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Nehemiah 8

(2021)

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Nehemiah 8.

Topics.

- All the people tell Ezra to read the book of the Law of Moses.
- Ezra reads the book of the law for eight-days.
- Ezra and the Levites help all the people understand the reading.
- From the day of Jeshua the people had not kept the Feast of Booths.
- The people made small huts and lived in them eight days.

The feast of Booths is celebrated.

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF NEHEMIAH

In 445 B.C. the Persian King Artaxerxes gave Nehemiah, an Israelite who was a trusted official written permission to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. Nehemiah went with the third wave of returning Jewish exiles. There was intense opposition from other people in the land, and disunity within Jerusalem. Despite the strong opposition, Nehemiah rebuilt the walls and overcame many threats. He served twice as governor and did what God had put in his heart (Neh. 2:12) (Neh. 7:5), and found that the joy of the LORD was his strength (Neh. 8:10). For an overview of the entire book see the title: "Overview of the Book of Nehemiah" (at the beginning of the index to Nehemiah).

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THE PREVIOUS CHAPTER

The wall was built so Nehemiah gave Hanani and Hananiah charge over Jerusalem, and set up the gates, and appointed, guards and gatekeepers, priests, Levites, temple servants and singers. He then assembled the nobles, the officials and the people to be enrolled by genealogy. The exiles who came with Zerubbabel, out of captivity who Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried into exile and had returned to Jerusalem and Judah settled in their own towns.

NEHEMIAH 8:1

- **Nehemiah 8:1:** And all the people gathered as one man into the square (the street in KJV) before the Water Gate. And they told Ezra the scribe to bring the Book of the Law of Moses that the LORD had commanded Israel.

The previous chapter ended with all the work on the wall of Jerusalem being finished and the last two verses of the chapter ended with the words, "the priests, the Levites, the gatekeepers, the singers, some of the people, the temple servants, and all Israel in the seventh month lived in their towns. (Neh. 7:73). These verses are a good beginning and introduction to this chapter. The wall was finished on the twenty-fifth day of the month Elul, which was the sixth month. The events recorded in this chapter took place on the first day of the seventh month. The completion of the wall was immediately followed by the reading of the law, in which Ezra takes the lead. Prior to this Nehemiah has been the dominant figure, but now Ezra who has not been mentioned during the building of the wall, now becomes the dominant figure, with Nehemiah being scarcely mentioned.

As one man: (v1) this mass assembly of the people manifests their great desire to put the nation's past sins behind them and their desire now to bind themselves to the law of God and make things right before Him. Had the law been engraved upon their hearts and its outworking manifested in their life, they would not have suffered as they did for so many generations. Turning from God to chase after worldly things will always dull spirituality and weaken the will's desire for the things of the Lord.

The square (the street in KJV): (v1) the following verse shows that the water gate was on the eastern side of the wall.

- The temple servants living on Ophel repaired to a point opposite the Water Gate on the east and the projecting tower. (Neh. 3:26).

Through this gate the temple servants brought water into the temple, clearly there was a very spacious area in front of it, for such a large company of people to gather, maybe the same space that later became called, "The Court of the Gentiles."

Ezra the scribe: (V1) this is the first mention of Ezra in this book, and the first evidence that he was contemporary with Nehemiah. He came to Jerusalem from Babylon in the seventh year of Artaxerxes king of Persia. It is thought by many that after his visit to Juda and seeing the temple completed and after spending much of his time opposing the corruptions that had crept in among the returned exiles and accomplishing the reforms spoken of in the following verses he most likely returned to the court of Artaxerxes.

- Ezra the priest stood up and said to them, "You have broken faith and married foreign women, and so increased the guilt of Israel. ¹¹ Now then make confession to the LORD, the God of your fathers and do his will. Separate yourselves from the peoples of the land and from the foreign wives." ¹² Then all the assembly answered with a loud voice, "It is so; we must do as you have said. (Ezra 10:10-12)

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And did not revisit Jerusalem until sometime near the completion of the wall, or possibly after an absence of more than ten years. The following verses show that it was the calling of Ezra to read and teach the law.

- Ezra had set his heart to study the Law of the LORD, and to do it and to teach his statutes and rules in Israel. (Ezra 7:10).
- Ezra, according to the wisdom of your God that is in your hand, appoint magistrates and judges who may judge all the people in the province Beyond the River, all such as know the laws of your God. And those who do not know them, you shall teach. (Ezra 7:25).

He most likely returned to the land of Persia to encourage more captives to return to Jerusalem, but now hearing of Nehemiah's work on the wall returned. There is no doubt when he saw the success of the building work on the wall he was filled with great joy as he was when he saw the temple finished.

They told Ezra the scribe: (v1) since Nehemiah and Ezra had the same zeal and passion for God and His people Ezra's arrival to Jerusalem would have been a great comfort to Nehemiah. Following are the two reasons Ezra now becomes the dominant figure:

1. He was a scribe (Neh. 8:2).
2. He was a priest (Neh. 8:2).

Holding both these positions it was clearly the right choice for Ezra to read Law of Moses to the people. It was at this time of the year that the LORD had commanded that Moses Law was to be read to the people.

The seventh month: was considered Israel's festival month of the year, because during this month were the following three feasts:

1. The Feast of trumpets.

2. The great Feast of tabernacles.
3. The solemn day of atonement.

No doubt the great success Nehemiah had on the work and the completion of the wall and the arriving of Ezra and the coming of these three great celebrations all aided in leading to the people's zeal to hear the law, and get their lives right before the Lord their God. The beginning of every Jewish month ushered in as a sacred festival; but the commencement of the seventh month, was kept with a special honour because of these three feasts. The Feast of Trumpets, extended over two days. The following verses show that God had commanded the Law to be read, every seventh year at the feast of tabernacles:

- Moses commanded them, "At the end of every seven years, at the set time in the year of release, at the Feast of Booths (Feast of tabernacles in KJV), (Deut. 31:10).

The Feast of trumpets: (Heb. Rosh Hashanah) is a two-day celebration that begins on the first day of Tishrei and ends on the second day of Tishrei, which is the seventh month of the Jewish year. Trumpet are sounded to signify the issuing of revelation and a call for Israel to gather for God's word of redemption. This is set at the time of Israel's final agricultural harvest; the day symbolizes the Lord's final harvest of all who belong to His Kingdom.

NEHEMIAH 8:2-3

- **Nehemiah 8:2-3:** So Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly, both men and women and all who could understand what they heard, on the first day of the seventh month. ³ And he read from it facing the square before the Water Gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of the men and the women and those who could understand. And the ears of all the people were attentive to the Book of the Law.

From early morning until midday: (v3) the Book of the Law was comprehensive, because to read from early morning to midday means Ezra and those with him must have read for about six hours. After reading hour after hour, it is most likely that they took a break at midday to eat and drink some refreshments.

Before the men and women: (v3) and those that could understand, meaning those old enough to understand, obviously small children would be exempt. Some say that as soon as the reader begins the reading of the law, it was not lawful to speak, but silently give attention to what was being read.

NEHEMIAH 8:4

- **Nehemiah 8:4:** And Ezra the scribe stood on a wooden platform that they had made for the purpose. And beside him stood Mattithiah, Shema, Anaiah, Uriah, Hilkiah, and Maaseiah on his right hand, and Pedaiah, Mishael, Malchijah, Hashum, Hashbaddanah, Zechariah, and Meshullam on his left hand.

This public reading was required by the law to be made every seventh year; but during the Babylonian seventy-year captivity this feast, along with many others, could not be held, so it is very possible that many of the people had never heard the following words being openly and publicly read.

- **Deuteronomy 31:10-11:** And Moses commanded them, "At the end of every seven years, at the set time in the year of release, at the Feast of Booths, ¹¹ when all Israel comes to appear before the LORD your God at the place that he will choose, you shall read this law before all Israel in their hearing.

Nehemiah was set up on a scaffold large enough to hold him and thirteen principal men, and high enough to be above the crowd, obviously so they could be better heard and seen by all. This was not like our pulpits, made

to contain one or two persons, but large enough that at least fourteen were able to stand on it. Amid reverent silence Ezra would have lifted the sacred roll containing Moses Law and begin to read. Nehemiah took no part in the reading since Ezra the priest and his Levite supporters were more suited for it, but he does join them in exhorting the people to dry their tears, and joyfully go to the feast. (Neh. 8:9). The thirteen men mentioned (six on Ezra's right, and seven on his left) were probably chief priests who at this time were performing the temple service. Ezra's duty was very strenuous, as he continued reading aloud from morning until midday, but his labour was lightened by the aid of the other men present, who were there partly to show their agreement with Ezra's declaration of Moses Law, and partly to take their share with him in the duty of publicly reading and expounding the Scripture.

NEHEMIAH 8:5-6

- **Nehemiah 8:5-6:** And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was above all the people, and as he opened it all the people stood. ⁶ And Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God, and all the people answered, "Amen, Amen," lifting up their hands. And they bowed their heads and worshiped the LORD with their faces to the ground.

Ezra blessed the Lord: (v6) Ezra opened the book and the multitude stood up, he then offered praise and thanksgiving to the LORD and all the people lifted up their hands as a token of their fervent acceptance and then with faces bowed to the ground, in humble adoration uttered a double Amen as a sign of their strong and total agreement with all that has been said.

NOTE: the people stood up, it is hardly likely they remained standing for the entire reading, but stood for a short time to show their respect for God's word or rather, because Ezra offered a prayer prior to the reading after which they more than likely would have resumed their positions sitting on the ground.

NEHEMIAH 8:7-8

- **Nehemiah 8:7-8:** Also Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodiah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, the Levites, helped the people to understand the Law, while the people remained in their places. ⁸ They read from the book, from the Law of God, clearly, and they gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading.

The Levites, helped the people to understand the Law: may mean:

- The Levites explained it, or they all read it in turns.
- There were a number of groups, each of which had a Levite teacher who both read and explained the law.
- The words for some needed to be translated from Hebrew, to the Chaldee or Syriac language, which after seventy years in exile would now be the common language for many.
- They expounded the mind and will of God in what they read, and applied it to the people's present condition.

It is difficult to determine which of these it may mean, and perhaps a few may all apply, but regardless of the exact meaning Ezra was always the principal figure.

They remained in their places: (V7) it is not likely that such a vast congregation could distinctly hear one man's voice, so it is possible that rather than one platform they had several platforms upon which the Levites, and men previously named stood upon to read to different

companies of the people. The words, "Ezra the scribe stood on a wooden platform (pulpit in KJV) had 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," (Neh. 8:4), does not necessarily have to mean that they were all on the same platform, since it could be taken to mean that they each remained with their company some on the left of him and some on the right for the convenience of hearing.

HEARING THE WORD OF GOD

Those who hear the word, should understand it, otherwise the preachers sound is simply empty words, that have no power to save or change lives. This is the reason teachers must clearly explain and give understanding to it. Reading and preaching is good, but illuminating, clarifying and explaining the word makes the reading and preaching better understood, and far more powerful and convincing.

In almost every generation God has raised up those who have faithfully and excellently preached the word of God, but, there has also been those who have for lack of knowledge simply clothed their own personal views in Scripture and lead many astray. This is why we must bring all that we hear before Scripture to test it. Both the Old and New Testament warn us of false teachers, but it is our personal responsibility to examine the Scriptures to test that what we have been taught is in line with the context of Scripture. The apostle Paul wrote:

- Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so. (Acts 17:11).

The aim of all teachers of God's law, the Gospel and the message of the bloodstained cross of Calvary should always be the teaching of God's truth so that all clearly understand it, not only intellectually, but in such a manner that, like the crowd standing before Ezra outside the water-gate they are moved to repentance, and to follow the Lord and filled with joy.

NEHEMIAH 8:9

- **Nehemiah 8:9:** And 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 wept as they heard the words of the Law.

Though Nehemiah took no part in the reading since Ezra the priest and his Levite supporters were more suited for it, he did join them in exhorting the people when the reading was over, and it was clearly seen that the people were inwardly mourning with tears of sorrow and repentance for disobedience to dry their tears, and joyfully go to the feast with gladness.

This day is holy unto the Lord your God: because it was a special and sacred feast day of thanksgiving to God and rejoicing in his salvation mercy, forgiveness and blessings.

Mourn not, nor weep: a deep sense of their national sins, brought to their remembrance by the reading of the law inwardly and deeply affected the hearts of the people with sorrow and repentance for the following two reasons:

1. As the law was read painful memories would have come to mind of the many gross sins the nation had committed before the LORD their God.
2. Since the law also comes with great blessings if the nation had obeyed, they would have been awakened to the truth that their nation would have been greatly blessed and favoured by the LORD had they not been so disobedient and rebellious.

MOURNING In considering their offences against the Law, the Levites do not reprove the people for inwardly mourning, but assure them of God's mercies if they are repentant. Weeping was a good sign that their hearts were tender and had a deep inner sense of guilt as they heard the words of the law and that they had godly sorrow for the nation's sins and offences before the LORD. It was right and proper that they should feel inwardly sorry for their sins, they were not reprimanded or forbidden from this, but rather told not to carry their mourning over to the time of feasting and rejoicing. The idea is that all sinners should grieve and sorrow over their sin before God, but once forgiven, sorrow should change to joy and rejoicing.

However, in the following chapter we are told:

- Now on the twenty-fourth day of this month the people of Israel were assembled with fasting and in sackcloth, and with earth on their heads. ² And the Israelites separated themselves from all foreigners and stood and confessed their sins and the iniquities of their fathers. (Neh. 9:1-3).

the festival began on the 14th day (the feast of trumpets) of the seventh month (Heb. Tisri) immediately after this day, the feast of Booths/Tabernacles began and lasted from the 15th day to the 22nd. With the 23rd day (the eighth day) being a day of solemn observance (Neh. 8:18) during which time outward manifestations of mourning had been forbidden. But now that the festival had finished, the people were permitted on the twenty fourth day to outwardly express their sorrow and mourning, which they outwardly did by sprinkling dust and earth on their heads, (Neh. 9:1) which would have been totally contrary to the spirit of the sacred holy feast. The act of sprinkling dust and earth on their heads, signified that the external body and the internal spirit were one in repentance, grief and sorrow.

NEHEMIAH 8:10-11

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- **Nehemiah 8:10-11:** Then he (Nehemiah) said to them, "Go your way. Eat the fat and drink sweet wine and send portions to anyone who has nothing ready, for this day is holy to our Lord. And do not be grieved, for the joy of the LORD is your strength." ¹¹ So the Levites calmed all the people, saying, "Be quiet, for this day is holy; do not be grieved."

The beautiful words, "the joy of the LORD is your strength: (v10) means if we set our mind and heart upon seeking deeper communion with God rather than upon worldly things, and make Him our greatest love, then our faith will lift us above the sorrows that this world may bring upon us so that though we maybe grieved, we will not be crushed, for lying deep within the inner most being remains hope, love and joy resting as a subterranean river ready to overflow its banks once again.

Joy in the Lord is the natural result of Christian faith, for the following reasons:

- It gives confidence that one is accepted by God and by grace gives rest to the spirit
- It brings communion with God and takes away fear of judgement.
- It removes guilt and the tormenting conflict that is waged between the conscience and human inclinations, and between the will and the passions which without grace have power to torment a heart devoted to God.
- It takes away the sense of sin and calms the conscience from invading accusations.
- It replaces death with eternal life and fills all voids in the heart with God's love and grace.

Send portions to anyone who has nothing: (V10) the people were to send portions of their food and drink to those who had nothing so that the poor amongst them could also participate in the public rejoicings. It was the command of the LORD that adults, their sons and daughters, male and female servants, priests, Levites, travellers, the fatherless and widows were to all join in with these appointed festivals and feast days. (Deut. 16:11) (Deut. 16:14) (Esth. 9:19). These verses show that during the Old Testament the law and God's blessing fully encompassed the lowest and the noble, no one no matter what station in life they held had the right to feast and drink to themselves, all was to be shared.

No one is called to solely enrich and indulge themselves, but to care for each other, especially those less fortunate. Israel's duty to help the poor and less fortunate as they enjoy God's blessing is highlighted here. This is a principal throughout Scripture that applies to all Christians.

SNAP SHOT OF THIS SECTION

The walls to fortify the Holy City were completed, but the true defence of Israel was not in the strength of the walls, but in faithfulness to God and obedience to His law. As the people listened to the reading of the law, this truth was being awakened in their mind and hearts and brought a new national zeal to establish God's laws and the sacred festivals etc.

NEHEMIAH 8:12

- **Nehemiah 8:12:** And all the people went their way to eat and drink and to send portions and to make great rejoicing, because they had understood the words that were declared to them.

All the people went their way to freely and cheerfully eat, drink and send portions to the poor who had nothing to eat and drink, so that they also could celebrate this great festival with singing and musical instruments and songs of praise and joy, because they had understood the words that had been read to them. When God's law and the Gospel are clearly known and understood and His people faithfully walk in them there is joy and gladness.

- Blessed are the people who know the festal shout, who walk, O LORD, in the light of your face. (Psalm 89:15).

NEHEMIAH 8:13-16

- **Nehemiah 8:13-16:** On the second day the heads of fathers' houses of all the people, with the priests and the Levites, came together to Ezra the scribe in order to study the words of the Law. ¹⁴ And they found it written in the Law that the LORD had commanded by Moses that the people of Israel should dwell in booths during the feast of the seventh month, ¹⁵ and that they should proclaim it and publish it in all their towns and in Jerusalem, "Go out to the hills (the mount in KJV) and bring branches of olive, wild olive, myrtle, palm, and other leafy trees to make booths, as it is written." ¹⁶ So the people went out and brought them and made booths 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 Feast of Booths (also called Tabernacles): (Heb. Sukkot) was a seven-day festival holiday in the Land of Israel with the eighth day being a holy Sabbath. For further information concerning the eighth day see the title, "Concerning the Eighth Day" (below). The first day and second day was a Sabbath Day in which no work was to be done. The booths were made of palm and other wide leaf branches for the people to dwell in during this feast. It is held as a Jewish holiday to celebrate the gathering of the harvest as well as the Jewish exodus from Egypt. The eighth day

also commemorates the completion of the annual cycle of readings from the Torah (the first five books of the Bible) and is called Simḥat Torah (Rejoicing of the Law). For further information concerning this seven-day festival and the eighth day see the title, "The Feast of Booths/Tabernacles" at the end of this study. Dwelling in booths was not only a memorial of Israel's exodus from Egypt and their dwelling in tents in the wilderness, but also the people dwelling in booths/tabernacles before the Holy City of God symbolically symbolises Gospel believers separated from the world standing before God dwelling in the heavenly Holy City.

They found written in the law: (v14) Scriptures such as the following:

- Speak to the people of Israel, saying, On the fifteenth day of this seventh month and for seven days is the Feast of Booths to the LORD. (Lev. 23:34)
- You shall keep the Feast of Booths seven days, when you have gathered in the produce from your threshing floor and your winepress. (Deut. 16:13)

Go out to the hills (the mount in KJV): (v15), the mount of Olives, was near Jerusalem, but fetching such branches would not be limited to the mount only, but include all neighbouring areas that were covered with olive trees and the other leafy trees mentioned. It is certain trees of these kinds would have been planted in locations near the holy city for this very feast, which was to be celebrated every year, but had been neglected for seventy years due to Israel's exile. Christ will reward those under the Old Testament covenant who followed God's law and those under the New Testament covenant who hold fast to the Gospel with joy and rejoicing with a crown of glory at the resurrection.

NOTICE: these booths were not just around the city, they were on roof tops, in the people's backyard, in the courts of the temple of God, in the square at the Water Gate and the Gate of Ephraim, when this feast was at its peak, booths/tabernacles would be seen wherever there was space to erect one.

NEHEMIAH 8:17

- **Nehemiah 8:17:** And all the assembly of those who had returned from the captivity made booths and lived in the booths, for from the days of Jeshua the son of Nun to that day the people of Israel had not done so. And there was very great rejoicing.

From the days of Jeshua (Joshua) the son of Nun: (v17) the children of Israel had not lived-in booths, this cannot mean that this festival had never been observed since Joshua's time, because we are told in the following verse that it was kept after their return from Babylon:

- They kept the Feast of Booths, as it is written, and offered the daily burnt offerings by number according to the rule, as each day required. (Ezra 3:4).

The meaning is most likely that this feast had not been kept with such joy and passion since that time. Some say, that the reason for this was that in the days of Joshua they rejoiced, because they had gained possession of the land of Canaan; and now they equally rejoiced, because they were restored and quietly settled in their land, especially the city of Jerusalem, after being for such a long time separated from their beloved city. Clearly it was not the intention of the writer to state that the Feast of tabernacles had not been kept from the time of Joshua until this occasion. We know this because the following verses show that it had been observed before this time:

- All the men of Israel assembled to King Solomon at the feast in the month Ethanim, which is the seventh month. (1 Kings 8:2).
- So, Solomon held the feast at that time, and all Israel with him, a great assembly, from Lebo-hamath to the Brook of Egypt, before the LORD our God, seven days. (1 Kings 8:65).

- On the eighth day they held a solemn assembly, for they had kept the dedication of the altar seven days and the feast seven days. (2 Chron. 7:9).
- They kept the Feast of Booths, as it is written, and offered the daily burnt offerings by number according to the rule, as each day required. (Ezra 3:4).

The idea is that there had been no such celebration as this since Joshua's time, that aroused such zeal for the law of the LORD and feelings of enthusiastic joy and that raised the emotions to such a passionate height and great rejoicing (as the next words declare) since the time of their entrance into Canaan, as now on their return after a long and sorrowful captivity.

NEHEMIAH 8:18

- **Nehemiah 8:18:** And day by day, from the first day to the last day, he read from the Book of the Law of God. They kept the feast seven days, and on the eighth day there was a solemn assembly, according to the rule.

Every day, from the first to the last day of the feast, Ezra read the book of the law during the feast according to the following verse:

- Moses commanded them, "At the end of every seven years, at the set time in the year of release, at the Feast of Booths, ¹¹ when all Israel comes to appear before the LORD your God at the place that he will choose, you shall read this law before all Israel in their hearing. ¹² Assemble the people, men, women, and little ones, and the sojourner within your towns, that they may hear and learn to fear the LORD your God, and be careful to do all the words of this law. (Deut. 31:10-12).

The eighth day: was a solemn assembly, it was the last and great day of the feast. For more concerning the eighth day see the title, "Concerning the Eighth Day" (below).

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- On the eighth day you shall have a solemn assembly. You shall not do any ordinary work. (Numbers. 29:35).

It was on this day that Jesus stood up in the temple and cried out:

- If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. (John 7:37-39).

THE FEAST OF BOOTHS/TABERNACLES

DATE: the 15th to the 22nd day of Tishrei the seventh month of the ecclesiastical year. (September/October).

- **Leviticus 23:33-36:** And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ³⁴ "Speak to the people of Israel, saying, On the fifteenth day of this seventh month and for seven days is the Feast of Booths to the LORD. ³⁵ On the first day shall be a holy convocation; you shall not do any ordinary work. ³⁶ For seven days you shall present food offerings to the LORD. On the eighth day you shall hold a holy convocation and present a food offering to the LORD. It is a solemn assembly; you shall not do any ordinary work. (Lev. 23:33-36).

NOW JUMP TO VERSE THIRTY-NINE:

- **Leviticus 23:39-44:** On the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the produce of the land, you shall celebrate the feast of the LORD seven days. On the first day shall be a solemn rest, and on the eighth day shall be a solemn rest. ⁴⁰ And you shall take on the first day the fruit of splendid trees, branches of palm trees and boughs of leafy trees and willows of the brook, and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God seven days. ⁴¹ You shall celebrate it as a feast to the LORD for seven days in the year. It is a statute forever throughout your generations; you shall celebrate it in the seventh month. ⁴² You shall dwell in booths for seven days. All native Israelites shall dwell in booths, ⁴³ that your generations may know that I made the people of Israel dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God." ⁴⁴ Thus Moses declared to the people of Israel the appointed feasts of the LORD. (Lev. 23:39-44).

- On the 15th day of the seventh month, after Israel had gathered in the produce of the land, they were to celebrate the Feast of Booths for seven days, in the following manner:
- The first day was to be a Sabbath, no ordinary work was to be done (i.e., only work required to hold this feast was permitted). They were to take the fruit and the branches of palm trees, leafy trees and willows of the brook, and rejoice before the LORD for seven days.
- All native Israelites were to dwell in booths for seven days so that their future generations would know that God made the people of Israel dwell in booths when He brought them out of the land of Egypt. During these seven days they were to present food offerings to the LORD.
- On the eighth day they were to hold a Sabbath, no ordinary work was to be done and, and also present a food offering to the LORD.

CONCERNING THE EIGHTH DAY

in the book of Leviticus, we read:

- On the fifteenth day of this seventh month and for seven days is the Feast of Booths to the LORD.³⁵ On the first day shall be a holy convocation; you shall not do any ordinary work.³⁶ For seven days you shall present food offerings to the LORD. On the eighth day you shall hold a holy convocation and present a food offering to the LORD. It is a solemn assembly; you shall not do any ordinary work. (Leviticus 23:34-36).

And in the book of Numbers:

- On the fifteenth day of the seventh month you shall have a holy convocation. You shall not do any ordinary work, and you shall keep a feast to the LORD seven days.¹³ And you shall offer a burnt offering, a food (Num. 29:12-13).

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This is referring to the Feast of Booths/tabernacles, which we know was held on the 15 day of the seventh month (Heb. Tishrei). Further on in the same chapter it is stated:

- On the eighth day (of the feast of Booths/Tabernacles) you shall have a solemn assembly. You shall not do any ordinary work,³⁶ but you shall offer a burnt offering, a food offering, with a pleasing aroma to the LORD (Num. 29:35-36).

This seven-day feast, plus the eight-day Sabbath was to be held on the 15th day in the seventh month and kept forever throughout Israel's generations. The appointed feasts that God gave to Moses to declare to the people of Israel are recorded in Leviticus chapter 23 and Numbers chapter 29.

EXTRA OFFERINGS

These are the seven appointed feasts of the LORD and times of holy convocation, for presenting the following on its proper day to the LORD:

- Food offerings.
- Burnt offerings.
- Grain offerings.
- Sacrifices and drink offerings.

These seven feasts were to be kept, besides the LORD's weekly Sabbaths, and besides their gifts, their vow offerings, and all their freewill offerings that they give to the LORD. (Lev. 23:37-38).

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.

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