

## How Should Political Leaders Obey God?

The *International Sunday School Lesson* for Sunday May 25, 2008  
Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 13-14, 17-18

*“Ezra read from it [the book of the law of Moses] facing the square before the Water Gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of the men and the women and those who could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive to the book of the law”* (Nehemiah 8:3—NRSV).

*“And he read therein before the street that was before the water gate from the morning until midday, before the men and the women, and those that could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law”* (Nehemiah 8:3—KJV).

The spiritual renewal and survival of any nation begins with a return to practicing the Bible. After the Jews returned from captivity, Ezra, the priest, called them together and read to them the law of God. He probably read the first five books of the Bible, but perhaps only Deuteronomy. Both adults and children with understanding gave undivided attention as he read lengthy portions of the Bible day by day for seven days (Nehemiah 8:18).

Knowing the content of the Bible alone will not bring renewal. To make a real and lasting difference in a nation, the people who know the scriptures must also sincerely intend to obey God and His law. When Ezra read the law of God, he also prayed and blessed the Lord. Then, the people heartily responded, “Amen, Amen” (a double amen) which means, absolutely and without any doubt “so let it be!” or “it will be so!” (Nehemiah 8:6). Knowing that God claimed them for His own, they wanted to do their part in serving Him faithfully and fully.

Most often, renewal and a return to obeying the Bible must begin with the heads of families and the nation’s spiritual and political leaders actually studying the word of God so they can live according to God’s law and teach its appropriate application to others by example and word (Nehemiah 8:13). When leaders fail to lead according to God’s law, the nation will suffer. © 2008 by L.G. Parkhurst, Jr.

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## Questions for Further Thought or Class Discussion

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Think about your answers to the questions below before your Sunday school class meets, discuss in class, or use for further study. In some cases, I do not always write the questions to have a definitive right or wrong answer. In most cases, the questions should encourage everyone to think about how to apply biblical truths to their daily lives. Before beginning to answer the questions below, read the entire Scripture lesson in your favorite translation or compare translations. Write your thoughts in the space provided and take them to your Sunday school class for discussion.

1. Who are the spiritual leaders that Washington politicians might call to the Capitol to advise them today?
2. What denominations, churches, or religions are most likely to influence national and state politicians? Why? Do you think denominations, churches, or religions should try to influence politicians and politics today?
3. Do you think the majority of the politicians in national and state governments would make an effort to enact laws in accordance with the moral law or the 10 commandments or the Bible today? Why do you think some would not do so?
4. Can you think of examples where American laws have been enacted in accordance with or contrary to what the Bible teaches?
5. What lessons have you learned from Nehemiah that you can apply to the decisions you must make in choosing leaders in your nation, state, and church?

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