

Respect for God's Word

1. Israel and the Law

A. The Law vital to Israel's continuance and blessing - Dt 6:1-9; 28:1-2, 9, 13.

1. But over time the Law is neglected; Josiah finds the Law amid the rubble of the temple - 2 Chr 34:14-15, 19-21, 24-28. But it is too late.
2. Josiah's son, Jehoiakim, reflects the majority attitude - Jer 36:20-26.
3. God fulfills His promise to send a "famine" upon the land - Amos 8:11-12.

B. Revival of enthusiasm for the Law after the captivity.

1. Neh 8:1-3, 6-8, 9-13, 18; 9:1-3.
2. The people are overjoyed by their return to the land and the opportunity to once again "feast" on the word of God after the "famine."

2. Attitudes Toward God's Law Today

A. Some believe the Bible is a "mystery," not understandable or at least subjective - it means different things to different people. Eph 5:17 - *"understand what the will of the Lord is."*

B. Some have outright contempt for the concept of Biblical authority; they disregard what the Bible says.

1. When shown clear Bible teaching, they completely dismiss it because it doesn't fit with their church doctrine, personal desires or some situation.
2. **Illus.** Baptism. How much clearer than Mk 16:16; Ac 2:38; 22:16; 1 Pet 3:21? Yet creatively rejected by many who have been taught a doctrine of "no works."

C. Some who acknowledge the authority of God's word have lost their *zeal* for it.

1. A malaise has crept into many churches fostered by poor Bible class material, a "don't challenge me" mentality to study, members too busy or distracted by worldly pursuits to seriously study, overreliance on preachers, attitudes that consider study helps - commentaries, dictionaries/encyclopedias - anathema.
2. No one can teach students who don't want to learn - not even the Lord.

D. Is there not a “famine of hearing the words of the Lord” today?

3. Suggestions

A. We will take the word of God seriously when we feel our personal inadequacy to direct our own affairs. A **true** appreciation of Jesus leads us to His word - Lk 6:46; Jn 14:21-24.

B. We need to be:

1. Readers - A daily Bible reading program is vital to keeping our memories fresh.
2. Students - Turn off the TV and **study!**
3. Teachers - As capable, of neighbors, co-workers, weak brethren, new Christians, *children*.

C. We all have limitations - educational background, age/memory, social skills, etc.
Do the *best you can with what you've got!*

Conclusion: Be like Ezra: *“For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the Law of the Lord, and to do it and to teach statutes and ordinances in Israel”* (Ez 7:10).