

Lesson 13: T is for Temple (Is. 9: 1-7, John 8:12; Nehemiah 8-9 Rebuilding the Temple)

12/8 & 12/9

Read Isaiah 9:1-7 and John 8:12

1. Isaiah describes "a child, a son" as a gift of divine grace to the nations. Take a moment to write down the characteristics of this son. Which quality resonates with you the most and why?
2. How does Isa 9:7 line up with the promise the Lord made to David in 2 Samuel 7?
3. Christians recognize the child mentioned in Isaiah to be the person of Jesus Christ, the long-promised Messiah. Why is it important that Jesus is bringing light to the world? How does Jesus do this?

T is for Temple (Nehemiah 8-9)

Note: The Hebrew word torah is most often translated into English as "law," and refers to the first five books of the Bible. But torah can also be translated as "instruction." We are instructed through the Old Testament stories and poems, not just in the commandments.

Read Nehemiah 8:1-8

4. In this section Ezra reads the Book of the Law of Moses to the people and the word "understand" is used to begin (v.2) and end the section (v.8). How do the people come to an understanding of the Book of the Law of Moses in this passage? Why is it important we know not only what Scripture says but also what it means?
5. Imagine the moment that Ezra opened the book (scroll) in the sight of all the people (Ezra 8:5-6). The people worshipped the Lord in response as Ezra blessed the Lord and the word was read. How might we grow in treasuring God's word as they did at this moment?

Read Nehemiah 8:9-12

6. Why do you think the people wept when they heard the words of the Book of the Law of Moses read? Why do Nehemiah and Ezra command them to be joyful rather than weep?
7. How do the instructions to the people not to weep from Nehemiah, Ezra, and the 13 Levites differ from Josiah's reaction to hearing this same rediscovered law read aloud in 2 Kings 22:1-10? Why the difference?

8. Have you experienced a time in which a sermon, a hymn, or your personal reading of Scripture moved you to tears?

Read Nehemiah 8:13-18

9. The leaders and Levites wasted no time going back to study God's words with Ezra, getting to it in earnest the very next day. What is it about Scripture that requires us to dig ever deeper? How can you do so, or encourage others?
10. While reading the Book of the Law of Moses Ezra, the priests, the scribes and the heads of house realize they are to celebrate the feasts of booths. The purpose of this feast is to remember God's provision for when they were in the wilderness before entering the promised land. Why has this festival been neglected and what does that say about the devotion of God's people?

Read Nehemiah 9

11. How does Ezra's prayer of rededication summarize each C.A.S.K.E.T. segment of God's story?
 - Creation (v.6)
 - Abraham (v. 7-8)
 - Sinai (v. 9-21)
 - Kings (v. 22-28)
 - Exile (v. 29-31)
 - Temple (v. 32-37)

C.A.S.K.E.T. Recap

12. Ezra and Nehemiah are both men of God to be admired, but when you read Nehemiah 13 you'll find that Judah was falling yet again into sin and rebellion against the gracious Lord who had miraculously brought them back from exile. The Old Testament ends with a thud. How do Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John complete the Old Testament story?

13. What is one insight about God's redemptive plan that you have come to appreciate from this study?