

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

- After completing a big construction project comes the chore of working day-to-day issues to maintain it, protect it, and grow it, and trying to do it with the same enthusiasm and drive

Passage	Comments
Nehemiah 7:1-2	<p>Coping w/ Day-to-Day Issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When the construction work was done (i.e., the gates had locking doors with guards, and the temple had singers and attenders for proper worship) Nehemiah gave attention to the daily protection and upkeep of the city <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Note the character and spiritual qualifications of those put in charge – they were faithful and God-fearing ♦ Spiritual qualifications seem to have precedence over technical qualifications, even for civic roles (If only American voters would be so conscientious to put spiritually-qualified men & women into office, and not those who promise everything & deliver nothing) • Did Nehemiah play favorites by giving his brother, Hanani, a Govt job? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Consider this. We see Hanani in Chap 1:2-3, and he's reporting to his brother the dire straits of Jerusalem, expressing the need for help – So Hanani was indeed deeply involved with Jerusalem's welfare as he made at least 2 trips to/from Jerusalem (about 800 miles each way)
7:3-5	<p>Know If/When God Is Prompting/Leading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • v3. It sounds like Jerusalem was under martial law. All gates were shut till the sun was fully up – and this was imposed by God-fearing people • v4. BUT, there was a problem – few wanted to live in the city. After all, who wants to live in a crowded city with few amenities, e.g., lack of indoor plumbing and trash removal? Each family had to haul their own trash and dung out through the Dung Gate. • v5. "Then my God put it into my heart..." – Does God still do this? How does one tell? Is it subjective? Does God do this for anyone or only for a select few? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ What was the significance of this roll call?
7:6-63	<p>Know Your Neighbor and Who's Qualified To Serve</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Keeping track of numbers and statistics is OK ♦ Know where you are at and where you are going, and who is with you and who is against you
7:63-69	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • v64. Why were some priests considered "unclean" just because they couldn't validate their lineage? If God is not a respecter of persons (Acts 10:34), what is the significance of this?

Passage	Comments
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Consider this. From a spiritual perspective, God is NOT a respecter of persons. He is willing to save anyone and everyone; BUT that does not mean He provides equality for ALL. He treats Jews different from Gentiles, He treats adults different from children; Men different from Women; Priests different from non-Priests, etc. ♦ God will settle all accounts fairly laterIsaiah 11:4 • v65. The Urim and Thummim (or sacred lots) – were stones that were tossed to determine God's leading (similar to rolling dice). These elements had a very strong cultural image for the Jews since God often conveyed his will to the Jews through these elements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Other elements used to "inquire of the Lord" (though how it was done, is never revealed to us) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ephod (Priestly garment made of blue, purple, scarlet, and fine gold-twined linen, worn between the tunic and the breastplate, and which held the Urim and Thummin) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ex 28:6-12; 1Sam 30:7-8 2. The Ark's Mercy Seat Ex 25:22 ♦ Is God still using such practices today?NO ♦ Such practices seem bizarre to us today, similar to flipping a coin. BUT the Bible does state that the "casting of lots is in God's hands" (Prov 16:33), and "the lot puts an end to contention" (Prov 18:18) ♦ REMEMBER – We are not told in Scripture how such biblical artifacts were used with accuracy, THEREFORE, they are not meant for us today
7:70-73	<p>Know that some will do little, others a lot</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • v70. The Governor (Nehemiah) gave a respectable sum of 1,000 gold drachmas (more than \$100,000) • v71. Some of the other leaders (not all) gave 20x that, collectively • v72. And the rest of the people also gave 20x more • v73. Motivating principle – everybody wants to finish the work and go home sooner or later – so DO NOT wear out or over-tax your volunteers

CONCLUSION / APPLICATIONS / BENEFITS

- We need bean counters who like to dig into the minute details of each job. Even God was meticulous with details building the Ark
- For it takes good information to assess God's leading and the people's willingness to share in the work – Else we have failure

NEXT WEEK: Nehemiah 8. Jews have their land, their temple and sacrifices, and their city wall restored – Now they make time for God and reflect on the purpose of their existence

...Did you Know?
<p>The 2nd Temple lacked five things which the 1st Temple possessed (per Rabbi Samuel bar Inia, <i>Systematic Theology, Vol I, p525</i>):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Ark of the Covenant – with the 10 Commandments and the budding rod of Aaron 2. The Urim and Thummin – stones for casting lots to determine God's leading 3. The Fire – that was always to be lit 4. The Anointing Oil 5. The Holy Spirit's presence – periodic display of miraculous fire & smoke <p>Yet the 2nd Temple would receive more honor than the 1st - <i>The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, says the LORD of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, says the LORD of hosts (Hag 2:9)</i></p>