

# Adventure Number 49

## Ezra 1-4 and Isaiah 44:28

**Story Line: The Jews returned to Jerusalem to rebuild their temple.**



### 1) Study the Lesson (before class)

- The Israelites were deported from Judah to Babylon from 605 B.C. to 586 B.C. After Jeremiah and Ezekiel had died, and when Daniel was about 80 years old, a prophecy of Isaiah came to be fulfilled.
- In Isaiah 40-48, Isaiah talked about a foreign king names Cyrus who would issue a decree to rebuild Jerusalem. Cyrus would not be a worshipper of Yahweh. This prophecy occurred around 700 B.C. Cyrus was born about a century after Isaiah wrote this prophecy.
- Jeremiah foretold that Judah would be exiled to Babylon for 70 years. The Israelites would pray and then God would restore them to the land that He had promised to them (Jeremiah 29:10-14).
- Sixty-seven years after the exile, Daniel read this prophecy and realized the exile was almost over. So, he did what Jeremiah said to do, he confessed the sins of Israel and begged God for His favor (Daniel 9:3-19). By 536 B.C., 50,000 Jews had decided to return to Jerusalem.
- The decree by Cyrus declared all the stolen temple items would be returned. Ezra 3 describes the construction of the second temple in Jerusalem. This happened around 536 B.C.
- In Ezra 4, the reader learns that the Samaritans wanted to join the rebuilding of the temple. The Samaritans worshipped Yahweh. However, they also worshipped other gods. The writer of 2 Kings 17 tells us that the Samaritans feared the Lord but they also served other gods. They were not allowed to be part of the building project.
- By 515 B.C., the building project had stopped. However, the prophets Haggai and Zechariah confronted the Jews about their priorities and the building efforts resumed.

The teacher's guide is divided into five key segments. Each part of the teaching process is important and all five should be followed for effective teaching. Chronological Bible teaching is a great way to evangelize and disciple children. As children come to know the stories of the Bible, they will understand the God of the Bible and how to respond to Him by faith.

Each of the five steps to teaching these lessons is a vital part of the lesson. Preparation before the lesson is extremely important and takes place in the days leading up to class. Then when class time starts, introduce the lesson with ideas or methods that will encourage students to become involved in the learning process. Teaching the story will take on several forms: through telling, through singing, through Scripture memory, and through activity. Be sure to review the lesson as well as previous lessons. Last, and probably most important, give your class something to apply or live out as a result of the lesson.

*Timeline:*

*Returning to Home*



## 2) Begin the Lesson

There are eight basic concepts that are emphasized throughout all of the Bible. We have studied these truths in previous lessons. Ask the children if they can name them and tell a little bit about each one. They are:

1. God. In the beginning, there was a very powerful God. (Lesson 1: The Eternal God; Lesson 27: The Exodus; Lesson 40: The Reign of David)
2. Man. God created many things. He created man and woman to be His special friends. (Lessons 3: Creation of the Universe; Lesson 4: Creation of People; Lesson 24: Moses Leads His People)
3. Sin. Man and woman disobeyed God. They did not do what He told them to do. (Lesson 7: Beginning of Human Sin; Lesson 33: Unbelief at Kadesh; Lesson 43: The Divided Kingdom)
4. Death. God punished man and woman for their disobedience. Death, in the Bible, refers to separation. (Lesson 8: The Origin of Death; Lesson 16: The Tower of Babel; Lesson 46: The Exiles of Israel and Judah)
5. Christ. God sent His one and only Son, His unique Son, who lived a perfect life. (Lesson 9: Promise of a Victor Over Satan; Lesson 45: Prophecies of a Coming Messiah)
6. Cross. Jesus died on the cross for the sins of the world. (Lesson 11: Provision of Coverings; Lesson 32: The Day of Atonement)
7. Faith. If anyone places their faith in Christ, God welcomes them. (Lesson 13: Cain and Abel; Lesson 34: The Bronze Serpent)
8. Life. God gives eternal life to those who put their faith in Him. (Lesson 5: Life in Paradise; Lesson 38: Bright Lights in an Era of Darkness)



## 3) Teach the Lesson

Coming home is a wonderful thing to do. Have you ever been away from home for a short period of time? Have you ever been away from home for a long period of time? How did it feel when you came home?

Today's lesson will tell us about 50,000 people who came home.

### Teacher Helps

#### Review Activity: Eight Basic Gospel Truths - One Complete Story

The teacher should emphasize these eight gospel concepts throughout Scripture. They are foundational to telling children the one story of redemption found in the Bible. We will emphasize these eight truths regularly.

Ask the children if they can think of how these eight gospel principles are emphasized in the first 48 lessons that we have studied.



## Tell the Story

### Teacher Helps

It was near the end of my life. As young teenage boys in Babylon, my three friends and I worshipped and served God. Even when the king issued a decree that we could not worship God, I still continued to pray. It almost cost me my life but God spared me. The king put me in a lions' den and they were hungry. God chose to let me live and that is why I am here today. The king also put my three friends in a fiery furnace because of their faith in Yahweh. Again, God spared them. Now, at the end of my life, God has allowed me to be a part of His great work in another way.

I was reading the prophet Jeremiah. While I was reading, I realized that my countrymen and I would be in captivity for 70 years. This was our sixty-seventh year of captivity. If Jeremiah was correct and I knew he was, then we would only have three more years of captivity in Babylon. Then, we could go home to Jerusalem. I earnestly confessed the sins of my countrymen and begged for the favor of God to be upon us. Yahweh graciously granted my request. Three years later, King Cyrus issued a decree that the Jews could return to Jerusalem and he would even give us all the stolen items from the temple. That amounted to 5,400 articles of gold and silver which had been stolen from the first temple that were returned to the temple that would be rebuilt.

Isaiah, the prophet of Yahweh, had written 170 years earlier about this decree by Cyrus. He even mentioned "Cyrus" by name. My great God revealed it to Isaiah and now it was coming true. God is a promise-giving God and He always keeps His promises.

My countrymen started building the temple in 536 B.C. They got off to a great start but because of some opposition, they slowed down and eventually stopped. They did not complete the job of rebuilding the temple. The opposition came from neighbors of ours, the Samaritans. The Samaritans worshipped Yahweh and served Him, but they also worshipped and served other gods. We could not tolerate that because God does not share His glory with other gods.

After a long delay, we continued rebuilding the temple in 515 B.C. The preaching of Haggai and Zechariah got the people going again. Finally, the temple was completed. There was great joy and celebration. We had returned to the land promised to Abraham. We were now living in the City of David, Jerusalem. It was all because of God's faithful love for His people. Praise be to Yahweh! May His name be honored!

### **Tell the Story** **Activity: A Monologue** **from Daniel**

Tell this story as if you were Daniel. Dress up in costume, if possible. It is written in the first person as if Daniel was telling the story.

All the story comes from the Bible, especially the prophets Daniel, Isaiah, and Jeremiah.



## Memory Verse

Ezra 6:16 (ESV) - And the people of Israel ... celebrated the dedication of this house of God with joy.



## Praise and Worship

Praise and Worship styles vary greatly around the world. It is the intent of this curriculum that praise and worship songs be selected that best fit the content of this lesson. Recommendations for praise and worship are given and this music can generally be located at [www.itunes.com](http://www.itunes.com). However, the teacher can feel free to select a similar praise and worship song.

“Salvation Belongs to Our God” by Eric Quiram is recommended for this lesson.



## Bible Activity

### Daniel's Faithful Life

**“Daniel had a very exciting and sometimes scary life! Let's see how many things we can remember about Daniel's life, and then we will play a game.”** Lead the children to think of events from Daniel's life, and write each one on a different card. Some suggestions:

1. As a young teenager, taken from his home in Judah to Babylon
2. Thrown in a den of lions for praying to God
3. His 3 friends were thrown in a fiery furnace
4. Interpreted the king's dream at risk to his own life
5. Prophesied about God's judgement
6. Confessed the sins of his countrymen

Once the cards have been written, turn them over & mix them up. See who can put them in chronological order the fastest. Kids can work on this alone, or in teams.

## Teacher Helps

### Memory Verse Activity: Scripture Log

Make a page for children to take home that shows down the left column: Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday.

Across the top, put practice times and review times.

Children should work on this memory verse each day and mark on their log when they practiced this verse and when they review this verse. Bring this log to class with you next week.

### Bible Activity: Daniel's Faithful Life

Supplies needed: Cards, about 3x5 or 4x6, a pen or marker to write on the cards.



## 4) Review the Lesson

The teacher should divide the class up into two teams.

- One team could be the “red” team and receive red cards or pieces of paper. The other team could be the “yellow” team and receive yellow cards or pieces of paper.
- Each team has the responsibility of writing out 3 to 5 questions that they want the other team to answer.
- Each question has to pertain to the lesson today.
- After questions are written out, the other team has five to seven minutes to answer the questions. The “yellow” team will answer the questions from the “red” team and the “red” team will answer questions from the “yellow” team.



## 5) Apply the Lesson

The Jews came home to Jerusalem with good intentions. They were going to rebuild the temple. But, the original group stopped and did not finish.

Describe one or two ways that you have begun your journey of faith but you have slowed down or stopped. What caused you to slow down or stop? What did you do about it? What will you do about it?

**Story Line: The Jews returned to Jerusalem to rebuild their temple.**

### Teacher Helps

#### Review Activity: Two Team Review

After an appropriate time, the teacher will gather up the cards or pieces of paper and reward points to the best questions and best answers from each team.

It is highly advisable to have 2 adult teachers in every classroom for kids. If there are 2 adults, then one adult should be the leader of each team.



# Adventure Number 50

## Nehemiah 1-8

**Story Line: The Jews returned to Jerusalem to rebuild the walls.**



### 1) Study the Lesson (before class)

- The Jews' attempts to rebuild the temple and the walls of Jerusalem had opponents during the reign of Cyrus, around 530 B.C. In 515 B.C., the Jews completed the temple but not the walls.
- During the reign of Artaxerxes (465 B.C. - 424 B.C.), the Jews began to rebuild the walls, again with opposition. After much prayer, Nehemiah approached the king and asked the king to allow the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem. The king granted Nehemiah's request.
- Nehemiah and a small group of men went to Jerusalem and surveyed the damage of the walls. With much enthusiasm, they enlisted workers not only from Jerusalem, but also from Judah.
- Even with opposition, Nehemiah and his friends continued the work. In 52 days, they rebuilt the nine foot thick walls.
- Nehemiah and his contemporary, Ezra, taught the word of the Lord to the people and exhorted them to be faithful in obedience. They assembled the people of Jerusalem for five hours at the beginning of each morning at the city gates. The word of the Lord was read in Hebrew and explained in Aramaic, the current language of most of the people. Nehemiah urged people to rejoice in the Lord and to continue to live as holy people in His presence.
- Approximately 80 years earlier, Haggai had prophesied that other nations would bring valuable gifts for the temple. Zechariah, a contemporary of Haggai, told about the king who would enter Jerusalem in humility.
- The Old Testament ended with a message of hope from three prophets: Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. Each of these prophets declared something wonderful about promises by Yahweh for His people.

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*Timeline:*

*Returning to Home*



## 2) Begin the Lesson

### Adventure Number 47: Prophecies from Judah

1. Where did God promise to write His promises?
2. Read Jeremiah 31:34.
3. God's promises are trustworthy.
4. Ask God to write His promises on your heart now.

### Adventure Number 48: Prophecies from Babylon

1. Who were two prophets who spoke for God in Babylon?
2. Read Ezekiel 34 and Daniel 2.
3. Ezekiel and Daniel were young men who honored God.
4. Pray that we would honor God with our daily lives.

### Adventure Number 49: Jews Return to Jerusalem

1. Where did the opposition to rebuild the temple come from?
2. Read Ezra 4.
3. Sometimes, opposition to live for God comes from our friends.
4. Pray to live for God even if there is opposition from friends.



## 3) Teach the Lesson

Maybe you have experienced a spiritual revival and maybe you haven't experienced one. If you haven't, what do you think is necessary to have a spiritual revival? In today's lesson, we are going to learn how revival happened for the people of God.

### Teacher Helps

#### **Begin the Lesson** **Activity: Ask, Read,** **Talk, Pray**

A good review strategy from 3 previous lessons will focus on four main elements.

- 1) Ask a question.
- 2) Read the Bible.
- 3) Talk about it.
- 4) Pray to God.



## Tell the Story

This was the last chapter of the Old Testament history, and it ended with a note of hope and optimism. It ended on a revival. God's people had come back to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple and the walls. With opposition, they rebuilt the temple but they did not rebuild the walls. This put the temple and the people of Jerusalem at great risk. In those days, walls around the city were for protection. With no protective walls, everyone was vulnerable to attack from outsiders.

At great risk to himself, Nehemiah approached King Artaxerxes of Persia. Nehemiah had prayed much about the city and its unbuilt walls. God answered the prayers of Nehemiah. Not only did the king give Nehemiah approval to rebuild the walls, he provided the materials necessary to make it happen.

So, Nehemiah and some of his friends went to see what needed to be done to get the walls rebuilt. When they looked over the task ahead of them, they were excited and started recruiting helpers to rebuild the walls. It was amazing to see how God was working and answering prayers.

But opposition came to the builders and it came from an unusual source. It came from the friends of the builders. Sanballat and Tobiah were friends of some of the builders, they might have even been related to some of the builders. Even with the opposition, the construction of the walls was completed in less than two months. There was great joy and celebration.

In the middle of the building, Nehemiah and Ezra began teaching the word of the Lord to the people of Jerusalem. Every morning, they read the word of the Lord for five hours. There was some explanation given and the people responded in faith and obedience. So, there were not only the walls being built, there were people being built.

The walls went up and the people grew up. The people grew up to learn about Yahweh and obey Him. Nehemiah encouraged the people to make the joy of the Lord their strength.

This last chapter of the Old Testament also saw hopeful messages from Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. Haggai wrote of the Lord giving peace in this place. Zechariah wrote about a coming king who would enter Jerusalem in humility. Malachi wrote about a great messenger who is coming. The promises made throughout the Old Testament would soon come to pass.

### Teacher Helps

#### **Tell the Story** **Activity: Cheering for the Israelites**

Have children listen to the story. As you tell the story, have the children clap or cheer when they hear the words "Jerusalem," "temple," and "walls."

The reason for focus on cheering for these three words: God was going to bless the Israelites with joy and celebration as the walls and temple of Jerusalem were rebuilt.

Haggai 2:7-9  
Zechariah 9:9  
Malachi 3:1  
Malachi 4:2-5





## Memory Verse

Nehemiah 8:10 (ESV) - And do not be grieved, for the joy of the LORD is your strength.



## Praise and Worship

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## Bible Activity

### “Red Light/Green Light” Activity

Prepare 2 circles of paper, one solid green, and the other solid red. Tell the children, “**I will name an activity that pleases God (such as helping sweep the floor, pulling weeds in the garden, helping a friend who has fallen down, etc). When I hold up the green light and say ‘go,’ everyone should pretend to do the good activity. When I hold up the red light and say ‘stop’ everyone should stop doing the good thing.**”

After a few rounds, tell them: “**God wants us to do good things, but sometimes people try to stop us. It’s like they are the red light.**” That’s how it was for Nehemiah and the people of Israel. They wanted to do the right thing and obey God, but their enemies tried to stop them. What are some things you might try to do that are good, and how do others sometimes try to stop you? What can we learn from Nehemiah’s example that can help us?

## Teacher Helps

### Memory Verse Activity: Hop It

In large letters, write phrases of the verse on sheets of paper. On the floor, tape the papers in a mixed up fashion, but close enough for succeeding words to be reached in a step. Children should step on one word at a time in the proper order to quote the verse. Let each child have a turn of hopping on the verse.



## 4) Review the Lesson

Agree/Disagree Statements (If you disagree, why do you disagree?)

1. Isaiah and Micah lived at the same time as Nehemiah. (Disagree. They lived about 170 years before Nehemiah).
2. Nehemiah and Ezra taught the word of God together to the people who lived in Jerusalem. (Agree.)
3. Nehemiah went to King Artaxerxes to have the walls of Jerusalem rebuilt. (Agree.)
4. Nehemiah did not pray about going to the king. (Disagree. He did pray.)
5. It took 6 months to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. (Disagree. It took less than 2 months.)



## 5) Apply the Lesson

Revival came to the people when they read the Bible and followed its teachings. The joy of the Lord became their strength.

How often are you reading the Bible? Will you read it every day?

How well are you following the teachings of the Bible? Will you turn away from things that do not please the Lord?

**Story Line: The Jews returned to Jerusalem to rebuild the walls.**

### Teacher Helps

#### Review

#### Activity: Agree and Disagree Statements

Kids will have fun disagreeing or agreeing with these statements. You may want to make up some statements of your own for them to agree or disagree with.