

Promise and Deliverance

Student Workbook

Volume 19

Level 3

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: “But you shall 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)

Lesson Truth: Christ Jesus was exalted as King when He ascended into heaven.

Lesson

The book of Acts tells the story of Christ Jesus the exalted King. He told His disciples that after He ascended into heaven, they would be given power when the Holy Spirit came upon them. With the power of the Holy Spirit, they would be His witnesses in Jerusalem and Judea, in Samaria and to the ends of the earth. The Lord told the disciples to wait in Jerusalem for the promise of the Father, which they heard from Him. This was the promise, that just as John baptized with water, so the disciples would be baptized with the Holy Spirit. The disciples still had to learn what the Kingdom of God would be like. They had to learn that only the Father has the authority to know the times and seasons of His Kingdom. And they had to learn to live by faith instead of by sight. This lesson took place when Jesus was taken up into glory and a cloud removed Him from their sight.

At the time of His ascension, Jesus shared with His disciples the promise of being baptized with the Holy Spirit. This was forty days after He rose from the dead. In these forty days Jesus appeared to His disciples many times, but He never appeared to the world. Now, as He was preparing for His ascension, He again appeared to His disciples. He told them not to leave Jerusalem but to wait for the promise they had received from the Father. This promise was that they would be baptized with the Holy Spirit just as John had baptized people with water. What a thrilling promise to be assured that they would be sanctified through the Holy Spirit. Through this sanctification of the Holy Spirit, they would die to sin in order to give themselves to the Lord.

Sadly, the disciples still did not understand the nature of God’s Kingdom. They did not understand the change that would take place in their lives through the Holy Spirit, from sight to faith. That is why they asked Jesus if He was going to restore the Kingdom to Israel at this time. Jesus had to remind them that God the Father was the only one who had authority to know the times and seasons of His Kingdom. He told the disciples that they would receive power when the Holy Spirit came upon them. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, they would be His witnesses in Jerusalem and Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. The disciples should not look for the restoration of a kingdom like David’s. Instead, they had to learn to submit to the power of the Holy Spirit in their lives. They would learn that the Kingdom of God now resides in the hearts and lives of believers and one day will be fully consummated when Jesus returns in glory.

As Jesus told the disciples about the power they would receive when the Holy Spirit came upon them, they walked to the Mount of Olives. Then in the sight of His disciples Jesus was taken up into heaven. There the angels in heaven received the exalted King. At that moment He took His place at the right

hand of God the Father. Now the Kingdom of grace would reach to all nations and tribes and tongues. By His ascension, the Lord Jesus not only inherited heaven for Himself, but He secured heaven for all His people.

When the cloud removed Jesus from the sight of the disciples a great transformation took place. The disciples had to change from believing in their Redeemer by what they saw, to believing in Him by faith. From that moment the disciples had to live by faith. By faith they had to believe that their Redeemer reigned in heaven. We must also live by faith. Although we do not see our Lord in glory; we know that He reigns in heaven over all things. As the disciples changed from sight to faith; they were given one more assurance. Two angels gave this assurance, when Jesus was taken up to heaven. They told the disciples that, “This same Jesus, who was taken up to heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven” (Acts 1:11).

Now the disciples knew that they had to go about their task of being His witnesses to the end of the earth. That is also our task as we wait for His return. We must join the disciples in praying to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Then we too can be His witnesses to the ends of the earth. Is Jesus your exalted King?

Questions

1. What did Jesus command the disciples? (Acts 1:4)
2. From whom had the disciples heard the promise of the Father? (Acts 1:4)
3. With what had John baptized the people? (Acts 1:5)
4. What did the disciples ask Jesus that showed they misunderstood His Kingdom? (Acts 1:6)

Lesson 2

The Organization of the Church

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

Scripture: Acts 1:15-26

Memory Verse: “And they prayed and said, ‘You O Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which of these two You have chosen to take part in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas fell, that he might go to his own place.’” (Acts 1:24-25)

Lesson Truth: The church must be organized according to the Word of God and the working of the Holy Spirit.

Lesson

The church is the organization that is called to do the Lord’s work on earth. Today we will learn how the church of the Lord’s apostles had to organize after Jesus’ ascension into heaven. In organizing to fill the office of apostle after Judas fell away, the church was guided by Scripture. In addition, they called on the Holy Spirit to guide the lots that were cast. The model of the church gathered in Jerusalem after Jesus’ ascension is the model we must follow today.

The organizing of the church after the Lord’s ascension took place in Jerusalem. The believers were waiting for the gift of the Holy Spirit that Jesus had promised would come upon them. As they waited, they continued in prayer and supplication. They knew that the Lord had promised the Holy Spirit; still they prayed for His promise to be fulfilled. As they waited and prayed, Peter stood up and reminded them of a need in this new little church of Christ. The need was to select an apostle to replace Judas. When Judas betrayed the Lord and then went out and hung himself, it was a blow to this body of believers. Still, Peter reminded them that the Psalms in Scripture had to be fulfilled concerning Judas. The Psalms foretold his deed of betraying Jesus. They foretold of his death and the purchase of a burial plot with the money he received for betraying Jesus. This plot came to be known as the “Field of Blood.”

The Psalmist wrote, “Let his dwelling place be desolate and let no one live in it” (Psalm 69:25). But the Psalmist followed that dismal assessment of Judas’ dwelling place with clear instructions as to what had to be done by saying, “Let another take his office” (Psalm 109:8). This body of believers under the leadership of Peter was now ready to follow Scripture’s instructions. They looked for men who had been with Jesus from the time of His baptism until He ascended into heaven. It was men who had been with Jesus in His earthly ministry who were qualified to be an apostle. After they searched, they found two men who met these qualifications. They were Joseph, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. The church was satisfied that either of these men could serve in the office of apostle. Still, they wanted the Lord of the church to indicate the man of His choosing.

With that, the members of this church called on the name of the Lord in prayer. In their prayer they recognized that Jesus is the Lord of the church and that He could indicate the man of His choosing. They prayed, “You O Lord who know the hearts of all, show which of these two You have chosen to

take part in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place” (Acts 1:24-25).

After this prayer and request for the Lord’s guidance, they cast lots. When they had cast lots, the lot pointed to Matthias. The body of believers agreed that this was the man God had chosen to be an apostle. So, he was numbered with the other eleven apostles. This was the way this new little church closed the break in the office of apostle that was caused by Judas’ betrayal.

This is the model for the church today. The church first must be guided by Scripture just as these early believers were. Then the church must be ready to lay its request before the Lord. The church today must pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit as it does its business. It is only through the working of the Holy Spirit that the church can be organized according to the Word of the Lord.

Questions

1. Approximately how many believers were gathered at Jerusalem? (Acts 1:15)
2. Who inspired David to write about the destruction of Judas? (Acts 1:16)
3. Because Judas was numbered with the apostles what did he participate in? (Acts. 1:17)
4. What did Judas purchase with the wages of his iniquity? (Acts 1:18)

Lesson 3

The Spirit of Communion

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

Scripture: Acts 2

Memory Verse: “And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams.” (Acts 2:17)

Lesson Truth: The Holy Spirit filled the hearts of God’s people with His love.

Lesson

Jesus had promised the disciples that He would send His Spirit to dwell in their hearts. The disciples were still waiting for the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. Then amidst signs from God, the Holy Spirit came in a mighty rushing wind and tongues of fire. The multitudes were surprised when disciples began to speak in different tongues and each one heard them speak in their own language. With this outpouring of the Holy Spirit the last days were ushered in, and the people were urged to repent. The disciples were given the power to proclaim the gospel of salvation because they were filled with the Spirit of the Lord. This brought many to conversion and began a new fellowship of believers who shared all their possessions.

Each day after the Lord’s ascension into heaven, the disciples would come together to pray. They were waiting for the Holy Spirit that the Lord had promised He would send. Ten days after the ascension, it was the day of Pentecost. This was also known as the Feast of Weeks when it was required that the men of Israel present themselves at the sanctuary. The disciples were again together for the feast and for prayer. Would Christ send His Holy Spirit at this time? Would the Lord set forth His new covenant at this time?

Then it happened in a way that the disciples never imagined. As they were gathered in a group, they suddenly heard the sound of a mighty rushing wind. At the same time, they saw tongues of fire upon each other. Even more astounding, the disciples began to speak in different languages as the Holy Spirit came upon them. The crowds of people that were in Jerusalem for Pentecost were also amazed. They heard the disciples speak in different languages and each of the Jerusalem visitors could understand them in their own language. What made this amazing was that the disciples were men from Galilee and were not schooled to speak a different language. Yet people from all parts of the world could understand them. Some of the people were curious and wanted to know the meaning of this amazing sign. Others mocked the disciples and said they spoke in different languages because they were drunk.

Peter then stood up to speak and pointed to the prophet Joel to help them understand what was happening. He told them plainly that Joel had spoken about this event, years before. Peter quoted from Joel’s prophecy saying, “And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall see dream dreams, your young men shall see visions” (Joel 2:28). This event prophesied by the prophet Joel was what the men of

Israel were seeing. But Peter pointed out more than the prophecy from Joel; he reminded them that it was Jesus who had promised the coming of the Holy Spirit, this same Jesus that they had delivered up to be crucified and put to death. It was this Jesus that David had spoken about in his prophecy in the Psalms. David prophesied that Jesus would rise from the dead because it was impossible for death to hold Him. David prophesied that God would raise this Jesus from the dead and that He would ascend into heaven. Jesus would sit at God's right hand and from that exalted place, He poured out His Spirit as He had promised. Peter said, that is what the people in Jerusalem were now witnessing. Peter's sermon touched the hearts of many, and they were overcome with guilt so they asked, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37).

Peter responded by telling them to repent and to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins. If they did, they too would receive the Holy Spirit, for the promise was also for them and their children. Although some who heard Peter's sermon did not believe, others heard it and gladly received it. That day three thousand souls were added to the group of Christians and were baptized. Now this large congregation continued to share the apostle's teachings. They continued to fellowship and pray together. They became so concerned for each other's welfare that they sold their possessions and shared with anyone that had need. The Holy Spirit did come upon the Lord's disciples as He had promised. Being filled with the Holy Spirit, they were able to share God's love with all nations and tribes and tongues.

Questions

1. What were the signs that God sent to show the coming of the Holy Spirit? (Acts 2:2-3)
2. Some people were amazed at the disciples speaking in their language. What did others think? (Acts 2:12-13)
3. Who stood up to speak and tell the crowd what had happened? (Acts 2:14)

Lesson 4

Revealed to Jerusalem

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

Scripture: Acts 3:1–4:31

Memory Verse: “Then Peter 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.’ And he took him by the right hand and lifted him up, immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength.” (Acts 3:6-7)

Lesson Truth: With the healing of the lame man, Christ Jesus was revealed in Jerusalem. He is the One who is alive forevermore.

Lesson

God used the occasion of healing a lame man to reveal Jesus to Jerusalem. This healing and Peter’s claim that he was healed in Jesus’ name revealed the risen Lord. This healing showed the power of the Lord’s resurrection. It also showed that Jesus arose just as the prophecies in Scripture said He would. The healing of the lame man brought the disciples into sharp conflict with the Jewish leaders. In this conflict the believers asked the Lord for boldness to witness to the risen and exalted Christ. God answered this request by shaking the building at which they were gathered and by the presence of the Holy Spirit.

On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples so that they spoke in languages that people from all parts of the world understood. Three thousand people believed the resurrection message and were baptized that day. The Lord’s commission at the time of His ascension was happening. Jesus told His disciples that they would be His witnesses in Jerusalem, in Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. The revelation of the risen Lord to Jerusalem began when Peter and John went to the temple to pray. As they came to the temple gate named Beautiful, they saw a lame beggar. He was asking for money as he had done for years. He also asked Peter and John for money. Instead of giving him money, Peter asked him to look at them. When he looked, Peter told him that he did not have silver or gold to give him, but that he would give him something far greater than silver. He said, “In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk” (Acts 3:6). Peter then took his hand and helped him up. The people were amazed when they saw this lame man leaping, walking, and praising God. At first the people began to look at Peter and John as miracle workers.

Peter immediately put a stop to this by reminding the people that this man walked only because of Christ’s resurrection power. He was not healed because of any power of the disciples but only through the power of the Son of God. It was the power of the Son of God whom the Jews had denied in the presence of Pilate that made this man whole. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob glorified His Son and raised Him from the dead. It was in the name of this Jesus that the lame man was healed and was now able to walk. Peter urged the people to repent and believe in the Lord Jesus who was raised from the dead. He reminded the people that Jesus arose as the prophets said He would in the Scriptures.

Sadly, this beautiful scene of the lame man leaping and walking became ugly when the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came along. These leaders could not tolerate hearing the disciples say that the man was healed in the name of Christ Jesus. They would not believe in the resurrection of the dead. So, they had Peter and John arrested and put into custody.

The following day, the leaders brought them to meet with the high priests. They asked by what power and by what name they had healed the lame man. The question the leaders asked gave Peter the opportunity to witness to the rulers of Israel. He said, "If we this day are judged for a good deed done to a helpless man, by what means he has been made well, let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of 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 4:9-10). Peter further testified that salvation could be found only in this Jesus: "For there is no other name under heaven, given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). Upon hearing the words of the disciples, the leaders forbade them to speak in the name of Jesus. Peter replied that they should judge whether in the sight of God they to listen to them rather than to God. He then assured them that they would speak about what they had seen and heard.

When Peter and John were released, they went to the gathering of believers. This group raised their voices in prayer asking God for the gift of boldness to speak His Word. God answered their prayer in two ways. He shook the place where they were staying, and he filled them with His Holy Spirit. God's answer gave the disciples the power to reveal the risen Lord to Jerusalem. Later, they would reveal Him to Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth. He is the risen Savior who is alive for evermore!

Questions

1. Where were Peter and John going at the hour of prayer? (Acts 3:1)

2. What did the lame man ask from Peter and John? (Acts 3:3)

3. What did the disciples give this man instead of alms? (Acts 3:6)

Lesson 5

A Holy Fellowship

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

Scripture: Acts 4:32–5:11

Memory Verse: “Nor was there anyone among them who lacked; for all who were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold, and laid them at the apostles’ feet; and they distributed to each as anyone had need.” (Acts 4:34-35)

Lesson Truth: A new holy fellowship was created in Jerusalem. The Holy Spirit guided this fellowship.

Lesson

An amazing thing happened to the fellowship of believers at Jerusalem. This was the group that prayed for the apostles so they could boldly speak the word of the Lord. This fellowship of approximately five thousand believers was under the power of the Holy Spirit. This made them care for one another in a spectacular way. Yet, despite this amazing fellowship, Satan entered the hearts of one couple so that they lied to the Holy Spirit. The discipline of the Holy Spirit that followed was swift and severe.

The fellowship of believers that grew in Jerusalem after Pentecost was an amazing fellowship. These were the believers that prayed for boldness for the apostles. With boldness the apostles would be unafraid to speak the word of the Lord. This fellowship that was guided by the Holy Spirit had other spiritual qualities. They were so filled with the truth of the resurrection of Jesus that they had an unbelievable bond. They cared for each other in an amazing way. Scripture says that they shared everything they owned. No one in this fellowship lacked what he or she needed because those who had possessions shared with those who didn’t.

One man named Joses was a leader in showing the others how to share. Out of a thankful heart he sold his land and brought the money he received to the apostles. With this money, the apostles could help to supply the needs of others. The apostles were so encouraged by the generosity of this man that they gave him a new name. They named him Barnabas, which means Son of Encouragement. Yet the strength of this fellowship was not in men like Barnabas; it was in the Holy Spirit. The presence of the Holy Spirit is what created the bond of love in this fellowship of believers.

Sadly, not everyone in this fellowship was living under the direction of the Holy Spirit. One couple named Ananias and Sapphira allowed Satan to influence them to try to deceive the apostles. They very likely wanted to be honored the way Barnabas was honored for giving his possessions for the fellowship. But this couple did not want to give all the money they received for their land. They wanted to keep some for themselves. Still, they knew that if they kept some of the money they would not receive the honor they wanted. With evil in their hearts, Ananias and Sapphira decided to deceive the apostles.

They sold their land and brought some of the money to the apostles. Ananias pretended that he brought all of the money. However, the Holy Spirit informed Peter of their deception. He asked

Ananias why he allowed Satan to fill his heart so he would lie to the Holy Spirit. Peter told him that they could have kept their land, and they could have kept the money after they sold their land. But what believers in Christ Jesus may not do is lie and deceive. Peter reminded Ananias that he had not lied to men first of all, but to God. When Ananias heard Peter's words he fell over and died. Some young men came and removed his body for burial.

Some three hours later Sapphira came to the apostles. She did not know what had happened to her husband. When Peter asked her about the land they sold and the money they received for it, she shared the same lie as Ananias shared. Peter then asked, "How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord?" (Acts 5:9). Sapphira then learned that people could not lie to the Holy Spirit and get by with it. She also fell down and died just as her husband had done. The young men that removed her husband's body, also came and removed her body for burial.

Now the believers in Jerusalem knew that they were part of a holy fellowship. The Holy Spirit created this fellowship according to the covenant that God made with His people. The Lord had begun to gather His people from every nation and had punished the sin of deceit and unbelief.

Questions

1. The fellowship of believers was characterized as being of one what? (Acts 4:32)
2. What attribute of God came upon the fellowship of believers at Jerusalem? (Acts 4:33)
3. How many of the believers in the Jerusalem fellowship lacked what they needed? (Acts 4:34)
4. Who asked Ananias why Satan had filled his heart? (Acts 5:3)

Lesson 6

Jerusalem Filled with His Name

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

Scripture: Acts 5:12–6:7

Memory Verse: “But at night an angel 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)

Lesson Truth: Jerusalem was filled with the name of Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Lesson

The holy fellowship in Jerusalem continued to grow as the apostles healed many and spoke the words of life. This angered the Jewish leaders, so they arrested the apostles and put them in jail. They failed to understand that they could not stop the work of the Holy Spirit. The Lord sent an angel to deliver His apostles so they could continue to do His work. The Jewish leaders became so upset with the fearless work of the apostles that they determined to kill them. One Pharisee of the Sanhedrin suggested that they should not kill the apostles. He said if their work was from men, it would soon disappear. However, if it was from God, they could not destroy it. This was an appeal to the secret counsel of God despite his unbelief. Through all the persecution the disciples found joy in being able to suffer for the name of their Lord.

The apostles were busy in Jerusalem speaking the name of Jesus and healing sick people. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, the holy fellowship in Jerusalem continued to grow. People from villages and towns around Jerusalem also brought their sick and tormented loved ones to the apostles for healing. But the crowds were so big that they could hardly get to Peter to have him heal them. These people believed that Peter had received power from the Holy Spirit so he could heal them in Jesus’ name. When they couldn’t get near, they tried to place the bed of their loved one in Peter’ shadow hoping for healing. They believed that God’s grace was working through the apostles. The apostles’ work caused the fellowship in Jerusalem to grow to be a multitude. But this growth made the high priest and the other Jewish leaders very angry.

These leaders became so angry that they arrested the apostles and put them in prison. Little did they realize that they could never stop the work of the Holy Spirit. The bars and walls of a prison could not hinder Almighty God! That very night the Lord sent an angel to open the doors of the prison and set the apostles free. The angel told them to go back to the temple and speak the words of this life.

The next morning the high priest called the council together to decide what to do with the apostles. When they sent for the apostles from prison, they were told that the prison was empty. Even more amazing, they were told that they were teaching at the temple. The captain that went to get them did not make a scene but brought them quietly. As the apostles stood before the council, the high priest asked them, “Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this Man’s blood on us!” (Acts 5:28). Peter then answered for the apostles saying, “We ought to obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29). He also testified that the name of Jesus they proclaimed, was the Jesus whom the Jewish leaders had crucified.

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: “However, the Most High does not dwell in temples made with hands, as the prophet says: ‘Heaven is My throne and earth is My footstool. What house will you build for Me? says the Lord, or what is the place of My rest?’” (Acts 7:48-49)

Lesson Truth: A new spirit would show the believers how to worship God in a temple not made with hands.

Lesson

Stephen was one of the faithful men that the believers chose to minister to the poor and the widows. He would testify that a new spirit would help the believers see that God would be worshipped in the temple of the human heart. Stephen’s testimony brought him into sharp conflict with Israelites who thought that salvation was only for the Jews. But Stephen shared the testimony of history to show that God intended His salvation for people of every nation. When the Jews heard this testimony, they decided to stone Stephen to death. However, by God’s grace Stephen’s death became a victory. Following Stephen’s death, the believers were persecuted severely. God allowed this persecution to scatter His people with the gospel message.

The believers in Jerusalem were encouraged when the apostles were freed from prison. They grew to become a large group of believers. From this group, seven faithful men were chosen to minister to the widows and the poor. One of these seven faithful men was Stephen. He was not only faithful in his conduct, but he also told the Jews of a new spirit that God would bring. This new spirit would help the children of Israel understand that God should be worshipped in a temple not made with hands. He testified that God should be worshipped in the temple of the human heart and not just in the temple in Jerusalem. But men from the Synagogue of the Freedmen disputed Stephen’s testimony. These men were not going to allow Stephen to speak about Gentiles worshipping God at some place other than the temple in Jerusalem. Still, they were not able to refute his wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke.

Because these men could not refute Stephen’s wisdom, they forced men to bring false accusations against him. These false accusers said that Stephen blasphemed God, by speaking against the Law and the temple. They claimed that he tried to do away with the teachings of Moses. A remarkable thing happened as Stephen sat before the council. His face appeared to be like the face of an angel. When the high priest asked him if these accusations were true, Stephen responded by reviewing the history of God’s people. The history of God’s people was a testimony that what he said was true.

Stephen reviewed the call of Abraham to go to Canaan so that he could become God’s chosen people. He assured this council that all the patriarchs believed the promise that God had made to Abraham. Stephen reminded them of the years that God’s people spent in Egypt. He reviewed how they were brought to Egypt and how they were delivered. Stephen reminded them how the words of the

Lesson 8

Victory over Magic

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

Scripture: Acts 8:5-25

Memory Verse: “Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit.” (Acts 8:14-15)

Lesson Truth: By the power of the Holy Spirit Samaria was delivered from the magic of Simon the sorcerer.

Lesson

The Bible truth from Acts 8 tells us how Samaria was delivered from magic when the gospel of Christ was preached to them. By God’s grace the people of Samaria submitted in faith to the gospel message. When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that the people of Samaria had received the gospel, they sent Peter and John to share the gift of the Holy Spirit with them. They also spoke a word of judgment against Simon the magician who thought he could buy the right to give people the Holy Spirit.

The persecution of Christ’s followers continued in Jerusalem. Saul, who was also called Paul, was very active in persecuting Christians. He gave his approval to the stoning of Stephen and sought to arrest Christians from other cities. Because of this persecution, Christians scattered from Jerusalem. The deacon Philip was one of the Christians who left Jerusalem. He went to the city of Samaria and there he preached the gospel of Jesus Christ. The Samaritans were a mixed race of people. They were a mixture of Jews that had married Gentiles. These people had heard about the God of Israel from the Jewish parents of their mixed race. However, they were under the influence of a magician, a man named Simon, who practiced sorcery.

The people believed that Simon had the power to influence God’s actions, because he had astonished them with his magic tricks. Still, when they heard the gospel message from Philip and saw the miracles he performed; they believed him. By God’s grace the city of Samaria was filled with joy. Many of the people that heard Philip’s message believed and were baptized. Amazing as it seems, even Simon the magician believed and was baptized. Yet we learn later that Simon was rebuked for thinking that he could buy the right to give people the Holy Spirit. We are not told if his conversion was true, only that Peter told him that his heart was not right with God. Many people in Samaria forsook the magic of Simon and became new men and women in Christ. They were set free from sorcery and magic because they submitted to the gospel in faith.

When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that the people of Samaria received the gospel they decided to send someone to encourage them. Peter and John went to Samaria to pray with the believers there. They prayed that these believers might also receive the Holy Spirit. Until now the believers in Samaria had only been baptized, but they had not been filled with the Holy Spirit. Peter and John not only prayed for the Holy Spirit, but they also laid their hands on the believers. When they laid on their hands, these believers were also filled with the Holy Spirit. Now the people of Samaria became one

Lesson 9

The Way to the Gentiles

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

Scripture: Acts 8:26-40

Memory Verse: “So the eunuch answered Philip and said, ‘I ask you, of whom does the prophet say this, of himself or of some other man?’ Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him.” (Acts 8:34-35)

Lesson Truth: By the power of the Holy Spirit Jews and Gentiles became one in the covenant of grace.

Lesson

Through the entire Old Testament, the Israelites were identified as God’s chosen people. God used the Israelites to bring His promised Redeemer into the world. Still, the Lord knew that the promises of His covenant would be for all people of every race and nation. The thrill of the Bible story from Acts 8 is how God brought the first Gentile from Ethiopia into a covenant relationship with Him. The Holy Spirit worked in the heart of this stranger to bring him to Jerusalem. The Holy Spirit also called Philip to preach the gospel of Christ Jesus to this Gentile. The joy of this revelation is to know that Jews and Gentiles are one in God’s covenant of grace.

Many people from Samaria believed the gospel message that Philip preached and were delivered from the magic of Simon. Now an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip and told him to go to the road that led from Jerusalem to Gaza. At Samaria the Lord brought the people that were a mixture of Jews who had married Gentiles, into the covenant. Now He was going to bring those that were entirely Gentile into His covenant relationship. When Philip reached the road that went to Gaza, he saw a chariot that belonged to an official from Ethiopia. This official was the treasurer for Candace, the queen of Ethiopia. The Holy Spirit had worked in the heart of this official to go to Jerusalem to worship.

While the Ethiopian official was at Jerusalem, he must have been disappointed. He came to worship, but because he was a Gentile he was not allowed into the temple. He had to remain in the court of the Gentiles. He had come a long way to satisfy the longing of his soul, only to find that he had to worship from a distance. Still, the Holy Spirit prompted this official to take a copy of the prophecy of Isaiah along home. When Philip saw this chariot, he came near, as the angel of the Lord had instructed him. He heard the official reading the following 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 Ethiopian answered, “How can I unless someone guides me?” (Acts 8:31). He then asked Philip if the prophet Isaiah was speaking about himself or if he was speaking about someone else. These questions gave Philip the opportunity to tell this Gentile from Ethiopia the story of Jesus the Redeemer. He began with the prophecy of Isaiah and preached Jesus the Christ to him. This was the way the Holy Spirit showed that the Gentiles were part of God’s covenant.

Lesson 10

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: “But the Lord said to him, ‘Go for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before the 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)

Lesson Truth: By the power of the Holy Spirit, Saul was called to carry God’s Word.

Lesson

Despite Saul’s hostility to the disciples of the Lord Jesus, God called him to bring His Word to the world. Saul showed his hostility to the followers of Jesus by trying to arrest them and put them in prison. The wonder of this story is that the Lord stopped him on his way to Damascus. When he was stopped, he was changed from a persecutor of Christians to one who preached Christ. By God’s grace Saul’s eyes were illumined so that he recognized the voice of the Lord. Although he was tested, Saul brought God’s Word to both Jews and Gentiles.

Saul of Tarsus was the Pharisee who held the clothes when zealous Jews stoned Stephen to death. He continued to show his hatred for the disciples of Jesus by trying to have them arrested. The wonder of God’s grace was seen when Jesus confronted Saul on the road to Damascus. Saul was a zealous Pharisee who asked for letters from the high priest to give him permission to arrest Christians. Saul believed, along with the Pharisees, that he had to be saved by his own works. He was convinced that the Christians were wrong when they told others about salvation by grace. Yet the Lord Jesus in His grace had great plans for Saul.

Now, on his way to Damascus to hunt down Christians to bring them bound to Jerusalem, an amazing thing happened. Suddenly, a great light appeared around Saul and those traveling with him. Later, Saul said that the light that shone around him was brighter than the sun. This is not surprising because the light of God’s grace is brighter than the light of the sun. This light was so bright that Saul fell to the ground. He then heard a voice speaking to him saying, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?” Saul asked, “Who are You, Lord?” (Acts 9:4-5). The Lord then told him plainly that He was Jesus whom Saul was persecuting. In this encounter an unbelievable change had to take place in Saul of Tarsus. By His grace, the Lord would change him from a persecutor of the Lord’s people to the one who proclaimed the gospel. With a trembling and astonished heart Saul asked, “Lord what do You want me to do?” (Acts 9:6). The Lord responded by telling him to go into the city of Damascus and wait. Then, when Saul got up from the ground his companions found that he was blind.

Saul’s companions led him into Damascus. For three days he remained blind and did not eat or drink. During this time Saul realized that he had been blind all along in his desire to persecute the Christians. While his eyes were closed with blindness, Saul prayed for deliverance. Slowly, the Lord allowed him to understand His grace. Saul had to understand that salvation for God’s people is by grace alone before he could be used to proclaim the gospel. God then showed His grace by asking a disciple

Lesson 11

Everlasting Life

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

Scripture: Acts 9:31-43

Memory Verse: “Then Peter arose and went with them. When he had come, they brought him to the upper room. And all the widows stood by weeping, showing the tunics and garments which Dorcas had made while she was with them.” (Acts 9:39)

Lesson Truth: Christ Jesus gives everlasting life by the power of His Spirit.

Lesson

The churches in Judea, Galilee, and Samaria grew after Saul’s conversion. The believers in these churches were filled with the Holy Spirit. Peter ministered through the Holy Spirit to Aeneas, and Dorcas at Lydda and Joppa. From these ministries we learn that the work of the Holy Spirit could not be destroyed. The life that the Holy Spirit gives is everlasting life. Bringing Dorcas back to life showed that death could not prevail against true believers in the church. When Peter confessed that Jesus was the Christ the Son of God, Jesus gave the promise that Peter was the rock on which He would build His church. Jesus also promised that the gates of hell could never prevail against that church.

Something wonderful happened after Saul came to know Jesus as the Redeemer. The churches in the regions where Jesus had ministered grew in numbers. The believers walked in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit. As the churches grew, the apostles visited these believers and encouraged them in the faith. One of the churches that Peter visited was at Lydda, where he found a believer named Aeneas. Aeneas suffered from paralysis that had kept him bedridden for eight years. He was not able to take part in the activities of the church because of his illness. This man, who was so limited because of his paralysis, now received a visit from the apostle Peter.

It must have shocked him to hear what Peter told him. Peter said, “Aeneas, Jesus the Christ heals you. Arise and make your bed” (Acts 9:34). After eight years of being unable to stand or walk, Peter told him to get up. Yet Aeneas believed Peter and he immediately arose. The news of his recovery spread through the towns of Lydda and Sharon, and many turned to the Lord. Believers came to know that faith in the Lord Jesus Christ brings life. Through the power of the Holy Spirit all life could be restored.

While Peter was ministering at Lydda other events were taking place at Joppa. A wonderful woman by the name of Tabitha, or Dorcas, lived at Joppa. She was a woman who was full of good works and charitable deeds. Widows at Joppa testified that Dorcas sewed many coats and other garments and gave them to those who had need. Many of these widows had received gifts of clothing from Dorcas. But then Dorcas became sick and died. The people who loved her washed her body and placed it in an upper room.

Some disciples of the Lord heard that Peter was at Lydda and that he had told Aeneas to get up from his bed after eight years of paralysis. They sent some men to Lydda to urge Peter to hurry to Joppa to possibly minister to Dorcas. Peter came without delay and was ushered into the upper room where

they had placed Dorcas' body. In the upper room Peter found a group of widows standing by the body and weeping. They showed Peter the coats and garments that Dorcas had made, and wept because she was no longer with them.

Peter then asked everyone to leave the upper room. When everyone was gone, he knelt down and prayed. After his prayer Peter turned to Dorcas' body and said, "Tabitha (Dorcas) arise" (Acts 9:40). Amazingly Dorcas opened her eyes and sat up. Peter took her by the hand and presented her to the widows and the other believers. The news of Dorcas' coming back to life spread through Joppa and many came to believe on the Lord Jesus.

Now the believers knew that life in the Spirit of the Lord is victorious over death. Life in the Spirit of the Lord is everlasting life. This life gives purpose to the lives of all believers. Believers know that they are called to bear fruit for the Lord through all eternity.

Questions

1. In whose fear and comfort did the believers from Judea, Galilee, and Samaria walk? (Acts 9:31)
2. What was the name of the town where Peter went to visit the saints? (Acts 9:32)
3. How long had Aeneas been bedridden? (Acts 9:33)
4. What was the response of the people from Lydda and Sharon to Aeneas' healing? (Acts 9:35)

Lesson 12

The Cleansing of the Gentiles

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

Scripture: Acts 10–11

Memory Verse: “Then Peter opened his mouth and said: ‘In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. But in every nation whoever fears him and works righteousness is accepted by Him.’” (Acts 10:34-35)

Lesson Truth: People from every nation are made clean by the power of the Holy Spirit and are included in the covenant.

Lesson

The story that tells how God sent an angel to speak to a Gentile officer is a wonderful story of the way the Lord included Gentiles in the covenant. The Lord demonstrated that He knows of the faithfulness of His people from every nation. The Lord also graciously instructed the apostles and other Israelite believers that He shows no partiality. He made it very clear that both Jews and Gentiles were included in the covenant. This was a difficult idea for the circumcised Israelites to accept. But God used the apostle Peter to convince the church at Jerusalem of this truth. The excitement of this story is to read about the first group of believers to form a church at Antioch.

In Acts 11 we read that the believers in Judea heard that the Gentiles also received the word of God. How did this come about? The story of Cornelius is an amazing story of how the Lord sent His angel to a Gentile centurion to acknowledge his faith. An angel of the Lord spoke to Cornelius in a vision and told him that his steadfast prayers and faithfulness in giving had come up as a memorial before God. In order to teach Cornelius that he was a part of God’s covenant the angel told him to send for a man named Simon Peter from Joppa. Simon Peter would tell Cornelius what he should do as a member of God’s covenant.

The angel’s instructions to Cornelius seem to be easy to understand, but there remained a problem. The problem was that the zealous Jews like Simon Peter did not yet believe that Gentiles could be part of God’s covenant. God addressed that problem by speaking to Simon Peter in a vision. Peter’s vision took place about the sixth hour, which was an indication that Peter was ready to eat. In his vision Peter saw a huge sheet that descended from heaven. In that sheet were four-footed animals, as well as wild beasts, birds, and creeping things. Peter then heard a voice instruct him to kill some of these animals and eat. But Peter resisted these instructions. As a zealous, circumcised Israelite he protested that he had never eaten anything common or unclean. The voice then corrected Peter to help him understand that all believers are part of God’s covenant. The voice informed Peter that what God had cleansed he should not call common or unclean. For emphasis, God repeated the scene in this vision three times. Each time insisting that what God had made clean Peter could not call unclean.

Even while Peter wondered what this vision meant, the messengers from Cornelius were at the door. The Spirit now spoke to Peter and told him to go along with Cornelius’ servants and not doubt. When Peter arrived at Cornelius’ home, he informed the group gathered there that it was really unlawful for

a Jew to keep company with Gentiles. But he added that God had shown him in a vision that he could not call those unclean whom the Lord made clean. After Cornelius informed Peter of the Lord's vision that he had seen, Peter shared the gospel with this group. He told them of the Lord's death and resurrection and that the prophets testified that all who believed in Him would receive remission of sins. Then an amazing thing happened. Even as Peter was speaking the Holy Spirit came upon the Gentile believers at Cornelius' home. The coming of the Holy Spirit upon the Gentiles astonished the circumcised Jews that were with Peter. But they heard these Gentiles speak in tongues and magnify God. So, Peter saw that it was proper to baptize these Gentiles. This was the sign and seal that the Gentiles were also included in the covenant.

Now there was another problem. The circumcised Jews at the church in Jerusalem were not yet ready to accept Gentiles as part of the covenant. The Lord then used Peter to explain the vision that he had seen. Peter explained that what God had made clean in the blood of the Lord Jesus was truly clean. Peter testified that the Holy Spirit had also come upon the Gentiles, so he had baptized them. When the believers at Jerusalem heard Peter's testimony, they glorified God. They acknowledged that God had granted to Gentiles repentance and forgiveness of their sins. Then something wonderful happened. The believers that had spread to many parts of the country when they were persecuted preached the gospel in all these places. Not only did they preach to the Jews but also to Gentiles. When the believers in Jerusalem heard about the gospel being preached, they sent Barnabas to Antioch. Barnabas later brought Saul to Antioch to help share the gospel. As the church grew among the Gentiles at Antioch, they received a special distinction. It was at Antioch that believers first became known as Christians. Now we know that all who believe, from every nation, are included in God's covenant.

Questions

1. How does the Bible characterize Cornelius the Roman centurion? (Acts 10:2)
2. What did the angel of the Lord instruct Cornelius to do? (Acts 10:5-6)
3. Who went up to the housetop to pray about the sixth hour? (Acts 10:9)

