

LESSONS THIS QUARTER

- 1) 07 Dec .....Esther 1-3..... Deliverance is Needed
- 2) 14 Dec .....Esther 4-10..... God Provides Deliverance**
- 3) 21 Dec .....Luke 2..... God Provides a Savior
- 4) 28 Dec .....Ezra 1-6..... God Ordains Restoration
- 5) 04 Jan .....Ezra 7-10..... God Commands Obedience
- 6) 11 Jan .....Nehemiah 1-2..... God Inspires the Work

INTRODUCTION

- The issue the Jews were faced with was bigger than they were. They needed God's help, and they apparently got it by fasting. Fasting didn't weaken God's knees to bend to their whims and wishes, rather fasting humbled them to bow before God and trust Him working through the circumstances providentially
- When is it appropriate to withhold the truth? Incidences of withholding the truth are found throughout Esther
  - ♦ Esther concealed her Jewish heritage
  - ♦ Haman did not tell the King he wanted to kill the Israelites
  - ♦ The King delayed telling Haman who he was going to honor
  - ♦ Esther did not reveal her issue till after the 2<sup>nd</sup> banquet

| Passage                                     | Comments  |
|---|---|
|   | <p><b>Zech 7:5-10</b> "Say to all the people of the land and to the priests, 'When you fasted and mourned ... was it actually for Me that you fasted?'" vv9-10 "Thus has the LORD of hosts said:"</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Dispense true justice</li> <li>2) Practice kindness and compassion</li> <li>3) Do not oppress the widow, the orphan, the stranger or the poor</li> <li>4) Do not devise evil against one another</li> </ol>   |
| Purpose of Fasting                          | <p><b>Isaiah 58 – Fasting God's Way</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• v6. To win the battle against wickedness; to bring relief to those afflicted; to relieve oppression; &amp; to break every yoke</li> <li>• v7. To share with the hungry; to restore the homeless/poor; to cover the naked; and to resolve personal issues</li> <li>• v5. Results of a Godly 1-day Fast are achieved</li> <li>• v8. Hope is seen; Health restored; Righteousness is restored; and God's glory is proclaimed</li> <li>• v9. Prayers are answered</li> </ul>   |
| 5:1-14                                      | <p><b>Sometimes We Have To Take Risks and Act Courageously</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• vv1-8. Esther approached the King                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Esther's presence was quite acceptable to the king - People take notice of a godly person ..... Prov 22:11</li> <li>♦ King probably sensed Esther was there for something more pressing than a social call. God prefers to work through our obedience to accomplish His will</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Esther must've sensed the proper timing of her appeal                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ vv9-14. Haman Plotted Mordecai's Death, BUT Mordecai would not bow before Haman. "A righteous man falling down before the wicked is [like a polluted] spring" ..... Pr 25:26</li> <li>♦ God's working behind the scenes                             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The sleepless King</li> <li>2. The right bed-time story</li> <li>3. The timely arrival of Haman in the morning</li> <li>4. The right question to Haman to entice his fall</li> <li>5. The befitting honor of Mordecai – the JEW</li> </ol> </li> <li>♦ Warning: Never dishonor even your enemies, cause God can chose to honor them.....Pr 24:17,18; 26:27</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
| 6:1-14                                      | <p><b>It's Time for Honor</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mordecai was not changed by the high honor he received</li> <li>• And Haman no longer was in control of things</li> </ul>  |
| 7:1-10                                      | <p><b>It's Time for a Hanging</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The pieces of the puzzle began to fall in place. The King realized he was duped by Haman. Haman sealed his own fate</li> </ul>   |
| Esther 8:1-17                               | <p><b>A time for Repair</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• After receiving Haman's estate, Esther now had to resolve the irrevocable edict to slay all Jews in about 10 months</li> <li>• The original edict was countered by a 2<sup>nd</sup> Edict                     <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Esther worked within the system</li> <li>2. Everything resolved by probable providence</li> </ol> </li> <li>• When Righteousness prevails, people rejoice ..... Prov 29:2</li> </ul>   |
| 9:1-16                                      | <p><b>A time for Slaughter</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• v2. Jews went on pre-emptive strikes against leaders                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ "Cut the head off the snake" principle</li> </ul> </li> <li>• vv13-15. Esther asks for a 2<sup>nd</sup> day of killing to continue                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ You can't let evil linger or let it get another toe hold</li> </ul> </li> <li>• v15. Jews avoided war atrocities due to greed or brutality</li> </ul>   |
| 9:17-32                                     | <p><b>A time for Celebrating</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 16 verses out of 166 (10%) are focused on celebration</li> <li>• The Jewish religion is festive. God is to be enjoyed</li> <li>• If God's work and worship are boring – shame on us!</li> </ul>   |
| 10:1-3                                      | <p><b>A time for Righteousness</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• v1. "Laid a Tribute on the Land" equivalent to forced labor/taxes</li> <li>• v3. Mordecai – a man for the times</li> </ul>  |
| Possible NT Reference to the Feast of Purim | <p>Christ probably attended this 'Feast of Purim.' "There seems little doubt that this was the 'feast of the Jews,' to which the Savior 'went up to Jerusalem' when He healed the 'impotent man' at the Pool of Bethesda (p. 332)." There is great debate among the scholars what John meant by the 'feast of the Jews (Jn. 5:1).' John wrote: "After this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem (Jn. 5:1)." No one knows for sure what feast day John is referring to here. Dr. Edersheim believes it was the 'Feast of Purim' because this is the only feast day that occurs between December and March-April, the time of the Passover (Jn 4:35, Jn 6:4). – Alfred Edersheim, in his book The Temple</p>   |

CONCLUSION / APPLICATIONS / BENEFITS

- The Lord does not promise to give us a risk-free life
- AND, God doesn't need us, BUT He wants to use us, if we are pliable

NEXT WEEK: Luke 2. Christmas Message.

| Passage              | Comments   |
|----------------------|--|
| Esther 4:1-17        | <p><b>Response to Disaster</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• vv1-7. Emotions run high. Ripe for mistakes to be made</li> <li>• vv1-2. Mordecai tempered his response. He mourned severely, but he did not cross over the fine line of disrespect or bad behavior</li> <li>• vv8-11. Esther was also removed from the misery. She sought to relieve the misery by giving things away                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Seek to work w/in proper channels to fix problems</li> <li>♦ Should we ever bypass proper channels?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• v13. Keeping head in sand does not provide safety                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ v14. God doesn't need us – WE ARE ALL REPLACEABLE</li> <li>♦ vv15-16. A time to pray &amp; fast corporately</li> <li>♦ v16. A time to trust God implicitly</li> <li>♦ v17. Mordecai listened to Esther's advice</li> </ul> </li> <li>• If we want people to listen to us, we need to listen to them</li> </ul>   |
| Fasting in the Bible | <p><b>FASTING</b> ..... see Easton's Revised Bible Dictionary<br/>The only fast required by the law of Moses was that of the great Day of Atonement (Lev 23:26-32). It is called "the fast" (Acts 27:9).<br/>The only other mention of a periodical fast in the Old Testament is in Zechariah 7:1-7 8:19, from which it appears that during their captivity the Jews observed four annual fasts:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The fast of the <b>fourth month</b>, kept on the seventeenth day of Tammuz, the anniversary of the capture of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans; to commemorate also the incident recorded (Ex 32:19; Jer 52:6,7)</li> <li>2. The fast of the <b>fifth month</b>, kept on the ninth of Ab (Num 14:27) to commemorate the burning of the city and temple (Jer 52:12,13)</li> <li>3. The fast of the <b>seventh month</b>, kept on the third of Tisri (2Ki 25:1ff) the anniversary of the murder of Gedaliah (Jer 41:1,2)</li> <li>4. The fast of the <b>tenth month</b> (Jer 52:4; Eze 33:21; 2Ki 25:1) to commemorate the beginning of the siege of the holy city by Nebuchadnezzar.</li> </ol> <p>There was in addition to these the fast appointed by Esther (4:16). Public national fasts on account of sin or to supplicate divine favor were sometimes held:<br/>1) 1Sa 7:6; 2) 2Ch 20:3; 3) Jer 36:6-10; 4) Jud 20:26<br/>5) Ne 9:1 There were also local fasts. 6) 2Sa 1:12;<br/>7) 1Sa 31:13; 8) 1Ki 21:9-12; 9) Eze 8:21-23; 10) Jon 3:5-9</p> <p>There are many instances of private occasional fasting:<br/>1Sam 1:7; 1Sam 20:34; 2Sam 3:35; 12:16; 1King 21:27; Ezra 10:6; Ne 1:4; Dan 10:2,3. Moses fasted forty days twice (Ex 24:18; 34:28). Elijah fasted 40 days (1King 19:8). Our Lord fasted forty days in the wilderness (Mt 4:2). Unfortunately, the practice of fasting was often abused (Is 58:4; Jer 14:12; Zec 7:5). Our Lord rebuked the Pharisees for their hypocritical pretenses in fasting Mat 6:16. Christ himself appointed no fast. The early Jewish Christians, however, observed the ordinary fasts according to their traditions and the law of Moses (Acts 13:3; 14:23; 2Co 6:5).</p> |

## Jewish Calendar of Feast Days, Sabbaths, and Months

| # | Jewish Feasts  | Scripture Referenes   | When   |
|---|--|---|--|
| 1 | <b>Feast of Purim (Lots)</b>                                       | <b>Esth. 9:18-32</b>  | <b>14th &amp; 15th days of 12th month (Adar)</b>                       |
| 2 | Passover / Pesach  | Ex. 12:1-14; Lev. 23:5; Num. 9:1-14; Num. 28:16; Deut. 16:1-7             | 14th day of the 1st month (Nisan)                                      |
| 3 | <b>Feast of Unleavened Bread</b>                                   | Ex. 12:15-20; Ex. 13:3-10; Lev. 23:6-8; Num. 28:17-25; Deut. 16:3,4,8     | 15th day of the 1st month (Nisan) until 21st                           |
| 4 | <b>Feast of Firstfruits</b>  | Lev. 23:9-14; Num. 28:26  | 1st Sunday after Nisan 15th  |
| 5 | <b>Feast of Weeks (Pentecost / (Shavuot)) (6th of Sivan, 5767)</b> | Ex. 23:16; Ex. 34:22; Lev. 23:15-21; Num. 28:26; Deut. 16:9-12            | 50 days after the 1st Sabbath following the Passover (always a Sunday) |
| 6 | <b>Feast of Trumpets (Rosh-Hashanah)</b>                           | Lev. 23:23-25; Num. 29:1-6  | 1st day of the 7th month (Tishri)                                      |
| 7 | <b>Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur)</b>                               | Lev. 16; 23:26-32; Num. 29:7-11   | 10th day of the 7th month (Tishri)                                     |
| 8 | <b>Feast of Tabernacles (Booths / Sukkot)</b>                      | Ex. 23:16; Ex. 34:22; Lev. 23:33-36, 39-43; Num. 29:12-38; Deut. 16:13-15 | 15th to 22nd day of 7th month (Tishri)                                 |
| 9 | <b>Feast of Dedication (Lights or Hanukkah)</b>                    | A reference to it is found in John 10:22                                  | 25th day of 9th month (Kislev) for 8 days                              |

**Note #1:** Some Messianic Jews believe we are in the middle of the Tribulation, and the 2 witnesses of Revelations 11 are expected on **21 December 2014**

**Note #2.** BUT, this "American-ized mid-trib outlook fails to consider things from Israel's perspective. Israel has not had a peaceful existence in the past 3.5 years as depicted in Ezekiel 38-39, nor has Israel rebuilt her Temple as described in Rv 11:1-2 to restore animal sacrifices

## Major Jewish Holidays and Fasts for 2015 (Jewish Year 5775)

Dates in **bold** are *yom tov*, so they have similar obligations and restrictions to Shabbat in the sense that normal "work" is forbidden. Pink Table Rows depict Esther's influence (Source: <http://www.hebcal.com/holidays/2014-2015>)

| Holiday            | Dates   | Description   |
|--------------------|---|---|
| Ta'anit Esther     | Mar 4   | Fast of Esther  |
| Purim              | Mar 5   | Purim is one of the most joyous and fun holidays on the Jewish calendar   |
| Purim Katan        |   | Minor Purim celebration during Adar I on leap years                       |
| Pesach             | <b>Apr 4-5</b><br>Apr 6-9<br><b>Apr 10-11</b> | Passover, the Feast of Unleavened Bread ( <b>Blood Moon*</b> )            |
| Pesach Sheni       | May 3, 2015                                   | Second Passover, one month after Passover                                 |
| Shavuot            | <b>May 24-25, 2015</b>                        | Festival of Weeks, commemorates the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai    |
| Tish'a B'Av        | Jul 26, 2015                                  | The Ninth of Av, fast commemorating the destruction of the two Temples    |
| Rosh Hashana       | Sep 14-15                                     | The Jewish New Year   |
| Yom Kippur         | Sept 23                                       | Day of Atonement  |
| Sukkot             | <b>Sep 28-29</b><br>Sep 30-Oct 4              | Feast of Tabernacles ( <b>Blood Moon*</b> )                               |
| Shmini Atzeret     | <b>Oct 5</b>                                  | Eighth Day of Assembly  |
| Simchat Torah      | <b>Oct 6</b>                                  | Day of Celebrating the Torah  |
| Chanukah (Hanukah) | Dec 7-14                                      | The Jewish festival of rededication, also known as the Festival of Lights |

## Modern Holidays 2015

| Holiday          | Dates  | Description              |
|------------------|--------|--------------------------|
| Yom HaShoah      | Apr 16 | Holocaust Memorial Day   |
| Yom HaZikaron    | Apr 22 | Israeli Memorial Day     |
| Yom HaAtzma'ut   | Apr 23 | Israeli Independence Day |
| Yom Yerushalayim | May 17 | Jerusalem                |

## Special Shabbatot (Sabbaths) 2015

| Holiday           | Dates  | Description  |
|-------------------|--------|--|
| Shabbat Shekalim  | Feb 14 | Shabbat before Rosh Chodesh Adar   |
| Shabbat Zachor    | Feb 28 | Shabbat before Purim   |
| Shabbat Parah     | Mar 14 | Shabbat of the Red Heifer  |
| Shabbat HaChodesh | Mar 21 | Shabbat before Rosh Chodesh Nisan  |
| Shabbat HaGadol   | Mar 28 | Shabbat before Pesach  |
| Shabbat Chazon    | Jul 25 | Shabbat before Tish'a B'Av (Shabbat of Prophecy/Shabbat of Vision)             |
| Shabbat Nachamu   | Aug 1  | Shabbat after Tish'a B'Av (Shabbat of Consolation)                             |
| Shabbat Shuva     | Sep 19 | Shabbat that falls between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur (Shabbat of Returning) |

## Rosh Chodesh (Jewish Months) 2015

| Holiday                                  | Dates      | Description   |
|--|------------|---|
| Rosh Chodesh Sh'vat (or <i>Shebhat</i> ) | Jan 21     | Beginning of new Hebrew month of Sh'vat (Zech1:7, <a href="#">1 Maccabees 16:14</a> ) |
| Rosh Chodesh Adar                        | Feb 19     | Beginning of new Hebrew month of 'Adar (Ezra 6:15; Esther 3:7, 8:12)                  |
| Rosh Chodesh Adar II                     | Leap Month | (not named in Scripture) Recent Leap Months (2014, 2016, 2019)                        |
| Rosh Chodesh Nisan                       | Mar 21     | Beginning of new Hebrew month of Nisan (Nehemiah 2:1; Esther 3:7)                     |
| Rosh Chodesh Iyyar                       | Apr 19     | Beginning of new Hebrew month of 'Iyyar (not named in Scripture)                      |
| Rosh Chodesh Sivan                       | May 19     | Beginning of new Hebrew month of Siwan (Esther 8:9; <a href="#">Baruch 1:8</a> )      |
| Rosh Chodesh Tamuz                       | Jun 17     | Beginning of new Hebrew month of Tammuz (Ezekiel 8:14)                                |
| Rosh Chodesh Av                          | Jul 17     | Beginning of new Hebrew month of 'Abh (not named in Scripture)                        |
| Rosh Chodesh Elul                        | Aug 15     | Beginning of new Hebrew month of 'Elul (Neh 6:15; <a href="#">1 Maccabees 14:27</a> ) |
| Rosh Chodesh Cheshvan                    | Oct 13     | Beginning of new Hebrew month of Cheshvan (not named in Scripture)                    |
| Rosh Chodesh Kislev                      | Nov 12     | Beginning of new Hebrew month of Kislev (Zech 7:1; Neh 1:1)                           |
| Rosh Chodesh Tevet (or <i>Tebeth</i> )   | Dec 12     | Beginning of new Hebrew month of Tebeth (Esther 2:16)                                 |

## Minor Fasts 2015

| Holiday          | Dates  | Description  |
|------------------|--------|--|
| Asara B'Tevet    | Jan 1  | Fast commemorating the siege of Jerusalem                                |
| Ta'anit Esther   | Mar 4  | Fast of Esther   |
| Ta'anit Bechorot | Apr 3  | Fast of the First Born   |
| Tzom Tammuz      | Jul 5  | Fast commemorating breaching of the walls of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar |
| Tzom Gedaliah    | Sep 16 | Fast of the Seventh Month, com   |

## Minor Holidays 2015

| Holiday       | Dates | Description  |
|---------------|-------|--|
| Tu BiShvat    | Feb 4 | New Year for Trees   |
| Shushan Purim | Mar 6 | Purim celebrated in Jerusalem and walled cities              |
| Pesach Sheni  | May 3 | Second Passover, one month after Passover                    |
| Lag B'Omer    | May 7 | 33rd day of counting the Omer                                |
| Leil Selichot | Sep 5 | Prayers for forgiveness in preparation for the High Holidays |

**Note(\*):** Since there is a media frenzy over the so-called "**Four Blood Moons**" here are the dates: Jewish Passovers on April 15, 2014, and **April 4, 2015**, and the Feasts of Tabernacles on Oct. 8, 2014, and **Sep. 28, 2015**. For more information, see <http://www.wnd.com/2013/10/blood-moons-expert-watch-2014-and-2015/>