

LG | AnswerGuide

[Nehemiah 8 – Self Guided]

WARM-UP (10 mins)

Prepare your mind to receive God's word. Take a moment to be silent. Pray for your mind to receive God's Word.

(Briefly flip through chapters 1-7 to recall the events in the book of Nehemiah. Now, read chapter 8.)

ILLUMINATE (40 mins)

Open your Bibles to the primary text.

1. In this chapter, we read about the wooden platform built for Ezra "for this purpose." Was this the first time Ezra had publicly read scripture to the people? How does the bible help us answer this? While the wall was being built, there was also a wooden platform being built for the public reading of Scripture. This was not the first time Ezra had read Scripture out loud to the people. Ezra had been reading the Torah to the people for the last 13 years, but the Feast of the Booths presented a special occasion in which the platform was built. Teaching the Law of the Lord was always Ezra's priority, see Ezra 7:10.
2. How did Nehemiah handle children in regard to the public reading of Scripture? All who could understand were present for this gathering. And they listened attentively (8:2-3).
3. We read that the people listened attentively and even stood when the word of God was read. List some good reasons you and others should listen attentively in church? [More than just the obvious]
 - 1) It honors God
 - 2) It displays to your family that it is important
 - 3) It is good for your soul
 - 4) It encourages your Pastor
4. Understanding God's word was very important to Ezra and Nehemiah. Where does this chapter emphasize understanding? What lengths do you go to truly understand God's word? Verse 8 and 12 emphasized the importance of the people's understanding. If you don't understand a text, do you simply leave it or do you take the time to understand?
5. Nehemiah chapter 8 is not all prescriptive (instructive for us today), but we can gather helpful principles to guide us in church today. If Ezra's public reading was a church service, what did the service include? Ezra read Scripture out loud to the people. He made sure he had the support he needed from both the platform and for the people listening (26 men total - Levites). He appointed good leaders to ensure that the people were understanding what was being read. The Word provoked weeping (repentance) and rejoicing (worship). The gathering was distinguished as holy.

6. Verse 8:12 says they ate, drank, sent portions and rejoiced? Why is this verse important for us?
They celebrated in what they had heard, but not only did they rejoice, they shared their portions with others so that their rejoicing would be complete.

7. What is the Festival of Booths? Where did it come from and why is it important to Ezra and Nehemiah?

So much of the Bible contains events and moments of remembrance. Remembrance was and still is very important to the Lord (i.e. Remember the Sabbath and keep it holy. Remember the Lord Jesus through the Lord's Supper, etc.). The Festival of Booths was a family-oriented festival that reminded people of God's protection of Israel in the desert before the conquest. When God's people were brought out of Egypt, they lived in temporary dwelling places in the wilderness made out of branches, called booths (Lev. 23:43). So, during the Festival of Booths, Nehemiah and the people did the same for seven days to remember how the Lord had carried them.

8. If you could describe this chapter in just a few words, what would it be?

Covenant Renewal, Submission to the word of God, Remembrance, Renewed Holiness

KIDS EMPHASIS

God has written a book for us so that so that we can know all there is to know about Him. God's word is a treasure, a book that we can hold on to and trust even in hard times. God uses His word to remind us of all that he has done for us.

Questions to discuss with kids:

1. How would you describe the Bible to one of your friends?
2. How do we as a family remember God? Daily/Weekly/Yearly?

PRAY

Use this time to pray specifically. Pray for the needs of others; locally and abroad.