

Lesson 7 | October 18, 2020

Return From Exile



Study Text: Ezra 1:1–5; 3:8–13; 6:13–18; Nehemiah 2:11 through 3:35; 6:15–16; Malachi 3:1–18

Central Truth: Christians can trust God to keep His covenant promises.

Key Verse: Ezra 1:2

Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem (KJV).

“This is what Cyrus king of Persia says: “The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and he has appointed me to build a temple for him at Jerusalem in Judah” (NIV).

Learning Objectives

- Examine the nature of the opposition God’s people faced in their return from exile.
- Recognize that God has a plan for His people and will equip them to do what He has called them to do.
- Assess what God has called students to do and commit to following His leading.

Introducing the Lesson

Say: Following God isn’t always easy. The events in this lesson came at a joyous yet challenging time for Judah. They had returned from Babylonian exile to Jerusalem. Yet amid this victory they faced opposition. As we will see in the last part of the lesson, they also needed to stop mingling pagan ways with their worship of God. Despite their struggles in return from exile, we can learn much from Judah about serving God in the face of challenges—from without as well as within.

Opening Activity—A Giant Reconstruction Project

Ask: What’s the biggest reconstruction project you have undertaken? What kinds of difficulties did you run into? Did you have help, or was it strictly “do it yourself”? (Give a few minutes for responses.)

Say: Today’s lesson centers on a large reconstruction project: the rebuilding of the temple and the walls of Jerusalem after many decades of neglect. The lesson concludes with a call for restoration of God’s people themselves. **God has a plan for us, just as He did for His people 2,500 years ago. Ezra and Nehemiah came on the scene almost 100 years after the release of Judah from captivity, and God was**

still working on His plan. This reminds us that **God’s plan may not be fulfilled immediately, and we may face opposition.** Yet God will see His plan through to completion. If we are in tune with His will, we can experience the blessings of His promises. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

Although Ezra and Nehemiah appear in the first half of the Old Testament, they record some of the latest events found in these first thirty-nine books of Scripture. This is because **the Old Testament is not chronological but is grouped according to genre, with history following law.** As you study, keep in focus that much sadness lay in the history of God’s people at this point: **Both the Northern and Southern Kingdoms had long-since fallen. The tragic warnings of so many prophets had come to pass.** Yet with the return from Babylonian exile, hope had been renewed. Now, however, just as God’s promises seem to be progressing, more struggles had come.

Part 1—The Temple Rebuilt

God Sovereignly Worked Out His Plan

Ezra 1:1–5

[Ezr 1:1-5 KJV] 1 Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and [put it] also in writing, saying, 2 Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The LORD God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which [is] in Judah. 3 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, (he [is] the God,) which [is] in Jerusalem. 4 And whosoever remaineth in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, beside the freewill offering for the house of God that [is] in Jerusalem. 5 Then rose up the chief of the fathers of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests, and the Levites, with all [them] whose spirit God had raised, to go up to build the house of the LORD which [is] in Jerusalem.

Say: Perhaps you’ve heard the statement, “God moves in mysterious ways His wonders to perform.” This often-quoted adaptation from a poem written by William Cowper in the eighteenth century might be applied to the circumstances in which the exiles from Judah began their task of rebuilding the temple. **God’s sovereignty is a difficult concept to understand. While He is completely sovereign, He allows people to make choices as to serving Him. He also sometimes uses unlikely people and circumstances to accomplish His will.** This was the case in today’s lesson. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

As we begin our look at the post-exilic books, it is helpful to understand the timeline of events. **The first wave of exiles from Judah were taken to Babylon in approximately 605 BC.** The final destruction of Jerusalem and a final wave of exiles

went in 586 BC. In 538 BC, a new Persian regime under the kingship of Cyrus issued a decree that allowed the Jews to return to their land and rebuild their temple. This is recorded in Ezra 1:2–4. It is interesting to note that archaeology has confirmed the biblical text. A statement regarding his actions was found in the excavations of Babylon in 1879; the “Cylinder of Cyrus” was an ancient clay cylinder that was rolled onto wet clay (similar to a rolling pin) to create copies of his achievements. Ezra 1:2–4 records his edict as it was directed specifically to the Jewish people. It is believed that other people groups received such an edict as well.

Scripture gives us the true reason behind the policy of Cyrus, however. The Lord “moved the heart of Cyrus king of Persia” (verse 1, NIV). This is consistent with prophecies of Isaiah and Jeremiah. Isaiah 41:2 and 41:25 both allude to this. Then, in 44:28 and 45:1, Cyrus is mentioned by name. Jeremiah 51:1,11 spoke of the fall of Babylon, which would bring about the return from exile and subsequent restoration. Furthermore, a dominant theme in Jeremiah is that God sovereignly controls all the nations. **Although Cyrus issued the edict, it was clear in Isaiah’s time (two centuries prior to Cyrus) that God would be orchestrating these events.**

[Isa 44:28 KJV] 28 That saith of Cyrus, [He is] my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.

[Isa 45:1 KJV] 1 Thus saith the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut;

God can execute His plan by any means He desires. We must keep in focus His sovereign control of the nations. Our world can seem chaotic and uncertain. Yet we can rest assured that God is in control. This remains true even when opposition rises up against us—as we will see in the Book of Ezra.

Discuss

? Even as the people of Judah were in exile, God had a plan of redemption foretold by the prophets. Have you ever experienced a time when it seemed like God had forgotten about you, yet later you could see how God was working things out? Explain.

? Although Cyrus may have believed that he was making a benevolent policy on his own, he was actually operating within God’s plan. Can you think of any modern parallels where decisions or events seem to have been orchestrated by God even if the participants were not believers?

The Temple Is Completed and Dedicated

Ezra 3:8–13; 6:13–18

[Ezr 3:8-13 KJV] 8 Now in the second year of their coming unto the house of God at Jerusalem, in the second month, began Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and

Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and the remnant of their brethren the priests and the Levites, and all they that were come out of the captivity unto Jerusalem; and appointed the Levites, from twenty years old and upward, to set forward the work of the house of the LORD. 9 Then stood Jeshua [with] his sons and his brethren, Kadmiel and his sons, the sons of Judah, together, to set forward the workmen in the house of God: the sons of Henadad, [with] their sons and their brethren the Levites. 10 And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD, they set the priests in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites the sons of Asaph with cymbals, to praise the LORD, after the ordinance of David king of Israel. 11 And they sang together by course in praising and giving thanks unto the LORD; because [he is] good, for his mercy [endureth] for ever toward Israel. And all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid. 12 But many of the priests and Levites and chief of the fathers, [who were] ancient men, that had seen the first house, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice; and many shouted aloud for joy: 13 So that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people: for the people shouted with a loud shout, and the noise was heard afar off.

[Ezr 6:13-18 KJV] 13 Then Tatnai, governor on this side the river, Shetharboznai, and their companions, according to that which Darius the king had sent, so they did speedily. 14 And the elders of the Jews builded, and they prospered through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo. And they builded, and finished [it], according to the commandment of the God of Israel, and according to the commandment of Cyrus, and Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia. 15 And this house was finished on the third day of the month Adar, which was in the sixth year of the reign of Darius the king. 16 And the children of Israel, the priests, and the Levites, and the rest of the children of the captivity, kept the dedication of this house of God with joy, 17 And offered at the dedication of this house of God an hundred bullocks, two hundred rams, four hundred lambs; and for a sin offering for all Israel, twelve he goats, according to the number of the tribes of Israel. 18 And they set the priests in their divisions, and the Levites in their courses, for the service of God, which [is] at Jerusalem; as it is written in the book of Moses.

Say: Delay is not the same as failure. When the temple was being rebuilt, the opposition was able to convince the king to stop the work. However, **God's will would ultimately be accomplished, and the temple was completed. Sometimes there are unavoidable reasons work is delayed, but God will accomplish His will.** As we surrender to Him, His work will be done in our lives. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

Zerubbabel was a governor of Judah during the restoration of the temple. Under him, the rebuilding of the temple began in earnest and its foundation was laid (Ezra 3:8–13).

Overseeing the work were numerous Levites (the priestly line). There were mixed emotions concerning the completion of the foundations. Many sang to the Lord, proclaiming His goodness and mercy. However, some of the older priests, Levites, and family leaders who had seen the original temple of Solomon wept because it lacked the splendor of Solomon's Temple.

Expressions of joy and lamenting were short-lived. **Adversaries of Judah and Benjamin requested to assist in the rebuilding of the temple since they too claimed to seek the same God (see Ezra 4:1–5). When Zerubbabel refused, they began to discourage the people and, as a result, the building of the temple was hindered throughout the reign of Cyrus.**

When Artaxerxes was king, a letter of accusation was sent claiming that the returnees were rebuilding the walls as well, which resulted in a halt of all building activities (4:6–24). Only later, under King Darius, were the returnees allowed to complete the temple—and with full financial support (6:1–12). **The temple was completed in the sixth year of Darius, or 515 BC, very much in line with Jeremiah's prophecy of seventy years of captivity (see Jeremiah 25:12–14). God's Word was unfolding, just as He had declared.**

Resource Packet Item 1: Dedicating the Temple

Distribute the work sheet and discuss it as a class or in small groups. Then ask the students to consider the last two questions individually, and take time for a brief prayer of dedication, either as a class or individually, that each student will truly be dedicated as a temple of the Holy Spirit.

Discuss

? The initial joy of God's favor was interrupted by several years of opposition. Has there been a time in your life where God's direction for you was clear, but circumstances delayed fulfillment? Explain.

? More than two decades passed from the edict of Cyrus to the completion of the temple. What can this teach us about God's timing and our expectations? Describe how we can maintain faith in times of delay.

Part 2—Jerusalem's Wall Rebuilt

Nehemiah: A God-Given Leader

Nehemiah 2:11–20; 3:1–2,28–35

[Neh 2:11-20 KJV] 11 So I came to Jerusalem, and was there three days. 12 And I arose in the night, I and some few men with me; neither told I [any] man what my God had put in my heart to do at Jerusalem: neither [was there any] beast with me, save the beast that I rode upon. 13 And I went out by night by the gate of the valley, even before the dragon well, and to the dung port, and viewed the walls of Jerusalem, which were broken down, and the gates thereof were consumed with fire. 14 Then I went on to the gate of the fountain, and to the king's pool: but

[there was] no place for the beast [that was] under me to pass. 15 Then went I up in the night by the brook, and viewed the wall, and turned back, and entered by the gate of the valley, and [so] returned. 16 And the rulers knew not whither I went, or what I did; neither had I as yet told [it] to the Jews, nor to the priests, nor to the nobles, nor to the rulers, nor to the rest that did the work. 17 Then said I unto them, Ye see the distress that we [are] in, how Jerusalem [lieth] waste, and the gates thereof are burned with fire: come, and let us build up the wall of Jerusalem, that we be no more a reproach. 18 Then I told them of the hand of my God which was good upon me; as also the king's words that he had spoken unto me. And they said, Let us rise up and build. So they strengthened their hands for [this] good [work]. 19 But when Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arabian, heard [it], they laughed us to scorn, and despised us, and said, What [is] this thing that ye do? will ye rebel against the king? 20 Then answered I them, and said unto them, The God of heaven, he will prosper us; therefore we his servants will arise and build: but ye have no portion, nor right, nor memorial, in Jerusalem.

[Neh 3:1-2 KJV] 1 Then Eliashib the high priest rose up with his brethren the priests, and they builded the sheep gate; they sanctified it, and set up the doors of it; even unto the tower of Meah they sanctified it, unto the tower of Hananeel. 2 And next unto him builded the men of Jericho. And next to them builded Zaccur the son of Imri.

[Neh 3:28-32 KJV] 28 From above the horse gate repaired the priests, every one over against his house. 29 After them repaired Zadok the son of Immer over against his house. After him repaired also Shemaiah the son of Shechaniah, the keeper of the east gate. 30 After him repaired Hananiah the son of Shelemiah, and Hanun the sixth son of Zalaph, another piece. After him repaired Meshullam the son of Berechiah over against his chamber. 31 After him repaired Malchiah the goldsmith's son unto the place of the Nethinims, and of the merchants, over against the gate Miphkad, and to the going up of the corner. 32 And between the going up of the corner unto the sheep gate repaired the goldsmiths and the merchants.

Say: Books and seminars on leadership abound. While training is valuable and anyone aspiring to be a leader should learn as much as possible, **the first qualification for a spiritual leader is a call from God.** Nehemiah had that call, stayed humble and submissive to God's will, and was not deterred from the task God had given him. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem and served as governor of Judah in **approximately 444 BC, several decades after the time of Zerubbabel and roughly during the time of Ezra.** Three days after his return, he and a few men quietly assessed the task under cover of night (Nehemiah 2:11–20). After assessing the condition of the walls Nehemiah approached the leaders. **He was personally concerned about the situation, referring to the trouble that “we are in” (verse 17). He pointed out that he had**

favor of both the king and God himself, and advised that they begin rebuilding. It is also noteworthy that Nehemiah was a great man of prayer (see Nehemiah 1).

Sturdy and effective walls characterized the security and stability of a city in Old Testament times. It was disgraceful that Jerusalem, the great city of God's people, would find itself in the state it was in at the point of Nehemiah's inspection. Sadly, however, just as it was with the rebuilding of the temple, **there was great opposition to Nehemiah's God-given plan. Several officials mocked their efforts to rebuild the walls and even accused them of rebelling against the king (2:19–20). Nehemiah exhibited calm confidence in declaring that God would make them succeed.**

Nehemiah 3 recounts the specifics of the rebuilding plan. **Nehemiah gave specific responsibilities to various families, which, in turn, made the people personally involved in the project, motivating them to finish the work.**

Discuss

? What can Nehemiah teach us about being a Christian leader?

? Describe a memorable time when a spiritual leader gave you a responsibility in ministry. How did you respond to this responsibility, and what did you learn?

God's Work Intimidates the Enemy

Nehemiah 6:15–16

[Neh 6:15-16 KJV] 15 So the wall was finished in the twenty and fifth [day] of [the month] Elul, in fifty and two days. 16 And it came to pass, that when all our enemies heard [thereof], and all the heathen that [were] about us saw [these things], they were much cast down in their own eyes: for they perceived that this work was wrought of our God.

Say: When God's people obey Him and begin to accomplish His work, there often will be opposition. But God is greater than the opposition. After the enemies of Nehemiah saw the completion of the wall—in only fifty-two days—they recognized that God had brought success to His people. As a result, they were intimidated. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

Through God's help, Nehemiah's strategy and leadership were successful. In fact, it took only **fifty-two days to complete the complex and difficult project** (Nehemiah 6:15). As such, it speaks to Nehemiah's qualities of leadership as a man of God. **He was confident of the project's success and made a priority of calling many others to participate in the work and share the vision of their leader. Nehemiah never sought out personal gain. The people could be confident his motives were godly.**

Verse 16 is especially helpful yet today, for any who face opposition. **The opposing leaders who sought to foil the plans of Nehemiah were afraid and disheartened. The literal expression regarding their frame of mind, in the original Hebrew,**

states, “They fell much in their own eyes.” They knew that the success of this project had come from God.

Today, the strategy of the enemy of our souls is to convince us to fear opposition and doubt the reality of God’s voice and empowerment. **When a spiritual leader is confident in God and sincerely seeks Him for direction, there can be great expectation that the Lord will bring success in the endeavor.**

Resource Packet Item 2: Leadership Lessons From Nehemiah

Distribute the work sheet to your class. Assign one row to each person and have them share the principle they discover, or send the sheet home with students for further study.

Discuss

? Why did Nehemiah’s adversaries become disheartened?

? How can you prepare now for future times of fear or discouragement as you seek to follow the Lord’s direction?

Part 3—God’s People Called To Reform

God Calls His People to Obey

Malachi 3:7–12

[Mal 3:1-18 KJV] 1 Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts. 2 But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he [is] like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: 3 And he shall sit [as] a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness. 4 Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the LORD, as in the days of old, and as in former years. 5 And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in [his] wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger [from his right], and fear not me, saith the LORD of hosts. 6 For I [am] the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed. 7 Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept [them]. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the LORD of hosts. But ye said, Wherein shall we return? 8 Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. 9 Ye [are] cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, [even] this whole nation. 10 Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that [there shall] not [be room] enough [to receive it]. 11 And I will rebuke the

devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the LORD of hosts. 12 And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the LORD of hosts. 13 Your words have been stout against me, saith the LORD. Yet ye say, What have we spoken [so much] against thee? 14 Ye have said, It [is] vain to serve God: and what profit [is it] that we have kept his ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the LORD of hosts? 15 And now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, [they that] tempt God are even delivered.

Say: Malachi was both a priest and a prophet to God's people. The exiles had returned to their homeland, and had rebuilt the temple and the walls of Jerusalem. Yet they fell short of God's commands. **They offered blemished sacrifices in their worship, dishonored Him in their marriage relationships, and withheld their tithe from Him. Malachi warned them of judgment to come.** Yet he also spoke of the coming Messiah who would usher in the new covenant. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

Malachi is the final book in the Old Testament and was quite possibly the last book written. The time between Malachi and Matthew represents the intertestamental years between the close of the Old Testament period to the beginning of the New Testament period—a time span of slightly more than four centuries.

Malachi contains a stern warning reminiscent of the prophets of the eighth and seventh centuries BC, prior to the Northern Kingdom being taken into exile. As noted in lesson 2, Israel's idolatry began soon after the Exodus, at Mt. Sinai, as the people worshipped the golden calf. Malachi 3:7 alludes to this sad history: "Ever since the time of your ancestors you have turned away from my decrees and have not kept them" (NIV).

It seems the people had become spiritually apathetic (Showing no interest, enthusiasm, or concern) in the century that had followed the return from exile. A note: America has become spiritually apathetic. As a result, the Lord called them to return to Him. The instruction regarding the tithe in verse 10 is familiar to many Christians. Such instruction was grounded in the law of Moses. The practice of tithing recognized that all of the fruit, livestock, and produce of the land was a gift from God. **Tithing was expected of the people, and to not do so was, in fact, robbing God.**

Verses 11–12 reaffirm a promise, noting the blessings of being in healthy covenant relationship with God. Adherence to the Old Testament law brought fertility and prosperity to the land. **A return to the Lord would result in protection of Israel's crops.** Then all of the nations would recognize that Israel had been blessed.

Discuss

? What are some ways Christians might be guilty of robbing God today?

? Spiritual apathy can still be a struggle for Christians today. Why do you think a Christian might become apathetic, and how can we guard against apathy?

A Remnant Turns to God

Malachi 3:16–18

[Mal 3:16-18 KJV] 16 Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard [it], and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name. 17 And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. 18 Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not.

Say: We noted earlier that the fear of the Lord was a key theme in the Old Testament. Yet in a world today that is often apathetic toward the Lord, **we must be careful to maintain a proper attitude toward and submission to God.** This means **looking to Him and trusting Him in every situation.**

A remnant, or portion, of the people responded positively to God’s invitation to trust Him. Malachi 3:16 records that those who feared the Lord came together, and the Lord heard them. **There is great joy in recognizing that the Lord counted them as His “treasured possession” (verse 17, NIV).** This can be a great object lesson, as well, in a world where family relationships are often strained and broken. The Heavenly Father is a loving Father to His children.

This new generation, committed to reform, would stand in contrast to previous generations. There would be a clear distinction between the righteous and the wicked (verse 18). **Mingling false religions and idolatry with true worship of God was a problem with God’s people throughout their history. They often confused the boundaries between what actions and beliefs belonged in the faith and which ones did not. There is no room in worship for pride, self, focus on anything other than Christ. We must worship in spirit and in Truth. What questionable actions and beliefs can be found in many churches?** God made it clear that judgment would come to evildoers (see 4:1). But goodness would come to those who were faithful to Him (4:3). Such a promise endures among God’s people at all times.

Resource Packet Item 3: What Did God Expect?

Distribute the work sheet and ask the students to complete it in small groups—perhaps one Scripture per group. Discuss their responses.

Discuss

? How can we assure that we are among those who fear the Lord amid a culture that is apathetic—or even antagonistic—toward God?

? Why do you think God's people, then and now, often struggle with the same recurring problems? How can we overcome these tendencies?

What Is God Saying to Us?

Say: Although God had sent His people into exile as punishment for their disobedience to Him, **He did not forget them. He sent leaders and prophets, yet they still did not fully worship Him.** But God is gracious, and His plan to send the Messiah would endure. When we go through a difficult time, we may feel that God has forsaken us, but His plan is still in place. God's timetable is much different from ours, but we can still trust Him for the outcome.

Living It Out Ministry in Action

- Find someone this week that you can encourage to trust God in the midst of difficulty. If possible, find a way you can be God's instrument to help that person.
- Look at the principles of leadership demonstrated by Nehemiah and incorporate them into your life—in your home, job, or volunteer role.
- Evaluate your own devotion to God. **Are there ways in which you are robbing God in your worship? Pray that you will worship Him sincerely and humbly.**

Daily Bible Readings

Monday:

God's Glory in the Tabernacle.

Exodus 40:34–38

[Exo 40:34-38 KJV] 34 Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. 35 And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. 36 And when the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the children of Israel went onward in all their journeys: 37 But if the cloud were not taken up, then they journeyed not till the day that it was taken up. 38 For the cloud of the LORD [was] upon the tabernacle by day, and fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys.

Tuesday:

Promised Land Promised to Joshua.

Joshua 1:1–9

[Jos 1:1-9 KJV] 1 Now after the death of Moses the servant of the LORD it came to pass, that the LORD spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying, 2 Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, [even] to the children of Israel. 3 Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses. 4 From the wilderness and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of

the sun, shall be your coast. 5 There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, [so] I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. 6 Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I swore unto their fathers to give them. 7 Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it [to] the right hand or [to] the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest. 8 This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success. 9 Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God [is] with thee whithersoever thou goest.

Wednesday:

Daniel's Intercession.

Daniel 9:1–2, 16–19

[Dan 9:1-2, 16-19 KJV] 1 In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans; 2 In the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem. ... 16 O Lord, according to all thy righteousness, I beseech thee, let thine anger and thy fury be turned away from thy city Jerusalem, thy holy mountain: because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and thy people [are become] a reproach to all [that are] about us. 17 Now therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lord's sake. 18 O my God, incline thine ear, and hear; open thine eyes, and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by thy name: for we do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousnesses, but for thy great mercies. 19 O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for thine own sake, O my God: for thy city and thy people are called by thy name.

Thursday:

Promise of God's Son Fulfilled.

John 1:14–18

[Jhn 1:14-18 KJV] 14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. 15 John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me. 16 And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace. 17 For the law was given by Moses, [but] grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. 18 No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared [him].

Friday:

A New and Better Covenant.

Hebrews 8:7–13

[Heb 8:7-13 KJV] 7 For if that first [covenant] had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. 8 For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: 9 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. 10 For this [is] the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: 11 And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. 12 For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. 13 In that he saith, A new [covenant], he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old [is] ready to vanish away.

Saturday:

A New and Better Sanctuary.

Hebrews 9:11–15

[Heb 9:11-15 KJV] 11 But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; 12 Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption [for us]. 13 For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: 14 How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? 15 And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions [that were] under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.