

DEEPER

Daily Bible Study

Adult Sabbath School Lesson
Podcast, Study Notes, and Teacher Helps

The Reading of the Word

2019, Quarter 4, Lesson 6

Sabbath (November 2): The Reading of the Word

The history of the Jews and their return from Babylon to Jerusalem is typical of the experience and work of Revelation's remnant church. Before diving into the lesson for this week, it will be helpful to review some of the interesting parallels between Israel's remnant in the Old Testament, and the remnant church today. The table below summarizes some of these important parallels.

Israel's Remnant in the Old Testament	Remnant Church of Revelation
Babylon conquers Judah and Jerusalem (2 Chron. 36:17-20).	The little horn oppresses the church and the saints (Daniel 7:25).
Jews' captivity caused by failure to keep God's law and the Sabbath (2 Chron. 36:14-16,21).	Christianity compromises with paganism and departs from truth of God's Word
Time prophecy of 70 years predicts length of Babylonian captivity (Jeremiah 25:11).	Time prophecy of 1,260 days/years predicts how long little horn will oppress the saints (Daniel 7:25).
God calls remnant of Jews out of Babylon through His prophetic Word given to King Cyrus (Isaiah 44:24-45:4; Ezra 1).	God calls people out of fallen Christianity through preaching of the Word in Protestant Reformation.
About 50,000 Jews return to Jerusalem with Zerubbabel (Ezra 2).	About 50,000 Millerites expect and preach about Christ's second coming leading up to 1844.
The 70 week prophecy points to the time period in which Israel's remnant must work (Daniel 9:24).	The 2300 day/year prophecy points to the time period in which Revelation's remnant must work (Daniel 8:14).
Mission of Israel's remnant to prepare world for Christ's first advent (Daniel 9:25-27).	Mission of Israel's remnant to prepare world for the second advent of Christ (Revelation 14:6-20).
Law of God preached to, and obeyed by, Israel's remnant (Nehemiah 8).	Law of God preached and obeyed by Revelation's remnant church (Revelation 14:12).

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Sunday (November 3): The People Gather

Nehemiah 8 records a great gathering of Jews in Jerusalem, at the beginning of the seventh month, after the rebuilding of the wall and gates was completed. As with so many other parts of their experience, their history is both informative and instructive for God's people today.

Discussion Questions:

- Read Leviticus 23:23-36. What three feasts were to be observed by Israel in the seventh month? (The Feast of Trumpets, the Day of Atonement, and the Feast of Tabernacles. These feasts are typical of closing events in the plan of salvation, and point to the antitypical Day of Atonement that started in 1844, and the second coming of Christ. As with the Jews in Ezra and Nehemiah's time, God desires His people today to be "gathered together" around an understanding of, and participation in, these climactic events in salvation history today.)
- Read Deuteronomy 31:11,12. What was to be done when Israel gathered together for these feasts and festivals? (God's Word was to be read to them.) What does this suggest about what our focus, as God's "gathered people" today, should be? (We should be seeking to understand and follow God's Word in our own lives, and to teach and help others to do the same.)
- Read John 12:48,50. What did Jesus say about the importance of accepting and following His Words, especially for us today living at the end of time? (He revealed that our response to His Words means the difference between life and death.)
- Revelation 14:14-20 describes two "harvests of the earth" at the end of time, when all people will be either saved or lost. Read the passage below and discuss its significance and importance for us today:

The warfare against God's law, which was begun in heaven, will be continued until the end of time. Every man will be tested. Obedience or disobedience is the question to be decided by the whole world. All will be called to choose between the law of God and the laws of men. Here the dividing line will be drawn. There will be but two classes. Every character will be fully developed; and all will show whether they have chosen the side of loyalty or that of rebellion. {DA 763.3}

Monday (November 4): Reading and Hearing the Law

Several powerful statements from the book *The Great Controversy* reveal the importance that God's law will have for God's people at the end of time:

"Before the final visitation of God's judgments upon the earth there will be among the people of the Lord such a revival of primitive godliness as has not been witnessed since apostolic times. The Spirit and power of God will be poured out upon His children. At that time many will separate themselves from those churches in which the love of this world has supplanted love for God and His word. Many, both of ministers and people, will gladly accept those great truths which God has caused to be proclaimed at this time to prepare a people for the Lord's second coming." {GC 464}

"It is only as the law of God is restored to its rightful position that there can be a revival of primitive faith and godliness among His professed people." {GC 478}

Today's lesson takes a closer look at what it means to restore God's law to its "rightful position."

Discussion Questions:

- Read Deuteronomy 6:6 and Hebrews 8:10. What is the "rightful position" of God's law?
- Read the following passages and discuss what they reveal about what it means to have God's law in our mind and heart:

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- Psalm 1:1-3. (Like a tree draws daily nourishment from water, we need daily spiritual nourishment from God's Word.)
- Deuteronomy 4:1 and James 1:22. (We deceive ourselves into a false sense of security and salvation if we only read, but do not do, what God tells us.)
- Proverbs 19:20. (We should hear counsel and receive instruction. Humility is required to do this.)
- Matthew 7:24-27.
- Psalm 40:7,8. (God promises that we can learn to delight in doing His will.)
- Psalm 19:11-13. (God's law and Word will keep us from both presumptuous and unintentional sins. Our desire should be to avoid both.)

Tuesday (November 5): Reading and Interpreting the Word

The book *Gospel Workers* states, "Ministers should present the truth in a clear, simple manner," (page 170), and in today's lesson we will see that Ezra and the other leaders working with him did all in their power to read and present God's Word in this way.

Discussion Questions:

- Read Nehemiah 8:4. Why did Ezra stand "upon a pulpit of wood"? (So that the people could hear what he was reading.)
- Read Nehemiah 8:5-7. As the lesson points out, two groups of 13 men assisted Ezra in preaching the Word. What significance might this have for us today? (The leaders of the "church" were united in their participation of preaching and teaching God's Word. The same responsibility rests on our leaders today. The first priority of the church and its leaders is to preach and teach God's Word.)
- Read Nehemiah 8:1. Who had requested that Ezra read the law, and what significance does this have for us today? (The people had requested that Ezra read the law. One reason why leaders in the church today might neglect their duty to preach and teach God's law is that the members of the church have not requested or insisted that this be done.)
- Read Nehemiah 8:8. How effectively was the preaching and teaching of God's law done in Jerusalem at this time? (The Bible says that it was done "distinctly" and that it "caused them to understand.") What might this mean for us today? (There is much "teaching" of the Bible today that is mixed and confused with other ideas, values, etc. This indistinct kind of preaching and teaching helps nobody understand what God's Word says, and actually creates spiritual confusion, declension, and apathy.)

Wednesday (November 6): The People's Response

Ezra's reading of God's law was not without effect. When he was finished, the people responded in a powerful way that revealed they had not only heard and understood what was read, but that they also had taken it to heart. In today's lesson we will look at the people's response to hearing God's Word, and the lesson's that their reaction hold for us today.

Discussion Questions:

- Read Nehemiah 8:9. How did the people respond when they heard and understood God's Word? (They wept and mourned.) Why do you think they did this? (They realized that their own sins and disobedience of God's law had caused their disgrace and troubles as a nation.) What lesson should we learn from their response for us as part of God's church today? (We need to realize that

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much of the chaos and confusion that is sweeping through society, and at times our own church, is caused by our own departure from God's Word.)

- Read Ezekiel 9:4. What are God's people found doing in Ezekiel's vision? (They are "sighing and crying" about all the abominations that are being done in the nation and even in the temple.) Read the following statement and discuss how it applies to us today:

In the time of the end the people of God will sigh and cry for the abominations done in the land. With tears they will warn the wicked of their danger in trampling upon the divine law, and with unutterable sorrow they will humble themselves before the Lord in penitence. The wicked will mock their sorrow and ridicule their solemn appeals. But the anguish and humiliation of God's people is unmistakable evidence that they are regaining the strength and nobility of character lost in consequence of sin. It is because they are drawing nearer to Christ, because their eyes are fixed on His perfect purity, that they discern so clearly the exceeding sinfulness of sin. Meekness and lowliness are the conditions of success and victory. A crown of glory awaits those who bow at the foot of the cross. {PK 590.2}

- Read Nehemiah 8:10. What does it mean to you that "the joy of the Lord is your strength"? How should this realization give us courage and hope even as we realize and admit the ways in which we have forsaken God in the past? (Answers will vary.)

Thursday (November 7): The Joy of the Lord

All people want to be happy, yet most people spend their entire lives searching in vain for peace and happiness. The Bible, however, reveals a source of peace, and happiness that is guaranteed to bring fullness to a person's life. In today's lesson we will take a closer look at this source of joy.

Discussion Questions:

- Read Nehemiah 8:13-18. What made the people so joyful at this time? (They had done all in their ability to conform their lives to the will of God as expressed in His Word, and as a result there was "very great gladness.") In what ways have you found this to be true in your life? (Answers will vary.)
- Read Psalm 40:8. What cause for joy is revealed in this verse? (True joy comes from having the principles of God's law and Word written in our mind and heart.)
- Read Psalm 19:7-13. What reasons can be found in each verse for rejoicing in God's Word and law? (Answers will vary.)

Friday (November 8): Joy in the Judgment

The seventh month (Tishri) was perhaps the most important one of the entire year, for in it the Israelites were to celebrate and observe the Feast of Trumpets, the Day of Atonement, and the Feast of Tabernacles. The Day of Atonement, in particular, signified the yearly conclusion of the atonement process, and at its conclusion all the people were "clean from all [their] sins before the Lord" (Leviticus 16:30). Today we live in the antitypical day of atonement, and in today's lesson we will look at reasons that we can rejoice in this solemn period of salvation history.

Discussion Questions:

- Read Leviticus 16:29,30. For us today, who are living in the antitypical Day of Atonement, what is our solemn duty? (To "afflict our souls" before God.) What does this mean? Might it result in some "sighing" and "mourning" such as the people in Jerusalem did during Nehemiah and Ezra's time? (This is a solemn time in earth's history, and it should be too in the life of every professed

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Christian.) What cause for rejoicing and peace is found in Leviticus 16:30? (We have the promise of forgiveness and cleansing from sin, so that we can stand in Christ's presence when He returns!)

- Read the following passages and discuss their relevance and application to us today:

We are now living in the great day of atonement. In the typical service, while the high priest was making the atonement for Israel, all were required to afflict their souls by repentance of sin and humiliation before the Lord, lest they be cut off from among the people. In like manner, all who would have their names retained in the book of life should now, in the few remaining days of their probation, afflict their souls before God by sorrow for sin and true repentance. There must be deep, faithful searching of heart. The light, frivolous spirit indulged by so many professed Christians must be put away. There is earnest warfare before all who would subdue the evil tendencies that strive for the mastery. The work of preparation is an individual work. We are not saved in groups. The purity and devotion of one will not offset the want of these qualities in another. Though all nations are to pass in judgment before God, yet He will examine the case of each individual with as close and searching scrutiny as if there were not another being upon the earth. Everyone must be tested and found without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. {GC 489.3}

If those who hide and excuse their faults could see how Satan exults over them, how he taunts Christ and holy angels with their course, they would make haste to confess their sins and to put them away. Through defects in the character, Satan works to gain control of the whole mind, and he knows that if these defects are cherished, he will succeed. Therefore he is constantly seeking to deceive the followers of Christ with his fatal sophistry that it is impossible for them to overcome. But Jesus pleads in their behalf His wounded hands, His bruised body; and He declares to all who would follow Him: "My grace is sufficient for thee." 2 Corinthians 12:9. "Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light." Matthew 11:29, 30. Let none, then, regard their defects as incurable. God will give faith and grace to overcome them. {GC 489.2}