

Nehemiah 8:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

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.

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

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

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

וַיִּקְרָא	בּוֹ	לִפְנֵי י	הָרֶחַב וּב	אֲשֶׁר רַן	לִפְנֵי י	שַׁעַר
And he read	H0	that was before	the street	H834	that was before	gate
H7121		H6440	H7339		H6440	H8179
הַמַּיִם	מִן	הָאֹר	עַד	מִמֶּחָצִית יוֹם	הָיָא	נְגִידָה
the water	H4480	from the morning	H5704	until midday	H3117	H5048
H4325		H216		H4276		
הָאֲנָשִׁים	וְהַנָּשִׁים	וְהַמְבִּינִים	וְאָזְנֵי	כָּל		
H376	and the women	and those that could understand	and the ears	H3605		
	H802	H995	H241			
הָעָם	אֵל	סֵפֶר	הַתּוֹרָה:			
of all the people	H413	were attentive unto the book	of the law			
H5971		H5612	H8451			

Additional Cross-References

Revelation 3:22 (Parallel theme): He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

Revelation 2:29 (Parallel theme): He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.