

Lesson XI.

READING AND OBEYING THE LAW December 10, 1905

Nehemiah 8 : 8-18. Study the chapter—Memory Verses 17, 18.

Golden Text—Blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.—Luke 11 : 28.

8 So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused *them* to understand the reading.

9 And Nehemi'ah, which is the Tir'shatha, and E'zra the priest the scribe, and the Le'vites that taught the people, said unto all the people, This day is holy unto our Lord : mourn not, nor weep. For all the people wept, when they heard the words of the law.

10 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 the LORD is your strength.

11 So the Le'vites stilled all the people, saying, Hold your peace, for the day is holy ; neither be ye grieved.

12 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.

13 And on the second day were gathered together the chief of the fathers of all the people, the priests, and the Le'vites, unto E'zra the scribe, even to understand the words of the law.

14 And they found written in the law which the LORD had commanded by Mo'ses, that the children of Israel should dwell in booths in the feast of the seventh month :

15 And that they should publish and proclaim in all their cities, and in Jeru'salem, 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*.

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 E'phraim.

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 Jesh'ua the son of Nun unto that day had not the children of Is'rael done so. And there was very great gladness.

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.

THE LESSON RETOLD

One week after the walls of Jerusalem were finished came the time of the Feast of Trumpets, which was the Jewish New Year. Then Nehemiah and Ezra, with the chief men of Israel, called all the people to gather together in the large public square, which lay between the city walls and the temple, that they might hear the word and commandments of God. At this time, when few, if any, of the common people could read, copies of the Bible were very scarce, and were always written by hand on costly parchment.

When all the people were assembled,

Ezra and Nehemiah, with the elders, took their places upon a raised platform facing the people, and as Ezra opened the roll, all the congregation stood up, and after he had given thanks to God, they bowed their heads and worshipped with their faces to the ground. In reading, Ezra and Nehemiah divided the Book of the Law into several portions, so that, in the pauses which came between the readings, the priests and Le'vites went among the people explaining and teaching that which they had just heard.

But many of the people, when they heard the word of the Lord, began to weep and