

Nehemiah 8:12-18; 9:1; 10:1

Neh. 6:15	Neh. 7:73b	Neh. 8:1-8	Neh. 8:9-12	Neh. 8:13-18	Neh. 9:1
ELUL 25	TISHREI 1	TISHREI 10	TISHREI 11	TISHREI 15-22	TISHREI 24
25 th day of Elul (6 th month; last month of civil year) (30 days/month; 5 days left in the year)	1 st day of Tishrei (seventh month; first month Jewish civil year)	10 th day of Tishrei (This was to be a fast day.)	11 th day of Tishrei (444 BC this was a day of reading Scripture and study.)	15 th day of Tishrei A seven-day feast from Tishrei 15-22	24 th day of Tishrei (This was declared for fasting and study and prayer in 444 BC.)
	6 days after wall completed	15 days after wall completed		20 days after wall completed	29 days after wall completed
Wall Completed	People back in their towns; This would be New Years Day of the civil year, the first day of the first month (but, also the 1 st day of the 7 th month of the religious year. This is the Feast of Trumpets	Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) People gather in Jerusalem to hear the Law; the fast for this day was altered to a day of feasting by Nehemiah. Celebrate feast for Day of Atonement 10 th of Tishrei the people hear the Law	11 th of Tishrei the men, Levites and priests study the Law with Ezra The study of the Law reveals the practice and purpose for the Feast of Booths. This would be celebrated in four days.	Feast of Booths (Feast of Tabernacles; Sukkot) People build little shelters or booths out of branches to remember 1444 BC Exodus and celebrate 538 BC return from Captivity	This is an unofficial holiday; It is during the month of Tishrei, which is a month for fasting. It may be a return to mourning and fasting since the fast of the 10 th day, Day of Atonement, was changed by Nehemiah to a day of celebration

8:12 – **And all the people went their way to eat and drink and to send portions and to make great rejoicing, because they had understood the words that were declared to them.**

8:13 – **On the second day the heads of fathers' houses of all the people, with the priests and the Levites, came together to Ezra the scribe in order to study the words of the Law.**

1. There was five days between the Day of Atonement (10th day, 7th month) and the Feast of Booths (15th day, 7th month).
2. The day after the Day of Atonement the men (heads of fathers' houses; not women or children) got together with the priests and Levites to study the Word of God with Ezra

- a. Ezra is now called a “scribe”. In 8:2 he was identified as “the priest”.
- 3. While studying the Law they discovered how to properly celebrate the next feast, the Feast of Booths.
 - a. The directions for the Feast of Booths in Leviticus 23:39-43 were details the people (and, many of the priests and Levites) had not remembered in Babylon.
 - b. Ezra the scribe had dedicated himself to having the text, reading the text, understanding the text and, now finally, teaching the text.

8:14 – And they found it written in the Law that the Lord had commanded by Moses that the people of Israel should dwell in booths during the feast of the seventh month,

- 1. The Feast of Booths begins on the fifteenth day of the seventh month and is seven days of Feasting while they live in “booths” or “shelters” built outside their homes.
 - a. Leviticus 23:34 – *“On the fifteenth day of this seventh month and for seven days is the Feast of Booths to the Lord.”*
 - b. The Feast of Booths recognized and celebrated a couple of things:
 - i. The ingathering of the crops at the end of the year:

“You shall observe the Feast of Weeks, the firstfruits of wheat harvest, and the Feast of Ingathering at the year's end.”
 - ii. The people’s time in the wilderness

“You shall dwell in booths for seven days. All native Israelites shall dwell in booths, that your generations may know that I made the people of Israel dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God.”
- Leviticus 23:42-43
 - iii. The Lord’s presence dwelling with the people in the wilderness in the Tabernacle

8:15 – and that they should proclaim it and publish it in all their towns and in Jerusalem, “Go out to the hills and bring branches of olive, wild olive, myrtle, palm, and other leafy trees to make booths, as it is written.”

- 1. All the Jews of Judah were to participate in the Feast of Booths
- 2. Communication and instructions were sent out

8:16 – So the people went out and brought them and made booths for themselves, each on his roof, and in their courts and in the courts of the house of God, and in the square at the Water Gate and in the square at the Gate of Ephraim.

- 1. Booths or shelters were made
- 2. The booths were set up:
 - a. On the flat roofs of the homes
 - b. In the open, center court of their homes which was surrounded by rooms
 - c. In the temple courts on Mount Moriah
 - d. In the open squares of the main gate on the east and main gate on the west side of the new city walls:
 - i. East wall – in the Water Gate
 - ii. West wall – in the Gate of Ephraim

8:17 – And all the assembly of those who had returned from the captivity made booths and lived in the booths, for from the days of Jeshua the son of Nun to that day the people of Israel had not done so. And there was very great rejoicing.

1. The Feast of Booths had been celebrated since the days of Joshua, but not with such great understanding, celebration and dedication since the days of Joshua.

8:18 – And day by day, from the first day to the last day, he read from the Book of the Law of God. They kept the feast seven days, and on the eighth day there was a solemn assembly, according to the rule.

1. The reading of the Law (the Word of God) and the continued study of that text was the activity the people committed to during the seven-day Feast of Booths.
2. The study of and the dedication to the Word of God had set in. The synagogue system would soon follow and spread to every village and city in Judah.

Nehemiah 9:1-38

9:1 – “24th day of month” is two days after the celebration of Feast of Booths

9:2 – Seems like a repeat of the Day of Atonement, may be because Nehemiah had turned that day into a feast and celebration on the 10th of the month, just 14 days or 2 weeks before.

1. separated from foreigners
2. confessed sin

9:3 – Stood for six hours or ¼ of day

1. A day is 12 hours (plus 12 hours of darkness, night)
2. ¼ of a day or ¼ of 12 hours would be 3 hours
3. For ¼ of the day or 3 hours they read Scripture and studied
4. For ¼ of the day they confessed sin and worshipped

9:4 – Again it does not take place on the Temple Mount, but “on the stairs of the Levites” which may be in the public square at the Water Gate as in Nehemiah 8

9:6-31 – recount Israel’s history with God as one of YHWH’s faithfulness and Israel’s disobedience from Creation and Abraham through the Exodus, Judges, Kings, prophets until the Babylonian captivity.

9:32 – “Now” marks a transition from historical documentation to the contemporary setting of 444 BC.

9:38 – “making” is literally “cutting”

1. This was the cutting of a binding covenant or a royal decree

Nehemiah 10:1-29

1. The listing of the names of the men who signed the covenant

Nehemiah 10:30-39

1. The provisions of the covenant:
 - a. Mixed marriages – 10:30 – will not give our daughters in marriage to the nations, nor take their daughters in marriage
 - b. Business on the Sabbath – 10:31a – Gentiles will not be allowed to bring merchandise or graine to sell on the Sabbath and we will not buy on the Sabbath.
 - c. Sabbatical Year – 10:31b – Every seven years we will give the land rest and cancel all debts.
 - d. Temple offerings and staff – 10:32-39