

Nehemiah 8:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And all the people gathered themselves together as one man into the street that was before the water gate; and they spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the LORD had commanded to Israel.

Analysis

And all the people gathered themselves together as one man into the street that was before the water gate; and they spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the LORD had commanded to Israel.

This verse within Nehemiah 8 addresses themes of Scripture centrality, teaching, understanding, worship. The public Scripture reading demonstrates how spiritual renewal requires understanding God's Word, not mere ritual observance. City gates were strategic both defensively and administratively, controlling access and serving as centers of commerce and justice. This passage demonstrates biblical principles applicable across both testaments—God's sovereignty combined with human responsibility, faith expressed through obedient action, and the necessity of both individual and corporate commitment to covenant faithfulness. Nehemiah models leadership that combines vision, prayer, courage, integrity, and perseverance amid sustained opposition.

Historical Context

Nehemiah's account occurs during Persian imperial dominance (539-331 BC), specifically 445-433 BC under Artaxerxes I. The spiritual reforms under Ezra and

Nehemiah shaped Judaism for centuries, establishing Scripture's centrality and patterns of worship continuing into the intertestamental period and beyond. The Persian period was crucial transitional time when Jewish identity shifted from monarchical nationalism to Torah-centered covenantal community. Without political independence, the people's cohesion depended on shared scripture, temple worship, and covenant obedience. This established patterns persisting through the Second Temple period into New Testament times. Understanding this context illuminates Jesus's ministry among a people shaped by these reforms and challenges.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does regular engagement with Scripture transform understanding of God and His will for your life?
2. What specific commitments do you need to make (or renew) regarding Bible reading, worship, and obedience?
3. How can the principles demonstrated in this passage inform your response to current challenges in your life or church?

Interlinear Text

אָסַף	1	כָל	בְּעֵם	בָּעֵם	כָּא	וְשָׁ	אֵל
gathered	themselves	together	H3605	And	all	the	people
H622				H5971			man
into	the	street	H834	that	was	before	as
H7339				H6440			one
לְפָנֵי	שַׁעַר	בְּעֵמָה	בְּעֵמָה	וְאָמַרְוּ			
	gate	the	water	and	they	spake	
	H8179		H4325		H559		
עֹזֵךְ	אֶת	לְבָבְךָ	תּוֹבֵת	מִשְׁהָ	אֲשֶׁר		
unto	Ezra	the	scribe	of	the	book	
H5830		H5608	H935	H5612	H8451	H4872	H834
אָתָה	לְבָבְךָ	סִפְרָה	תּוֹבֵת	תּוֹבֵת	סִפְרָה	מִשְׁהָ	
had	commanded	which	the	the	book	of	of
H6680		H3068		H854		Moses	Moses
יְהֹוָה	אָתָה	אֲשֶׁר	אֲשֶׁר				
had	commanded	which	the	the	book	of	of
הָרָאֶל:							
to	Israel						
H3478							

Additional Cross-References

Ezra 7:6 (Word): This Ezra went up from Babylon; and he was a ready scribe in the law of Moses, which the LORD God of Israel had given: and the king granted him all his request, according to the hand of the LORD his God upon him.

Nehemiah 3:26 (Parallel theme): Moreover the Nethinims dwelt in Ophel, unto the place over against the water gate toward the east, and the tower that lieth out.

2 Chronicles 34:15 (Word): And Hilkiah answered and said to Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the LORD. And Hilkiah delivered the book to Shaphan.

Ezra 7:11 (Word): Now this is the copy of the letter that the king Artaxerxes gave unto Ezra the priest, the scribe, even a scribe of the words of the commandments of the LORD, and of his statutes to Israel.