

February 22 & 23, 2020

The Temple Was Rebuilt (Lesson 3)

Ezra 4 – 6 & Haggai

Unit: Return to the Land

Unit Bible Verse: Jeremiah 29:11

Bible Story: After living in Babylon for 70 years, God's people were home! A group had returned to Jerusalem to rebuild God's temple. They had started the work, but their neighbors didn't want them to rebuild the temple, so they stopped building. The people made excuses. "Maybe it isn't the right time to rebuild the temple," they said. They thought that because the task was difficult, maybe God didn't want them to do it.

God sent the prophets Haggai and Zechariah to encourage the people and they started working on the temple again. At this time, Darius, the king of Persia, ruled over the land of Judah. The king was in charge of so much land, he put governors in charge of some of the land. A governor named Tattenai (TAT ih nigh) noticed God's people had started to rebuild the temple again. Tattenai talked to those working on the temple and asked, "Do you have permission to rebuild this temple?" The workers said, "We do."

Tattenai sent a letter to King Darius. To Darius the king - This letter is to tell you that the people in Judah are building the temple of the great God. They said King Cyrus gave them permission to rebuild the it. Please search the royal records to see if this is true."

King Darius's officials searched the royal records for Cyrus's order. They found it on a scroll. It said, "Let God's temple be rebuilt. It will be a place to offer sacrifices. Let its foundation be rebuilt." King Cyrus had also ordered for the cost of building the temple to be paid for out of the royal treasury.

King Darius sent a letter back to Tattenai with this order: "Stay away from the workers in Jerusalem. Don't bother them or try to stop them. Give them whatever they need."

Tattenai and the other officials obeyed King Darius's order. The Jewish leaders kept building, and they finally finished the temple of God! The people celebrated and made offerings to God. They chose priests and assistants to serve in the temple. Then, God's people celebrated the Passover. God's people were so happy because the temple of God was finally complete!

Questions/Discussion

- 1) Why was the temple important?
- 2) Why don't we worship in a temple today?

Christ Connection: God's people rebuilt the temple so they would have a place to worship God. Years later, God sent His Son, Jesus, to be with His people. Now God dwells not in the temple, but directly with His people. Jesus provided something better than the temple; He gives us Himself.



Family Activity: Work with your family to build a structure out of uncooked spaghetti noodles and mini marshmallows. Set goals like how tall the structure will be or how much weight it will hold. Discuss the purpose of the temple and how Jesus changed it.

Prayer: Dear God, thank You for sending Your Son, Jesus, to be with us wherever we go. Help us turn from our sin and trust in Him. In Jesus' name, amen.

Unit Summary: After the Israelites' disobedience led to 70 years of exile in Babylon, God kept His promise to bring His people home to Judah. Prophets encouraged the people to rebuild the temple. The prophet Zechariah told of a future King who would come humbly on a donkey. God later kept His promise to send King Jesus. *Kids will be learning from the books of Ezra, Haggai and Zechariah.*

Lesson Summary: God's people returned to Jerusalem, the home of their ancestors. God had given them another opportunity to live as His special people. They got to work right away, completing the foundation of the Lord's temple. Many of God's people had been born in Babylon, but they had likely heard the stories of their parents and grandparents, stories of a life in the land God had given them. They probably heard of their families' mistakes: ignoring God, worshiping idols, and mistreating the poor. But the Lord had been gracious! He kept His promise to bring His people back to Judah.

Life in Judah wasn't exactly what they had imagined. It was difficult. Their national wealth was gone. The work of rebuilding the temple and the city of Jerusalem was hard. The land was desolate, and crops failed. Their neighbors opposed their efforts. (See Ezra 4:6,11-16.)

God's people were disappointed and discouraged. Rather than fight their enemies, God's people gave up. The temple of the Lord sat unfinished for 16 years. The people made excuses. "Maybe it's not time to rebuild the temple," they reasoned. If that was what God wanted, wouldn't He make it easier for them? (See Hag. 1:2.) God's people moved on to building their own homes.

The prophet Haggai stepped onto the scene and rebuked the people for their misplaced priorities. (Hag. 1:4) He brought words from the Lord, commanding them to finish the work they started. God promised to fill the temple with His glory and comforted His weary people with this promise: "I will provide peace in this place" (Hag. 2:7,9).

God promised to be with His people and bless them—and not only them, but the whole world through them, keeping the promise He made to Abraham long ago. (See Gen. 12:3.) Through God's servant, Zerubbabel, God would send His Son, Jesus—the greater Servant who is God with us.

God's people rebuilt the temple so they would have a place to worship God. Years later, God sent His Son, Jesus, to be with His people. Now God dwells not in the temple, but directly with His people. Jesus provided something better than the temple; He gives us Himself.

Unit Key Memory Verse: Jeremiah 29:11

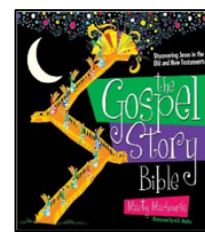
- *Age 2 – 3:* I know the plans I have for you...a hope."
- *Age 4 – 5:* "I know the plans I have for you...plans...to give you a future and a hope."
- *Grade K – 3 & Preteen:* "I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope."

Preteen Daily Readings: This week's (**February 17**) readings are 1 Peter 5:10, 2 Corinthians 5:6-8, Jeremiah 29:10, Hebrews 10:23, Proverbs 3:5-6 and 1 Chronicles 16:34.

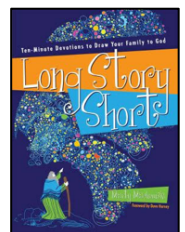
Family Devotional: Our desire is for kids to hear from the Bible first at home and then have the message be reinforced at church on the weekend. In addition to, or in lieu of the provided story, you can use these devotionals with your family. These can be purchased in the Berean Café.



Age 2-5, Pages 152
& 156



Grade K-3, Story 77



Grade 4-5, Week 77