

Building Your Life for God

Studies in Ezra, Nehemiah, Ezra, Daniel, Ezekiel, Haggai, & Malachi

[Shaping Hearts for God Curriculum]

Lesson 11 – Ezra and Nehemiah

Theme: Repentance - Sorrow for sin; deciding to obey God

Memory Verse - Nehemiah 8:5-6

“Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people...and when he opened it, all the people stood up. Then Ezra blessed the Lord the great God. And all the people answered ‘Amen, Amen!’ while lifting up their hands; then they bowed low and worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground.”

Daily Bible Readings

Thursday – Nehemiah 8:1-6, 10-18 - **Friday** – Nehemiah 9:1-2, 5-25 -

Saturday – Nehemiah 9:26-38 - **Monday** – Nehemiah 10:28-36

Tuesday – Nehemiah 13:1-22

Questions

- 1) Who came to the square to hear Ezra read from the Law of God?
- 2) What did the people do when Ezra opened the Law and blessed the Lord?
- 3) What does it mean to “confess”?
- 4) Name 3 times that God took care of His people even though they were stubborn.
- 5) *True or False.* The people thought that their punishment was unfair.
- 6) Who caused the people to be punished?
- 7) What did many people agree to do when merchants tried to buy and sell on the Sabbath?
- 8) How did the people plan to support the temple and its services?
- 9) While Nehemiah was back in Persia, who came to live in the temple building?
- 10) Why was it wrong for him to live in the temple building?

Teacher Notes:

In the days of Ezra and Nehemiah, God's people in Jerusalem were not living for God the best they could. Life was not always easy, and some people started disobeying God. Ezra and Nehemiah tried to help people obey God and never turn back.

Once the temple of God and the walls of Jerusalem were rebuilt, it was time for the people to rebuild their lives as God's people. They got off to a good start by asking Ezra to bring the book of Law of God. Jews from all over the country came to Jerusalem, and Ezra stood up to read God's Word.

Ezra stood on a platform to read. People showed respect for God's Law by standing up when Ezra opened the book. When Ezra thanked God for all He had done for His people, the people bowed down and worshipped God. Ezra read God's Law for a long time, and people paid attention.

When people heard God's Word, they became sad because they realized how much they had disobeyed. They began to cry. Ezra and Nehemiah helped the people understand that this was a happy occasion. God's Word was being read, and the people were understanding it. This was a time to celebrate.

Part of the reading was about the Feast of Booths - a reminder of how God took care of them in the wilderness. After reading about it, the people happily celebrated this feast in a way they had not done in a long time.

The word "confess" means "to say the same thing." Suppose your mother says, "I think you broke this glass." If you confess to doing it, you say the same thing your mother said: "Yes, I broke the glass." In the days of Nehemiah, the people of Israel confessed their sins; they said they had disobeyed God's Law.

People confessed their wrongs with a poem. In speaking the poem, they talked about God's power and grace. They remembered how God had helped them many times. They said they had not been obedient but had been stubborn and did not always listen to God.

The people then promised to start obeying God again. They said they would not marry people of the land because this would tempt them to follow other gods. They promised to take care of the house of God so priests could make sacrifices. They decided to serve God again.

After a while, Nehemiah returned to Persia to serve the king. While he was gone, Tobiah, one of the enemies of God's people, started living in the temple in Jerusalem. When Nehemiah came back to Jerusalem, he found that people were not obeying God. Nehemiah threw Tobiah and all of his things out of the temple. Nehemiah got right to work teaching the people and helping them follow God. Building our lives for God means learning, growing, and changing. We should try our best to go God's way and never turn from it.