

Promise and Deliverance Student Workbook

Volume 20

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.

Lesson 1

The Victory of the Word of Grace

Reference: De Graaf, *Promise and Deliverance*, Volume 4, Lesson 35

Scripture: Acts 12:1-24

Memory Verse: “But motioning to them with his hands to keep silent, he declared to them how the Lord had brought him out of prison.” (Acts 12:17a)

Lesson Truth: The Spirit of the Lord Jesus brought the power of His grace to the early church. This Word of grace delivered Peter from prison.

Lesson

God’s Word of grace will always be victorious over the plans of evil men. The church of the apostles was oppressed under the evil ruler, Herod. The believers were put to shame because they did not understand the power of God’s Word of grace. In this lesson we will learn that neither prisons nor soldiers could not stop the spread of God’s Word. We will see how God’s Word of grace brought judgment on the Lord’s enemy.

The story from Acts 12 is about the early church. The apostles led this early church. It also suffered from persecution. Saul of Tarsus persecuted the church before his conversion. Saul pursued the new Christians and had them arrested, but he did not go after the apostles. A change occurred after the Gentile church in Antioch began. The Jews became very angry and hostile because Gentiles were allowed in the church. The Jews believed that they were God’s chosen people. They believed that God’s covenant promises were only for the Jews.

At this time, king Herod was the ruler of Palestine. He saw that the Jews liked it when he harmed the apostles. He arrested James the brother of John and had him killed. Then when he saw how this pleased the Jews, he had Peter arrested. Peter was arrested during the Passover feast, so his trial had to wait. Peter could not be tried during the feast. Instead, Herod put him in prison and charged four squads of soldiers to guard him. The soldiers took their task seriously. They chained Peter between two soldiers so he could not escape. They also placed soldiers to guard the prison doors.

As Peter was bound in prison, the group of believers prayed for his deliverance. Sadly, even as they prayed, they did not expect that God would deliver him. They most likely believed that he would be killed as James was killed. Neither Herod nor the believers understood the power of God’s Word of grace. They did not understand that prisons and soldiers could not stop the spread of God’s Word.

Before Peter could be brought to trial all would see the victory of God's Word of grace.

On the night before his trial, an angel came into the prison and stood by Peter. A light shone in the prison, and the angel touched Peter. The angel told Peter to rise and to put on his sandals. Then an amazing thing happened. Even as Peter stood up, his chains fell off. He was no longer bound to the soldiers. The angel then told him to put on his coat and follow him. As Peter followed, they walked past the first and second guard posts. Then when they came to the iron prison gate, it opened for them. Peter thought he saw a vision. He could hardly believe the miracle of his deliverance. When he was outside the prison, the angel left him. Then he realized that the Lord had delivered him. Peter's deliverance showed the believers that God's Word of grace could never be stopped. Nothing will ever be able to stop the spread of the gospel. The Lord's Word of grace will win the victory.

After Peter realized that he was free, he went to Mary's house. He knew he would find the believers gathered there for prayer. When he knocked on the door Rhoda the maid greeted him. She was so shocked to see Peter that she forgot to unlatch the door. When she ran to tell the others, they did not believe her. They said that Rhoda was beside herself or that she saw Peter's angel. Imagine how amazed the others were when they finally opened the door and saw Peter. Peter then related how the Lord had delivered him. He instructed them to tell James the Lord's brother. This James would become the believer's new leader. In the meantime, Peter left Jerusalem to preach elsewhere.

Think of the fear among the soldiers when they found that Peter was gone. Herod questioned the soldiers about Peter's disappearance. He then had them put to death because they let Peter escape. But Herod would learn that God's Word of grace also brings judgment. He allowed the people of Tyre and Sidon to call him a god. God's Word of grace would not tolerate such pride. An angel of the Lord struck him because he did not give glory to God. Worms ate Herod so that he died. At the same time, God's Word of grace grew and multiplied. This story helps us understand that God's Word of grace won the victory. Now we know that nothing can ever stop the spread of the gospel.

Questions

Fill in the blanks.

1. "Now about that time _____ the king stretched out his hand to harass some of the church." (Acts 12:1)

2. “And because he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to seize _____ also. Now it was during the Days of Unleavened Bread.” (Acts 12:3)

3. “So when he had arrested him, he put him in _____ and delivered him to four squads of soldiers to keep him, intending to bring him before the people after Passover.” (Acts 12:4)

4. “Now behold, an _____ of the Lord stood by him, and a light shone in the prison; and he struck Peter on the side and raised him up, saying, ‘Arise quickly!’ And his chains fell off his hands.” (Acts 12:7)

5. “And when _____ had come to himself, he said, ‘Now I know for certain that the Lord has sent His angel, and had delivered me from the hand of Herod and from all the expectations of the Jewish people.’” (Acts 12:11)

6. “The _____ of the Lord encamps all around those who fear Him, and delivers them.” (Psalm 34:7)

Lesson 2

The Door of Faith Opened to the Gentiles

Reference: De Graaf, *Promise and Deliverance*, Volume 4, Lesson 36

Scripture: Acts 12:25–14:28

Memory Verse: “Now when they had come and gathered the church together, they reported all that God had done with them, and that He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles.” (Acts 14:27)

Lesson Truth: The Spirit of the Lord and His Word opened the door of faith to the Gentiles.

Lesson

God’s covenant promise had been shared with Abraham and the children of Israel. God promised a Redeemer to all who believed. Many Israelites believed that God’s promise was only for them. But this was not true. Barnabas and Saul were sent to the Gentiles to tell them about God’s covenant promise. The story today is about their first missionary journey. They went to the Gentile churches and shared the gospel. At one of these churches, they ran into a sorcerer. At another church they found Jews who thought salvation was not for Gentiles. They also preached at a Gentile church that wanted to worship them as gods. But the joy of this lesson is that God opened the door of faith to the Gentiles.

Saul and Barnabas brought an offering to the believers in Jerusalem. Now they went back to Antioch in Syria. At the church at Antioch the believers ministered to the Lord. The Holy Spirit told these believers to set Barnabas and Saul apart to preach God’s Word. The believers fasted and prayed and then anointed Barnabas and Saul. After they were anointed, they sent them to the Gentile churches.

They first went to the island of Cyprus. On this island, they first preached at the synagogue at Salamis and later at Paphos. At Paphos, Barnabas and Saul ran into a sorcerer. This was a man who practiced magic. He was an aid to the governor. The governor asked Saul and Barnabas to preach God’s Word. But Elymas the sorcerer did not like that. He wanted the governor to believe in his magic. But Saul, whose Greek name is Paul, knew that Elymas was evil. Paul was filled with the Holy Spirit. He looked at Elymas and told him that he was a son of the devil. He said that he was filled with deceit. Paul said that the Lord’s hand was upon him. This made Elymas blind. When the governor saw this, he believed the Word of God.

Later, Paul and Barnabas traveled to Antioch in Pisidia. They went to the synagogue on the Sabbath Day. There they heard the rulers of the synagogue read the Law and

the Prophets. The rulers then asked them to preach. Paul asked the men of Israel to listen. He then told them how God had chosen Abraham and the children of Israel. God chose them because of His grace. He chose David because of His grace. The Lord Jesus came from David's children. He reminded them that the Lord Jesus had been put to death. But God raised Him from the dead. Paul said that this Jesus is the Redeemer. He said that the Redeemer could do what the Law of Moses could not do. The Redeemer could forgive their sins. The message of forgiveness was so amazing that the Gentiles begged him to preach to them. Later, the Jews became upset that Paul preached to the Gentiles. They began to fight against him.

Paul and Barnabas then reminded the Jews that the Word of God was spoken to them first. But since they rejected this Word, God sent them to the Gentiles. God said that the apostles were sent as a light to the Gentiles. After Paul and Barnabas preached at Iconium they went to Lystra. At Lystra they saw a crippled man. He had been crippled all his life. Paul saw that he was listening to his preaching. So, he told the man to stand up. Immediately, the man stood up. Then a bad thing happened. The people said that Paul and Barnabas were gods. They even tried to bring sacrifices to them. Sadly, these people were so set on idol worship that they tried to worship men. They wanted to worship human power. They did not have faith in the grace of God. Then some Jews from Iconium and Antioch came and stirred up the people. They became so angry that they stoned Paul and threw his body out of the city. But Paul did not die. The Lord planned to use him to preach to other Gentiles.

Later, they decide to go back to Antioch in Syria. On the way back, they stopped at the Gentile churches. They helped the churches choose elders. These elders would do God's work in each of these churches. Paul and Barnabas finally got back to Antioch. At Antioch they called the believers together. They told these believers what God had done with them. Then they shared some wonderful news. They said that God had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles. God's grace is for all who believe from every nation.

Questions

Fill in the blanks.

1. "As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, 'Now separate to me _____ and Saul for the work to which I have called them.'" (Acts 13:2)
2. "But _____ the sorcerer (for so his name is translated) withstood them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith." (Acts 13:8)

3. “Then _____ who is also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him and said, ‘O full of all deceit and all fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of righteousness, will you not cease perverting the straight ways of the Lord?’” (Acts 13:9-10)

4. “This man heard _____ speaking, Paul observing him intently and seeing that he had faith to be healed said with a loud voice, ‘Stand up straight on your feet!’ And he leaped and walked.” (Acts 14:9-10)

5. “So when they had appointed _____ in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.” (Acts 14:23)

6. “Now when they had come and gathered the _____ together, they reported all that God had done with them, and that He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles.” (Acts 14:27)

Lesson 3

Freedom of Faith

Reference: De Graaf, *Promise and Deliverance*, Volume 4, Lesson 37

Scripture: Acts 15:1-34

Memory Verse: “Simon has declared how God at first visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name.” (Acts 15:14)

Lesson Truth: The Spirit of the Lord showed the Gentiles that they were free to serve Him by faith.

Lesson

What does it mean to have freedom of faith? It means that the Gentiles did not have to keep the Jewish laws to be saved. Do you know why the Gentiles had questions about faith and laws? They had questions because some zealous Jews came to trouble them. These Jews were from Judea. They came to Antioch to visit the Gentile believers. They told the Gentile believers that they had to keep the Jewish law of circumcision. But that was not what Paul and Barnabas told these Gentiles. They decided to send some of their leaders to Jerusalem to ask the apostles about these things. God would use the apostles to show them the truth.

The Gentile church at Antioch was growing. Paul and Barnabas told them about the great things God did for believers. They told them that God opened the door of faith to the Gentiles. This meant that Gentiles were in God’s covenant. This made the Gentile believers very happy. But then something sad happened. Some Jews from Judea came to trouble these believers. These Jews said something that hurt the Gentiles. They said that the Gentiles had to keep some Jewish laws to be saved. But that is not what Paul and Barnabas had told them. What was the truth? Did the Gentiles have to be circumcised, or could they be saved by faith in Jesus? The believers in Antioch had to find out. So, they sent some elders with Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem. At Jerusalem they would ask the apostles about these laws.

At Jerusalem, the apostles and elders greeted the believers from Antioch. Paul and Barnabas told them about the Gentiles who were believers. They also asked if Gentiles had to be circumcised. Some Pharisees heard them ask this question. The Pharisees said that the Gentiles had to keep the Law of Moses. The elders and apostles then called a meeting. They would decide if the Pharisees were right.

At that meeting some agreed with Paul and Barnabas. Others agreed with the Pharisees. Then Peter stood up and told them the truth. He reminded them that God had sent him to share the gospel with Gentiles. God had given His Holy Spirit

to Gentiles. Peter said that in God's eyes Jews and Gentiles were alike. Gentiles were part of God's covenant. They were in the covenant because of what they believed. They were not in the covenant because they kept Jewish laws. Peter told them that God did not ask the Gentiles to keep Jewish laws. So, he said that they also could not ask the Gentiles to keep these laws. Peter said that both Jews and Gentiles are saved by the grace of the Lord Jesus. Then the people were silent. They listened to Peter. They listened to Paul and Barnabas, who told of the wonders God did among the Gentiles.

Now James spoke at the meeting. He said that Peter told the truth. God had given the Gentiles His Holy Spirit. James said that Peter's words agreed with the prophets. The prophets said that the Gentiles would seek the Lord. James added that they should help the Gentiles to stay away from idol worship. He said the Gentiles should stay away from things offered to idols. They should also keep away from strangled things and from blood. James also said the Gentiles should not do sexually immoral things. The elders and apostles agreed with James. They decided to send a letter to the Gentiles to tell them these things. They also encouraged the Gentiles in this letter.

The Gentiles at Antioch were happy when they read this letter. Now they knew that they were free to believe in Jesus. They knew that the Lord's grace saved them. Keeping the Law of Moses did not save them. You and I also have this freedom of faith. We are free to believe that we are saved by grace. We only want to keep the Law to show that we are thankful. We are thankful for the Lord's grace. The Holy Spirit helps us know this truth.

Questions

Fill in the blanks.

1. "And certain men came down from _____ and taught the brethren, 'Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.'" (Acts 15:1)
2. "Therefore, when _____ and Barnabas had no small dissension and dispute with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain others of them should go to Jerusalem, to the apostles and elders, about this question." (Acts 15:2)
3. "But some of the sect of the _____ who believed rose up saying, 'It is necessary to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the Law of Moses.'" (Acts 15:5)

4. “And when there had been much dispute, _____ rose up and said to them: ‘Men and brethren, you know that a good while ago God chose among us, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe.’” (Acts 15:7)

5. “So God, who knows the _____, acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He did to us.” (Acts 15:8)

6. “But we believe that through the _____ of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved in the same manner as they.” (Acts 15:11)

Overlooking the Times of Their Ignorance

Reference: De Graaf, *Promise and Deliverance*, Volume 4, Lesson 38

Scripture: Acts 15:35–18:22

Memory Verse: “And he brought them out and said, ‘Sirs, what must I do to be saved?’ So they said, ‘Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.’” (Acts 16:30-31)

Lesson Truth: Acts 17:30 says that God overlooked the times of ignorance of unbelieving nations. In mercy He sent them the gospel and commanded men everywhere to repent.

Lesson

This is the story of Paul’s second missionary journey. On this journey God directed Paul to bring the gospel to Europe. God’s covenant with mankind included people from every nation. It was now time for the people of Europe to hear the gospel. The Bible states clearly that the Holy Spirit directed Paul and Silas. Under the direction of the Holy Spirit the gospel would be proclaimed in every nation. The light of Christ Jesus would shine in the darkness of these times.

How did the Holy Spirit direct Paul and Silas to Europe? This story began while they were at Antioch in Syria. Paul became restless at Antioch. He thought that he and Barnabas should go back and visit the new Gentile churches. Barnabas agreed with Paul, but he wanted to take John Mark with them. Paul didn’t trust Mark, so he didn’t want him along. Because of Mark, a division came between Paul and Barnabas. After this division, Barnabas took Mark and went to Cyprus. Paul then took Silas and went to Derbe and Lystra. At Lystra Paul and Silas found a believer named Timothy. Paul wanted Timothy to go along with them on their missionary journey. In order to satisfy the Jews, he had Timothy exercise the rite of circumcision. Now both Jews and Gentiles would receive Timothy.

Paul and Silas traveled on to Phrygia and Galatia. Then we are told that the Holy Spirit would not allow them to preach the word in Asia. Instead, the Holy Spirit caused Paul to see a vision. In this vision Paul saw a man from Macedonia calling. He called for Paul and Silas to come over and help. They believed that the Lord called them to go to Macedonia. So, they sailed to Neapolis and then went to Philippi. At Philippi they preached the gospel outside the city. There they met a believer named Lydia. When Lydia heard the gospel, the Lord opened her heart. She believed the gospel story and she and her household were baptized. As a new believer, Lydia persuaded Paul and Silas to stay at her house.

Then a sad thing happened as Paul and Silas went to pray. They met a slave girl who told fortunes. By telling fortunes this girl provided an income for her masters. When she saw Paul and Silas the Spirit allowed her to know who they were. She said for everyone to hear, "These men are the servants of the Most High God" (Acts 16:17). She continued by saying that they proclaim the way of salvation. This girl hindered the apostles for some days. At last Paul looked at the girl and spoke to the spirit in her. In the name of Jesus, he commanded the spirit to leave her. The spirit came out that very hour and she could no longer tell fortunes.

Now her masters were angry. Their slave girl could no longer give them an income. So, they brought Paul and Silas to the city officials. A crowd followed and accused them of disturbing the peace. In response the officials tore the clothes from Paul and Silas. Then they had them beaten with rods and thrown into prison. At midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing in their prison cell. Suddenly, the Lord sent a great earthquake to shake the prison. The earthquake made the prison doors fly open and all the prisoners' chains fell off. The jailer was frightened when he saw what happened. He was responsible for the prisoners. He knew that he would pay for their escape with his life, so he took out his sword to kill himself. But Paul called out and told him the prisoners were all there. Then the jailer asked Paul and Silas, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16:30). Paul and Silas answered that he should believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. The jailer did believe, and he and his household were baptized.

Later, Paul and Silas went to Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, and Corinth. At each city they shared the good news of the Lord's death and resurrection for sinners. At Athens, Paul saw many altars that the people made for their gods. This made him very sad. So, he stood in the middle of the Areopagus and spoke to them about their religion. He said that he knew they were religious. They were religious because they had so many altars to their gods. But Paul said that he wanted to talk to them about just one of their altars. This was their altar to the unknown god. Paul said that it was this unknown God who made all things. Everyone lives because of the mercy of this God. Paul told these unbelievers that God overlooked the times of their ignorance. But now He commanded them to repent. He told them that they would be judged. The Lord who was raised from the dead would judge them. Thankfully, some of the people believed Paul, but others mocked him. At Corinth, Aquila and Priscilla believed Paul and went with him to Ephesus. This is the wonderful story of the gospel reaching Europe. The Holy Spirit led Paul and Silas to these nations.

Questions

Fill in the blanks.

1. "Then after some days Paul said to _____ 'Let us now go back and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord and see how they are doing.'" (Acts 15:36)

2. “Then he came to Derbe and Lystra. And behold a certain disciple was there named _____ the son of a certain Jewish woman who believed, but his father was Greek.” (Acts 16:1)

3. “Now when they had gone through Phrygia and the region of _____ they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia.” (Acts 16:6)

4. “Now a certain woman named Lydia heard us. She was a seller of purple from the city of _____ who worshiped God. The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul.” (Acts 16:14)

5. “And he brought them out and said, ‘_____ what must I do to be saved?’” (Acts 16:30)

6. “So they said, ‘_____ on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.’” (Acts 16:31)

Lesson 5

The Way of the Lord

Reference: De Graaf, *Promise and Deliverance*, Volume 4, Lesson 39

Scripture: Acts 18:23–20:38

Memory Verse: “So the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed.” (Acts 19:20)

Lesson Truth: By His grace God helped the world to know the way of the Lord.

Lesson

People who believed that Jesus was the Christ were known as people of the Way. Today we will learn how God showed Apollos the true way of the Lord. We will learn that the way of the Lord was more than John’s baptism. Paul taught the way of the Lord to the people in Ephesus. Because Paul walked in the way of the Lord, he won the victory over death. The Holy Spirit led Paul to Jerusalem. The Holy Spirit told Paul that he would endure chains and trials.

The Bible lesson today is about the way of the Lord. We are told about a man named Apollos, who knew the way of the Lord. Yet he had to learn about the Holy Spirit. This would help him know the true way of the Lord. Apollos went to Ephesus to teach the Bible. But he did not know that God gave His Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Aquilla and Priscilla heard Apollos teach. So, they took him aside and told him about the Holy Spirit. Now Apollos knew the true way of the Lord. He taught the Jews that Jesus was the Christ. Apollos helped those who knew about God’s grace.

At this time, many believers did not know about the Holy Spirit. The apostle Paul discovered that when he came to Ephesus. He asked the believers if God had given them His Holy Spirit. They told Paul that they had never heard about the Holy Spirit. They said that they were baptized with John the Baptist’s baptism. Paul then told them that God poured out His Holy Spirit at Pentecost. He said that John did a baptism of repentance. But John also told about the Christ who would come after him. These believers then asked to be baptized in Jesus’ name. A wonderful thing happened when they were baptized. They were filled with the Holy Spirit. These believers were known as the people of the Way.

Paul also went to the synagogue at Ephesus. He told them about the Kingdom of God. The Holy Spirit filled some people, so they believed. But others spoke evil of the people of the Way. This kind of separation happens between believers and unbelievers. God allowed Paul to do miracles at the church in Ephesus. Some sick people were healed when Paul’s handkerchief touched them. Then some unbelieving

Jews tried to use the power that God gave to Paul. They tried to cast out demons by using the Lord's name. Do you know what these Jews said to the demons? They told them to leave in the name of the Jesus that Paul preached about. Do you know what the demons answered? They said that they knew Jesus, and they knew Paul, but they did not know these Jews. Then the demons attacked these Jews, so they ran away. The people heard about the demons' attack. Many of them became believers. They even burned their books about magic.

The people knew these believers as the people of the Way. Later, the people of Ephesus made trouble for the people of the Way. It happened because a man named Demetrius complained. He was a silversmith. Demetrius made silver idols of the goddess Diana. The people who followed Jesus did not buy these idols. So, Demetrius lost money. This made a number of people angry. They were afraid that people would no longer worship Diana. This caused a riot. The crowds cried out, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" (Acts 19:28). Some of Paul's friends were arrested and taken to the theater. Paul wanted to help them, but some disciples stopped him. Thankfully, a man named Alexander calmed the crowd. Paul then decided to make his way to Jerusalem, encouraging believers along the way.

At Troas, Paul preached a long sermon. He preached until midnight. A young man named Eutychus heard Paul preach. But he fell asleep and fell out of a third-floor window. The people thought he was dead. But Paul fell on him, and he came back to life. Paul then preached until the next morning.

From Troas Paul went to Miletus. At Miletus he sent for elders from Ephesus. He told them how he shared God's word with them. Now Paul said that he was going to Jerusalem. This was sad because Paul knew that bad things would happen to him at Jerusalem. The Holy Spirit told Paul that he would suffer and be put in chains. Yet he said that he was ready to suffer and to die. He wanted to finish the race of life with joy. Paul then warned the elders to keep the believers from evil. He then said goodbye. This made the elders and Paul cry. They knew that they would not see Paul again. This was how the world came know about the Way of the Lord!

Questions

Fill in the blanks.

1. "Now a certain Jew named _____ born at Alexandria, an eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures came to Ephesus." (Acts 18:24)
2. "So he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When _____ and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately." (Acts 18:26)

3. “Then Paul said, ‘_____ indeed baptized you with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.” (Acts 19:4)

4. “And about that time there arose a great commotion about the _____.” (Acts 19:23)

5. “But none of these things move me; nor do I count my _____ dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.” (Acts 20:24)

6. “I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this that you must support the _____. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus that He said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’” (Acts 20:35)

Lesson 6

Imitator of the Christ

Reference: De Graaf, *Promise and Deliverance*, Volume 4, Lesson 40

Scripture: Acts 21:1–23:35

Memory Verse: “Then He said to me, ‘Depart, for I will send you far from here to the Gentiles.’” (Acts 22:21)

Lesson Truth: Christians love Christ and seek to follow Him.

Lesson

Paul was different from most Jews. He was born a Roman citizen but was raised a strict Jew. Paul used every part of his background to spread the gospel. For Paul, spreading the gospel was the most important thing in his life. Paul knew that Jesus gave his life for sinners. Paul wanted to imitate Christ by offering his life for the spread of the gospel.

In this lesson, we will learn about Paul traveling to Jerusalem. Many people urged him not to go. Some prophesied that Paul would be arrested in Jerusalem. But that did not matter to Paul. He wanted to go to Jerusalem anyway. He wanted to show the Christians in Jerusalem that Gentile Christians and Jewish Christians were all the same in Christ Jesus. But he wanted to make sure they knew why they were the same. It was not their observance of the Law that made them the same. Instead, it was the grace that Jesus Christ showed to them. Jesus showed the same grace to Gentiles as well as Jews.

Paul did go to Jerusalem. When he arrived, the Christian leaders asked him to join other Christians in fulfilling a Nazirite vow. A Nazirite vow was a promise to live in a certain way for a specific amount of time. Since Paul was a Jew, he agreed to fulfill this vow. However, when he entered the temple as part of the vow, some other Jews thought he broke a different law. They thought he had taken a Gentile into the part of the temple that only Jews were allowed to enter. They raised the alarm, and soon the whole city was in an uproar.

The Roman commander heard the uproar and arrived with soldiers to restore order. He arrested Paul because Paul was at the center of the trouble. He thought Paul was an Egyptian who had lately been causing trouble. When Paul told him he was a Jew, he allowed Paul to speak to the crowd before he took him away. Paul tried to explain to the crowd that he was a faithful Jew. He spoke to them in Hebrew. He told them that he studied under a famous rabbi. He also told them how he was so committed as a Jew that at one time, he tried to arrest Christians. But he also explained that

being a faithful Jew meant following Jesus. When he was on the road to Damascus, Jesus called to him and told him to stop hurting Christians. He said that he had a different plan for Paul's life. Jesus wanted Paul to preach the gospel to the Gentiles.

When the crowd heard Paul say that he preached to the Gentiles, they said that he deserved to die. The crowd did not want the Gentiles to hear the good news that Jesus died for our sins. The Roman commander had to keep Paul in prison to protect him from the crowd. The Jewish leaders even formed a plan to kill Paul. However, the son of Paul's sister heard about the plan and told the Roman commander. That is when the commander decided to send Paul to Felix, the governor.

Paul was not afraid of the crowd. He was not afraid to die. But Christ still came to him at night and said, "Be of good cheer, Paul, for as you have testified for Me in Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness at Rome" (Acts 23:11b). Paul was ready to go to Rome for the sake of Jesus Christ. He was willing to obey Christ wherever Christ would send him. Paul was an imitator of the Christ. Are you ready to be an imitator of Christ Jesus?

Questions

Fill in the blanks.

1. "Then Paul answered, 'What do you mean by _____ and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.'" (Acts 21:13)
2. "But Paul said, 'I am a Jew from _____, in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city, and I implore you, permit me to speak to the people.'" (Acts 21:39)
3. "Then a certain Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good testimony with all the Jews who dwelt there, came to me; and he stood and said to me, 'Brother Saul, receive _____'" (Acts 22:12-13)
4. "For you will be His _____ to all men of what you have seen and heard." (Acts 22:15)
5. "And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said to the centurion who stood by, 'Is it lawful for you to scourge a man who is a _____, and _____?'" (Acts 22:25)

6. “Be of good cheer, Paul; for as you have _____ for Me in Jerusalem, so you must also _____ at Rome.” (Acts 23:11)

Standing before Kings and Governors

Reference: De Graaf, *Promise and Deliverance*, Volume 4, Lesson 41

Scripture: Acts 24–26

Memory Verse: “You will be brought before rulers and kings for My sake, for a testimony to them.” (Mark 13:9b)

Lesson Truth: Kings and governors hear the gospel.

Lesson

One of the things the Lord wanted Paul to do was to preach to kings and other earthly rulers. Today’s lesson describes how Paul did that. Paul proclaimed the gospel before a governor named Felix. He also proclaimed the gospel to Festus, who replaced Felix. And he proclaimed the gospel to King Agrippa.

When Paul was in Jerusalem, the Jewish crowds became so angry that the Roman commander there arrested Paul and sent him to Caesarea to defend himself before Felix, the governor. Some Jewish leaders also traveled to Caesarea to argue their case against Paul. They said that Paul was “a creator of dissension among Jews” (Acts 24:5). The word “dissension” means an argument between different people that can sometimes lead to fighting. The Roman government did not like dissension. They thought it would lead to people fighting against their government, so they had harsh punishments for it. The Jewish leaders also said the Paul profaned the temple by taking a Gentile into the part of the temple that only Jews were allowed to enter.

Paul denied all of these charges. But then he said that the only possible complaint the Jewish leaders could have against him was that when he was before the Sanhedrin, he cried out, “Concerning the resurrection of the dead I am being judged by you this day” (Acts 24:21). Paul said that one day everyone who has died will be resurrected. The just will be resurrected, and the unjust will be resurrected. Paul wanted Felix to know this because Felix was a very unjust governor. Paul wanted Felix to seek forgiveness through Jesus Christ. But Felix did not repent. Instead, he kept Paul in prison and hoped that Paul would give him a bribe to release him. Paul remained in prison for two years.

After two years, Festus replaced Felix as governor. Festus asked Paul to give his defense before him. Festus also asked Paul if he would be willing to travel to Jerusalem to stand trial there. Paul answered Festus differently than he had answered Felix. This time, instead of focusing on the judgment of God, Paul focused on justice. Paul knew that if he returned to Jerusalem for trial, he would not be shown

justice. So, he appealed to Caesar. He said, “If I am an offender, or have committed anything deserving death, I do not object to dying; but if there is nothing in these things of which these men accuse me, no one can deliver me to them” (Acts 25:11). Festus replied, “You have appealed to Caesar? To Caesar you shall go!” (Acts 25:12).

Paul also argued his case before Agrippa. Agrippa was familiar with Jewish laws and customs, so Paul showed him how the Old Testament prophesied about Jesus Christ. He also told Agrippa about how he was raised according to very strict Jewish laws and lived the life of a Pharisee. He became very zealous in fighting against Christians and even was given authority to arrest Christians and punish them for being Christians. But Paul said all that changed when he traveled to Damascus. Jesus Christ met him on the road to Damascus and changed him from being a persecutor of Christians to being a minister of the gospel to the Gentiles.

Agrippa knew what Paul was doing. He knew that Paul wanted him to also believe in Jesus Christ. He said, “You almost persuade me to become a Christian” (Acts 26:28). Paul said that he would like that very much. Paul was not concerned about being in prison. He was not even afraid to die. But he took every opportunity to share the good news of Jesus Christ to anyone who would hear him, even to those rulers who had earthly authority over him.

Questions

Fill in the blanks.

1. “Now after five days _____ the high priest came down with the elders and a certain orator name Tertullus.” (Acts 24:1)
2. “I have hope in God, which they themselves also accept, that there will be a _____ of the dead, both of the just and the unjust.” (Acts 24:15)
3. “Meanwhile, he also hoped that _____ would be given him by Paul, that he might release him.” (Acts 24:26)
4. “After some days King _____ and Bernice came to Caesarea to greet Festus.” (Acts 25:13)

5. “Why should it be thought incredible by you that God _____
_____.” (Acts 26:8)

6. “Then Agrippa said to Paul, ‘You almost persuade me to become a
_____.’” (Acts 26:28)

Christ's Global Reign

Reference: De Graaf, *Promise and Deliverance*, Volume 4, Lesson 42

Scripture: Acts 27–28

Memory Verse: “Do not be afraid, Paul. You must be brought before Caesar.”
(Acts 27:24a)

Lesson Truth: Christ is king even in Rome.

Lesson

Paul always wanted to go to Rome, but the way he got there was different. God sent Paul to Rome as a prisoner. This was the Lord's doing, and Paul submitted to His will. The trip was filled with many dangers, but the Lord protected Paul along the way. The Lord even promised Paul that he would stand before Caesar. Paul was a servant of the Lord called to preach the gospel wherever he went. That meant that he would preach the gospel to Caesar, but he would also preach the gospel to his fellow shipmates along the way.

The reason Paul was going to Rome as a prisoner was that he had appealed to Caesar when he was on trial before Festus. If he had not appealed to Caesar, Festus would have sent him back to Jerusalem to stand trial before the Jewish leaders. But Paul knew he would not get a fair trial before the Jewish leaders. It was also possible that he would have been killed as he traveled to Jerusalem.

Paul was a Roman citizen, so it was his right to appeal to Caesar. Even so, he was still a prisoner and would travel to Rome in chains. A centurion named Julius was ordered to take Paul to Rome. The centurion was nice to Paul. He even let Paul take some friends with him. Luke was with him. He wrote about the trip and included the stories in the book of Acts. Aristarchus also traveled with Paul. Aristarchus was a Macedonian from Thessalonica.

Paul and those traveling with him encountered many obstacles along the way. It was as though Satan tried to hinder Paul from preaching the gospel there. But God wanted Paul in Rome, and nothing can stop God's will from being done. The first challenge was when the ship set sail from Sidon. Boats in Paul's day did not use engines to travel on the sea. They used sails and relied on the wind to push them where they needed to go. But when the ship set sail from Sidon, the winds were blowing in the wrong direction. They had to use the island of Cyprus as a shelter from the winds.

Later in the journey, the opposite happened. The wind was so light that the ship traveled very slowly on the water. When they arrived at a port called Fair Havens, they were so late that it was almost winter, and winter was the time when more storms rose up on the sea. Paul said they should stay at Fair Havens for the winter, but the pilot of the ship and the ship's owner wanted to sail to Phoenix, which had a better harbor. They should have listened to Paul, who was the bearer of God's Word, but they did not.

At first, it looked like Paul was wrong and they were right. The ship sailed in good weather from the south. But soon, a storm from the north came and blew the ship off course. The storm lasted several days, and the sailors had almost given up hope of surviving. But an angel appeared to Paul and assured him that he would reach Rome. The angel also said that the lives of all those traveling with Paul would also be saved. This was a great comfort to everyone on the ship.

After living through such a fierce storm, the sailors knew that they needed to find a harbor for the ship, so they tried to run the ship ashore on the island of Malta. But before it could get to the shore, the ship ran aground on a reef and the waves started breaking it apart. The people on the ship had to swim to shore while the ship broke apart in the waves.

On the shore, they built a fire to keep warm. Then, a snake came out from the heat of the fire and bit Paul on the hand. The people of Malta thought Paul must be a very bad man to have a snake bite him like that. They were certain Paul would die. But nothing happened to him. Later, Paul healed many people on the island including the father of Publius, the ruler of Malta.

The travelers spent three months on Malta before they left for Italy on a different ship. When they arrived in Italy, the centurion let Paul visit with Christians who came to meet him. Even at Rome, Paul was put under house arrest but was allowed to invite others to visit him there. He invited Jewish leaders from Rome and preached the gospel to them. Some believed, but others did not. Paul continued to preach the gospel not only to Jews, but also to Gentiles.

Questions

Fill in the blanks.

1. "And Julius treated Paul _____ and gave him liberty to go to his friends and receive care. (Acts 27:3)
2. "Men, I perceive that this voyage will end with _____ and _____, not only of the cargo and ship, but also our lives." (Acts 27:10)

3. “Now when neither sun nor stars appeared for many days, and no small tempest beat on us, all _____ that we would be _____ was finally given up.” (Acts 27:20)

4. “And now I urge you to _____, for there will be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship.” (Acts 27:22)

5. “So when this was done, the rest of those on the island who had _____ also came and were _____. (Acts 28:9)

6. “Therefore let it be known to you that the salvation of God has been sent to the _____, and they will hear it!” (Acts 28:28)

The Victory of the Kingdom

Reference: De Graaf, *Promise and Deliverance*, Volume 4, Lesson 43

Scripture: Matthew 24–25

Memory Verse: “Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.” (Matt. 24:35)

Lesson Truth: King Jesus will come again in victory.

Lesson

When Jesus was by the temple in Jerusalem, his disciples pointed it out to Him. They thought the temple was very beautiful. But Jesus told them that a day was coming when the whole building would be torn down. The disciples thought that when that happened, Jesus would establish His Kingdom on earth. So, when they were at the Mount of Olives, they asked Him when He would establish His Kingdom. But Jesus explained that it would be different than that.

Jesus explained that there would be a long time between when the temple was torn down and when Jesus would establish His Kingdom at the end of the age. Then Jesus explained why there would be such a long time in between. The Jews of Jesus’ day did not accept Jesus as the Messiah. They did not think that Jesus would come to establish His Kingdom based on His grace. Jesus said, that is why the temple would be destroyed. And He said, the world would also reject Jesus and His Kingdom, and it would also be destroyed like the temple. But before that happened, the gospel must be “preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations” (Matt. 24:14).

Jesus said that all the nations would hear the gospel, even though many would not believe it. He said that false prophets would arise and lead many people astray. They would point to someone who was not the Christ and say, “Look, here is the Christ!” (Matt. 24:23). Many would believe them. But Jesus said, when He does return, He will not need to be pointed out by false prophets. Everyone will know right away that He has returned.

Before Jesus returns, many bad things will happen in the world. Nations will fight against nations. There will be wars and rumors of wars. There will be earthquakes, famines, and pandemics. People will want peace and safety, but they will not be able to find it. The world will make it very hard for Christians to survive when everything is getting increasingly wicked. But then Jesus said He would come. And when He

comes, He will come to judge the nations and gather His people from all over the world.

Jesus said that we who believe in Him should make sure we are ready for Him to return at any time. He said that people know when spring is coming when they see leaves start to bud on the trees. In the same way, we can know when Christ is coming by looking at the signs of the times. People who do not believe in Jesus will be surprised when He comes, but we do not need to be surprised. Instead, we should be like the faithful servant (Matt. 24:45-51), who did not have to worry about when his master would return, since he was faithful all the time. Or we should be like the five wise virgins (Matt. 25:1-13) who made sure they had enough oil for their lamps so that they were ready whenever the bridegroom came. Or we should be like the faithful servants in the Parable of the Talents (Matt. 25:14-30), who made sure they were faithful to their master even when he was away.

When Jesus does come again, He will judge the nations. He will take believers and put them on His right side, and He will take unbelievers and put them by His left side. It will be like what a shepherd does who separates the sheep from the goats. Then, He will invite the believers to come and inherit the kingdom prepared for them, but He will cast the unbelievers into everlasting fire. Will you be ready for Jesus when He returns?

Questions

Fill in the blanks.

1. “And Jesus said to them, ‘Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be _____
_____’. (Matt. 24:2)
2. “Then many false _____ will rise up and deceive many.” (Matt. 24:11)
3. “But he who _____ to the end shall be saved.” (Matt. 24:13)
4. “[T]hey will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with _____ and _____
_____”. (Matt. 24:30b)

5. “Therefore, you also be _____, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect. (Matt. 24:44)

6. “Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the _____ prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” (Matt. 25:34)

The Victory over Satan

Reference: De Graaf, *Promise and Deliverance*, Volume 4, Lesson 44

Scripture: Revelation 12

Memory Verse: “Therefore rejoice O heavens and you who dwell in them!”
(Rev. 12:12a)

Lesson Truth: Jesus won the battle with Satan.

Lesson

Have you ever had a dream that was very exciting? Have you ever had a dream that was very scary? How about a dream that didn't seem to make any sense? In our lesson today, we are going to talk about a vision that the apostle John had on the island of Patmos. A vision is kind of like a dream, but it happens when a person is awake instead of asleep. John wrote down many visions that he had on Patmos and put them together in the book of Revelation. Some of John's visions may seem confusing or even scary, but Jesus wanted John to share these visions with the Church, so it is good for us to study them.

In Revelation 12, the vision is about a woman and a dragon. The woman is about to have a baby and the dragon chases her because he wants to devour the baby as soon as it is born. That sounds pretty scary, doesn't it? But we don't have to worry, because in this story, the dragon doesn't win.

So, what could this vision mean? Very often, the people and things we see in visions represent other things. That is true of this vision. The woman represents the people of God. The dragon represents Satan. And the baby represents Jesus Christ. The vision shows Satan trying to destroy Jesus Christ. Satan does not want God's people to have a good relationship with God, and he knows that if he can destroy Jesus Christ, God's people will also be destroyed. Their relationship with God would be permanently broken. But we know that Satan can never destroy Jesus Christ.

But that doesn't mean he won't try to stop Jesus. When Jesus was on earth, Satan tried his best to stop Jesus. He went so far as to work in the hearts of the Jewish leaders to send Jesus to die on the cross. Satan thought he had won the battle. But in fact, that was Jesus' greatest victory. In the vision that John had, the angels in heaven rejoiced saying, “Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down. And they overcame him

be the blood of the Lamb” (Rev. 12:10-11a). Isn’t that wonderful what Jesus did for us? We can rejoice with the angels in the victory of Jesus Christ.

But Satan does not want to rejoice. He is very angry. Even though Christ has already won the victory, he still wants to fight against the people of God. And that means that even today, Satan tries to trouble and tempt us. But even Satan knows that his time is short (Rev. 12:12). One day, Jesus Christ will come again, and He will judge Satan and all who follow him. Then, He will set up a new heaven and new earth, where no one will sin anymore, and we will live in perfect righteousness and peace forever.

Questions

Fill in the blanks.

1. “Now a great _____ appeared in heaven.” (Rev. 12:1)
2. “And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to _____ her Child as soon as it was born.” Rev. 12:4)
3. “And war broke out in heaven. _____ and his _____ fought with the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought...” (Rev. 12:7)
4. “And they overcame him by the _____ of the _____.” (Rev. 12:11)
5. “Therefore _____ O heavens, and you who dwell in them!” (Rev. 12:12a).
6. “And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the _____ of God and have the _____ of Jesus Christ.” (Rev. 12:17)

The Victory over the Beast

Reference: De Graaf, *Promise and Deliverance*, Volume 4, Lesson 45

Scripture: Revelation 19:11-21

Memory Verse: “And He has on His robe, and on His thigh a name is written: King of Kings and Lord of Lords.” (Rev. 19:13b)

Lesson Truth: Jesus will defeat all His enemies.

Lesson

Do you remember the story in our last lesson? A woman was being chased by a great, fiery, red dragon. Do you remember who the woman and the dragon represented? The woman represented God’s people and the dragon represented Satan. The dragon was chasing the woman because the woman was about to have a baby, and the dragon wanted to destroy the baby. So, if the dragon represented Satan, who did the baby represent? That’s right. The baby represented Jesus. Satan is an enemy of Jesus. But Satan can never destroy Jesus, can he? In the last lesson, we learned that Satan was very angry that he couldn’t destroy the Jesus, so he went to war against everyone who follows Jesus. He tried to fight against all of God’s people.

So, if our last lesson talked about the war that Satan has been fighting against God’s people, our lesson for today talks about what will happen at the end of that war. The war has been going on for a long time. Right after Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden, God came to them and said that there would always be enmity, or conflict, between the Seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. The Seed of the woman represents Jesus Christ and all who follow Him. The seed of the serpent represent Satan and all who follow him.

But before we talk about what will happen at the end of the war, we should talk a bit more about the war itself. After John described his vision of the dragon, he also described a vision of two beasts. The first beast came from the sea. The dragon gave the beast from the sea great power and authority. The beast from the sea tried to make everyone in the world worship the dragon. Whenever the beast from the sea saw people who worshiped Jesus, he would fight against them. It shows just how much Satan hates people who love Jesus.

The second beast came from the earth. This beast only had two horns like a lamb. Instead of using force to fight against God’s people, the beast from the earth would lie to them. He is a false prophet, and he uses lies to try to get everyone to worship

the beast out of the sea. He also makes it look like he can do miracles to trick more people into worshipping the beast out of the sea. And he makes it hard for people to follow Jesus.

There are many people and rulers in this world who are like the two beasts. They fight against Jesus, and they fight against God's people. Not everyone in this world wants to follow Jesus. Many do not want Jesus to be King. They want to be king instead of Jesus. They want to set up their own kingdoms. In the Old Testament, the kingdom of Babylon was like that. It sought its own glory, not God's glory. It ruled the world through power and lies, just like the two beasts. People still try to do that today. All those who seek their own glory instead of Christ's are following in the line of Babylon.

But the kingdoms of this world will not continue forever. In our passage for today, we learn that Jesus Christ will come again and will defeat all those who reject him. John described his vision of a rider on a white horse who came from heaven. The rider is Jesus Christ. He is called Faithful and True. When he comes again, he will make war against all those who follow the two beasts. He will come in judgment, and He will rule with a rod of iron. All those who have not already sought forgiveness for their sins will discover on that day that it is too late.

When Jesus Christ returns, He will show everyone that He is "King of Kings and Lord of Lords" (Rev. 19:16). Not even the dragon or the two beasts can stand against Him. In the end, they will be "cast into the lake of fire burning with brimstone" (Rev. 19:20). But those of us who trust in Jesus can rejoice. We know that one day He will return and everyone who opposes him will be defeated. Jesus Christ will reign forever, and all His people will enjoy eternal, blessed fellowship and communion with Him. Pray for that day to come soon.

Questions

Fill in the blanks.

1. "Now I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse. And He who sat on him was called _____ and _____."
(Rev. 19:11)
2. "His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many _____."
(Rev. 19:12)
3. "And His name is called The _____ of God." (Rev. 19:13)

4. “He Himself will rule them with a _____ of _____.
(Rev. 19:15)

5. “And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: _____
of _____ and _____ of _____.”
(Rev. 19: 16).

6. “Then the _____ was captured, and with him the false
prophet.” (Rev. 19:20)

The Age to Come

Reference: De Graaf, *Promise and Deliverance*, Volume 4, Lesson 46

Scripture: Revelation 21–22

Memory Verse: “Behold I make all things new.” (Rev. 21:5)

Lesson Truth: Christ will make all things new.

Lesson

When Jesus Christ comes again, everything will change. We do not know all the details of what will happen, but we know some things. We know that in the Age to Come, there will no longer be any sin. That will make the world look very different than what it looks like now. We also know that in the Age to Come, we will not have to personally struggle with sin. Instead, we will live in the presence of God in a new heaven and a new earth. What a wonderful hope we have for what is coming in the future. But did you know that even now, we can experience a little bit of what that future life will be like? Our lesson today is about what we can expect in the future and what we can experience of the Age to Come already now.

When Jesus ascended into heaven, He made a promise to the disciples. He told them that they would receive power when the Holy Spirit came upon them (Acts 1:8). When the Holy Spirit lives in our hearts, it is a taste of what we will experience in the Age to Come when we will live fully in the presence of God. At Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit was poured out on the disciples, Peter said that it was a fulfillment of a prophecy of Joel (Acts 2:17a). Peter claimed that those who follow Jesus Christ after He ascended into heaven are living in the last days that Joel talked about, when the Holy Spirit would be poured out. What a wonderful blessing for believers to have such a personal connection with the Holy Spirit.

But the Holy Spirit also did something else. He gave visions to the apostle John where he showed John the struggle Christians are in right now and what the new heaven and the new earth will be like once the struggle is finished. John wrote down all of these visions. We can read these visions in the book of Revelation, the last book in the Bible. The vision in Revelation 12 shows a woman who is about to have a baby. She is being chased by a fiery red dragon. It is a picture of what Satan has been trying to do ever since the first sin in the Garden of Eden. After that first sin, God spoke to the serpent and to Adam and Eve. God said that there would always be fighting between the seed of the serpent (those who follow Satan) and the seed of the woman (those who follow God). God also promised that one day, from the

woman would arise someone who would be called the Seed of the Woman (Jesus Christ), and He would crush the head of the serpent (Satan).

Some of John's visions in Revelation show us what the victory over Satan looks like. Jesus already conquered sin and death by dying on the cross and rising again. And when He comes again, he will bring a new heaven and a new earth where Satan will not be able to bother us anymore. Revelation 21 shows us a New Jerusalem coming down out of heaven. In this New Jerusalem, there will be "no more death, nor sorrow, or crying" (Rev. 21:4). Sin will be gone. And all the consequences of sin—death, sorrow, and crying—will also be gone. Only the new creation, represented by the New Jerusalem will remain.

God Himself will live in the New Jerusalem and fill it with His glory. It will be so glorious that we won't even need the sun or the moon. God's glory will fill the city even better and brighter than sunlight. Everyone who ever lived in this world and trusted in God to redeem the world will be there. And no one who trusted in himself or followed Satan will be allowed to enter. The only people who can enter are the ones whose names are "written in the Lamb's Book of Life" (Rev. 21:27). The city will be filled with precious stones and pure gold. And a river will be there. It is a river that brings life, and it will flow from the throne of God. A tree of life will be on the banks of the river bearing fruit continuously. We will serve the Lord there, and we will never have to worry about sin ever again.

John said that when he first saw these visions, he tried to worship the angel that explained the visions to him. But the angel stopped him. The angel knew that only God should be worshiped. But he told John to write down the visions so that others could read the visions and be prepared when Jesus comes again. Are you ready for Jesus to come again?

Questions

Fill in the blanks.

1. "Now I saw a new _____ and a new _____ for the first _____ and the first _____ had passed away." (Rev. 21:1)
2. "And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be now more _____, nor _____, nor _____." (Rev. 21:4)
3. "The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the _____ of God illuminated it." (Rev. 21:23)

4. “And he showed me a pure river of _____ of _____, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb.” (Rev. 22:1)

5. “Behold, I am coming _____! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.” (Rev. 22:7)

6. “Even so _____, Lord Jesus! (Rev. 22:20).