

Lesson 28 - Get ready!

God's people return from being slaves, from Nehemiah 8 - 10;

Malachi 1, 3, 4; Ezra 7

The Jesus Storybook Bible - pgs. 170 - 175

Lesson

Ezra, Nehemiah, and Malachi ministered to the exiles who had returned to the Promised Land after being captive to the Babylonians. Their books describe how the exiles are trying to rebuild their lives, their city, and their nation. They also encouraged the exiles by revealing to them that their sovereign God was continuing his redemptive work and reestablishing true worship among them.

Israel was brought into their original covenant relationship with God at Mount Sinai in Exodus 19 – 20. There they were formed as God’s people and called to live in a particular way in the world. However, whenever the people faced a major new chapter in their journey, they were led through a season of covenant renewal: in Joshua 24, before they entered the Promised Land; in 1 Samuel 12, before they took a king; and here in Nehemiah 8 – 9, as they returned from the Babylonian exile. These times of covenant renewal had three parts to them. First, the people returned to biblical texts in order to remember the things God had called them to do and be. Second, they looked forward to the next chapter, to the new challenges they faced. Third, they rededicated their lives and resources to God for the next stage of the journey.

The Word of God became a moving force in the midst of the exiles. The reading of the Law revealed to them that they were perishing and unable to recover themselves. The law made them feel morally helpless. They realized not simply that they were sinners, but prisoners of sin, helpless to free or cure themselves.

This is the purpose of the law: it shows us that we do not just “fall short” of God’s will, but that we are completely under sin’s power. Because we cannot obey the law, it shows us our need for salvation by grace. It even indicates our need to move beyond rewards and punishments into a motivation of gratitude and love toward God as the basis for our obedience.

So the law continually emphasizes that we need a righteousness, a power, a love for God beyond ourselves and beyond the law. In other words, the law leads us toward recognition of our need for salvation by grace.

Memory Verse

In preparation for the study of the New Testament next year, help your child begin memorizing the books of the New Testament.

Matthew	1 Corinthians	1 Thessalonians	Hebrews	3 John
Mark	2 Corinthians	2 Thessalonians	James	Jude
Luke	Galatians	1 Timothy	1 Peter	Revelation
John	Ephesians	2 Timothy	2 Peter	
Acts	Philippians	Titus	1 John	
Romans	Colossians	Philemon	2 John	

***Lesson taken from *The Jesus Storybook Bible Curriculum*, written by Sally Lloyd-Jones and Sam Shammas.

If you do not have a copy of The Jesus Storybook Bible, we will have them for purchase in Cranmer Hall for \$10.