



May 7, 2017

Dear Teacher,

This Sunday we transition to a new theme in our study of the Bible: Return. God's people, after seventy long years in exile, are going home. This was promised by God, and the promise was coming true! The journey, however, would be difficult, and rebuilding the temple was no easy task. But as we see, and should be pointed out to the children, God does not forget His promises and God does not forget His people. Over and over in our story we see God providing for His people. All of this for the worship of Him (rebuilding the Temple), and for their good.

We encourage all classrooms to engage with the story from the options provided in class. Teachers, tell the story using any of the provided helps (Vos, Jesus Story Book Bible, Gospel Story Book Bible or printed Handout). If you would like, read the selected Scripture passages aloud in class, discuss or explain what the passages mean, and use the questions below to help guide the discussion. Also, use time in class to teach the Scripture Memory and the Catechism Questions.

Morning Overview

Lesson: *Return*: Back to The Promised Land

Lesson Objective: To communicate to children that God always keeps His promises despite circumstances and even our inability to trust Him. God wants us to trust Him and obey His commands.

Scripture: Ezra 1-6

Story: Vos Children's Bible, Chapter 105-106 (Pages 245-249); Gospel Story Bible, Pages 152-155.

Teaching Summary:

- God's promises do not change despite circumstances, people and even our inability to believe them. God keeps His promises even when we do not trust Him or follow His commands.
- God alone is worthy of worship.
- God's people lived far away from home in the land of Babylon.
- After seventy years of living in Babylon, God put in King Cyrus of Babylon's heart to let the Israelites go back to Jerusalem.
- King Cyrus gave provisions, and all the things Nebuchadnezzar had taken from God's Temple, back to the Jewish people.
- The Jewish people traveled a long way, but finally arrived in Jerusalem. It had been destroyed by King Nebuchadnezzar so a clean-up was in order.
- The Jewish people just did that and tried to rebuild the Temple. They were bullied by their enemies, and were told to stop by royal officials.
- Two prophets of the Lord, however, inspired the people to start building again This caused quite a scene.
- In the end, King Darius of Babylon said that the Jewish people were to be left alone to rebuild the Temple.
- Once the Temple was rebuilt, God's people worshipped Him.

9:30am Sunday Schedule

For the Sunday Schedule, please see "Sunday Schedule for Preschool" found in Handbook on the teacher's table.

Cherub Church

- Kindergarten/5's – 9:35-10:00 (Classroom's: 162, 163, 121, 123, 124)
- 3's/4's – 10:05-10:30 (Classroom's: 166, 165, 164)

Craft: Building the Temple

Supplies: Cardstock toolbox, 3 tools, crayons/markers

Instructions:

1. Slide tools into toolbox through slit
2. Secure tools to toolbox with tape on the back
3. Color if desired



Snack

11am Sunday Schedule

Craft: Home Sweet Home

Supplies: Cardstock house, colored popsicle sticks, stickers, glue, crayons/markers

Instructions:

1. Glue popsicle sticks to house to form a border
2. Decorate house with stickers
3. Color if desired



Story: *Return:* Back to The Promised Land

1. **PRAY** for your time and any requests the children may have.
2. **ASK** Boys and girls, how many of you have ever built something? (Allow kids to answer, and expand – could be with Legos or really nails, wood and a hammer). Well today we learn that God's people get to return to their home and build something very special. Let's find out what they get to build!
3. **TELL** the Story. Use the Vos Children's Bible, the Jesus Storybook Bible, the Beginner's Bible, or the story below to aid in telling the story.
4. **REVIEW** the questions to help children understand the story.

Questions for Review

Scripture Memory (Nehemiah 1:5)

Catechism Questions (1-17)

Hymn of the Month: A Mighty Fortress Is Our God

Free Play

Questions for Review

Questions for Younger Children:

- Where did God's people live?
- How many years did God's people live in Babylon?
- Who was the first king of Babylon?
- What did King Cyrus help the Israelites do?
- Who stopped God's people from building the Temple?
- How did God's people start building again?
- What did God's people do once the Temple was completely rebuilt?

Questions for Older Children:

- What does the story tell us about God?
- What does this story tell us about God's faithfulness?
- What does this story tell us about worshipping God?

Scripture Memory for May:

O Lord God of heaven, the great and awesome God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments. (Nehemiah 1:5)

Catechism Questions:

- Question 1 – Who made you? *God*
- Question 2 – What else did God make? *God made all things.*
- Question 3 – Why did God make you and all things? *For his own glory.*
- Question 4 – How can you glorify God? *By loving him and doing what he commands.*
- Question 5 – Why are you to glorify God? *Because he made me and takes care of me.*
- Question 6 – Is there more than one true God? *No. There is only one true God.*
- Question 7 – In how many persons does this One God exist? *In three persons.*
- Question 8 – Who are they? *Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.*
- Question 9 – What is God? *God is a Spirit and does not have a body like men.*
- Question 10 – Where is God? *God is everywhere.*
- Question 11 - Can you see God? *No; I cannot see God, but He can always see me.*
- Question 12 – Does God know all things? *Yes. Nothing can be hidden from God.*
- Question 13 – Can God do all things? *Yes. God can do all His holy will.*
- Question 14 – Where do you learn how to love and obey God? *In the Bible alone.*
- Question 15 – Who wrote the Bible? *Chosen men who were inspired by the Holy Spirit.*
- Question 16 – Who were our first parents? *Adam and Eve.*
- Question 17 – How did God create man? *God created man, male and female, in His own image.*

Story

Transition

Boys and girls, how many of you have ever built something? (Allow kids to answer, and expand – could be with Legos or really nails, wood and a hammer). Well today we learn that God's people get to return to their home and build something very special. Let's find out what they get to build...

Do Not Forget

Before God's people were taken away by the Babylonians, God told the prophet Jeremiah to write down something very important. Jeremiah told the people that God would bring them back to their own country after seventy years away. God had not forgotten His people. He had planned their return!

A New King

Cyrus had just become king. King Cyrus ruled over a large kingdom called Persia. Persia ruled over Babylon where Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego had lived. And not just those four men, but thousands and thousands of God's people. Cyrus became king when Daniel was a very old man. Daniel had served under many kings and had seen God do many wonderful, powerful things. Daniel had seen God's faithfulness even though he lived in a strange and wicked land. Daniel would see God once again provide for His people.

As soon as King Cyrus became king, God put it into his heart to allow the Hebrew people to return to Jerusalem. King Cyrus offered to help them rebuild the temple which had been destroyed. King Cyrus made an important announcement:

The Lord, the God of heaven, has given all the kingdoms of the earth to me. And he has appointed me to build a Temple for him at Jerusalem in Judah. Now all of you who are God's people are free to go to Jerusalem. May your God be with you. And you may build the Temple of the Lord. He is the God of Israel, who is in Jerusalem. Those who stay behind should support anyone who wants to go. Give them silver and gold, supplies and cattle. And give them special gifts for the Temple of God in Jerusalem.

The Hebrew people were very surprised by the news! They were also very happy. Many people prepared to go to Jerusalem. They were going to Jerusalem to build the Temple of the Lord. God made all these people want to go too. All their neighbors helped them. They gave them things made of silver and gold, along with supplies, cattle and valuable gifts. And they gave them the special gifts for the Temple. Also, King Cyrus brought out the bowls and pans that belonged in the Temple of the Lord. Nebuchadnezzar had taken them from Jerusalem. And he had put them in the temple of his own god. King Cyrus had the treasurer get them out. The treasurer gave these things to the captives and they traveled with these riches from Babylon to Jerusalem.

Cyrus, even though he did not know God, did as God told him. It was by God's power that Cyrus had become so great a conqueror. God had work for Cyrus to do even though Cyrus probably never really knew the one true God.

The Journey Back to Jerusalem

The Jewish people in Babylon were excited to return home. To go back to Jerusalem seemed like a dream, but now that dream was coming true! They had to prepare to travel for a long time. Jerusalem was five hundred miles away from Babylon. It would be a hard and difficult journey. When the fifty thousand Jews arrived in Jerusalem, they found the temple, the city and all the buildings crumbled. When Nebuchadnezzar conquered Jerusalem, he stole all the nice things and burned the whole city to the ground. When the Jews came back, they had to rebuild everything! To rebuild the Jews had to first clear out all the burned down buildings. It would take a whole year to clean up! Only the youngest and strongest Israelites could clean up and rebuild. After clearing away the trash, broken blocks and other things, the Jews built an altar to worship the Lord. They would worship the Lord in the morning and in the evening.

Rebuilding the Temple

There was lots of work to do to rebuild the temple. The stoneworkers and carpenters had to be paid. Neighboring cities had to be paid so that very nice wood and supplies could pass through to Jerusalem. Of course, King Cyrus had given permission for all of this to happen. Many people worked on the temple, but there was a group of guys that were in charge. They were Levites which meant they had special jobs to do for the Lord. The builders finished laying the foundation of the Temple of the Lord. Then the priests, dressed in their robes, got trumpets. And other Levites had cymbals. They all took their places. They praised the Lord just as David king of Israel had said to do. With praise and thanksgiving, they sang to the Lord:

"He is good; his love for Israel continues forever."

And then all the people shouted, "Praise the Lord! The foundation of his Temple has been laid." But many of the older priests, Levites and family leaders cried aloud. They had seen the first Temple. Now they saw the foundation of this Temple. But most of the other people were shouting with joy. The people made so much noise no one could tell the difference between the joyful shouting and the sad crying. It could be heard far away.

Israel's Enemies

God's people had enemies. These enemies heard that the returned captives were building a Temple for the Lord, the God of Israel. The enemies said to God's people, "Let us help you build. We are like you. We want to worship your God. We have been offering sacrifices to him for a very long time." But the leaders of Israel answered, "No. You people will not help us build a Temple to our God. We will build it ourselves. It is for the Lord, the God of Israel. This is what King Cyrus, the king of Persia, commanded us to do." Then the people around them tried to discourage them from building the Temple. They tried to make them afraid to build. These mean enemies hired others to delay the building plans. This went on for a long time. Finally, these enemies sent a letter to a king who did not live too far away. These mean enemies complained to this king that the Jews were rebuilding the temple, and if the temple was rebuilt trouble would soon follow. The king did not want trouble. The king told the Jews to stop working on the temple, and so the Jews stopped working.

Israel Starts Building Again

God wanted His people to rebuild the Temple so they could worship Him. This was going to happen because God said it would. God used two prophets to deliver an important message to His people. Remember, prophets tell God's people what God wants them to know. The two prophets spoke with such power from the Lord that the people started working on the Temple again! The prophets of God stayed with the workers the whole time encouraging them. This caused a new fight to arise between God's people and their enemies. Eventually officials from Babylon came to find out why the Jews were rebuilding the Temple. You see King Cyrus had passed on and a new king, Darius, now ruled over all of Babylon and many other lands. But Darius did not know about the Jews returning to the land, or the Temple being rebuilt, or anything that Cyrus had promised God's people. King Darius had the records searched to see if anything could be found. People searched very hard and found what King Cyrus had promised! King Darius told his officials to leave the Jewish people alone and to let them rebuild. Then Darius added to Cyrus's decree. This is what Darius said to his officials and servants:

I order you to do this for the Jews. They are building this Temple. The cost of the building is to be fully paid from the Babylonian royal treasury. Do this so the work will not stop. Give the Jewish people anything they need. Give them young bulls, male sheep or male lambs for sacrifices to the God. Give them wheat, salt, wine or olive oil. Give the priests in Jerusalem anything they ask for. Give it every day without fail. Then they may offer sacrifices pleasing to the God. And they can pray for the life of the king and his sons.

God has chosen Jerusalem as the place he is to be worshiped. May he defeat any king or person who tries to change this order. May God destroy anyone who tries to destroy this Temple.

King Darius's orders were quickly and carefully obeyed. No one stopped the Jewish people from rebuilding the Temple. If the Jewish people needed anything, they could ask for it and it was given to them. God had used Darius to care for His people and for them to rebuild the Temple. God wanted His people to worship Him, and Him only. And the people wanted to do just that! The Temple was finally rebuilt just as God said it would happen. Then the people of Israel celebrated. They gave the Temple to God to honor him. Everyone was happy! Many sacrifices were made to God to show that the Israelite people truly loved Him and wanted to worship Him. The Israelites had seen God keep His promises to them, and now they would worship Him with happy hearts.