

Nehemiah 8:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God. And all the people answered, Amen, Amen, with lifting up their hands: and they bowed their heads, and worshipped the LORD with their faces to the ground.

Analysis

And Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God. And all the people answered, Amen, Amen, with lifting up their hands: and they bowed their heads, and worshipped the LORD with their faces to the ground.

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. 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 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

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

כָּל	וַעֲנָה וְ	הַגָּדוֹל	הָאֵלֹהִים יְיָ	לַיהוָה	אֶת	עֶזְרָא א	וְיָבֵר רָרְ
	answered	the great	God	the LORD		And Ezra	blessed
H3605	H6030	H1419	H430	H3068	H853	H5830	H1288
וַיִּקְדּוּ וְ	יָדֵיהֶם	בָּמָה עַל	אָמֵן	אָמֵן	אֲמֵן	הָעָם	
	and they bowed	their hands	with lifting up	Amen	Amen	And all the people	
H6915	H3027	H4607	H543	H543	H543	H5971	
אֲרָצָה:	אֶפְיָם	לַיהוָה	וַשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ				
	to the ground	with their faces	the LORD				
H776	H639	H3068	H7812				

Additional Cross-References

1 Timothy 2:8 (Parallel theme): I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.

Exodus 4:31 (Worship): And the people believed: and when they heard that the LORD had visited the children of Israel, and that he had looked upon their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshipped.

Lamentations 3:41 (References God): Let us lift up our heart with our hands unto God in the heavens.

2 Chronicles 20:18 (Worship): And Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground: and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell before the LORD, worshipping the LORD.

Revelation 7:11 (Worship): And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God,

Psalms 134:2 (Blessing): Lift up your hands in the sanctuary, and bless the LORD.

Nehemiah 5:13 (Worship): Also I shook my lap, and said, So God shake out every man from his house, and from his labour, that performeth not this promise, even thus be he shaken out, and emptied. And all the congregation said, Amen, and praised the LORD. And the people did according to this promise.

Genesis 24:26 (Worship): And the man bowed down his head, and worshipped the LORD.

Exodus 12:27 (Worship): That ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the LORD'S passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses. And the people bowed the head and worshipped.

1 Chronicles 29:20 (Worship): And David said to all the congregation, Now bless the LORD your God. And all the congregation blessed the LORD God of their fathers, and bowed down their heads, and worshipped the LORD, and the king.