

ADULT BIBLICAL EDUCATION SERIES

Vol. II, Book 9

The Remnant in Exile

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TEACHER'S GUIDE



Pictured on the cover is the Sower, pruning the tree so that it may bear good fruit. We note its increased growth over the year so that it may soon bear fruit.

John 15:1-2 comes to mind as we reflect on this picture: "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh it away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he cleanseth it, that it may bear more fruit.

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Teacher's Supplement To Volume II, Book 9

THE REMNANT IN EXILE Ezekiel, Daniel, and Esther

See the Teacher's Supplement for Vol. II, Book 2, pp. 1-3, for introductory material and guidelines in teaching Biblical lessons.

Below we will give some helps for the teacher in approaching each of the lessons of this quarter. Remember, the suggestions are based on the expectation that each student will have read the lesson material, so that the teacher can build on what the student has already done with the lesson.

LESSON ONE

Introduction to the Lesson:

In this quarter we will be studying the people of God in exile in Babylon and in Persia, noting the messages which God sent to them through the prophets and leaders whom He raised up to guide them in these difficult times.

Remind the class that these were very discouraging times when the people were required to live and to maintain their faith without a homeland, without a king, and without their usual means of worship.

For many, it seemed that the end of God's Kingdom on earth had come.

Therefore, through prophets like Daniel and Ezekiel and through events like those recorded in Esther, the Lord showed that He was still very much in control and that though the Kingdom of Judah had fallen, the Kingdom of God was intact.

Point One: In times of seeming defeat, believers must recall that God is in control.

Remind the class of the way in which the Lord taught Ezekiel this lesson by the vision of the wheels, reminding him of the chariots of the enemies which had overrun his homeland. Though those chariots and the armies using them seemed ever so formidable, the Lord showed that He controlled those wheels from heaven and that they moved wherever He willed them to go.

Help the class to recall how Jacob, faced with Esau before him and Lamech behind him, was also distressed; and in that time of fear, he remembered to

call on the Lord, recognizing that God alone was able to deliver him out of that terrible mess.

Later, David, when faced by Goliath, stood firm against the giant who was well armed while he had only a sling. In that time he did not become fearful of the weapons of men but remembered that his God had often delivered him from great perils and that His Lord proved to be in charge always.

Point to II Kings 6:14ff., where we are told that on one occasion, when the enemies were surrounding Elisha and his servant, the servant panicked but Elisha was assured that the Lord was near with His heavenly host and would protect them. He asked God to show that vast army of heaven to the servant, so that he too could have that assurance. Elisha did not need to see the army of God, he simply knew it was there. So, too, believers today need to be mindful that the Lord is ready at all times to deliver His own, who trust in Him, and is always stronger than men.

Show how Habakkuk had to face what seemed to be a terrifying army of Babylon, yet he learned to trust in the Lord and was prepared to suffer whatever he must, knowing that in the end the Lord would work all for good to those who trusted in Him.

Help the class to see that this very principle was the message of Esther, which they will be studying later in the quarter.

Quote for them the words of Jesus recorded in John 16:33 which teach us all to realize that in spite of the tribulations of this world, which every believer must face, Christ has overcome all the world. This is the message of Revelation as well.

Point Two: In times of seeming defeat, believers must take special care for one another.

Remind the class that Ezekiel was called to be a watchman for the people of Israel in captivity. He had a spiritual oversight and responsibility to warn them of the dangers to them spiritually, as they lived in a foreign land and were bombarded by the counsel of the ungodly.

Help the class members to see how that responsibility for one another is seen throughout Scripture, beginning with the relationship between Cain and Abel. Cain tried to disavow any

responsibility for his brother, but God would not allow it. In the end, because he failed, Cain was sent from God's presence.

Likewise Abraham showed his sense of responsibility toward Lot, his nephew, willing to share with him his blessings and to deliver him from the dangers in Sodom.

You can mention also the relationship between Joseph and his brothers, how Joseph understood his having been blessed by God as a means of his protecting his brothers in their time of peril, even though they once had sought to destroy him.

Through Moses we see many times of intercession on behalf of those whom God appointed him to lead. He not only prayed for them but also diligently taught them the right way, warning of perils if they ignored the Law of God.

We see Samuel taking responsibility for his people in his day, even when they had turned from him. He refused to cease to pray for them or to stop instructing them in the right way.

Likewise David loved his people and prayed for them and sought to lead and prepare them for life in the world for God's glory.

Mordecai, when faced with the possible extinction of all the Jews, reminded Esther of her responsibilities for her people and helped her to see that her privileged place was for the glory of God and the good of His people.

In the New Testament, Jesus shows Himself to be the Good Shepherd, ready to lay down His life for the sheep, those whom God has given to Him; and thereafter, all ministers of the Gospel are called to be shepherds (pastors) of the flock which God has given to them. Paul so teaches the Ephesian elders (Acts 20) and Peter likewise writes of this in his first epistle.

Finally, in the messages to the churches through their ministers, Jesus, in Revelation 2,3, shows that God examines and warns all churches, through His Word, to be pure and to be rid of the evil in them, lest they be put aside from fellowship with God.

Point Three: In times of seeming defeat, believers must expect opposition to their calls to remain faithful.

Ezekiel was warned by God, when he was called, that he could expect the majority in captivity not to listen to him but to oppose him like a hostile army. That is just what happened. The people would not listen to what he said but, for the most part, turned from him.

Show them that this was just the experience that Elijah faced when he warned the people in the days of Ahab and Jezebel.

Similarly, Jeremiah was warned by God, when he

was called, that he would face great opposition in Jerusalem to his preaching, as Ezekiel did in Babylon.

We could point to Malachi who also found his generation unwilling to heed the warnings of the prophet and refusing to honor the Lord.

John the Baptist, when he came, found the people who led Israel in his day unwilling to honor him as one sent from God or to give heed to his warnings.

Even the Lord, when he came to earth, found that most of the leadership of the Jews was unsympathetic to what he had to say and opposed him to the death.

Later, Paul and the other apostles found that even in the church, as it spread abroad, many opposed God's servants. Therefore, Paul prepared Timothy—and all generations to come—for the strong opposition that will arise to the truth proclaimed, even within the bounds of the visible church (II Tim. 4:1-5).

Suggestions for discussion:

1. You may wish to lead the class to a discussion of current discouragements in the church and in the world, and how we might better cope with them in the light of Ezekiel's message. You could utilize questions 5,6,12.
2. You could also lead the group in a discussion of ways in which we can all function as watchmen in the church today to aid one another, while there is time. Use questions 1-4,7,8,9,10,11.

LESSON TWO

Introduction to the Lesson:

Remind the class that much of Ezekiel's message concerning the sins of Jerusalem is similar to what other prophets had been saying for a long time. Yet, Ezekiel uniquely is given a vision that reveals the sin in the hearts of the people as he takes a tour of the sinful hearts of the leaders of Jerusalem.

Point One: God sees the sin in the churches and also calls members to see that sin.

Ezekiel, in his vision, was given a close look at the hearts of sinful men as God sees those hearts. He was—among men—uniquely to experience the revulsion of God at what He saw. After that vision, there could be no doubt that the Jerusalem church of the Old Testament had to be destroyed. Its leadership was corrupt.

Moses earlier had also been made aware of the sins of Israel on many occasions. At times he too was repelled by what he saw and became angry. God wished him to see why it was necessary for the Lord to punish those who came out of Egypt, but with unclean

hearts.

Later, Samuel was shown the extent of sin in Israel, particularly through Saul and his evil deeds.

Elijah, in his day, saw the extent of sin in the northern kingdom and cried out against the wavering sinful hearts of the people of Israel.

So all the prophets were men who had been impressed with the extent of the sin in Israel and Judah and whose messages dwelt on the effort to convince them that they had sins which made them corrupt to the core.

Jesus did not hesitate to speak about the sins that flowed out of the hearts of the people in His day on earth and which corrupted their whole lives.

Paul, later, wrote to the Corinthians, expounding on the sins in them which threatened the future of the church at Corinth and imploring them to deal with those sins in their midst.

Most vividly, in the messages to the 7 churches (Rev. 2,3), Jesus reveals all the corruption which He sees in the churches, even though many of those same churches were proud of their accomplishments.

Point Two: God will not spare the sinful, unrepentant church.

Through Ezekiel, the Lord declared that He had turned His pity away from that sinful church in Jerusalem. It would not be spared but would be overthrown by the Babylonians.

Remind the class that Paul later declared that God had been displeased with most of those in the wilderness in Moses' day and had overthrown them (I Cor. 10).

God showed that there are limits to His patience with the sinners in His church when He overthrew Israel, the northern kingdom, after many prophets had been sent to them, and they did not repent. Likewise, ultimately, He overthrew Judah as well.

Help the class to recall that Habakkuk erred in thinking that the Israelites were more righteous than the pagans who attacked them (the Babylonians) and that the Lord had to correct that misconception.

You can quote I Peter 4:17, showing that it is necessary for judgment to begin at the house of God if the world is to learn of righteousness and repent.

Point Three: Church members, when duly warned of their sins, are accountable to God for the church's failures.

First, they are to be made aware of the failures of their own hearts. Remind the class that this is what Ezekiel taught them. There was no hope in them because their hearts were evil before God.

Recall for the class how Moses, in Deuteronomy

and Jeremiah, likewise stressed the corruption of the heart and the need for it to be cleansed.

In the New Testament Jesus also taught that it was out of the heart that all wickedness came, which truly defiled the man.

For this reason, both Jeremiah and Ezekiel taught the people their need for new hearts, even as Jesus taught Nicodemus in the New Testament.

Second, they are to be taught that their false security will fail them.

In Ezekiel's day, the people had trusted in the vain "security"—some righteous ones in Jerusalem—to save them; but God warned that even if Noah, Job, and Daniel were living in Jerusalem, He would not spare the city.

In Jeremiah's ministry in Jerusalem, he had to show to the people that their false security in the temple in Jerusalem—as their guarantee that God would save them—was vain; and in the end the city and the temple would be destroyed.

In Jesus' day, the Jews drew great comfort from the fact that they were descendants of Abraham. They thought this made them sons of God. Jesus had to show that this was also vain security.

In Paul's day, the Gentiles were beginning to feel secure because God had turned from the Jews and had sent the gospel to them. But Paul warned that they too could be cut off if they did not believe. Thus our only security is to be found not in ourselves, but in our complete trust in the Lord alone to help us.

Suggestions for discussion:

1. You could discuss with the class how we are made aware in our church of our sins and failures as a church, and what we are being encouraged to do about it.
2. Discuss, too, the evidence that the church of which you are members is waiting on the Lord in all of its planning and programs? How is it evident that the church waits on God, through His Word, to lead the officers and others in the decisions of the church.

LESSON THREE

Introduction to the Lesson:

Ezekiel tells us that God's commission to him was primarily that he cause Jerusalem to know her abominations (16:1 ff.).

Ezekiel's concentration on Jerusalem has to do not only with the city itself but also with its inhabitants, who are under the scrutiny of God's judgment and have been found wanting.

Yet, Ezekiel reveals the city's pride in its history

and great buildings. It has used all of its resources not to honor God but to play the harlot with the pagan nations around.

The time is therefore ripe for God's judgment; but before that falls, the Lord once more wishes the people of Israel, both those in Jerusalem and those now in captivity, to know how very sinful the city is in God's sight.

Point One: God deals with men by holding all accountable for their own sins.

In Ezekiel's day the people murmured that they were in trouble with God because of their parents' sins, thus implying their own innocence of any wrong. They merely blamed the past generations.

But God would not let them get away with this. He accused them of the sins of that day and showed that their punishment was due to what they did, not their fathers.

God has always dealt with men this way. When God made Adam and Eve in His own image, He warned them that in the day they sinned, they would die. When they sinned they did die spiritually, so that they were then dead to God and alive to sin.

At the flood, the generation living at that time was so full of sin that God determined not to tolerate that generation any longer. They were punished for what they were, not for the deeds of past generations.

Similarly, the generation of Sodom and Gomorrah was punished for its sins, not those of its parents.

Moses was warned of his sins and punished when he sinned, even though he sought faithfully through most of his life to serve the Lord.

In the wilderness, the Israelites who sinned died; and many fell. They were punished, but their children, who were innocent of their sins, were spared.

In Exodus 34:6,7, God taught all Israel that He was a most loving and gracious God, but that He would not overlook sin in anyone of any generation.

In the time of the judges, each generation, as it sinned, felt the stinging rebuke and punishment of God.

Likewise David, though a man after God's own heart, was not able to escape the punishment for his sins. Yet, he learned God's forgiveness as well. But his sons, who later sinned, were punished, not for David's sins, but for their own.

We see that Israel, and ultimately Judah too, were punished because the later generations reached such a stage of rebellion that God could no longer endure them.

In the New Testament, John the Baptist called to the attention of his generation their sins, and warned of God's punishment of them, which was about to fall. He specifically named their sins.

Paul, in II Corinthians 5:10, teaches that we must all stand before the Lord in the last day and give an account of our lives, all that we have done.

We see clearly that Jesus, in addressing the generation at the end of the first century after Christ, praised some churches and condemned others, in accord with what each had done, good or bad (Rev. 2,3). And in the closing part of Revelation, chapter 20, we are taught plainly that everyone will see books opened and will be judged out of the books which tell of his life before God.

Help the class to see that when we sin we are liable to God and must give to Him an accounting of what we do: God will hold us responsible to account only for our own sins, not for those of another.

Point Two: People naturally reject God's way of dealing with them, denying their sins and believing in their own works.

In Ezekiel's day, people were unconcerned with their hearts and had convinced themselves that they were pretty good people, deserving not God's wrath but His commendation.

Show them that Saul was the same way when he constantly tried to convince God's prophet that he was basically a good man and deserved not rebuke but support and sympathy.

Isaiah notes that "our righteousness," that elusive and vain quality which most of Israel claimed in its support, was as nothing to God (Isa. 64:6).

Later, the Jews showed a continuation of this attitude that their righteousness was sufficient to justify their being called God's children and they vainly claimed this, though Jesus taught them that they were Satan's children (John 8).

We see clear evidence of many heresies in the New Testament era which held that we are saved by our works and not by faith alone (Galatians).

Jesus, in addressing the 7 churches of Asia Minor, condemned those who thought they were rich when they were poor and those who thought they were alive when they were really dead. And He declared that He would spew out of His mouth those who thought they pleased God when they did not (Rev. 2,3).

Help the class to see that men still tend to trust in their own works because they do not admit the excess of sin in their lives. Even those in the church often put more confidence in their "good works" than in Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Point Three: If men and God are to be reconciled, then men, not God, will have to change.

Remind the class that in Ezekiel's day, much of his message was concerned with showing the true nature

of the human heart (even of religious people) and with showing that man must have a changed heart or remain unacceptable to God,

In Deuteronomy, too, God says much about the sinfulness of the heart and the necessity of its being changed (circumcised).

The same message is to be found overall in Jeremiah's prophecy.

In I Samuel, we see Samuel the prophet leading the people back to God by showing that they must change.

The whole prophetic message calls people to turn from their present wickedness and come to God. They cannot expect God to change His judgment against them or His attitude toward their sins.

Christ taught Nicodemus that if he was to see God's Kingdom, then it must be on the basis of his being reborn (changed in heart).

Paul likewise taught that the natural man goes on sinning and that only if God quickens (changes) his heart can he be alive before God (Eph. 2:1ff.).

Suggestions for discussion:

1. You could discuss the efforts to adorn the church building where you worship versus adorning the lives of believers by good works to God's glory.
2. You can discuss the trials which your church has had to endure and how it has affected growth in the church and the faith of the members.

LESSON FOUR

Introduction to the Lesson:

In this lesson we will be looking generally at the judgment of God against the nations and why such judgments, so frequent in Scripture, are a very important part of God's revelation.

You can remind them of the extensive coverage this subject has received in the writings of the prophets. Remind them that these judgments were in preparation for the nations to receive the gospel. To receive that gospel in faith, they must first know God's displeasure with them and their need of repentance, as did the Jews also had that need.

Remind the class that judgments against the nations mean, ultimately, judgment against the god of this world, Satan, and that in the prophetic writings there are even hints of that ultimate judgment of man's greatest enemy.

Point One: The nations of the world must know that there is a God to whom they are accountable.

Ezekiel and Jeremiah both were sent to preach not

only to Israel but to the nations of the world as well; and much of their material is concerned with this subject, though they are not the first prophets to deal with this matter.

The judgment of God by the great flood in Noah's day, was, in essence, an expression of God's utter rejection of natural man, whatever the nation. And later, Sodom and Gomorrah showed that not only His own people but all the world was accountable to God.

The expelling of the Canaanites, later, showed again that God will bring all peoples in the world, one by one, to account before Him. He is truly the Lord of lords and King of kings.

Later, we see both Assyria and Babylon, which had prospered and even served God's purposes, nevertheless overthrown and made symbolic, in the rest of Scripture, of God's ultimate judgment on all nations.

In the Book of Revelation, God announces the sure fall of Babylon the Great, but in such a way that we understand that He is speaking of all nations of the world in general and Rome in particular.

Help the class to see that God's judgment on the nations brings our nation into account before God. We have an obligation to make our nation see that they too are accountable to God and may fall if they fail to please Him.

Point Two: The judgment on the nations of the world means also the sure judgment on the god of this world.

Ezekiel focuses particularly on Tyre and its king, who signifies Satan as well. Though God takes up much space in His Book with the judgment on nations of the world, it is clear that ultimately, His intent is to bring the downfall of Satan.

We see that God told of this fall of the god of this world in Eden, after the fall of Adam and Eve (Gen. 3).

Isaiah, in chapter 14, also prophesies in such a way that we are to understand that ultimately he is warning about the fall of Satan for his great pride and rebellion against God.

Jesus, in His public ministry, spoke often of the inevitable downfall of Satan, the god and deceiver of the whole world.

The Book of Revelation, chapter 20, tells of the final outworking of God's purpose to judge Satan, as he is cast into the lake of fire.

Here, remind the class that Scripture consistently portrays Satan as the god and ruler of this world, meaning those in it who do not honor Christ. He is personal (a being created by God, but who has rebelled against God) and dangerous, though limited now (bound) and restricted in what he can do against the

gospel. By the power of the gospel (the keys of the Kingdom of God) Satan can be and is being defeated daily.

Point Three: The nations of the world are being judged so that they may be prepared to receive the gospel as it comes to them.

In Ezekiel's day, the prophecies against the nations also contained many promises to those nations which would repent and believe in Israel's God.

Remind them of the hope for the nations in the promises of God to Abraham and his seed (Gen. 14,22).

Remind them too that many of the prophecies of Scripture contain hope for the Gentiles as well as for believing Israelites.

Jesus, in the Great Commission, makes clear that His eye is on the nations of the earth, that many out of them might be saved (Matt. 28).

The fall of Babylon, as portrayed in Revelation, is delayed until every one of God's children is sealed out of all the nations of the earth.

Paul teaches the Gentiles that they are privileged now to hear the gospel and to carry it still farther out into the world; but that that privilege carries responsibility too, so that if they, like the Jews, come to cease to believe, then they too will be cut off by God (Rom. 11:21ff.).

Suggestions for discussion:

1. You could discuss as a class the evidence that Satan continues as the ruler of this world today.
2. Discuss the evidence today that God's truth continues to go out to the nations of the world.

LESSON FIVE

Introduction to the Lesson:

This prophecy portion emphasizes the hope for the remnant in Babylon who has remained faithful to the Lord. It comes after news of the fall of Jerusalem has come and the issue is no more in doubt.

Now that the kingdom they knew has fallen, the Lord begins, in these chapters, to speak of the Kingdom of God that endures and the hope of its members.

Point One: God will do what must be done for His people (both from the Jews and from the Gentiles).

Ezekiel has shown to Israel both their need (they are sinners and not able to help themselves) and the

solution to that need: cleansed hearts.

God showed to Adam and Eve, just after they had sinned, that they could never extricate themselves from their sin; and He promised a Redeemer to come who would defeat their enemy, Satan.

Likewise, when Noah's generation was condemned, the Lord showed that the solution lay in what God will do by showing His grace to Noah and his family and saving them from the flood.

In chapter 22 of Genesis, Abraham learned that what had to be done (an acceptable sacrifice offered to God) must be offered not by Abraham, but by the sacrifice (Lamb) provided by God (i.e., the Christ).

Later, through David, the Lord promised the Son to come who would rule and triumph over all of our enemies; and in Isaiah, He gives us great detail of the promised Messiah.

Jesus, when on earth, went about doing good and accomplishing what no other man could accomplish: a perfect life and a perfect sacrifice.

Paul, from this, teaches that our justification before God comes by faith alone, quoting from Habakkuk; and later, in Titus 3:5-7, he shows that it is not our righteousness that saves us but what God, in Christ, has done.

Help the class to see, after this point, that the essence of the gospel message today is that God has done what was necessary for our salvation and that without His Work, we have no hope.

Point Two: God will give new life by His Spirit,

We have seen how Ezekiel shows this in chapters 36,37, where we are plainly taught that as God's Word is preached, then those dead in sins are given new life and live for God thereafter.

God, by sparing Isaac and giving to him life from the dead (he was as good as dead until God called), taught again that we are given new life only by God's work.

Elijah's lesson about the still small voice and the words of Zechariah that it is not by might but by God's Spirit show that regeneration is the work of God's Spirit.

Joel therefore promises that the Spirit will be poured out on the lives of true believers in the day of Pentecost, so that they will live and do what pleases the Lord.

For this reason, Jesus, on earth, said in John's Gospel much about the coming of the Spirit after He departed, to dwell in believers.

Thus Paul speaks of the fruits of the Spirit which come in the believer's life (Gal. 5), which is just what God had taught long before through Psalm 1.

Help the class to see that God's work for and in us is not simply to give to us life from the dead but life

that goes on serving and living for God's glory.

Point Three: Thus, man's salvation—God's work—is done not because we deserve it, but because of God's glory.

Remind the class that the Shorter Catechism teaches that we are created and recreated in Christ for the glory of God, our chief end (goal and purpose).

Through Ezekiel, the Lord showed that the Israelites did not deserve to be called God's children, but they were saved only for God's glory, so that all might learn to praise the Lord.

Through Moses, earlier, God had shown that He redeemed Israel and was good to her solely because of His glory, certainly not because the people deserved it.

Isaiah saw the glory of God in his call and learned then that the chief reason for his and his peoples being saved was the glory of God.

Malachi shows that God was determined that His name be glorified among the Gentiles, in spite of Israel's failures (Mal. 1:11-14).

Jesus made clear that His great mission on earth was to obey and glorify His Father.

Paul, in his writings, shows that the gospel was for the praise of the glory of the Lord (Eph. 1).

So in Revelation, it is clear that the Church's triumph over Satan on earth will come not by its efforts, but on the return of Christ, so that in the end, the triumph will be solely to God's glory.

Suggestions for discussion:

1. You may wish to discuss with the members of the class the contrast between Sunday's professions of faith by the members of your church and the weekday testimony of the members in their life and work.
2. Discuss the evidence for the increase of the world's hostility against the church in the present day.

LESSON SIX

Introduction to the Lesson:

In this lesson on the heavenly vision of Jerusalem and the cleansed temple prepared by God, our focus is on the comparison between the old temple, seen by Ezekiel in a vision earlier, which represented the corrupt hearts of the Israelites, and the new temple, built by God and perfect in every way, a fit place for God to dwell.

Remind them that what Ezekiel learned is what all believers need to learn: that our hearts cannot be fit for God to dwell in except by the cleansing work of God

through His Holy Spirit, who cleanses our hearts through the blood of Jesus Christ.

Point One: God is glorified through hearts cleansed by His Holy Spirit.

Begin with Ezekiel's experience. Ezekiel saw the glory of God in that new temple which God showed him after the old temple had been destroyed. This is one reason the old temple had to be destroyed: that we might learn the need of a new and heavenly temple, prepared by God.

You can point back to God's response to Moses' desire for a vision of the glory of God (Ex. 33:18,19). There, God responded by saying that He would show to Moses His goodness. Then He showed Moses His attributes (Ex. 34:6,7), attributes which are to appear in believers as well, when their hearts are cleansed (You can remind them of the lesson on this subject which we studied when studying that portion of Scripture.)

Note the account of the Shekinah glory of God when the first tabernacle had been completed (Ex. 40:34), which pointed to the day of God's being glorified in the hearts of all believers.

You can note, too, the passages which call for a cleansed heart (circumcised by God) in the believers (Deut. 10:16; 30:6; Jer. 4:4).

Remind them of Isaiah 6, where, in the call of Isaiah, he describes the glory of God to be seen in His holy temple.

Joel 2:28, points to the day when the Spirit of God will be poured out on all saints, enabling them to live to God's glory.

In Zechariah 4:6, we are told that God's work in men's hearts will be done by the Spirit of God.

In the New Testament, Jesus speaks of the coming of the Holy Spirit to dwell in all believers, who will glorify the Lord when He comes (John 16:14).

Paul adds, in Titus 3:5,6, that we are truly cleansed by the washing of regeneration by the work of the Holy Spirit through the blood of Jesus Christ. And, in Ephesians 1:13,14, he tells us that we are sealed till the day of Christ's return by the presence of the Holy Spirit in us.

Emphasize with the class that the only way any can live to the glory of God is by having his heart cleansed by Christ so that God's Spirit can dwell in him.

Point Two: God is enthroned in the heart of every believer.

Remind them of what Ezekiel saw: God sitting enthroned in the temple that had been prepared by God.

Show how this doctrine is elaborated upon in the New Testament, where our bodies are called the

temple of the Holy Spirit (i.e., where He dwells) (I Cor. 3:16; 6:19; II Cor. 6:16).

In Ephesians 2:21-22, Paul shows that the Holy Spirit seeks to build the whole church into a glorious and clean temple, the permanent habitation of the Lord.

From Romans 8:9, you can point out the doctrine that the Spirit of God does dwell in every believer; and this seems to be reflected as well in Revelation 22:3.

Here, the chief point is that the Old Testament portrayal of the heart as like a temple—either defiled and unfit for God to dwell in or cleansed and prepared for Him to dwell there—applies to the work of Jesus Christ and the coming of the Holy Spirit, promised by Jesus to those who believed in Him.

Point Three: The believer's heart, cleansed by God, is where true worship begins and true spiritual fruit is borne.

We see from Ezekiel's vision of the new temple that it is to be the true place of worship for God's people. The temple Ezekiel saw was never built by men, nor was it intended to be. It was symbolic of what God would do in the hearts of His children.

Jesus, in John 4, tells that all true worshippers will not worship in temples built by the hands of men, but in Spirit and in truth, showing that the temple was only a symbol of the true worship place.

This is why Paul, in Philippians 3:3, speaks of believers as the circumcision (circumcised where it counts, i.e., in the heart) who worship God by the Spirit of God and who glory in Christ Jesus.

In Ezekiel we also see that the new temple is the place of true spiritual fruit. This goes back to Psalm 1:3, where we learn that those who are righteous bear fruit in accord with their love of God's Word and meditation on it in their hearts.

Jesus picks this truth up in John 15, by teaching that we bear fruit as we abide in Him and He in us; and Paul, therefore, calls the resultant changes in the life of believers the "fruit of the Spirit." (Gal. 5:22-23)

Here, you will want to make the point to the class that while we do begin true worship in the heart, we are not to suppose that we do not congregate as the body of Christ to worship together in the church. God expects that. But in worshipping there, such worship is acceptable only if our hearts have been cleansed and the Spirit dwells in those hearts.

Suggestions for discussion:

1. You may wish to discuss the concept of worship in the hearts, as it relates to public worship. What difference does it make whether the worshipper has Christ in His heart?
2. You can also lead a discussion on the evidences of

Christ's Spirit living in believers in your church. How will the stranger see the evidence of Christ in you as a church?

LESSON SEVEN

Introduction to the Lesson:

In this lesson you will wish to point out particularly how Daniel serves as an example for all believers living in a hostile world. He shows how we can serve the Lord faithfully while living in the world, even within a pagan nation.

Point out that as Daniel and faithful believers were, in that day, in a minority, so Christians continue to be a minority in the world. Nevertheless, as Daniel succeeded, so can we, with Christ's help.

Point One: Believers in a hostile world find their strength to serve the Lord by their faith in the Lord.

Begin with Daniel's own fine example as he first determined to serve the Lord and then trusted in the Lord to give him opportunities, putting to God's service all in his life over which he had control. When placed before the king, he did not hesitate to give to God all the glory for anything he would be able to do to serve the king.

You can point to Joseph in Egypt, at an earlier time, as a similar example of God's child serving God while serving the ruler of Egypt.

Similarly, Esther and Mordecai served the Lord while serving rulers in the world and did so in a way to bring glory to God, as they put their trust in the Lord.

Show that Ecclesiastes is a Book dealing with the problem of believers in the world, in their jobs, learning to honor and serve the Lord while doing secular work.

Point to Psalm 1:1-2, which tells us that the world is trying to mould the righteous ones into its image; but they survive in such a world by study of and meditation on God's Word.

Remind them of Jesus' words in John 15:33, which tell that we can expect tribulation in the world but can find our sources of strength in the Lord, who has overcome the world.

Point to Matthew 28:18-20, where Jesus, the Lord of the harvest, sends out His people into the world to serve Him there.

In Romans 12:1,2, we are again reminded that believers in the world face a world that is seeking to conform them into its image, but we can have minds transformed into what God wishes us to be.

Note also Ephesians 6:5-9, where even slaves are

taught that they can successfully serve the Lord even while slaves of pagan owners.

Finally, note Revelation 1:9, which shows that the Kingdom of God has to do with both tribulation and an effort to remain faithful and steadfast in a hostile world.

At this point, challenge the class to learn from Daniel's example and to reexamine their day-by-day lives, to be certain that they are using every opportunity daily to serve God, even if in secular work. Point out that no work need be "secular," if we dedicate that work to the Lord.

Point Two: The rulers of this world do not have the solutions to life's problems and therefore have troubled hearts.

Show that the heart of Nebuchadnezzar, in Daniel's day, was not untypical. He was troubled because a dream could not be interpreted by any of his advisors; and yet, he feared that the dream had a sinister meaning for him or his kingdom. Daniel saw this, and guided him to a better understanding of his kingdom in respect to the purposes of God.

You can point to Abraham's experience with Sodom's king, when God guided Abraham to a solution to the problem faced by Sodom at that time, yet, in such a way that God received all the glory.

Again, Joseph was guided by the Lord to help the king of Egypt to solve the problem he faced in the coming drought.

Likewise, Elijah stood against king Ahab who was troubled because of circumstances in his day and sought to blame them on prophets like Elijah, when the source of the problems was really in Ahab's heart.

Isaiah sought to advise Ahaz in his day to trust in the Lord, but Ahaz refused his counsel and sought to solve the problem of the invasion which he faced with a worldly solution.

We can note that both Ezra and Nehemiah served the king of Persia and counseled the king in problems he faced.

In the New Testament, we see Pilate grappling with the problems of his realm and with the whole question of truth. Jesus had the answers for him but Pilate never really turned to Jesus for solutions.

We see that when the Lord called Paul, he told him that he was to stand before kings and governors for the sake of the gospel.

Help the class to see that the world rulers—who are under God (see Romans 13)—do need the help and counsel of Christians, whether or not they will follow that counsel, and that, as Christians, we are obligated to help them when we can.

Point Three: Believers must always view the world

from God's perspective, not man's.

Start by reminding them of the dream of Nebuchadnezzar, which Daniel understood, and how it helped him to see that though the Babylonian Empire seemed ever so big in his day, it was no real threat to the people of God. It would fall as would all man-made empires.

You can go back to the time of the building of Babel, as recorded in Genesis 11. There you see that though the world plans big, God's plans overrule men's plans.

You can also point to the arrogance and fearfulness of the kingdoms of Assyria and Babylon in their day and yet note that all the rulers of these nations were really tools in the hands of God, no matter what their own motivation was.

Note Psalm 2, which gives to us, in summation, the view God has of the world and its counsel. It *will not stand!*

Remind them of Habakkuk's new insight as is recorded in the 3rd chapter of his writing, seeing God move through history to accomplish His purposes for the good of His people. That is the real heart of and meaning of all history, and Christians must not lose sight of it.

You can note, too, that Jesus frequently speaks of the fall of Satan and the inevitable end of his power in the world. In John 16:33, He tells His disciples that they can expect trouble in the world, but that they must never lose sight of the fact that He has already overcome the world.

So in Romans 13, Paul can say that as believers we ought to serve and respect the kings of this world, but never fear that their sinful ways will prevail over Christ's purposes.

Finally, note that the Book of Revelation has as its chief theme the importance of the Church, seeing history and all that happens in it from God's perspective, not man's.

Suggestions for discussion:

1. You could lead a discussion on the problems in the world today and how the church can offer solutions through God's Word.
2. You can also discuss the church's responsibility to challenge all of its believers to make of their jobs a full-time Christian work.

LESSON EIGHT

Introduction to the Lesson:

In this lesson you will want to discuss principles to be drawn from the experience of Nebuchadnezzar

before Daniel's God. Note how he was humbled before God and forced, in the end, to sing the praises of God to all the nations under his control in the world.

Point One: God is the King of all kings of this world.

Remind them of how Nebuchadnezzar, who was filled with pride and who sought to exalt himself above Daniel's God, in the end was used to praise Daniel's God.

Show that the lesson of the Exodus was that there is really only one King in the world, the Lord (Ex. 15).

You can point to the difference between David and Saul: Saul saw himself as sovereign, but David saw the Lord as sovereign and himself only as God's servant.

Point to the counsel of the nations and their rulers against God and His anointed (Ps. 2) and show there how God laughs and overrules their plans.

You can point to Assyria's arrogance as is recorded in Isaiah 10:5ff., and show how God teaches that in the end Assyria was only an instrument in God's hands to be disposed of when He was ready. The same was true later of Babylon, according to God's words through Isaiah.

In the New Testament, you see how Christ and Satan are opposed, and yet Satan is never able to defeat Christ, but in the end he is defeated by Christ, though he is the "god" of this world.

In Revelation 19:16, we are given the title of the Lord: King of kings.

Likewise, Ephesians 1:20-22 teaches us that ultimately every ruler of this world will acknowledge the lordship of Christ overall.

Help the class to understand the importance of this fact in our daily living. We must remember who is really in control and who makes the final decisions about the outcome of all things.

Point Two: God will humble all who exalt themselves before Him.

Begin by pointing to how God humbled Nebuchadnezzar when he refused to humble himself.

Next, you can go back to Babel and show how men's plans made in pride then were all overruled by God who destroyed Babel and scattered men over the face of the earth.

Again, point to Psalm 2, which shows that in spite of men's arrogance, God has the last word.

You can cite Pharaoh's humbling when he hardened his heart against the will of God in Moses' day.

Note Hannah's prayer which expresses the sure humiliation of all who exalt themselves and are proud (I Sam. 2).

Remind the class of how pride was the cause of Saul's downfall and the exaltation of humble David. Use again the example of the boastful king of Assyria before Hezekiah, in Israel's history. Indeed, the judgment of all the kingdoms of this world, so frequently mentioned in the prophets, tells this same story.

In Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28, which we have studied, you can note how the humbling of kings is related to the humbling and fall of Satan.

In the New Testament, note how Christ stands before King Herod and Pilate, rulers of this world, and they are humbled.

In Revelation, you can point out that God consistently describes the fall of the nations of the world before Him in terms of the fall of "Babylon the Great" (any nation which exalts itself above God).

In this section, challenge the students to see in the world today how God continues to humble the proud.

Point Three: God can and does, at times, use sinful rulers to proclaim His praises in the world.

Begin with the proclamation of Nebuchadnezzar to all nations under his control, that Daniel's God was the only great God and was above all other gods. This does not mean that he believed in Daniel's God, but nevertheless, he feared and praised Him.

Earlier, we see Abraham's God recognized by many rulers in Abraham's day and in the days of his children. Then, later, even the Philistines praised the God of Israel whom they feared (I Sam. 4).

In Jonah's day, the king of Nineveh praised the God of Jonah after he and his people had been humbled.

We could also note Cyrus and other Persian kings, later, in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah, who learned to honor their God.

In the New Testament era, we could use the example of Pilate who sought to honor Christ before the Jews by calling Him their "King," even though his motivations were not good. Later, Agrippa the king also sought to honor Paul's God and recognized Him.

We could also cite the example of Constantine who, after the close of Biblical revelation, nevertheless, did finally acknowledge the God of Christians.

Help the class to see that in our time, also, there are many—presidents, kings, and famous people—who, from time to time, give recognition and praise to the God of all believers, whether or not they truly believe in Him unto salvation.

Suggestions for Discussion:

1. You may profitably discuss the question of how pride within our church can adversely affect its

testimony in the community.

2. You may wish to give examples, in the class, of rulers (Christian or not) who today use their office, from time to time, to praise and glorify our God.

LESSON NINE

Introduction to the Lesson:

This lesson deals with the end of the Babylonian Empire and the continuation of Daniel's service to the Persians, thus emphasizing the truth of the dream of Nebuchadnezzar that the mighty kingdoms of this world will rise and fall but God's Kingdom will survive and continue.

Here you will wish to put the emphasis on the importance of the lessons from the past, as we interpret history from the Biblical perspective.

Point One: The past has vital lessons to teach in the present and the future, if we see through the eyes of God's Word.

Begin by pointing out that Belshazzar was unable to learn from the past experiences of his ancestor, Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel rebuked him for this failure. Nebuchadnezzar had learned the hard way that he could not ignore the God of Daniel and had undergone much humiliation in the process. But Belshazzar seemed to know little of the past history of his people; had he known better, then he could have been guided to seek the wisdom of men like Daniel.

We see in Genesis how Jacob, as he reflected on his own hardships over many years with Laban, finally learned from his past failures that he could be successful only by the blessings of God and learned to humble himself before the Lord.

Similarly, Joseph in Egypt, reflecting on all the bad things that had happened to him at the hands of his brothers, was, nevertheless, able to see that God had meant these things for good and was able to console his brothers about the present and future (Gen. 50).

Moses, before his death, was able to review the whole past dealings of God with Israel and prepare the people for the future, after he was gone. This was the chief theme of the entire Book of Deuteronomy, which stressed the love of God toward Israel which would sustain the people in the days to come.

Similarly, Joshua reviewed the past dealings of God with Israel just before his death and challenged the people to live for God in this new land they received.

Samuel's chief point in I Samuel 7, was to help the people see that to that point God had led them and would therefore lead them on into the future, if they

sought Him first.

David, when threatened by Goliath, was able to gain great strength and faith by reviewing what things God had done for him in the past to prosper him. With this confidence in God, he was able to face Goliath and win.

Judah was urged to learn from Israel's past and the consequent judgment that fell on Israel in the north. Prophet after prophet in Judah pointed to God's judgment on Israel for her sins and urged Judah not to follow the same path which would lead her to the same end that befell Israel.

We see that all of the prophets used the past to teach the people about the present and challenge them toward the future.

Malachi also reviewed the past of Israel, which showed that God loved Jacob and blessed that people which came from him (Mal. 1).

In the New Testament, Matthew opens the gospel account of Jesus with a review of the past history of Israel, to show by the genealogies how God preserved a faithful line, through which God would now redeem His people.

Both Stephen and Paul in Acts, when they preached, drew heavily from the Old Testament lessons in God's dealings with His people to convict the present generation of its sins and to challenge all to repent and believe in the Lord.

In Romans 11, Paul urged Gentiles to learn from the past dealings of God with the Jews and their consequent rejection by God because they had turned from Him in unbelief.

Finally, the messages to the 7 churches of Asia Minor, in Revelation 2,3, are designed to teach the churches of each generation in the future what pleases the Lord and what does not.

Here, stress to the class the importance of our learning today from God's past dealings with His people, particularly through the history in God's Word. Recent history of the church in the world can teach us much, provided we interpret it in accord with the lessons from Scripture.

Point Two: Failure to learn the lessons of the past brings failure to present generations.

Start by reminding them that since Belshazzar and his generation in Babylon did not learn from God's dealings with Nebuchadnezzar, God brought judgment on that generation and Babylon fell into the hands of the Persians.

When the Israelites came out of Egypt, they did not learn from the past dealings of God with them, and so they behaved evilly in the wilderness; and most of that generation was destroyed in the wilderness because they did not learn to have confidence in God.

Later, Israel, the northern kingdom, fell because the people ignored the lessons of their past and refused to listen to the prophets who sought to teach them from the past.

Judah refused to give heed to the lessons to be learned by the judgment that fell on Israel in the north, and so, inevitably, Judah too fell under the power of pagan peoples.

Assyria, which had once repented under the preaching of Jonah, nevertheless, learned little from its past near-destruction and continued in sin after Jonah's time. Therefore, Assyria, not learning from her past experiences with God, was also overthrown.

Jesus called the Jews of His day to repent and believe on Him, pointing them to God's past mercy on them. But the Jews refused to learn from God's past promises and mercy; and they killed Jesus, refusing to believe in Him. For this, they were judged unfit to be God's people and God turned to the Gentiles. Jerusalem fell and was destroyed in A.D. 70, and the Jews lost the land of their fathers.

Paul, again in Romans 11, warned the Gentiles that if they did not learn from the past experiences of the Jews and their having been cut out, then the same thing would happen to the Gentiles (Romans 11:22).

Point Three: Though nations and even churches fail to learn from the past, God will always keep a remnant of believers to carry on His work to the end.

Remind the class of how the Lord did preserve Daniel through the period of the overthrow of Babylon so that though he had once served Babylon, he was able to continue to serve God while serving the new regime.

The doctrine of the remnant is promised as early as the time of Moses and is often noted by the prophets. God demonstrated throughout Israelite history, as recorded in the Old Testament, that He could and would preserve a faithful line of believers no matter what happened in the world.

God preserved Seth, Noah, Shem, Abraham and his children, Israel in Egypt, a remnant of believers out of the northern kingdom of Israel, and many out of Judah, down until the end of Old Testament revelation.

Then, after 400 years, He showed that He had also preserved a remnant of believers in the days of Christ's birth; and though most Jews rejected Jesus, a remnant believed and became the nucleus of the New Testament church, which has continued to our own day.

Remind them of the lesson taught to Habakkuk that the just shall live by their faith.

So, down through history since the close of the New Testament revelation, nations have risen and

fallen; but the church of Jesus Christ has continued to survive and will, to the end of human history, in accord with the promises of Revelation.

Suggestions for Discussion:

1. You could lead the class in a profitable discussion of the past history of your church and the lessons which can be learned from its past, as you plan for the future.
2. You could similarly discuss the past history of your denomination and of denominations from which you sprang, to determine what the course of your future should be. Always be guided in your interpretation by Biblical history and interpretation of history.

LESSON TEN

Introduction to the Lesson:

The visions of Daniel begin in the seventh chapter after the period of history in which he served the kingdoms of the world.

Here, the people of God are taught about their warfare with the world, as they serve God in the world, just as Daniel had done. As with Daniel, so with the church in the future, there will be times when they appear to be defeated, but the Lord will sustain them; and in the end the church will triumph, and the kingdoms of the world will be overthrown.

Point One: The people of God can expect great opposition from the world and seeming defeat in the eyes of the world, but in the end they will triumph when the world is overthrown.

Remind them of Daniel's experiences and seeming defeat at various times, but also his survival after Babylon was overthrown; see that as a pattern for the whole people of God down through their history in the world.

In Daniel's visions, he saw the world at war with the saints and the saints seemingly defeated, in the opinion of the world; but, in the end, God promises to give to them the victory.

Remind the class of the principle of enmity which God established, as is recorded in Genesis 3:15. That enmity between the people of God and the world is continuous and will be to the end. Since the saints do not use the weapons of the world's warfare, the church often seems weak and about to fall; but God will not let that happen. So, in Genesis 3,4, we see that the enmity of the world is not successful in destroying the children of God.

When Egypt controlled the Israelites (the children of Jacob) God raised up Moses to lead them out, but only in the power of God.

When the Philistines continually harassed Israel, God raised up David who defeated them, but only as he trusted in the Lord.

When the Assyrians threatened Jerusalem and seemed about to overwhelm the city, Hezekiah trusted in God and the Lord caused the Assyrians to retreat and never come there again.

When Babylon conquered Judah and Jerusalem and carried the people captive, even then, God continued to give to His people victories in the world as Daniel triumphed over Nebuchadnezzar and over all of his other enemies.

In the days of Persian rule, Haman sought to exterminate the Jews, but as Mordecai and Esther trusted in the God of the Jews, the Lord overthrew their enemy.

Jesus spoke of wars and rumors of wars in His days and thereafter, until the end of time; but He promised that there would continue to be a faithful remnant until the end.

In Ephesians 6, Paul enumerates the weapons of the warfare of believers, particularly the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God. Christians are to learn to use these.

In Revelation, believers are taught to fight the good warfare by the weapons that God has given them—with Word of God, the Scriptures—even as Jesus did (Matt. 4). To fight with those spiritual weapons and not the weapons of the world is called "the patience of the saints" in Revelation.

In Revelation 12, in particular, this warfare of Satan against the church and the church against Satan in the world is described vividly. In the 13th chapter, we learn of the false church which aids Satan in that warfare against the saints.

The Canaanites appeared such a formidable people that the Jews, who came out of Egypt, refused to go into Canaan and face them; and as a result all died without the inheritance. But God knew already what He would do with the Canaanites and they were no threat to God.

Later, Gideon, facing the Midianites, was terrified by their strength until God, by a dream, assured him that God was in control and that they were no threat to God.

In this point, you will want to help the class to see that we are in war now and that believers in the world are called to stand against the onslaught of Satan, assured that though the church may seem weak in the eyes of the world—and even in the eyes of Christians who have not studied the Bible sufficiently—we can, through the spectacles of God's Word, see all from God's perspective.

Point Two: The Lord knows in advance all that His and our enemies will do; and in His sight, they are never a threat to His Kingdom.

Start by reminding the class that we have studied about Daniel's vision of things to come in the near future, in which the Jews would be persecuted by Antiochus Epiphanes, who would seek to destroy the Jews; but he would not succeed, and in the end would be overthrown. Therefore, he was no real threat to God and His Kingdom and the Jews should view him from God's perspective and not be overwhelmed in the times of persecution.

David, when he was running from Saul, learned to ask God about the future and to trust in the leading of the Lord, who eventually made him, a fugitive from Saul, the king of all Israel.

Ahaz, cowered by the threat of Syria and Israel, though Isaiah had told him to trust in the Lord, made a deal with Assyria to help him against his enemies rather than trust in the Lord (Isa. 7).

His enemies were defeated, but later his nation was almost overrun by the Assyrians.

Once, when Elisha and his servant were threatened by an army of men, the servant was terrified until God answered Elisha's prayer and allowed the servant to see that God was protecting Elisha and the servant with legions of angels unseen by the eye (II Kings 6:14-19).

Isaiah was permitted to see, well ahead of time, that though the Babylonians would capture Jerusalem, his people would be set free by Cyrus, under the control of God.

Note how Jesus, in Matthew 24, teaches the disciples to realize that they will go through hard times for the sake of the gospel, but that, in the end, Christ will come and give to them the triumph.

You can point also to II Thessalonians 2, where Paul teaches of the "man of sin" and his great power over believers until Christ comes and utterly defeats him.

So too, Revelation 19 shows that in its warfare, the church is led by Christ, who will lead them to victory over their enemies in the world.

In Revelation 20, after it appears that the city of the saints in the world will be overrun by the nations of the world, suddenly, judgment will come from God against these nations and they will all be defeated by the power of God.

Help the class to learn to develop a divine perspective in history that sees the end from the beginning, as God has revealed it in His Word, and therefore not to be discouraged or brought low by looking only at the immediate situation, rather than toward the promised end.

Suggestions for discussion:

1. You can lead the class in a discussion of the world's apparent view of the church today. Is it weak or strong? Will it last or not?
2. Associated with the first question, lead them to think through Scripture lessons already studied, to help them understand the Biblical view of the world and history, to its conclusion.

LESSON ELEVEN

Introduction to the Lesson:

Show the class that Daniel was meditating on God's Word and through that meditation was led to pray unto the Lord about the present circur and the future of God's people in the world. By this meditation, he was led from the uncertainties and failures of the present into great assurance both about the present and the future purpose and plan of God.

This lesson, therefore, will be about the spiritual growth of God's children through meditation and prayer.

Point One: God's Children best prepare for life in the present world and for eternity by meditation on God's Word and prayer guided by that Word.

Begin by reminding the class of how Daniel was reflecting on the prophecy of Jeremiah, which had come from Jerusalem, and that in the midst of that meditation he began to pray on behalf of himself and His people. Through this experience the Lord showed Daniel yet more understanding of God's good purpose for His people and gained great assurance regarding the present and future.

You can remind them that it was Daniel's practice to meditate and pray on a regular basis and that he would not permit anything, not even the threat of death, to deter him from that commitment- Use this to challenge the class to a similar commitment to the Lord.

You could point to Deuteronomy 6:4ff., which calls all believers to meditate on God's Word and to set the course of their lives in accord with that Word and its application to their lives.

Use Psalm 1 to show that the righteous one, as he seeks to stand against the sinful counsel and ways of this world, must, at the same time, study God's Word with joy and meditate upon it, so that his life will be fruitful and to God's glory, and thereby prosper in God's sight.

You can also note Psalms 19 and 119, as showing how meditation on God's Word is to be conducted by

us.

Elijah was taught that the only way men's hearts could be changed was by the Word of God working in their hearts, this is what meditation is all about (I Kings 19).

Note that Christ frequently set aside a time and a place to go and quietly meditate on God's Word and pray. If even our Lord needed to do this while in the world, then surely we must need to do it without neglect!

You may finally wish to note the words of Paul to Timothy about the place of God's Word in Timothy's life and its power to change him for good (II Tim. 3:14-17).

In this point, urge the class members to set times of regular study of God's Word and meditation upon it, so that their prayer life may be meaningful and rich.

Point Two: Through prayer and meditation, God's child will be better able to face the present challenges of the world and the uncertainties of the future of this world, in greater faith in God's purpose and work in human history.

Remind them that Daniel himself needed to reflect on the Word of God and it's meaning for him and his people, so that he could, in turn, be a help to them. God led him, through his prayer and meditation, to see more clearly what God had in store, so that through his writing, others, in turn, were better prepared for the life they were called to live.

You can cite the passages in Isaiah 40 and 55 which assure us that though men may fail, God's Word will not fail and that, in fact, God's Word will always accomplish what God intends.

You can show how the Old Testament prepared the remnant, in the days of Jesus' earthly ministry, to receive Him and believe in Him. They were expecting the Messiah and were ready when He came.

Remind the class of the many exhortations in the New Testament that are based on what God had taught in the Old Testament.

Stress to them that the purpose of the Book of Revelation is to prepare the people of God to live in their day, viewing life from the perspective of God's Word rather than from the perspective of human eyes. Humans without God are limited and do not see or conceive of God's working in the world for the good of His people.

Urge the class members to view the world today not through the eyes of the press or other news media or through the eyes of the day's "experts on world events," but rather in the light of God's revealed purpose in His Word.

Suggestions for discussion:

1. You could lead the class in a discussion of our times of prayer and meditation; let each testify as to what times and circumstances he has found to be best, and to share with the class what difficulties he has encountered in seeking to maintain a regular time of meditation and prayer.
2. You could also indulge in a discussion of the different view of the world as reflected in the news media of today and in God's Word.

LESSON TWELVE

Introduction to the Lesson:

Remind the class that though this Book of Esther does not mention the name of God, it nevertheless tells of the activity of God on behalf of His people. Challenge the class to see the sovereignty of God in their lives as well.

Point One: Satan and his children are constantly seeking to destroy Christ's people on earth.

Begin by reminding them that in the days of Esther and Mordecai, there were many enemies of the Jews, and that Haman was just one out of the many who were ready to take advantage of the Jews for their own gain. But they needed a Haman to stir them up to overt acts against the Jews.

You can remind them that in the days of the Exodus, there were many enemies of Israel besides Egypt. Use, for example, the enmity of Balak and of Balaam. Balak wished to see them destroyed because he feared them; Balaam simply wanted to gain riches by their destruction. In both cases they were enemies but for different reasons.

Similarly, the Assyrians and the Babylonians were the enemies of the Jews and both sought to destroy and capture those people. But at the same time there were many more peoples and nations who were ready to take advantage of Israel's distress, as we learn from Amos, Nahum, and Obadiah, among other prophets.

You can remind them of the constant harassment from his enemies which Daniel had to withstand.

You can show how the Lord warned of the day of Antiochus Epiphanes when he would try to exterminate the people of God living in Jerusalem.

You can note too that in Acts we are told of the continual and mounting persecutions against the church, both from the Jews and from the Gentiles, wherever God's people went.

Help the class members to see that in this world it is not abnormal for the people of the world to be

hostile toward the church.

Point Two: In times of danger for the church, God's people are to be bold in their faith.

Begin by showing how the situation faced by Mordecai and Esther demanded boldness, and that Mordecai, who had already taken his stand boldly, had to persuade Esther that this was the only course of action open to her, if she would stand with God's people.

Remind them that when news of Lot's capture came to Abraham, he did not hesitate but boldly pursued his enemies in the name of His God.

Point to Moses' bold act, when assured that God was with him, so that he was willing to go back to the land where he was hated and stand before Pharaoh, risking his life for the good and freedom of his people.

You can note David, too, before Goliath, and show that holy boldness does not mean recklessness. David went out assured that his God would be with him and that his cause was right.

You can point out, too, that Elisha and other prophets of the Lord withstood those nations which plotted against their people and boldly confronted them, often alone, except for God with them.

Jeremiah is a good example of a prophet who had to withstand boldly those in the church who fought him and had to denounce their false teachings.

In the New Testament we have first the example of Jesus standing boldly against the teachings of the Pharisees, the "conservatives" of His day who, nevertheless, did not know God's Word. Later, He stood just as boldly before Pilate, the judge, to speak the truth in the face of death.

In the Book of Acts, we frequently read of the boldness of the saints and how, like Stephen, many of them layed down their lives for the sake of the gospel, and when threatened, simply prayed for more boldness (Acts 4:29).

Urge the class members to see that today, too, there are situations which call for great boldness on the part of believers and that God works through the bold to call His people to stand for what is true.

Point Three: When God's people do show boldness against threats of danger, God will sustain and bless His church.

You can show how Esther's boldness ultimately brought a blessing to the Jews, and they celebrated by instituting a new feast day.

You can show how Abraham's boldness brought glory to the God of Abraham among the people of Sodom.

In the Exodus, God's name was glorified before

Pharaoh and the Egyptians, and God overthrew those who sought to pursue.

When David stood in boldness, God gave him the ability, ultimately, to wipe out the Philistines as enemies of Israel.

We see, too, that though Jeremiah had to go on suffering and being rejected by his own people in his time, in the end he was fully vindicated in his boldness to speak the truth, though unpopular, and the Lord gave him a very special place in Biblical history.

You can show that through Christ's boldness to speak and do the truth, God made the way of our salvation; and through Christ's resurrection, we received the power to live forever.

Finally, through the boldness of the early believers, the church went on to the ends of the earth, carrying the message, unintimidated by the threats of the world. Here, encourage the class to learn to be bold in the things of God, yet, in such a way that they speak the truth in love and not out of arrogant hearts.

Suggestions for discussion:

1. You could discuss the question of whether we are guilty of leaving God out of our daily conversation with others so that they do not see that God is

active in our lives and so that He does not receive the glory for all that we do.

2. You could also discuss how these present days demand boldness from the believer.

LESSON THIRTEEN

Review

PART I: The test, may be done at home or in the class, individually or together. If the class is not disposed to do it at all, this entire part may be omitted; however, it is an excellent opportunity for the class to review what has been covered and to see whether they have grasped some of the significant truths in this quarter of Study. You, as the teacher, ought to encourage all to test their progress. Working together in the classroom may be a good way to handle this, to encourage the others. If tests are taken individually, it is best not to make the results known publicly.

The questions have been arranged so that the pupils may check the answers in the lessons. Questions are by the lessons, for easier reference.

Below, you will find the answers to the questions.

1. T	21. F	41. T	61. F	81. T
2. T	22. T	42. F	62. F	82. T
3. F	23. T	43. T	63. T	83. T
4. F	24. F	44. T	64. T	84. T
5. T	25. F	45. F	65. T	85. T
6. F	26. F	46. T	66. F	86. T
7. F	27. F	47. T	67. F	87. T
8. T	28. F	48. T	68. F	88. T
9. T	29. T	49. F	69. T	89. F
10. F	30. T	50. F	70. T	90. F
11. T	31. T	51. T	71. F	91. F
12. T	32. T	52. T	72. T	92. T
13. F	33. T	53. T	73. T	93. F
14. T	34. F	54. T	74. T	94. T
15. T	35. F	55. F	75. T	95. F
16. F	36. T	56. F	76. F	96. F
17. T	37. T	57. T	77. F	97. T
18. T	38. F	58. T	78. T	98. F
19. T	39. T	59. F	79. T	99. F
20. F	40. T	60. T	80. T	100. T

PART II: The review of the quarter on the basis of Ephesians 1:4 ought not to be omitted: and if there is not time in class to go over this content, because of the test, then urge the class to read and reflect on what is summarized in this section at home. It may be useful simply to read these paragraphs in class and have discussion of them afterwards.