

THE OLD TESTAMENT

THE PROPHETS and NEHEMIAH - ESTHER - JOB



Year 2 - Quarter 4

by

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LESSON 1

THE KING BURNS JEREMIAH'S BOOK

Jer. 36

INTRODUCTION. Jeremiah, the son of a priest, was from the village of Anathoth which was about three miles northeast of Jerusalem. When he was a young man, the Lord called him to be a prophet. He received his call from the Lord in the thirteenth year of Josiah's reign (about 627 B. C.). Although Josiah was righteous and the people served the Lord during Josiah's reign, the Lord told Jeremiah that Judah had not returned to the Lord with her "whole heart, but feignedly" (in pretense) (Jer. 3:10).

After the death of Josiah, the people of Judah soon became idolatrous again, and the nation fell into rapid decline. Three of Josiah's sons and a grandson reigned after him, but all of them were evil. During this tumultuous time, Jeremiah served the Lord as a prophet to Judah and the nations. However, the people did not heed Jeremiah's words, but rather ridiculed, maligned, and persecuted him.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S FIRST SIEGE OF JERUSALEM. When Josiah was killed by Pharaoh-Necho of Egypt at Megiddo in 609 B.C., his son Jehoahaz became king in Judah. After three months, however, Pharaoh-Necho took him captive and carried him to Egypt. Pharaoh placed Jehoiakim, another son of Josiah, on the throne and demanded heavy tribute (taxes) from Judah (II Kings 23:31-35; II Chron. 36:1-4).

In 605 B. C., the fourth year of Jehoiakim's reign, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, defeated Pharaoh-Necho and the Egyptians at Carchemish on the Euphrates River and then invaded Judah (Jer. 46:2). He marched throughout Judah, besieging Jerusalem and carrying captives back to Babylon. Among these captives was Daniel (Dan. 1:1).

In that fourth year of Jehoiakim's reign, the Lord spoke to Jeremiah, foretelling the Babylonian captivity of Judah which would last for seventy years (Jer. 25:1, 8-11). He then told Jeremiah to write all the words He had spoken on a scroll. When Jehoiakim heard the words Jeremiah had written, he destroyed the scroll. The Lord told Jeremiah

to write again the former words He had spoken, and then He added a prophecy against Jehoiakim, predicting his violent death (Jer. 36:30-31). Josephus, the Jewish historian, states that Jehoiakim was killed by Nebuchadnezzar who ordered him cast before the walls of the city and left unburied.

A. JEREMIAH AND JEHOIAKIM

- | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| 1. _____ Jehoiakim was the son of (Jer. 36:1) | a. day of fasting |
| 2. _____ In the fourth year of Jehoiakim, the word of the Lord came unto (Jer. 36:1) | b. Israel, Judah, all the nations |
| 3. _____ The Lord told the prophet to write on a (Jer. 36:2) | c. iniquity and sin |
| 4. _____ The prophet was to write all the words that the Lord had spoken against (Jer. 36:2) | d. Jeremiah |
| | e. Baruch |
| 5. _____ If the house of Judah returned from their evil way, the Lord would forgive their (Jer. 36:3) | f. anger and fury |
| 6. _____ The words of the Lord that were spoken to Jeremiah were written in the book by (Jer. 36:4) | g. Josiah |
| | h. scroll of a book |
| 7. _____ Jeremiah told Baruch to read from the scroll the words of the Lord to all Judah upon the (Jer. 36:5-6) | |
| 8. _____ Jeremiah said that the people might turn from their evil way, for great was the Lord's (Jer. 36:7) | |

*Behold, I will...take all the families of the north...
and Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon...
and will bring them against this land...
And this whole land shall be a desolation...
and serve the king of Babylon seventy years.
Jer. 25:8-11*

B. THE KING BURNS THE SCROLL OF THE BOOK

- | | |
|---|----------------------------------|
| 1. _____ A fast day was proclaimed in the fifth year of Jehoiakim in Jerusalem and Baruch read the book in the (Jer. 36:9-10) | a. afraid |
| 2. _____ When Michaiah heard the words, he went to the kings' house and told all the (Jer. 36:11-13) | b. house of the Lord |
| 3. _____ When the princes had heard all the words that were read by Baruch, they were (Jer. 36:14-16) | c. king |
| 4. _____ They said that they would tell the words to the (Jer. 36:16) | d. the Lord |
| 5. _____ The princes said that Baruch and Jeremiah should (Jer. 36:17-19) | e. pen knife
(scribe's knife) |
| 6. _____ The king was in the winter house, and there was a fire burning before him on the (Jer. 36:22) | f. rent (tore) their
garments |
| 7. _____ When three or four leaves (columns) had been read to the king, he cut them with a (Jer. 36:23) | g. princes |
| 8. _____ He cast the roll into the (Jer. 36:23) | h. fire |
| 9. _____ Neither the king nor any of his servants that heard the words of the book were afraid nor (Jer. 36:24) | i. hearth (brazier) |
| 10. _____ When the king commanded that Baruch and Jeremiah be taken (seized), they were hidden by (Jer. 36:26) | j. hide |

C. THE PROPHECY AGAINST JEHOIAKIM. The Lord then told Jeremiah to take another roll and write the words again, adding a prophecy against Jehoiakim: He shall have none to sit upon the throne of David: and his dead body shall be cast out in

the day to the _____, and in the night to the _____. (Jer. 36:30)

LESSON 2

JEREMIAH IN THE DUNGEON

Jer. 38

INTRODUCTION. Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, invaded Judah and besieged Jerusalem three times, taking captives and deporting them to Babylon. The first invasion and deportation was in 605 B. C. when Jehoiakim, son of Josiah, was reigning in Judah. Jehoiakim became subject to Nebuchadnezzar for three years but then rebelled (II Kings 24:1). Jehoiakim was apparently killed by Nebuchadnezzar sometime later in a violent manner, fulfilling the prophecy of Jeremiah (Jer. 22:18-19; 36:30).

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S SECOND SIEGE OF JERUSALEM. Jehoiakim was succeeded on the throne of Judah by his son Jehoiachin. Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem the second time, and after three months in 597 B. C., he again took captives to Babylon. Among the captives were the king Jehoiachin, his mother, wives, and officers, the prophet Ezekiel, princes, mighty men of valor, craftsmen and smiths—10,000 captives (II Kings 24:8-16; II Chron. 36:9-10; Ezek. 1:1-3).

A. JEREMIAH AND JEHOIACHIN. Jehoiachin, the son of Jehoiakim, was taken captive to Babylon in the second deportation. Jeremiah predicted Jehoiachin would be cast out into another country where he was not born and where he would die (Jer. 22:25).

1. The prophecy also states that Jehoiachin's seed would not sit upon the _____ of David. (Jer. 22:30)

Note. This prophecy is a reference to the earthly kingdom of Judah.

2. Jehoiachin was the last rightful descendant of David to rule on the throne in Judah. Although Jeremiah's prophecy regarding Jehoiachin states that none of his seed shall sit upon David's (earthly) throne, the Lord shall raise another to sit on David's throne. "I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth...this is his name whereby he shall be called, _____." (Jer. 23:5-6)

Note. God raised his son Jesus Christ, a descendant of David and Jehoiachin (Matt. 1:1-17), to sit on the spiritual throne of David and reign over a spiritual kingdom.

3. Jehoiachin remained a captive in Babylon, but in the thirty-seventh year of his captivity, he was released from prison by the son of Nebuchadnezzar, Evil-Merodach, in the first year of his reign as king of Babylon (Jer. 52:31).
 - a. Evil-Merodach spoke _____ to Jehoiachin and set his throne above the throne of the other kings with him in Babylon. (Jer. 52:32)
 - b. Jehoiachin changed his _____ and ate _____ continually before the king all the days of his life. (Jer. 52:33)

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S THIRD SIEGE OF JERUSALEM. After Nebuchadnezzar took Jehoiachin captive, he placed Zedekiah, another son of Josiah and the uncle of Jehoiachin, on the throne of Judah. Some years later Judah again rebelled against the Babylonians, and Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem for the third time. After a siege of more than two years, Nebuchadnezzar captured the city in 586 B. C. He burned the temple and houses, broke down the walls of the city, and carried the treasures of the temple and city to Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar took captive to Babylon those people who escaped the Babylonian sword, leaving only the poorest of the people in Judah to be vinedressers and farmers (II Kings 24:17-25:21; II Chron. 36:11-20)

B. JEREMIAH AND ZEDEKIAH. One of the many persecutions against Jeremiah took place when Zedekiah reigned during the third and last siege of Jerusalem.

1. When Zedekiah began to reign, how did he and the people of Judah regard the words of the Lord spoken by Jeremiah? (Jer. 37:1-2)
2. When Jeremiah spoke the words of the Lord, prophesying that the king of Babylon would capture the city of Jerusalem, he told the people: (Jer. 38:2-3)
 - a. he who remains in the city shall die by the _____, _____, and _____
 - b. he who goes over to the Chaldeans (Babylonians) shall _____
 - c. the city shall surely be given into the hand of the king of Babylon's _____

3. The princes of Judah then accused Jeremiah of treason and put him into a dungeon. Describe the dungeon. (Jer. 38:4, 6)
4. An Ethiopian servant in the king's house, pleaded with Zedekiah to release Jeremiah. The king told him to take thirty men with him and take Jeremiah out of the dungeon. How did the men do this? (Jer. 38:11-13)
5. When Jeremiah was rescued from the dungeon, Zedekiah consulted with him. Jeremiah told Zedekiah that if he surrendered to the Babylonians, he would live and the city would not be burned. If Zedekiah did not surrender, what would happen? (Jer. 38:18)

Note. Zedekiah did not surrender. The temple and city were destroyed and the people taken captive. Zedekiah was captured near Jericho while trying to escape and taken to Riblah. Here the Babylonians killed his sons before him, then put out his eyes and carried him to Babylon in fetters (II Kings 25:5-7).

C. JEREMIAH'S CHARACTER. Jeremiah was perhaps the most tenderhearted of the Old Testament prophets. Although reviled by the unrepentant people of Judah, he loved them and prayed for them. Before God he was obedient and humble.

1. Jeremiah is sometimes called the weeping prophet. Why did he wish his head were waters and his eyes a fountain of tears? (Jer. 9:1)
2. How did the people treat Jeremiah? (Jer. 20:7)
3. Although the people did not listen to the words of the Lord spoken by Jeremiah, he could not refrain from speaking. God's words were like what in Jeremiah's heart? (Jer. 20:9)

4. In spite of the dark days and calamitous times during Jeremiah's life, he prophesied of a new covenant and hope for the future. The Lord promised He would make a new covenant with the house of Israel and house of Judah (Jer. 31:31).
 - a. Where would the Lord put his laws in those days? (Jer. 31:33)
 - b. What about the sins of the people? (Jer. 31:34)

Note. This prophecy is fulfilled in Jesus Christ and his church (Heb. 8).

JEREMIAH'S FATE. Some of the people that were left in Judah rebelled against the governor that had been appointed by Nebuchadnezzar. They fled to Egypt and forced Jeremiah to accompany them, although he warned them that the Babylonians would invade Egypt and there was no safety there (II Kings 25:22-26; Jer. 40-44).

Jeremiah began his work during the peaceful reign of Josiah, but he lived through and witnessed the chaotic period that followed the death of Josiah. He was an old man when he went to Egypt, and his fate is uncertain.

*Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a
fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night
for the slain of the daughter of my people!
Jer. 9:1*

LESSON 3

DANIEL IN BABYLON

Dan. 1:1

INTRODUCTION. In 605 B. C. during the reign of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, came against Jerusalem for the first time and besieged the city. Nebuchadnezzar took young princes and nobles captive, carrying them back to Babylon along with temple treasures. One of the young Jewish men taken captive was Daniel. As a result, Daniel, a prophet of God, lived his entire adult life as a captive in a foreign country. He was courageous, deeply devoted to God, and a man of conviction and faith (Heb. 11:32-33).

Daniel's first test of courage occurred early in his captivity when he was very young, probably in his teens. The young captives were taken to Babylon for instruction in the Chaldean (another name for Babylonian) language and customs. They were trained for three years in preparation for service in the king's court. Daniel and three of his Jewish friends courageously, but courteously, refused to eat the king's food and drink his wine which possibly were foods offered to Babylonian idols or those which were a violation of the dietary laws in Leviticus.

The servant in charge of the young men was fearful his own life would be in danger if the Jewish boys' health suffered as a result of their refusal to partake of the king's food. Daniel suggested a ten-day trial, and the servant agreed to serve them vegetables and water during that period. At the end of the ten days, the countenance (features) of Daniel and his three friends surpassed those who had eaten the king's food.

1. Who was the king of Judah at this time? (Dan. 1:1)

2. Who was the king of Babylon? (Dan. 1:1)

3. Who besieged Jerusalem? (Dan. 1:1)
4. What did the king of Babylon carry to his own country? (Dan. 1:2)
5. The king of Babylon wanted certain of the children of Israel brought to Babylon. These captives were: (Dan. 1:3-4)
 - a. of the king's (royal) _____ and _____
 - b. children (youths, young men) in whom was no blemish, but _____
 - c. skillful (gifted) in all _____
 - d. cunning in (endued with, possessing) _____ and understanding science (quick to understand)
 - e. to stand (serve) in the king's _____
 - f. to be taught the _____ of the Chaldeans
6. What daily provision was appointed to the Hebrews and for how long? (Dan. 1:5)
7. The Hebrew names are in the left column. Draw a line to their Babylonian names in the right column. (Dan. 1:6-7)

Daniel	Shadrach
Hananiah	Abednego
Mishael	Belteshazzar
Azariah	Meshach
8. What had Daniel purposed in his heart? (Dan. 1:8)
9. How had God helped Daniel with the prince (chief) of the eunuchs (servants)? (Dan. 1:9)

10. The servant was afraid of what danger if Daniel and his three friends did not appear as healthy as the other young men? (Dan. 1:10)
11. What did Daniel ask that he and his three friends be allowed to eat and drink for ten days, and then be compared with the others who ate the king's food.? (Dan. 1:11-13)
12. How did Daniel and his friends appear after ten days? (Dan. 1:14-15)
13. What did God give to these four Hebrew children? (Dan. 1:17)
14. What did Daniel have in addition? (Dan. 1:17)
15. At the end of the time set by the king, how did the king find Daniel and his three friends? (Dan. 1:18-19)
16. How did the four Hebrews compare in wisdom and understanding to the magicians and astrologers in the king's realm? (Dan. 1:20)

And the king communed with them...and in all matters of wisdom and understanding, that the king enquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm.
Dan 1:19-20

LESSON 4

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM

Dan. 2

INTRODUCTION. In the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, he had a troubling dream. He wanted his dream interpreted but claimed he could not remember the dream. When the Babylonian wise men could not reveal or interpret the dream, the king became angry and commanded that the wise men be slain—a decree that included Daniel and his friends. Daniel asked the king for some time, then he and his friends prayed to God for mercy. God revealed the secret to Daniel in a vision during the night.

A. NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM AND DECREE

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. _____ In his second year, Nebuchadnezzar had a dream and his spirit was (Dan. 2:1) | a. cut in pieces |
| 2. _____ The king commanded to call the (Dan. 2:2) | b. interpretation |
| 3. _____ The Chaldeans told the king to tell them the dream, and they would give the (Dan. 2:4) | c. night vision |
| 4. _____ The king said his word was firm; if they could not tell the dream, they should be (Dan. 2:5) | d. wise men |
| 5. _____ If they could tell the dream and interpretation, they should receive (Dan. 2:6) | e. magicians, astrologers, sorcerers, Chaldeans |
| 6. _____ The Chaldeans said none could tell the king's dream except (Dan. 2:10-11) | f. mercies |
| 7. _____ The king was angry and furious and commanded to destroy all the (Dan. 2:12) | g. slain (killed) |
| 8. _____ Daniel and his friends were also to be (Dan. 2:13) | h. gifts, rewards |
| 9. _____ Daniel asked the king to give him some time, then he and his three friends asked the God of heaven for (Dan. 2:16-18) | i. the gods |
| 10. _____ The secret was revealed unto Daniel in a (Dan. 2:19) | j. troubled |

B. THE DREAM AND THE INTERPRETATION. When the secret was revealed to Daniel, he blessed the God of heaven:

Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his: And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise...He revealeth the deep and secret things...I thank thee, and praise thee, O thou God of my fathers, who hast given me wisdom and might, and hast made known unto me now what we desired of thee...(Dan. 2:19-23)

Daniel asked the king's captain to spare the lives of the wise men, then he went to the king, told him the dream and its interpretation. Nebuchadnezzar's dream was of a great image, bright, and terrible (awesome).

The Dream (Dan. 2:31-35)

The Interpretation (Dan. 2:36-45)

The image:

1. head of fine gold (Dan. 2:32)

_____ art the head of gold (Dan. 2:37-38)

2. arms and breast of silver (Dan. 2:32)

after thee another _____ inferior to thee (Dan. 2:39)

3. belly and thighs of brass (Dan. 2:32)

another _____ kingdom of brass (Dan. 2:39)

4. legs of iron (Dan. 2:33)

a fourth kingdom, strong as _____ (Dan. 2:40)

and feet part iron and clay (Dan. 2:33)

but a divided kingdom, partly _____ and partly _____ (Dan. 2:41-42)

A stone:

5. cut out without hands, smote the image on its feet and broke it; then became a great mountain and filled the earth (Dan. 2:34-35)

in the days of these kings, the God of heaven shall set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand

_____ (Dan. 2:44)

Note. Nebuchadnezzar's dream was a vision of four world kingdoms that would arise, one after the other. The first, the head of gold, was the Babylonian kingdom. The stone cut out without hands was prepared by God and broke in pieces the four world kingdoms. The kingdom of God would then fill the earth and stand forever.

6. To whom did Daniel give credit for revealing the dream and its meaning? (Dan. 2:26-28)
7. What did Nebuchadnezzar acknowledge after Daniel interpreted his dream? (Dan. 2:47)
8. What did Nebuchadnezzar do for Daniel? (Dan. 2:48)

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM

The Image

Head of Fine Gold

Arms and Breast of Silver

Belly and Thighs of Brass (Bronze)

Legs of Iron and Feet of Iron and Clay

Stone that becomes a Great Mountain

The Kingdoms Represented

Babylon

Medo-Persian

Greece

Rome

Kingdom of God

LESSON 5

THE FIERY FURNACE

Dan. 3

INTRODUCTION. Nebuchadnezzar became king of Babylon in 605 B. C. and reigned until 562 B. C. Three times he invaded Judah and took captives, deporting them to Babylon. His first siege of Jerusalem came in 605 B. C. during the reign of Jehoiakim (Dan. 1:1). At that time Nebuchadnezzar carried to Babylon temple treasures and some captives who were nobles. Daniel and his three friends were among these captives. After three years Jehoiakim rebelled against the Babylonians (II Kings 24:1).

Nebuchadnezzar's second siege of Jerusalem was in 597 B. C. It was probably at this time that he bound the rebellious Jehoiakim in fetters to take him back to Babylon (II Chron. 36:6). Apparently, however, he killed Jehoiakim instead, casting his body outside the walls of Jerusalem as prophesied by Jeremiah (Jer. 22:18-19; 36:30). Jehoiakim's son Jehoiachin then ascended the throne of Judah, but after three months Nebuchadnezzar deported the young king and others, including Ezekiel, to Babylon.

When Nebuchadnezzar invaded Judah the third time, he completely destroyed Jerusalem and Solomon's temple. Most of the remaining people of the land were taken captive to Babylon including the last king of Judah, Zedekiah, another son of Josiah. The Babylonians killed Zedekiah's sons before him, then put out his eyes and carried him captive to Babylon.

In addition to his military career, Nebuchadnezzar was a great builder, and his capital city of Babylon was a place of great splendor. He fortified the city heavily, building a series of double walls; he also constructed streets, canals, temples, and palaces. His most famous works were the hanging gardens built in terraces to please his wife who missed the hills of her native land of Media. The hanging gardens of Babylon were one of the "seven wonders of the ancient world."

Sometime during his reign, Nebuchadnezzar constructed a great image of gold, about ninety feet high. He then ordered his subjects to fall down and worship the image at the dedication ceremony. Anyone who refused would be thrown into a fiery furnace. Daniel's three friends—Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego—refused to worship the image. When they were saved miraculously from the fiery furnace, Nebuchadnezzar acknowledged once again the Most High God.

1. What did Nebuchadnezzar make? (Dan. 3:1)
2. What was the height and breadth? (Dan. 3:1)
3. Who were gathered together for the dedication of the image? (Dan. 3:2-3)
4. What were the people commanded to do when they heard the sound of the musical instruments? (Dan. 3:4-5)
5. What was the penalty for disobedience? (Dan. 3:6)
6. Certain Chaldeans accused whom of disregarding the king's command? (Dan. 3:8, 12)
7. When the three young men were brought before the king, what did they say about their God? (Dan. 3:16-17)
8. Even if God did not deliver them, what would they not do? (Dan. 3:18)

9. What did Nebuchadnezzar then command should be done to the furnace? (Dan. 3:19)
10. Who were commanded to bind the three men? (Dan. 3:20)
11. What happened to the men who cast Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego into the furnace? (Dan. 3:22)
12. What did Nebuchadnezzar see in the midst of the furnace? Describe the fourth man. (Dan. 3:23-25)
13. What did Nebuchadnezzar say to Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego? (Dan. 3:26)
14. What was the appearance of the three men when they came out of the furnace? (Dan. 3:27)
15. Whom did Nebuchadnezzar bless, and who did he say delivered the three men? (Dan. 3:28)
16. What decree did Nebuchadnezzar make? (Dan. 3:29)
17. How did the king reward the three Jews? (Dan. 3:30)

LESSON 6

BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST

Dan. 5

INTRODUCTION. After Daniel had been in Babylonian captivity for nearly seventy years, Belshazzar, the last king of Babylon, hosted a drunken feast for a thousand lords. The king and his guests drank from the gold and silver vessels brought to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar from the temple in Jerusalem. Suddenly, a hand wrote the words

Mene Mene Tekel Upharsin

on the wall of the palace. When no one could understand the message, the queen (queen mother) remembered Daniel, and he was brought to Belshazzar to interpret.

A. BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST

1. While Belshazzar and his thousand lords drank wine from the vessels taken out of the temple in Jerusalem, they praised the _____ of gold, silver, brass (bronze), iron, wood, and stone. (Dan. 5:4)
2. In the same hour the _____ of a man's hand wrote on the wall of the palace. (Dan. 5:5)
3. Describe the king when he witnessed this event: (Dan. 5:6)
 - a. his _____ changed
 - b. his _____ troubled him
 - c. his _____ were loosed
 - d. his _____ smote (knocked) against each other

4. He promised that anyone who could read the writing would: (Dan. 5:7)

- a. be clothed in _____
- b. have a chain of _____ about his neck
- c. be the _____ ruler in the kingdom

Note. Belshazzar's father Nabonidus was the actual king at this time. However, when Nabonidus left Babylon on a military expedition, he placed his son Belshazzar in charge of the kingdom. Therefore, since Belshazzar was the second-in-command, he could only offer the third position as a reward.

5. All the king's _____ could not read the writing or make known the interpretation. (Dan. 5:8)

B. DANIEL READS AND INTERPRETS THE WRITING. While Belshazzar was greatly troubled because of the mysterious writing on the wall, the queen entered the banquet hall. This queen was probably the queen mother or perhaps the widow of Nebuchadnezzar who had died some years previously. She told Belshazzar there was a man in the kingdom who had understanding and wisdom, and Nebuchadnezzar had made him master of the magicians, astrologers (enchanters), Chaldeans and soothsayers. Since an excellent spirit, knowledge, understanding, interpreting dreams and solving riddles were found in this man Daniel, he should be called, and he would give the interpretation. Daniel was then brought before Belshazzar who promised Daniel the same rewards he had promised his wise men (Dan. 5:10-16).

1. Daniel told the king to keep his _____ and give his _____ to another, but he would read and interpret the writing. (Dan. 5:17)

2. He told Belshazzar, the Most High God gave Nebuchadnezzar a _____, _____, _____, and _____. (Dan. 5:18)

3. Daniel then described the majesty of Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom: (Dan. 5:19)

- a. all people, nations, and languages _____ and _____ before him
- b. whom he wished he _____ and whom he wished he kept _____
- c. whom he wished he _____, and whom he wished he _____

4. Daniel said when Nebuchadnezzar became too proud, he was driven from his throne for a period of time until he humbled himself and acknowledged that the Most High God rules in the kingdoms of men (Dan. 5:20-21). Though Belshazzar knew this: (Dan. 5:22-23)

- a. he had not _____ his heart
- b. he had _____ up himself against the Lord of heaven
- c. he had drunk _____ from the vessels of the Lord's house
- d. he had praised the _____ of silver, gold, brass (bronze), iron, wood and stone which do not see, hear, or know
- e. he had not glorified _____

5. Daniel then read the writing and gave the interpretation: (Dan. 5:25-28)

- a. **Mene** - God has _____ thy kingdom and finished it
- b. **Tekel** - you are _____ in the balances and found wanting
- c. **Peres** - your kingdom is _____ and given to the Medes and Persians

Note. *Upharsin* is the word in verse 25, rather than *Peres*. *U* means and; *Pharsin* is the plural form of *Peres*.

6. Belshazzar then gave the command and Daniel was clothed with _____, given a _____, and proclaimed the _____ ruler in the kingdom. (Dan. 5:29)

7. That night Belshazzar was _____ and _____ received the kingdom. (Dan. 5:30-31)

Note. On October 12, 539 B. C., the city of Babylon fell to the Medo-Persians, the second kingdom in Nebuchadnezzar's dream represented by the breast and arms of silver. Belshazzar who was engaged in a riotous banquet was slain the same night.

C. THE BABYLONIAN KINGDOM

1. Daniel stated a truth about God and the kingdom of men to both Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar.
 - a. To Nebuchadnezzar: He _____ kings and _____ up kings. (Dan. 2:21)
 - b. To Belshazzar: the Most High God rules in the kingdom of men, and He appoints over it whomever He _____. (Dan. 5:21)
2. In the prophecy of Jeremiah to Judah and Jerusalem:
 - a. The Lord called Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, his _____ who would destroy them. (Jer. 25:8-9)
 - b. Judah would serve the king of Babylon for _____. (Jer. 25:11)
 - c. At the end of seventy years, the Lord would punish the king of _____ and that nation for their iniquity. (Jer. 25:12)
3. This prophecy of Jeremiah spoken against Babylon was fulfilled the night when Belshazzar was slain and the Babylonian kingdom was given to the _____ and _____. (Dan. 5:28)



LESSON 7

DANIEL IN THE LION'S DEN

Dan. 6

INTRODUCTION. Darius the Mede was appointed governor of Babylon by Cyrus, king of the Medes and Persians who was the conqueror of Babylon in 539 B. C. Darius appointed 120 princes or satraps over the kingdom, and placed three presidents or governors over the satraps of whom Daniel was one.

Because Darius favored Daniel for his excellence, the other two presidents (governors) were jealous and attempted to discredit Daniel. When they could find no fault in Daniel, they tricked Darius into making a royal law that no one could make a petition of any god or man for thirty days except of the king (Darius). Anyone disobeying this law would be cast into a den of lions.

In spite of this law, Daniel courageously continued to pray to God three times daily at his window which was opened toward Jerusalem. The jealous men reported this to Darius, who was greatly displeased by the trickery and tried to find a way to deliver Daniel. However, since the law of the Medes and Persians could not be changed, Daniel was cast into the den of lions.

Darius spent the night fasting, and very early in the morning went to the lions' den to determine Daniel's fate. When Daniel emerged unhurt, the king commanded that the men who had accused Daniel be cast into the den of lions. Before they reached the bottom of the den, the lions broke them in pieces.

A. THE DECREE OF DARIUS

1. Darius organized his kingdom by appointing 120 princes or satraps and over them three presidents or governors. As one of these governors, Daniel distinguished himself above the others because: (Dan. 6:3)
 - a. he was the oldest
 - b. he was a Jew
 - c. he had an excellent spirit in him

2. The presidents (governors) and princes (satraps) sought to find some occasion (charge) against Daniel concerning the kingdom, but could not because he was: (Dan. 6:4)
 - a. faithful
 - b. without error
 - c. without fault
3. The men decided the only charge they could find against Daniel would concern: (Dan. 6:5)
 - a. the law of the Babylonians
 - b. the law of his God
 - c. the law of the Medes and Persians
4. These men proposed a law that whoever asked a petition of any man or god for thirty days except the king would be: (Dan. 6:6-7)
 - a. cast into prison
 - b. cast into a den of lions
 - c. killed with a sword
5. According to the law of the Medes and Persians, when Darius signed the decree: (Dan. 6:8-9)
 - a. it could not be changed
 - b. it could not be changed for thirty days
 - c. it could not be changed for one year
6. Although Daniel knew the law was signed, he: (Dan. 6:10)
 - a. opened his windows toward Jerusalem
 - b. kneeled three times a day and prayed
 - c. gave thanks to God
7. When the men observed Daniel praying, they went to the king and said that Daniel: (Dan. 6:13)
 - a. had no regard for the king
 - b. had no regard for the decree (law)
 - c. made his petition three times a day

8. The king was greatly displeased with himself and: (Dan. 6:14)
 - a. angered with Daniel
 - b. set his heart to deliver Daniel
 - c. labored till the sun went down to save Daniel
9. When the men reminded Darius that the law could not be changed, the king: (Dan. 6:15-16)
 - a. cast Daniel into the den of lions
 - b. told Daniel his God would deliver him
 - c. prayed to his pagan god
10. The mouth of the lions' den was: (Dan. 6:17)
 - a. covered with a stone
 - b. sealed with the king's signet ring
 - c. sealed with the signets of the king's lords
11. That night the king: (Dan. 6:18)
 - a. fasted
 - b. allowed no music
 - c. did not sleep
12. In the morning the king hastened to the den and cried in a loud, mournful voice, O Daniel, servant of the living God: (Dan. 6:19-20)
 - a. are you alive?
 - b. did my gods save you?
 - c. was your God able to deliver you from the lions?
13. Daniel said to the king, O king, live forever: (Dan. 6:21-22)
 - a. my God sent his angel and shut the lions' mouths
 - b. I am not hurt for I am innocent before him
 - c. I have done you, O king, no wrong
14. The king was glad and commanded that Daniel be taken from the den, and Daniel: (Dan. 6:23)
 - a. was slightly injured
 - b. had no injury because he believed (trusted) in his God
 - c. cursed his accusers

15. The king commanded that Daniel's accusers and their wives and children be cast into the den, and: (Dan. 6:24)
- a. the lions overpowered them
 - b. the lions broke their bones before they came to the bottom
 - c. the lions did not harm them

B. DARIUS' MESSAGE TO ALL THE PEOPLE, NATIONS, AND LANGUAGES

1. Darius made a decree that in his kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel. How did Darius describe Daniel's God? (Dan. 6:26-27)
- a. a _____ God and _____ forever
 - b. his kingdom shall not be _____
 - c. his dominion shall endure unto the _____
 - d. He _____ and _____
 - e. He works _____ and _____ in heaven and earth
 - f. He delivered Daniel from the _____ of the lions
2. So Daniel _____ in the reigns of Darius and Cyrus. (Dan. 6:28)



LESSON 8

JONAH AND THE GREAT FISH

Jonah 1; 2; 3

INTRODUCTION. Jonah was a prophet to the northern kingdom of Israel. His home was Gath Hepher, a border town in the territory of Zebulun. He prophesied, by the word of the Lord, the expansion of the borders of Israel during the days of Jeroboam II who reigned over Israel from 793-753 B. C. (II Kings 14:23-29). Jeroboam II was the great-grandson of Jehu, the king who destroyed the house of Ahab and cleansed the northern kingdom of Baal worship.

One day the Lord told Jonah to go to Nineveh, the great capital city of Assyria, and "cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me" (Jonah 1:2). Nineveh was located on the Tigris River about 225-250 miles north of Babylon. The city was surrounded by a high, massive wall about eight miles in circumference. The population at the time of Jonah's mission was 120,000 or more (Jonah 4:11).

The cruel Assyrian empire had inflicted great suffering on the peoples of the world for centuries. Their first conflict with Israel had occurred one hundred years earlier during the reigns of Ahab and Jehu. Jonah, therefore, was reluctant to go to Nineveh to preach a message of repentance to Israel's enemy. Jonah instead attempted to run away from God.

The book of Jonah can be summarized as follows:

- Chapter 1 - Jonah runs from God
- Chapter 2 - Jonah runs to God
- Chapter 3 - Jonah runs with God
- Chapter 4 - Jonah runs ahead of God

A. JONAH RUNS FROM GOD (Jonah 1)

- | | |
|--|------------------------|
| 1. _____ The Lord told Jonah to go to Nineveh and cry against it because of their (1:2) | a. perish |
| 2. _____ Jonah fled from the presence of the Lord, went to Joppa, and found a ship going to (1:3) | b. broken |
| 3. _____ The Lord sent a great wind and a mighty tempest on the sea so that the ship was about to be (1:4) | c. sea and dry land |
| 4. _____ The mariners were afraid and cried to their gods, casting forth from the ship the (1:5) | d. wickedness |
| 5. _____ Jonah was in the innermost part of the ship and was (1:5) | e. Hebrew |
| 6. _____ The shipmaster told him to call on his God that they not (1:6) | f. raging |
| 7. _____ The sailors cast lots to determine who was responsible for the trouble, and the lot fell upon (1:7) | g. Tarshish |
| 8. _____ When the sailors asked Jonah his occupation, where he came from, his country, his people, he said he was a (1:8-9) | h. 3 days and 3 nights |
| 9. _____ Jonah said he feared the God of heaven who made the (1:9) | i. calm |
| 10. _____ Jonah told the sailors to cast him into the sea and it would be (1:11-12) | j. wares (cargo) |
| 11. _____ Although the men rowed hard to get back to the land, the sea became more tempestuous, so they cast Jonah into the sea which ceased its (1:13-15) | k. fast asleep |
| 12. _____ The Lord prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah, and he was in its belly (1:17) | l. Jonah |

B. JONAH RUNS TO GOD (Jonah 2). Jonah prayed to God while in the belly of the fish, describing his terror and helplessness. The prophet who ran from God then ran to God in repentance with thanksgiving, recognizing that salvation comes from the Lord God.

vs. 1: *Jonah prays to God.*

vs. 2: *Jonah earnestly cries to the Lord.*

vs. 3: *Jonah recognizes his condition is a judgment of God.* The Lord cast him into the deep, the heart of the seas, and the _____ and _____ passed over him.

vs. 4: *Jonah expresses repentance and hope.*

vs. 5: *Jonah experiences discomfort in the fish's belly.* The _____ was around him and _____ were wrapped around his head.

vs. 6: *Jonah feels trapped and near death.*

vs. 7: *Jonah remembers God in prayer.* When his soul _____, he remembered the Lord.

vs. 8: *Jonah realizes he has followed his own way rather than God's way.*

vs. 9: *Jonah determines to give thanks and pay his vows to God.* _____ is of the Lord.

vs. 10: The Lord spoke to the fish and it _____ Jonah on the dry land.

Note. God *prepared* this fish that swallowed Jonah and vomited him out on dry land. God worked a miracle preserving Jonah's life for three days and nights in the belly of this fish in order to accomplish his purpose.

C. JONAH RUNS WITH GOD (Jonah 3). The Lord told Jonah the second time to go to Nineveh and preach the message that "I bid thee." So Jonah ran with God.

1. What was the message Jonah preached? (Jonah 3:4)

2. What did the people of Nineveh do? (Jonah 3:5)

3. What did the king do? (Jonah 3:6)

4. The king decreed that the people should fast, cover themselves with sackcloth, and cry mightily to God. He also decreed that everyone turn from his _____ way and _____. (Jonah 3:8)
5. What did God do when He saw their works and that they turned from their evil way? (Jonah 3:10)

D. JONAH RUNS AHEAD OF GOD (Jonah 4). Although Jonah's preaching caused the people of Nineveh to repent, he was displeased because God in his mercy spared the city. As Jonah pouted outside the city walls, God *prepared* a plant to grow overnight and shade Jonah from the heat and sun. Jonah was very grateful. God then *prepared* a worm which destroyed the plant. Next He *prepared* a sultry wind to discomfort Jonah so that Jonah fainted and said he wished to die. Jonah was angry that a plant was destroyed, and angry that a city was not destroyed. God rebuked Jonah and asked, if he had pity for a plant he had not tended nor made to grow, should not God have pity for the great city and its people whom He created?

E. THE MESSAGE OF THE BOOK OF JONAH. The book of Jonah is not just a fish story. The book reveals two great truths about God.

1. *God is compassionate.* He is willing to save all who come to him in repentance, even heathen nations like the people of Nineveh who were guilty of great evil. God is longsuffering, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to _____. (II Pet. 3:9)
2. *God's love and mercy is universal.* His greatest gift of love is his son Jesus Christ who died for the sins of the world. Jesus declared: "...as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" (Matt. 12:40). To what was Jesus referring?



LESSON 9

NEHEMIAH REBUILDS THE WALLS

Neh. 1; 2; 4:1-18; 6:15-16

INTRODUCTION. When Cyrus, king of the Medo-Persian Empire, conquered Babylon in 539 B. C., he issued a decree allowing the deported peoples throughout his empire to return to their homelands. The first group of Jews to return to Palestine was led by Zerubbabel, a descendant of David. The main purpose of this return, besides resettling the land, was to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem. Cyrus gave to these returning exiles 5400 vessels of gold and silver that Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple and put in the house of his gods in Babylon. The new (second) temple was completed and dedicated to God in 515 B. C. (Ezra 1; 6:15).

A second group of Jews returned to Palestine in 458 B. C. The leader of this second return was Ezra, a scribe and descendant of Aaron. Ezra had set his heart to seek the Lord, and his mission was to teach the laws and statutes to the Jews who had returned to Palestine (Ezra 7:1-10).

In 445 B. C., in the twentieth year of the reign of the Persian king Artaxerxes, Nehemiah, a Jew and high official in the king's court, learned that conditions back in Jerusalem were deplorable—the people were in great affliction and the walls of the city broken down. The king appointed Nehemiah as governor of Judah and gave him permission to lead a third group of Jews back to Jerusalem with the authority to rebuild the walls of the city (Neh. 1-2:8; 5:14).

A. NEHEMIAH'S SORROW

1. When some men from Judah came to Nehemiah at the palace in Persia, they reported that the remnant (survivors) in Judah were in great affliction

(distress) and reproach, for the _____ of Jerusalem was broken down, and the _____ burned. (Neh. 1:3)

2. When Nehemiah heard these words, he _____ and _____
for many days and _____ and _____ to God. (Neh.
1:4)

3. Nehemiah's prayer:

- a. First, he praised God for keeping his covenant and _____
with those that love him. (Neh. 1:5)
- b. Nehemiah prayed _____ and _____ for the children
of Israel. (Neh. 1:6)
- c. Next, he confessed the _____ of the children of Israel, and
those of himself and his father's house. (Neh. 1:6)
- d. They had not kept the _____ God had given to
Moses. (Neh. 1:7)
- e. God had told Moses, if the people sinned, God would _____
them abroad among the nations. (Neh. 1:8)
- f. If the people returned to God, He would _____ them from
the farthest part and bring them to the place He had chosen. (Neh. 1:9)
- g. God had redeemed the people by his great _____ and strong
hand. (Neh. 1:10)
- h. Nehemiah pleaded with God to hear his prayer and grant him _____
in the sight of this man (the king). (Neh. 1:11)

4. Nehemiah was the king's _____. (Neh. 1:11)

Note. The position of cupbearer was one of great honor. Tasting the king's wine to make certain it was not poisoned was one of the chief duties of the cupbearer.

B. NEHEMIAH'S COMMISSION TO REBUILD THE CITY. When Nehemiah took wine to the king after learning of the conditions in Jerusalem, the king questioned Nehemiah about his sad countenance. Nehemiah prayed again, then asked permission of the king to go to Jerusalem to rebuild the city. The king granted Nehemiah's request, provided an armed escort, and gave him letters authorizing his passage through the empire. The documents also authorized the keeper of the king's forest to provide Nehemiah with timber for his building projects (Neh. 2:1-10).

After Nehemiah had been in Jerusalem for three days without revealing his mission to anyone, he went out at night to inspect the walls of the city. Then he went to the Jewish leaders and proposed that the work of rebuilding commence at once, giving two reasons ensuring success: the hand of God was good upon him, and also the words the king had spoken to him. The rulers of Jerusalem

then said, let us rise up and _____. (Neh. 2:18)

C. OPPOSITION. With the cooperation of the leaders of the Jews, Nehemiah then organized the work for the construction project. Besides voluntary labor from the people of surrounding villages, the residents of Jerusalem repaired the section of walls opposite their own homes (Neh. 3).

Some of the rulers of surrounding territories felt threatened by the restoration of fortifications at Jerusalem and opposed the project. Sanballat, a Horonite (secular history states he was governor of Samaria), Tobiah, an Ammonite, and Geshem, an Arabian, first ridiculed the Jews in their labors (Neh. 2:19; 4:1).

1. Sanballat mocked the Jews calling them _____, asking if they could fortify themselves, offer sacrifices, complete the work in a day, revive stones from heaps of rubbish? (Neh. 4:1-2)
2. Tobiah mocked the Jews, saying a _____ could break down their stone wall. (Neh. 4:3)
3. Nehemiah then prayed, asking God to notice how the workers were despised. He begged God to avenge their cause, for their enemies had provoked God to anger (Neh. 4:4-5). Despite the opposition, how were the people able to build the wall unto half the height? (Neh. 4:6)
4. Next Sanballat and his allies conspired to do what to stop the work? (Neh. 4:7-8)
6. Nehemiah and the builders prayed and did what? (Neh. 4:9)
7. As the workers carried their burdens and built the wall with one hand, what did they hold in their other hand? (Neh. 4:17-18)

D. FURTHER OPPOSITION. When their ridicule and threat of armed intervention failed to stop the work, Sanballat and his allies attempted to trick Nehemiah to parley with them outside the city. Four times Nehemiah declined. The fifth time Sanballat threatened Nehemiah in a letter, accusing him of rebelling against the Persian king and suggesting that the rumors of his treason might spread to the palace. Nehemiah replied that the rumors were invented in Sanballat's heart (Neh. 6:1-8).

1. Again Nehemiah prayed and asked God to _____ his hands. (Neh. 6:9)

2. How long did it take to rebuild the walls? (Neh. 6:15)

Note. This was a remarkable endeavor, made possible by Nehemiah's faith and trust in God, and his determination, persistence, and courage.

3. When the enemies of the Jews heard that the walls were finished, they were _____, for they perceived that the work was done by God. (Neh. 6:16)

CONCLUSION. The remainder of the book of Nehemiah deals with Nehemiah's administration of civil matters and his religious and social reforms. Nehemiah went back to Persia after twelve years in the thirty-second year of the reign of Artaxerxes, then returned to Jerusalem again some time later and continued with his religious and social reforms (Neh. 5:14; 13:6-7). Although Nehemiah had spent most of his life in a foreign land, he was fully devoted to God and a true worshipper. He was a planner and organizer, a man of wisdom, determination, persistence, and courage. Nehemiah prayed often and the last words of the book record a petition to God:

_____ me, O my God, for good. (Neh. 13:31)



LESSON 10

ESTHER BECOMES QUEEN

Esth. 1; 2

INTRODUCTION. In 539 B. C., Cyrus, king of the Medes and Persians, conquered the Babylonians. Thus the great Babylonian kingdom, represented by the head of gold in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, ended and was succeeded by the Medo-Persian Empire, the silver breast and arms.

Cyrus permitted the deported peoples in his conquered territory to return to their homelands. Many Jews returned to Palestine to once again live in their "promised land" and rebuild their temple and cities, fulfilling the prophecy of Jeremiah (Ezra 1:1-4; Jer. 25:11-12). Not all Jews returned to Palestine, however; some remained in the lands to which they had been carried as captives. Throughout the years they had established new homes and businesses, becoming prosperous.

The book of Esther takes place in Shushan, the Persian capital, during the reign of Ahasuerus, probably the Persian king known in history as Xerxes, who ruled Persia from 485 to 465 B. C. During his reign the empire was at its zenith and encompassed the known world. Esther was a brave and courageous young Jewish girl who became queen of Persia and saved her people from disaster.

ESTHER 1. The book of Esther opens in the third year of the reign of Ahasuerus while he was engaged in a seven-day, royal, drunken feast. On the seventh day of the feast Ahasuerus commanded his beautiful wife, Vashti, to come to the feast in order to display her beauty in an immoral way before his drunken guests. Vashti refused the king's request, and for her disobedience she was banished as queen.

A. THE KINGDOM OF AHASUERUS

1. Ahasuerus reigned over 127 provinces from _____ to _____.
(Esth. 1:1)
2. Ahasuerus sat on his throne in his palace in _____. (Esth. 1:2)

3. In the third year of his reign, he made a _____ for all his nobles and princes. (Esth. 1:3)
4. For 180 days he showed the _____ of his glorious kingdom and his excellent _____. (Esth. 1:4)
5. When these days were completed, he made a feast lasting _____ for all the people in Shushan in the court of the garden of the palace. (Esth. 1:5)
6. In the court of the garden were: (Esth. 1:6).
 - a. white and blue hangings (curtains) fastened with cords of fine linen and purple to _____ and _____
 - b. beds (couches) of _____ and _____ on a pavement of colored marble
7. Drinks were served in vessels of _____ with royal wine in abundance, but according to the law no one was compelled to drink. (Esth. 1:7-8)
8. On the seventh day when the king's heart was _____ with _____, he commanded his servants to bring Vashti before him. (Esth. 1:10)
9. He commanded Vashti to come before him with her _____ to show the people her beauty. (Esth. 1:11)
10. Queen Vashti _____ the king's commandment; therefore he was furious, and removed her from her royal position. (Esth. 1:12)

ESTHER 2. Ahasuerus then ordered that all the "fair young virgins" of the kingdom be brought to the palace in Shushan in order for him to choose a replacement for Vashti. One of the young women taken to the palace was Esther, a Jewish girl, who was "fair and beautiful." Esther was adopted when her parents died by her cousin Mordecai who was from the tribe of Benjamin and an official at the court. Mordecai instructed Esther not to reveal her Jewish ancestry to the king or his servants.

Esther found favor in the sight of King Ahasuerus, and he loved her more than all the young maidens. In the seventh year of his reign, Ahasuerus "set the royal crown upon her head," making Esther his queen. Meanwhile Mordecai overheard two men plotting to murder Ahasuerus. He passed the information on to Esther who warned the king. The conspirators were executed, and Mordecai's service was recorded in the official book of the court.

B. THE NEW QUEEN OF PERSIA. Match the name of the character to the statements below.

- | | | |
|--------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| a. Ahasuerus | c. Mordecai | e. Vashti |
| b. Esther | d. Hege (Hegai) | f. Nebuchadnezzar |

1. _____ He appointed officers in all the provinces to bring to the palace in Shushan all the beautiful young women. (Esth. 2:2-3)
2. _____ He was the king's chamberlain and keeper of the women. (Esth. 2:3)
3. _____ He was a Jew of the tribe of Benjamin. (Esth. 2:5)
4. _____ This Babylonian king had carried away from Jerusalem the ancestor of Mordecai. (Esth. 2:5-6)
5. _____ He brought up his orphaned relative as his own daughter. (Esth. 2:7)
6. _____ She was a fair and beautiful young woman. (Esth. 2:7)
7. _____ Esther pleased him when she was taken to the king's palace, and he treated her kindly. (Esth. 2:8-9)
8. _____ She was presented to King Ahasuerus in the seventh year of his reign. (Esth. 2:16)
9. _____ He loved Esther above all the women. (Esth. 2:17)
10. _____ The king set the royal crown upon her head. (Esth. 2:17)
11. _____ Esther replaced her as queen. (Esth. 2:17)
12. _____ She did not reveal her family and people as commanded by Mordecai. (Esth. 2:20)
13. _____ He told Esther about a plot against the king. (Esth. 2:21-22)
14. _____ His deed was written in the book of the chronicles of the king. (Esth. 2:22-23)

LESSON 11

HAMAN'S PLOT

Esth. 3; 4

INTRODUCTION. Vashti, the queen of Persia, was removed from her position when she refused to obey the king's command to parade her beauty before his drunken guests. As a result beautiful young women from all over the empire were brought to the palace in Shushan in order for King Ahasuerus to choose a new queen. Esther, a young Jewish woman, pleased the king more than any of the beauties brought before him, and he placed the royal crown upon her head. Sometime later Esther faced a great dilemma requiring immense courage on her part.

ESTHER 3. After Esther became queen of Persia, Ahasuerus appointed Haman as his chief advisor. The king commanded his servants to bow to Haman, but Mordecai, Esther's cousin and guardian, refused to pay homage to Haman, thus incurring his wrath. Haman determined to vent his anger on the whole Jewish population, not just on Mordecai. With the permission of Ahasuerus, Haman sent orders throughout the kingdom in the twelfth year of Ahasuerus that on a certain day all Jews were to be killed and their properties confiscated. The day selected for the slaughter was determined by casting lots—*Pur*.

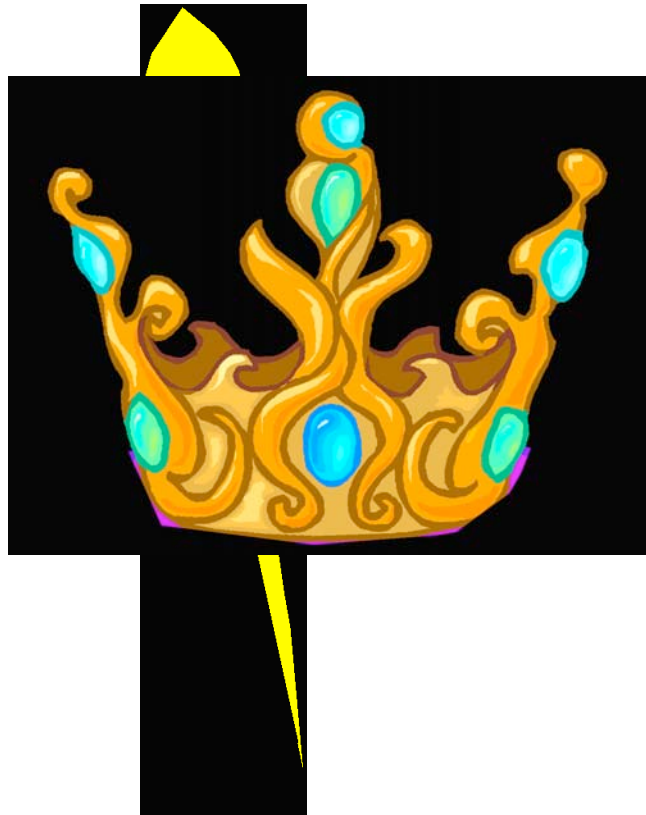
1. Ahasuerus, the king, promoted _____ above all princes. (Esth. 3:1)
2. The king commanded his servants to _____ and do reverence (pay homage) to Haman. (Esth. 3:2)
3. _____ did not bow nor do reverence (pay homage) to Haman. (Esth. 3:2)
4. When Haman saw that Mordecai did not bow nor do reverence (pay homage), he was full of _____. (Esth. 3:5)
5. Haman then sought to _____ all the Jews throughout the kingdom—the people of Mordecai. (Esth. 3:6)

6. Haman told the king a certain people did not keep the king's laws; therefore, he asked the king to pass a law to destroy these people, and he would pay _____ to the king's treasury. (Esth. 3:8-9)
7. The king gave Haman his _____ and told him to do what seemed good to him. (Esth. 3:10-11)
8. On the _____ letters were written to all the provinces and sealed with the king's ring. (Esth. 3:12)
9. The letters said to destroy, slay, cause to perish (annihilate) all Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day, the _____. (Esth. 3:13)
10. This day had been chosen by casting _____ or lot. (Esth. 3:7)

ESTHER 4. The decree devised by Haman and sealed with the king's ring caused great mourning throughout the empire by the Jews who fasted, wept, and clothed themselves in sackcloth. Esther was informed that her cousin Mordecai was at the king's gate dressed in sackcloth with ashes. First she sent clothing to him, but he did not accept it. Esther then sent a messenger to Mordecai to inquire about his distress. Mordecai told the servant to inform Esther of Haman's scheme and to charge her to intercede with the king on behalf of her people the Jews.

1. Esther sent word to Mordecai that anyone approaching the king in his inner court who had not been called, according to the law would be put to _____. (Esth. 4:11)
2. However, If the king held out his _____, then that person would live. (Esth. 4:11)
3. Esther had not been called to go in to the king for _____. (Esth. 4:11)
4. Mordecai's answer to Esther was:
 - a. Don't think you will _____ in the king's house anymore than all the other Jews. (Esth. 4:13)

- b. If you hold your peace at this time, then deliverance will arise to the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will _____. (Esth. 4:14)
- c. Who knows whether you are come to the _____ for such a time as this? (Esth. 4:14)
5. Esther sent word to Mordecai to gather all the Jews in Shushan together to fast for her for _____ days, and she and her servants would do the same. (Esth. 4:15-16)
6. Esther said she would then go to the king, which was not according to the law, and if "I _____, I _____." (Esth. 4:16)



LESSON 12

ESTHER SAVES THE JEWS

Esth. 5; 6; 7; 8; 9

INTRODUCTION. Ahasuerus, the Persian king, appointed Haman his chief advisor and ordered all of his servants to bow to Haman. Mordecai, a Jew and an official in the palace, refused to pay homage to Haman and thus incurred his wrath. Haman, in his anger, planned to destroy all Jews in the kingdom, not just Mordecai, and received authority from the king for his revenge.

When Mordecai heard about Haman's evil plot, he sent word to Esther, his adopted daughter, to intercede with the king on behalf of her people the Jews. Ahasuerus had chosen Esther, a young and beautiful Jewish woman, to be his queen to replace Vashti who had disobeyed him. However, Esther had not revealed to Ahasuerus her Jewish ancestry. Esther agreed to speak to the king to spare the lives of the Jews. Thus she placed her own life in danger, for she had not been summoned by the king to appear before him.

ESTHER 5. After fasting for three days Esther put on her royal apparel and went to the inner court where the king was sitting on his throne. When the king saw her, he held out his golden sceptre to her, thus indicating his pleasure at her presence. He asked what she desired and said it would be granted her unto the half of the kingdom. Esther invited the king and Haman to a banquet. At the banquet the king again asked Esther the nature of her petition. She invited the king and Haman to another banquet the following day. Haman went home full of pride for the honor bestowed on him, but his joy was marred by the sight of Mordecai at the king's gate.

1. The third day Esther appeared in her royal apparel before the king in the inner court. When the king saw Esther, he held out his golden sceptre to her. What did that symbolize? (Esth. 5:1-2)
2. The king asked Esther what she requested and promised to give her up to half of the kingdom. Whom did Esther invite to a banquet she had prepared? (Esth. 5:3-4)

3. At the banquet, the king again asked Esther what her petition was and again promised her up to half the kingdom. What did Esther request the king and Haman to do the following day? (Esth. 5:7-8)
4. Describe Haman when he left the banquet. (Esth. 5:9)
5. Haman went home and told his friends and wife how only he and the king had been invited to the queen's banquets, but it meant nothing as long as he saw Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate. His wife and friends then suggested he do what? (Esth. 5:14)

ESTHER 6. Meanwhile the king was unable to sleep that night and called for the court records to be read in his presence. Mordecai's part in revealing the assassination plot against Ahasuerus was read (Esth. 2:21-23), and the king learned that Mordecai had not been rewarded for his service. At that moment Haman came to the king to ask permission to hang Mordecai. When the king saw Haman, he asked, "What shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honor?" Believing that the king was referring to him, Haman advised that the man be clothed in royal apparel and led by one of the nobles through the city on the king's own horse.

1. Whom did Ahasuerus order Haman to honor in this manner? (Esth. 6:10-11)
2. Describe Haman after he had honored Mordecai. (Esth. 6:12)

ESTHER 7. At the second banquet, Esther told the king about the plot to destroy the Jews and pleaded with him to spare her life and the lives of her people. Then she named Haman as the one who had planned the mass murder of the Jews. The king arose from the banquet in his wrath and went into the palace garden. Haman, who was terrified, fell upon the couch where Esther was reclining to beg for his life. At that moment Ahasuerus returned to the banquet, and seeing Haman upon Esther's couch, he believed Haman was assaulting her. What did the king then order regarding Haman? (Esth 7:9)

ESTHER 8. Esther then told the king of her relationship to Mordecai. Ahasuerus gave Mordecai his official ring which he had taken from Haman, and Esther placed Mordecai over the household of Haman.

Again Esther approached the king, and again he held out the golden sceptre to her. This time she pleaded that the edict to kill her people might be reversed. Since the law of the Medes and Persians could not be changed, the king authorized Mordecai to issue another decree allowing the Jews to defend themselves on the day appointed for their massacre. The decrees were sealed with the king's ring and dispatched throughout the provinces by couriers riding on the king's swift horses.

1. When Esther asked the king to reverse the order for the Jewish slaughter, what did she tell him? (Esth. 8:6)

2. Describe Mordecai as he went from the king's presence. (Esth. 8:15)

3. Describe the Jews as they received the good news. (Esth. 8:16-17)

ESTHER 9. Upon the appointed day, the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the Jews gathered together in their cities throughout the empire to defend themselves. No one could withstand them, for the princes of the provinces, the governors, and all those that served the king helped the Jews because they feared Mordecai whose fame and power had become greater and greater.

The Jews in the provinces smote all their enemies that day—75,000—and in Shushan the palace the Jews killed 500 men and the ten sons of Haman. When the king asked Esther if she had a further request, she asked that the Jews in Shushan be allowed to attack their enemies the next day also, and that Haman's ten sons be hanged on the gallows. The king commanded that it be done, and the following day the Jews killed another 300 in Shushan. Thus the Jews in the provinces rested the fourteenth day of the month, and those in Shushan rested the fifteenth day.

1. Mordecai and Esther then sent letters to all the Jews in the empire to celebrate yearly the 14th and 15th days of the twelfth month (Adar) as: (Esth. 9:21-22)
 - a. the days the Jews had _____ from their enemies

- b. the month which was turned from sorrow to _____ and
from mourning into a _____
 - c. days of _____ and _____
 - d. days of sending _____ to one another and _____
to the poor
2. These feast days were called what? (Esth. 9:26)

Note. The Jews still celebrate this yearly feast.

ESTHER 10. The acts of Ahasuerus, his power and might, were written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Media and Persia. Mordecai was next (second) to King Ahasuerus and great among the Jews, seeking the good of his people and speaking peace.



LESSON 13

JOB

Job 1; 2; 42:7-17

INTRODUCTION. Job was a patriarch (father and ruler of a family or tribe) who may have lived during the same period of time as Abraham. His home was in the land of Uz. The exact location of Uz is unknown, but it was in the "east" (Job 1:3) near the desert or "wilderness" (Job 1:19). Uz was probably a region east of the Jordan River, bordering the Arabian desert from Edom north to the Euphrates River.

Job was a righteous and wealthy man with seven sons and three daughters, 7000 sheep, 3000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen, 500 female donkeys, and a great household. One day Satan appeared before the Lord making an accusation against Job. He complained that Job was righteous because God had blessed him richly, building a hedge about him to protect him. He then challenged the Lord to "put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face" (Job 1:11). The Lord then permitted Satan to afflict Job, but He did not allow Satan to harm Job himself. Thus the Lord limited Satan's power (Job 1:1-12).

The book of Job is a type of writing called wisdom literature, and it deals with the question, *Why do the righteous suffer?* The introduction to the book (Job 1 and 2) and the conclusion (Job 42:7-17) are written in prose. The remainder of the book is written in the form of an epic (long story) poem.

A. JOB'S CALAMITIES (Job 1:13-22). Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord, and then one day:

1. A messenger came to Job and told him the _____ were plowing and the _____ feeding beside them when the Sabeans took them away and killed the servants. (Job 1:14-15)

2. Another messenger said that fire from God fell from heaven and burned up the _____ and servants. (Job 1:16)
3. Another messenger said the Chaldeans fell upon the _____ and took them away, killing the servants. (Job 1:17)
4. Still another messenger said his _____ and _____ were eating and drinking together when a great wind from the wilderness smote the house, causing it to fall upon the young people, killing them. (Job 1:18-19)
5. Job arose, rent his robe, shaved his head, fell upon the ground and worshipped, saying, "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord" (Job 1:21). What was Job's reaction to these calamities? (Job 1:22)

Note. These calamities brought about by Satan were caused by two evil peoples, the Sabeans and Chaldeans, and two forces of nature, fire from heaven and a great wind from the wilderness.

B. JOB'S AFFLICTION (Job 2:1-10). Satan again presented himself before the Lord. The Lord said to Satan, "Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God...and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause" (Job 2:3).

Satan then scoffed and said, "...put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face" (Job 2:5). The Lord then permitted Satan to afflict Job, but again He limited Satan's power, for he could not take Job's life.

1. Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord and smote Job with _____ from the sole of his foot unto his crown. (Job 2:7)
2. Job's wife told him to renounce God and die, but Job told her she spoke foolishly. He asked, "...shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" In all this Job did not _____ with his lips. (Job 2:9-10)

C. JOB'S FRIENDS (Job 2:11-13). Job was then visited by three friends who came to mourn with him and comfort him. When they saw him they wept and sat with him without speaking for seven days.

D. THE EPIC POEM (Job 3-42:6). The poem contains the speeches of Job, his three friends, and a fourth speaker who appears later in the epic as a bystander. Job's friends argue that God does not afflict the righteous but the wicked. Throughout the ordeal Job maintains his innocence, his righteousness, and his faith in God, but he questions why God has allowed him to suffer so greatly (Job 3-37).

At last the Lord answers Job out of a whirlwind. He contrasts his power and wisdom with the weakness and ignorance of men (Job 38-41).

When the Lord concludes his speech, Job acknowledges God's power and wisdom, confessing he has spoken in ignorance. Job then repents of his attitude acquired during his suffering, trusting God though he still does not understand why he was afflicted (Job 42:1-6).

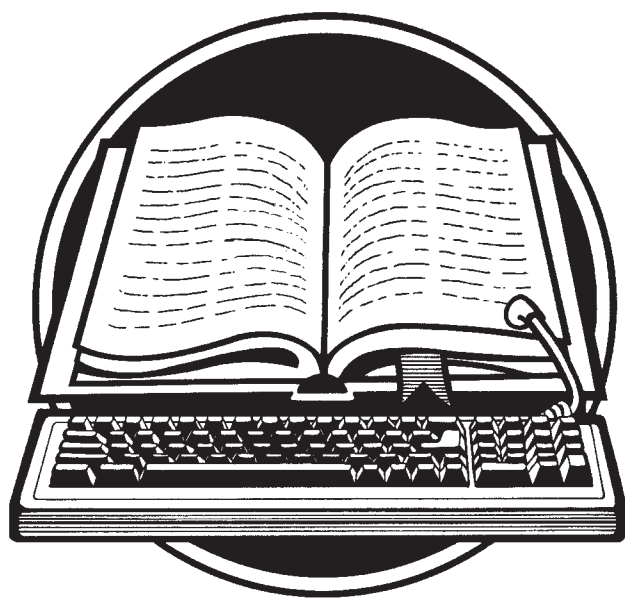
E. JOB'S BLESSING (Job 42:7-17). After Job's confession, God expresses his wrath against Job's three friends, for they have spoken falsely. He commands them to offer a sacrifice and appoints Job to pray for them, for Job has repented. When Job prays for his friends, indicating his forgiveness of them, God delivers Job from his sufferings, restores double his earlier fortunes, and in time Job has a new family.

1. The Lord blessed Job with _____ sheep, _____ camels, _____ yoke of oxen, _____ donkeys, and a new family of _____ sons and _____ daughters. (Job 42:12-13)
2. In all the land were no women found as _____ as Job's daughters, and he gave them an inheritance among their brothers. (Job 42:15)
3. How long did Job live after his ordeal? (Job 42:16-17)

CONCLUSION. The book of Job contains two important messages: both righteous men and evil men prosper and suffer in this life (Matt. 5:45), and the power of Satan to afflict man is limited by God. Job is an example of a person who suffered intensely, did not understand why, but maintained his integrity and faith in God.

Jewish Feasts

<i>Feast of</i>	<i>Month on Jewish Calendar</i>	<i>Day</i>	<i>Corresponding Month</i>	<i>References</i>
Passover	Nisan	14	Mar.-Apr.	Ex. 12:1-14; Matt. 26:17-20
*Unleavened Bread	Nisan	15-21	Mar.-Apr.	Ex. 12:15-20
Firstfruits	Nisan or Sivan	16 6	Mar.-Apr. May-June	Lev. 23:9-14; Num. 28:26
*Pentecost (Harvest or Weeks)	Sivan	6 (50 days after barley harvest)	May-June	Deut. 16:9-12; Acts 2:1
Trumpets, <i>Rosh Hashanah</i>	Tishri	1, 2	Sept.-Oct.	Num. 29:1-6
Day of Atonement, <i>Yom Kippur</i>	Tishri	10	Sept.-Oct.	Lev. 23:26-32; Heb. 9:7
*Tabernacles (Booths or Ingathering)	Tishri	15-22	Sept.-Oct.	Neh. 8:13-18; John 7:2
Dedication (Lights), <i>Hanukkah</i>	Chislev	25 (8 days)	Nov.-Dec.	John 10:22
Purim (Lots)	Adar	14, 15	Feb.-Mar.	Esth. 9:18-32
*The three major feasts for which all males of Israel were required to travel to the Temple in Jerusalem (Ex. 23:14-19).				



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