

LESSONS THIS QUARTER

- 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

- 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

Passage	Comments
Nehemiah 10:1-39	<p>Recommitment in Writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worship was followed by leaders committing in writing to the following <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ v30. Avoid foreign marriages ♦ v31. Keep the Sabbath & Sabbath Year holy ♦ v32. Additional yearly financial pledge ♦ v34. Commitment to service ♦ v35. Recommitment to honor the tithe ♦ v39. Recommitment to maintain the House of God • vv28-29. Why a commitment in writing? Why not a verbal, or a raising of the hand? And why were the leaders singled out? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ We are only as good as our leaders..... Lk 6:40 ♦ God takes no pleasure in vow-breakers (fools)..... Ecc 5:4 • v31. One third of a shekel (~\$20) was given to make repairs to the temple complex. Originally the price was for ½ shekel for every adult over 20 yrs of age (Ex 30:11-16). Apparently due to the poverty of the repatriated Jews, the priests reduced it from ½ shekel to 1/3 shekel. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ That means the tithe was not used for building upkeep ♦ Would \$20 from everyone be enough on an annual basis? Considering that the Temple was the only church around, so from 50,000 we deduce about 10,000 families giving \$20, which = \$200,000. That should be plenty to maintain a building the size of a typical small-town courthouse having no electricity and indoor plumbing to worry about. Just carpentry & masonry repairs. ♦ Recall that Jesus was questioned if He was going to pay tribute money to the temple, so He had Peter catch a fish with just the right amount of money in its mouth to pay His and Peter's portion Mat 17:24-27 • v37. More on the Tithe <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ The Tithe took care of 10% of the population (Levites) whose day job was to serve in the House of God ♦ 10% is a good ratio for church management ♦ Most churches average 3% giving ♦ ...and most churches typically have 3% of their households on the payroll ♦ Would we have more church challenges if we have 1 full time servant serving 10 families (10%) or 1 full time servant serving 30+ families (3%)?
11:1-36	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • v1. Can you imagine flipping a coin to see who needs to move to the big city? People preferred to live the quiet life in the country or in smaller towns, but the city needed citizens too. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Note. Tradition ascribed the greatness of Rome to this process of coercing many from the outskirts to relocate • v2. They blessed the volunteers. Jerusalem afforded very few advantages, and was a place of considerable danger; hence the people spoke well of them, and no doubt prayed for God's blessing upon them (src. Clarke's commentary) • v23. The King "commanded" the singers and the song leader to be about their business – They took singing seriously <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Temple singers are found 36x in the OT. Their function was to clearly sing praises to the Lord and provide a conducive atmosphere to worship Almighty God ♦ Nehemiah addresses singers more than 15x in his Book ♦ Singers actually did not come about till King David established the Levitical order of singers ♦ They were skillfully trained (1Chron 15:22), and singing was to be their full time job. At their height, there were 288 employed singers (1Chron 25:7). They even lived within

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12:1-47	<p>the Temple complex, and they were free from other work (1Chron 9:33), and even from paying taxes (Ezra 7:24)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Singing was very elaborate and culturally binding, comprised of both male and female singers <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Some singers were just dedicated to songs of thanksgiving (Neh 12:8); and in Nehemiah's time, many built villages around Jerusalem to be close to their place of work (Neh 12:29) 2. Solomon wrote over 1,000 songs (1Kings 4:32) 3. Singers were accompanied by an elaborate band of instruments (1Kings 10:12; 1Chron 5:12-13; 15:16) 4. Singing even resulted in victory on the battle field (2Chron 20:22) and release from jail (Acts 16:25-26) 5. The largest book in the Bible (Psalms) is comprised of all songs (almost 10% of the entire Bible) 6. The sexiest book in the Bible is a song (Song of Solomon) 7. We are to uplift each other with "psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord" (Eph 5:19) 8. God loves new songs (9x in the Bible) – we are to be innovative and creative with our singing to God 9. When joyful and grateful singing to God is neglected, so is the house of God; and the opposite is true – when singing is restored to its rightful place to reflect true joy and thankfulness, not contrived joy – then it is an indicator that the spirituality of the people has returned (Neh 42:-47) - because they also start tithing/giving wholeheartedly
13:1-31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • vv1-3. Ammonites & Moabites were never to enter the temple because of their volatile treatment of their Jewish cousins (recall that the Ammonites and Moabites came about from the incestuous relationship between Lot and his 2 daughters) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ It's interesting Jesus had some Moabite (Ruth), Canaanite (Rahab), and possibly Philistine (Jezebel) blood in Him • v6. Apparently, Nehemiah spent about 12 years in Jerusalem (compare Neh 1:1), and returned to Babylon for a few years to resume his post serving the King as his cupbearer. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Nehemiah must have been quite the servant, since the King held his job for him 12 years later • v8. Nehemiah evicted Tobia in a heartbeat after returning. Recall that Tobia was an Ammonite (2:10) and an enemy. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ How come Nehemiah wasn't willing to forgive & forget (love the sinner, hate the sin)? – Because, in all probability, Tobia was not repentant ♦ Is it ever appropriate in our day for someone to display this kind of volatile behavior toward an enemy of God's people? If so, Who? How? When? And Where? • vv10-12. Even with a strong shepherd the sheep have a tendency to wander away – and it took a strong shepherd to right the wrongs and restore civility and obedience • v13. Look at the characteristics of the people who were put in charge of large sums of money – they were faithful • vv15-30. Nehemiah had zero tolerance for sin – in this case, profaning the Sabbath and idolatry by marrying foreign women. Where do we have intolerance for sin? Or do we?

CONCLUSION / APPLICATIONS / BENEFITS

- We too need to know when to take a stand against sin & how hard

NEXT WEEK: Nahum 1-3. God will restore the splendor of Israel

