

# Nehemiah 8:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And on the second day were gathered together the chief of the fathers of all the people, the priests, and the Levites, unto Ezra the scribe, even to understand the words of the law.

## Analysis

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**And on the second day were gathered together the chief of the fathers of all the people, the priests, and the Levites, unto Ezra the scribe, even to understand the words of the law.**

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. 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

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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

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**Revelation 20:12** — Judgment according to deeds

**Matthew 25:31** — Final judgment

## Study Questions

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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

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לְכָל הַאֲבָדָה וְתַחַת כָּאשָׁר וְבַיִת וּמִשְׁנֶה  
day And on the second were gathered together the chief of the fathers H3605  
H3117 H8145 H622 H7218 H1

פָּסָף רַעֲזָב אֶל וּבְלוּלִים וְכָבָדִים וְבָשָׁר  
the scribe unto Ezra the Levites and the priests of all the people H5608 H5830 H413 H3548 H5971

פָּתֹוחַה: דִּבְרָה אֶל וְלִפְשָׁךְ יְלִדְךָ  
the words of the law even to understand H8451 H1697 H413 H7919

## Additional Cross-References

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**Proverbs 12:1** (Parallel theme): Whoso loveth instruction loveth knowledge: but he that hateth reproof is brutish.

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