



STUDENT DEVOTIONAL UNIT 17

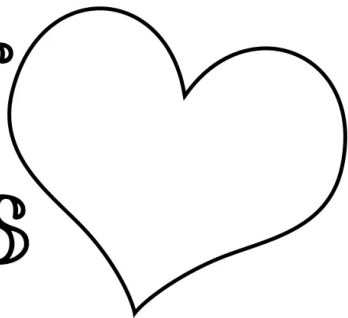
Name:

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I will
put my law
within them
and
I will write it
on their
hearts



jeremiah 31:33

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Session 1: Zechariah Gave Hope
Zechariah 13-14



Sunday, January 8

Can God
be trusted?

Yes, God cannot lie or ever be wrong, so we can trust whatever He has said.

Memory Verse: Jeremiah 17:7

"The person who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence indeed is the Lord, is blessed."



Before you read...

- ▶ God punished His people by sending them away from their land to live in Babylon in exile for 70 years.
- ▶ Life was not easy in Babylon. God's people were servants to the Babylonians.
- ▶ But now, the 70 years are almost over. God sent a prophet, Zechariah, to give His people a message of hope.



Read Zechariah 1:2-4

- ▶ In verse 4, what did the earlier prophets say to God's people?

- ▶ Did God's people listen to the earlier prophets?

- ▶ In verse 3, what does it say God's people need to do?



Before you read...

- ▶ This week we have read about how God kept His promises about exile.
- ▶ Yesterday we read about how God kept His promise to give us a new covenant and forgive our sins through Jesus.
- ▶ Today we will read that God STILL has one more promise for us in the future!
- ▶ Because we know that God has kept ALL of His other promises, we can be sure He will keep this one, too.



Read Revelation 21:1-5

- ▶ What NEW things will there be in the future? (Verse 1)

- ▶ In verse 4, what will there be no more of?

- ▶ We know that God will keep this promise because God ALWAYS keeps His promises! What is your favorite part of the promise God gives in these verses?



Before you read...

- ▶ This week we have read about the promises God made and kept about sending His people into exile and their return.
- ▶ Today we will read about a new promise for God's people that would take place many years after they returned to Jerusalem from exile.



Read Jeremiah 31:31-34

- ▶ What does verse 31 say God will make with His people? (Hmmm does this phrase ring a bell with our church??)

- ▶ What does verse 33 say God will do with His law?

- ▶ We know that God kept this promise because we know that God sent His Son Jesus to die on the cross for our sins, come back to life, and ascend to heaven to be with God. Then God sent the Holy Spirit to live in our hearts when we believe in Jesus. How does this promise make you feel? (For me, it feels like fireworks in my heart!)



Before you read...

- ▶ In these verses, Zechariah is reminding God's people of the reasons they were in exile. He is telling the people that God has always done what He said He would do.
- ▶ Don't worry. We will get to Zechariah's message of hope tomorrow.



Read Zechariah 7:13-14

- ▶ God's people did not listen to Him. Therefore, what does verse 13 say God will not do?

- ▶ What does verse 14 say God did to His people?

- ▶ What happened to the pleasant land where God's people lived?



Before you read...

- ▶ After the reminders of the evil ways of God's people and their bad listening skills, we are FINALLY going to get to Zechariah's message of hope!
- ▶ Chapter 13 starts with a phrase, "On that day" or "At that time." Zechariah is talking about when God will rescue His people.
- ▶ Chapter 13 also talks about the family of David. Remember, God's people always had a king from the family line of David...all the way to Jesus!



Read Zechariah 13:1-2

- ▶ In verse 1, what will God's people wash away 'on that day?'

- ▶ In verse 2, what will God remove from the land?

- ▶ Have you ever been really, really dirty? Like went down a mudslide dirty? What does it feel like to wash away the dirt?



Before you read...

- ▶ On Monday we read that God kept His promise to send His people to exile.
- ▶ On Tuesday we read that God kept His promise to destroy the king of Babylon at the end of the 70 years of exile.
- ▶ Today we will read God's promise to bring His people back to Jerusalem after exile.



Read Jeremiah 30:3 and 18

- ▶ What does verse 3 say God will do?

- ▶ What does verse 18 say about the city and the temple (or palace)?

- ▶ We know that God kept this promise from our reading the past two weeks in Ezra. God brought His people back to Jerusalem and they rebuilt the temple. Extra credit deep thinking question: What do you think comes next for God's people now that they are back living in their land?



Before you read...

- ▶ This week we are reading from the book of the prophet Jeremiah to see all of the ways that God kept His promises about the exile of His people.
- ▶ Today we will read about God's promise to destroy the king of Babylon after God used him to capture His people and destroy His land.



Read Jeremiah 25:12-13

- ▶ How many years were God's people in exile?

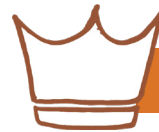
- ▶ What does Jeremiah say God will do to the king of Babylon and his nation?

- ▶ We know that God kept this promise from our reading in Daniel right before Christmas. Do you remember how a hand appeared and wrote on the wall that Babylon's kingdom would end? Extra credit: Who was the new king that took over after Babylon fell? (You can find the answer in week 2 of this devo book.)



Before you read...

- ▶ When Babylon took over God's people, many people died. Also, 70 years is a long time and some of God's people died before exile was over.
- ▶ But, there are still some of God's people who have been faithful after all of the years of exile. (Think about Daniel. He was faithful!)
- ▶ In today's verse, Zechariah tells about how God's people, who have lived in exile all this time, have been tested.



Read Zechariah 13:9

- ▶ Did you know that gold and silver are melted down to liquid form to get rid of the impurities—the bad stuff—that is in it? God's people were tested in exile to get rid of their impurities—their sin. What sin do you need to ask God for forgiveness today?

- ▶ Remember on Tuesday when we read that God would not listen to His people? What does the end of verse 9 say God will do when His people call on Him now?



Before you read...

- ▶ Zechariah reminded the people of their evil ways that led them to exile. Zechariah also reminded the people that God always does what He says He will do.
- ▶ Zechariah told people that the exile will end and that God will rescue His people.
- ▶ Zechariah also told the people that in the future God will be king over the whole earth. We are still waiting for God to fulfill that promise.



Read Zechariah 14:8-9

- ▶ What kind of water will flow out of Jerusalem 'on that day?'

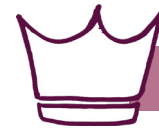
- ▶ Have you heard the phrase, 'living water' before? What do you think it means?

- ▶ When the Lord is King over all the earth, what do you think the earth will be like?



Before you read...

- ▶ God has used many prophets to warn His people and to give them hope. Jeremiah is a prophet who did both of those things, specifically about the exile that God's people went through.
- ▶ Because of prophets like Jeremiah, we can trust that God always keeps His promises. This week we are going to look at what Jeremiah said about the exile for God's people and see that it all came true.
- ▶ Today we are reading a passage that was written more than 20 years BEFORE exile.



Read Jeremiah 25:8-11

- ▶ What nation and king did Jeremiah say God would bring against His people?

- ▶ What does verse 11 say will happen to the whole country?

- ▶ We know that God kept this promise from our reading a few months ago in 2 Chronicles. Do you remember why God sent His people into exile? (Look at verse 8 for a clue.)

UNIT 17: THE PEOPLE RETURN

Session 4: God Can Always Be Trusted Jeremiah 31



Sunday, January 29

Can God
be trusted?

Yes, God cannot lie or ever be wrong, so we can trust whatever He has said.

Memory Verse: Jeremiah 17:7

"The person who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence indeed is the Lord, is blessed."

BibleWise

OLD TESTAMENT BOOKS

The following books can be found on the word search grid below. Circle the letters that make the word. The letters must be in straight lines, vertically, horizontally, or diagonally. Words may be spelled either forward or backward.

GENESIS	KINGS	SONG OF SOLOMON	OBADIAH
EXODUS	CHRONICLES	ISAIAH	JONAH
LEVITICUS	EZRA	JEREMIAH	MICAH
NUMBERS	NEHEMIAH	LAMENTATIONS	NAHUM
DEUTERONOMY	ESTHER	EZEKIEL	HABAKKUK
JOSHUA	JOB	DANIEL	ZEPHANIAH
JUDGES	PSALMS	HOSEA	HAGGAI
RUTH	PROVERBS	JOEL	ZECHARIAH
SAMUEL	ECCLESIASTES	AMOS	MALACHI

M C R O M A D A H A I M E H E N D
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UNIT 17: THE PEOPLE RETURN

Session 2: God Delivered His People Ezra 1-2



Sunday, January 15

Can God
be trusted?

Yes, God cannot lie or ever be wrong, so we can trust whatever He has said.

Memory Verse: Jeremiah 17:7

"The person who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence indeed is the Lord, is blessed."

Session 3 Friday



Before you read...

- ▶ Yesterday we read that the governor tried to stop God's people from rebuilding the temple and even sent a letter to the king to try to get them to stop.
- ▶ Chapter 5 and part of Chapter 6 are letters that the governor and king wrote about God's people rebuilding the temple. We are going to skip over those letters.
- ▶ The most important thing to know is that King Darius told God's people they could continue rebuilding God's temple.



Read Ezra 6:13-15

- ▶ Who commanded God's people to rebuild the temple?

- ▶ God also used foreign kings to carry out His command for the people to rebuild the temple. What are the names of the foreign kings who commanded God's temple to be rebuilt?

- ▶ What do you think God's people did after they finished the temple? (If you want to know what they actually did, keep reading verses 16-22.)

Session 2 Monday



Before you read...

- ▶ We have been learning about God's people in exile. It is time for that exile to end.
- ▶ But first, we are going to read the end of 2 Chronicles to remember what God said about the end of exile for His people.



Read 2 Chronicles 36:20-23

- ▶ King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon was the king who led God's people away to exile, but now a new kingdom is in charge of God's people. Who is the new king and what is the name of the kingdom?

- ▶ Read verse 22 again. Who convinced this new king to let God's people go back to their land?

- ▶ After 70 years, exile is over!! How do you think the people celebrated?

Session 2 Tuesday



Before you read...

- ▶ Yesterday we read from the end of 2 Chronicles about the end of exile for God's people.
- ▶ Today, we will turn one page in your Bible to the book of Ezra to continue reading about the end of exile for God's people. Ezra was a prophet.
- ▶ You might notice some of the exact same words in Ezra that you read in 2 Chronicles!
- ▶ Cyrus king of Persia was not one of God's people. He was a foreign king who worshiped other gods.



Read Ezra 1:1-4

- ▶ God keeps His promises! Which prophet told the people that their exile would end? (Look at verse 1.)

- ▶ What did God appoint King Cyrus to do in Jerusalem?

- ▶ Read verse 3 again. Who got to go back to Jerusalem?

Session 3 Thursday



Before you read...

- ▶ Yesterday we read that God's people had enemies who did not want them to rebuild the temple. These enemies did many things to make God's people lose hope and feel very afraid.
- ▶ The enemies frustrated God's people for many years—as many as 20 years—and they stopped rebuilding the temple.
- ▶ So, God sent His prophets to encourage His people to start rebuilding the temple again.



Read Ezra 5:1-5

- ▶ What are the names of the two prophets God sent to encourage His people to keep rebuilding the temple?

- ▶ Verse 3 says the governor of the land tried to stop God's people AGAIN! But, what does verse 5 say...who was watching over them? Did they stop building this time?

- ▶ Tell about a time when you did the right thing even though other people were trying to stop you.

Session 3 Wednesday



Before you read...

- ▶ God's people had many enemies who did not want them to rebuild the temple and worship God in Jerusalem.
- ▶ The enemies were afraid that God's people would become too powerful.



Read Ezra 4:1-5

- ▶ In verse 2, what did the enemies want to do with God's people?

- ▶ How did God's people respond to the enemies? (Look at verse 3) Why do you think they did not want the enemies to help?

- ▶ Verse 4 says the enemies set out to discourage God's people and make them afraid. Tell about a person or a situation when you felt discouraged or afraid.

Session 2 Wednesday



Before you read...

- ▶ Yesterday we read that God's people were going to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple.
- ▶ Ezra doesn't say this, but the trip from Babylon to Jerusalem was very long. Bible experts think it might have taken them four months to travel back.



Read Ezra 1:5-6

- ▶ List three of the items that the neighbors gave to God's people to take with them back to Jerusalem.

- ▶ Why do you think King Cyrus told the neighbors to give those things to God's people? What would they need them for?



Before you read...

- ▶ God's people are returning to Jerusalem with many gifts from their neighbors.
- ▶ God's people will rebuild the temple when they get back to Jerusalem.
- ▶ We are mostly going to focus on verse 7 in today's passage.



Read Ezra 1:7-11

- ▶ Read verse 7 again. King Cyrus brought out more things for God's people to take back to Jerusalem. Where were these things from?

- ▶ King Nebuchadnezzar stole things from God's temple and now King Cyrus is giving them back! How do you think God's people felt about having their temple items returned?

- ▶ Look at verse 11. How many total items were brought back with God's people?



Before you read...

- ▶ Yesterday we read that God's people built the altar first, even though they were afraid of the foreign people around them. The altar was very important to them. God's people began offering sacrifices and celebrating the feasts that God required because they wanted to return to following God's ways.
- ▶ Next, God's people began rebuilding the temple. This passage talks about the 'foundation' of the temple. The foundation is the bottom layer of a building; the first stones that go on the ground.



Read Ezra 3:10-13

- ▶ What did God's people do after the foundation of the temple was built?

- ▶ Why do you think they celebrated when only a little bit of the temple had been built?

- ▶ Verse 12 says that some of the older priests and leaders were sad when they saw the foundation of the temple. Do you think this temple was bigger or smaller than the one that Solomon built?

Session 3 Monday



Before you read...

- ▶ Last week we read that God's people have finally returned to Jerusalem after their 70 year exile.
- ▶ The temple and everything around it had been completely destroyed by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. God's people returned to a ruined city.



Read Ezra 3:1-3

- ▶ After God's people returned, what is the first thing they built in Jerusalem?

- ▶ What does verse 3 say about how God's people felt about the people around them in Jerusalem? God's people kept building even though they felt that way.

- ▶ Why did God's people build the altar? What did they need it for?

Session 2 Friday



Before you read...

- ▶ We have read about all of the items that God's people brought back to Jerusalem.
- ▶ Today we are going to look at the list of people that came back to Jerusalem. You don't have to read all of the names, just scan through the list.



Read Ezra 2:1 and scan the rest of chapter 2

- ▶ Do you remember...how many years did God's people live in exile? (Look at Monday's devo to find the answer.)

- ▶ All of these names represent family groups of God's people. Today we would say the Bushlack family or the Stouffer family. Which name on this list is your favorite? Would you want to be named that name?

- ▶ The Bible keeps track of families. The most important family line in the Bible is the one that shows that Jesus was born into David's family and even all the way back to Adam's family. Has YOUR family always lived in the same place? Ask your mom and dad where your family comes from!

UNIT 17: THE PEOPLE RETURN

Session 3: The People Rebuilt the Temple Ezra 2-6



Sunday, January 22

Can God
be trusted?

Yes, God cannot lie or ever be wrong, so we can trust whatever He has said.

Memory Verse: Jeremiah 17:7

"The person who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence indeed is the Lord, is blessed."

Word Puzzle Complete the word puzzle using the hints. Then use the circled letters to find the missing word in the sentence below.

1. J _ _ D A ()
2. _ _ A _ _ Y L () N
3. J _ _ R U _ _ A _ _ E ()
4. () Z R _ _

The Southern Kingdom of Israel

The place God's people were exiled to for 70 years

The place where God's temple was

The book of the Bible between 2 Chronicles and Nehemiah

"GOD'S PEOPLE WERE FREE TO GO BACK _____."

Complete the Story Use the pictures below to write today's Bible story in your own words.

