

Prophetic Fall Feasts of The LORD
October 9, 2019 Lesson #39 Power of God's Word

Themes Month 7: Gather, Judgment, afflict your soul, repentance, rebuild, cleansing, restoration, renewal, revive, refreshing, rejoicing

Neh. 7:1; 4-5a; 73b Now it came to pass, when the wall was built, and I had set up the doors, and the porters and the singers and the Levites were appointed, ⁴Now the city was large and great: but the people were few therein, and the houses were not built. ⁵ And my God put into mine heart to gather together the nobles, and the rulers, and the people, that they might be reckoned by genealogy.

^{73b} and when the seventh month came, the children of Israel were in their cities.

- ❖ 7th month: Israel is expected to observe Feast of Trumpets [Tishri 1] Day of Atonement [Tishri 10] & Feast of Tabernacles [Tishri 15].
- ❖ Priesthood & sacrificial system had been restored earlier. [Ezra 3:1-13]
- ❖ It was time for the Law of God to be read to the people so their worship and lives would be restored to God's prescribed order. [celebrate Millennial Kingdom]
- ❖ Nehemiah will call the people together to honor the Word of God, confess their sins and dedicate themselves and their work to the Lord. It is time for consecration.

The material needs have been met. Time To Address Spiritual Needs:

Nehemiah's Solution: Have a 'Bible Conference' at the Water Gate.

The Water Gate led from the old City of David to the Gihon Spring located adjacent to the Kidron Valley. The Bible does not say that this gate was repaired, but only that the workers repaired the walls adjacent to it.

This suggests that the Word of God stands forever and will not fail.

Ps. 119:89 Forever, O LORD, Your word is settled in heaven.

Matt. 24:35 Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.

"The Bible does not need to be repaired or improved." (Warren Wiersbe -Be Determined)

It will be a restoration of hearing God's living, prophetic word. (Neh. 8)

The people of God needed to be brought to an intelligent understanding of the Word of God and realize the secret of their strength for the future.

Problem: When God's people get away from loving, reading and obeying the Word of God, they lose the blessing and power of God.

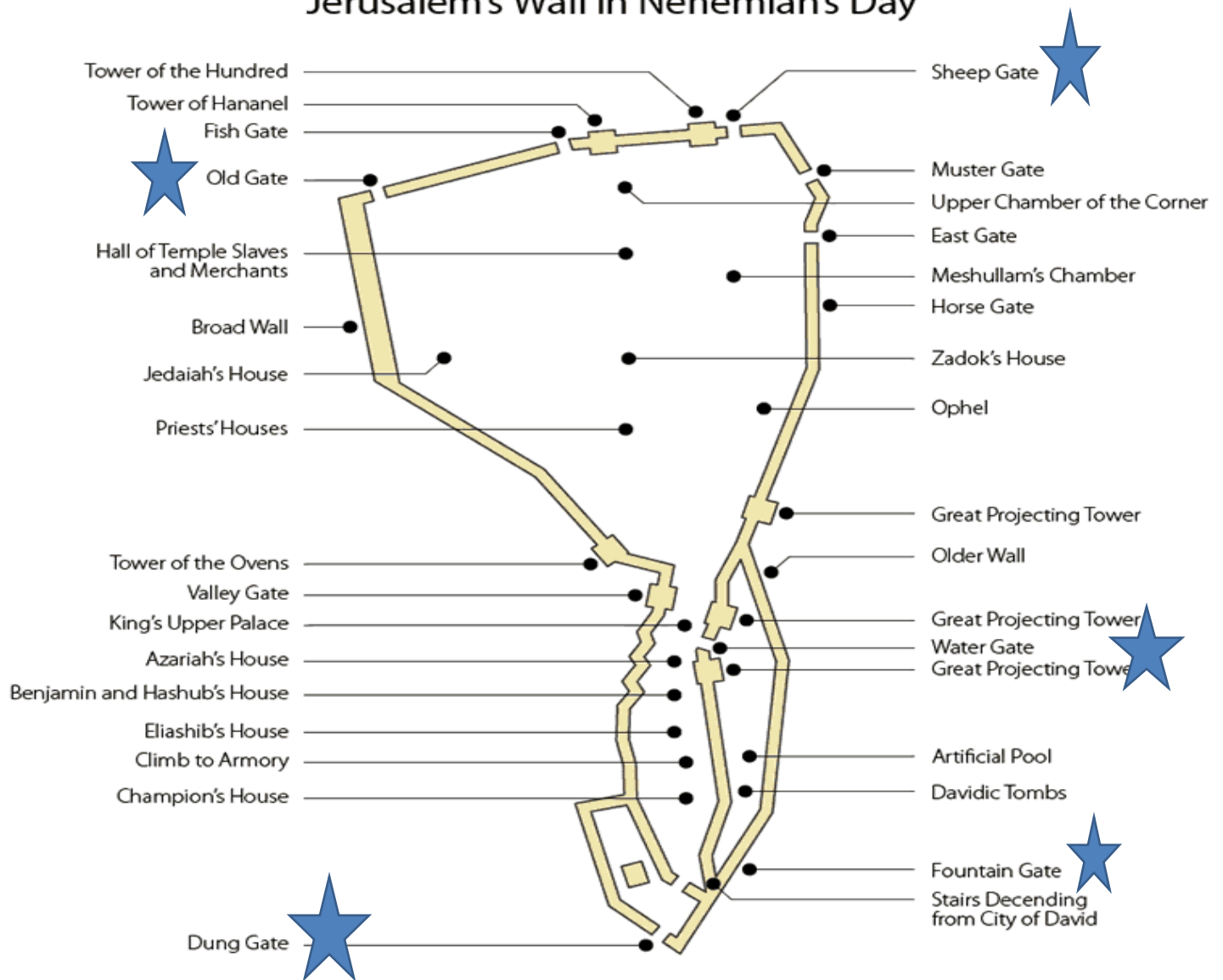
Truth: If I want to be a fruitful tree, I must delight in God's Word.

Ps. 1:2-3 But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night.

³ He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper.

God's general, written Logos Word is represented at the Old Gate. The 2nd Power Gate or Water Gate represents the quickened, living, Rhema Word of God to us. This only comes after the Fountain Gate when we are filled with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit will open up God's Word to us and quicken specific words from it to our spirit.

Jerusalem's Wall in Nehemiah's Day



Psalm 119:9 How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your Word.
Ephesians 5:26 That He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the Word, (Rhema)
 The Holy Spirit is the one who makes the Word of God alive to us personally.

The Spiritual Ministry of Nehemiah for the people included:

1. Instruct the people in the Word- Ezra and the priests explained the Scriptures to the people.
2. Confess Sin
3. Dedicate the walls
4. Cleanse the Fellowship

Note: Ezra & Nehemiah put the Word of God FIRST in the life of the city.

What happened in Jerusalem (God's dwelling place) from that point on was a by-product of the people's response to the Scriptures.

Dr. Lloyd-Jones "The primary task of the church is the preaching of the Word of God.

The decadent periods and eras in the history of the church have always been those periods when preaching the Word had declined."

Truth: The Spirit of God uses the Word of God to cleanse and revive the hearts of people.

Consider: If I want God to work in me and through me, I must respond positively to His Word.

My whole being must be captive to God's truth.

Nehemiah 8 describes 3 basic responses (3 parts of my soul):

Understanding the Word > my mind

Rejoicing in the Word > my heart; emotions

Obedying the Word > my will

I Thess. 5:23 Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

James 1:21b receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.

Meekness: Accept It; Do Not Argue With It; Honor It As The Word Of God;

Do Not Try To Twist It To Conform It To Your Thinking

I. Understanding the Word of God - My Mind - Neh. 8:1-8

1. God's Word must be understood (mentioned 6x in chapter 8) before it can enter the heart and release its life-changing power.

a. Parable of the Sower - Matt. 13:1-9, 18-23 - Emphasis is on Understanding the Word of God. Jesus compared understanding and receiving the Word to the planting of seed in the soil, where it takes root and bears fruit.

Seed=Word Soil=types of hearts Results=response

b. Heb. 4:12 Word of God *is* living and powerful,

c. God's Word must take root in our heart, and be cultivated so we will bear fruit.

Note: $\frac{3}{4}$ of the seed did not bear fruit

Question: Do most people hear the Word, but not receive it (take root) and bear fruit?

Rom 10:17 Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

2. They chose the Water Gate for the sight of the Bible conference.

a. In the Bible, water for washing is a picture of the Word of God (John 15:3; Eph. 5:26)

b. Water for drinking is a picture of the Spirit of God

John 7:37-39 In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. ³⁸ He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

³⁹ (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

c. When we apply the water of the Word to our lives, the Spirit can work in us and through us. "It is refreshing to the soul when you receive the Word and allow the Spirit to teach you."

3. Timing of the Conference

- a. 1st Day of the 7th month (Tishri) - Feast of Trumpets - 2nd most solemn day
 - b. It is a call to prepare to stand before the judgment of God.
 - d. 10 days of introspection to prepare for the Day of Atonement on the 10th day of 7th month.
 - e. Feast of Tabernacles from day 15 -21
- Perfect time for the nation to get right with God and make a fresh new beginning.

4. Ezra was an excellent choice to conduct this outdoor Bible conference.

a. Ezra 7:10 He was a priest and scribe (skilled in the Law of Moses) who had "prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord and to do it, and to teach in Israel."
God raised up Ezra to rebuild [Trumpets], cleanse [Atonement] and fill [Tabernacles] the Temple with the worship of God.

5. Ezra performed 3 ministries for the people at the Water Gate.

a. Ezra brought the Book of the Law [Neh. 8:1-4]

Neh. 8:1 And all the people gathered themselves together as one man into the street that was before the water gate; and they spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the LORD had commanded to Israel. [Desire to learn]

He stood on a platform above the people so they see and hear him. (13 other men)

b. Ezra opened the Book of the Law [Neh. 8:5-6]

When he lifted the scroll, the people in the square before the Water Gate honored the Word of God by standing.

- They knew they would hear the very Word of God.

I Thess. 2:13 ...when you received the Word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the Word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.

- They remained standing while the Law was read and explained.

Neh. 8:3 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.

Note: They stood and listened for 5-6 hours. This continued for a week.

Neh. 8:6 After he opened the scroll, Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God.

- They praised God for His Word before they read it.

- Neh. 8:6 And all the people answered, "Amen, Amen!" while lifting up their hands.

And they bowed their heads and worshiped the LORD with *their* faces to the ground.

This work of the Word of God and the Spirit of God had three immediate results.

- The people *thanked God* (by saying Amen when Ezra blessed the Lord)

- They prayed (by lifting up their hands)

- They worshipped (by bowing down before Him)

Thanksgiving, prayer, and praise are all good measures of how the Spirit of God and Word of God are working in us.

Consider: At the Water Gate in Jerusalem there was no eloquent preaching, no sensational sermon. Ezra preached straight from the Scriptures, reading for hours on end.

As the people stood and listened to God's Word, they grew excited as the Word "came alive" in them.

Note: They were a united congregation who honored the Scriptures and were willing to devote $\frac{1}{2}$ day to hearing it read and taught. [Neh. 8:1]

Neh. 8:18a Also day by day, from the first day until the last day, he read from the Book of the Law of God.

I Tim. 4:13 Until I come, give attention to the *public reading of Scripture*, to exhortation and teaching. (NASB)

Ponder: In some parts of the world, believers stand for hours in crowded churches to hear Bible teaching. In the western evangelical churches, the shorter the sermon, the better.

c. Ezra read and explained the Book [Neh. 8:7-8]

Neh. 8:8 So they read distinctly from the book, in the Law of God; and they gave the sense and helped *them* to understand the reading.

- Distinctly > explained in a language they could understand - could apply it to their lives.

Question: Do my daily choices reveal a love for God's Word?

Do I thirst for an understanding of His Word?

Consider: People filled with the Spirit of God have a great longing for God's Word.

Christians in China spent literal months and years writing down their own copies of the Scriptures. When they couldn't take the copy of the Holy Scriptures home with them, they would memorize it. They simply cannot understand that we have a Bible, perhaps many Bibles, and yet not read and meditate in God's Word all through the day and night.

We are dull. We have little response to God's Word.

Rev. 3:2-3 Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, (my maturity and spiritual growth?) for I have not found your works perfect (complete, mature) before God. Remember therefore how you have received (by faith) and heard; hold fast and repent (change your mind; turn and continue by faith).

Warning: Wake Up! Pay Attention!

A.W. Tozer: The average Christian is NOT Christ-like and lives a sub-Christian life.

Do not grow comfortable with your present spiritual state. Do we not realize our spiritual life is a battlefield, a preparation for a greater life to come? At the moment of justification, all are entered in the race for the prize and are commanded to walk in the spirit. The "reformation" we need is to allow the Holy Spirit to complete the work that was started in us. There is always more ground to gain. Allow Him to mature us and "grow us up into the fullness of Jesus Christ."

Phil. 1:6 being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete *it* until the day of Jesus Christ; (Promise> Reckon> Surrender>Thank Him)

Jesus Christ issues the same exhortation to each church. "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

It takes more than physical ears to hear the voice of God; it requires a receptive heart. Heb. 3:7-8 Today, if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts.

Hebrews states 5 admonitions to "heed God's Word" and the sad spiritual consequences that result if we do not.

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| 1. Drifting From The Word | = | Neglect | Heb. 2:1-4 |
| 2. Doubting The Word | = | Hard Heart | Heb. 3:7-4:13 |
| 3. Dullness Toward The Word | = | Sluggishness | Heb. 5:11-6:20 |
| 4. Despising The Word | = | Willfulness | Heb. 10:26-39 |
| 5. Defying The Word | = | Refusing To Hear | Heb. 12:14-29 |

Sequence: 1. If we do not listen to God's Word and really HEAR it, we start to DRIFT. Neglect always leads to drifting.

2. As we drift, we begin to DOUBT the Word. Faith comes by hearing the Word of God.

3. Our heart begins to harden which leads to spiritual sluggishness which produces DULLNESS toward the Word. We become dull of hearing = lazy listeners!

4. This leads to a despiteful attitude toward the Word to the extent we willfully disobey.

5. This gradually develops into a defiant attitude.

Heb. 5:11-14 Emphasizes the marks of spiritual immaturity and the call to maturity

Warning #3 Given: Dullness Toward The Word; Sluggish & lazy listener - Heb. 5:11-6:20

Heb. 6:1 THEREFORE leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, Let Us Go On Unto Perfection; [maturity; completion]

1. Let Us Be Carried Forward - It is God who enables us to progress as we yield to Him, receive His Word and act on it.

Open Invitation To Enter & Dwell In The Presence Of God

Tozer: We cannot enter into presence of God while we are rebelling against God!

Truth: My relationship with God's Word has a lot to do with my relationship with God.

Can others tell I am in love with God by the way I eagerly study and discuss God's Word?

What do I like to read the most? God longs for us to desire to hear more of His Word.

Next time you pick up that novel, magazine or catalogue, ask yourselves whether you have just again bypassed His Word for some materialistic preoccupation, fictional adventure or indifferent business.

Prayer: Increase my desire & thirst for Your Word.

May Your Word occupy my mind so I meditate on It day and night.

Prayer of Spurgeon: Lord God, let the words leap out of the page into my soul, Thyself making them vivid, quick, powerful, and fresh to my heart.