

**LESSONS THIS QUARTER.....LIVE AS GOD WANTS**

- 01) 3 Dec (12/10)..... Ezra 1:1-3:13 ..... Seizing New Opportunities
- 02) 10 Dec (12/17)..... Ezra 4:1-6:22 ..... Working w/ Confidence in God
- 03) 17 Dec (12/24).....Ezra 7:1-10:44 ..... Following Godly Spiritual Leaders
- 04) 31 Dec ..... Neh 1:1-3:32 ..... Working Cooperatively
- 05) 07 Jan..... Neh 4:1-7:73 .....Devising Strategies
- 06) 14 Jan..... Neh 8:1-10:39 .....Rededicating Lives
- 07) 21 Jan..... Ps 139:1-24 ..... Valuing Every Life
- 08) 28 Jan..... Neh 11:1-13:31 ..... Keeping Commitments
- 09) 04 Feb..... Esth 1:1-2:23 .....When Life turns upside Down
- 10) 11 Feb ..... Esth 3:1-4:17 ..... When Service is Risky
- 11) 18 Feb..... Esth 5:1-7:10 ..... How Courage Triumphs
- 12) 25 Feb ..... Esth 8:1-10:3 ..... What is Worth Celebrating

**INTRODUCTION / QUESTIONS / COMMENTS**

- Would you rather have an unrighteous, but knowledgeable leader or a righteous, but a less knowledgeable leader?
  - ♦ **Depends.** In the civic world, a smart unrighteous leader (e.g., Governor, President) may be OK (God directs his/her path anyway); but in the church, righteous & humble leadership is always desired – God can mitigate the knowledge gap – unless it’s due to lack of zeal

**LESSON PLAN**

- 1) **Altar and Temple Foundation established.....3:1-13**
  - a) Restoration of Worship was a priority ..... 7<sup>th</sup> month
    - i) Feast of Tabernacle with daily burnt offerings
    - ii) Freewill offerings & other ceremonies (feasts)
    - iii) God is big on ceremonies (WHY?) . **Zech 14:16-19**
      - (1) Glorify God, encouragement, public witness
  - b) Temple Foundation finished (2<sup>nd</sup> yr) ..... **v10**
    - i) Reappointment of Levites (20 yrs vs 30yrs)..... **v8**
      - (1) God did not object (He worked w/ them)
      - (2) Similar to Hezekiah celebrating Passover one month late while people got ready **2Chr 30:1-4**
    - ii) Rejoicing & Weeping ..... **v12,13**
    - iii) The glory of this house will be greater than Solomon’s [due to Jesus walking in it]..... **Hag 2:9**
- 2) **Outside Persecuted Stops Temple Progress .....4:1-24**
  - a) Leaders rejected outside help [Why?] ..... **vv1-3**
    - i) Discernment saw through the true motive of the neighbors to hamper Israel’s progress
    - ii) Caution on using this passage to justify isolation
      - (1) Much money was brought to buy land & material from indigenous neighbors
        - (a) 1 mina = 5yrs wages == \$1.2B..... **2:69**
        - (2) Israel took help from Persian Govt..... **7:22**
        - (3) Other biblical principles exist to limit help offered by new/non-believers/backsliders - E.g. Is it proper for an experienced CPA or Banker, whose testimony is questionable, to be on the Finance committee?
  - b) These disgruntled Samaritans hired lawyers..... **vv4-6**
  - c) Letter to Artaxerxes seems out of place, but is inserted, presumably, to reflect the true heart of the enemies and the extent they went to stop the work ..... **vv7-23**
    - i) Supposed discrepancies in the Bible are from man’s perspective – no doctrine is impacted
    - ii) God’s ways are not our ways – God possibly allows alleged discrepancies in His Word to foil unbelievers by giving them excuses to reject the truth – ‘seeing they shall not see’ ..... **Mark 4:12**  
PLUS – it makes us think more to give an answer

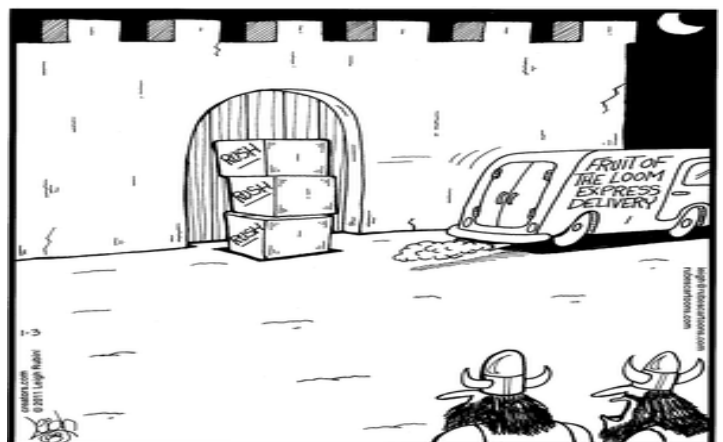
- 3) **Temple Work Resumed .....5:1-17**
  - a) Haggai & Zechariah to the rescue..... **v1**
    - i) Even good leaders may need extra support..... **v2**
    - ii) God oversees everything, even a 14yr delay..... **v5**
    - iii) Another official transcript (4 of 7)..... **vv6-17**
  - b) **Haggai**
    - i) Wrong priorities led to chastisement .....**vv1:4-11**
      - (1) Caution here on transferring cursing of the land to the NT era. Israelites were under a Land covenant. Our covenant is based on receipt or loss of blessings – not cursings
    - ii) Obedience brings blessings..... **vv1:12,14; 2:18,19**
    - iii) This temple will have more glory ..... **v2:9**
  - c) **Zechariah**
    - i) ‘Return to me so I may return to you’ ..... **1:3**
      - (1) Powerful principle – God has done a lot to position (draw) everyone unto salvation & blessings, but we need to go or return to Him
    - ii) Compassion & Prosperity ..... **1:16,17**
    - iii) Messianic message (the BRANCH)..... **3:8**
- 4) **Temple Completed .....6:1-22**
  - a) A 2<sup>nd</sup> decree from Darius confirms 1<sup>st</sup> decree ..... **vv8-12**
  - b) Temple sacrifices restored ..... **vv15-22**
    - i) Only thing missing – The Ark
    - ii) Dedication Ceremony ..... **v16**

**CONCLUSION**

- We need to recognize the time period we are in and act accordingly
- Like Ezra, we should strive to be skilled scribes in God’s word
  - ♦ Only by sound doctrine are we able to save ourselves, those who hear us, and to straighten out lives ..... **1Tim 4:16**

**SUPPORTING PASSAGES**

- Hag 2:9** The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the LORD of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the LORD of hosts.
- Mt 25:23** "His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.’
- 1Ti 3:10** These men must also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons if they are beyond reproach.



"Apparently, news of our imminent invasion has successfully struck fear into the enemy's hearts, among other places."