

Nehemiah 8:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Ezra the scribe stood upon a pulpit of wood, which they had made for the purpose; and beside him stood Mattithiah, and Shema, and Anaiah, and Urijah, and Hilkiah, and Maaseiah, on his right hand; and on his left hand, Pedaiah, and Mishael, and Malchiah, and Hashum, and Hashbadana, Zechariah, and Meshullam.

Analysis

And Ezra the scribe stood upon a pulpit of wood, which they had made for the purpose; and beside him stood Mattithiah, and Shema, and Anaiah, and Urijah, and Hilkiah, and Maaseiah, on his right hand; and on his left hand, Pedaiah, and Mishael, and Malchiah, and Hashum, and Hashbadana, Zechariah, and Meshullam.

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

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. These 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

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

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

אֶשֶׁר עָץ מִגִּדָּל עַל הַסֵּפֶר רַעְזָרָא וְעָמַד
him stood **And Ezra** **the scribe** H5921 **upon a pulpit** **of wood** H834
H5975 H5830 H5608 H4026 H6086

מִתֵּתִי הָאֶצֶל וְעָמַד לְדַבֵּר עָשׂוּ
which they had made **for the purpose** **him stood** **and beside** **Mattithiah**
H6213 H1697 H5975 H681 H4993

עַל וּמַעֲשֵׂי הַחִלְקִי וְאוּרִיָּה וְאַנְיָה וְשֵׁמָע
and Shema **and Anaiah** **and Urijah** **and Hilkiah** **and Maaseiah** H5921
H8087 H6043 H223 H2518 H4641

וּמֶלְכִי וּמִישָׁאֵל פְּדַיָּה וּמִשְׁמָאל וְיָמִין
on his right hand **and on his left hand** **Pedaiah** **and Mishael** **and Malchiah**
H3225 H8040 H6305 H4332 H4441

מִשְׁלָם זְכַרְיָה וְחַשְׁבַּדָּנָה וְחָשׁוּם
and Hashum **and Hashbadana** **Zechariah** **and Meshullam**
H2828 H2806 H2148 H4918