



**Mustard Seed Sunday School Lesson for May 25, 2008
Released on Wednesday, May 21, 2008**

“Ezra Read the Law”

Lesson: Nehemiah 8:1–3, 5–6, 13–14, 17–18

Read: Nehemiah 8.

Devotional Reading: Psalm 27:11–14; 19:7–14.

Background Scripture: Nehemiah 8.

Place: Jerusalem

Time: Around 443 B.C.

GOLDEN TEXT: “He read therein... and the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law” (Nehemiah 8:3).

**SCRIPTURE LESSON TEXT:
Nehemiah 8**

1And all the people gathered themselves together as one man into the street that was before the water gate; and they spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the LORD had commanded to Israel.

2And Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation both of men and women, and all that could hear with understanding, upon the first day of the seventh month.

3And he read therein before the street that was before the water gate from the morning until midday, before the men and the women, and those that could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law.

...

5And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people; (for he was above all the people;) and when he opened it, all the people stood up:

6And 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.

...

13And on the second day were gathered together the chief of the fathers of all the people, the priests, and the Levites, unto Ezra the scribe, even to understand the words of the law.

14And they found written in the law which the LORD had commanded by Moses, that the children of Israel should dwell in booths in the feast of the seventh month:

...

17And all the congregation of them that were come again out of the captivity made booths, and sat under the booths: for since the days of Jeshua the son of Nun unto that day had not the children of Israel done so. And there was very great gladness.

18Also day by day, from the first day unto the last day, he read in the book of the law of God. And they kept the feast seven days; and on the eighth day was a solemn assembly, according unto the manner.

TEACHER'S NOTES ON THE LESSON

When Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem, the walls were broken and needed repair. Lives also needed repair. The people had strayed from God's Word. The walls had been restored and renewed. Now the relationship of the people with God needed to be restored and renewed. The covenant God had made so long ago was still in effect; He would bless His people if they obeyed Him.

Under the leadership of Ezra and Nehemiah, the people enjoyed a revival. A revival is a renewed determination to obey God's Word. Daily Bible reading leads to renewal and revival.

THE OBJECT IN VIEW:

Teach that hearing and obeying God's Word brings great joy.

TRUTHS TO STRESS:

God's people understood His Word.

God's people obeyed His Word.

God's people celebrated with great joy.

PLANNING VISUAL AIDS:

For Beginning the Lesson, cut an ear shape from poster board. Put it in the mystery box.

For Telling the Lesson, make a paper tulip. On it print "Ezra Read the Law." Bring tape, a small container of water, a fork, and a sponge.

For Helping to Remember, you need paper plates, markers, a paper punch, and lengths of yarn.

BEGINNING THE LESSON:

Allison scowled. The class was singing "If You're Happy and You Know It." Why did someone always ask to sing that? Allison was not happy, and she didn't like that song.

Mrs. Reed noticed Allison's face. "Everyone wants to be happy," Mrs. Reed told the class, "but many people look for happiness in the wrong places." Allison quit scowling and looked interested.

"People think they will be happy if they get what they want," Mrs. Reed continued, "but that is the devil's lie. The happiest people have trusted Jesus as Saviour. They live for God and others, not for themselves. They hear and obey God's Word."

When Nehemiah finished building the wall in Jerusalem, he knew there was still more building to do. The people needed to rebuild their lives. Nehemiah knew they needed to hear God's Word. (Take ear shape from mystery box.)

The wall was finished. The Jews were settled in their own homes. It was the seventh month on the Jewish New Year.

TELLING THE LESSON:

The people gathered in a square near the Water Gate of the temple. They asked Ezra the scribe to read the law of Moses to them.

Ezra had returned to Jerusalem about fourteen years before Nehemiah. He was a scribe, a man who studied and taught God's Word.

On the first of the month, Ezra brought out God's law. Men, women, and children stood and listened as Ezra read to them for six or seven hours, from daybreak until noon. The people listened carefully. (Tape tulip behind fence.) They had not heard God's Word for a long time; perhaps some had never heard.

All the people could see Ezra. He stood above them on a platform. When Ezra opened the scroll, the people stood to honor God. Ezra praise God. The people praised God and bowed and worshipped.

The next day the heads of all the families, the priests, and the Levites met with Ezra to study God's Word more deeply. (Dip fork into water.) When some people hear God's Word, they are like a fork. What they hear just runs off them. When other people hear God's Word, they are like a sponge. They let God's Word enter into them and change them. (Dip sponge into water.) They understand the Word, and they obey it.

As the people heard God's Word, they discovered God had commanded them to celebrate a special feast in the seventh month. For seven days they were to live in booths, or shelters, made from branches. This would remind them of how God had cared for His people during the forty years they had wandered in the desert with no homes.

The people wanted to obey God. All the people made booths from olive, myrtle, or palm branches. They lived in them for a week, on the flat housetops or in the streets. It was like camping out. The children must have enjoyed it. Everyone was filled with joy.

The feast had not been celebrated for a long time. Not since the early days in the Promised Land had God's people celebrated the feast so joyfully. The people had a weeklong celebration of praise and thanksgiving. On the eighth day, they had a special meeting.

Every day of the feast, Ezra read and explained God's Word.

TELLING HOW TO LIVE:

Hearing and obeying God's Word is the way to joy. Boys and girls, have you obeyed God by trusting Jesus as Saviour? Great joy will fill your heart when you know your sin is forgiven.

Some of you who already know Jesus as Saviour may not feel joyful. Is there some sin you have not asked God to forgive? Great joy will fill your heart when you obey God.

HELPING TO REMEMBER:

Each student may draw a happy face on the plate as a reminder that joy comes from hearing and obeying God's Word. On the back he may print the golden text. He

should punch a hole in the top of the plate and thread yarn through to make a hanger.

EXPLAINING THE GOLDEN TEXT:

“He read therein... and the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law” (Nehemiah 8:3).

To be “attentive” means to listen carefully. The people stood and listened carefully for six or seven hours every day.

Do you listen carefully whenever God’s Word is read or taught? Do you obey it?

MUSTARD SEED LESSON ACTIVITIES:

“Ezra Read the Law”

(Nehemiah 8:1–3, 5–6, 13–14, 17–18)

CIRCLE THE CORRECT WORDS:

1. “And all the people gathered themselves together as one man into the [**STORE, STREET**] that was before the [**RIVER, WATER GATE**]; and they spake unto Ezra the [**BEE-KEEPER, SCRIBE**] to bring the book of the law of [**MOSES, MANANSEH**], which the Lord had commanded to Israel.” Nehemiah 8:1

2. “And Ezra the priest brought the [**LAW, LION**] before the congregation both of men and [**ANIMALS, WOMEN**], and all that could hear with understanding, upon the [**FIRST, SECOND**] day of the seventh month.” Nehemiah 8:2

3. “And he read therein before the [**STREET, SACRIFICE**] that was before the water gate from the morning until [**MORNING, MIDDAY**], before the men and the women, and those that could understand; and the [**EARS, EZRA**] of all the people were attentive unto the book of the [**BIBLE, LAW**].” Nehemiah 8:3

4. “And [**NEHEMIAH, EZRA**] opened the book in the sight of all the people; (for he was [**AWAY FROM, ABOVE**] all the people;) and when he opened it, all the people [**STOOD UP, SAT DOWN**]:” Nehemiah 8:5

TRUE OR FALSE:

5. When Nehemiah blessed the Lord, the great God, all the people responded to him by saying, “Amen. Amen.” They also lifted up their hands and bowed their heads, and worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground.

Nehemiah 8:6 **TRUE OR FALSE**

6. On the second day, “the heads of the fathers’ houses of all the people, with the priests and Levites” gathered together in front of Ezra to tell Ezra what the law of God said. Nehemiah 8:13 **TRUE OR FALSE**

7. The people found written in the Law of Moses that they were supposed to build and dwell in houses made of brick and mortar during the feast of the 21st month. Nehemiah 8:14 **TRUE OR FALSE**

8. The people continued in their obedience as they observed “the feast” for all eight days as commanded. Then they ended their celebration with “the feast” with a “solemn assembly.” Nehemiah 8:18 **TRUE OR FALSE**

MUSTARD SEED LESSON ACTIVITIES:
"Ezra Read the Law"
(Nehemiah 8:1–3, 5–6, 13–14, 17–18)

WORD SEARCH

W O R S H I P E D L O R D N O
K R C A T G P L N S G T K P V
Y O G P Y O E E Y T F Z E P B
Y D E S S E F N O C I N B F N
E W S E Q B P Y W P S V O H G
H W A G E J O T C Q L K O J N
D H C A T M G O U O Y E K K I
E J K T A N G A T Y M B O Z T
S S C N G R R P N H R M F W S
S R L B R E S V R E S S T W A
E V O K E M C E G Z A H H V F
L J T L T I R N I R U J E H G
B D H D A F I J K A V L L W P
L U O O W J B A F T W M A S E
B V Q H K Q E H T T A B W R I

**BLESSED
BOOK OF THE LAW
BOOTHES
CONFESSED
EZRA**

**FASTING
LORD
OPEN SQUARE
PEOPLE
SACKCLOTH**

**SCRIBE
WATER GATE
WEPT
WORSHIPED**

Lesson Summarized by:
Kimbley Y. Baker-Richardson
Jesus Is All Ministries
www.jesusisall.com