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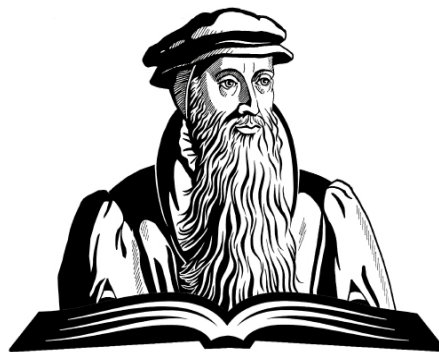
**BIBLE FOR
6TH GRADE STUDENTS**

Old Testament

Lesson 92

Ezra - Return from Captivity

Lecture Presenter: Dr. Daniel Sweetman



The John Knox Institute
of Higher Education

Entrusting our Reformed Inheritance to the Church Worldwide

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Module

BIBLE FOR 6TH GRADE STUDENTS

Old Testament

113 LESSONS

(Additional lessons forthcoming)

77 Lessons presented by Mr. Daniel Van Brugge

36 Lessons presented by Dr. Daniel Sweetman

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|--|---|
| 01. The Bible: The Word of God | 26. Joseph and His Brethren |
| 02. Creation: The Work of an Almighty God | 27. Jacob Comes to Joseph |
| 03. Man: A Special Place in God's Creation | 28. God Heard Their Cry |
| 04. A Gracious Promise | 29. Moses and the Burning Bush |
| 05. Cain and Abel | 30. Let My People God |
| 06. Only Noah Found Grace | 31. Deliverance |
| 07. The Coming Judgment –A Way of Escape | 32. God's Patience with a Complaining People |
| 08. The Noahic Covenant | 33. Keeping the Law: Not to Merit /Thankfulness |
| 09. The Tower of Babel | 34. The Lord Dwells Among His People |
| 10. Abram: Called by God | 35. A Priest for the People |
| 11. Abram Intercedes for Lot | 36. Moses Intercedes for a Rebellious People |
| 12. Melchizadek | 37. Worshiping God Rightly |
| 13. Righteous by Faith | 38. Walk Not According to the World |
| 14. Two Sons | 39. Hearts of Ingratitude |
| 15. Lessons from Lot's Life | 40. Aaron's Rod Blossoming |
| 16. Faithless Abraham – Faithful God | 41. The Serpent of Brass Lifted Up |
| 17. Abraham Tested – God's Provision | 42. Phinehas Turning Away God's Wrath |
| 18. Isaac and Rebekah | 43. Cities of Refuge |
| 19. Jacob: A Better Desire than Esau | 44. A New Generation |
| 20. Jacob the Deceiver | 45. Moses' Last Days |
| 21. God Preserves Jacob | 46. Joshua—God's Promise Fulfilled |
| 22. Jacob Returns to Beth-el | 47. A Promise to Rahab |
| 23. Joseph Loved – Joseph Hated | 48. The Rise of Judges |
| 24. An Eye upon God | 49. Gideon—God with Him |
| 25. Joseph Raised Out of Prison | 50. Samson |

51. Ruth the Moabitess
52. Samuel Judges Israel
53. Israel's First King
54. The Kingdom Established
55. David Anointed the Next King
56. David Hunted by Saul
57. The Last Days of Saul
58. David, the Next King
59. Fetching the Ark
60. Thou Art the Man
61. David's Return to Jerusalem
62. Seven Sons of Saul Killed
63. Genealogies of Israel
64. David Appointed King
65. David's Kingdom Established
66. David Prepares for the Temple
67. David's Departing Instructions
68. Solomon Becomes King
69. Solomon Builds the House of God
70. The Kingdom is Rent
71. A Wicked Divided Kingdom
72. Ahab's Reign and Death
73. Elisha Begins his Work
74. Elisha's Voice is Heard
75. A Succession of Kings
76. Ahaz and Hezekiah
77. The Captivity of Judah
78. Introduction to the Prophets
79. Isaiah's Vision & Song
80. Isaiah Prophecies about Christ
81. The Prophet Jeremiah Called and Sent
82. Jeremiah Opposed and Comforted
83. Ezekiel, the Captive Prophet
84. Ezekiel's Comforting Visions
85. Daniel and His Three Friends
86. Nebuchadnezzar's Forgotten Dream
87. Three Friends in the Fiery Furnace
88. Nebuchadnezzar's Madness
89. The Writing on the Wall
90. Daniel in the Lions' Den
91. Daniel's Visions and Dreams
- 92. Ezra—Return from Captivity**
93. Ezra—Rebuilding the Temple
94. Ezra—The Scribe
95. Nehemiah—Rebuilding the Walls
96. Nehemiah—The Task Completed
97. Esther the Queen
98. Esther—Haman's Plot
99. Esther—The Jews Saved
100. Hosea—The Minor Prophets
101. Joel and the Day of the LORD
102. Amos the Fearless Herdsman
103. Obadiah Prophecies Edom's Fall
104. Jonah's Flight
105. Jonah's Mission
106. Micah Preaches Judgment & Mercy
107. Nahum—A Message for Nineveh
108. Habakkuk's Questions, God's Replies
109. Zephaniah—Threatenings & Promises
110. Haggai Urges Building the Temple
111. Zechariah—The Night Visions
112. Zechariah Prophecies of Christ
113. Malachi—Last Old Testament Prophet

Lesson 92

Ezra - Return from Captivity

The Book of Ezra, chapters 1 through 3

Memory Verse

*“This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying,
Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the LORD of hosts.”*
Zechariah 4:6

The Return

Seventy years of captivity had passed, and it was time for the new Persian King Cyrus to fulfill the prophecy of Isaiah 45:1, where God addresses king Cyrus long before he was born: “Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him... For Jacob my servant’s sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name.” In both 2 Chronicles 36:22-23 and Ezra 1:1-3, we read the dramatic proclamation of King Cyrus: “*Who is there among you of all His people? His God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the Lord God of Israel*”

When God delivered His people from Egypt, they were being severely oppressed. They all longed to be delivered, but Pharaoh would not let them go. When it was God’s time to deliver His people from Babylon, conditions were very different. God had been gracious to them during their captivity. Many of them owned homes, land, farms or businesses in Babylon. In old Persian records we read that some Jews had become very wealthy.

The leaders organizing the return were Zerubbabel, the grandson of former King Jehoiachin, and Joshua, the grandson of the last high priest. We can imagine the kind of objections raised at the meetings which were held: “My crops are nearly ripe.” “My business is prospering.” “Isn’t it a long and dangerous trip?” “What will we find there, isn’t everything destroyed?” “We have synagogues here too, where we may serve God.” “We would be under the same king there as here.”

Consider

Why did anyone return at all? God who had stirred up the spirit of Cyrus to give them permission to go, also stirred up the spirits of His people to leave everything they had gotten in Babylon, and return to the land of their fathers (Ezra 1:5). God filled the hearts of many of the Jews with love for God, for His house, and for the promised Messiah who must be born in that land. Nearly 50,000 Jews, mostly from the tribe of Judah and Benjamin, as well as thousands of priests and Levites, carrying with them the temple treasures which had been returned, began the dangerous and difficult journey across the desert. What a moving moment it must have been when after months of travel, they set foot in the land of their fathers, and when they saw the ruins of Jerusalem and the other towns.

Beginning to Rebuild

After finding the fields and farms of their forefathers, every family began the task of rebuilding. The priests and Levites did not sit still either. Seven months later, when all the returned Jews gathered at Jerusalem for the Day of Atonement and the feast of Tabernacles, they saw piles of lumber and hewn stone laying ready. The Temple Mount had been cleared of rubble and leveled, and in the center of the open space stood an altar. What a solemn moment it must have been when all the assembled Jews watched the high priest approach with a lamb, the first offering after the destruction of the temple. As the sacrifice burned and the choirs sang, the hearts of the people must have been filled with joy and wonder at the goodness of God, their God.

The Gospel in the Old Testament

“Who is there among you of all His people? His God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem,” King Cyrus had announced. As they stood around the altar, how glad and thankful the assembled Israelites were that the Lord had stirred up their hearts to go. Matthew Henry says: “The calls and offers of the gospel are like the proclamation of Cyrus. Those bound under the power of sin may be made free by Jesus Christ; Jesus Christ has opened the way for them. Many that hear this joyful sound choose to sit still in Babylon, but some break through all discouragements, whatever it cost them. They are those whose spirit God has made willing. Thus will the heavenly Canaan be filled, though many perish in Babylon. The gospel offer will not have been made in vain.”

Review Questions

Ezra chapter 1

1. Whose prophecies were fulfilled when Cyrus allowed the Jews to return?
 - a. Isaiah
 - b. Ezekiel
 - c. Jeremiah
 - d. Both a and c
2. What did King Cyrus tell the Jews to do when they returned to their land?
 - a. Rebuild homes and farms
 - b. Rebuild Jerusalem
 - c. Rebuild the temple
 - d. Drive out the Samaritans
3. What did King Cyrus tell the Jews who stayed in Babylon to do?
 - a. Go along with their brethren
 - b. Help them with silver and gold and goods
 - c. Buy their fields and farms
 - d. Serve the Lord in Babylon

4. What other name for Zerubbabel do we read in Ezra 1:8 and Ezra 2:63?

- a. Tirshada
- b. Mithredath
- c. Sheshbazzar
- d. Both a and c

5. How many vessels did King Cyrus return to the Jews? _____

Ezra chapter 2

6. What was the total number of Jews who returned? _____

7. How many servants and maids did they have? _____

8. Why were some Israelites excluded from the priesthood? _____

Ezra chapter 3

9. What did NOT happen in the seventh month?

- a. The people gathered together as one man.
- b. They offered burnt offerings on the new altar.
- c. Fire came down from heaven upon the sacrifice.
- d. They kept the feast of Tabernacles

Discussion Questions

10. How was King Cyrus in Ezra 1 different from Pharaoh in Exodus 5-14? How might King Cyrus have heard of the God of Israel? _____

11. Think of some reasons why God has lists of names and numbers like the ones in Ezra 2, recorded in the Bible? _____

12. What feast was held in the seventh month? What did they commemorate at this time? Why was this fitting? _____
