, leads a return to Jerusalem. Nehemiah was one who loved God deeply. Notice his prayer for the people, " And I said: "I pray, LORD God of heaven, O great and awesome God, You who keep Your covenant and mercy with those who love You and observe Your commandments, please let Your ear be attentive and Your eyes open, that You may hear the prayer of Your servant which I pray before You now, day and night, for the children of Israel Your servants, and confess the sins of the children of Israel which we have sinned against You. Both my father's house and I have sinned." {Nehemiah 1:5-6}

This prophet made no excuses for the trials of God's children. "We have acted very corruptly against You, and have not kept the commandments, the statutes, nor the ordinances which You commanded Your servant Moses. Remember, I pray, the word that You commanded Your servant Moses, saying, 'If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the nations " {Nehemiah 1:7,8} God had never left them, they had left Him! A truth that will endure thru the ages - God will never tolerate disobedience!

One of the commandments, which God gave them thru Moses, concerns the teaching of the Law to their children. "You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. " {Deuteronomy 6:7} In so doing the Law would never be forgotten! Yet, they failed to do so. In the end, this led to them leaving God. From history, we know how the story ended!

So what effect did the reading of the Law have upon the people? " So they read distinctly from the book, in the Law of God; and they gave the sense, and helped them to understand the reading. And Nehemiah, who was the governor, 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 nor weep. For all the people wept, when they heard the words of the Law." {Nehemiah 8:8,9} Why did the people weep? Did they finally understand how great their transgressions were? God's Law touches the heart and it still does today!

Brethren, this vital truth must be understood by the sinner. One who is outside of Christ must acknowledge how terrible sin is! We cannot hope to bring one to Christ, until they see the need for the blood of Christ being applied to their sins!

What can touch the heart of the sinner? Only the true gospel of Christ! Not gimmicks, food, fun, or frolic. Remember the word of God is powerful! "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek." {Romans 1:16} Also consider James 1:21 and Hebrews 4:12.

Nothing on earth has the power that the message of the cross can have on the contrite heart lost in the depths of his sins. Sadly, many so-called "churches" in our own country are preaching less Bible and less emphasizes on "book, chapter and verse" preaching—even in the Lord's church! God's power is in His message. How can less preaching the message convert the millions who are wallowing in the depths of sin? Let us "read the Law of Christ" to those in sin. It will get the best results! ***