



“The Danger and Delight of God’s Word” Nehemiah 8

Our study of the book of Nehemiah has brought us from Susa, capital of the Persian Empire and home of Nehemiah, cupbearer to King Artaxerxes, to Jerusalem, the city of God. Nehemiah has rallied the people of Jerusalem to rebuild their wall (chapter 3), face down their enemies (chapters 4 & 6), and repent of sin (chapter 5). Now we arrive at an inspiring story involving another spiritual leader: Ezra.

Ezra was a priest, scholar, teacher, and scribe for the Jews in Nehemiah’s day. His arrival in Jerusalem preceded that of Nehemiah by some 13 years. In Nehemiah 8, he stands on a high platform and reads the Word of God for the assembled people for an entire morning. It is possible that Ezra read the entire Pentateuch (the first five books of our Old Testament: Genesis through Deuteronomy), or certainly significant parts of it.

Let this week’s study encourage you to become “a person of the book,” that is, the Bible.



KNOWING GOD

Nehemiah came to Jerusalem from his home in Susa to lead the rebuilding of the city’s walls. Through God’s grace and the people’s dedication to the work, the wall was finished in a mere 52 days. Now they turn their attention to other priorities, including the reading and teaching of Scripture. Read **Nehemiah 8:1-12**. What effects did the reading of God’s Word by Ezra the priest have upon the people?

Why did the people react with tears to what they heard?

Read **Nehemiah 8:13-18**. The background on this section is Leviticus 23:33-43. When Ezra read this portion of the Scriptures to the citizens of Jerusalem, they immediately obeyed it. They celebrated the Feast of Tabernacles (or booths) for seven days, as the Law required. Their obedience resulted in great joy. How does that response to God’s Word compare or contrast to the general attitude toward the Bible that exists in our culture today?



GROWING TOGETHER

In his sermon, Mike said that the Bible is both dangerous and delightful. Do you agree? If so, share how God’s Word

has confronted you at times, and comforted you at other times.

Read **Psalm 119:97-104**. Is your attitude toward the Bible similar to or different from that of the psalmist? Explain.



SERVING OTHERS

God has called each of us to help make disciples of all nations, which includes teaching people to obey the commands and truths of God's Word (Matthew 28:18-20). How are you presently helping the church carry out this Great Commission? If you are dissatisfied with your current level of involvement, what are a couple steps you could take to get to a better place?



IN YOUR FAMILY...

(a) *Something to talk about:* How important is the Bible to your family? Are you reading and talking about it regularly? Do you discuss the Sunday sermon at home during the week? What needs to change so that the Bible becomes a lamp to your feet and a light for your path (Psalm 119:105)?

(b) *Something to do:* If you're not already doing it, start having family devotions together. For some tips, check out this website: www.everygoodpath.net/FamilyDevotionIdeas

SERMON NOTES