

THE GREAT WENCHOSTER BIBLE
NEHEMIAH 8: 1-12 (alternative version)

1. And all the people gathered themselves together into the street that was before the water gate, which was named thereof because of the flooding that took place after every heavy rainfall where the earth was mired and cartwheels did become stuck and the robes of the people became much caked so that the wives did complain bitterly; and they spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the LORD had commanded to Israel, saying, Bring the book, bring the book, but let it not be Genesis for we have heard much of that already.
2. And Ezra the priest brought the book they desired to hear before the congregation both of men and women, and all that could hear with understanding, though some doubted and were of mixed opinion, and it was the first day of the seventh month.
3. 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 those who were yet undecided; 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; for though the earth was dry there was much dust and occasional swarms of ants, and beside him stood Mattithiah and Shema the twins, and Anaiah son of Pith, and Urijah son of Golem, and Hilkiah who begat Jobeth, and Maaseiah who begat many that he did deny, on his right hand; and on his left hand, Pedaiah the specialist in child maladies, and Mishael and Malchiah the half-brothers, and Hashum son of Chobb, and Hashbadana the eunuch, Zechariah son of Ephraim and Melchazzadenenour, and Meshullam the ill-tempered.
5. And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people; (for he was above all the people let the reader understand, for he was standing on a wooden pulpit;) and when he opened it, all the people stood up with much grunting and groaning and clicking of hips,
6. 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. And there was yet more groaning.
7. Also Jeshua son of Nob, and Bani son of Cleft, and the children of Sherebiah being Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodijah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, and Pelaiah; and other Levites also being there so that the water gate was crowded with many teachers who caused the people to understand the law: and the people stood in their place, though some who were frail had brought cushions and did sit down upon them, and some leaned upon their crutch.
8. So they read in the book in the law of Moses distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading, though since many of the Levites giving the exegesis spoke at the same time it caused many of the people to mishear.
9. And Nehemiah, which is the Tirshatha (let the reader understand for no-one else will), and Ezra the priest who was also the scribe for he was adept at multi-tasking, 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 tired and some in great discomfort from the prolonged standing in front of the water gate.
10. Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat but not the lean, and drink the sweet wine but not the dry, and send ready meals 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. And Ezra's words did mollify the discomfort of some though others were much grieved over the loss of the lean meats and the dry sherries. So the Levites stilled all the people, saying, Hold your peace, for the day is holy; neither be ye grieved for ye are an ungrateful people.
12. And all the people muttered against the Levites for their pronouncements and went their way to eat both the lean and the fat, and to drink whatever wines they wanted, and yet they also sent portions to those without. And that night there was great mirth because they had all eaten well and drunk much and made merry, even those who had not understood the words that were declared unto them, and they were numerous. And the wooden pulpit was taken unto the storehouse for future use. And Ezra did eat only bread and drink water for he was grieved over the people, but the Levites feasted.