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EZRA'S RECIPE FOR RESTORATION

(Nehemiah 8:1-3, v5-6, v8-18)

INTRODUCTION

Story setting: About 476 b.c., Ezra, Nehemiah, and others led many Israelites out of captivity in Babylon back to Jerusalem. They returned to rebuild the city walls, rebuild the temple, and restore keeping the book of the law of Moses given by God.

When reading from the law (Lev. 23:35-42), they discovered that "booths" were absent in their observance of the Feast of Tabernacles. It had not been observed for 1000 years. From this day forward, they would restore that, and be glad.

Why tell this story?

The OT was written for our learning and example (Rms. 15:4; 1 Cor. 10:11).

It's possible, even today, for religious people to neglect a command of God.

We learn that it's possible for God's word to be understood.

When it is understood, we need to implement or do that which was left undone.

1. (v1) "all the people gathered themselves together as one man"

They were united in thought and action; they were all agreed.

It's the same for us: (John 17:20-21; 1 Cor. 1:10; Eph. 4:3-6)

2. (v2) "Then Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation ..."

The authority for having booths, the final say, was the law of God (one source).

Relying on different sources for authority in religion creates division.

(Matt. 15:3, v9; John 8:30-32; John 12:48; Rev. 22:18-19)

3. (v3) "... and the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law"

Hear, listen, to the word of God with the purpose of understanding.

"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

(Rev. 2:7, v11, v17, v29; 3:6, v13, v22)

4. (v5-6) "And all the people answered, Amen, Amen"

It's proper response, respect, and reverence toward God's word; an attitude of "so be it."

(1 Tim. 4:13) "give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine."

(Rev. 1:3) "Blessed is he that reads ... hear ... and keep those things written therein"

5. (v7-8) "caused them to understand the reading"

God's word is understandable by all, and all may understand it alike.

(Luke 24:45; Acts 8:30-31, v35; Acts 2:40-41)

6. (v12) "they had understood the words" (v16) "and made themselves booths"