

INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON FOR SEPTEMBER 10

TEACHING THE LAW OF GOD.

Nehemiah 8:1-18.

GOLDEN TEXT—Teach me, O Jehovah the way of thy statutes; And I shall keep it unto the end. Psalm 119:33.

Nehemiah 8:3, 5, 6, 8, 12.

1 And all the people gathered themselves together as one man into the broad place that was before the water gate; and they spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses, which Jehovah had commanded to Israel. 2 And Ezra the priest brought the law before the assembly, both men and women, and all that could hear with understanding, upon the first day of the seventh month. 3 And he read therein before the broad place that was before the water gate from early morning until midday in the presence of them and the women, and of all that could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law.

4 And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people; and when he opened it, all the people stood up. 5 And Ezra blessed Jehovah, the great God; and all the people answered, Amen, Amen, with the lifting up of their hands; and they bowed their heads, and worshipped Jehovah with their faces to the ground.

6 And they read in the book, in the law of God, distinctly; and they gave the sense, so that they understood the reading.

7 And Nehemiah, who was the governor, and Ezra the priest the scribe, and the Levites that taught the people, said unto all the people, This day is holy unto Jehovah your God: mourn not, nor weep. For all the people wept, when they heard the words of the law. 8 Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto him for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our Lord: neither be ye grieved for the joy of Jehovah is your strength. 9 So the Levites stilled all the people, saying, old your peace, for the day is holy; neither be ye grieved. 10 And all the people went their way to eat, and to drink, and to send portions, and to make great mirth, because they had understood the words that were declared unto them.

INTRODUCTION.

Our lesson presents a striking and attractive picture. Two remarkable and noble men are here seen working together to teach the people the work and will of God. The energy and devotion and wisdom of Nehemiah, as shown in our last lesson, were rewarded. In the comparatively short time of fifty-two days (Nehemiah 6:15) the wall had been finished. The adversaries with all their taunts and opposition had not been able to prevent it. It was now the month of Elul, corresponding to the latter part of August and early part of September, in the year B. C. 444. The enemies of Nehemiah were much cast down by his success. But they kept up working against him. Nehemiah put his brother and another man whom he could trust in charge of what remained to be done in the way of protecting the city, and gave his own attention to internal affairs (chapter 7).

LESSON NOTES.

Reading the Law (Nehemiah 8:1-8). It was the seventh month corresponding nearly to our September. The people outside of Jerusalem's wall had been repaired; its inhabitants were happy. The time was now arrived for the observance of the Feast of Tabernacles, preceded by the great Day of Atonement. As many of our readers know, this annual observance is still held among the Jews in September. It is the beginning of the religious or sacred year with them, and is a time of fasting and prayer. No doubt the good news of the rebuilding of Jerusalem had spread through the country, and many of the Jews who had been left behind, or had come back from captivity, rejoiced in the possibility of celebrating their great festival once more in the sacred city.

We are told that the people spoke to Ezra to bring them the Word of God. We may ask why this popular demand arose, and why the people should have made the start, rather than Ezra himself. In the absence of definite information, we may suppose that many among the people realized how far they had fallen short in their acquaintance with and obedience to the law which had been given to their fathers. Their conscience made a demand for better instruction and for renewal of their covenant obligations with the God of their fathers. With regard to Ezra himself, it may be that he had become absorbed in his studies and duties as a scribe, and was not so active as he had been at first in public affairs. This seems evident from the fact that it was Nehemiah who had taken hold of the problem of rebuilding; while Ezra, for a time at least, had dropped out of the leadership. But his former good work had not been fruitless, and his labors to teach the Word of God in Jerusalem had much to do with awakening among the outside people, who had come up to the feast, a desire for the word of God.

Ezra and Nehemiah.

However, all this may be, the fine result now appears in the fact that the people asked for instruction, and Ezra the scribe and Nehemiah the governor and leader joyfully worked together to answer this encouraging and hopeful demand of the people. We can imagine with what joy the good old teacher Ezra responded, and with what Nehemiah worked with him. The people asked for and Ezra brought forth the book of the Law of Moses. Just how much or what special portions of what we now know as the Pentateuch, or five books of Moses, were included in this statement we do not know. It is more guess work to select what particular passages may have been used. Some think it was the so-called Book of the Covenant (Exodus 20-23), but others

Deuteronomy as a whole or in parts. We can only say with certainty that it was such a portion of the law as was suitable to be read and expounded on the occasion, and that the selections were wisely made by Ezra to suit the conditions.

A Protracted Service.

The method and spirit of the reading of the law are very instructive. They made a business of it. The men, women, and children that were old enough to understand gathered in the appointed place on the first day of the seventh month. This was the beginning. The service (verse 13) was continued on the second day, and (verse 18) on every day for a week. It is the opening service on the first day which is here described. The word was read from daylight until midday. The people were very attentive to the reading. A platform or tower had been made for the teachers. Here Ezra the scribe stood with his hearers, consisting of thirteen each. These were probably scribes and teachers who had been trained and prepared by Ezra. Whether they took turns in the reading or divided the great crowd into groups or classes we cannot certainly say; but the latter mode of procedure is at least suggested by the large number of readers engaged, and by the difficulty of making all the crowd hear from one point in the open air. But if this plan was adopted, it followed the opening service where all seem to have been together.

In opening the service, Ezra stood upon his platform with his companions about him, and opened the book in the sight of all the people. When he did so the people rose and stood in reverence, while Ezra prayed God and the people answered, Amen. Then came the teaching either to the whole crowd or in groups, as suggested above. Three important things are told us in verse eight. The first is that they read distinctly. ere is a great lesson. Even preachers often fail to do this, and the people get no good from the reading of the word. The second thing is that in reading they made such comments as to give the sense. The language was that of ancient times, and it required some explanation to the present generation. The third thing is that the expected result is stated. The people understood the reading. We readily understand that the explanation did not take away attention from the word of God itself. ere also is a good point for preachers and teachers.

The Effect of the Reading (8:9-18). The people were in earnest, and the leaders gladly availed themselves of this feeling. As the meaning of the word of God spread among the eager listeners, the people began to perceive how far short their conduct fell from the high requirements of the sacred law. It is but natural that they gave way to some gloom, but their wise leaders were prompt to check this wholesome feeling from going too far. They reminded the people that this was a holy day to God.

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Special September Prices On First Class Radio Goods Gish Radio Service 108 E. 8th St., Amarillo

LEGAL NOTICE. Pursuant to a Resolution of the City Commission of the City of Amarillo, duly and legally adopted on the seventh day of February, A. D. 1922, wherein the said City Commission ordered the improvement of the following named and numbered streets within the City of Amarillo, Potter County, Texas, to-wit:

FIFTH STREET, from the East Side of Fillmore Street to the West Side of Grant Street. And further ordered that a part of the costs for said improvements to be made, be paid by special assessments or levies of special taxes to be made as therein provided and in the "Procedure Ordinance No. 292" and amendments thereto.

Feast of Tabernacles. The second day they gathered again and paid special attention this time to the law which established the Feast of Tabernacles as one of the annual festivals. It was a joyous occasion, and they made preparations to keep it in the old traditional manner. They erected booths of branches of trees on flat roofs of houses and in the open places. They kept the feast for the prescribed week, and on the eighth day they held a solemn assembly rededicating themselves to the service of the Lord.

Co-Operation. There is here a fine example of co-operation in leadership for the study of God's word. Ezra, Nehemiah, priests, Levites, and people worked together to give and receive the blessing of instruction out of the Word of God. What a great thing it will be for all when there is co-operation in the home, the church, the Sunday School, the community, in teaching and learning the law of God. Partial and imperfect as our present arrangements and efforts are, they are worth while in themselves, and should lead to larger and better things.

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Table with columns: NAME, Lot, Block, Addition, Feet, Amount. Lists property owners and their respective lots and amounts.

A hearing will be given to owners of property abutting on the proposed improvements, and to their agents and attorneys, to all of whom this Notice is addressed; and that such hearing will be held on the 18th day of September, A. D. 1922, in the Commission Chamber in the City Hall of the City of Amarillo, Potter County, Texas, at 2 o'clock p. m., at which date, hour and place said owners of abutting property and their agents and attorneys, or other persons interested in said matters are hereby notified to be and appear to show cause, if any they have, why a special assessment shall not be made and declared as aforesaid against any or all of said abutting property and the owners thereof, respectively, and that said hearing and further proceedings shall be had and conducted in accordance with said procedure Ordinance No. 292 and amendments thereto.

DR. WATKINS, Dentist. 18 years of experience. High class Dentistry at prices you can afford to pay. Webster Bldg. Over Olympic Theater

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SIXTH STREET, from the east side of Buchanan Street to the west side of Lincoln Street, and LINCOLN STREET, from the south side of Sixth Street to the south side of Fifth Street.

Table with columns: NAME, Lot, Block, Addition, Fr. Ft., Amount. Lists property owners and their respective lots and amounts.

A hearing will be given to owners of property abutting on the proposed improvements, and to their agents and attorneys, to all of whom this Notice is addressed; and that such hearing will be held on the 18th day of September, A. D. 1922, in the Commission Chamber in the City Hall of the City of Amarillo, Potter County, Texas, at 2 o'clock p. m., at which date, hour and place said owners of abutting property and their agents and attorneys, or other persons interested in said matters are hereby notified to be and appear to show cause, if any they have, why a special assessment shall not be made and declared as aforesaid against any or all of said abutting property and the owners thereof, respectively, and that said hearing and further proceedings shall be had and conducted in accordance with said procedure Ordinance No. 292 and amendments thereto.

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Table with columns: NAME, Lot, Block, Addition, Fr. Ft., Amount. Lists property owners and their respective lots and amounts.

A hearing will be given to owners of property abutting on the proposed improvements, and to their agents and attorneys, to all of whom this Notice is addressed; and that such hearing will be held on the 18th day of September, A. D. 1922, in the Commission Chamber in the City Hall of the City of Amarillo, Potter County, Texas, at 2 o'clock p. m., at which date, hour and place said owners of abutting property and their agents and attorneys, or other persons interested in said matters are hereby notified to be and appear to show cause, if any they have, why a special assessment shall not be made and declared as aforesaid against any or all of said abutting property and the owners thereof, respectively, and that said hearing and further proceedings shall be had and conducted in accordance with said procedure Ordinance No. 292 and amendments thereto.

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SIXTH STREET, from the east side of Buchanan Street to the west side of Lincoln Street, and LINCOLN STREET, from the south side of Sixth Street to the south side of Fifth Street.

Table with columns: NAME, Lot, Block, Addition, Fr. Ft., Amount. Lists property owners and their respective lots and amounts.

A hearing will be given to owners of property abutting on the proposed improvements, and to their agents and attorneys, to all of whom this Notice is addressed; and that such hearing will be held on the 18th day of September, A. D. 1922, in the Commission Chamber in the City Hall of the City of Amarillo, Potter County, Texas, at 2 o'clock p. m., at which date, hour and place said owners of abutting property and their agents and attorneys, or other persons interested in said matters are hereby notified to be and appear to show cause, if any they have, why a special assessment shall not be made and declared as aforesaid against any or all of said abutting property and the owners thereof, respectively, and that said hearing and further proceedings shall be had and conducted in accordance with said procedure Ordinance No. 292 and amendments thereto.

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Willard SERVICE STATION. T. M. CALDWELL, CO. 6th and Tyler Streets