

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

- Jews have their land, their temple sacrifices, & their city wall restored – now they make time to reflect on the purpose of their existence
- A new era was coming about – God was ceasing to lead by direct revelation: the last of the OT prophets were departing the scene (Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi); cessation of temple fire & smoke that showed God's approval, and by Urim and Thummin (casting of lots)
- Public reading of God's word in the OT occurred every 7th Sabbath year at the Festival of Trumpets Deut 31:10-11
- The King was to copy & read God's word Deut 17:14-20
- And God's word was to be taught "diligently" Deut 6:7
- Public reading & exposition of Scripture replaced most animal sacrifices by the time of the final temple destruction (70 AD)

Passage	Comments
Nehemiah 1:1-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • v1. "...and they asked Ezra to bring the book of the Law..." – wouldn't it be nice if more people, on their own initiative, sought to be taught <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ More people would be in church, in Sunday School, and in discipleship classes throughout each week • v2. Principle of Comprehension – "All who could listen with understanding" <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ So, what becomes of the ones who cannot comprehend God's word, such as infants and the infant-minded? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Are they saved by other another process? 2. Are they doomed for Hell? ♦ In brief, Scripture is silent on the subject Deut 29:29 ♦ For a more thorough discussion on this, see the Sunday School lesson on Psalms 139, 19 Jan 2014 • v3. "...and all the people were attentive..." – What keeps people's interests at their peak level, especially when the Law is being read verse by verse for more than 6 hours per day? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Was it Ezra's captivating oratory ability? ♦ Was it a matter of life and death? ♦ What would entice us to listen to God's word with excited expectation as it is being expounded on for more than 6 hours over a 2 day period, while we are standing (vv5-8)?
8:10-13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • v10. What does it mean that the "joy of the Lord is our strength"? And why would that keep us from grieving? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Consider that going to God's house use to be a festive event for the Jews full of feasting and fellowshiping ♦ How can we make our church experience to be one of joyful anticipation? • v12. "...they understood the words which were made known to them" – and this brought about a festive occasion similar to our modern day Christmas joy • v13. Then the clan leaders met on the 2nd day to "gain insight into the words of the Law" – presumably so they would be able to convey God's truth more intimately to their clans

Passage	Comments
8:14-18	<p>Jews Commemorated the Exodus by Living in Tents (Booths)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was joyous because they were back on home turf and they were reinstating home-grown customs • What was the purpose for the Solemn Assembly? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Consider they needed a time of serious contemplation ♦ When is our time of serious corporate contemplation? ♦ Should we implement a church-wide Solemn Assembly from time to time?
Reading of God's Word	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most likely Ezra read portions of Gen – Deut (4-6 hrs) • ~240 pgs x 3 min/pg = 720 min = 12 hrs • 7th month, religious yr – 1st month in civic year, ~Sept <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ 1st – Festival of Trumpets/New Years Day/Creation ♦ 10th – Day of AtonementLev 23:27 ♦ 15th – Festival of Tabernacle or BoothsLev 23:24 • Two Bible Sessions in 2 days – and the events were planned (podium built, people listened intently) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ People's Bible Reading & Leader's Bible Study ♦ Teach the Teachers concept • What benefit is there to reading long passages of Scripture? – better understanding of the context = less problems with misinterpretation & misapplication. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Illus. One preacher to another – "A good preacher can take any single bible verse and develop a 1 hour sermon on any topic he wants" • This half-day reading & repenting wasn't meant to be a weekly practice – but something to memorialize this restoration period, to reconfirm their purpose, and to recommit their lives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Periodic solemn assemblies, revivals, etc, are OK ♦ Purpose wasn't to attract new numbers but to refocus and re-establish God's people and purpose • Emotions were evident – humility (v6); weeping (v9); joy (v10); quietness (v11); feasting (v12) • God's word, after it brings about honest repentance, should be followed by joy & gladness

CONCLUSION / APPLICATIONS / BENEFITS

- If we could truly comprehend the importance of absorbing more and more of God's word into our lives we couldn't wait till morning came so we could be in His word studying it
 - ♦ "Great are the works of the LORD; They are studied by all who delight in them" Psalms 111:2
 - ♦ My soul waits for the Lord more than those who watch for the morningPs 130:6

NEXT WEEK: Nehemiah 9. 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

