

Promise and Deliverance

Student Workbook

Volume 19

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
Exalted as King

Reference: De Graaf, *Promise and Deliverance*, Volume 4, Lesson 23

Scripture: Acts 1:4-14

Memory Verse: “And also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days.” (Joel 2:29)

Lesson Truth: Christ Jesus ascended into heaven and is now the exalted King.

Lesson

Christ Jesus is our exalted King. He became our exalted King when He ascended into heaven. Just before Jesus ascended, He reminded the disciples of the Father’s promise. The Father promised that the disciples would be baptized with the Holy Spirit. This was not what the disciples expected. They expected that God would give the kingdom back to Israel. The disciples had to learn that God is the ruler of everything. God is the only one who knows about the times and the seasons. After Jesus reminded the disciples of God’s promises, He was taken up to heaven. A cloud removed Him from their sight.

Jesus showed Himself to His disciples many times after He rose from the dead. Now forty days after he arose, He showed Himself again. This time the disciples were all together in Jerusalem. Jesus told them not to leave Jerusalem. Instead, He told them to wait for the promise of the Father. Jesus then reminded them what the Father had promised. The Father promised that they would be baptized. But this baptism would not be like John’s baptism. John the Baptist baptized people with water. But the Father promised that the disciples would be baptized with the Holy Spirit. The disciples had to wait at Jerusalem for this baptism.

Sadly, the disciples did not understand what this baptism would mean. Do you know what they asked Jesus? They asked if this was the time that He would give His kingdom back to Israel. Jesus told the disciples that only the Father knows the times and the seasons. He is the ruler of the times and seasons. But the disciples would learn the truth about God’s Kingdom. They would learn this truth when they were baptized with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit would fill them with His power. Then they would understand that God’s Kingdom is in men’s hearts. If the disciples learned the truth about God’s Kingdom something wonderful would happen.

Do you know what that wonderful thing would be? The disciples would become witnesses. They would understand that God's Kingdom is spiritual. Then they would know that their work was to tell others about Jesus. They would be His witnesses first of all in Jerusalem. Then they would go on to Judea and Samaria. In time they would tell the whole world that Jesus arose from the dead.

The Lord and His disciples were walking to Mount Olivet as they talked. Then Jesus was taken up to heaven. The angels in heaven welcomed Jesus with a shout. At that moment Jesus took His place at God's right hand. He became the exalted King. Then an amazing change took place in the hearts of the disciples. This change took place when a cloud hid Jesus from their sight. Now they could no longer see Jesus. So, they had to live by faith instead of by sight. The disciples had to remember and believe the words of Jesus. You and I must also live by faith. We must believe the words of Jesus.

The disciples continued to look up to heaven. They looked up even though they could not see Jesus. Then two men in white garments stood by them. Very likely they were angels. These angels gave the disciples a word of assurance. They told them that Jesus, who was taken up to heaven, would return. They said that Jesus is coming back the same way He went up to heaven. Now it was possible for the disciples to go back to Jerusalem with joy. In Jerusalem the disciples gathered along with some women for prayer. They prayed as they waited for the baptism of the Holy Spirit. By faith they began to understand that God's Kingdom lives in men's hearts. They knew that Jesus is the exalted King of that Kingdom. Do you know Jesus as the exalted King? Are you ready to be His witness to the whole world?

Questions

Fill in the blanks.

1. "And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from _____ but to wait for the Promise of the Father, which He said, 'You have heard from Me.'" (Acts 1:4)
2. "For _____ truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." (Acts 1:5)
3. "Therefore, when they had come together. They asked him, saying, '_____ will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?'" (Acts 1:6)

4. “And He said to them. ‘It is not for you to know the times or _____ which the Father has put in His own authority.’” (Acts.1: 7)

5. “But you shall receive _____ 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)

6. “Men of _____ why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.” (Acts 1:11)

Lesson 2

The Organization of the Church

Reference: De Graaf, *Promise and Deliverance*, Volume 4, Lesson 24

Scripture: Acts 1:15-26

Memory Verse: “Let his days be few, and let another take his office.” (Psalm 109:8)

Lesson Truth: The church must be organized according to God’s Word. The Holy Spirit guides the church in this organization.

Lesson

What does it mean to organize? What is the organization of the church? It means to arrange the parts of the church. The leaders of the church are one of its parts. In this lesson, we will learn of the apostles as leaders. The apostle Judas fell away when he betrayed Jesus. He later hanged himself. This meant that there was one apostle missing to do the Lord’s work. We will learn how the church chose another apostle to take his place. The choosing of this apostle was organizing the church.

Before Jesus ascended into heaven He made a promise. He promised His disciples that He would send the Holy Spirit upon them. The disciples were together in Jerusalem. They were waiting for the Holy Spirit to come. The disciples believed that Jesus’ promise would come true. As they waited, Peter stood up to talk. He reminded the disciples that they were missing one apostle. They were missing Judas. Peter said that the Bible foretold that Judas would fall away. The Bible also told them what they should do. The Bible said they should find another to take his office. This was the way they had to organize the church.

Who would the disciples find to take Judas’ place? They wanted a man who really knew Jesus. They thought it should be a man who had been with Jesus. They wanted a man who had been with Jesus all through His ministry. He had to be someone who had been at the Lord’s baptism. The new apostle had to be someone who heard Jesus teach. He had to be a man who knew that Jesus was taken up to heaven. When the disciples looked for such a man, they found two of them. They were Joseph, whose surname was Justus, and Matthias. Why did the disciples want a man who knew Jesus so well? He had to know Jesus because he had to tell others the truth about Jesus. That was the task of an apostle. That was the task that Judas fell away from. When Judas fell away, he broke the line of authority in the church. This line of authority had to be restored. Thankfully God’s Word told the disciples how to restore it.

The disciples knew that Joseph and Matthias were both qualified to be apostles. But which one had the Lord chosen? To find out whom the Lord had chosen the disciples prayed. They confessed that the Lord knows the hearts of all men. They asked the Lord to show them which one He had chosen. Was it Joseph or was it Matthias? In the church organization today, we must also ask the Lord to guide us. We ask Him to show us the men He has chosen. These are the kind of men that must lead the church. They must be the kind of men who can tell the truth about Jesus.

The disciples not only prayed, but they also cast lots. Casting lots was a way of deciding between the two. The disciples asked the Lord to direct the lot to the man of His choosing. The lot pointed to Matthias. So, Matthias was ordained to be an apostle. He was chosen by the Lord and by the disciples to take Judas' place.

This is a beautiful story because it tells of the church doing the right thing. They followed the teaching of God's Word. And they asked for the guidance of the Holy Spirit. This is an example for the church today. The church must be organized according to God's Word. It must also pray for the working of the Holy Spirit. In this way the church can honor God's name.

Questions

Fill in the blanks.

1. "And in those days _____ stood up in the midst of the disciples (altogether the number of names was about a hundred and twenty)...." (Acts 1:15)
2. "Men and brethren, this _____ had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke before by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus." (Acts 1:16)
3. "For it is written in the book of _____: 'Let his dwelling place be desolate, and let no one live in it; and let another take his office.'" (Acts 1:20)

4. “Therefore, of these men who have accompanied us all the time that the _____ went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John to that day when He was taken up from us, one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection.” (Acts 1:21-22)

5. “And they prayed and said, ‘You, O Lord, who know the _____ of all, show which of these You have chosen.’” (Acts 1:24)

6. “And they cast their lots and the lot fell on _____. And He was numbered with the eleven apostles.” (Acts 1:26)

The Spirit of Communion

Reference: De Graaf, *Promise and Deliverance*, Volume 4, Lesson 25

Scripture: Acts 2

Memory Verse: “And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.” (Acts 2:4)

Lesson Truth: The Holy Spirit was poured out on the disciples at Pentecost. This filled them with God’s love.

Lesson

The day of Pentecost had come. The Lord’s disciples were waiting in Jerusalem for the promised Holy Spirit. Amidst signs from heaven, the Holy Spirit came upon them. The crowds were surprised to hear the disciples speak, each in their own language. Yet this was the event that the prophet said would usher in the last days. The apostle Peter declared that the same Jesus who was crucified brought the Spirit of life. This caused some to believe. As the number of believers grew, they formed a new fellowship. In this fellowship the believers shared everything.

It was ten days after the Lord ascended into heaven. It was the day of Pentecost. Pentecost was also known as the Feast of Weeks. The Lord’s disciples were all together in Jerusalem. They were still waiting for the Holy Spirit that the Lord had promised. Many other religious Jews were also in Jerusalem for the feast. The disciples wondered if the Holy Spirit would come soon. They wondered if the Law and the covenant made at Mount Sinai would be replaced. Would a new covenant be made that would include people from every nation? The disciples were expecting something.

And then it happened! Suddenly, they heard the sound of a mighty rushing wind. It filled the house where they were sitting. At the same time, they saw tongues of fire. This fire rested on each of them. Then, even more amazing, the disciples began to speak. Each one was speaking a different language. The crowds of people in Jerusalem for Pentecost were astonished. They had come from many different countries. Yet each one heard the disciples speak in their own language. The people did not realize that the Holy Spirit had come upon the disciples. Many of them wanted to know what this really meant. Others mocked the disciples and said they were drunk.

The apostle Peter then stood up to talk to the people. He told them what had happened to the disciples. He knew what had happened because he remembered that the Bible talked about this event. Years before, the prophet Joel said this would happen. He said, “And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh” (Joel 2:28). That is what the crowds saw. They saw the Holy Spirit poured out on the disciples. But the Holy Spirit was for all flesh. This meant that people of every nation could receive the Holy Spirit. This also meant that these were the last days. The Holy Spirit would be poured out in the last days. Now is the time that people from every nation may pray for the Holy Spirit to fill them. Have you prayed for the Holy Spirit to fill your life?

Peter also told the crowd that it was Christ Jesus who poured out His Spirit. This was the same Jesus that had been crucified by lawless hands. It was the same Jesus that, God knew, had to die for the sins of His people. It was the same Jesus that God raised from the dead. And it was the same Jesus that David foretold would sit at God’s right hand in heaven. Then many people felt sorry for their sins. They asked Peter and the others what they should do. Peter answered them that they should repent. If they repented, they could be baptized in the name of Christ Jesus. Do you know what happened? Three thousand souls repented of their sins. And three thousand souls were added to the church.

These three thousand souls joined the other believers. This made a new fellowship of believers. They followed the apostles’ teaching. They prayed together and ate together. The believers in this new fellowship cared for each other. They cared for each other so much that they shared everything. They sold their possessions and gave to anyone who had a need. From this communion of believers, the church grew. The Holy Spirit was poured out on all flesh. So, the church includes believers from every nation and tribe and tongue. Today we too can rejoice in the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Questions

Fill in the blanks.

1. “When the Day of _____ had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.” (Acts 2:1)
2. “And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty _____ and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.” (Acts 2:2)

3. “And they were all filled with the _____ and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” (Acts 2:4)
4. “For these are not _____ as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel.” (Acts 2:15-16)
5. “And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of _____ on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophecy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams.” (Acts 2:17)
6. “Then _____ said to them, ‘Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’” (Acts 2:38)

Lesson 4

Revealed to Jerusalem

Reference: De Graaf, *Promise and Deliverance*, Volume 4, Lesson 26

Scripture: Acts 3:1–4:31

Memory Verse: “Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name given among men by which we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12)

Lesson Truth: The living Lord Jesus was made known to Jerusalem in the healing of a lame man.

Lesson

God used the healing of a lame man to make Jesus known in Jerusalem. Peter declared the power of the risen Lord when the lame man was healed. He declared that the Lord arose just as the Scriptures said He would. The healing of the lame man in Jesus’ name brought conflict with the Jewish leaders. The disciples were given the power of the Holy Spirit to answer this conflict. When they were filled with the Holy Spirit, they were able to speak the word of God. They spoke the word of God with boldness.

Before Jesus was taken up to heaven, He told His disciples that they would be His witnesses. He said they would witness to Jerusalem. They would also witness to Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth. Witnessing began on the day of Pentecost. Three thousand people became believers on that day. Soon after Pentecost, the disciples witnessed to Jerusalem. This is what happened.

Peter and John went to the temple to pray. They entered the temple through the gate called Beautiful. Sitting at this gate was a lame man. He begged for alms. This lame man begged at the gate for years. When he saw Peter and John, he asked them for money. Then an amazing thing happened. Peter told him that he did not have either silver or gold. But he said that he would give him something much greater than gold. Peter then told this lame man that in the name of the risen Jesus he could walk. This man had been lame since he was born. Peter took him by the hand and helped him stand up. The man then went leaping and walking into the temple. He praised God for the miracle of healing.

Some of the people thought that Peter and John had the power to perform miracles. But Peter told them that they did not have the power to heal. He said that the man was healed in the name of Jesus. He was healed in the name of Jesus who was promised to

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He was healed in the name of Jesus who had been crucified and who rose from the dead.

The Jewish leaders became upset when they heard Peter. They did not want anyone to believe that Jesus rose from the dead. So, they arrested Peter and John and put them in jail. The next day the leaders brought the disciples out of jail and asked them questions. They asked by whose name and by what power they had made the lame man walk. This question made it possible for Peter to witness for Jesus. He was filled with the Holy Spirit. So, Peter spoke to the rulers of Israel with boldness. He told them that the man was healed by the power of Jesus name. In the name of Jesus whom the Jews had crucified, the man was made whole. Now the rulers of the people did not know what to do. They could not deny that the lame man was healed. Do you know what they decided to do? They decided to threaten Peter and John. They told them that they might not speak or teach in Jesus' name. So, Peter asked the rulers if it was right to obey them rather than to obey God. He told them that they had to speak about the things they had seen and heard. They had to speak about the risen Lord Jesus. Still, the rulers allowed Peter and John to go because they were afraid of the people. The people glorified God because of this miracle.

After Peter and John were set free, they found the other believers. They told them what had happened. The believers then raised their voice in prayer. They confessed that the Lord was the God who made heaven and earth. He was the Lord who spoke through David. The believers asked almighty God to make the disciples bold. They asked God to make them bold to speak the name of Jesus. They prayed that God would turn away the threats of the rulers. Then an amazing thing happened. God answered their prayer. Almighty God shook the place where they were staying. God also filled the believers with His Holy Spirit. The disciples now spoke the name of Jesus. That is how Christ Jesus was made known to Jerusalem. He is the living Lord Jesus.

Questions

Fill in the blanks.

1. "Now Peter and _____ went up together to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour." (Acts 3:1)
2. "And a certain man _____ from his mother's womb was carried, who they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms from those who entered the temple." (Acts 3:2)

3. “Then _____ said, ‘Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.’” (Acts. 3:6)

4. “So he, _____ up, stood and walked and entered the temple with them – walking, leaping, and praising God.” (Acts 3:8)

5. “Let it be known to you all, and to all the people of _____, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands before you whole.” (Acts 4:10)

6. “But _____ and John answered and said to them, ‘Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than God, you judge. For we cannot but speak the things we have seen and heard.’” (Acts 4:19-20)

A Holy Fellowship

Reference: De Graaf, *Promise and Deliverance*, Volume 4, Lesson 27

Scripture: Acts 4:32–5:11

Memory Verse: “But Peter said, ‘Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself.’” (Acts 5:3)

Lesson Truth:

The Holy Spirit worked in the hearts of believers in Jerusalem. These believers formed a holy fellowship.

Lesson

What is a holy fellowship? It is a group of believers guided by the Holy Spirit! The fellowship in Jerusalem was so close that they shared all their possessions. Sadly, one couple wanted the praise of this fellowship, without fully sharing. They received the quick and awful discipline of the Holy Spirit.

At this time there were five thousand believers in Jerusalem. The apostles led this group to become a true unity. The members of the group loved one another. They cared for one another in a special way. By faith they knew that they were one body. Because of this, they shared everything. These believers shared not only spiritual things, but also their material things. Some of them sold their land or houses and shared the money with the others.

Why did they do this? They did it because they had become new people in Jesus. They were so thankful that Jesus rose from the dead that they wanted to show their thanks. The apostles told them about the power of the Lord rising from the dead. Because of this power, these believers became a holy fellowship. It was a holy fellowship because the Holy Spirit lived in their hearts.

Possibly the first man to show his thanksgiving in a special way was Joses or Joseph. He sold his land and brought the money to the apostles. The apostles used this money to help others. Joseph was so generous that the apostles gave him a new name. They called him Barnabas, which means Son of Encouragement. Many others followed Joseph’s example. They also sold land and brought the money to the apostles. That was the way the people cared for one another. This was a holy fellowship.

Sadly, Ananias and Sapphira did not have the Holy Spirit in their hearts. They wanted the honor that was given to Barnabas, but they didn't want to give all their money. This couple thought they could deceive the apostles. They decided to sell some land and keep part of the money. They would tell the apostles that the price of the land was less than they received. This way it would look like they were generous like Barnabas. At the same time, they would have some money for themselves.

The Holy Spirit told Peter what Ananias and Sapphira had done. When Ananias brought the money to the apostles, Peter asked him a question. He asked why he allowed Satan to fill his heart. Why did he lie to the Holy Spirit? Peter told him that he didn't need sell the land for the fellowship. Nor did he have to bring the money after he sold the land. It belonged to him. What he could not do was to deceive and lie. When Ananias heard Peter, a frightening thing happened. He fell down and died. Some young men came and took his body away. This brought fear on the people of this holy fellowship.

But the discipline of the Holy Spirit wasn't finished. A few hours later Sapphira came to the apostles. Peter asked her about the price of the land they sold. He asked her about the money that Ananias brought to the apostles. Sadly, Sapphira told the same lie as her husband. Peter then asked her; "How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord?" (Acts 5:9). He then said that the young men that carried her husband's body out, would also carry out her body. Then Sapphira fell down and died.

Now the believers in Jerusalem knew that their fellowship was holy. It would not work to pretend. It would not work to lie and deceive. The Lord's grace stopped this unbelief in His fellowship. Now the believers could talk about Jesus through the whole world. God would gather His people from every nation starting with Israel.

Questions

Fill in the blanks.

1. "And with great _____ the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all." (Acts 4:33)
2. "Nor was there anyone among them who _____; for all who were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold." (Acts 4:34)

3. “But a certain man named _____, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession. (Acts 5:1)

4. “And he kept back part of the _____, his wife also being aware of it, and brought a certain part and laid it at the apostles’ feet.” (Acts 5:2)

5. “But Peter said, ‘Ananias why has _____ filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself?’” (Acts 5:3)

6. “While it remained was it not your own? And after it was _____, was it not in your control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God.” (Acts 5:4)

Jerusalem Filled with His Name

Reference: De Graaf, *Promise and Deliverance*, Volume 4, Lesson 28

Scripture: Acts 5:12–6:7

Memory Verse: “And we are witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him.” (Acts 5:32)

Lesson Truth: The Holy Spirit filled the hearts of the apostles. This caused Jerusalem to be filled with Jesus’ name.

Lesson

The Jewish leaders wanted to do away with the name of Jesus. Instead, the Holy Spirit filled the hearts of the apostles to speak the Lord’s name. This caused the fellowship of believers to grow. Jerusalem became filled with the name of Jesus. This made the Jewish leaders angry. They were so angry that they arrested the apostles. But the work of the Holy Spirit could not be stopped. An angel of the Lord set the apostles free to continue to witness. Even a plot to kill the apostles could not stop the work of the Holy Spirit. One of the Jewish leaders appealed to God’s secret counsel, and the apostles were spared. He did this despite his unbelief. The apostles were beaten but rejoiced that they were worthy to suffer for the Lord.

The holy fellowship in Jerusalem grew and grew. Even after Ananias and Sapphira died because of their lie, the fellowship grew. The apostles were teaching the name of Jesus in Jerusalem. They were also healing sick and tormented people. Now believers from other towns brought their sick to the apostles to be healed. There were so many that they could not get to Peter. Do you know what they did? They tried to find a place in Peter’s shadow to put their sick. These people believed that Peter could bring God’s grace. They believed that he was filled with the Holy Spirit. All the teaching and healing that the apostles were doing made the fellowship of believers grow even more. This made the Jewish leaders very upset and angry.

They were so upset about this growth of believers that they put the apostles in jail. These Jewish leaders did not understand that they could not stop the work of God. The very night that the apostles were put into jail the Lord sent His angel to deliver them. The angel told them to stand in the temple and teach the name of Jesus. The next morning the Jewish leaders called a meeting. They sent for the apostles from jail.

Imagine their surprise when they learned that the apostles were no longer in jail. They were told that they were in the temple teaching.

The Jewish leaders then quietly brought the apostles to their meeting. They reminded them that they were told not to teach in Jesus' name. But Peter talked for the apostles and said that they would obey God rather than men. He also told them about Jesus whom the leaders had crucified. This Jesus is now in heaven at God's right hand. He is the Savior who could forgive their sins. Peter told the leaders that God gave them His Holy Spirit. He said that God gives His Spirit to those who obey.

Peter's speech made the leaders angry. Now they decided they should kill the apostles. But one of the leaders said they should be careful. This leader was a man named Gamaliel. Gamaliel told the other leaders that if the apostles' teaching was from men, it would die out. But he said if their teaching was from God, they could not destroy it. How foolish it was for Gamaliel to say that. If the apostle's teaching was from God, he should have listened to them. If their teaching was from men, he should have stopped them. The leaders listened to Gamaliel and did not kill the apostles. Instead, they beat them and forbid them to teach in Jesus name. Yet the apostles continued to teach at the temple. They told about Jesus rising from the dead and going to heaven.

The apostles' teaching made the fellowship of believers grow even more. Then some believers told the apostles about the widows. The other believers were not caring for the widows. The apostles then asked them to find seven honest men who could care for the poor and the widows. The believers found these honest men. This made it possible for the apostles to continue to teach about Jesus. It happened just as the Jewish leaders complained about. Jerusalem was filled with the name of Jesus!

Questions

Fill in the blanks.

1. "Also a multitude gathered from the surrounding cities to _____ bringing sick people and those who were tormented by unclean spirits, and they were healed. (Acts 5:16)
2. "Then the _____ rose up, and those who were with him, and they were filled with indignation, and laid their hands on the apostles and put them in the common prison." (Acts 5:17-18)

3. “But at night an _____ of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out, and said, ‘Go stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this life.’” (Acts 5:19-20)

4. “And the _____ _____ asked them saying, ‘Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name?’” (Acts 5:27b –28a)

5. But _____ and the other apostles answered and said: ‘We ought to obey God rather than men.’” (Acts 5:29)

6. “And now I say to you keep away from these _____ and let them alone; for if this plan or this work is of men it will come to nothing; but if it is of God, you cannot overthrow it—lest you be found to fight against God.” (Acts 5:38-39)

Lesson 7

In Newness of the Spirit

Reference: De Graaf, *Promise and Deliverance*, Volume 4, Lesson 29

Scripture: Acts 6:8–8:4

Memory Verse: “Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, ‘Lord do not charge them with this sin.’ And when he had said this, he fell asleep.” (Acts 7:60)

Lesson Truth: The fellowship of believers felt the glory of serving God with a renewed spirit.

Lesson

The fellowship of believers was working with a new spirit. The apostles had been set free. The believers had found faithful men to help the widows. One of these faithful men was Stephen. Today we will learn about Stephen’s trouble with zealous Jews. He showed how history pointed to the truth of his teaching. The zealous Jews put Stephen to death. Yet his death was a victory. Following Stephen’s death, the believers were forced to scatter because they were persecuted. This was the Lord’s way to spread the gospel.

The Holy Spirit caused the number of believers in Jerusalem to grow. It grew so much that faithful men were asked to help the apostles. These faithful men helped the poor and the widows. One of these faithful men was Stephen. He was full of faith and power. He was able to do signs and wonders among the people. But some zealous Jews argued with Stephen. They said that he spoke evil about God and sacred things. Still, these men could not argue against Stephen’s wisdom. They saw that he spoke with a heart of love. Yet they wanted to hurt Stephen. Do you know what they did? They forced men to lie about him. These men said that Stephen spoke evil about the temple and the Law. They claimed that he said Jesus would destroy the temple. And also that Jesus would change the teaching of Moses. An amazing thing happened. When these men talked to Stephen, his face looked like the face of an angel.

Now the high priest asked Stephen if the things his accusers said were true. Stephen answered with a long answer. He reminded the high priest and the council of Israel’s history. He reminded them how God called Abraham to go to the Promised Land. God told Abraham that his children would be a chosen people. These chosen people were brought to Egypt. Moses led these chosen people from Egypt. Stephen reminded them that Moses said God would send the Messiah. All this time God showed that He would

live with His people. He showed this by having them build a tabernacle. The tabernacle was the place that God met with His people. Stephen reminded them that David asked God if he could build a temple to replace the tabernacle. The temple would be the place for God to meet with His people. David got things ready, but it was Solomon who built this temple.

And then something very sad happened. The people thought that God was limited to stay in the temple. Stephen reminded them that God the Most High is much greater than a temple. He cannot be kept in a place made by hands. He reminded them of what Isaiah the prophet said. Isaiah spoke words that came from the Lord when he said, “Heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool. Where is the house that you will build for Me? And where is the place of My rest?” (Isaiah 66:1).

Yet the people rejected the Lord who was much greater than the temple. Stephen reminded them that they rejected the prophets who said the Lord would come. He then told the truth about the Lord’s death. He said that God’s chosen people were the ones who betrayed Him. They were the ones who put Him to death on the cross. They were the ones who were given the Law, but they did not keep it.

This made the zealous Jews very angry. They gnashed their teeth at Stephen. They threw him out of the city and began to stone him. While the people threw stones at Stephen he gazed into heaven. He saw the glory of God. He also saw Jesus standing at God’s right hand. Stephen then prayed that God would take his spirit. He also prayed that God would not charge the people with this sin. This was the sin of killing Stephen with stones. Then Stephen died, but his death was a victory. It was a victory because his spirit (soul) went to be with Jesus in heaven.

The people who stoned Stephen laid their clothes at a young man’s feet. This young man was Saul of Tarsus. Saul did not like the believers. He dragged many believers from their homes. Saul had many of the believers put in prison. Why did God allow the believers to be persecuted? God allowed this persecution so the believers would scatter. In this way, they went to many different places. Everywhere they went they spoke about Jesus. It was sad that the believers were persecuted. But it was wonderful that they spread the news about the Lord Jesus.

Questions

Fill in the blanks.

1. “And _____, full of faith and power, did great wonders and signs among the people.” (Acts 6:8)

2. “Then they secretly induced _____ to say, ‘We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God.’” (Acts 6:11)

3. “However the Most High does not dwell in _____ made with hands, as the prophet says....” (Acts 7:48)

4. “Heaven is My _____ and the earth is My footstool. What house will they build for Me? says the Lord, or what is the place of My rest?” (Acts 7:49)

5. “And they stoned _____ as he was calling on God and saying, ‘Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.’” (Acts 7:59)

6. “Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, ‘_____, do not charge them with this sin.’ And when he had said this, he fell asleep.” (Acts 7:60)

Victory over Magic

Reference: De Graaf, *Promise and Deliverance*, Volume 4, Lesson 30

Scripture: Acts 8:5-25

Memory Verse: “Repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you.” (Acts 8:22)

Lesson Truth: The Word of the Holy Spirit delivered the believers in Samaria from the magic of Simon.

Lesson

Our story today is about the power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit saved the believers in Samaria from the evils of magic. They were saved when they believed the gospel of Jesus Christ that Philip preached. The believers in Samaria were also given the Holy Spirit. The apostles Peter and John laid their hands on the believers giving them the Holy Spirit. This made the people of Samaria part of the body of believers in the world. The apostles also urged Simon the magician to repent because his heart was not right with God.

Hurting the followers of Jesus was a bad thing. Still, because the believers were being hurt in Jerusalem, something wonderful happened in Samaria. Many of the believers left Jerusalem and went to other cities. Philip was a believer who left Jerusalem to go to Samaria. In Samaria he preached the gospel of Jesus Christ. Many of the people in Samaria believed the good news about Jesus. They saw that Philip cast out evil spirits and healed many sick people. God’s grace caused the people in Samaria to be filled with joy to hear the gospel.

Do you know why it was a surprise that the people believed Philip’s message? It was a surprise because these people had been following a man who did magic things. This man was Simon. He said that he was someone great. The people believed that Simon could work God’s power by magic. But no one can work God’s power with magic. God is all-powerful. Only the Holy Spirit can cause the people to believe in Jesus. That is what the Holy Spirit did when Philip preached in Samaria. He helped the people to believe. Because the people believed, many men and women were baptized. The sign of baptism showed that the people no longer believed in Simon’s magic. Now they believed in Jesus as their Redeemer. Even Simon believed and was baptized. Still later,

Peter said that Simon's heart was not right with God. He had to tell Simon to repent and ask to be forgiven.

Soon the apostles in Jerusalem heard about the people in Samaria. They heard that they believed the gospel that Philip preached. They also heard that many people in Samaria were baptized. The apostles decided to send Peter and John to Samaria. Peter and John would pray with these new believers. They would pray that these believers would also be filled with the Holy Spirit. Peter and John prayed for the Holy Spirit to come into the believer's hearts. They also laid their hands on the believers. When they laid their hands on the believers the Holy Spirit filled their hearts. Now the people in Samaria were set free from Simon's magic. They no longer had to believe in Simon's charms.

Then a sad thing happened. Simon thought that he could buy the power of the Holy Spirit. He wanted to give the apostles money for this power. Peter then told Simon that his money should perish with him. He said that Simon did not have any part of the Holy Spirit. Why was he without the Holy Spirit? He was without because he thought that the gift of the Holy Spirit could be bought.

Peter told Simon to repent of his wickedness. He told him to ask God for forgiveness. Simon then asked the apostles to pray for him. He did not want God's judgment to fall on him. The apostles showed that they honored Philip's preaching. Then they went back to Jerusalem. As they went back, they stopped in other Samaritan villages and told about Jesus. Isn't that a wonderful story? It is a story about the Holy Spirit winning the victory over magic.

Questions

Fill in the blanks.

1. "Then _____ went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ to them." (Acts 8:5)
2. "And the _____ with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did." (Acts 8:6)
3. "But there was a certain man called _____, who previously practiced sorcery in the city and astonished the people of Samaria claiming that he was someone great." (Acts 8:9)

4. “But when they believed _____ as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized.” (Acts 8:12)

5. “Now when the _____ who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them.” (Acts 8:14)

6. “But _____ said to him, ‘Your money perish with you, because you thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money!’” (Acts 8:20)

The Way to the Gentiles

Reference: De Graaf, *Promise and Deliverance*, Volume 4, Lesson 31

Scripture: Acts 8:26-40

Memory Verse: “And he answered and said, ‘I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.’” (Acts 8:37b)

Lesson Truth: The work of the Holy Spirit brought Jews and Gentiles together in the covenant. Believers from every nation are now one in Christ Jesus.

Lesson

This story from Acts 8 tells how God included Gentiles in His covenant. God sent Philip to a man from Ethiopia to tell him about Jesus. Philip baptized the Ethiopian eunuch in the name of Jesus. Now we know that both Jews and Gentiles are included in God’s covenant.

Philip was the deacon that preached in Samaria. He told the people in Samaria about the Lord Jesus. A great number of the Samaritans believed Philip’s message. They were baptized in the name of Jesus. Now an angel of the Lord appeared to Philip. The angel told him to go to the road that ran from Jerusalem to Gaza. The Holy Spirit was going to use Philip to tell the Gentiles about Jesus.

Philip was a servant of the Lord. He knew that a true servant of the Lord is ready to obey what the Lord commands. So he went to the road that led to Gaza. On the road Philip saw a chariot of an Ethiopian official. The Holy Spirit told Philip to go near that chariot. When Philip came near the chariot, he heard the official reading from the prophecy of Isaiah. He read these words: “He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and as a lamb before its shearer is silent, so He opened not his mouth. In His humiliation His justice was taken away, and who will declare His generation? For His life is taken from the earth” (Acts 8:32-33).

Philip asked the official if he understood what he was reading. The official answered, “How can I, unless someone guides me?” (Acts 8:31). He then asked if the prophet Isaiah was talking about himself. Or was Isaiah talking about some other person? Philip knew the answers to the official’s questions. So, he told him about Jesus. He began the story about Jesus with Isaiah’s prophecy. Now the Ethiopian official knew about the Redeemer. Do you know what he wanted to do? He wanted to be baptized. He asked

Philip if he could be baptized in Jesus' name. Philip said that he could if he really believed with all his heart. Then this official gave a wonderful confession of his faith. He said to Philip, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God" (Acts 8:37).

The official commanded his chariot driver to stop at a pool of water. Then he went into the water with Philip and was baptized. He was baptized in the name of Jesus the Redeemer. Right after the official was baptized, the Spirit of the Lord took Philip away. The official did not see him again. But he wasn't sad. He went on his way rejoicing. The official rejoiced because he knew that Jesus was his Redeemer. This was the way that the Holy Spirit brought a Gentile into God's covenant.

Why is this story so amazing? It is amazing because this showed that Gentiles were also part of God's covenant. The Holy Spirit brought the Ethiopian official to Jerusalem. The Holy Spirit brought Philip to the road from Gaza. There, Philip was able to tell the story of Jesus to this official. The Holy Spirit brought a Gentile official into God's covenant. Now we know that God's covenant includes believers from every tribe and nation.

The Ethiopian official very likely told others in Ethiopia about Jesus. Later, the believers began an active church in Ethiopia. Now we know that believers of every nation are one in Christ Jesus. The Holy Spirit brought Jews and Gentile together in the covenant.

Questions

Fill in the blanks.

1. "Now an angel of the Lord spoke to _____ saying, 'Arise and go toward the south along the road which goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.' This is desert." (Acts 8:26)
2. "So he arose and went. And behold a man of _____, a eunuch of great authority under Candace the queen of the Ethiopians, who had charge of all her treasury, and had come to Jerusalem to worship." (Acts 8:27)
3. "Then the _____ said to Philip, 'Go near and overtake this chariot.'" (Acts 8:29)

4. “So Philip ran to him, and heard him reading the prophet _____, and said, ‘Do you understand what you are reading?’” (Acts 8:30)

5. “And he said, ‘How can I unless someone _____ me?’ and he asked Philip to come up and sit with him.” (Acts 8:31)

6. “Then _____ opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him.” (Acts 8:35)

Called to Be a Bearer of the Word

Reference: De Graaf, *Promise and Deliverance*, Volume 4, Lesson 32

Scripture: Acts 9:1-30

Memory Verse: “Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?’” (Acts 9:4)

Lesson Truth: Saul was called by the Holy Spirit to bring God’s Word to the world.

Lesson

Saul of Tarsus did not like Christians. He was a Pharisee who thought he would be saved if he did good things. Saul did not believe the Christian message of grace. He wanted to stop the followers of Jesus from telling others about His grace. Still, the Lord had chosen Saul to bring His word to the world. By His grace Jesus opened Saul’s eyes to the truth of the gospel. The Lord also tested Saul to prepare him to be the Bearer of His Word.

When the Jews stoned Stephen to death, Saul of Tarsus was there. He held the clothes of the ones who stoned Stephen. Saul did not like the followers of Jesus. He did not believe their message of grace. Saul wanted to stop Christians from telling others about Jesus. Saul believed the opposite of grace. He believed that he had to be good to be saved. Yet the Lord had plans for Saul. The Lord chose him to tell others about Jesus and His grace. How could that happen since Saul did not like Christians? The Lord had to stop Saul some way. He had to change Saul’s heart.

It happened when Saul was on his way to Damascus. He asked the high priest for letters to give him permission to arrest Christians. With these letters he was on his way to find Christians. When he was near Damascus a bright light suddenly shone around him. This made Saul fall to the ground. He then heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?” Saul asked, “Who are You, Lord?” Then the Lord answered him saying, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting” (Acts 9:4-5). The Lord also said that it was hard for Saul to go against Jesus. Then a wonderful thing happened. God’s grace began to change Saul. This made Saul tremble with wonder. What was the Lord doing with him? Saul asked, “Lord what do you want me to do?” (Acts 9:6). The Lord told him to go into Damascus and to wait. He had to wait until he was told what to do. When Saul got up from the ground he could not see. His eyes were blind. So, his friends led him by the hand into Damascus.

For three days Saul could not see. He did not eat or drink during these days. All this time the Lord was working in Saul's heart. Saul had to be changed so he could do the Lord's work. In the meantime, the Lord spoke to one of his disciples in a vision. This disciple was Ananias. The Lord told Ananias to find Saul and lay his hands on him. This would bring back Saul's sight. But Ananias was afraid. He reminded the Lord that Saul did not like Christians. Saul tried to harm Christians. But the Lord told Ananias that Saul was His chosen vessel. He said that He had chosen Saul to carry His name. He would carry the Lord's name to the Gentiles, to the kings, and to the children of Israel.

Ananias obeyed the Lord and found Saul. He told Saul that it was Jesus who appeared to him on the road. He said that Jesus sent him to restore Saul's sight. Ananias also said that Saul would be filled with the Holy Spirit. As soon as he said this, scales fell from Saul's eyes. The Lord's grace had changed Saul. Now he could see with his eyes. He could also understand God's grace with his heart. So, Saul was baptized.

Now Saul told the people in the synagogues that Jesus was the Son of God. The people were amazed that Saul taught about Jesus. They remembered that he was the same Saul that tried to hurt Christians. Saul's preaching helped many others believe in Jesus. This upset the Jews in Damascus. So, they made a plan to kill Saul. But the Lord had chosen Saul to proclaim His name. He would not allow him to be killed at this time. Yet the Lord did allow him to be tested.

Some of the Lord's disciples helped him escape. They let him down over the city wall in a basket. Later the disciples in Jerusalem were afraid of Saul. They were not sure that he really changed. Only Barnabas was sure that Saul had changed. He brought him to the apostles and told them what happened to Saul. He told them how the Lord had stopped Saul on the road to Damascus. The apostles then sent Saul to Tarsus. At Tarsus Saul would become ready to preach the gospel. This is the wonderful story of the way that the Holy Spirit changed Saul. He was changed from a persecutor of God's people to a preacher of the gospel.

Questions

Fill in the blanks.

1. "Then _____, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked letters from him to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any who of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem." (Acts 9:1-2)

2. “As he journeyed he came near _____, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven.” (Acts 9:3)

3. “Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him _____, _____, why are you persecuting Me?” (Acts 9:4)

4. “And he said, ‘Who are You _____?’ Then the Lord said, ‘I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads.’” (Acts 9:5)

5. “So he trembling and astonished, said, ‘_____ what do You want me to do?’ then the Lord said to him, ‘Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.’” (Acts 9:6)

6. “And _____ went his way and entered the house; and laying his hands on him said, ‘Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.’” (Acts 9:17)

Lesson 11
Everlasting Life

Reference: De Graaf, *Promise and Deliverance*, Volume 4, Lesson 33

Scripture: Acts 9:31-43

Memory Verse: “Then the churches throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and were edified. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they were multiplied.” (Acts 9:31)

Lesson Truth: The Lord Jesus gives everlasting life through the Holy Spirit.

Lesson

The Lord Jesus Christ allowed the apostles to continue His ministry. Saul of Tarsus was stopped on the road to Damascus and became a follower of Jesus. After that the churches lived in peace. In this time of peace, the Lord gave the apostles the power to heal the sick. Peter was even given the power to raise Dorcas from the dead. These miracles showed the churches that the Lord gives everlasting life by His Spirit. Death can no longer prevail over the church of the Lord Jesus.

Saul of Tarsus was no longer persecuting the Christians. He was stopped on the road to Damascus and blinded by a bright light. The disciple Ananias laid his hands on Saul so that he could see again. He also declared that that the Lord would fill Saul with His Holy Spirit. Now the Christians in Judea, Galilee, and Samaria lived in peace. The apostles went from town to town to visit the believers. The apostle Peter went to the town named Lydda. At Lydda Peter found a believer named Aeneas. Aeneas was paralyzed. He had not been able to get out of bed for eight years. All this time Aeneas could not fellowship with the other believers. When Peter came, a wonderful thing happened.

Peter knew that the Spirit of the Lord Jesus had the power to heal people. So, he said to Aeneas, “Jesus the Christ heals you. Arise and make your bed” (Acts 9:34). Do you know what happened? Aeneas believed that Jesus could heal him. Because he believed, he stood up just as Peter had commanded. Now the people from both Lydda and Sharon knew that the Lord had the power to heal. Many of these people turned to the Lord in faith.

While Peter was at Lydda a sad thing happened at Joppa. A wonderful woman named Dorcas died. The people at Joppa were very sad that Dorcas died. The widows were

especially sad. They were sad because Dorcas did so many good things for them. She made coats and other garments for the widows. So, the widows wept when Dorcas died.

Thankfully some of the disciples heard that Peter was at Lydda. So, they sent two men to get Peter. These men asked Peter to come to Joppa right away. They heard about Aeneas being healed by a miracle. These disciples thought that Peter could probably do something for Dorcas. Peter did not wait but came immediately. When he came to Joppa the disciples brought Peter to an upper room. This was the room where they had placed Dorcas' body.

Many of the widows were standing by Dorcas' body in that upper room. They were weeping because their friend Dorcas had died. These widows showed Peter the coats and garments that Dorcas had made for them. Do you know what Peter did? He sent everyone out of the upper room. Then he got on his knees and prayed. After Peter prayed, he turned to Dorcas' body and said something amazing.

Peter said, "Tabitha (Dorcas) arise" (Acts 9:40). Can you imagine that Peter told a dead person to arise? But Peter knew that the Spirit of Jesus is greater than death. He knew that the Lord Jesus had won the victory over death. When Peter told Dorcas to arise, she opened her eyes. Then, when she saw Peter, she sat up. Peter then took her by the hand and brought her to the believers in Joppa. Now the widows could dry their tears because Dorcas was alive. The believers knew that God could do all things. By His Spirit, He not only gave new life to Dorcas, but He also gives everlasting life. Believers today also know that they have everlasting life. Because believers have everlasting life they want to live for the Lord Jesus.

Questions

Fill in the blanks.

1. "Now it came to pass, as _____ went through all parts of the country, that he also came to the saints who dwelt in Lydda." Acts 9:32)
2. "There he found a certain man named _____, who had been bedridden eight years and was paralyzed." (Acts 9:33)
3. "And Peter said to him, ' _____, Jesus the Christ heals you. Arise and make your bed.' Then he arose immediately." (Acts 9:34)

4. “At Joppa there was a certain disciple named Tabitha, which is translated _____ . This woman was full of good works and charitable deeds which she did.” (Acts 9:36)

5. “But it happened in those days that she became sick and _____ . When they had washed her, they laid her in an upper room.” (Acts 9:37)

6. “But _____ put them all out, and knelt down and prayed. And turning to the body he said, ‘Tabitha, arise.’ And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter, she sat up.” (Acts 9:40)

The Cleansing of the Gentiles

Reference: De Graaf, *Promise and Deliverance*, Volume 4, Lesson 34

Scripture: Acts 10–11

Memory Verse: “And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord.” (Acts 11:21)

Lesson Truth: The Lord Jesus cleans believers by His blood. He does this through the Holy Spirit. Believers from every nation are part of the covenant.

Lesson

What does the title of this lesson mean when it says, “The Cleansing of the Gentiles”? It means that Gentiles are made clean by the blood of Jesus. Gentiles are also part of the covenant that God made with men. This was a disturbing thought to many Jews. Jews who were circumcised did not believe that Gentiles could ever be God’s people. But God showed His love to both Jews and Gentiles. He showed the Gentile, Cornelius, that he was part of God’s covenant. God also showed Peter in a special vision that Gentiles belong to Him. God also used Peter to help the believers in Jerusalem accept Gentiles. By His grace, God caused the church to spread through the world. The first believers to be called Christians were Gentiles at Antioch

Believers from every nation are part of God’s covenant promise. In His covenant, God promised that He would be the God of everyone that believes. In our story today we learn how God showed a Gentile that he was part of the covenant promise. The Gentile was named Cornelius. He was a Roman centurion. Cornelius was a man who feared God. He and his family prayed to God always. Cornelius was generous in giving offerings to God. God sent an angel to speak to Cornelius in a vision. The angel told him to send some of his men to Joppa to Simon Peter. They were to bring Peter back with them and he would tell Cornelius what to do.

Cornelius sent some of his men to get Peter. But was Peter ready to go to the home of a Gentile? Peter believed that only Jews were God’s people. He believed that only Jews had received the sign of God’s covenant. But God would teach Peter that all believers are part of His covenant. God also spoke to Peter in a vision. In this vision Peter saw a sheet come down from heaven. In this sheet there were animals and birds and creeping things. Peter also heard a voice in this vision. The voice told him to get up and kill some of these animals to eat. But Peter did not want to do that. He said that he kept the

Jewish laws. He never ate things that were common or unclean. Then the voice told Peter that he had to change. The voice said that he could not call things common or unclean that the Lord had made clean. This was a different way to say that God chose Gentiles to be part of His covenant. Peter had to know that he might not reject anyone whom God had chosen. Even as Peter was thinking about this vision, Cornelius's men were at the door. Because of his vision, Peter was ready to go with them.

When he came to the home of Cornelius many other believers were with him. Peter told these believers that Jews were not supposed to meet with Gentiles. But he added that God had told him in a vision not to call unclean what the Lord had made clean. Cornelius then told Peter about his vision. After that Peter understood that God's people come from every nation. He then told these Gentiles the story of the Lord's suffering and death. He told them that Jesus rose from the dead and ascended into heaven. Peter reminded them that the prophets said that all who believe would have their sins forgiven. As Peter was speaking an amazing thing happened. The Holy Spirit came upon these Gentiles. They began to speak in other languages and to praise God. Then Peter said that they should be baptized. So, the Gentiles at Cornelius's home were baptized in the Lord's name.

The believers at Jerusalem heard about the Gentiles being baptized. They accused Peter of going to Gentiles and baptizing them. But God used Peter to help the believers at Jerusalem to understand. Peter told them about his vision. He told them that he could not call those unclean whom the Lord had made clean. Thankfully, the believers at Jerusalem understood at last. They said, "Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life" (Acts 11:18). After this the gospel spread to many different places. Believers who had been persecuted preached the gospel in the towns to which they fled. The believers in Jerusalem then sent Barnabas to Antioch. He later brought Saul to Antioch to help him teach the gospel. The Gentiles at Antioch were the first believers to be called Christians. This is the beautiful story of the way God cleansed the Gentiles. Now we know that believers of every nation are in God's covenant.

Questions

Fill in the blanks.

1. "There was a certain man in Caesarea called _____,
a centurion of what was called the Italian Regiment. (Acts 10:1)

2. “The Centurion was a devout man and one who feared _____ with all his household, who gave alms generously to the people, and prayed to God always.” (Acts 10:2)

3. “And a voice came to him, ‘Rise _____; kill and eat.’ But Peter said, ‘Not so Lord! For I have never eaten anything common or unclean.’” (Acts 10:13-14)

4. “And a _____ spoke to him again the second time, ‘What God has cleansed you must not call common.’” (Acts 10:15)

5. “Then _____ opened his mouth and said; ‘In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality.’” (Acts 10:34)

6. “But in every _____ whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him.” (Acts 10:35)