

AWAKE THE CALL TO A RENEWED LIFE

Lesson 4: Return to God's Word Nehemiah 8:1-8

Question: *When has following someone's directions taken you someplace unexpected?*

- **Water Gate (v.1)** Refers to the gate in the wall of Jerusalem leading to the Gihon Spring. It was not the same as the Water Gate in Herod's temple, which did not exist at this time. Since this spring provided the main water source outside the wall, it was a gathering point for the community.
- **Amen (v.6)** "Amen" is an expression of support or confirmation, coming from the verb that means "to confirm," "to support" or "to uphold." As a congregational response, the word was an affirmation of the truthfulness of a spoken prayer, praise, or teaching.

Nehemiah 8:1:3

1 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.

Discussion Question #1

- How do our circumstances impact the way we approach the Bible?

Nehemiah 8:4-6

4 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, Hilkiyah, 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.

Discussion Question #2

- What's the connection between engaging the bible and worshipping God?

Nehemiah 8:7-8

7 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.

Discussion Question #3-4

- When have you recently been affected or convicted by your study of the Word of God?
- What steps can you take to better understand and apply God's Word?

Live It Out

- **Read up.** Make a habit of reading the bible everyday. A devotional book or magazine can help you get started, but give God uninterrupted time to speak through His Word.
- **Lighten up.** Make yourself more attentive to God's Word by taking notes. Write down what you hear God saying to you.
- **Step up.** Lead a small group or bible study. Teach children or students at your church. The greatest way to learn the Scriptures is to teach them to someone else!