

### **A The festivity of the Word (Nehemiah 8:1-2).**

- ❖ The first day of the seventh month in the Jewish calendar was the civil new year. That's when the festivity of the trumpets took place (Leviticus 23:24).
- ❖ The people of Israel decided to devote to God in that new year. They built a high platform and asked Ezra to read the book of the Law.

### **B The reading of the Word (Nehemiah 8:3).**

- ❖ The wall of Jerusalem had been rebuilt, and the people lived peacefully. The previous teachings of Ezra had touched the people's hearts, so they felt an urge to hear the Word.
- ❖ Men, women and children listened to the story of God's faithfulness. They heard about how God had led His people to the promised land and had given them fair laws.

### **C Understanding the Word (Nehemiah 8:4-8).**

- ❖ There were two groups of 13 teachers:
  - (1) The first group read (v. 4). They read the text in Hebrew—the original language—and probably translated it into Aramaic—the common language.
  - (2) The second group interpreted the text (v. 7). They explained to the people what had been just read.
- ❖ The reading took the whole morning (about 5-6 hours). Nobody complaint about the length of the event. Everyone was happy to hear the Law.
- ❖ The best thing was that everybody could understand the Word of God.

### **D Rejoicing in the Word (Nehemiah 8:9-12).**

- ❖ The people felt sinful after reading of the Word. They cried because they understood they were unworthy before God and helpless to improve their own situation.
- ❖ The leaders encouraged the people to repent, because God listens and forgives. Therefore, they should rejoice in God's kindness: "for the joy of the Lord is your strength." (v. 10)
- ❖ They celebrated a great meal together. They also invited those who had not prepared anything.
- ❖ The joy of the Gospel motivates us to share it with others.

### **E Obeying the Word (Nehemiah 8:13-18).**

- ❖ After the gathering, the leaders asked Ezra for a deeper explanation of God's Word.
- ❖ They understood that they couldn't lead the people if they didn't understand God's will first.
- ❖ They found out that they should celebrate the Feast of the Tabernacles on the 15<sup>th</sup>, so they immediately told the people so.
- ❖ Thus they celebrated the most joyful feast. As they remembered God's acts of mercy and grace and salvation, the people were to rejoice in what the Lord had done for them.

The chiastic structure of Nehemiah 8 is helpful to understand the story and to discover its main point: “the joy of the Lord is your strength.” (Nehemiah 8:10 NIV)

