

Ministry of Ezra and Nehemiah

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen's sermon explores the transformative revival led by Ezra and Nehemiah, emphasizing the power of God's Word and effective leadership in the church.

Scripture: Nehemiah 8:3-9

Topics: "Biblical Revival", "Church Leadership"

Description

Zac Poonen preaches on the powerful revival brought among the Jews through the influence of two godly men, Ezra and Nehemiah, as depicted in the Book of Nehemiah. Ezra conducted a 6-hour Bible study, explaining the Word clearly to the people, leading to a revival where the people wept for their sins and found strength in sharing God's blessings. Nehemiah led the Israelites in fasting, confessing sins, and a lengthy prayer of repentance, culminating in signing a document before God. Their joint ministry resembled the functioning of a New Testament church led by two elders, serving as an example for believers today.

Transcript

The Book of Nehemiah shows us the tremendous revival that God brought among the Jews through the influence of two godly men - Ezra and Nehemiah.

In Chapter 8 of Nehemiah, we read what God did through Ezra. He took the Word of God and gathered all the men and women and children who were above the age of understanding. He then conducted a 6-hour Bible study for them! And it says there that "all the people were attentive to the book of the law" (Neh. 8:3). They began their meeting with a time of praising God (Neh. 8:4). And then Ezra took pains to explain to the people the meaning of everything that he read from the Word (Neh. 8:8). Obviously Ezra had spent many months and years studying the Word himself to have been able to explain it all so clearly to all of them. God had prepared him in secret for this time.

Revival broke out and the people began to weep for their sins (Neh. 8:9). They were then exhorted to share with others the good things that God had given them. In doing so, "the joy of the Lord would be their strength" (Neh. 8:10). The people went out and obeyed that exhortation. The next day Ezra had a Bible-study for the leaders (Neh. 8:13). When they saw that the Word of God had commanded the Israelites to celebrate "the feast of booths" every year in the seventh month, they obeyed it immediately. This was the first time this feast was being celebrated in about 900 years - for this command had not been obeyed since the days of Joshua (Neh. 8:14-17). Even David, the man after God's own heart, had not got

the Israelites to obey this command. Ezra continued to have Bible-studies for the people for the next seven days (Neh. 8:18).

In Chapter 9 of Nehemiah, we read what God did through Nehemiah. The chapter begins with the Israelites fasting, confessing their sins and separating themselves from the heathen (Neh. 9:1, 2). Then they had a three-hour Bible-study time and three hours of praising the Lord and confessing their sins. It was revival all over again (Neh. 9:3). Then the Levites stood up and cried to the Lord with a loud voice (Neh. 9:4). From Neh. 9:5 to Neh. 9:38, we have the longest recorded prayer in the whole Bible. The Levites then rehearsed the history of Israel from Abraham's time and their failure during the forty years of wandering in the wilderness and during the times of the judges and the kings and acknowledging that every judgment that God had sent was just and right. They repented and signed a document before God, with Nehemiah signing first of all (Neh. 10:1).

All of this came about through the influence of these two God-fearing men, Ezra and Nehemiah. Their joint ministry was almost exactly like the functioning of a new-testament church being led by two elders. What an example for all of us to emulate today.

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