

Ezra & Nehemiah; Lesson 6 The Reading of the Word

Neh 8:1-12, Deut 31:9-13, Matt 17:5, Acts 8:26-38, Lev 23:39-43

Memory Verse

Nehemiah 8:8 *So they read distinctly from the book, in the Law of God; and they gave the sense, and helped them to understand the reading.*

The People Gather (Sunday)

Nehemiah 8:1–3 (NKJV) *Now all the people gathered together as one man in the open square that was in front of the Water Gate; and they told Ezra the scribe to bring the Book of the Law of Moses, which the Lord had commanded Israel. ² So Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly of men and women and all who could hear with understanding on the first day of the seventh month. ³ Then he read from it in the open square that was in front of the Water Gate from morning until midday, before the men and women and those who could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive to the Book of the Law.*

Acts 15:21 (NKJV) *For Moses has had throughout many generations those who preach him in every city, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath.”*

Nehemiah 8:4–6 *So Ezra the scribe stood on a platform of wood which they had made for the purpose; and beside him, at his right hand, stood Mattithiah, Shema, Anaiah, Urijah, Hilkiah, and Maaseiah; and at his left hand Pedaiah, Mishael, Malchijah, Hashum, Hashbadana, Zechariah, and Meshullam. ⁵ And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was standing above all the people; and when he opened it, all the people stood up. ⁶ And Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God. Then all the people answered, “Amen, Amen!” while lifting up their hands. And they bowed their heads and worshiped the Lord with their faces to the ground.*

Deuteronomy 4:1–2 (NKJV) *“Now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the judgments which I teach you to observe, that you may live, and go in and possess the land which the Lord God of your fathers is giving you. ² You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you.*

❖ **Revelation 1:3** (NKJV) *Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near.*

Reading and Hearing the Law (Monday)

Deuteronomy 6:1–2 (NKJV) *“Now this is the commandment, and these are the statutes and judgments which the Lord your God has commanded to teach you, that you may observe them in the land which you are crossing over to possess, ² that you may fear the Lord your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, you and your son and your grandson, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged.*

Deuteronomy 31:11–12 (NKJV) *when all Israel comes to appear before the Lord your God in the place which He chooses, you shall read this law before all Israel in their hearing. ¹² Gather the people together, men and women and little ones, and the stranger who is within your gates, that they may hear and that they may learn to fear the Lord your God and carefully observe all the words of this law,*

Joshua 8:34–35 (NKJV) *And afterward he read all the words of the law, the blessings and the cursings, according to all that is written in the Book of the Law. ³⁵ There was not a word of all that Moses had commanded which Joshua did not read before all the assembly of Israel, with the women, the little ones, and the strangers who were living among them.*

Reading and Interpreting the Word (Tuesday)

Nehemiah 8:7, 8 *Also Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodijah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, and the Levites, helped the people to understand the Law; and the people stood in their place. ⁸ So they read distinctly from the book, in the Law of God; and they gave the sense, and helped them to understand the reading.*

Matthew 28:19–20 (NKJV) *Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen.*

Luke 24:27 (NKJV) *And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.*

❖ **Luke 24:45** (NKJV) *And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.*

Deuteronomy 6:6–9 (NKJV) *“And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. ⁷ You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. ⁸ You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. ⁹ You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.*

2 Timothy 4:2–4 (NKJV) *Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. ³ For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, ...*

The People’s Response (Wednesday)

Nehemiah 8:9 (NKJV) *And Nehemiah, who was the governor, Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, “This day is holy to the Lord your God; do not mourn nor weep.” For all the people wept, when they heard the words of the Law.*

Kings 22:10–11 (NKJV) *Then Shaphan the scribe showed the king, saying, “Hilkiah the priest has given me a book.” And Shaphan read it before the king. Now it happened, when the king heard the words of the Book of the Law, that he tore his clothes.*

- ❖ **James 4:8–10** (NKJV) *Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. ⁹ Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. ¹⁰ Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.*

2 Kings 22:18–20 (NKJV) *But as for the king of Judah, who sent you to inquire of the Lord, in this manner you shall speak to him, ‘Thus says the Lord God of Israel: “Concerning the words which you have heard—¹⁹ because your heart was tender, and you humbled yourself before the Lord when you heard what I spoke against this place and against its inhabitants, that they would become a desolation and a curse, and you tore your clothes and wept before Me, I also have heard you,” says the Lord. ²⁰ Surely, therefore, I will gather you to your fathers, and you shall be gathered to your grave in peace; and your eyes shall not see all the calamity which I will bring on this place.” ’ ’ So they brought back word to the king.*

- A 12-year-old girl in Winnipeg, Canada, held a smile on her face for 10 hours five minutes, establishing a new world record.

The Joy of the Lord (Thursday)

Nehemiah 8:10 (NKJV) *Then he said to them, “Go your way, eat the fat, drink the sweet, and send portions to those for whom nothing is prepared; for this day is holy to our Lord. Do not sorrow, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.”*

Psalms 28:7–9 (NKJV) *The Lord is my strength and my shield; My heart trusted in Him, and I am helped; Therefore my heart greatly rejoices, And with my song I will praise Him. ⁸ The Lord is their strength, And He is the saving refuge of His anointed. ⁹ Save Your people, And bless Your inheritance; Shepherd them also, And bear them up forever.*

John 11:35 *Jesus wept.* **1 Thes. 5:16** *“Rejoice evermore”* **Shorter**

Joy 158 times in scripture. Rejoice 300 times

Joy = Intense and especially ecstatic or exultant happiness. The expression or manifestation of such feeling. A source or an object of pleasure or satisfaction:

- Oliver Wendell Holmes once said, "I might have entered the ministry if certain clergymen I knew had not looked and acted so much like undertakers."
- Robert Louis Stevenson once entered in his diary, as an extraordinary phenomenon, "I have been to Church today, and am not depressed."
- It takes 72 muscles to frown—only 14 to smile!
- If you have no joy in your religion, there's a leak in your Christianity somewhere. - Billy Sunday
- Joy is peace dancing and peace is joy at rest. - F. B. Meyer
- Man cannot find true essential joy anywhere but in his relationship to God.- Oswald Chambers

Nehemiah 8:11–12 (NKJV) *So the Levites quieted all the people, saying, “Be still, for the day is holy; do not be grieved.” And all the people went their way to eat and drink, to send portions and rejoice greatly, because they understood the words that were declared to them.*

One day as Benjamin Franklin concluded a stirring speech on the guarantees of the Constitution, a heckler shouted, "Aw, them words don't mean nothin' at all. Where's all the happiness you say it guarantees us?" Franklin smiled and replied, "My friend, the Constitution only guarantees the American people the right to pursue happiness; you have to catch it yourself."