

Promise and Deliverance

Student Workbook

Volume 10

Level 2

Harvey De Groot

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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.

The Power of Grace in a Time of Judgment

Reference: De Graaf, *Promise and Deliverance*, volume 2, Lesson 52

Scripture: II Kings 21; II Chronicles 33

Memory Verse: “Therefore thus says the Lord God of Israel: ‘Behold, I am bringing such calamity upon Jerusalem and Judah that whoever hears of it, both his ears will tingle.’” (II Kings 21:12)

Lesson Truth: King Manasseh came under the power of God’s grace when he was taken captive.

Lesson

In the story today we will learn two truths. The first is that God showed His grace to king Manasseh. He did this when Manasseh was taken captive. The second is that the people of Judah became very wicked. They became so wicked that God had to punish them. God would allow them to be taken into captivity. The story begins when Manasseh became king of Judah.

Manasseh was only twelve years old when he became king. He was king in Jerusalem for fifty-five years. It is sad that he was not a godly king. He did not serve the Lord as his father Hezekiah had done. Manasseh did some very wicked things. He brought back many of the idols his father had destroyed. He even brought back the Baals and made altars for the people to worship them. Wicked king Manasseh had the people worship the sun, moon, and stars. It seemed that Manasseh tried to keep the people from worshipping the Lord.

This wicked king also mocked the sacrifices of the Lord. The sacrifices were to be offered on the altar to show that Christ Jesus would take away their sins. Do you know what Manasseh did? He offered his own sons as sacrifices on the fire. This is just what the heathen nations did. How long could the Lord permit Manasseh to lead the people in such wickedness? The truth is that the Lord knew His people would forsake Him. The sins of Manasseh and the people made them ready for punishment.

The Lord spoke to Manasseh and His people to warn them. But they would not listen. The Lord then allowed the king of Assyria to take Manasseh captive. The captain of the army of Assyria treated the king harshly. He used hooks and fetters and took him as a prisoner. The Bible tells us that when Manasseh was in trouble he thought

about the Lord. He remembered the God of his father Hezekiah. Manasseh begged God in prayer and became humble before Him. The Lord showed the power of His grace to Manasseh. He helped him see that his troubles came because of his sin.

A wonderful thing happened. The Lord heard Manasseh's prayer. He answered his prayer in a very special way. He permitted Manasseh to return to Jerusalem. But that wasn't all that happened. The Lord also permitted him to be king again. This was the way the Lord showed that His grace is stronger than sin. Manasseh showed that he changed. He tried to put away the idols he brought to Jerusalem. Still because of his sins the people continued to worship idols. Manasseh was a believer when he died. Yet all the years that he worshipped idols made the people sinful. It made them ready for punishment.

God showed His anger against sin after Manasseh died. He gave the land of Judah another wicked king. This wicked king was Amon. The Lord would allow Judah to live in their sins. Then when the time was right, they would be taken away as captives. Amon was king for only two years. Then his servants killed him. Afterward the people killed these servants. That was the way the land of Judah began to fall apart. The people had become so wicked that the Lord would send them into captivity.

God showed the power of His grace to Manasseh. He humbled himself before the Lord and was a believer when he died. But all the years that he led the people to worship idols was bad for Judah. Because of Manasseh's sins Judah became ready for punishment. Judah needed a Redeemer who did not sin. That Redeemer is Christ Jesus our Lord. You and I also need a Redeemer because we deserve to be punished forever. God also showed the power of His grace to us when he sent Jesus to be our Redeemer.

Questions

Fill in the blanks.

1. “_____ was twelve years old when he became king?”
(II Chronicles 33:1a)
2. “But he did evil in the sight of the _____, according to all the abominations of the nations whom the Lord had cast out before the children of Israel.” (II Chronicles 33:2)

3. “For he rebuilt the high places which _____ his father had broken down; he raised up altars for the Baals, and made wooden images.” (II Chronicles 33:3a)

4. “And the Lord spoke to _____ and his people, but they would not listen.” (II Chronicles 33:10)

5. “Therefore the Lord brought upon them the captains of the army of the king of Assyria, who took _____ with hooks, bound him with bronze fetters and carried him off to Babylon.” (II Chronicles 33:11)

6. “Now when he was in affliction, he implored the Lord his God, and _____ himself greatly before the God of his fathers.” (II Chronicles 33:12)

Lesson 2

The Need for Reformation by the Spirit

Reference: De Graaf, *Promise and Deliverance*, Volume 2, Lesson 53

Scripture: II Kings 22–23: II Chronicles 34–35

Memory Verse: “And he read in their hearing all the words of the Book of the Covenant which had been found in the house of the Lord.” (II Kings 23:2b)

Lesson Truth: King Josiah brought many reforms, yet only a reformation of the Holy Spirit through Christ Jesus would save God’s people.

Lesson

Josiah was just eight years old when he became king. He was the king in Jerusalem for thirty-one years. It is a joy to read about Josiah as king. He was a good king who tried to serve the Lord. The Bible tells us that he walked in the ways of David. We are told there was no king like him. He turned to the Lord with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his might.

Josiah set out to clean and repair the temple. He also wanted to remove the idols and their altars. These were idols that his grandfather Manasseh brought to the temple. Josiah wanted the people to serve only the Lord at the temple. He asked the people to bring an offering to pay for the temple repairs. Do you know what Josiah did with the offering? He told his secretary to bring it to the high priest. The high priest would pay the workers to repair the temple. Hilkiah the high priest took the offering. Then he told the secretary that he found an old book in the temple. This book was the Book of the Law the Lord had given to Moses. The kings and the people had not read the law for many years.

The secretary brought this Book of the Law to King Josiah. He also read it for the king. Do you know what Josiah did when he heard the Book of the Law? He tore his clothes in sorrow. He knew that the judgments talked about in the law would come on Judah. They would come because Judah had broken the law. God would punish Judah because Josiah’s grandfather, Manasseh, had filled the land with sins. Even Josiah’s prayers could not turn away God’s judgments. The people could no longer be saved by the old covenant of the law. They would be saved by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Josiah knew that Judah would be punished for its sins. Still, he wanted to show honor to the Lord for His righteousness. He wanted the people to worship only the Lord. So

he called the people together in front of the temple. There he had the law read so all the people could hear it. They heard about the judgments that come from disobeying the law. Still the people were not ready to humble themselves before the Lord.

King Josiah went on to cleanse the temple. He destroyed the images and the altars of his grandfather Manasseh. He destroyed the altars for sun worship and the altars where children had been sacrificed. Josiah wanted the people to worship only the God of Israel and Judah. How sad that Josiah could destroy the idols, but he could not change the hearts of the people.

Only the Lord Jesus Christ can change people's hearts. Now Josiah knew that the old covenant of the law was ending. Instead the new covenant of grace in Christ Jesus would save God's people. This is why the title of the lesson says we need a reformation by the Spirit. That means that the Holy Spirit must change our hearts. With changed hearts we can love and serve the Lord.

King Josiah had heard the Book of the Law. Now he wanted to celebrate the Passover feast. He wanted the people to remember that the angel of death passed over homes that had blood on the doorframes. This happened before the children of Israel left Egypt. The blood on the doorframes was the blood of lambs. The angel of death did not put to death the first born of the homes that had the blood.

This time the Passover feast did not save Judah. The blood of lambs did not take away Judah's sins. Only the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ could take away their sins. The old covenant of the law and lamb's blood was gone. The new covenant in Christ Jesus would save God's people. The Lord Jesus Christ was Judah's Passover Lamb. He is also the Lamb of God that shed His blood for you and me.

Questions

Fill in the blanks.

1. “_____ was eight years old when he became king, and he reigned thirty-one years in Jerusalem.” (II Kings 22:1a)
2. “And he did what was right in the sight of the _____, and walked in all the ways of his father David; he did not turn aside to the right hand or to the left.” (II Kings 22:2)

3. “Then _____ the high priest said to Shaphan the scribe, ‘I have found the Book of the Law in the house of the Lord.’” (II Kings 22:8a)

4. “Now it happened when the king heard the words of the _____ of the Law, that he tore his clothes.” (II Kings 22:11)

5. “Then the king stood by a pillar and made a _____ before the Lord, to follow the Lord and to keep His commandments and His testimonies and His statutes, with all his heart and all his soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book.” (II Kings 23:3a)

6. “Then the king commanded all the people saying, ‘Keep the _____ to the Lord your God, as it is written in this Book of the Covenant.’” (II Kings 23:21)

Lesson 3
Fading Light

Reference: De Graaf, *Promise and Deliverance*, Volume 2, Lesson 54

Scripture: II Kings 24–25

Memory Verse: “Is it nothing to you, all you who pass by? Behold and see if there is any sorrow like my sorrow, which has been brought on me, which the Lord has inflicted in the day of His fierce anger.” (Lamentations 1:12)

Lesson Truth: The reigns of David and Solomon had been a time of light for Israel and Judah. This light faded when Judah was carried to Babylon. It appeared with new brilliance in Christ Jesus.

Lesson

The kingdom of Israel reached its greatest glory when David and Solomon were kings. The temple in Jerusalem stood as a light from the Lord to the entire world. Today we will learn the sad story of that beautiful light fading. It happened when the house of David was carried off into captivity in Babylon. Still God did not forget His promise to David’s house. He sent prophets to His faithful people in captivity as well as to those who remained in Judah. In the darkest hour of the kingdom of Judah, God sent a sign of His faithfulness to David. He had the king of Babylon release Jehoiachin from prison.

The end of the kingdom of Judah came when the people were carried to Babylon. The people were carried away in two different groups. Only the very poor people were allowed to remain in Judah. Many of them later fled to Egypt. The first group of captives was carried off to Babylon after the Babylonians defeated Egypt. With the defeat of Egypt, they took control of Judah. When king Jehoiakim rebelled against Babylon they sent bands of raiders to destroy Judah. The Bible tells us that it was the Lord who had these raiders trouble Judah. These judgments came against Judah just as the prophets said they would. They came because of the sins of King Manasseh. Because of those sins, God would allow His people to be carried away as captives.

Both king Jehoiakim and Jehoiachin were disobedient to the Word of the Lord. They would not listen to Jeremiah the Lord’s prophet. They rebelled against king Nebuchadnezzar. In response to their rebellion Nebuchadnezzar carried Jehoiachin off to Babylon. He also took the princes and craftsmen as prisoners. He even carried away the treasures from the temple and the palace. The light that had shone in Jerusalem

when David was king started to fade. Did God forget His promise to David? God could never forget His promise! A day would come when His light would again shine in Jerusalem. Christ Jesus would come as the Light of the World.

The second group was taken captive to Babylon when Zedekiah was king. Zedekiah was the third son of Josiah to become king. He did not serve the Lord like his father Josiah. He rebelled against the Word of the Lord and against the king of Babylon. The Babylonians laid siege to the city of Jerusalem and starved the people. Zedekiah fled from the city to the plains of Jericho. There his army deserted him, and he was captured. The Babylonians showed how they hated Zedekiah. They made him watch as they killed his sons. Then they plucked out his eyes so that he would always remember their deaths. They carried all the important people from Judah to Babylon. Many of them were put to death. Only the poorest people were allowed to stay behind. The light in Jerusalem had gone out. Yet it would shine again in a new and better way in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Zedekiah was the last king of Judah. The king of Babylon placed Gedaliah in Jerusalem as a governor. Gedaliah advised the people to submit to the rule of Babylon. This was also the word that Jeremiah brought. But Gedaliah was killed. After Gedaliah's death, many people fled to Egypt. The kingdom of Judah had come to an end. Yet God would always have faithful people even in captivity. His promises to David would be fulfilled. God gave a sign that He was still with His people. He had the king of Babylon release King Jehoiachin from prison. He was allowed to eat at the king's table. The faithful people in captivity knew this was a sign from the Lord. They knew the Lord would keep His promise to David. Even though the old covenant faded away God would make a new covenant. He gave the new covenant to His people in Christ Jesus. This covenant is not only to Israel and Judah, but to all who believe. You and I are part of that covenant. God kept His promise to the house of David!

Questions

Fill in the blanks.

1. "In his days Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up, and _____ became his vassal for three years." (II Kings 24:1)
2. "And the _____ sent against him raiding bands of Chaldeans, bands of Syrians, bands of Moabites, and bands of the people of Ammon." (II Kings 24:2a)

3. “Surely at the commandment of the Lord this came upon Judah, to remove them from His sight because of the sins of _____ according to all he had done.” (II Kings 24:3)

4. “Jehoiachin was _____ years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem three months.” (II Kings 24:8a)

5. “At that time the servants of _____ king of Babylon came up against Jerusalem, and the city was besieged.” (II Kings 24:10)

6. “Then they killed the sons of _____ before his eyes, put out the eyes of Zedekiah, bound him with bronze fetters, and took him to Babylon.” (II Kings 25:7)

A Kingdom Not of This World

Reference: De Graaf, *Promise and Deliverance*, Volume 2, Lesson 55

Scripture: Daniel 1–2

Memory Verse: “The king answered Daniel, and said, “Truly your God is the God of gods, the Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, since you could reveal this secret.” (Daniel 2:47)

Lesson Truth: Through Daniel, God told the king of Babylon about the Kingdom of Christ Jesus.

Lesson

The people of Judah were carried into captivity. Among the captives were Daniel and his three friends Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. God used Daniel and his friends to bring a message of hope to all people. God caused Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon to have a dream. Through this dream God told about the coming of the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Daniel and his friends were carried off to Babylon when Jerusalem was conquered. When they arrived in Babylon, they were chosen for training to serve the king. God used this training to prepare them to be prophets in Babylon. As part of their preparation, they were supposed to eat the king’s food and drink his wine. Daniel and his friends did not want to use the king’s food and drink. They thought this diet would make them impure before God. So, Daniel asked the man in charge if they could have just vegetables and water. He said he could not allow them to live on such a plain diet.

Daniel then asked him if they could try his diet for ten days. He promised that if they looked underfed, they would eat the king’s diet. God caused the captain in charge to listen to Daniel. He said they could try their food for ten days. Do you know what happened? After ten days Daniel and his friends looked stronger and healthier than all the others. Then the man in charge allowed them to eat only vegetables and drink only water. God also gave them knowledge and wisdom.

At the end of their training the captain brought them to the king. The king asked them questions about the kingdom. Do you know what he found? He found that Daniel and his friends knew ten times as much as the other wise men. God had given them this wisdom and knowledge.

Later the king had a dream. It was a dream that bothered him. When he woke up he could not remember the dream. He called for his wise men and magicians. He asked them to tell him his dream and also what it meant. The wise men said this wasn't fair. They said the king should tell them the dream then they would tell what it meant. This made the king angry. He said real wise men would be able to tell him his dream. He then commanded that all the wise men and magicians should be put to death.

The king's guards were also going to put Daniel and his friends to death. Daniel asked the guard to wait just a little while. He then asked his friends to pray that God would tell him the king's dream. Then a wonderful thing happened. God told Daniel the king's dream and also what it meant.

Daniel said a prayer of thanks to God. Then he asked the guard to bring him to the king. The king asked Daniel if he could tell him his dream. Daniel answered that only God in heaven could tell what he dreamed. He also said the God of heaven would tell him the meaning of the dream.

As the king listened Daniel told him that in his dream, he saw a huge image. The head of this image was fine gold. The chest and arms were silver. The belly and thighs were bronze, and the legs were iron. The feet were part iron and part clay. Daniel then said that the king saw a stone cut from a mountain without hands. This stone crushed the image and filled the whole earth. This meant that in the future there would be four great kingdoms on the earth. The stone cut from the mountain would crush these great kingdoms. This stone is the Kingdom of Christ Jesus, and it would fill the whole earth.

King Nebuchadnezzar knew that Daniel told him his dream. He also knew that the meaning of the dream was correct. He praised the God of Daniel and said that Daniel's God was the God of gods. He knew that Daniel's God could make secrets known. Even though God's people were captives in Babylon He still remembered them with a message in a dream. He told them, and He tells us that the Kingdom of Christ Jesus will fill the whole earth. This Kingdom will never be destroyed, but will stand forever. Just think you and I are part of that Kingdom!

Questions

Fill in the blanks.

1. "Then the king instructed _____ the master of his eunuchs, to bring some of the children of Israel and some of the king's descendants and some of the nobles." (Daniel 1:3)

2. “And the king appointed for them a daily provision of the king’s _____ and of the wine which he drank.” (Daniel 1:5a)

3. “But _____ purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king’s delicacies, nor with the wine which he drank.” (Daniel 1:8a)

4. “And the king said to them, I have had a _____, and my spirit is anxious to know the dream.” (Daniel 2:3)

5. “Then the secret was revealed to _____ in a night vision. So _____ blessed the God of heaven.” (Daniel 2:19)

6. “And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a _____ which shall never be destroyed.” (Daniel 2:44a)

The Power of Grace in Babylon

Reference: De Graaf, *Promise and Deliverance*, Volume 2, Lesson 56

Scripture: Daniel 3

Memory Verse: “You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You.” (Isaiah 26:3)

Lesson Truth: God showed the power of His grace through a fiery furnace in Babylon.

Lesson

Nebuchadnezzar had conquered many nations. When he conquered the land of Judah, he brought many captives to Babylon. Among the captives were Daniel and his three friends. Daniel’s three friends saw the power of God’s grace in a burning fiery furnace. The king of Babylon also saw the power of God’s grace. He said that God was better than other gods. Still, he did not confess the Lord to be the only true God. The story of the fiery furnace is a story about God showing His grace in a city of wickedness.

King Nebuchadnezzar was very proud. He was the king of many conquered nations. The proud king decided to make a huge statue to remind the people of his power. The statue was about ninety feet high and nine feet wide. In order to dedicate the statue, the king brought all the officials from Babylon to the plains of Dura. He wanted his officials to believe that Babylon’s power was holy. Then the king commanded all the people in his kingdom to bow down and worship this statue. They had to bow when they heard the sounds of musical instruments. He wanted the people to think that Babylon was god.

It is sad that the king did not understand that all power belongs to God. He was going to see the power of God’s grace. It happened when Daniel’s three friends would not bow to the king’s statue. Some of the king’s officials immediately told him about Daniel’s friends. They reminded the king about the punishment he promised if people did not bow to his statue. He promised that they would be thrown into burning fiery furnace. The king called for Daniel’s three friends. He reminded them that if they did not bow to his statue, they would be thrown into the fiery furnace.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego told the king they did not need his reminder. They told him they served the Lord God of heaven. They would never bow down to any image. Even more, they said that the God they served could deliver them from the fire

of the furnace. But even if God did not deliver them, they would not worship the gold image. For them it was better to die than to worship an image.

The king became very angry with Daniel's friends. He would show them his power! The king commanded his soldiers to make the furnace seven times hotter than usual. He then told the soldiers to tie the three friends with ropes and to throw them into this very hot fire. The fire was so hot that it killed the soldiers who threw the men into the furnace. Then an amazing thing happened!

As the king watched he saw four men walk around in the fiery furnace. He called his officials and asked them, "Didn't we throw three men into the fiery furnace?" They answered the king that it was true that only three men were thrown into the furnace. In amazement the king replied that he saw four men walking in the fire unharmed. He added that the form of the fourth was like the Son of God. Then he called to Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and asked them to come out of the furnace.

When the three friends came out of the furnace the king's officials saw that the fire did not harm them. Their hair was not even singed, and their clothes did not smell like smoke. The king then praised the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. He said that their God was the Most-High God! The king then sent a decree throughout his kingdom. He promised that anyone who would say anything against the God of Daniel's friends would be put to death. He confessed, "There is no other God who can deliver like this" (Daniel 3:29). It is sad that the king did not confess that God is the only true God. God saved Daniel's three friends from the burning fiery furnace. How thankful you and I must be that we are saved through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Questions

Fill in the blanks.

1. "Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of _____ whose height was sixty cubits and its width six cubits." (Daniel 3:1)
2. "Then a herald cried aloud: 'To you it is _____ O peoples, nations, and languages, that at the time you hear the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, and psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, you shall fall down and worship the golden image that king Nebuchadnezzar has set up.'" (Daniel 3:4-5)

3. “There are certain Jews whom you have set over the affairs of the province of _____: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego; these men, O king have not paid due regard to you. They do not serve your gods or worship the gold image which you have set up.” (Daniel 3:12)

4. “If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to _____ us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king.” (Daniel 3:17)

5. “Then these men were _____ in their coats, their trousers, their turbans, and their other garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.” (Daniel 3:21)

6. “Look! he answered, ‘I see four men loose, _____ in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.’” (Daniel 3:25)

The Sovereignty of Israel's God

Reference: De Graaf, *Promise and Deliverance*, Volume 2, Lesson 57

Scripture: Daniel 4

Memory Verse: “Whatever the Lord pleases He does, in heaven and in earth, in the seas and in all deep places.” (Psalm 135:6)

Lesson Truth: God showed the power of His grace in Christ when he warned the king of Babylon how he would be humiliated.

Lesson

King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon was a proud king. He thought that Babylon became a great kingdom because he was so wise and powerful. He did not understand that God is the supreme ruler of everything on earth. The king had to learn that the God of Israel is Sovereign. God rules everything!

The story of the king's second dream tells how God humbled Nebuchadnezzar. The king said he was at rest in his palace when he saw a dream. The dream he saw made him afraid. He did not know what it meant but thought it meant something bad. He called for the wise men of Babylon at once. He told them his dream, but they did not know the meaning. Their minds were closed because of fear. They were afraid of the judgment suggested in this dream.

Then the king thought about Daniel. Daniel had told him the meaning of his first dream. He was sure that Daniel could tell him the meaning of his dream. He was sure because he knew that the Spirit of the Holy God was in him. Since Daniel had the Spirit of the Holy God no secret was kept from him. The king told Daniel his dream. He dreamed that he saw a huge tree. It was so large that it could be seen to the ends of the earth. The fruit of this tree provided food for everyone. The animals rested in its shade and the birds lived in its branches. The king then saw a being from heaven. This being cried out to cut down the tree and cut off its branches.

The being from heaven then said something strange. He said the stump should be left. This stump should be bound with a band of iron and bronze. He talked about the stump like it was an animal. He said this creature would eat grass with the beasts. It would get wet with dew in the mornings. Also, the heart of man that was in the creature would

become the heart of a beast. The creature would eat grass and be wet with dew for seven periods of time. Isn't this a strange dream?

God helped Daniel know the meaning of the dream. But he was afraid to tell the king what it meant. He said to the king that he wished the judgment of the dream would come on his enemies. Then Daniel told the king what it meant. He said the huge tree was king Nebuchadnezzar. God had given him a kingdom that was strong and powerful. This strong and powerful kingdom would be cut down just like the being from heaven said it would. Then the king would eat grass like an animal, and he would get wet with the dew. This would happen for seven periods of time. It would happen until Nebuchadnezzar was made humble. After Daniel told the king the meaning of the dream, he begged him to change. He begged him to think about the poor and the needy. Daniel said the Lord might still bring peace.

At first Nebuchadnezzar thought about the meaning of the dream. But he soon forgot and became very proud again. He walked about his palace and bragged about the great Babylon that he had built. As he was bragging God's judgments came on him. He lost his senses and acted like an animal. The king ate grass and was covered with dew. His hair grew like feathers and his nails like claws. The king lived like a mad creature until he knew that the Most-High God ruled the kingdoms of men.

When seven periods of time passed the king came back to his senses. The first thing he did was to praise the name of God. Now he knew that God was the supreme ruler of all the kingdoms on earth. He knew that Daniel's God had all authority on the earth. Through the judgments talked about in this dream, God humbled Nebuchadnezzar. God kept His word alive until Christ Jesus came. You and I must always remember that God is the supreme ruler of the whole world. Israel's God is sovereign!

Questions

Fill in the blanks.

1. "I thought it good to declare the signs and wonders that the _____
_____ has worked for me." (Daniel 4:2)
2. "I saw a _____ which made me afraid, and the thoughts
on my bed and the visions of my head troubled me." (Daniel 4:5)

3. "I was looking and behold a _____ in the midst of the earth, and its height was great." (Daniel 4:10b)

4. "I saw in the vision of my head while on my bed, and there was a _____ a holy one, coming down from heaven." (Daniel 4:13)

5. "Therefore, O king, let my _____ be acceptable to you; break off your sins by being righteous, and your inequities by showing mercy to the poor." (Daniel 4:27a)

6. And at the end of the time I, _____, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my understanding returned to me; and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever." (Daniel 4:34)

Like a Potter's Vessel

Reference: De Graaf, *Promise and Deliverance*, Volume 2, Lesson 58

Scripture: Daniel 5

Memory Verse: “O Lord, I know the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man who walks to direct his own steps.” (Jeremiah 10:23)

Lesson Truth: God showed His grace in Christ when He told Belshazzar his kingdom would be destroyed because he was an enemy of the Lord.

Lesson

The title of our lesson mentions a potter's vessel. A potter's vessel is like a clay flowerpot. It breaks easily if it is dropped. This is a picture of how God can break a nation in pieces. He breaks them like a potter's vessel when they profane His name. The story of today's lesson is about the destruction of the kingdom of Babylon. God showed His grace in destroying this kingdom.

Belshazzar was the last king of the kingdom of Babylon. He was a proud and wicked king. When he was king, the Persians captured a large part of Babylon. Still, Belshazzar was proud. He would not humble himself before the Lord. Instead, he made a big feast for his lords. At this feast he wanted to show off how great he was. He drank wine in front of all his lords. He wanted them to believe that he wasn't afraid of anyone or anything.

Then he did something even more wicked. He wanted to show his lords that he wasn't afraid of the God of Israel. He told his servants to bring the vessels from the temple in Jerusalem to his feast. He wanted his lords and his wives to drink wine from these vessels as they honored their gods of gold and silver. This was a terrible thing to do. It was very wicked to dishonor the sacred vessels from the temple. God would not allow this wicked king to dishonor His name in that way.

Then a very strange thing happened. A man's hand appeared on the wall. This hand wrote some words. The king and his lords could not read the words, so they became afraid. The king was so afraid that his knees knocked together as he trembled. He immediately called for his wise men and magicians. He asked them to read the words that the hand had written and to tell what they meant. But God was not with these wise

men so they could not read the words. The king and his lords then became so afraid that their faces were filled with fear.

The queen heard about the fear of the king and his lords. She went to the king's feast and reminded the king that there was a man of God in Babylon. She reminded him that the Spirit of God was in Daniel. It was Daniel who told King Nebuchadnezzar the meaning of his dream. The king sent for Daniel right away. He told Daniel that he would be honored, and he would receive gifts if he could read the words on the wall. Daniel answered the king that he did not want gifts, but he would read the words on the wall. Daniel then reminded the king that God had humbled Nebuchadnezzar. God made Nebuchadnezzar roam in the fields like an animal until he honored God's name. Daniel told Belshazzar that even though he knew what happened to Nebuchadnezzar, but he did not honor the God of heaven. Because he did not honor the God of heaven he was going to be destroyed.

Belshazzar had made fun of the God of grace. That is why God sent the hand to write on the palace wall. Daniel then told the king that the words on the wall were: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. The meaning of these words was, numbered, numbered, weighed, and divided. The kingdom of Babylon was weighed in the balance and it was found wanting. So the days of the kingdom were numbered. The kingdom of Babylon would soon end. This kingdom would be given to the Persians. The kingdom of Babylon could no longer carry the hope of the coming Kingdom of Christ.

The king honored Daniel by giving him a purple robe and a gold chain. But that did not put off the destruction of Babylon. That very night the Persians made a surprise attack and Belshazzar was killed. The kingdom of Babylon was broken in pieces like a potter's vessel. God will surely judge any nation who has no room for His Spirit. God showed His grace when He destroyed Babylon. Now the hope of the coming of the Kingdom of Christ Jesus would be kept alive. It would live in the kingdoms of Persia, Greece, and Rome until Christ Jesus was born.

Questions

Fill in the blanks.

1. "Belshazzar the king made a great _____ for a thousand of his lords, and drank wine in the presence of the thousand." (Daniel 5:1)
2. "They drank wine and _____ the gods of gold and silver, bronze and iron, wood and stone." (Daniel 5:4)

3. “In the same hour the _____ of a man’s hand appeared and wrote opposite the lamp stand on the plaster of the wall of the king’s palace; and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote.” (Daniel 5:5)

4. “Then the king’s countenance was changed and his thoughts _____ him, so that the joints of his hips were loosened and his knees knocked against each other.” (Daniel 5:6)

5. “There is a man in your kingdom in whom is the _____ of the Holy God.” (Daniel 5:11a)

6. “TEKEL: You have been _____ in the balance, and found wanting.” (Daniel 5:27)

Worshipping the Name of the Lord

Reference: De Graaf, *Promise and Deliverance*, Volume 2, Lesson 59

Scripture: Daniel 6

Memory Verse: “The king spoke, saying to Daniel, ‘Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?’” (Daniel 6:20b)

Lesson Truth: The Lord made sure that the worship of His name continued when he saved Daniel from the lions.

Lesson

Daniel was a man who faithfully worshiped the name of the Lord. The governors of Darius’ kingdom tried to forbid prayer to anyone but the king. They did this so they could trap Daniel. God not only wanted to save Daniel but also wanted to keep the worship of His name.

The Medes and Persians defeated the kingdom of Babylon. King Darius became the king of this huge kingdom. He decided to rule this large kingdom with a number of governors. He also named three of these governors to be the supervisors. The other governors had to report to the three supervisors. Daniel was one of the three supervising governors. He did his work well. The king thought about putting him in charge of the whole kingdom. This made the other governors jealous of Daniel. They also hated his worship of the Lord. These governors tried to find something that Daniel did wrong. They wanted to accuse him to the king. But they could not find anything wrong with Daniel’s work.

The governors decided that the only way they could trap Daniel was in his worship of God. They knew that he prayed to the Lord three times each day. So, they made an evil plan to pass a law that would forbid prayer to anyone but the king. The king in his pride agreed to pass this law. He also agreed to throw anyone who broke this law into the lion’s den. This was a law that could not be changed. Daniel knew about this law. Still, he also knew that God’s law commanded him to worship the Lord. Daniel decided to obey God’s law.

Daniel went home and prayed three times that day. He opened his windows toward Jerusalem and gave thanks to God just like always. The governors immediately went to

the king and accused Daniel. They reminded the king that the law could not be changed. The king first tried to save Daniel. When he couldn't, he said, "Your God, whom you serve continually, He will deliver you" (Daniel 6:16). Then he had Daniel thrown into the lion's den. The king could not sleep that night. He did not eat a bite, but just waited for morning. Early in the morning he hurried to the lion's den. He called out to Daniel and asked, "Has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?" (Daniel 6:20b). Daniel then told the king of God's power and grace. He said: "My God sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths, so they have not hurt me" (Daniel 6:22a). God delivered Daniel for the honor of His name.

The king was very happy to find Daniel alive. He had him taken out of the lion's den. Then he commanded that the men and their families who accused Daniel be thrown into the den of lions. This time the Lord did not stop the lion's mouths. The bodies of these men, women, and children were torn apart before they reached the ground. This was the way the Lord showed His justice to those who hated the worship of His name.

The king then made a new decree. He sent it to all nations and peoples of the earth. He commanded that all people fear and tremble before the God of Daniel. He confessed that Daniel's God is the Living God. The king told the people that the Kingdom of Daniel's God would never be destroyed. We do not know if the king was truly converted. We do know that he honored the name of the Lord. Yes, the Lord preserved the worship of His name. There will always remain faithful people until the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. You and I must also honor the Lord by faithfully calling on His name.

Questions

Fill in the blanks.

1. "Then this _____ distinguished himself above the governors and satraps, because an excellent spirit was in him." (Daniel 6:3a)
2. "Then these men said, 'We shall not find any charge against this _____ unless we find it against him concerning the law of his God.'" (Daniel 6:5)
3. "Now when _____ knew that the writing was signed, he went home. And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days." (Daniel 6:10)

4. “So the king gave the command, and they brought _____ and cast him into the den of lions. But the king spoke, saying to Daniel, ‘Your God, whom you serve continually, He will deliver you.’” (Daniel 6:16)

5. “My God sent His _____ and shut the lion’s mouths, so they have not hurt me.” (Daniel 6:22a)

6. “I make a decree that in every dominion of my kingdom men must _____ and fear before the God of Daniel.” (Daniel 6:26a)

The Temporary Restoration of the Lord's House

Reference: De Graaf, *Promise and Deliverance*, Volume 2, Lesson 60

Scripture: Ezra 1–6

Memory Verse: “Then the heads of the fathers’ houses of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests and the Levites, with all whose spirits God had moved, arose to go up and build the house of the Lord which is in Jerusalem.” (Ezra 1:5)

Lesson Truth: The temple was rebuilt in Jerusalem. This pointed to the promise of God dwelling with His people when Christ Jesus came to earth.

Lesson

God always keeps His promises. The prophet Isaiah prophesied that God would direct Cyrus to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem. Jeremiah prophesied that God’s people would return from captivity after seventy years. The book of Ezra tells how these prophecies were fulfilled. The temple was rebuilt in Jerusalem. But this restoration of the Lord’s house was only temporary. The old covenant would not be restored to the glory of the days of David and Solomon. God’s people had to look forward to the new covenant. In the new covenant Christ Jesus would bring the people into full communion with God

Ezra tells us that the exiles returned in order to fulfill God’s word. God’s people had been carried into captivity because they rejected His commands. Now they were to return from captivity according to God’s word. Cyrus was king of Persia. He became king after the Persians defeated Babylon. Isaiah prophesied years before that Cyrus would become king. He also said that Cyrus would obey God’s command to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem. Cyrus obeyed God’s command by sending a proclamation to his entire kingdom. He told the people that God had given him all the kingdoms of the earth. He also said that God commanded him to build a temple in Jerusalem.

Cyrus asked God’s people to return to Jerusalem to build the temple. He also asked his citizens to give a freewill offering to those who returned. This freewill offering was to pay the expenses to rebuild the temple. Most of the people who returned were from the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. Only a few people from each of the other tribes returned to Jerusalem. Still the exiles that returned were known as the twelve tribes of Israel. Isn’t it wonderful that God’s Word and Spirit, moved the people to return?

It was Jeshua and Zerubbabel who led those that returned. They wanted the people to commune with God just as they did when David was king. But the old covenant was past. They had to look forward to the new covenant. The new covenant would come when Jesus came. In Christ Jesus the people would enjoy full communion with God. Jeshua and Zerubbabel built an altar so they could offer burnt offerings to the God of Israel. Then they gave money and materials to the workmen to begin building the temple. The people shouted for joy when the foundation was laid. The only ones who did not shout for joy were the ones who remembered Solomon's temple. These older people wept when they saw the foundation. They knew this temple would never be as glorious as Solomon's temple.

The older people should have looked ahead instead of looking back. They should have put their hope in the glory that would come with Christ Jesus. But the younger people did not understand that the new temple was only a temporary restoration of the Lord's house. The true restoration of the Lord's house occurred when Christ sent His Spirit to live in the hearts of His people!

God's people then ran into trouble when they were building the temple. The Samaritans who lived in the land wanted to help them build. But they did not keep God's covenant. So, the leaders did not want them to help. The Samaritans then tried to stop the others from building. Because God's people did not live by faith, the work was stopped. For fourteen years the people did not work on the temple. They did build their own homes but not God's house.

God then sent the prophets Haggai and Zechariah to warn the people. The prophets told the people that God was not first in their lives. That is why they had so much trouble. Haggai also encouraged the people. He told them if they put God first in their lives, they would see glory that was greater than Solomon's. They were also encouraged when they heard the report of King Darius. When Darius searched the books of Persia, he found the proclamation of Cyrus. In this proclamation Cyrus said that God commanded that he build a temple in Jerusalem. The temple was finally completed because the Lord was with His people. If only they would look forward to the coming of Christ. In Christ the Lord's house is restored. The Spirit of Christ Jesus lives in the hearts of His people!

Questions

Fill in the blanks.

1. "Thus says _____ king of Persia: 'All the kingdoms of the earth the Lord God of heaven has given me.'" (Ezra 1:2a)

2. “And He has commanded me to build Him a house at _____ which is in Judah.” (Ezra 1:2b)

3. “King _____ also brought out the articles of the house of the Lord, which Nebuchadnezzar had taken from Jerusalem and put in the temple of his gods.” (Ezra 1:7)

4. “Then Jeshua the son of Jozadak and his brethren the priests, and _____ the son of Shealtiel and his brethren, arose and built the altar of the God of Israel, to offer burnt offerings on it, as it is written in the law of Moses the man of God.” (Ezra 3:2)

5. “When the builders laid the _____ of the temple of the Lord, the priests stood in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites, the sons of Asaph, with cymbals to praise the Lord, according to the ordinance of David king of Israel.” (Ezra 3:10)

6. “And may the _____ who causes His name to dwell there destroy any king or people who put their hand to alter it, or to destroy this house of God in Jerusalem.” (Ezra 6:12a)

The Law Reinstated

Reference: De Graaf, *Promise and Deliverance*, Volume 2, Lesson 61

Scripture: Ezra 7–10

Memory Verse: “For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach statutes and ordinances in Israel.” (Ezra 7:10)

Lesson Truth: Ezra taught the people to keep the law so they could stand righteous before God.

Lesson

A large group of God’s people returned to Israel when Cyrus was king. Zerubbabel and Jeshua led them to the Promised Land. Now many years later a second group of God’s people returned to Israel. God moved Ezra the scribe to lead this second group. Ezra went back to Israel because he wanted to teach the people to obey God’s Law again. That is what it means to reinstate the law.

The first group of God’s people who returned to Israel no longer obeyed God’s Law. They forgot the law that would make them a holy people. God loved His people. That is why He stirred Ezra’s heart to lead a second group back to Israel. God wanted Ezra to teach His people to obey His Law. Ezra wanted priests and Levites to go to Jerusalem with him. He wanted the priests and Levites to help him teach the people to obey God’s Law.

Artaxerxes was the king of Persia at this time. Ezra asked him for permission to go to Jerusalem. God also touched the king’s heart, so he gave Ezra permission to go. Because the hand of the Lord was on the king, he helped Ezra. The king gave Ezra a lot of gold and silver and other gifts. He also offered to send soldiers along with Ezra to protect him. Ezra did not need the soldiers to protect him because God’s righteousness was his protection. King Artaxerxes gave Ezra a letter. In this letter the king said any of God’s people could go along with Ezra. The letter also said that the governors in Jerusalem should help Ezra. God caused the people in Jerusalem to accept Ezra as their leader.

God protected Ezra and his group, so they came safely to Jerusalem. At Jerusalem they offered burnt offerings to God. Then some leaders told Ezra that the people in Jerusalem did not keep the law of God. They did very wicked things. Many of the men married unbelieving girls. These girls were from other nations. God’s Law did not allow

God's people to marry unbelievers. Ezra felt so bad about this sin that he tore his clothes. He even pulled hair from his head and beard. Ezra acted like Jesus would act and confessed the sins of the people. He took the sins of the people on himself. Ezra asked God to hold back His anger and not destroy His people. He knew that sinful people could not stand before God!

A large group of people gathered around Ezra. They heard him confess their sins. They saw him weep and tear out his hair. Now they knew they had been very wicked. They confessed that they broke God's Law when they married unbelieving girls. The people said they would do what Ezra told them to do. Ezra told them to do two things. First, they had to confess their sins to the Lord God. Second, they had to separate themselves from the people of the land. This meant they had to put away their unbelieving wives. The people shook as Ezra spoke. They shivered as they stood in the rain. But more than ever they trembled because of the power of God's Word.

The people did as Ezra commanded. They sent their pagan wives back to their own land. There was crying and tears because families were broken up. The people understood that their sorrow came because they had sinned. They had rejected God's Law! The righteousness of the law had to be followed again. Then Israel could again be a holy people.

God's people had to learn another truth. The covenant was only for Israel. Other nations were not yet included in the covenant. This should have made God's people pray for Christ Jesus to come. Christ Jesus would break down the wall of separation between nations. Christ Jesus would make it possible for people of all nations to be part of the covenant. We should be very thankful that Christ Jesus did come. He did break down the wall of separation. We must put our faith and trust in Him!

Questions

Fill in the blanks.

1. "This _____ came up from Babylon; and he was a skilled scribe in the Law of Moses, which the Lord God of Israel had given." (Ezra 7:6a)
2. "The _____ granted him all his request, according to the hand of the Lord his God upon him." (Ezra 7:6b)

3. “For _____ had prepared his heart to seek the Law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach statutes and ordinances in Israel.” (Ezra 7:10)

4. “For they have taken some of their _____ as wives for themselves and their sons, so that the holy seed is mixed with the peoples of those lands.” (Ezra. 9:2a)

5. “So when I heard this thing, I _____ my garment and my robe, and plucked out some of the hair of my head and beard, and sat down astonished.” (Ezra 9:3)

6. “Now therefore, make _____ to the Lord God of your fathers, and do His will; separate yourselves from the peoples of the land, and from the pagan wives.” (Ezra 10:11)

Lesson 11

A Witness

Reference: De Graaf, *Promise and Deliverance*, Volume 2, Lesson 62

Scripture: Esther 1–10

Memory Verse: “Then queen Esther answered and said, ‘If I have found favor in your sight, O king, and if it pleases the king, let my life be given me at my petition, and my people at my request.’” (Esther 7:3)

Lesson Truth: Esther and the Jews in Persia were witnesses to the faithfulness God.

Lesson

The story of the book of Esther is about a plot to destroy God’s covenant people. It tells how the Lord used the courage of Queen Esther to speak for her people. The book of Esther shows us how God’s people were a witness to the nations. God used a number of events in the kingdom of Persia to bring Esther into the king’s court. He then used Esther in the king’s court to save His people.

King Ahasuerus made a big feast for all his nobles. For one hundred eighty days he showed them the splendor of his kingdom. After this he made a seven-day feast for the people of the capital. At this second feast the king and his nobles drank a lot of wine. The king even became drunk. In his drunken daze he decided to call for the queen. He wanted to show off his beautiful queen Vashti. Vashti did not want to be foolish, so she refused to come. This made the king very angry. He said Vashti could no longer be the queen. Then the king asked his nobles how he could find a new queen.

They suggested that he gather beautiful, unmarried girls to the palace. After these girls were given beauty treatments, the king would choose a new queen from this group. A Jew named Mordecai lived in the capital. He raised a beautiful girl named Esther as his own daughter after her parents died. Mordecai brought Esther to the palace to join the king’s group of unmarried girls. When it was time for the king to choose a new queen, he chose Esther. That was the way God brought Esther to the king’s court. God would use Esther in a special way to save his people.

The king had an important nobleman. His name was Haman. The king made Haman the second ruler in the kingdom. Everyone except Mordecai bowed down when they saw Haman. Mordecai served the Lord; he would not bow to a man. This made Haman so angry that he wanted to kill Mordecai. Then he decided he would sooner kill all the

Jews along with Mordecai. Haman got the king to sign a law that said all the Jews would be killed on a certain day. That is when Mordecai asked Esther to help.

Mordecai wanted Esther to go to the king and ask that she and her people be allowed to live. But Esther knew the king's rules. His rule was that anyone who came to the king uninvited would be put to death. A person would be put to death unless the king held out his golden scepter. Mordecai told Esther that God might have brought her to the king's court for just this purpose.

After fasting for several days Esther went to the king. When the king saw her, he held out the golden scepter. Then he asked Esther what she wanted. She said she wanted the king and Haman to come to a banquet. The king told Haman about Esther's invitation. Haman was very excited until he saw that Mordecai did not bow to him. He told his wife about Esther's invitation and about Mordecai. Haman's wife told him to get ready to go to Esther's banquet. She also told him to build huge gallows on which to hang Mordecai. Early in the morning Haman went to the king to ask if he could hang Mordecai. When he came to the king's court everything began to change.

That was the night the Lord would not allow the king to sleep. Because he could not sleep, he asked his servant to read some court records to him. The servant read about a time when Mordecai saved the king's life. The king asked if Mordecai was ever honored for this deed. Just then he heard Haman in his outer court. He asked Haman what should be done for the king to honor someone. Haman thought he was the one the king would honor. So, he suggested this person be led around the capital on the king's horse. Imagine how Haman felt when the king told him to honor Mordecai this way.

Later the king and Haman went to Esther's banquet. At her second banquet she asked the king for her life and the life of her people. She then told the king about Haman's wicked plot. The king was very angry because of Haman's plot and the way he fell on Esther's cot. He commanded that Haman be hanged on the gallows he built for Mordecai. The king then made Mordecai the second ruler in the kingdom. Mordecai was allowed to send a decree that the Jews might fight to save themselves. God saved his covenant people by the hands of Queen Esther and her cousin Mordecai.

Questions

Fill in the blanks.

1. "On the seventh day, when the heart of the king was merry with wine he commanded _____ to bring Queen _____ before the king, wearing her royal crown." (Esther 1:10-11)

2. “In Shushan the citadel there was a certain Jew whose name was _____ the son of Jair, the son of Shemei, the son of Kish, a Benjamite.” (Esther 2:5)

3. “And _____ had brought up Hadassah, that is, Esther, his uncle’s daughter, for she had neither father nor mother.” (Esther 2:7a)

4. “For if you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the _____ from another place, but you and your father’s house will perish.” (Esther 4:14a)

5. “Yet who knows whether you have come to the _____ for such a time as this?” (Esther 4:14b)

6. “And Esther said, ‘The adversary and enemy is this wicked _____!’ So Haman was terrified before the king and queen.” (Esther 7:6)

The Temporary Restoration of the City of God

Reference: De Graaf, *Promise and Deliverance*, Volume 2, Lesson 63

Scripture: Nehemiah 1–13

Memory Verse: “So it was, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned for many days; I was fasting and praying before the God of heaven.” (Nehemiah 1:4)

Lesson Truth: The rebuilding of the Jerusalem pointed to the coming Kingdom of God in Christ Jesus.

Lesson

God’s people were carried into exile because of their sins. After seventy years of exile, God allowed His people to return to Jerusalem. Zerubbabel and Jeshua led the first return. Ezra led the second return. And now we will learn about Nehemiah leading the third return. Zerubbabel and Jeshua restored the temple in Jerusalem. Ezra worked to restore the law. Finally, God allowed Nehemiah to return to rebuild the city. God called qualified leaders to restore the temple, the law, and the city. Yet this restoration was only temporary. It should have made God’s people long for the restoration that would come through Christ Jesus.

God moved the heart of Nehemiah to want to go back to Jerusalem. Nehemiah had an important position in the court of the Persian king. He was the one who served the king his wine. The king had to have someone he trusted to serve his wine. Nehemiah was also an Israelite. He wanted to know about Judah and Jerusalem. One day Hanani came from Jerusalem. He told Nehemiah that walls of the city were broken down and the people were sad. When Nehemiah heard this, he wept. But he also prayed and asked God to touch the heart of the king. He wanted the king to allow him to go to Jerusalem.

One day Nehemiah was sad when he brought the king his wine. The king asked him why he was sad. Then he told the king about the walls of Jerusalem. He asked the king if he could go to rebuild the walls of God’s city. God touched the heart of the king. The king decided to send Nehemiah to Jerusalem. The king even gave him letters for the governors that told them to help Nehemiah.

When Nehemiah came to Jerusalem, he went at night to check the walls. Later he told the officials in Jerusalem that the walls had to be repaired. God also touched the hearts

of these officials. They agreed to help Nehemiah rebuild the walls. Then everyone, both the common people and the officials, helped to build the walls. Each family rebuilt the walls in their part of the city. As they were building, their enemies tried to stop them. The builders carried bricks in one hand and a spear in the other. This way they could continue building. Nehemiah encouraged the people. He told them that God would fight for them. God's Spirit was in Nehemiah and God did help them rebuild the walls.

Nehemiah also had to help God's people to think about each other. The rich people made the poor people sell their sons and daughters to pay their taxes. Nehemiah said this was not right. Again, God touched the hearts of the people. They made a vow that they would help each other.

Nehemiah also showed that he wanted to help God's people. He did not take any pay for the work he did. Instead of taking pay, he gave extra gifts to help rebuild the walls. Nehemiah reminded the people of the Lord Jesus Christ. It was the Lord Jesus who truly gave Himself for His people. Then Nehemiah led the people to even greater renewal. He asked Ezra to bring the Book of the Law and to read it for the people. The people were so touched when they heard the law that they cried. Ezra and the Levites told them not to cry, but to be happy for the Lord's favor. In their joy they renewed the covenant with the Lord. They promised that they would walk in His ways and would not mix with other nations. It was a joy to renew the covenant, but the people had to know that the old covenant would end. Christ Jesus would bring a new covenant and restore man's relationship with God.

It was evident that God blessed His people. It took only fifty-two days to rebuild the wall around Jerusalem. This happened even when enemies tried to harm the people of the Lord. Now it came time to dedicate the wall. Nehemiah assigned choirs to sing at the dedication. Great sacrifices were offered in thanksgiving to God. The people were safe within the walls of the city of God once again. Still Nehemiah wasn't finished. After a time in Persia, he came back to bring new reforms. He sent strangers out of the temple. The people were taught to honor the sabbath. And the men were told to put away unbelieving wives. It was Nehemiah who led the rebuilding of Jerusalem. But this rebuilding was only for a time. It was a prophecy that pointed to the Kingdom of God in Christ Jesus!

Questions

Fill in the blanks.

1. "The words of _____ the son of Hachaliah."
(Nehemiah 1:1a)

2. “And thy said to me, “The _____ who are left from the captivity in the province are in great distress and reproach. The wall of Jerusalem is also broken down, and its gates are burned with fire.” (Nehemiah 1:3)

3. “So it was, when I heard these words, that I sat down and _____, and mourned for many days; I was fasting and praying before the God of heaven.” (Nehemiah 1:4)

4. “So I came to _____ and I was there three days.” (Nehemiah 2:11)

5. “And I told them of the hand of _____ which had been good upon me, and also of the king’s words that he had spoken to me. So they said, ‘Let us rise up and build.’ Then they set their hands to this good work.” (Nehemiah 2:18)

6. “So _____ the priest brought the Law before the assembly of men and women and all who could hear with understanding on the first day of the seventh month.” (Nehemiah 8:2)