

LESSONS THIS QUARTER

- 1) 07 DecEsther 1-3.....Deliverance is Needed
- 2) 14 DecEsther 4-10.....God Provides Deliverance
- 3) 21 DecLuke 2.....God Provides a Savior
- 4) 28 DecEzra 1-6.....God Ordains Restoration
- 5) 04 JanEzra 7-10.....God Commands Obedience
- 6) 11 JanNehemiah 1-2.....God Inspires the Work
- 7) 18 JanSanctity of Life.....Protect Human Life
- 8) 25 JanNehemiah 3-6.....Be Faithful in Adversity
- 9) 01 FebNehemiah 7.....Do Your Appointed Part
- 10) 08 FebNehemiah 8.....Get an Understanding
- 11) 15 FebNehemiah 9.....Return to the Restoring God**
- 12) 22 FebNehemiah 10-13.....Commit Your Way to the Lord
- 13) 01 MarNahum 1-3.....God Is

INTRODUCTION

- God's word continues to entice the people to honestly repent and obey emphatically. This chapter also has the longest prayer in the Bible ever uttered
- The Jews probably read passages from the OT that reminded them of the sins of their parents:
 1. Like an adulteress wife they constantly cheated on their spouse (God) just to make Him angry Ezek 16:25-26
 2. They were murderous Isaiah 1:21
 3. They were involved with sorceries and witchcraft Isaiah 47:12
 4. They slew their own children Isaiah 57:5
 5. They were involved in sexual perversion of homosexuality, incest, and bestiality Lev 20:1-23; 1Kings 14:24
 6. And worst of all, they were idolatrous 2Kings 17:12
- Within a few short years the returning exiles found themselves repeating the sins of their parents, beginning with marrying foreign women who would lead them in their nation's downfall once again
- Yet, God still sought for His wayward bride with unbridled love – no matter what she did to spite Him Joel 2:12-13

Passage	Comments
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Would we take our spiritual walk with God that serious to spend ½ a day in worship and study? Should we? • vv4-5. Notice that many of these Levites were named in 8:7-8 and they translated God's word so the people could fully understand its rich meaning
Why Would Reading God's Word Effect Such Repentant Change?	<p>Let God's Word Speak for Itself</p> <p>Jer 23:29 Is not My word like fire? declares the LORD, and like a hammer which shatters a rock?</p> <p>Eph 5:26 That [Jesus] might sanctify and cleanse [the Church] with the washing of water by His word</p> <p>Heb 4:12 For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.</p>
9:6-38	<p>Longest Prayer in the Bible</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These 33 verses only take 4 minutes to recite • This prayer recalls God's wonderful works (23vs), and acknowledged the sins of the parents (10vs), which caused the current generation to be enslaved, & the recommitment of the current generation (1 verse) with 85 leaders putting their names on the line <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ v16. The blame was on the parents for "they were stubborn and WOULD NOT LISTEN" ♦ v17. Yet God was ready to forgive and forget ♦ v33. Notice that the people acknowledged God's faithfulness and their wickedness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Before repentance comes honest evaluation • v38. The prayer ends with the people committing themselves in writing to return to God wholeheartedly

Passage	Comments
Nehemiah 9:1-5	<p>Confession & Repentance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • v1. Planned Repentance. It's strange to us why people would dress in sackcloth and cast dirt or ash upon themselves to represent a humbled state – but it worked for them <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Would God have been just as pleased if they dressed in their normal attire? Since God intimately knows the heart, most certainly. God is not as concerned with the outward appearance as He is with an inward change of the heart ♦ Outward appearance to show public humility may be nice initially, but after a while, it can become a sacred cow as depicted by Jesus highlighting how the religious hypocrites took pride in their fastings Matt 6:16; 23:5 • v2. Separating from foreigners is quickly mentioned with little detail how it was done. I suspect this was reminiscent of Ezra 10 where Ezra took almost 100 days to resolve over 100 cases of foreign marriages <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Again, being married to a foreigner was not a problem unless it was to an idolatrous foreigner ♦ What would be comparable for us? What would we need to separate ourselves from to draw closer to God? TV? Computer? Hobby? Food? Friends? • v3. This Bible reading session lasting 3-4 hrs, followed by 3-4 hrs of worship – They finally took God seriously <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ It's not that studying and worshipping typically should take 6-8 hours, but their dire situation required them to fix what was broke, and it was broke for a long, long time

CONCLUSION / APPLICATIONS / BENEFITS

- **Joel 2:12-13 seems to say it best...** "Yet even now, declares the LORD, 'Return to Me with all your heart, and with fasting, weeping and mourning; and rend your heart and not your garments.' Now return to the LORD your God, for He is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, abounding in lovingkindness and relenting of evil."

NEXT WEEK: Nehemiah 10-13. Joyful and thankful worship of our holy and righteous God is not a nice thing; it's the only thing we should be concerned about

...Some Wonderful Bible Facts
✦ The Bible can be read aloud in 70 hours.
✦ There are 8,674 different Hebrew words in the Bible, 5,624 different Greek words, & 12,143 different English words in the King James Bible
✦ Number of books in the Bible: 66; Number of authors: 40
✦ Chapters: 1,189; Verses: 31,101; Words: 783,137;
✦ Number of promises given in the Bible: 1,260
✦ Commands: 6,468; Predictions: over 8,000
✦ Fulfilled prophecy: 3,268 verses; Unfulfilled prophecy: 3,140
✦ There are 365 prophecies about the coming of the Messiah, over 60 have been fulfilled, and 15 of those refer to His birth; so about 300 are still future
✦ There are 613 laws in the Law of Moses! 366 were <u>probations</u> – "Thy shall NOT" and 248 were affirmations – "Thy shall!"
✦ Number of questions: 3,294
✦ Longest name: Mahershalalhashbaz (Isaiah 8:1)
✦ Longest verse: Esther 8:9 (78 words)
✦ Longest prayer: Nehemiah 9:6-38
✦ Shortest verse: John 11:35 (2 words: "Jesus wept").
✦ Middle books: Micah and Nahum
✦ Middle verse: Psalm 118:8; Middle chapter: Psalm 117
✦ Shortest chapter (by number of words): Psalm 117
✦ Longest book: Psalms (150 chapters)
✦ Shortest book (by number of words): 3 John
✦ Longest chapter: Psalm 119 (176 verses)
✦ Spacing between words became common in 7th century A.D.; The system of chapters was introduced in A.D. 1238 by Cardinal Hugo de S. Caro, while the verse notations were added in 1551 by Robertus Stephanus – after the advent of printing; and rules of punctuation became common in the mid 1600's