

Nehemiah 8:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

So the people went forth, and brought them, and made themselves booths, every one upon the roof of his house, and in their courts, and in the courts of the house of God, and in the street of the water gate, and in the street of the gate of Ephraim.

Analysis

So the people went forth, and brought them, and made themselves booths, every one upon the roof of his house, and in their courts, and in the courts of the house of God, and in the street of the water gate, and in the street of the gate of Ephraim.

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

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

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

וַיֵּצֵא	וְעַמְּךָ	וְבָנָיו	וְעַשְׂרֵה	וְלַבְּמִזְבֵּחַ	וְסַכְמָה
went forth	So the people	and brought	them and made	H1992	themselves booths
H3318	H5971	H935	H6213		H5521
וְאֵלֶּה	עַל	גָּגָוּ	וְבָמָצָר וְתָמָר		
every one	H5921	upon the roof of his house	and in the courts	and in the courts	
H376		H1406	H2691		H2691
בְּבֵית	בְּאֱלֹהִים	וּבְרֵחֶת וּבְ	שַׁעַר	בְּפַתַּח וּבְ	
of the house	of God	and in the street	gate	of the water	and in the street
H1004	H430	H7339	H8179	H4325	H7339
שַׁעַר אַפְרַיִם					
gate	of Ephraim				
H8179	H669				

Additional Cross-References

Nehemiah 12:39 (Parallel theme): And from above the gate of Ephraim, and above the old gate, and above the fish gate, and the tower of Hananeel, and the tower of Meah, even unto the sheep gate: and they stood still in the prison gate.

2 Kings 14:13 (Parallel theme): And Jehoash king of Israel took Amaziah king of Judah, the son of Jehoash the son of Ahaziah, at Beth-shemesh, and came to Jerusalem, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem from the gate of Ephraim unto the corner gate, four hundred cubits.

Nehemiah 12:37 (Parallel theme): And at the fountain gate, which was over against them, they went up by the stairs of the city of David, at the going up of the wall, above the house of David, even unto the water gate eastward.

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.

Jeremiah 32:29 (References God): And the Chaldeans, that fight against this city, shall come and set fire on this city, and burn it with the houses, upon whose roofs

they have offered incense unto Baal, and poured out drink offerings unto other gods, to provoke me to anger.

Nehemiah 8:3 (Parallel theme): And he read therein before the street that was before the water gate from the morning until midday, before the men and the women, and those that could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law.

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