

Promise and Deliverance

Student Workbook

Volume 20

Level 4

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: “Now behold, an angel 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. Then the angel said to him, ‘Gird yourself and tie on your sandals,’ and so he did. And he said to him, ‘Put on your garment and follow me.’” (Acts 12:7-8)

Lesson Truth: The Word of grace conquers and reigns supreme.

Lesson

After the Word of grace spread to the Gentile world, hostility against the believers increased, resulting in the execution of James. The death of James and the imprisonment of Peter caused the believers to retreat in fear. They did not yet understand that it is impossible to stop the Word of God’s grace. In this story, we will see that they became witnesses of the power of God and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. They would also witness the judgment of the Word of grace against the enemies of God’s kingdom.

The spread of the gospel to the Gentile Christians at Antioch was not well received by many Jews. The Jews continued to believe that the Israelites were God’s chosen people, and that salvation was only for them. While the Jews were displeased about the spread of the gospel to the Gentiles, king Herod exerted his influence. At one time he had been deprived of all his authority by the emperor Tiberius, only later to be elevated to the throne of his grandfather. Now Herod seized the opportunity to gain some favor with the Jews. He joined in their persecution of the believers. Not only did Herod harass the believers, but he also arrested James the brother of John and put him to death. Then, when he saw how this pleased the Jews, he also had Peter arrested and put in prison. But Peter’s arrest occurred just before the Passover feast, so his trial had to be postponed until after the feast. In order to secure Peter, Herod charged four squads of soldiers to keep him. If Peter were tried and executed as James had been executed, what would happen to the church? Would the story of the death and resurrection of Christ Jesus for the remission of sins be stopped?

The march of the gospel can never be stopped. But the believers were cowering in fear because they were still living with the expectations of the flesh. How could Peter ever be delivered when he was bound with two chains between two soldiers and additional guards were guarding the prison doors? To the believers that were gathered for prayer on Peter’s behalf, it seemed like an impossible situation. But they were about to learn that the power of God could do the impossible.

The night before Peter was scheduled to go on trial he was sleeping, chained between two soldiers. Suddenly, an angel of the Lord stood by him and a light shone in the prison. The angel touched Peter and told him to rise quickly and put on his sandals and coat. Immediately the chains fell from Peter’s hands, and he followed the angel past both the first and second guards and through the prison gate. Peter thought that he had seen a vision, but after the angel departed and he found himself outside the prison walls, he knew that the Lord had delivered him. Peter then decided to go to the house of Mary, the mother of John Mark, where he expected the believers to be gathered for prayer.

When Peter knocked at the door of Mary’s house, he was greeted by the maid, who was so astounded to see him that she forgot to open the door. When she hurried to the other believers and announced that Peter was

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: “For so the Lord has commanded us: ‘I have set you as a light to the Gentiles, that you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth.’ Now when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord. And as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.” (Acts 13:47-48)

Lesson Truth: By God’s Spirit and Word, the door of faith was opened to the Gentiles.

Lesson

This is the amazing story of how the Lord opened the door of faith to the Gentiles. The Holy Spirit prompted the prophets at Antioch to send Saul and Barnabas to preach the gospel to the Gentiles. As they began their preaching assignment, they were confronted with Elymas, a sorcerer who practiced magic. At Antioch in Pisidia Saul and Barnabas found the Jews still insisting that they had to earn their own righteousness. They were not yet liberated by faith in God’s grace. At Lystra the people wanted to offer sacrifices to them as gods, because they healed a crippled man. Saul urged them to reject such idolatry and serve the living God. Later, Saul and Barnabas visited the churches at Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch and appointed elders to lead these churches in the way of the Lord.

Saul, whose Greek name was Paul, along with Barnabas returned to Antioch after they brought their offerings to Jerusalem. The Gentile believers at Antioch wanted to know what the Lord’s will was for them. They understood that the Gentile church at Antioch was just the beginning of the gospel of grace reaching Gentiles. These believers waited and prayed for a revelation of the Lord’s will for them. The Lord answered these prayers by sending the Holy Spirit to prompt them to set Paul and Barnabas apart to preach the gospel of grace. The believers placed their hands on them as a sign that they were commissioned by the Holy Spirit to preach the gospel for the church at Antioch.

As the commissioned preachers of the gospel, Paul and Barnabas sailed to the island of Cyprus. On the island they went to the synagogues at Salamis and Paphos to preach the gospel of grace. It was at Paphos that they encountered a sorcerer named Elymas, who tried to convince the governor not to believe the gospel that Paul and Barnabas preached. Although Elymas was a Jew he wanted to control divine powers by magic. The teachings of Elymas were the exact opposite of righteousness by faith in the grace of the Lord Jesus. They were the opposite of being included in the covenant by God’s grace. Because Paul was filled with the Holy Spirit, he knew the deceit and fraud with which Elymas was trying to pervert the straight ways of the Lord. Paul looked intently at Elymas and told him that he was the enemy of righteousness and that he was a son of the devil. Then Paul informed him that the hand of the Lord was upon him and caused him to become blind. When the governor heard this and saw what happened to Elymas he believed the gospel of the Lord’s grace proclaimed by Paul and Barnabas. From Cyprus Paul and Barnabas crossed to another Antioch in Pisidia where they went to the synagogue on the Sabbath Day to preach the gospel.

Paul urged the Jews to forsake their idea that they had to keep the Law to become righteous. He declared to them how God had chosen the patriarchs by His grace to be in His covenant. He told them how God chose David to bring forth His Son as the Redeemer of Israel. He pointed out that God, by His grace, raised Jesus from the dead and now in His name there is forgiveness of sins. Paul warned the Jews not to harden their hearts against this preaching, or judgment would come upon them. Thankfully, many of the Jews and their Gentile

friends believed. When the news of this gospel of grace reached others in the city, the Gentiles asked that Paul preach the same sermon to the Gentiles the next Sabbath Day. But when Paul and Barnabas preached to the Gentiles, the self-righteous Jews protested. Paul had to remind them that they did preach to the Jews first, but since many of the Jews rejected the gospel of grace, they shared this gospel with the Gentiles. This angered the self-righteous Jews, so they stirred up the people to drive Paul and Barnabas from their country.

From Antioch in Pisidia Paul and Barnabas went to Iconium in Galatia. There the people were divided. Some believed the apostles, and others wanted to harm them. This caused the apostles to go to Lystra. At Lystra they saw a crippled man and commanded him to stand up. Now when the people saw the man stand up, they showed how they clung to their idolatry. They claimed that Paul and Barnabas were gods and they tried to offer sacrifices to them. These people wanted to worship human power instead of believing the gospel of grace. At the urging of Jews from Antioch and Iconium, Paul was stoned and thrown out of the city. Yet there were believers at Lystra. Paul did not die from being stoned but he did go on to Derbe. Later, he and Barnabas visited each of these churches on their way back to Antioch. At each church they ordained elders to carry on the work of the Lord. This was the way that Spirit and Word of the Lord opened the door of faith to the Gentiles.

Questions

1. Who did Saul and Barnabas take with them when they had fulfilled their ministry in Jerusalem? (Acts 12:25)
2. Who commanded the believers to separate Saul and Barnabas to do the work of the Lord? (Acts 13:2)
3. Who was the sorcerer who tried to turn the governor away from the faith? (Acts 13:8)
4. What befell this sorcerer when Saul said the hand of the Lord was upon him? (Acts 13:11)

Lesson 3

Freedom of Faith

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

Scripture: Acts 15:1-34

Memory Verse: “And when there had been much dispute, Peter 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 gospel and believe. So God, who knows the heart acknowledged by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He did to us, and made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.’” (Acts 15:7-9)

Lesson Truth: Through the Holy Spirit the freedom of faith has been upheld.

Lesson

Paul and Barnabas stayed with the church at Antioch in Syria for some time. This Gentile church was flourishing until some Pharisaic men came from Judea and made trouble. They made trouble because they insisted that Gentiles could not be saved unless they were circumcised. This was a real trap for the Gentiles who were free in Christ Jesus. Paul and Barnabas tried to correct these false teachers, but they would not listen. The church then decided to send Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem to consult with the apostles about this problem. At Jerusalem both Peter and James spoke to this issue and informed the church that salvation was for both Jews and Gentiles apart from circumcision.

It was a shame that the church at Antioch was disturbed by some self-appointed men who came with laws of the Pharisees. These men were convinced that the only way a Gentile could be saved was to be incorporated into the Jewish system of laws. This meant that the Gentiles would have to be circumcised and become like Israelites. Sadly, they failed to understand that God wanted to extend His covenant to all nations. God’s covenant would be extended by the faith of the new believers and not by keeping the law of circumcision. Sadly, these men would not accept the truth that Christ Jesus had paid the price for their sins. They still insisted that they had to earn their salvation by keeping the Law.

The church from Judea did not send these men to Antioch. They came on their own and created a lot of confusion among the believers. These men insisted that salvation had to be earned by keeping the Law of Moses. They did not understand what happened at Pentecost. At Pentecost the Holy Spirit was poured out to fill men’s hearts with faith. Later, the Holy Spirit was also poured out on the Gentile believers. Paul and Barnabas knew that salvation came by faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus for their sins. That is what they taught the believers at Antioch, and that is why they disputed with these Jews.

To settle the dispute, the believers decided to send Paul and Barnabas with other elders to Jerusalem. This delegation was instructed to ask the apostles and elders at Jerusalem if it was necessary to circumcise the Gentiles. When they arrived, they were welcomed by the apostles and elders, and a meeting was arranged to discuss their question. At that meeting there was a lot of debate, and a dispute arose about the question of circumcision. Finally, Peter stood up and addressed the delegates with the truth as revealed to him by God.

Peter reminded the men in attendance that some time before, God had instructed him to bring the gospel of grace to the Gentiles. He reminded them that God, who knows the heart, acknowledged the Gentiles by pouring out His Holy Spirit on them, just as He did to the Jews. Peter assured the delegates that God made no distinction between Jew and Gentile in that He purified the hearts of both. He then asked, why anyone would want to put a yoke on the Gentiles that God did not put on them. God made the Gentiles pure through faith in Christ

Lesson 4

Overlooking the Times of Their Ignorance

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

Scripture: Acts 15:35–18:22

Memory Verse: “Then Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, ‘Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious; for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I found an altar with this inscription: to the unknown God, Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you.’” (Acts 17:22-23)

Lesson Truth: God sends out the gospel to all nations, having overlooked the times of their guilt through ignorance.

Lesson

Following the resurrection and ascension of Christ Jesus the gospel could not be restrained. As the Gospels told about the work of Christ in His teaching and healing ministry; so the book of Acts tells about the work of the Holy Spirit in spreading the good news of salvation to the ends of the earth. After the Holy Spirit was poured out at Pentecost, the Jews were dispersed, and Saul of Tarsus was converted. Following Saul’s conversion, he and Barnabas were commissioned to bring the gospel to the Gentiles. On their first missionary journey, the Holy Spirit guided them to the island of Cyprus, to Asia Minor, and Syria. Now on this second missionary journey the good news of salvation, through Christ Jesus, was introduced to Europe.

After their first missionary journey, Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch in Syria to teach and preach. However, the Holy Spirit worked in Paul’s heart and made him restless so that he suggested to Barnabas that they visit the churches in each of the cities where they had preached before. Barnabas agreed with Paul, but he wanted to take Mark with them. This caused a division between Paul and Barnabas because Mark had deserted them when they were on their first missionary journey. Because of this disagreement, Barnabas took Mark along with him to Cyprus, and Paul chose Silas to accompany him to Syria and Cilicia. At Lystra Paul and Silas became acquainted with a disciple of the Lord named Timothy. God would use Timothy to strengthen the believers at Ephesus. Paul and Silas wanted to continue to preach in Asia at Galatia, Mysia, and Bithynia but amazingly the Holy Spirit prevented them from doing so. Instead, the Holy Spirit led them to Troas, where Paul received a vision of a man from Macedonia pleading for him to come and help. Paul and Silas answered this call, crossed over to Macedonia, and went to the city of Philippi. At Philippi they went to the riverside to preach on the Sabbath Day. This is where they met Lydia, a seller of purple, whose heart the Lord opened to the gospel. Lydia and her entire household were baptized. They also provided a place for Paul and Silas to stay.

At Philippi Paul and Silas were confronted by a slave girl who produced an income for her masters by fortune telling. This girl had a spirit that recognized Paul and Silas as servants of the Most High God who proclaimed the way of salvation. Still, Paul was annoyed by her declaration and finally turned to her and commanded the spirit within her to come out. The spirit obeyed Paul and came out, but this made her masters angry because she could no longer be used to tell fortunes. Because this destroyed their source of income, the girl’s masters brought Paul and Silas to the city officials. In addition, the crowd rose up against the apostles, so the officials ripped the clothes from Paul and Silas and had them beaten with rods. Later they were thrown into jail where the jailer bound them in the inner prison. Then a wonderful event occurred at midnight. Paul and Silas were singing and praying when suddenly there was a great earthquake, and all the prison doors were opened, and the prisoner’s chains fell off. The jailer was so scared that he would be charged with the prisoners’ escape, that he drew his sword to kill himself. But Paul called to him in a loud voice and told him the prisoners were all

accounted for. The jailer responded by asking Paul and Silas a crucial question for everyone who would believe. He asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16:30). They answered that he should believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and both he and his household would be saved.

Paul and Silas then went on to proclaim the gospel at Thessalonica and Berea. At Berea some Jews from Thessalonica followed them and stirred the crowds against them, so the believers sent Paul away. This was the way the Holy Spirit was leading Paul to Athens where he reasoned with both Jews and Gentiles at the synagogue. Each day he went to the marketplace where he debated with Epicurean and Stoic philosophers. When they brought Paul to the Areopagus, he said that he knew that they were very religious, because they had altars to many gods. Paul said that he saw one altar dedicated to the unknown God. It was this unknown God that Paul proclaimed to be the Creator of the world and the Savior of those who believe.

From Athens Paul went to Corinth where he encountered a Jewish couple name Aquila and Priscilla. They went with Paul to Ephesus where believers urged Paul to stay on and preach. This is the amazing story of the way God overlooked the times of unbeliever's ignorance and brought the gospel to Europe.

Questions

1. Who was the disciple, the son of a Jewish mother and a Greek father, that Paul found at Lystra? (Acts 16:1)
2. Who did not permit Paul and Silas to go to Bithynia? (Acts 16:7)
3. Where was the man from that Paul saw in a vision pleading for help? (Acts 16:9)
4. What were Paul and Silas doing at midnight when they were in the Philippian jail? (Acts 16:25)

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: “For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God. Therefore, take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.” (Acts 20:27-28)

Lesson Truth: The revelation of the way of the Lord in the world.

Lesson

When we read about the way of the Lord in the book of Acts, we are told about the way that we may walk with the Lord and have fellowship with Him. We will learn about this walk with the Lord as we see His way with Apollos and His way when the baptism of John was explained. Finally, we will learn about the way of the Lord with His people in the synagogue and the church at Ephesus. After Paul taught the people the way of the Lord, he showed that he was ready to die for the Lord as he was compelled by the Holy Spirit to go to Jerusalem.

Before the believers in the mission churches knew the true way of the Lord, some corrections had to be made. At Ephesus an eloquent believer named Apollos was preaching and teaching the gospel of the Lord Jesus. Apollos knew about the baptism of John the Baptist, but he did not know that the significance of John’s baptism had been fully realized when the Holy Spirit was poured out at Pentecost. When Aquila and Priscilla heard him speak, they took him aside and helped him understand what happened when God poured out His Holy Spirit. This helped Apollos understand that through the Holy Spirit, Christ would establish His reign among all nations. With this new information, Apollos declared to all people that Jesus was the Christ.

After Apollos left Ephesus, Paul arrived on his third missionary journey. The first people he contacted were people who believed that salvation was only for the Jews. They knew of John’s baptism of repentance, but they did not know about the outpouring of the Holy Spirit for all people. Paul asked them directly if they had received the Holy Spirit. They responded that they had never heard of the Holy Spirit. After Paul explained that John’s baptism pointed to the Christ who would follow him, this group asked to be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. When Paul laid his hands on these believers, they also received the Holy Spirit and came to understand that God’s grace was for all people.

Paul then went to the synagogue at Ephesus and urged the Jews to believe that the Lord’s mercy was for all people. These Jews had to be set free from the bondage of the Law and see the grace of the Lord Jesus. But many of these Jews hardened their hearts and spoke evil of the Way. Still, Paul continued to preach so that both Jews and Greeks heard about the Lord Jesus. In addition to preaching, God allowed Paul to do many miracles. But this also created a problem because the people at Ephesus were superstitious. Some of the visiting Jews tried to cast out demons by invoking the name of Jesus whom Paul preached. The remarkable thing was that the evil spirit they were trying to cast out responded by saying, “Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are you?” (Acts 19:15). At this, the man possessed by the spirit leaped upon these men and overpowered them so that they fled away naked. This brought many to believe in the Lord Jesus. Those who believed burned their magic books. The Word of the Lord grew and prevailed.

After Paul preached in Ephesus he decided to go to Jerusalem and later to Rome. At that time a riot erupted at Ephesus centering on a silversmith named Demetrius. Demetrius made a lot of money creating and selling

silver shrines of the Ephesian goddess Diana. When the Ephesian people became believers, they no longer bought these shrines of Diana. This made a number of the unbelievers angry, and they began to riot and call out, “Great is Diana of the Ephesians” (Acts 19:28). The whole city rushed into the theatre after they seized some of Paul’s companions. When Paul wanted to go to the theatre to help them, the disciples stopped him. Sadly, not everyone became believers. Some despised the way of the Lord.

Paul wrote the First Epistle to the Corinthians and then traveled to Troas. In Macedonia he wrote the Second Epistle to the Corinthians and then went to Corinth. At Corinth he wrote the Epistle to the Romans and probably the Epistle to the Galatians. He spent seven days in Troas where Eutychus fell to his death and was brought back to life. Paul then went to Miletus where he sent for the Ephesian elders. Paul shared with these elders how he served the Lord with true humility and tears as he lived through each trial. He also told them that when he went to Jerusalem, he wasn’t sure what would happen to him because the Holy Spirit testified that chains and tribulations awaited him. But he was not concerned about his life. He was ready to finish the race of life with joy because he knew the grace of God. Because the Holy Spirit compelled Paul, he left the Ephesian elders with an emotional farewell. Just as Paul had a special calling to preach the gospel, we must also be ready to heed the call to share God’s Word.

Questions

1. Who was the eloquent man, mighty in the Scriptures, that went to Ephesus? (Acts 18:24)
2. Who explained the way of God to this man more accurately? (Acts 18:26)
3. Who did John urge people to believe? (Acts 19:4)
4. What happened to the believers at Ephesus when Paul laid his hands on them? (Acts 19:6)

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 Paul answered, ‘What do you mean by weeping 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)

Lesson Truth: By faith we are imitators of Christ.

Lesson

In this lesson, we will see how Paul used his Jewish identity, his Roman citizenship, and even his belief in the resurrection to his advantage. But he did not do so out of fear of persecution or death. In fact, he traveled to Jerusalem ready to die for the gospel that united both Jew and Gentile in the grace and mercy of Jesus Christ. In that way, he was an imitator of Christ.

Paul, following the leading of the Spirit, determined to go to Jerusalem to celebrate the feast of Pentecost. On the way, he faced many temptations to disobey the Spirit. At Tyre, the Holy Spirit revealed to the believers that Paul would be imprisoned in Jerusalem. They urged him not to go, but Paul was determined. When he arrived at Caesarea, he stayed at the home of Philip the Evangelist. A prophet named Agabus met Paul there. He took Paul’s belt and bound Paul with it, saying, “Thus says the Holy Spirit, ‘So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man who owns this belt, and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles’” (Acts 21:11). Again, Paul’s companions urged him not to go to Jerusalem. And again, Paul refused to listen to them.

Why was Paul so bent on going to Jerusalem? He was determined to strengthen the bonds between Gentile and Jewish believers. Jesus Christ died for both Jew and Gentile. They are united in Christ. Throughout his ministry, Paul worked to strengthen that unity, but to strengthen it in the right way—not through observance of the Law, but through a recognition of Christ’s saving work. Paul was willing to die to strengthen that union, just as Christ died to establish it.

When Paul arrived in Jerusalem, he was made aware of a rumor that had been spreading among the Jews in Jerusalem regarding his ministry. It was a rumor that potentially would drive a wedge between Gentile and Jewish believers. The rumor was that Paul taught that Jews around the world should stop observing the ceremonial laws. But Paul never taught that. He very clearly taught that keeping the Law was not needed for salvation, so Gentiles should not be forced to keep it. However, Jews who wanted to continue keeping the Law were free to do so. To dispel the rumor, Paul agreed to join with some fellow believers who had taken a Nazirite vow. Paul agreed to take the vow with them and to pay the expenses of their purification and sacrifices that needed to be made at the end of the week. In that way, Paul would demonstrate his respect for the Law of Moses. Paul knew that true fulfillment of a Nazirite vow was only possible in Christ. And it was that faith in Christ that united both Jewish and Gentile believers.

When Paul went to the temple with the believers who had made the vow, some Jews from Asia Minor recognized him. Previously, they had seen him with Trophimus, a Gentile believer from Ephesus, so they assumed that Paul had taken Trophimus with him into the part of the temple that was reserved only for Jews. They raised the alarm, and soon, the whole city was in an uproar. The commander of the Roman garrison in Jerusalem heard it, and immediately took centurions and soldiers there to restore order. They arrested Paul and carried him away.

Lesson 7

Standing before Kings and Governors

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

Scripture: Acts 24–26

Memory Verse: “I will deliver you from the Jewish people, as well as from the Gentiles, to whom I now send you, to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.” (Acts 26:17-18)

Lesson Truth: The witness to Jesus Christ also goes out to kings and governors.

Lesson

Paul knew early in his Christian walk that he would proclaim the name of Christ before kings. The Lord told Ananias of His plans for Paul when He sent Ananias to heal Paul of his blindness. He said this: “Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name’s sake” (Acts 9:15-16). Paul’s imprisonment did not take Paul by surprise. In this lesson, we will see that Paul was ready to suffer and even to die for the name of Christ. Paul also was ready to give a testimony of his faith to kings, governors, and even to Caesar himself.

When Paul was arrested in Jerusalem, the Roman commander, Lysias, sent him to Caesarea to be tried by Felix, the governor. Felix was not a friend of the Jews. In fact, the Jews hated him for the way he treated them. But you would not know that if you heard the opening speech of Tertullus, the spokesman for the Jewish leaders. Tertullus flattered Felix with empty praise. Then, he listed the charges against Paul. Tertullus claimed that Paul had committed a very serious crime against Roman authority. Throughout the Roman world, Roman authorities were very quick to stamp out any hint of unrest among the people they governed. Tertullus knew that, and so he claimed that Paul was “a creator of dissension among the Jews” (Acts 24:5). Then he connected Paul to the Nazarene sect, which would have given Felix a good excuse to increase persecution against other Christians in addition to Paul. Finally, he claimed that Paul profaned the temple, which would have broken Jewish laws, but not Roman ones. He said that the Jewish leaders would have dealt with Paul themselves if Lysias had not removed Paul from their hands and sent him to Caesarea. Through all of this, Tertullus attempted, through flattery and misdirection, to turn Felix against Paul.

When Paul responded to the charges, he took a very different approach. He did not attempt to flatter Felix. Rather, he simply acknowledged that Felix had been the governor of the Jews for many years. Then he clearly and accurately responded to the charges against him. He said that he could not have caused dissension since he was only in Jerusalem twelve days before he was arrested. He also stated that the Jewish leaders could not prove that he profaned the temple. Paul knew that the charges were false, so he laid the burden of proof on those who made the false claim. He admitted to belonging to the Nazarene sect called “the Way,” however, he argued that it was not a dissenting sect, but one that served God according to His Word. 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).

When Paul spoke of the resurrection of the dead, he claimed that both the just and the unjust would be resurrected, pointing to the day when all people would be judged by God. This probably made Felix uncomfortable, since he was a very unjust ruler. Felix decided to postpone judgment, but sent for Paul often,

Lesson 8

Christ's Global Reign

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

Scripture: Acts 27–28

Memory Verse: “Then Paul dwelt two whole years in his own rented house, and received all who came to him, preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no one forbidding him.” (Acts 28:30-31)

Lesson Truth: Christ puts His claim on the center of the world.

Lesson

Paul had always wanted to preach the gospel in Rome, the center of the known world. In this lesson, we will see the unusual circumstances that Christ used to bring Paul to Rome. We will see how He protected Paul along the way. And we will see how He used Paul to stake his claim there.

In the last lesson, we learned that Paul appealed to Caesar rather than stand trial before the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem. It was his right as a Roman citizen to appeal to Caesar. But that meant that Paul had to travel to Rome. A Roman centurion name Julius was given the task of taking Paul to Rome. Paul was a prisoner of Julius, but Paul was also allowed to take some friends with him. One of the people who went with him was Luke, who wrote the story of Paul's travel to Rome and included it in the Book of Acts. Another friend of Paul was Aristarchus, a Macedonian from Thessalonica. Aristarchus even remained with Paul during Paul's first Roman imprisonment. Julius was kind to Paul by letting Paul travel with his friends.

Even so, Paul was forced to travel to Rome as a prisoner. This was not the kind of trip to Rome that Paul had hoped to take. He wanted to preach the gospel in freedom, not in chains. But this was the Lord's way of bringing Paul to Rome, and Paul had to surrender to the Lord's will. What mattered was not Paul's circumstances. Rather, what mattered was the spread of the gospel.

The journey to Rome was difficult. The first stop for the group was Sidon, which went well. But after leaving Sidon they experienced strong headwinds, which forced them to sail on the side of Cyprus that was sheltered from the winds. It was as if something or someone was trying to stop Paul from reaching Rome. Or more to the point, it was as if something or someone was trying to stop the gospel from reaching Rome.

After reaching Myra in Lycia, the centurion found a ship of Alexandria that was sailing for Italy. He put everyone on board, and they set sail. But on this part of the journey, the wind was very light. They sailed slowly for several days, but finally came to a port called Fair Havens. Paul advised the ship's crew to stay at Fair Havens for the winter. He warned them that they would lose the ship and its cargo as well as their lives if they went on. But the centurion listened to the pilot and owner of the ship who thought the harbor was not suitable to spend the winter. They wanted to make it to Phoenix, a harbor of Crete, and spend the winter there.

The centurion should have listened to Paul because Paul was the bearer of the Word of God. The sailors may have been more experienced in sailing, but God is the one who controls the weather. At first, there was a gentle south wind—just what they needed to sail to Rome. But soon, a fierce northeast wind swept down and blew the ship off course. It continued to blow for several days. Each day, the situation became more desperate. The sailors threw the cargo overboard to lighten the ship. They even threw the ship's tackle overboard, but nothing seemed to help. Finally, Paul stood up and told them they should have listened to him earlier. But he also encouraged them. An angel had told Paul that he would reach Rome safely. Jesus Christ would make sure

that Paul preached the gospel before Caesar. Paul would be saved for the sake of the gospel. And everyone else on the ship would be spared as well. They would all find protection with Paul, who was called to preach the gospel before Caesar.

Paul's encouragement was a great relief for the crew, but they still had difficult circumstances to endure. In trying to run the ship ashore on the island of Malta, the ship struck a reef and began to break apart. The ship was lost, but all the passengers were saved. Even the soldiers, who wanted to kill the prisoners instead of risking their escape, were stopped by the centurion, who wanted to spare Paul's life. God kept his promise to Paul.

But Paul's difficulties were not over. When Paul added some sticks to a fire they made on the beach, a viper came out of the fire and bit Paul on the hand. The natives of Malta took this as a sign that Paul was a murderer. But Paul shook off the viper and no harm came to him. When the natives saw that Paul did not die, they changed their minds and thought that Paul was a god. But Paul ministered to the natives and even visited Publius, the chief of the island. He healed the father of Publius and others on the island. The grace of the Lord came to the inhabitants of Malta through the ministry of Paul.

When the travelers left for Rome, the people of Malta sent them on their way with everything they needed. In a new ship, they finally reached the coast of Italy, where the centurion allowed Paul the freedom to meet with Christians in some neighboring towns. Christians also met Paul as he arrived in Rome, which encouraged Paul.

Paul was given additional freedom in Rome. He was placed under house arrest, but he was allowed to have visitors. The first people he invited for a visit were leaders of the Jewish community in Rome. They agreed to listen to Paul. Some were convinced by what Paul said, but others did not believe. Paul then turned to the Gentiles in Rome. He lived there two years at his own expense and spent his time proclaiming, "the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no one forbidding him" (Acts 28:31).

Questions

1. What unusual circumstances did the Lord use to bring Paul to Rome? (Acts 27:1-2)
2. How did the centurion, Julius, show kindness to Paul, his prisoner? (Acts 27:3)
3. After the ship set sail from Sidon, in what way was it hindered? (Acts 27:4)

Lesson 9

The Victory of the Kingdom

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

Scripture: Matthew 24–25

Memory Verse: “And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all nations, and then the end will come.” (Matt. 24:14)

Lesson Truth: One day the Kingdom of grace will be victorious.

Lesson

One day, when Jesus was leaving the temple in Jerusalem, His disciples pointed out the temple buildings to him. The temple was magnificent, and its beauty was a matter of national pride for Jews. Jesus’ response must have shocked them. He said that there would come a day when every stone of the temple would be knocked to the ground. When Jesus reached the Mount of Olives, His disciples asked Him when this destruction would happen. They thought that when the temple was destroyed, the Kingdom of Jesus Christ would come in all its glory. The coming of the Kingdom would mean the end of the age. What they did not realize was that a very long span of time would take place between the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem and the end of the age. The temple would be destroyed because the Jews of Jesus’ day did not accept the Lord’s Kingdom of grace. In the same way, the world will be destroyed because it will reject the gospel. But before the world is destroyed, the gospel must be “preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations” (Matt. 24:14).

Even though the gospel will be preached to all nations, not everyone will believe it. Jesus said that false prophets will lead many astray from the truth. Jesus warned us that some false prophets will say, “Look, here is the Christ!” or “There!” (Matt. 24:23). Jesus said we should not believe them because when Christ does return, everyone will know immediately that the real Christ has come. Jesus said that as the world rejects Christ’s Kingdom of grace, many bad things will happen. Nations will fight against other nations. There will be wars and rumors of wars. Peace will not be possible in a world that rejects the Kingdom of grace. The creation itself will groan and struggle. People will live in terror because of earthquakes and pandemics.

But all this trouble will only be the beginning. The world will become more hostile to Christians. The church will suffer persecution. Many church members will buckle under the pressure and even betray their fellow church members. Wickedness in the world will multiply, and believers will struggle against it. When God created the world, He gave mankind a command. We are to fill the earth and subdue it as image-bearers of Him. But in an increasingly wicked world, it will be difficult for believers to be part of the world’s sinful culture. Believers will be forced to withdraw from it.

When Jesus foretold the destruction of Jerusalem, He said that when the Roman army invaded, the Jews should not take up arms against it. Rather they should flee. It would be a terrible time of tribulation and would only be shortened for the sake of the elect. In the same way, believers at the end of the age will suffer great tribulation. It will be extremely oppressive, especially for believers and their children. They will not be able to function in a world that is choked by sin. But then, Christ will come. And He will come to judge the nations and gather His elect from all over the world.

Believers are called to look for the signs of Christ’s coming. Just like we know that spring is coming when we see leaves start to come on the trees, so we can see the signs that Christ’s Kingdom is coming. People in the world will be surprised at Christ’s coming. For them, it will be like the days of Noah, when people were “eating

Lesson 10

The Victory over Satan

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

Scripture: Revelation 12

Memory Verse: “And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.” (Rev. 12:17)

Lesson Truth: Christ will conquer Satan.

Lesson

John lived longer than any of the other apostles. Toward the end of his life he settled in Ephesus, and provided leadership for that congregation after Paul was martyred in Rome. But even though John lived into old age, he did not escape persecution. The Roman government sent him into exile on the island of Patmos. It was on this island that Jesus Christ came to John in a series of visions. He told John to “Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this” (Rev. 1:19).

The visions John saw were something like our dreams. When we dream, we can sometimes see strange and confusing things. When we read John’s visions in Revelation, they also can seem strange and confusing to us. But these visions were part of what Jesus Christ wanted to reveal to His Church. John wrote them down for our benefit, and so it is so important that we try to understand them.

Our passage today describes one of John’s visions. At the beginning of the vision, John portrayed a woman who was “clothed with the sun” (Rev. 12:1). In other words, God had granted her all the glory that we usually associate with the sun. This woman was also pregnant and was about to give birth. John also saw a fiery, red dragon, who wanted to take the baby from the woman as soon as it was born. He wanted to destroy the baby, but he was not able to do so. As soon as the baby was born, it was “taken up to God and His throne” (Rev. 12:5). It was obvious that the dragon was hostile toward the woman.

So, what could all this mean? From the vision, it is clear that the woman represents God’s people, and the dragon represents Satan. We know from Romans 8:30 that “whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.” In the vision, the glory that God’s people receive is represented by the woman being clothed with the sun. The dragon wanted to take that glory away from God’s people. He wanted to destroy the relationship between God and His people. He has always wanted to break our relationship with God.

When Adam and Eve sinned, Satan thought he had won the victory. But God would not let that happen. After Adam and Eve sinned, God came looking for them in the Garden. He told them there would be consequences for their sin. He also cursed the serpent who tempted them. God told the serpent, “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel” (Gen. 3:15). In other words, Adam and Eve tried to break their relationship with God and start a relationship with Satan. But God said that there would always be enmity, or conflict, between those who follow Satan (Satan’s seed) and those who follow Christ (the woman’s seed).

In the vision in Revelation 12, the baby represents Jesus Christ. The anger of the dragon was first directed toward Christ. The dragon knew that without Christ, God’s people would not survive. Satan also knew that if the baby survived, He would bring judgment on the nations and anyone who rejected a relationship with Jesus Christ. Satan wanted the whole world to be enslaved to himself.

Lesson 11

The Victory over the Beast

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

Scripture: Revelation 19:11-21

Memory Verse: “Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image.” (Rev. 19:20)

Lesson Truth: The One called Faithful and True shall conquer the beast out of the sea.

Lesson

In our last lesson, we looked at John’s vision in Revelation 12, where God’s people, represented by a woman, were pursued by Satan, represented by a great, fiery, red dragon. We saw that the woman gave birth to a baby boy, who represented Jesus Christ, the Seed of the woman. And we saw that the dragon pursued the woman, wanting to devour the baby. Satan was not able to destroy the baby, and in rage, he made war on the rest of the woman’s offspring. In this lesson, we will take a closer look at the war that Satan wages against the rest of the woman’s offspring, against all those “who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ” (Rev. 12:17).

Our passage today comes from Revelation 19, which describes the end of the battle between the Seed of the woman, represented by Jesus Christ and all who follow Him, and the seed of the serpent, represented by all who follow Satan. But before we discuss Revelation 19, we need to take a quick survey of John’s visions after Revelation 12. We know at the end of chapter 12, Satan waged war on the rest of the woman’s offspring. In chapter 13, we get a glimpse of what this war looks like.

Chapter 13 begins with a beast rising from the sea. Like the dragon in chapter 12, it also had seven heads and ten horns. The dragon gave this beast “his power, his throne, and great authority” (Rev. 13:2), so that he ruled over “every tribe, tongue, and nation” (Rev. 13:7). The beast caused the whole world to worship the dragon. And the beast spoke great blasphemies, words that would be greatly offensive to God. He made war with all those who still served the Lord. It shows how much the seed of the serpent seeks to overcome the seed of the woman (see Gen. 3:15).

After the beast from the sea, there arose another beast, this time from the earth. This beast only had two horns like a lamb. It did not work through force and power like the beast from the sea. Rather, it spoke with words that would deceive people. This second beast functioned like a false prophet, and the words he spoke caused the world to worship the beast from the sea. The second beast would also perform many miraculous signs that were intended to deceive people. And anyone who did not follow the beast from the earth to worship the beast from the sea would be cut off from society so that “no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name” (Rev. 13:17).

The two beasts symbolize all the powers in this world that reject Jesus Christ. They fight against Jesus and all who follow Jesus. They do not want Jesus to be king. Rather, they want to set up their own kingdoms. In that sense, they are like Babylon the Great in the Old Testament. Babylon was a world empire that sought its own glory. It ruled the world by force and deceit. 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 good news is that Babylon cannot continue forever. John saw another vision that gives us hope. In Revelation 19:11, John described heaven opened and riding from heaven was a rider on a white horse. The rider is Jesus Christ. In our passage, He is called Faithful and True. He does not do anything that isn't faithful and true. He shows grace to those who are united to Christ. But He also is righteous, and He will judge and make war against all those who follow the two beasts. He is accompanied by the armies of heaven (Rev. 19:14), who make war against the two beasts and all those who follow them. Christ, Himself, will rule with a rod of iron. When Christ returns, the time to seek forgiveness will be finished. It will be a time for judgment with a rod of iron (v. 15).

The victory of Christ and the armies in heaven is certain, because Jesus Christ is the "King of Kings and Lord of Lords" (Rev. 19:16). No one can stand against him. In the end, the beast and the false prophet will be "cast into the lake of fire burning with brimstone" (Rev. 19:20). If we are united to Christ, we can rejoice that one day Jesus will return. When that day comes, all those who oppose Jesus—all those who seem so powerful now—will be defeated. Christ will reign forever, and all His people will enjoy eternal, blessed fellowship and communion with Him. Pray that that day may come soon.

Questions

1. From where was the rider on the white horse coming? (Rev. 19:11)
2. What did the rider do in righteousness? (Rev. 19:11)
3. What was on the rider's head? What did they represent? (Rev. 19:12)
4. Who knew the name of the rider? (Rev. 19:12)

Lesson 12

The Age to Come

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

Scripture: Revelation 21–22

Memory Verse: “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last.” (Rev. 22:13)

Lesson Truth: We can look forward to a new heaven and a new earth.

Lesson

Have you ever wondered what the Age to Come will be like? We know that it will be different than what we experience now. We live between Christ’s first coming and second coming. Even though Christians are new creations in Christ, we also still must deal with sin. But when Jesus comes again, He will finally and permanently put an end to sin. The Age to Come will be a wonderful time for believers, because we will spend eternity living in the presence of Jesus. But did you know that we can already have a small foretaste of the Age to Come even now? Our lesson today talks about what we can already experience from the Age to Come and what we can look forward to in the future.

Jesus gave us a glimpse of the Age to Come already at Pentecost when He poured out His Spirit to dwell in the hearts of His people. Peter referred to the pouring out of the Holy Spirit when he quoted from the prophet Joel. He said, “And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh” (Acts 2:17a). The coming of the Spirit in the last days is something new that Jesus promised when He ascended into heaven. He said, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8). It is a wonderful promise that gives us a taste of what the Age to Come will be like. We know that in the Age to Come, we will have perfect communion with God, but even now with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, we have an intimate communion with Him. It makes us eager for Christ to come again so that we can experience that kind of communion in all its fullness. It also brings about a change in our lives right now. Christians are different than non-Christians, and the difference is that we live in the strength of the Holy Spirit as we look forward to the ultimate renewal of heaven and earth in the Age to Come.

When John was on Patmos, the Lord gave him many visions. In some visions, the Lord showed John the cosmic struggle against Satan and those who follow him. In other visions, the Lord showed John what the new heaven and the new earth will be like. In one vision, John saw a city coming down from God in heaven. It was the New Jerusalem. In this new city, there will be “no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying” (Rev. 21:4). The old creation that was so affected by sin will be gone forever. And only Christ’s bride, the New Jerusalem, will remain.

The New Jerusalem will be glorious. It will be glorious because God himself will dwell there. His glory is so great that the city will not need the sun or the moon to shine in it. God’s glory will outshine them both. The New Jerusalem will have twelve gates, with three gates on each of its four sides. In John’s vision, he saw names of the twelve tribes of Israel written on the gates. And on the foundations of the walls were written the names of the twelve apostles. Believers from both the old covenant and the new covenant will be welcomed into the city. That is as it should be since the New Jerusalem is the bride of Christ (Rev. 21:9). There will also be angels guarding the gates so that the only people who can enter the city will be the ones whose names are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life.

The walls of the city will be made of jasper and the streets will be made of gold. And from the throne of God in the city will flow a river of the water of life. On the edge of the water will be the tree of life. It will bear fruit continuously. We will serve the Lord there and will have intimate communion with Him. It will never be possible for life in this city to be disturbed or broken by sin.

When John saw these visions, the Lord sent an angel to explain the visions to John. John was so amazed at the visions that he fell down at the angel's feet and tried to worship him. The angel quickly told John to stop, since he was a fellow servant of God, and only God should be worshiped. But the angel did tell John to make the visions known so that people could be prepared for Jesus when he comes again. Jesus said He would come quickly. Do you look forward to that day? Are you ready for Him to come?

Questions

1. In John's vision, where did God dwell after the New Jerusalem descended from heaven? (Rev. 21:3)
2. How did the One who sat on the throne describe Himself? Who is the One on the throne? (Rev. 21:5-6)
3. Describe the New Jerusalem. (Rev. 21:8-21)
4. Why didn't the New Jerusalem have a temple in it? (Rev. 21:22)

