

A Worship Study Guide for Individuals, Groups and Families for the week of July 26, 2020

They Read From the Book & Gave the Sense

This week, Pastor Steve Shelby preached from [Nehemiah 8:1-8](#)

¹And all the people gathered as one man into the square before the Water Gate. And they told Ezra the scribe to bring the Book of the Law of Moses that the LORD had commanded Israel. ²So Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly, both men and women and all who could understand what they heard, on the first day of the seventh month. ³And he read from it facing the square before the Water Gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of the men and the women and those who could understand. And the ears of all the people were attentive to the Book of the Law. ⁴And Ezra the scribe stood on a wooden platform that they had made for the purpose. And beside him stood Mattithiah, Shema, Ananiah, Uriaah, Hilkiah, and Maaseiah on his right hand, and Pedaiah, Mishael, Malchijah, Hashum, Hashbaddanah, Zechariah, and Meshullam on his left

hand. ⁵And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was above all the people, and as he opened it all the people stood. ⁶And Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God, and all the people answered, "Amen, Amen," lifting up their hands. And they bowed their heads and worshiped the LORD with their faces to the ground. ⁷Also Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodiah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, the Levites, helped the people to understand the Law, while the people remained in their places. ⁸They read from the book, from the Law of God, clearly, and they gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading.

Nehemiah 8-9 describes a remarkable revival in the life of Israel. With the wall completed, Nehemiah leads the people to respond to God's Word as read by Ezra. As the people gather together to hear the Law read aloud from daybreak to noon, the Scripture tells us they all "could understand what was being read." And the Holy Spirit leads them to respond powerfully and repent as a community. For seven days, the reading continues as godly leaders turn God's people to His Word. The public reading of God's own words leads the people to celebrate their God and to turn their attention to confession of sin and repentance. They praise Him by recalling His mighty works in their history and giving glory to God: "In all that has happened to us, you have been just; you have acted faithfully, while we did wrong" (Nehemiah 9:33).

- **Why did the people assemble** on the first day of the seventh month (1-2)? Read [Leviticus 23:23-25](#) and [Numbers 29:1-6](#) for more background.
- Why do the people assemble **in the public square** instead of the temple? What is **the makeup** of this historic gathering of people (3)?
- **Who is helping** these people understand the Scriptures (2,7)?
- Ezra had gone to Jerusalem 13 years earlier to teach the Law ([Ezra 7:6-10](#)). **Why does it take so long** for this general assembly to gather and hear him proclaim the truth of God's Law? **What changes have been made** this assembly possible?
- In Nehemiah 8:7-8 we see the Word of God not just being read, but also being taught. What role has the **reading of God's Word** had in your spiritual growth? What role has the **preaching and teaching of God's Word** had in your spiritual growth?
- What is the **purpose of Scripture**? Why is **teaching** an essential part of understanding the Scriptures? Read [John 1:1,14](#), [I Corinthians 12:27-30](#), and [Hebrews 1:1-3](#), [4:12](#) for further insight.

Pray in response to God's Word.

- Ask God to grant you a greater passion for and confidence in the Scriptures.
- Thank God that He has spoken, That He has faithfully revealed Himself in His Word and His Son.