“AND ALL THE PEOPLE...”
Nehemiah 8:1-3

INTRODUCTION:
1. In our text for this lesson is found some principles that I believe worthy of our consideration - Nehemiah 8:1-3.

BODY:
1. The first thing that we notice from verse one is that “All the people gathered themselves together.”
   A. No wonder Paul said what he did in Romans 15:4.
      1. How we can learn from this point in Nehemiah 3:1.
   B. All the people gathered together at one point.
      1. Since they gathered in Jerusalem we must understand that not every Jew in all Judaism was gathered at that point.
      2. But those who had reassembled themselves in Jerusalem after the Babylonian captivity were present.
   C. From verse two we find some help in understanding this point.
      1. Notice that it says, “both men and women, and all that could hear with understanding were present.”
      2. This would of course indicate that within this group would be the children, who were able to understand what was going on.
   D. God has always required that the children be taught concerning His Word and His Will and this is but one example of which they were being brought to learn the words of the law from the mouth of Ezra.
      1. What a tragedy it is today when people, even those who claim membership in the kingdom of God, won't do all that they can to see that their children are taught the Word of the Lord!
      2. There is going to be a lot of people lost because their parents failed them in this area.
         A. Truth is truth!
         B. We can hide from it or we can accept it and do something about it.
      3. The sooner we get to the truth on this matter the better off we and our children are going to be spiritually.
   E. Those of us who have children today need to see that our children are being “brought up in nurture and admonition of the Lord” - Ephesians 6:4.
2. Secondly, let us note that they did not only gather together, but gathered “as one man.”
   A. The thought of gathering as one in this way was an indication of their unanimity.
      1. They were unanimous in coming together for the purpose of hearing the law of the Lord.
   B. As they gathered to hear the law of the Lord there was no division at all among these brethren.
      1. Their influence was strengthened by this.
   C. Today we too need to learn that our influence can be weakened when we come together if we do not come together as one - 1 Corinthians 1:10.
D. The prayer of Jesus in John 17 is a prayer of unity for His people.
   1. In verse 11 Jesus prays for his disciples.
   2. In verses 20-23 we have the prayer of Jesus relative to all believers from then on.
E. Brethren, if there is one thing that is needed in the kingdom of God it is unity!!
3. Thirdly, from verse one; we note that they spoke unto Ezra “to bring the book of the law of Moses.”
   A. From this we find an eagerness to learn the will of the Lord.
      1. No doubt Ezra read the Hebrew text and expounded upon the precepts set forth.
   B. Today, we need eagerness in our lives to come to an understanding of the will of God - Matthew 5:6.
      1. I know I keep talking about Bible study and I intend to keep on talking about it.
      2. I suppose one thing that discourages more preachers than anything else is for them to study long hours for the benefit of the class, and have few people attend.
4. Fourth, we note from verse 3, just how interested these people really were about hearing the Word.
   A. It says, “He read...from morning until midday.”
      1. Now this would be from daylight until noon, or after Ezra related unto them what the scriptures had to say.
   B. If I walked into any of our “church buildings” today and preached for six hours what kind of response do you think I would get?
      1. When do you think I would get asked back?
   C. Notice, also, that these people were attentive to what was being said during those six hours.
      1. Now I realize that the words “were attentive” were not in the original, but were supplied by the translators.
      2. But the thought of attentiveness is indeed present in the passage.
         A. “The ears of all the people were unto the book of the law.”
         B. Therefore they were attentive to what was being said.
D. Now we talk today about our attention span.
   1. That is the area of time that we can give attention to something before our mind starts to wander.
   2. Normally, when it comes to teaching and preaching, we say that it is not much more than about a half an hour.
      A. But, isn't it strange to you that our attention span drastically increases when it comes to sports activities, movies, the newspaper and things such as these?
      B. Isn't it strange to you that these Jews could have an attention span of six hours while ours is one half hour?
   3. Maybe, just maybe, rather than a problem with our attention span, we have a heart condition that ails us.
      A. In other words, our heart in, the wrong place!
E. I don't know about you, but I feel a little embarrassed as I think on this point.
1. Perhaps, rather than make our Bible classes and our sermons conform to our “attention spans” we need to conform our attention spans to the Bible classes and sermons!