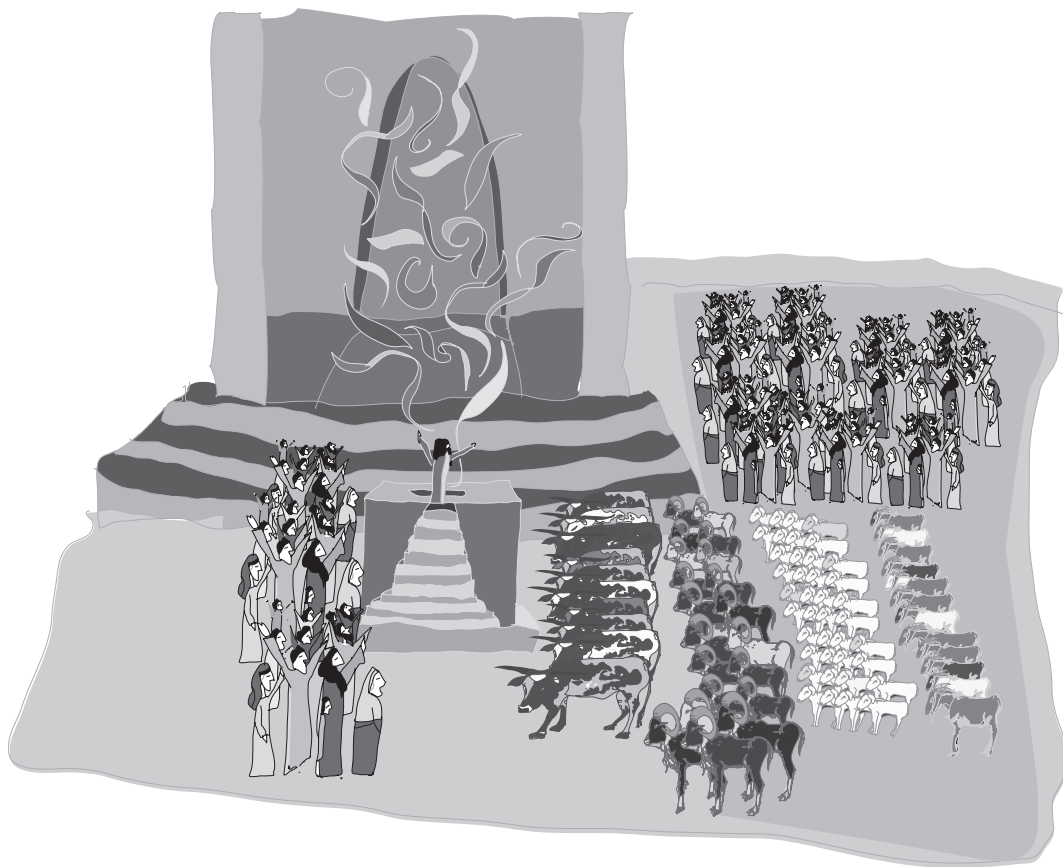


LESSON 77

The Temple Is Completed

EZRA 6-7



BIBLE TRUTH

NOTHING STOPS GOD FROM REDEEMING HIS PEOPLE

LESSON SNAPSHOT

1. **OPENING REVIEW** **5 MIN**
Use last week’s lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.
2. **BIBLE STORY** **10 MIN**
Read Ezra 6 from the Scriptures or read story 77, “The Temple Is Completed,” from *The Gospel Story Bible*.
3. **OBJECT LESSON 1** **10 MIN**
Magic Trick
SUPPLIES:
 - ✓ deck of fifty-two playing cards to use for magic trick (see photos to practice)
4. **TEACHING/DISCUSSION** **10 MIN**
5. **OBJECT LESSON 2** **10 MIN**
The Importance of the Passover
SUPPLIES:
 - ✓ a branch from a leafy bush to use as a paintbrush
 - ✓ red paint
 - ✓ a roll of craft paper
6. **WORD BIBLE MEMORY** **5 MIN**
7. **ACTIVITY TIME** **10 MIN**
Coloring Activity
SUPPLIES:
 - ✓ coloring page 77—one copy for each child
8. **CLOSING PRAYER** **5 MIN**
9. **BONUS OBJECT LESSON** **15 MIN**
A Lot of Animals
SUPPLIES:
 - ✓ a five-pound bag of rice
 - ✓ plastic bags
 - ✓ dark, solid-color tablecloth
 - ✓ small wooden cross

TOTAL 80 MIN

PREPARING TO TEACH

TEACHING POINTS

The temple is finally complete—The rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem began under the rule of Cyrus. But the local governor and the people of the former kingdom of Israel, now a province called Beyond the River, begin to interfere with the rebuilding. After several years of this interference, all work on the temple stops.

The people of Judah return to building their own houses and working their own fields, and for about ten years no work is done on the temple. Then the prophets Haggai and Zechariah begin to speak. The people of Judah listen to Haggai and Zechariah and return to working on the temple. They also appeal to Darius, who has replaced Cyrus as king of Persia, and ask him to uphold the command of Cyrus to rebuild the temple. Darius finds the command of Cyrus and follows it. He makes sure the people of Judah have what they need to complete the temple, and he commands those opposing them to cooperate and even to help. The remaining cost of rebuilding the temple is paid by those who do not follow God. It takes many years, but the temple is at last rebuilt.

The people celebrate the Passover—Now that the temple has been finished, the people celebrate the Passover. One day, Jesus would sit in the upper room with his disciples and announce the new covenant during the Passover meal. In light of that day, God preserves the celebration of the Passover after this rededication of the temple. God ensures that the Passover would continue to be celebrated until it was fulfilled in Christ.

Artaxerxes sends Ezra to teach the people—Ezra is a scribe and a teacher who, along with many other captives, is still living in Babylon under the rule of the king of Persia. About sixty years after the Passover is celebrated following the temple's rebuilding, a new king, Artaxerxes, comes to the throne of Persia. In the book of Ezra, we find the amazing letter of Artaxerxes sending Ezra and others back to Jerusalem. This letter shows us just how powerfully God can work in the heart of a king to accomplish his will. God wanted his people in Jerusalem to learn more about his word, so he sent Ezra to teach them as well as to bring new riches to the temple.

WHERE IS JESUS? _____

How does today's Bible story fit into God's greater plan of redemption?

Read Ephesians 2:19–22.

After the rebuilding of Zerubbabel's temple, seven hundred animals were sacrificed. At the completion of Solomon's temple 142,000 animals were sacrificed. Neither temple remains today. Those hundreds and thousands of sacrifices were temporary. Those temples were temporary.

Jesus is God's temple (Revelation 21:22) just as Christ's body—the church—is God's temple (Ephesians 2:19–22). As a part of the church, we are each individually God's temple (1 Corinthians 6:19–20).

We are God's temples because the Holy Spirit dwells in us. Together we make up his church and all of us form the body of Christ. In Christ we have become the new temple of God. Only one sacrifice was made and only one was ever needed—the death of Christ on the cross.

THE LESSON

OPENING REVIEW

5 MIN

Use last week's lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

BIBLE STORY

10 MIN

Read Ezra 6 from the Scriptures or read story 77, "The Temple Is Completed," from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

OBJECT LESSON 1

10 MIN

Magic Trick

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ deck of fifty-two playing cards to use for magic trick (see photos to practice)

To supplement this lesson, here is a great trick that you can use to fascinate the children and make the point that the heart of a king is in the hand of the Lord (Proverbs 21:1).

In the story of completing the temple, God worked through King Darius to accomplish his plan. This card trick will illustrate that point. First, you need to practice forcing a card. The attached photos demonstrate how to force a person to choose a predetermined card. You place the card you want your subject to choose on the front of the deck. Then you explain that you will thumb through the cards until your subject tells you to stop. The card facing down when they tell you to stop is the card they choose. When you remove the top half of the deck, you use your three fingers to slide the top card down into the middle of the deck where they asked you to stop. By doing this you move the force card down onto the second half of the cards. They think they chose a card randomly but you know that you forced a particular card on them.

The Trick: Purchase two identical decks of cards. Take the king of hearts out of one deck and keep it in reserve. Secretly slip it into a particular child's Bible at Proverbs 21:1 before the class officially begins. Use the second complete deck for your trick. Put the king of hearts on the top of the deck, and explain to your class that you want to try out a magic trick with them. Pick a volunteer, and force the king of hearts on them as described above. Show the card to everyone, but tell them not to tell you what it is. Place the cards back in their box, and then go about teaching the lesson telling the class that you will complete the trick later. Make a point to tell the class that God moved on King Darius and earlier Cyrus to accomplish his plan.

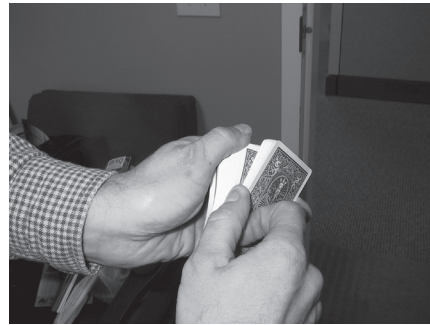
Toward the end of class remember about the trick just as you mention that God controls the heart of the king. Tell the child with the Bible you set up to read Proverbs 21:1. But just before he does, say, "Oh, I almost forgot my trick."

Take the closed pack of cards in one hand. Ask for the Bible from the child in the other, and then smack the pack of cards dramatically down on top of the Bible. Then ask the child to read the verse. When the child opens the Bible they will find the king of hearts, the forced card. Have them hold it up to the class and point out the card they selected was found in the Bible. Have the child read the verse, and then hold up the card and say, "Certainly it is true, the heart of the king is in the hand of the Lord." Finish your lesson there and do not tell anyone how you did the trick.



Hold the deck of cards with three fingers over the pack. Put the card you want the audience to choose on top.

Flip through the deck with your thumb, asking the audience to say “stop” at any point in the deck.



Tell the audience their card is the one they told you to stop on. Grasp the top half of the deck, but as you do, slip the top card back onto the

back half of the deck. This “forces” the top card (that you chose) to take the selected card’s position. With a little practice you can do this so smoothly no one will know!



TEACHING/DISCUSSION

10 MIN

Using the teaching points, teach through the lesson for today.

OBJECT LESSON 2

10 MIN

The Importance of the Passover

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ a branch from a leafy bush to use as a paintbrush
- ✓ red paint
- ✓ a roll of craft paper

Prior to class, tape brown craft paper around the doorpost and lintel of the classroom door.

Read the celebration of the Passover in Ezra 6:19–22. While the passage is being read, have another teacher dip the branch in the red paint and mark the lintel and doorposts.

Then ask the class the following questions:

Why does God make sure the feast of the Passover is not forgotten?

(This feast more than any other points to Christ and God’s plan of salvation. God declared that this would be a lasting ordinance for Israel, see Exodus 12:14–30.)

What about the Passover reminds us of Christ?

(The blood sacrificed for the people so death would pass over them points forward to Christ’s blood shed on the cross so that we could be forgiven for our sins and eternal death would pass over us.)

What is the most famous Passover in the New Testament?

(The Last Supper meal Jesus had with his disciples before his death where he introduced the new covenant in his blood.)

WORD BIBLE MEMORY

5 MIN

Take time during the class to review the WORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.

ACTIVITY TIME

10 MIN

Coloring Activity

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ coloring page 77—one copy for each child

While the children are coloring, engage them by asking the following questions:

Why is the priest bringing a lamb?

(The lamb is for the Passover feast that Israel celebrated at the completion of the temple rebuilding.)

What was the Passover supposed to help Israel remember?

(The Passover helped God's people remember the day the angel of death passed over all those who had placed blood on their door frames.)

For us looking back, whom do we know the lamb represents?

(The Passover lamb represents Jesus, the Lamb of God, who was killed for our salvation.)

CLOSING PRAYER

5 MIN

Pick several children to pray prayers based on the day's scripture passages.

BONUS OBJECT LESSON

15 MIN

A Lot of Animals

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ a five-pound bag of rice
- ✓ plastic bags
- ✓ dark, solid-color tablecloth
- ✓ small wooden cross

Before class measure 1½ tablespoons of rice and place it in a small plastic bag. (This represents the seven hundred animals sacrificed at the new temple.) Now measure out twenty cups of rice and place that in a large container or bag. (This represents the 142,000 animals sacrificed at the temple of Solomon. There are approximately 7,200 grains of rice in a cup, so 20 cups is just over the 142,000.)

Use the “Where Is Jesus?” section to help with this object lesson.

Spread out the tablecloth on the floor and gather the children around it. Tell the children that when Zerubbabel's temple was complete, seven hundred animals were sacrificed. If each animal was represented by a grain of rice, this is how many animals were killed. Pour the small bag of rice onto the tablecloth.

Then tell them that when Solomon's temple was completed, 142,000 animals were sacrificed. Pour the twenty cups of rice on the tablecloth telling the children that every grain of rice represents an animal killed.

Finally, after their amazement subsides, tell them that every single animal sacrificed was designed by God to point to one sacrifice. Place the cross on top of the rice and share how Jesus was the Lamb of God who was killed so that our sins could be forgiven.

LESSON 77 - THE TEMPLE IS COMPLETED

