

Promise and Deliverance

Student Workbook

Volume 8

Level 4

Harvey De Groot

Copyright © 2021 Harvey De Groot

Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are taken from the New King James Version.

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons AttributionNonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0 Unported License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, 171 Second Street, Suite 300, San Francisco, California, 94105, USA.

In plain English, it means that you are free share (copy, distribute and transmit) this work under the following conditions:

- You must attribute the work to Harvey De Groot.
- You may not use this work for commercial purposes.
- You may not alter, transform, or build upon this work. Among other things, that means you must include all pages, including this one, in any copies you share.

If someone has shared a copy of this book with you and you would like to support this work, please consider purchasing your own copy at:

www.norlandegroot.com

While at the website you can purchase bound copies or download free PDFs of this and other volumes.

Preface

When S.G. De Graaf wrote his four-volume series, *Promise and Deliverance*, he showed educators how to teach Bible stories from a redemptive-historical perspective. Rather than turning Bible stories into moralistic tales, De Graaf taught us how all the Bible shows God revealing himself as the God of the covenant, who is working out His redemptive plan for humanity and all of creation.

The 80 workbooks written by Harvey De Groot are meant to supplement De Graaf's work. They are divided by volume and level number: 20 volumes with four levels per volume. Workbook lessons are written at four levels so that families with students in various grades can study the same Bible stories during the week in preparation for their classes on Sunday. Prior to class, the Sunday School teacher should study the lesson in De Graaf's book. The teacher and students can go through the workbook during class.

The levels are divided according to the following grades:

- **Level One:** Grades K-1
- **Level Two:** Grades 2-3
- **Level Three:** Grades 4-6
- **Level Four:** Grades 7-8

Each volume contains 12 or 13 lessons, and each lesson has the following sections:

- **Reference:** The volume and lesson number in De Graaf's series.
- **Scripture:** The passage from Scripture on which the lesson is based.
- **Memory Verse:** A memory verse related to the lesson.
- **Lesson Truth:** A short statement to help the class focus on the main point of the lesson.
- **Lesson:** The lesson itself, which the teacher can read in class. For older grades, the teacher may opt to assign it as homework.
- **Questions:** Items to be discussed in class. For older grades, the teacher can assign these questions as homework but should also use them as a basis for class discussion. These are not the only questions that could or should be asked. Teachers should encourage students to come with their own questions as well.

This edition was written by Harvey De Groot and edited by his son Norlan De Groot.

Lesson 1

David's House Humbled

Reference: De Graaf, *Promise and Deliverance*, Volume 2, Lesson 26

Scripture: I Kings 12:1-24

Memory Verse: “So the king did not listen to the people; for the turn of events was from the Lord, that He might fulfill His word, which the Lord had spoken by Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam the son of Nebat.” (I Kings 12:15)

Lesson Truth: The Lord humbles David's house in order to be a blessing to His people through it.

Lesson

God loved His chosen people Israel. He promised their ancestors, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob that in their seed all the nations of the earth would be blessed. This was the promise that the Redeemer would come from the children of Israel. God gave that same promise to David when he promised that he would always have a son to sit on his throne. The son that would sit on the throne of David forever is the Redeemer, Christ Jesus. But what could the Lord do if the house of David became proud and cut itself off from God's covenant promises? The Lord loved His people so He chose to humble the house of David and save a remnant from whom the Redeemer would come.

The way that the Lord humbled the house of David was to bring about a revolt against Rehoboam, the son of Solomon. After Solomon died the Israelites gathered at Shechem to make Rehoboam king. The first indication that the house of David would be humbled was that the people met at Shechem rather than at the city of David, Jerusalem. At Shechem the people asked Jeroboam to be their leader in speaking to Rehoboam. The major request from Jeroboam and the people was that Rehoboam would reduce the tax burden that Solomon had placed on them. In response, Rehoboam asked for three days' time to consider their request before he gave an answer.

In the three days' time Rehoboam first asked the older men who served with his father what answer he should give to their request. They advised him to listen to the request and reduce the taxes. Then Rehoboam asked advice from the young men who were his peers. They advised him to make the taxes even heavier and to treat the people harshly. Rehoboam chose to listen to the advice of the young men and answered the people that the taxes would be made heavier. He was not ready to humble himself before the Lord so he could be a king after God's own heart. But the Bible tells us that the turn of events was from the Lord that He might fulfill His word that He had spoken by Ahijah to Jeroboam.

When Rehoboam returned with a harsh response, the people revolted. They shouted: “What share have we in David? We have no inheritance in the son of Jesse. To your tents O Israel! Now, see to your own house, O David!” (I Kings 12:16). When Rehoboam sent his treasurer to try to convince the people to come back, they stoned him to death. Rehoboam had to flee for his life back to Jerusalem.

The children of Israel did a terrible thing. They knew about the promise that had been given to the house of David, yet they willfully rejected this promise. They also rejected the covenant that the Lord made with the house of David. It would have been just for the Lord to reject the entire nation of Israel. But He never breaks His covenant. The Lord continued to show His love for Israel by allowing one tribe and believers from other tribes to remain faithful to the covenant with David. This was a sign that a small part of Israel would be saved by the Lord's grace.

The ten tribes crowned Jeroboam as their king. When Rehoboam heard about the ten tribes crowning Jeroboam as king, he gathered a large army to fight the ten tribes and bring them back under his rule. Then God showed his love for Israel by sending the prophet Shemaiah to Rehoboam to tell him that this division was from God. God had taken ten tribes away from the house of David to humble them. If the house of David humbled itself before the Lord there was hope for them and for all Israel. The promise to the house of David would be fulfilled. David would have son to sit on his throne forever.

Questions

1. Where did Rehoboam go to be made king of Israel? (I Kings 12:1)
2. Who did the people of Israel ask to speak to Rehoboam for them? (I Kings 12:3)
3. What request did Jeroboam and the people make of Rehoboam? (I Kings 12:4)
4. How much time did Rehoboam want to consider their request? (I Kings 12:5)
5. With whom did Rehoboam first consult about the people's request? (I Kings 12:6)

Lesson 2

Unquenchable Fire

Reference: De Graaf, *Promise and Deliverance*, Volume 2, Lesson 27

Scripture: I Kings 12:25–14:20

Memory Verse: “Go tell Jeroboam, ‘Thus says the Lord God of Israel: Because I exalted you from among the people, and made you ruler over My people Israel, and tore the kingdom away from the house of David, and gave it to you. And yet you have not been as My servant David, who kept My commandments and who followed Me with all his heart, to do only what was right in My eyes.’” (I Kings 14:7-8)

Lesson Truth: The Christ will clear his threshing floor and burn the chaff with unquenchable fire.

Lesson

Jeroboam was made king over the ten tribes of Israel. He was the king who did everything in his power to separate Israel from the house of David. Later a man of God predicted that the bones of priests would be burned on the altar that Jeroboam set up at Bethel. This pointed ahead to the complete destruction of Israel. Most of Israel would be destroyed, but a remnant would be saved. From this remnant the promised Son of David would come.

The Lord did not allow Rehoboam to go to war against the ten tribes. This gave Jeroboam a chance to set up his rule of the ten tribes at Shechem. He later moved the seat of his government to Tirzah. When Jeroboam began to rule, he was afraid that the people of Israel might again follow Rehoboam if they continued to go to Jerusalem for the feast days. So, he set up golden calves for the people to worship, one at Dan in the north and the other at Bethel in the south. He was intent on separating the people completely from David’s house. It was tragic that when he separated the people from David’s house, he also separated them from the revelation of God’s grace.

Jeroboam changed the times of the religious festivals and invited anyone who wanted to be a priest to serve in that function. The Levites who were the true priests of the Lord were driven out. Jeroboam also led the people in offering sacrifices at the festivals. He then used the historic words of Aaron when he made the golden calf in the wilderness by saying: “Here are your god’s, O Israel, which brought you up from the land of Egypt” (I Kings 12:28). This was a sad event in Israel because it showed that Jeroboam and the people were rejecting all ties to the Son of David as the future leader. They were rejecting the covenant, just as they had done at Mount Sinai. Jeroboam pretended that he did not want the people to turn away from the Lord, but to set up a calf to represent the Lord was an abomination. Jeroboam showed that he desired to have power over the Lord. A few people remained faithful and continued to worship at Jerusalem, but most of them were fed up with the rule of David’s house. They were not willing to be governed by the Lord’s covenant. Why didn’t the Lord reject the people? They were not yet ready for judgment, but that judgment was announced as Jeroboam stood at the altar at Bethel.

As Jeroboam was offering sacrifices on the altar at Bethel, a prophet from Judah came to pronounce judgment against Jeroboam and the people of Israel. He did this in a very unique way by crying out against the altar. He pronounced that the bones of all the priests who served here would be burned on this altar. These bones were burned by Josiah, who was born of the house of David, who became king of Judah. This pronouncement made Jeroboam very angry and he pointed to the prophet and cried: “Arrest that man!” The Lord sent His judgment immediately and the hand that pointed at the prophet became withered. Jeroboam then asked the prophet to pray for him. When he did so Jeroboam’s hand was restored. Jeroboam then asked the prophet to eat and drink

with him with the hope that he could restore some of his authority. But the prophet refused because the Lord would not allow him to have fellowship with anyone in that accursed place.

As the prophet left to go back to Judah an old prophet convinced him to return to Bethel. Because of that unfaithfulness, a lion killed the prophet of Judah, so he could not be buried in his family's grave. The old prophet then brought the body of the prophet from Judah and buried it in his own grave. This grave was not dug up by Josiah the son from David's house, so these bones were not burned on the altar. The grave of the prophet from Judah served as witness to the truth of God's Word.

After all this Jeroboam still did not repent, so the Lord announced His judgement against his house. This was done by the prophet Ahijah, the same prophet who told Jeroboam he would be king of the ten tribes. The judgment was pronounced when Jeroboam's wife disguised herself and went to Ahijah. Although Ahijah was old and could not see God told him that Jeroboam's wife was coming. Ahijah told her that Jeroboam's household would be destroyed because he had rejected the covenant.

Questions

1. What place in the mountains of Ephraim did Jeroboam build as a place to dwell? (I Kings 12:25)
2. What was Jeroboam's fear concerning the people? (I Kings 12:27)
3. What did Jeroboam set up for the people to worship instead of going to Jerusalem? (I Kings 12:28-29)
4. Who came from Judah to speak to Jeroboam as he stood at the altar at Bethel? (I Kings 13:1)

Lesson 3

Estrangement in Judah

Reference: De Graaf, *Promise and Deliverance*, Volume 2, Lesson 28

Scripture: I Kings 14:21–15:24; II Chronicles 11:5–16:14

Memory Verse: “For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him. In this you have done foolishly; therefore from now on you shall have wars.’ Then Asa was angry with the seer, and put him in prison, for he was enraged at him because of this.” (II Chronicles 16:9-10a)

Lesson Truth: The people of Judah provoke the Lord to jealousy by withdrawing their hearts from Him.

Lesson

God divided the glorious kingdom of David and Solomon into two kingdoms. Jeroboam ruled ten tribes called Israel and separated them completely from David’s house. Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, ruled the tribe of Judah and spent his seventeen years as king in warfare with his brothers in Israel. Because of His covenant with David, God loved Judah with a special love. We became aware of this special love when we read that Judah did evil in the sight of the Lord and provoked Him to jealousy with their sins. God loved Judah like a husband loves his wife. God had chosen Judah and the house of David to bring the Redeemer into the world.

When Jeroboam began his rule in Israel, Rehoboam became king of Judah. The first three years he was king, Rehoboam tried to serve the Lord. The Lord showed His favor to Rehoboam, the grandson of David. He allowed him to be king in Jerusalem, the city of David. The house of David had been humbled, but God continued look with favor on that house because of his covenant. Despite the Lord’s favor, Rehoboam no longer gave himself to the Lord in humble obedience. Then all Judah followed their king and did abominable things. They built high places, sacred pillars, and wooden images just like the wicked nations around them. They treated the Lord like one of the heathen gods. These were the sins that provoked the Lord to jealousy. Now in His jealous love He would punish Judah.

The Lord allowed Shishak king of Egypt to come against Jerusalem. He came with a huge army and first attacked the fortified cities of Judah and then came on to Jerusalem. He attacked Jerusalem and carried away the treasures that had been gathered by David and the people. He even took the golden shields that Solomon had made, so Rehoboam had to replace them with bronze shields. Rehoboam tried to make it appear that the glory of the Lord was still in Jerusalem. He could much better have admitted that the plundering of Jerusalem was due to his sins. But Rehoboam continued to turn away from the Lord.

After Rehoboam died, Abijam his son became the king of Judah. The Lord allowed a descendant of David to continue to sit on the throne. Despite Abijam’s desire to follow in the sins of his father, the Lord allowed him to be king because of His covenant with David. Abijam decided to force Israel back under the rule of David’s house. He gathered an army of four hundred thousand to go against Jeroboam. He told the men of Israel that because they rejected the house of David they were living in rebellion to the covenant. Jeroboam countered this attack with eight hundred thousand men. He caught the men of Judah in a pincers movement and would have destroyed them, but they called on the name of the Lord. And the Lord gave Abijam the victory for the sake of His covenant with David.

God showed His favor when He made Abijam’s son Asa the king of Judah. Asa was a God-fearing king through most of his life. He destroyed idol worship and urged the people to seek the Lord while He could be found.

6. What was Abijam's relationship with the Lord? (I Kings 15:3)

7. Who became king of Judah after Abijam? (I Kings 15:8)

8. What was Asa's relationship to the Lord? (I Kings 15:11)

Lesson 4

Israel Forsaken

Reference: De Graaf, *Promise and Deliverance*, Volume 2, Lesson 29

Scripture: I Kings 15:25–16:34

Memory Verse: “And it was so, when he became king, that he killed all the house of Jeroboam. He did not leave to Jeroboam anyone that breathed, until he had destroyed him, according to the word of the Lord which He had spoken by His servant Ahijah the Shilonite, because of the sins of Jeroboam, which he had sinned and by which he made Israel sin.” (I Kings 15:29-30a)

Lesson Truth: The Lord forsakes Israel because of the split with the house of David in order to seek this nation later in His grace.

Lesson

The kingdom of Judah was estranged from the Lord under the reign of Rehoboam and Abijam. They provoked the Lord to jealousy by withdrawing their hearts from Him. Yet, hope remained for Judah because of the covenant with the house of David. At the same time the kingdom of Israel was completely forsaken by the Lord because of their rejection of the house of David.

Jeroboam was the first king of the divided kingdom of Israel. God promised Jeroboam that He would build him an enduring house if he would be faithful to the Lord. Part of being faithful to the Lord meant that he would have to acknowledge that the promise of the covenant would come through the house of David. But Jeroboam did not acknowledge the ties of the covenant to the house of David. Instead, he tried to break completely with the house of David by setting up calves to worship at Dan and Bethel. The tragedy was that by separating from the house of David he was separating Israel from the Christ. The Lord declared that because of this sin the house of Jeroboam would be utterly destroyed. This destruction took place after Jeroboam’s son, Nadab, was killed by Baasha. After Baasha assassinated Nadab, he wiped out the entire house of Jeroboam just as the prophet Ahijah had predicted.

The kingdom of Israel now fell apart at the seams because they rejected the salvation of the Lord Jesus Christ. By rejecting the covenant promise made to the house of David they rejected the Christ. This brought real confusion into the kingdom of Israel. Baasha continued to lead the people away from the Lord by means of calf worship. The Lord brought the same judgment on Baasha as He brought on Jeroboam. Baasha’s house was destroyed when his son Elah was king. When Elah was drunk at a banquet, Zimri killed him. Then Zimri was king for only seven days before the military made Omri king in his place. This was the confusion in Israel once they separated from the house of David.

Omri was able to overcome all his rivals to the throne of Israel, but he did not lead Israel back to the Lord. Instead, he led Israel to a greater commitment to idol worship and apostasy. Omri bought a mountain in the middle of the land of Israel and built the city of Samaria on it. The city of Samaria became the opposition to Jerusalem. While Jerusalem with its temple was a symbol of service according to the word of the Lord; Samaria was a symbol of life lived apart from the Lord. In this way Israel wandered further and further from God until there was a complete break with the Lord.

The result of total rejection of the God of Israel was seen when Ahab the son of Omri became king. Ahab did more than encourage the worship of the Lord through idols, he pushed the Lord aside and introduced the worship of Baals. He was encouraged to do this by his wicked wife Jezebel who came from Sidon. The Baals

were gods made to worship the forces of nature. They saw the forces of nature as a power independent from God. This showed a completed rejection of the Lord and His Word of grace. Under Ahab the complete break with the Lord took place in Israel.

It is a terrible thing to be forsaken by the Lord. This was seen in the way the people resisted the Lord's grace. During the godless reign of Ahab someone decided to rebuild the walls of Jericho. Remember that Joshua had said that anyone who would rebuild these walls would experience the Lord's curse. This curse of the Lord was visited on the house of Hiel when he began rebuilding Jericho. He soon found that resistance to the Lord's grace brought death. All of his sons died just as Joshua had predicted. Israel became completely absorbed into heathen practices just as the nations around them. Yet, the Lord did not let them go. His covenant is unshakeable! A remnant would be preserved!

Questions

1. Who became king of Israel in the second year of the reign of Asa king of Judah? (I Kings 15:25)
2. What characterized his reign over Israel? (I Kings 15:26)
3. Who executed the judgment against the house of Jeroboam by killing his family? (I Kings 15:28-29)
4. What characterized the reign of Baasha in Israel? (I Kings 15:33-34)
5. What judgment was pronounced against the house of Baasha? (I Kings 16:3)

Lesson 5

The Word of Grace Concealed

Reference: De Graaf, *Promise and Deliverance*, Volume 2, Lesson 30

Scripture: I Kings 17

Memory Verse: “And Elijah said to her, ‘Do not fear; go and do as you have said, but make me a small cake from it first, and bring it to me; afterward make some for yourself and your son. For thus says the Lord God of Israel. The bin of flour shall not be used up, nor the jar of oil run dry, until the day the Lord sends rain on the earth.’” (I Kings 17:13-14)

Lesson Truth: The Lord conceals the Word of His grace to make it clear that this Word possesses sovereign authority.

Lesson

Ahab the king, with his wicked wife Jezebel, introduced Baal worship in Israel. The Baals were the gods of the Sidonians that were supposed to be in charge of the forces of nature. Ahab should have known that the Lord God controls all of nature. In a gracious act, God sent the prophet Elijah to speak to Ahab. He told Ahab that the Lord God of Israel promised that there would be neither dew nor rain on the earth except by the word of Elijah.

The Lord gave his Word to Elijah and gave him authority to demonstrate the power of that Word. Elijah’s prediction that there would be neither dew nor rain on the earth until he gave the word was a direct assault on the Baals. It would be made clear that the blessings of the fields did not come from the forces of nature, represented in the Baals, but from Almighty God.

After Elijah shared the prediction of drought on the earth, the Lord told him to hide himself at the brook Cherith. Elijah could not be found at the brook Cherith. The Word of God’s grace to Israel was hidden with him; it was truly concealed. Yet Elijah experienced the power of that Word of grace in a marvelous way. God cared for Elijah by having ravens bring him bread and meat and by allowing him to drink from the brook. These ravens, known to be voracious in their eating habits, were commanded by God to bring bread and meat to His servant. God made it clear that the forces of nature or the Baals were not the deciding factor in this struggle, but it was the Word of grace. God initiated this struggle and He concealed Elijah to help the people of Israel see that they were dependent upon the Word of God. God would not allow Israel to lose all connections with Judah and the promise to David.

The drought became so severe in Israel that the brook Cherith dried up. This meant that Elijah could no longer stay at Cherith, but God was not yet ready to reveal His Word of grace to Israel. He wanted his Word of grace to remain concealed, so He commanded Elijah to go to the town of Zarephath in the land of Sidon. Here he would find a widow that would provide for him. Elijah’s heart must have ached that he wasn’t sent to a widow in Israel. He knew that the Word of the Lord’s grace had been withdrawn from Israel for a time. He knew that Israel was under the Lord’s wrath.

When Elijah arrived at Zarephath he saw a woman gathering sticks. He wondered if this could be the widow, with whom the Lord had sent him to lodge, so he asked her for water and for bread. She then confessed her own dire situation that she only had a handful of meal and a little oil. She planned to make a cake for herself and her son and after eating this last cake they would die. Elijah decided to test her and asked that she first make a cake for him and then keep the rest for herself. He added the promise that her handful of meal and

little oil would not run out until the Lord brought rain on the earth. The woman acted with faith. She surrendered what she could see for what she could not see. She did as Elijah asked; and her oil and meal did not run out. The daily reminder of the miracle of the oil and meal was no doubt a joy for this woman. Yet we must realize that the miracle of the Lord's grace still exists today. Through this grace we receive all things.

The widow from Zarephath was given additional evidence of the Lord's grace and mercy. This happened when her son died, and she thought this was punishment for her sins. To be sure the widow and her son deserved death and rejection just like the whole human race. But she had to learn of the Word of grace from Christ Jesus that protects us from God's wrath. Elijah cried out in faith to the Lord for the life of this child, and the Lord heard his prayer. When Elijah brought the boy to his mother, she realized that this miracle was a miracle of God's mercy. Then she confessed that the Word of the Lord is truth. This event was a comfort to Elijah! Now he knew that the Lord could revive Israel, which was spiritually dead, to a life of faith in covenant with Him.

Questions

1. What dire announcement did Elijah make to Ahab? (I Kings 17:1)
2. Where did the Lord tell Elijah to hide when he left Ahab? (I Kings 17:3)
3. From where would Elijah get his food and drink when he was hiding at Cherith? (I Kings 17:4)
4. What happened to the brook that made it necessary for Elijah to leave? (I Kings 17:7)
5. When Elijah left Cherith, where did the Lord tell him to go? (I Kings 17:9a)

Lesson 6

The Word of Grace Revealed

Reference: De Graaf, *Promise and Deliverance*, Volume 2, Lesson 31

Scripture: I Kings 18

Memory Verse: “Then it happened, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said to him, ‘Is that you, O troubler of Israel?’ And he answered, ‘I have not troubled Israel, but you and your father’s house have, in that you have forsaken the commandments of the Lord and have followed the Baals.’” (I Kings 18:17-18)

Lesson Truth: The Lord reveals His Word of grace so that Israel will return to Him in faith.

Lesson

The Word of the Lord’s grace was concealed with Elijah at Cherith and at Zarephath. By concealing His Word of grace, the Lord wanted Ahab to realize that only if Israel depended on that Word of grace would it ever be fully blessed. But King Ahab never recognized the need for that Word of grace. Instead, he had his men search for Elijah, because he believed Elijah was the one who troubled Israel. The concealing of God’s Word of grace was a preparation for His revelation of that Word.

The first way that God chose to reveal His Word of grace was to have Elijah reappear. Elijah had been hidden at Zarephath for nearly three years. All this time Ahab had been looking for him, but was unable to find him. Ahab thought that Elijah was responsible for the drought in Israel. He never understood that God had turned away from His people. Now the Lord told Elijah to present himself to Ahab and let the Word of grace speak again, so that His people would believe.

The meeting of Elijah and Ahab was dramatic since it took place after years of searching. It happened when Ahab had sent his servant Obadiah in one direction as he went the opposite direction to look for pasture for the king’s livestock. The drought was so severe that the livestock was in danger of dying. As Obadiah was searching for pasture, Elijah appeared to him and told him to inform Ahab that he had returned. Obadiah was afraid to let Elijah out of his sight for fear he might disappear again. When Elijah answered all his objections, Obadiah was ready to allow the Word of God’s grace to speak. Then Elijah met Ahab and was addressed by him as the one who troubled Israel. Ahab’s response was typical of sinful humanity in blaming God when he withdraws His grace from us. But Elijah corrected him by telling him that he and his father’s house were responsible for the troubles in Israel because of their sins against God.

The second way God revealed his Word of grace was even more dramatic than the first. Elijah longed for a new revelation of God’s mercy and grace that would make the people forget the Baals and turn to the God of grace. He knew God would reveal Himself in a remarkable way, so he asked Ahab to gather the people at Mount Carmel. He also asked that the four hundred fifty prophets of Baal and the four hundred prophets of Astarte gather at Mount Carmel. Then Elijah asked the people to make a choice to serve the God who would answer the prayers of His people by fire. He proposed that the prophets of Baal go first by laying a sacrifice on an altar and asking Baal to consume this sacrifice by fire. He allowed them to call out to Baal until late afternoon without receiving any answer. Then he prepared an altar of twelve stones and placed the animal for sacrifice on the altar. He also had water poured over the sacrifice and the altar until even the trenches around the altar were filled with water. The Elijah called on the name of the Lord to consume his sacrifice by fire.

The Lord revealed Himself by sending a fire from heaven and burning the sacrifice, the wood, the stones, and the water. The people saw the miracle of God’s grace. He had not rejected them. Then the people fell on their

faces and cried out: “The Lord, He is God! The Lord He is God!” (I Kings 18:39). Now the people knew that the Lord is God. Elijah wanted to remove the abomination of Baal worship from Israel so he had the prophets of Baal killed at the brook Kishon. The Lord did not let go of His people.

After the priests of Baal were killed, Elijah told Ahab to get ready for abundant rain. He then bowed in prayer before the Lord for the rain he knew was coming. Elijah knew that he had to claim what God in His grace has already decided to give. He prayed seven times and did not stop until he saw an answer to his prayer. Then the Spirit of the Lord gave him strength to run before Ahab’s chariot all the way to Jezreel. Ahab and all Israel knew that the Word of grace that had been concealed was now revealed. If only Ahab would lead the people in accordance with that Word of the Lord!

Questions

1. What command did the Lord give to Elijah in his third year of hiding? (I Kings 18:1)
2. What had Jezebel done to the prophets of the Lord? (I Kings 18:4a)
3. How do we know that Obadiah was a servant of the Lord? (I Kings 18:4b)
4. Of what did Ahab accuse Elijah when he met him after three years? (I Kings 18:17)
5. What was Elijah’s response to Ahab’s accusation? (I Kings 18:18)

Lesson 7

Stillness with God

Reference: De Graaf, *Promise and Deliverance*, Volume 2, Lesson 32

Scripture: I Kings 19

Memory Verse: “Then He said, ‘Go out, and stand on the mountain before the Lord.’ And behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind tore into the mountains and broke the rocks in pieces before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice.” (I Kings 19:11-12)

Lesson Truth: The Lord reveals the stillness in the struggle.

Lesson

Almighty God can communicate with His people with power and majesty as well as with a still small voice. In our lesson today we learn of the stillness in resting with God in His covenant. The Lord addressed Elijah in a still small voice on Mount Horeb and assured him that through Hazael, Jehu, and Elisha the evil of Baal worship would be destroyed.

Elijah, the prophet of the Lord, had seen a great victory on Mount Carmel when the Lord consumed his sacrifice by fire. Emphasis was added to this victory when the prophets of Baal were killed at the brook Kishon. Ahab told his wicked queen Jezebel about the contest on Mount Carmel and the slaying of the prophets of Baal. When Jezebel heard this report she vowed that she would kill Elijah by the next day. Now Elijah knew that Ahab had given in to his wicked wife and he became filled with despair. After the unmistakable demonstration of God’s power on Mount Carmel, didn’t Elijah know that God’s grace would triumph? At this point his faith was weak and he could not see that God would always be victorious. Instead he fled from Jezebel and went into the desert and found rest under a broom tree. There he asked the Lord to take his life because he was exhausted from doing battle with the Lord’s enemies. While he was resting under the broom tree, an angel of the Lord touched him and told him to arise and eat. The angel did this two times so his body would be strengthened to go on a journey for forty days and forty nights to Mount Horeb. At Horeb he spent the night in a cave.

God brought Elijah to Mount Horeb so He could remind him of the covenant that had been established with the nation of Israel. This covenant had been established on Mount Sinai in the mountain range of Horeb and God assured Elijah that His covenant would be fulfilled. After Elijah spent the night in a cave on the mountain; the Word of the Lord came to him and asked: “What are you doing here Elijah?” (I Kings 19:9). Then we note Elijah’s defeated spirit when he answered: “I have been very zealous for the Lord God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword; and I alone am left; and they seek to take my life” (I Kings 19:10). Elijah’s faith was weak and he forgot that God’s grace is always victorious. The Lord had to correct Elijah concerning His power and the certainty of victory over evil. At the Lord’s command Elijah went out of the cave and stood on the mountain where he would be instructed.

There on the mountain the Lord showed His awesome majesty as he first sent a mighty wind that tore into the mountain and broke the rocks in pieces. But the Lord was not in the wind. He sent an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. Then He sent an all-consuming fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. After all that noise, a deep stillness followed. Elijah was aware that the Lord was in the stillness. In this stillness he was

assured that God's grace would triumph and save His covenant people. In that stillness Elijah was again asked what he was doing there. Once again he answered that evil had triumphed and that he was the only servant of God left. God in His grace had to show Elijah that he had lost the power of faith. If he would look to God in faith, he could again be comforted.

After the Lord had strengthened Elijah by the stillness He urged him to continue the struggle. He told Elijah to go and anoint Hazael king over Syria, to anoint Jehu king over Israel, and to anoint Elisha to be the prophet in his place. Then the Lord assured him that Hazael would destroy the idol worshippers in Israel. Anyone who would escape the sword of Hazael, Jehu would kill. And anyone, who would escape the sword of Jehu, Elisha would kill. The Lord also showed Elijah that he was wrong in believing that he was the only one left who served the Lord. He told him there were seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to Baal. For the sake of this remnant God would not forsake His people. Elijah then went and threw his robe on Elisha indicating that he would be the prophet that followed Elijah. Through the prophet Elisha the Lord would continue to wrestle with Israel through His Word of grace.

Questions

1. Whom did Ahab tell about the execution of the prophets of Baal? (I Kings 19:1)
2. What did the queen pledge to do to Elijah by the next day? (I Kings 19:2)
3. How did Elijah show his despair when he ran from the queen? (I Kings 19:4)
4. To where did Elijah travel for forty days and forty nights? (I Kings 19:8)

Lesson 8

Like Sheep without a Shepherd

Reference: De Graaf, *Promise and Deliverance*, Volume 2, Lesson 33

Scripture: I Kings 20:1–22:40

Memory Verse: “So Ahab said to Elijah, ‘Have you found me, O my enemy?’ And he answered, ‘I have found you, because you have sold yourself to do evil in the sight of the Lord: Behold, I will bring calamity on you. I will take away your posterity, and will cut off from Ahab every male in Israel, both bond and free.’” (I Kings 21:20-21)

Lesson Truth: For the sake of His grace to His people, the Lord rejects the unfaithful shepherd.

Lesson

Following the reign of Solomon, the Lord divided Israel into two kingdoms, the kingdom of Israel and the kingdom of Judah. At first the two kingdoms were bitter enemies, as Israel tried to separate itself from Judah and the house of David. Later the kingdom of Judah followed Israel, which was a rejection of the grace that they once enjoyed because of the covenant with David. The king of Judah’s alliance with the king of Israel made Judah a partner in the sin of Baal worship. This partnership showed that Judah was ready to surrender the honor of the Lord’s covenant.

Under the leadership of Ahab, the seventh king of Israel, the worship of Baal and Asherah was added to calf worship. We read of Ahab that it was but a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam. For this reason, Ahab became an unfaithful shepherd to the Lord’s sheep. He showed this unfaithfulness in the way he dealt with Ben-hadad, king of Syria, the Lord’s enemy. Ben-hadad made unreasonable demands from Ahab for the best of his belongings and even the fairest of his wives and children. Ahab first agreed to the king’s terms, but then refused when he learned that Ben-hadad wanted to plunder the city of Samaria. After his refusal the Lord sent a prophet to Ahab to tell him that the Syrian army would be delivered into his hands. Ahab believed the prophet, but he did not see the miracle of the Lord’s grace. He did not believe in the prophet’s word as the Word of grace.

The Syrian army was defeated. It was evident that the victory for Israel was from the Lord. Even the Syrian’s believed that their defeat was from a source of power other than Israel. In their pagan notions they concluded that Israel served a god of the hills and that is why they were victorious. They decided that the next time they would fight in the valley’s and then they would be victorious. Once again, the Syrians were defeated, in the valleys as well as on the hills. In giving Israel the victory, God wanted them to acknowledge the Lord’s faithfulness in His covenant. After this victory Ahab made a terrible mistake. He made an agreement with Ben-hadad instead of destroying him. In making this agreement he forgot the Lord’s claim for honor even from His enemies. Ahab showed that he was not a shepherd for the Lord’s sheep. Because of this failure God said Ahab and Israel would be destroyed in the place of Ben-hadad and the Syrians.

Ahab was not only weak against the enemies of the Lord, but he was also weak in dealing with his own people. He did not dare to stand for the right against his wicked wife Jezebel. When he wanted to expand his gardens by taking the vineyard of Naboth, he pouted because Naboth said the Lord forbade him to sell his inheritance. Ahab did not have the character to withstand his wicked wife when she took upon herself to get the vineyard for him. She believed a king could do whatever he wished, so she had evil men bring false charges against Naboth. As a penalty for these false charges Naboth was put to death and his vineyard was given to Ahab. The one who was supposed to be the shepherd of Israel was now guilty of shedding innocent blood. Now the Lord

5. Why did the servants of the king of Syria believe Israel won the battle? (I Kings 20:23)

6. Who told Ahab that she would get the vineyard of Naboth for him? (I Kings 21:7)

7. How did Ahab address Elijah when he was confronted about Naboth's vineyard? (I Kings 21:20)

8. What did the Lord put into the mouths of the prophets to get Ahab to go into battle? (I Kings 22:23)

Lesson 9

Joy in the Lord

Reference: De Graaf, *Promise and Deliverance*, Volume 2, Lesson 34

Scripture: I Kings 22:41-51; II Chronicles 17:1–18:3; 19:1–20:37

Memory Verse: “Now the Lord was with Jehoshaphat, because he walked in the former ways of his father David; he did not seek the Baals, but sought the God of his father, and walked in His commandments and not according to the acts of Israel.” (II Chronicles 17:3-4)

Lesson Truth: Joy in the Lord by faith is the people’s strength.

Lesson

What a blessing to learn that Jehoshaphat found real joy in serving the Lord. This came after the rule of Rehoboam and Abijam, when the people of Judah had turned their affections for the Lord to indifference. Under the rule of Asa many reforms were carried out in Judah but there was not a return to serving the Lord with joy. It was in the rule of Jehoshaphat, the son of the good king Asa, that the Lord gave Judah a king who led the people back to the ways of David.

Jehoshaphat tried to end the conflict with Israel but wasn’t entirely successful so he set up fortified cities in Judah for defense. The Lord blessed Jehoshaphat in his work because he sought the Lord bringing prosperity to all of Judah. The kingdom of Judah grew in riches and honor because Jehoshaphat was happy in the Lord’s service. He worked hard to wipe out the idolatry and worship at the high places. He also saw that the people were ignorant of the law, so he sent Levites and priests to teach people the law of the Lord. Jehoshaphat believed that if people knew the law of the Lord and worshipped the God of Judah they would turn from their idolatry. When Jehoshaphat began to reign, the Lord kept him from wars and fear of the Lord fell on the nations around Judah.

In spite of Jehoshaphat’s joy in serving the Lord, he did make a mistake when he formed an alliance with the wicked house of Ahab. This alliance became so close that his son Jehoram married Athaliah the daughter of wicked Ahab and Jezebel. Jehu the prophet told Jehoshaphat that the Lord was angry with him because he made an alliance with godless Ahab. Yes, Israel and Judah were brother nations, but that did not give Jehoshaphat the right to overlook the sins of Ahab’s house. Still this was a king who sought the Lord in his heart, so Jehu told him the Lord would not withdraw His favor from him. In the confidence that he enjoyed the Lord’s favor, Jehoshaphat pressed on with reformation in Judah. He commanded the people to obey the law of the Lord not only in worship, but also in every area of life. He appointed judges throughout the land to judge justly according to the law of the Lord. He established a higher court in Jerusalem with the high priest Amariah judging the spiritual matters and Zebadiah judging the civil matters. Under the leadership of Jehoshaphat, Judah was confirmed in the fear of the Lord. The people saw in this king something of the promised Messiah. King Jehoshaphat found joy in keeping the law of the Lord.

Jehoshaphat also found joy in the faith he had in the God of David. This was demonstrated when Moabites and Ammonites threatened the kingdom of Judah. The Moabites and Ammonites along with other tribes came with such large numbers that Jehoshaphat knew he could not rely on his own strength to resist them. So he called all of Judah to Jerusalem to stand before the Lord. Jehoshaphat made this a matter between the Lord and all the people including the women and children. As the people stood before the Lord the Spirit of the Lord came on Jahaziel and he prophesied that they were to go out the next day against the enemy and see the salvation of the Lord. These armies would know they had come against the Lord God of heaven. Jehoshaphat,

along with the people, bowed in faith before the Lord. To strengthen their faith, he had them go to meet the enemy singing: “Praise the Lord, For His mercy endures forever” (II Chron. 20:21). God gave Judah a great victory by causing the enemy to attack one another.

The victory was so great that it took the people three days to gather up the spoil. The nations who wanted to take away the inheritance of the Lord’s people were destroyed. The Lord was near His people for Christ’s sake, giving them His favor. Fear fell on Judah’s enemies that remained, so Judah lived in peace. They lived in the joy of thankfulness until they once again disobeyed by associating with the house of Ahab. Again the Lord sent a prophet to warn Jehoshaphat and his joy in the Lord led him to seek the Lord above everything.

Questions

1. Why was the Lord with Jehoshaphat? (II Chron. 17:3)
2. Who established the kingdom of Judah in Jehoshaphat’s hand? (II Chron. 17:5)
3. What did Jehoshaphat send the Levites and the priests to teach throughout Judah? (II Chron. 17:9)
4. Why didn’t the kingdoms around Judah make war with them? (II Chron. 17:10)
5. According to Jehoshaphat who were the judges judging for? (II Chron. 19:6)

Lesson 10

The Prophet of Penitence

Reference: De Graaf, *Promise and Deliverance*, Volume 2, Lesson 35

Scripture: I Kings 22:52–II Kings 1:18

Memory Verse: “So they said to him, ‘A man came to meet us, and said to us,’ ‘Go return to the king who sent you, and say to him.’ ‘Thus says the Lord: Is it because there is no God in Israel that you are sending to inquire of Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron?’ ‘Therefore you shall not come down from the bed to which you have gone up, but you shall surely die.’” (II Kings 1:6)

Lesson Truth: The judgment of grace is revealed so that the people will believe.

Lesson

God loves his people and even sent the Angel of the Lord to tell Elijah to confront a rebellious king so he would submit to the Word of grace. It is sad that King Ahaziah was so steeped in the sins of his parents, Ahab and Jezebel, that he rejected this Word of grace. The Word of grace became the judgment of God’s grace upon His people.

Ahaziah became king of Israel following the reign of the wicked king Ahab. The Bible tells us he did evil in the sight of the Lord, and walked in the ways of his father and in the ways of his mother. The worship of Baal and the calves continued in the land of Israel. It seemed that the Word of the Lord, that came through Elijah and the other prophets, didn’t mean anything to Ahaziah and the people of Israel. As a result, God turned against Ahaziah in everything he did and made his reign futile. This was seen when Ahaziah made plans to subdue the Moabites and get them to continue paying a tribute. He was kept from executing these plans when he fell through the lattice of his upper room and was injured.

There is no doubt that the Lord sent this injury to see if Ahaziah would submit to God’s providential rule. Would he admit that the Lord in His grace was seeking him in this injury? Would he surrender to the Word of the Lord’s grace to His people? Would he confess his sins? The sad truth is that King Ahaziah avoided the Word of grace. Instead of sending his servants to Elijah, the prophet of the Lord, to inquire about his injury, he sent them to Baal-Zebub the god of Ekron.

Despite the king avoiding this Word of grace, God sent the Angel of the Lord to command Elijah to confront the king’s messengers. Just think, the Angel of the Lord was sent to command Elijah to speak to these messengers. The Angel of the Lord had spoken to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and had led Israel in the wilderness. This Angel now appeared to instruct Elijah on behalf of Ahaziah. Elijah posed the question, first to the messengers and later to Ahaziah: “Is it because there is no God in Israel that you are sending to inquire of Baal-Zebub the god of Ekron?” (II Kings 1:3). Elijah then gave the king the message about his injury, telling him he would surely die. The Lord could only put an end to the fruitless life of Ahaziah. He knew he was going to die so he could have repented and submitted to Lord.

When Ahaziah learned from his messengers that it was Elijah who confronted them, he sent a captain with fifty soldiers to capture him. The king resisted the Word of grace so completely that he thought Elijah had to be eliminated. The captain sent to capture Elijah addressed him as the man of God, and told him the king ordered him to come down. Elijah answered: “If I am a man of God, as you say, let fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty men” (II Kings 1:10). Fire did come down and consume them. Then the king sent a second captain with fifty men who were also consumed. These were sad events. But we must realize that the

Lesson 11

Ascension

Reference: De Graaf, *Promise and Deliverance*, Volume 2, Lesson 36

Scripture: II Kings 2

Memory Verse: “Then he went up from there to Bethel; and as he was going up the road, some youths came out from the city and mocked him, and said to him. ‘Go up, you bald head! Go up, you bald head!’ So he turned around and looked at them, and pronounced a curse on them in the name of the Lord. And two female bears came out from the woods and mauled forty two of the youths.” (II Kings 2:23-24)

Lesson Truth: The Lord exalts the bearer of the Word of God.

Lesson

The prophet Elijah had championed the Word of God in Israel. He stood up to the Baal worshippers and to wicked king Ahab. Each time he confronted evil with the Word of God. Now Elijah was to be taken up to heaven, not as a personal exaltation, but as an exaltation of the Word of God.

Elijah’s work on earth was finished and the Lord was about to take him away. He was not going to die as most people do, but he was going to be taken up to heaven in a chariot of fire. Because Elijah had led the struggle for the truth of God’s Word; the Lord was going to exalt His servant. Elijah would ascend to heaven to show that the Word of God would be exalted.

Elijah and Elisha were traveling together from Gilgal, when Elijah suggested to Elisha that he stay at Bethel. Elijah was aware that the Lord was going to take him to heaven, but he wasn’t sure that Elisha knew this, so he wanted to travel on alone. Elisha would not hear of leaving Elijah’s side so they traveled on to Bethel. At Bethel the sons of the prophets came out to meet them and asked Elisha: “Do you know that the Lord will take away your master from over you today?” (II Kings 2:3). Neither Elisha nor Elijah wanted to discuss his departure so they asked the sons of the prophets not to talk about it. At Bethel, Elijah again asked Elisha to stay behind as he went on to Jericho. One more time at Jericho Elijah asked Elisha to stay behind, and again Elisha refused. Then Elijah probably understood that the Lord had revealed His plans to Elisha, so he consented to keep Elisha with him to the end.

From Jericho they traveled together to the Jordan River. Then we are given a glimpse of the Lord’s presence with Elijah and Elisha. When Elijah took his robe and struck the waters of the Jordan, the waters parted, and the two of them walked across on dry ground. As they reached the other side of the Jordan River, they were separated from the sons of the prophets. Elijah was also separated from his work in Israel. The Spirit of God, who had sent a miracle to make a path through the Jordan River, now also prepared to take Elijah to heaven. Elijah then asked Elisha what he could do for him before he was taken to heaven. Elisha asked for something that only the Lord could give. He asked for a double portion of the Spirit that was in Elijah. Elijah knew he had to leave the giving of that gift to the Lord, so he told Elisha that if he saw him ascend to heaven he would have the Spirit he requested.

Then it happened! Suddenly a chariot of fire appeared with horses of fire and separated the two of them. Elisha then saw Elijah ascend to heaven in a whirlwind, and when he saw it he cried out: “My father, my father, the chariots of Israel and its horsemen!” (II Kings 2:12). Elisha then tore his own clothes and also picked up the robe that had fallen from Elijah and returned to the Jordan River. Then he took Elijah’s robe and struck the Jordan River and said, “Where is the Lord God of Elijah?” (II Kings 2:14). He said this in faith, because he

expected that the Spirit that was in Elijah would now be in him. God was gracious and showed Elisha that the Spirit of Elijah was in him, when He again sent a miracle to part the waters of the Jordan River. Elisha had been allowed to see the heavens opened and the victory of the Word of God.

Elisha returned to Jericho where he made the bitter waters sweet by throwing salt into them. He said as he did so: "Thus says the Lord: 'I have healed this water; from it there shall be no more death or barrenness'" (II Kings 2:21). Then Elisha went on to Bethel, where Jeroboam had set up calf worship. As he traveled to Bethel some youth met him and mocked him by saying: "Go up bald head! Go up bald head!" (II Kings 2:23). Elisha was so taken back by the willingness of these youth to mock the Spirit and the Word of God, that he called down a curse on them. In response to that curse the Lord sent two female bears to destroy forty-two of these youth. The Lord wanted to bring the people under the terror of the Word of God so that they would fear Him and believe Him.

Questions

1. What was the Lord about to do with Elijah as he and Elisha traveled from Gilgal? (II Kings 2:1)
2. What did Elijah ask Elisha to do? (II Kings 2:2a)
3. What was Elisha's response to Elijah's request? (II Kings 2:2b)
4. Who told Elisha that this was the day Elijah would be taken away? (II Kings 2:3)
5. How were Elijah and Elisha able to cross the Jordan River? (II Kings 2:8)

Lesson 12

The Whole Earth Is Mine

Reference: De Graaf, *Promise and Deliverance*, Volume 2, Lesson 37

Scripture: II Kings 3

Memory Verse: “But Jehoshaphat said, ‘Is there no prophet of the Lord here, that we may inquire of the Lord by him?’ So one of the servants of the king of Israel answered and said, ‘Elisha the son of Shaphat is here, who poured water on the hands of Elijah.’” (II Kings 3:11)

Lesson Truth: The Lord gives His grace to His people in order to bless the entire earth.

Lesson

Israel had to learn that the whole earth belongs to the Lord. Even the land where other nations lived belonged to the Lord. It was not Israel’s prerogative to utterly destroy the land of Moab in a spirit of national pride. They had to learn that nations are blessed or cursed for the Lord’s honor not for Israel’s honor. Both king Jehoram and the prophet Elisha were guilty of bringing the wrath of the Lord against Israel because of the utter destruction of Moab. This senseless destruction caused the king of Moab to offer his eldest son as a burnt offering on the city wall.

Ahab’s son Ahaziah was king of Israel for only two years and was then succeeded by his brother Jehoram. During the reign of Jehoram Baal worship was discontinued, but in its place Jehoram taught the people to worship Jehovah as a national god through the calves at Dan and Bethel. To Jehoram the Lord was no more than the gods of the other nations. The only difference was that Jehovah was Israel’s national god. This spirit became evident when the king of Moab refused to pay the tribute of lambs and wool to the king of Israel.

Ahab made Moab pay an annual tribute of one hundred thousand lambs and the wool of one hundred thousand rams. Neither Ahaziah or Jehoram were able to make the king of Moab pay this tribute. So Jehoram decided Israel would attack Moab and force them to pay the tribute and in this way, they would restore Israel’s honor. The tragedy was that they thought only of Israel’s honor and not the Lord’s honor. In order to send a large army to invade Moab, Jehoram asked Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, to join him in this battle. Jehoshaphat agreed to do this because he thought that if Moab could rebel against Israel then Edom could rebel against Judah. Jehoshaphat also made the king of Edom join in the battle against Moab. The three kings agreed to attack Moab from the south shore of the Dead Sea. This meant they would have to march several days through the desert. They knew they could not carry enough water for this journey, but they thought that in late spring the brooks would still have water in them.

The tragedy of these kings following their own will instead of the Lord’s will became evident when they marched for seven days in the desert and did not find any water. Jehoram was the first one to become desperate and complain that the Lord brought the three armies together to deliver them into the hands the king of Moab.

King Jehoshaphat from Judah showed he was still aware of the need for the presence of the Lord in every situation. He asked if there was a prophet of the Lord with the army that they could inquire of the Lord by him. When he was informed that Elisha was with the army, he and Jehoram went to see Elisha. Elisha immediately told Jehoram to go to the gods of his parents. He said that if it were not for Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, he would not talk to them. The reason Elisha had respect for Jehoshaphat was because he was a son of David. The Lord would hear them for the sake of His covenant with David.

Lesson 13

The Word of Life

Reference: De Graaf, *Promise and Deliverance*, Volume 2, Lesson 38

Scripture: II Kings 4

Memory Verse: “Now it came to pass, when the vessels were full, that she said to her son, ‘Bring me another vessel.’ And he said to her, ‘There is not another vessel.’ So the oil ceased. Then she came and told the man of God. And he said, ‘Go sell the oil and pay your debt; and you and your sons live on the rest.’” (II Kings 4:6-7)

Lesson Truth: The Word of the Lord is the Word of life.

Lesson

Second Kings 4 helps us understand the life-giving power of the Word of the Lord. The life-giving power of this Word is revealed in four stories from this chapter of Scripture. We will learn that we receive to the extent that our hearts are opened to, and gripped by, the Word of the Lord. This passage of Scripture also shows us that the Word of the Lord preserves life.

A widow of one of the men from the school of the prophets cried out to Elisha about the difficulties she was having financially. After her husband died the creditor was coming to take her two sons as slaves to satisfy her debt. When Elisha heard about her situation, he asked her what she had in the house. When she informed him that all that she had was a little jar of oil, Elisha told her to collect as many vessels as she could and bring them into the house. Then with the power of faith she began to pour oil from her small jar into all the vessels until they were all filled. In gratitude she informed Elisha of the miracle that had taken place as she poured the oil. Elisha advised her to sell the oil and pay the creditor; then she and her sons could live on what remained. By a divine miracle, the lives and freedom of this woman and her sons were saved. So too we will be saved by a miracle of God’s grace in Christ Jesus.

The Word of the Lord again became evident at the village of Shunem. Elisha was invited to stay at the home of a notable woman at Shunem. In fact, she convinced her husband to add a small room to their home where Elisha could stay whenever he was in town. Not only did she provide a room for Elisha, she also provided him with food. She recognized that Elisha was a man of God. The Lord then helped Elisha understand that this house should receive the blessing of His Word.

Elisha was not sure what this blessing should be, so he sent his servant Gehazi to ask the woman what they could do for her. Her response was that she did not need anything. However, Gehazi saw that there was something missing in her life, as she had no child. In the power of the Word of God, Elisha told the Shunemite woman that in a year she would have a son. Because the gift of a son was so overwhelming, the woman told Elisha not to lie to her and get her hopes up. But she did believe and a year later the Lord gave her a son.

A few years later, the Lord tested the faith of the woman from Shunem when her son died in the heat of the sun. She complained to Elisha that she would rather that she never had a son than to have the one the Lord gave her taken away. Elisha sent Gehazi with his staff and told him to lay it on the child’s face. Gehazi did as he was told, but he did not have that kind of faith in the Word of the Lord. Therefore, he could not lay hold of this Word in faith and the child did not respond. When Elisha came to the house, he found the child lying on his bed. He lived by faith in the Word of the Lord. Yet it was through a difficult struggle of Elisha’s faith that the child finally sneezed and awoke. The child returned from the dead by the power of the Word of grace.

Then the woman from Shunem fell on her face at Elisha's feet. She bowed in humble adoration of the Lord in whom she trusted.

The last two stories in this chapter relate how Elisha made the pot of stew edible for the school of the prophets, and how he fed one hundred men with twenty loaves of barley bread. Even though Elisha's servant could not believe that all these men could be fed with twenty small loaves, Elisha told him to feed them anyway. Elisha believed that the Word of the Lord could provide for all the needs of His people. Not only was there enough bread to feed all the men, but also there was bread left over. Again, and again the Word of the Lord provided for His people. In that way the Word of the Lord can provide for all our needs! What could we possibly lack if we live in the Lord's favor?

Questions

1. What was the creditor going to do with the widow's two sons to satisfy her debt? (II Kings 4:1)
2. What was the one thing remaining in the widow's house? (II Kings 4:2)
3. What did Elisha instruct the widow to do with oil from her small jar? (II Kings 4:3-4)
4. After the widow found all the vessels full, what did Elisha tell her to do with the oil? (II Kings 4:6-7)

5. What provision did the woman from Shunem make for Elisha? (II Kings 4:8-10)

6. What miraculous thing did Elisha promise the woman from Shunem? (II Kings 4:15-16)

7. What happened to the young son the Lord had given to the woman from Shunem? (II Kings 4:18-20)

8. When the woman from Shunem went to get Elisha what did she refuse to do? (II Kings 4:30)