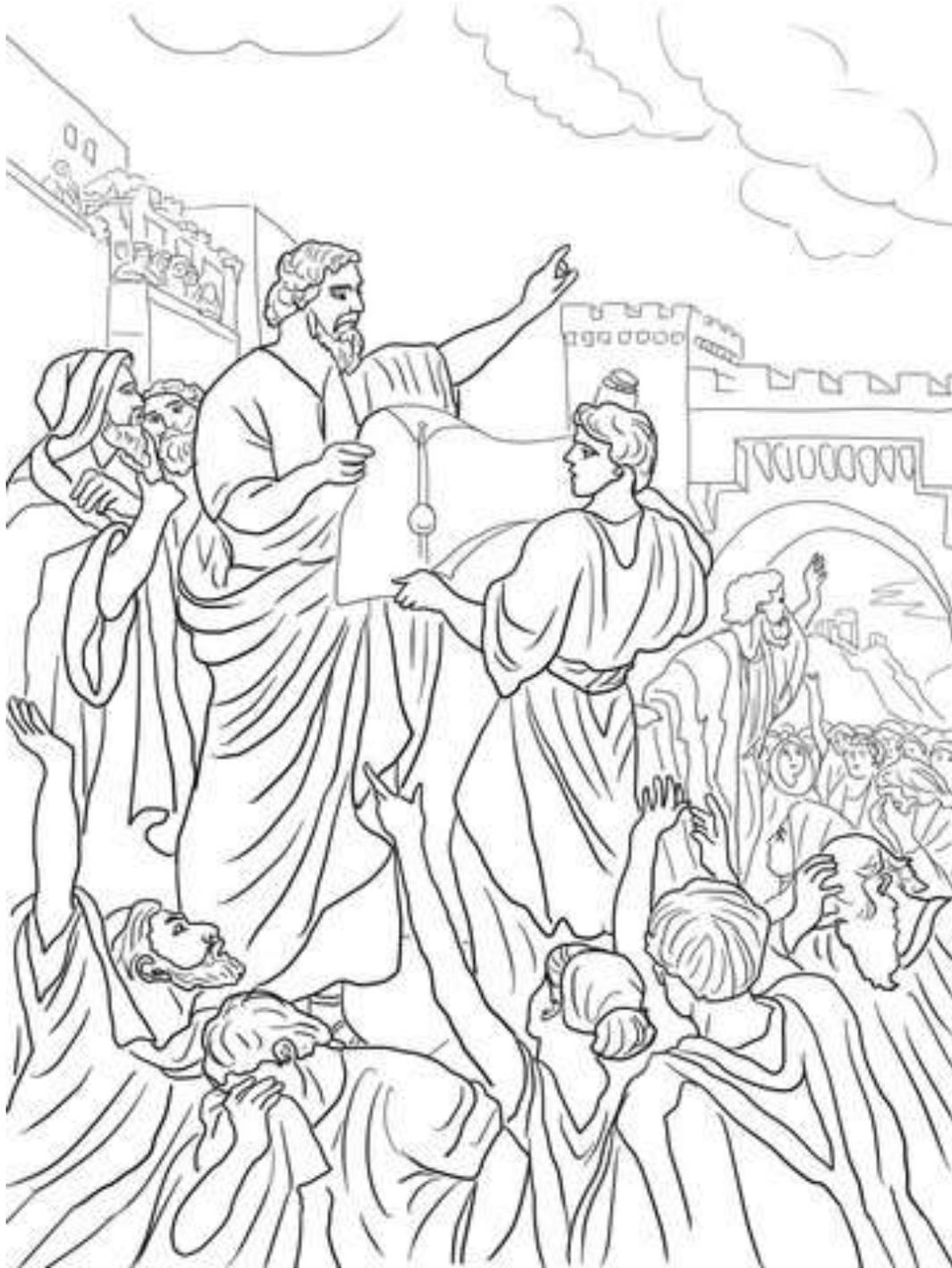


St. James Episcopal Church
A Moment for Kids—of All Ages!
JANUARY 24, 2016—THE THIRD SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY
EZRA READS THE TORAH



The people had been taken away from their homes, from the Temple (which was their church). They didn't have the Torah (the bible)—and they even thought that they had been taken away from God. When they returned to Jerusalem, Ezra and Nehemiah helped to rebuild the city, the Temple and, most importantly, to read the Torah to the people. It was a wonderful, joyous time, a terrific celebration. The people were very happy!

BRINGING THE GOSPEL HOME: THOUGHTS FOR PARENTS

The Return of the Exiled People of Israel

It was the year 445 B.C.E. The Jews, who had been taken into exile in Babylon, were home, back in Jerusalem. Under the leadership of Ezra and Nehemiah, they were rebuilding their city and the Temple. Ezra and Nehemiah knew that it wasn't enough just to rebuild the walls and buildings, they had to rebuild their faith and their understanding of and relationship with God. The way that they did this was through the Torah (or the Law). (We know the Torah as the first five books of the bible: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.) For 70 years they had not had the Torah, they felt separated from God. Now, they knew that God was with them.

Help your kids to understand the story by answering these questions together.

Fill in the blank:

"All the people gathered together into the square before the Water Gate. They told the scribe _____ to bring the book of the Law of Moses, which the LORD had given to Israel. (Nehemiah 8:1)

Circle the correct words:

"And 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** or **all the people walked away.**)" (Nehemiah 8:5)

"Then Ezra (**blessed** or **forgot**) the LORD, the great God, and all the people answered, 'Amen, Amen', lifting up their hands." (Nehemiah 8:6)

"So they read from the book, from the law of God, with interpretation. They gave the sense, so that the people (**understood** or **ignored**) the reading." (Nehemiah 8:8)

Fill in the blank:

"Go your way, eat good things and share what you have with the poor. For this day is holy to our LORD; and do not be sad, for the joy of the LORD is your _____." (Nehemiah 8:10)

Dinner Table Conversation:

What do you love about your home?

Why do you think God gave us the bible?

Sometimes the bible is hard to understand. If we read it together, would that help us to learn?

Where can we go if we need help to understand the stories in the bible?

This insert is prepared by Mother Bonnie. If you have any questions about it, please let me know.
It is posted weekly on www.stjamesbatavia.org