



*Ministry of
Biblical Studies*

Reset

APRIL LENTEN BIBLE STUDY SERIES
"10 Steps to Spiritual Renewal"
April 10th, 2024

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Welcome to the Metropolitan Community Church
Ministry of Biblical Study Classes
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“Is It Time for a Spiritual Reset In Your Life?” (cont.)

2. Worship: Renewal Requires Worship That is Guided by God’s Word. Neh. 8:4-6.

- The people worshiped God. The people sat in submission to hear God’s Word. After Ezra blessed God, the people then raised their hands while on their knees to worship God:

“4 Ezra the scribe stood at a wooden podium which they had made for the purpose. And beside him stood Mattithiah, Shema, Anaiah, Uriah, Hilkiah, and Maaseiah on his right; and Pedaiah, Mishael, Malchijah, Hashum, Hashbaddanah, Zechariah, and Meshullam on his left. 5 Then Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was standing above all the people; and when he opened it, all the people stood up. 6 Then Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God. And all the people answered, “Amen, Amen!” with the raising of their hands; then they kneeled down and worshiped the Lord with their faces to the ground.” (Neh. 8:4-6).

- Ezra’s position on a platform was not to elevate his importance. Instead, he symbolically elevated the importance of God’s Word. He also surrounded himself with 13 elders who made themselves accountable to help teach and explain God’s Word to the people. The people also received God’s Word in full submission. They stood up when he opened a scroll with God’s Word. When Ezra blessed God, the people again signaled their agreement with their response of “Amen, Amen”. They then worshiped God on their knees: “The repetition of ‘Amen, Amen!’ connotes the intensity of feeling behind the affirmation (2 Kings 11:14; Luke 23:21). The Amen as a congregational response is known from the time of David according to 1 Chronicles 16:36.”

- Spiritual renewal requires worship. The Jews' prior great revivals all included worship. As one of David's enduring legacies as king, he institutionalized the role of the Levites to lead the people in worship (1 Chr. 16:41-42; 25:1). The great reformer kings Hezekiah and Josiah reinstated David's reforms to ensure that the Jews continued to worship God out of gratitude (2 Chr. 30:21; 35:15). King Jehoshaphat, who at one point led a revival, prioritized repairing the Temple for worship before other reforms (2 Kgs. 22:4-5). King Josiah also prioritized repairing God's Temple to restore proper worship (2 Chr. 34:8-13; 2 Kgs. 22:3-7). At age 26, he had the wisdom to order his servants to repair the Temple for worship (2 Chr. 34:8). At that time, the Temple had not been fully repaired for approximately 218 years (2 Kgs. 12:1-16). Ezra also wisely understood that his Spirit-led reforms would not last without vibrant worship, a strong priesthood, and accountability. If you are looking for renewal, begin by renewing your worship life.

3. Learning the Word: Renewal Requires Learning and Knowing the Word. Neh. 8:7-8.

- The priests teach and explain God's law. Revival will not succeed with just one person. Thus, Nehemiah stressed the important role of the priests to teach and explain the law:

*"7 Also Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodiah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, and the Levites explained the Law to the people while the people remained in their place. 8 They read from the book, from the Law of God, translating to give the sense so that they understood the reading."
(Neh. 8:7-8).*

- God gave the law hundreds of years earlier at Mount Horeb. After living in exile, the Jews had lost their knowledge of many of the Jews practices. They had also adopted many Babylonian and Persian customs. Thus, they needed help to understand God's law.

