

THE STORY OF NEHEMIAH (PART FOUR)

By Rod

A retelling of Nehemiah chapter 8. Narrators tell the story while the actors mime the actions.

CAST

Narrator A Main storyteller

Narrator B Asks questions. A bit of a joker.

Nehemiah

Ezra In turns plays Sanballat, X factor judge, jew, rich jew

Levite I n turns plays Tobiah, X factor judge, jew, poor jew

[Nehemiah, Actors 1 and 2 are on stage in a line with Nehemiah in the middle]

A The further adventures of Nehemiah.

[Nehemiah steps forward]

B Which chapter are we in now?

A Chapter 8. It's actually more about Ezra than Nehemiah.

[Ezra steps forward and Nehemiah steps back. Levite holds up "8"]

B That was my favourite poem at school:

*"Here lies the body of Ezra Pound;
Lost at sea and never found."*

[Ezra falls to ground as if dead. Levite acts as priest and Nehemiah is mourner]

A This is not about Ezra Pound; and the Ezra in our story was very much alive.

[Ezra gets up looking relieved. Nehemiah and Levite retire]

B Who was he?

A He was an expert on the law.

B O, a policeman then. Evenin' all.

[Ezra does policeman's knees bend]

A No, he was an expert in God's law – he was a priest.

B Oh right.

A The people all gathered in the square by the Water Gate.

B Oh good. I like a bit of scandal. No wonder they needed an expert on the law.

[Nehemiah & Levite mime listening into scandal]

A No, it has got nothing to do with the Watergate scandal. They got Ezra to read from the Book Of The Law – part of the Bible.

[Nehemiah gives bible to Ezra]

[Type text]

B Oh, is that all.

A From dawn until noon.

B What! That's one.. two hours.. er... three... That's a long time that is!
[Nehemiah and Levite yawn]

A Six people stood on his right hand.
[Nehemiah steps up alongside Ezra on his right]

B That must have been painful.

A And seven stood on his left hand.
[Levite steps up alongside Ezra on his left]

B How did he turn the pages?

A And when he had finished some other people called Levites.....
[Levite steps aside]

B Who were experts in jeans.
[Levite indicates trousers]

A explained what it all meant.
[Levite mimes explaining to the people]

B What was the people's reaction?

A They cried.
[All 3 cry]

B I'm not surprised. Having to stand still and listen for such a long time would probably make me cry.

A No, they cried because they realised how much of the Law they had broken.

B A fair cop?
[Ezra repeats policeman's knees bend]

A Indeed. But Nehemiah stepped up at this point and told the people to go home and have a feast.
[Nehemiah steps forward and gestures to go and eat]

B I expect they were peckish. He could probably hear their tummies rumbling.
[All 3 rub tummies]

A A feast to celebrate the fact that God's Word had been read in public in Jerusalem for the first time in many years.
[All 3 look happy]

[Type text]

B Still, they must have wanted to start to obey the Law.

A They did, and Ezra and the other experts told them they should all build temporary shelters.

[All 3 put heads together and then Ezra indicates to build tents]

B Why? Were they moving out? That was a bit silly since they had only just finished rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem. What a waste of time.

[All 3 move off to collect tent. They then start to erect tent during next few lines]

A No, because the Book of the Law said it was the time of the Festival of Shelters.

B Oh, I see.

A So the people built their temporary shelters and were happy and excited.

[They enter tent and look happy]

B So you could say – wait for it – that the excitement was intense!

A Indeed it was, because it was the first time the festival had been celebrated since the time of Joshua, son of Nun.

[Levite steps forward as Joshua, looking sad]

B Poor chap. It must have been rotten not knowing who his parents were.

A No, Nun was his dad's name.

[Nehemiah puts arm around 'Joshua' as his dad, Nun]

B I didn't know dads could be nuns.

[Nun holds hands together in prayer]

A Well this one was. He was called Nun.

B Oh, right. If he was clever I expect they called him Nun the Wiser.

A The people celebrated for seven days.

[All 3 return to tents to party]

B In their tents?

A Yes, and on the eighth day there was a big closing service.

[They emerge from tent celebrating]

B It sounds like Soul Survivor.

A It was even better.

B No mud, you mean?

[Type text]

[They mime treading in mud]

A No mud, and a great sense of coming back to God.

[All 3 hold hands aloft for 'Hallelujah' and then sink to knees on 'Amen']

A & B Hallelujah. Amen.

THE END

[Type text]