

THE GREAT WENCHOSTER BIBLE

Nehemiah 8:1-12

1. And all the people gathered themselves together as one man (for verily the women and children were not included in the counting) into the street that was before the communal water closet; and they spake unto Ezra the scribe, Bring out of its place the book of the law of Moses, which the LORD had commanded to Israel.
2. And Ezra the priest collected the book of the law of Moses from its place on the second shelf counting from the left of the sanctuary, and carried it out before the congregation both of men and women, (for the women had complained bitterly and were now included in the counting) and all that could hear with understanding (including children), upon the first day of the seventh month at about ten of the clock in the morning.
3. And he read therein before the street that was before the water closet from ten in the morning until eleven, when he stoppeth for a seed bun and a mug of wine, and from then until midday, before the men and the women (and also the children), and those that could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law.
4. And Ezra the scribe stood upon a pulpit of wood, which they had made for the purpose and decorated with carvings and script; and beside him stood Mattithiah, and Shema, and Anaiah, and Urijah, and Hilkiah, and Maaseiah, and Algernon on his right hand; and on his left hand, Pedaiah, and Mishael, and Malchiah, and Hashum, and Hashbadana, Colin, Zechariah, and Meshullam.
5. And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people; (for he was above all the people;) and when he opened it a pressed four-leaved clover fell out, and all the people marvelled and stood up:
6. And Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God. And all the people answered, Amen, Amen, Hallelujah, Amen, (which gave rise to the tradition of standing up when this chorus was sung) and lifteth up their hands in the true evangelical position: and they bowed their heads like unto the penitent, and worshipped the LORD with their faces to the ground, which causeth some contortion and confusion since they were all still standing up.
7. Also Jeshua, and Bani, and Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Phyllis, Ethel, Edna, 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.
8. So they read in the book in the law of God (*) distinctly, and gave the sense through dramatic rendering, and caused them to understand the reading.
9. 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, for they were overcome with emotion hearing it proclaimed with such expression. And tissues were sought.
10. Then he (that is, Ezra) said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat of the land, and drink the sweet wine of the vineyard, and send packaged portion 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 Levites stilled all the people, saying, Hold your peace, for the day is holy; neither be ye grieved, but eat, drink and be merry.
12. And all the people went their way to eat, and to drink, and to be merry. And the women prepared lunch and sent portions unto their neighbours, and all the men, women and children made great mirth, and some tiddly, because they had understood the words that were declared unto them, and it was the weekend.

() Note that here the scribe has replaced the name of Moses with God.*