



Rice Memorial MBC

Pastor J. Harper, President of State Convention  
Apostle Walter Camp, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President  
Minister Danny Current, Dean of Christian Education  
Pastor Michael Hansberry, Southern District Moderator

### **Rice Memorial Missionary Baptist Church**

Apostle Walter F. Camp, Presiding Senior Pastor  
Pastor David K. Baker III, 2<sup>nd</sup> Presiding  
802 W. 15<sup>th</sup>, Little Rock, AR 72202, 501-301-8181

[www.RiceMemorialBaptistChurch.org](http://www.RiceMemorialBaptistChurch.org)

## **The Festival of Booths**

Definitions in **bold** letters are from **Strong's** Exhaustive Concordance  
Other definitions are from **Webster's** Dictionary, 1828 Edition  
or Roget's Thesaurus – **August 4, 2013**

***Worship with us at 3201 Mary St until we rebuild our sanctuary at 802 W. 15th,  
... We're just behind Kaufman's Lumber Company in Little Rock Arkansas***

### **Nehemiah 8:13-18**

**Introduction:** The occasion was the celebration of the feast of the seventh month (Ne 7:73). The beginning of every month was ushered in as a sacred festival; but this, the commencement of the seventh month, was kept with distinguished honor as "**the feast of trumpets**," which extended over **two days**. It was the first day of the seventh ecclesiastical year, and the new year's day of the Jewish civil year, on which account it was held as "a great day." The place where the general concourse of people was held was "at the water gate," on the south rampart. Through that gate the Nethinims or Gibeonites brought water into the temple, and there was a spacious area in front of it.

(Source: Jamieson, Fausset, Brown Commentary [classic.studydrive.org/com/jfb](http://classic.studydrive.org/com/jfb))

**Nehemiah 8:2-3**, And **Ezra** the priest brought the law before the congregation both of men and women, and all that could hear with understanding, upon the first day of the seventh month. And he read therein before the street that was before the water gate from the **morning** until **midday**, before the men and the women, and those that could understand; and the ears of ALL the people were **attentive** unto the book of the law.

**Thought 1.** This proves when people LOVE the truth, which is God's word, they can listen to it more than just 30-45 minutes on a Sunday morning.

**Nehemiah 8:4-8**, And **Ezra** the scribe stood upon a **pulpit (rostrum)** [stage for public speaking, 1913 Webs.]] of wood, which they had made for the purpose... And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people; (for he was above all the people;) and when he opened it, all the people **stood up**: And Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God. And all the people answered, Amen, Amen, with lifting up their hands: and they bowed their heads, and worshipped the LORD with their faces to the ground. Also Jeshua, and Bani, and Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodijah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, and the Levites, **caused** the people to **understand** the law: and the people **stood** in their place. So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly (clearly; plainly), and gave the **SENSE** (rational meaning), and caused them to **understand** the reading.

**Thought 1.** They knew understanding was very important! Without it, the people couldn't obey God. (Psalm 111:10) And they also knew what it DID in the MINDS of the people.

**Psalm 119:130**, The **entrance (opening)** (EXPLAINING) of thy words giveth **LIGHT** (illumination of mind); it giveth **understanding** unto to the **simple** (seducible: capable of being drawn aside from the path of rectitude).

**Ephesians 1:18-19**, The **EYES** of your **UNDERSTANDING** being **enlightened**; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power...

**Nehemiah 8:9-10**, And Nehemiah, which is the Tirshatha, and Ezra the priest the scribe, and the Levites that taught the people, said unto all the people, This day is holy unto the LORD your God; **mourn not, nor weep**. For all the people **wept**, when they heard the words of the law. Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our Lord: **neither** be ye **sorry**; for the **JOY** OF (from, ABOUT) the LORD is your **strength**.

**Joy defined 2304 chedvah pronounced khed-vaw' from 2302; rejoicing--gladness** (pleasure of mind; cheerfulness, delight, happiness).

**Thought 1.** As you can see, JOY does mean happiness. And it is conditional. As you probably noticed, this "joy" he's speaking about is "from, or ABOUT" the Lord. Today, this includes rejoicing (keep up one's spirits) IN Jesus; what he's done, as well as, what our Father has done, and WHO they are to us. And scripture further teaches us "joy" depends on "the things at which we are LOOKING." So, we have to DO what's necessary to HAVE it. It doesn't just happen. This feast was designed to give them an opportunity to "MAKE merry." As a matter of fact, he told them HOW to have joy about the Lord.

**NOTE:** This is no gluttonous and drunken festival that enervates (weaken) the body, and enfeebles the MIND: from your religious feast your **bodies** will acquire strength and your **minds** power and fervour, so that you shall be able to DO HIS will, and to do it cheerfully. Religious joy, properly tempered with continual dependence on the help of God, meekness (humility) of mind, and self-diffidence (constraint, modesty), is a powerful means of **strengthening** the soul. In such a state every duty is practicable, and every duty delightful. In such a **frame of mind** no man can ever fall, and in such a state of mind the general health of the body is much improved; a cheerful heart is not only a continual feast, but also a continual medicine.  
(Source: The Adam Clarke Commentary classic.studylight.org/com/acc/)

**Nehemiah 8:11-12**, So the Levites **stilled** all the people, saying, Hold your peace, for the day is holy; neither be ye grieved. And all the people went their way to eat, and to drink, and to send portions, and to **MAKE** great mirth, because they had **understood** the words that were declared unto them.

**NOTE:** The **reason** for this great joy is stated in the words, Because they had **understood** the words that were declared unto them. What a glimpse of the New Covenant there is in this! The great and eternal principle of holy religion is this, as Jesus stated it, That my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full (John 15:11). From one end to the other, the New Testament is a shout of joy. (Source: Coffman Commentaries on the Old & New Testament classic.studylight.org/com/bcc/)

**Proverbs 3:13**, Happy is the man that findeth **wisdom**, and the man that **getteth** UNDERSTANDING.

**Nehemiah 8:13-15**, And on the second day were gathered together the chief of the fathers of all the people, the priests, and the Levites, unto **Ezra** the **scribe**, even to **understand** the words of the law. And **they found** written in the law which the LORD had commanded by Moses, that the children of Israel should dwell in **BOOTHS (a hut—booth, tent)** in the feast of the seventh month: And that they should publish and proclaim in all their cities, and in Jerusalem, saying, Go forth unto the mount, and fetch olive branches, and pine branches, and myrtle branches, and palm branches, and branches of thick trees, to make booths, **as it is written**.

**NOTE:** (*Commentary on Lev. 23:34*) The Jews were commanded during the whole period of the festival to dwell in **booths**, which were erected on the flat roofs of houses, in the streets or fields; and the trees made use of are by some stated to be the citron, the palm, the myrtle, and the willow, while others maintain the people were allowed to take any trees they could obtain that were distinguished for verdure and fragrance. While the solid branches were reserved for the construction of the booths, the lighter branches were carried by men, who marched in triumphal procession, **singing** psalms and crying "Hosanna!" which signifies, "Save, we beseech thee!" (Ps 118:15, 25, 26). It was a season of **great rejoicing**.  
(Source: Jamieson, Fausset, Brown Commentary classic.studylight.org/com/jfb)

**Nehemiah 8:16**, *So the people went forth, and brought them, and made themselves booths, every one upon the roof of his house, and in their courts, and in the courts of the house of God, and in the street of the water gate, and in the street of the gate of Ephraim.*

**NOTE:** It need scarcely be repeated, that the houses in the **East** are generally built with **flat** roofs. On these they reposed (laid at rest); on these they took the air in the heats of summer; and on these they oftentimes slept.  
(Source: The Adam Clarke Commentary classic.studylight.org/com/acc/)

**Nehemiah 8:17**, *And all the congregation of them that were come again out of the captivity made booths, and sat under the booths: for since the days of Jeshua the son of Nun unto that day had not the children of Israel done so. And there was very great gladness.*

**NOTE:** This statement may be an **interrogative** (denoting a question); and if so, it is a declaration that the children of Israel had observed the Feast of Tabernacles (also called the Feast of Booths) from the days of Joshua till the occasion in this chapter, the Scriptural citings of celebrations in the days of both **Solomon** and **Zerubbabel** being proof enough of the truth of the sentence read as an interrogative; but, the critics find it much more delightful to read it as a **dogmatic declaration** to be cited at once as 'a contradiction,' 'an error,' 'an oversight' or some other euphemism for a falsehood. Oesterley, for example, noted that, These words are not in accordance with other passages of Scripture; for this feast had been observed by Solomon (2 Chr. 7:8, 8:13) and by Zerubabel (Ezra 3:4). It is an 'oversight' of the chronicler's.

Even if the sentence is accurately understood as declarative, the meaning then would be as stated by Rawlinson: "This cannot mean that there had been no celebration of this feast since the days of Joshua, nor even that there had been no occasion of it marked by their dwelling in booths, but only that there **had not been so joyous** and general a celebration of it. A similar statement is made of Josiah's celebration of the Passover."

A number of other very able scholars are in full agreement with Rawlinson. "It is not the intention of the writer to state that the Feast of Tabernacles had not been kept since the days of Joshua until this occasion, but that there had been **no such celebration AS this** since the times of Joshua." Likewise, Keil wrote that, "The text only states that since the days of Joshua, the whole community had not so celebrated it." (Source: Coffman Commentaries on the Old & New Testament classic.studylight.org/com/bcc/)

**Nehemiah 8:18**, *Also day by day, from the first day unto the last day, he read in the book of the law of God. And they kept the feast seven days; and on the eighth day was a solemn assembly, according unto the manner.*

**NOTE:** The prominent thing in this paragraph is the thirst of the people to **HEAR the word** of God. "Once let the sweetness of the Divine Word be tasted, and there springs up in the heart instantly **a desire** for more, like that feeling of the Psalmist who wrote, 'Oh how **love I thy law!** It is my meditation all the day' (Psalms 119:97)." Not only did the people come to hear Ezra read the law on that following day, but also on every day throughout the Feast of Tabernacles (Nehemiah 8:18). (Source: Coffman Commentaries on the Old & New Testament classic.studylight.org/com/bcc/)