

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**
- 7) 18 Jan Sanctity of Life Protect Human Life
- 8) 25 Jan Nehemiah 3-6 Be Faithful in Adversity
- 9) 01 Feb Nehemiah 7 Do Your Appointed Part
- 10) 08 Feb Nehemiah 8 Get an Understanding
- 11) 15 Feb Nehemiah 9 Return to the Restoring God
- 12) 22 Feb Nehemiah 10-13 Commit Your Way to the Lord
- 13) 01 Mar Nahum 1-3 God Is

INTRODUCTION

- Godly people in ungodly situations doing their godly mission
 - ♦ Nehemiah – Cup Bearer (aka bartender). Akin to a captured Al Qaeda being a trusted advisor to the U.S. President.
 - ♦ Esther - part of a harem (a sex slave), unequally yoked to an unbeliever
- Two different leaders (Ezra & Nehemiah), two different approaches, same accomplishment – resolution of tough problems & restoration of worship

Date	Persian King	Event	Scripture
486-465	Xerxes (Ahasuerus)	Esther's King (Assassinated)	Ezra 4:6; Est 1-10
465-424	Artaxerxes I (Longimanus); Possibly influenced by Esther	Allows Ezra & Nehemiah to travel to Jerusalem	Ezra 7-12 Neh 1-13

Date	Event	Scripture
516	Temple is completed	Ezra 5-6
478	Esther is Queen to Ahasuerus (Xerxes)	Esther
457	Artaxerxes sends Ezra to Jerusalem	Ezra 7-10
444	Artaxerxes sends Nehemiah to rebuild	Neh 1-12
432	Nehemiah makes a 2 nd trip to Jerusalem 12 years later	Neh 13

Comparison Event	Ezra (good cop)	Nehemiah (bad cop)
Type of leader	Priest/Scribe (7:1-5)	Governor (2:7-10)
Mission	Worship Leader (7:10)	Wall Builder (2:13)
800 mile trip to Jerusalem	Prayed for protection (8:21,22)	Accepted military escort (2:9)
Response to leaders oppressing the people	None observed	Used mob intimidation. He set up a great assembly against them (5:6-13)
Response to mix marriages	Pulled hair & beard out of himself (9:3)	Contended, cursed, smote, pulled hair of others, and made them vow to be good (13:25)
Response to heathens in the temple	Ezra may have lost his effectiveness (possibly due to age) or he had died by this time	Threw their stuff out in the street (13:7-9)
Response to temple neglect		Contended w/ the rulers (13:10-13)
Response to Sabbath neglect		Contended w/ nobles and threatened to use violence on Sabbath violators (13:15-21)
Response to one priest who was related to Sanballat – who sought to kill Nehemiah		Chased him away from his presence (13:28)

Passage	Comments
Nehemiah 1:1-11	<p>Begin with Prayer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • v1: Chislev/Kislev was the 9th month of the Jewish Calendar (Nov/Dec) • v4: Prayer & Fasting – Jews were expected to fast 1 day each year – Day of Atonement Lev 23:26-32 • Nehemiah's first priority was to pray for God's intervention. Praying was not a last resort for him. 13 Prayers in Nehemiah <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ It's OK to pray few words Ecc 5:1,2 ♦ And it's OK to even pray for the obvious Zech 10:1 • v5. Look at this great insight about God: "Oh Lord you preserve (and fulfill) your promises to those who love and obey you." So, you want God to be faithful to His promises toward you, then willingly Love & Obey Him! It's that simple.

Passage	Comments
2:1-16	<p>Take Steps of Faith</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • v1. Nisan was the 1st month of Jewish calendar (Mar/ Apr). Timing, in this case 4 months, and circumstances are always a part of providentially-answered prayer • v2. Why was Nehemiah "very much afraid"? If he was a mature believer why be afraid of what man could do to him? Or was Nehemiah just like us? • v4. God even answers short, quick prayers • vv5-8. Decree to "restore and build Jerusalem" – 69-wk countdown to the Messiah (cf Dan 9:25, Ezr 17:13) • v10. The wicked were displeased that God's people were cared for – WHY?. Similar to radical Muslims killing aid workers and Christians; and how atheists and even liberal Christians are attacking AIG's building a replica of Noah's Ark
2:17-20	<p>To win Volunteers – Be a Motivator</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • vv17-18. State the need and how God is proceeding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Watch out for serving in the flesh vs in the Spirit ♦ Church Programs can be powerful ministry tools or a detriment to people. Always evaluate the wallsHOW? • vv19-20. Expect persecution AND continue to make plans to expound the Gospel by "rising and building"

	Prayers	Request
1.	1:4-11	Mourned, fasted & prayed many days – praised God for His greatness and faithfulness, repented of 'our' national sins; asked for mercy from the king
2.	2:4	Short, unknown prayer, shot up in a moment's notice to quickly respond to the king's request
3.	4:4-5	Cursed the enemies of God (Sanballat, Tobiah, et al)
4.	4:9	Unknown prayer for protection backed up w/ guard duty
5.	5:19	God – Please bless my hard work for you
6.	6:9	Short prayer for strength against God's enemies
7.	6:14	God – Please curse those who seek to harm your work
8.	9:1-5	People mourned, fasted & prayed w/ confession of sins
9.	9:6-38	Longest Prayer in the Bible – Godly Praise, acknowledgement of sins, and renewed commitment
10.	13:14	God – Please bless my hard work for you
11.	13:22	
12.	13:31	
13.	13:29	God – Curse the Priests & Levites who take their job lightly

CONCLUSION / APPLICATIONS / BENEFITS

- Never underestimate PRAYER – Be devoted to it (see Acts 1:14; 2:42; 6:4; Rom 12:12; 1Cor 7:5; Col 4:2)
- Always evaluate "the walls"... (identify spiritual cracks and fix 'em; know thy enemy [Satan] and prepare for attacks; be unified with other believers and "rise & build"; and draw near to God by loving and obeying His commandments)

NEXT WEEK: Passages on the Sanctity of Life. (Genesis/Psalms)



Don't let persecution discourage us or slow us down spreading the Gospel, but let us "rise and build"...Nehemiah 2:20