

January 12, 2020
Large Group



The Temple Was Completed

BIBLE PASSAGE: Ezra 4:1-7; 5:1-5; 6:1-22

MAIN POINT: God helped His people rebuild the temple.

KEY PASSAGE: Daniel 2:20-21

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: How can we obey God? We trust God to give us strength to obey Him.

Leader BIBLE STUDY

Some time after the temple's foundation was laid, the work stopped. With the encouragement of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, God's people resumed the work of rebuilding the temple in Jerusalem. Approximately 15 years had passed without progress.

At this time, Darius was king of Persia. The Persian Empire was vast, so Darius appointed governors over the provinces. A man named Tattenai watched over the province that included the land of Judah.

Tattenai noticed the work of God's people, and he was concerned. He sent a letter to King Darius. "Is this allowed?" he asked. "The people say that King Cyrus said they could rebuild the temple and the city. Please investigate this matter."

King Darius did investigate, and Cyrus's decree was located in the Babylonian records. Darius instructed Tattenai to allow the people to rebuild the temple and the city. Point out to kids that God had turned the heart of the king for His people's favor. (See Prov. 21:1; Ezra 6:22.) The people completed the temple. They dedicated it joyfully and observed the Passover.

God declared in Haggai 2:9 that the glory of this second temple would be greater than the first. This prophecy was fulfilled by the presence of the Messiah, the Son of God. Jesus said that He is greater than the temple. (Matt. 12:6)

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In Christ, we find the substance of which the temple was a shadow. The Lord was not confined to a building, yet deity lives fully in Christ. (See Col. 2:9.) Jesus is our High Priest. He entered the most holy place for us. (Heb. 6:19-20) The priest offered the blood of animals, but Christ offered His own blood once and for all. (Heb. 9:25-26) He gives us access to the throne of grace. (Heb. 10:19-22)

***Christ Connection:** God's people rebuilt the temple so they would have a place to worship God. Years later, God sent His Son, Jesus, to be with His people. Now God dwells not in the temple, but directly with His people. Because of Jesus, we don't need a temple anymore.*

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Giant timeline (1 minute)

LEADER •

SLIDE - After years of living in exile under the rule of many kings who wanted the people to follow their laws instead of God's law,

SLIDE - We learned last week that God changed the king's heart so the Israelites could go home, just like he had promised them He would do.

SLIDE - When they got there, they began to rebuild the temple, the place where God met with His people. Well, this week, our story is called "The Temple Was Completed," and I bet you can guess what happened from the name alone!

Big picture question (1 minute)

LEADER • Who can remind me of the big picture question and answer? [*Take responses.*] Good job!

SLIDE - *How can we obey God?*

SLIDE - *We trust God to give us strength to obey Him.*

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Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Ezra 4:1-7; 5:1-5; 6:1-22.

Show the Bible story **VIDEO** - “The Temple Was Completed.”

LEADER • When God’s people began to rebuild the temple, they faced some challenges. At first, they stopped working on the temple. But that is not what God wanted. God sent the prophets Haggai and Zechariah to encourage the people to obey God.

Eventually the people did start to rebuild the temple again. Zerubbabel helped the people. God’s people faced more challenges, but they didn’t stop building this time.

Again and again we have seen that God looked out for His people. He made a way for them to obey Him. **God helped His people rebuild the temple.** When they finished, they had a place to worship God the way God wanted them to. By helping His people obey and finish the temple, God was also helping them obey and worship Him correctly!

Years later, God sent His Son, Jesus, to be with His people. Now God dwells not in the temple, but directly with His people. Because of Jesus, we don’t need a temple anymore.

Before Jesus went to the cross, He said to the Pharisees, “Destroy the temple, and I will raise it up in three days” (John 2:19). Jesus was speaking about something amazing—His death and resurrection.

****When Jesus died on the cross and rose again, He changed *everything*. We don’t have a temple anymore because God is always with His people. He sent the Holy Spirit to dwell in all believers. The Holy Spirit guides God’s people to love and obey God.****

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Key passage (5 minutes)

Show the key passage SLIDE.

LEADER • Like our key passage tells us, God is wise and mighty. He is in control of time, seasons, and kings. He teaches us and gives us wisdom and understanding. Blessed be the name of the Lord!

Lead the boys and girls to read together Daniel 2:20-21.
See if any kids can say it from memory.

SING “Name of God.”

Pray (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to small groups.

LEADER • Let’s pray together.

Father, You are magnificent and wonderful in all Your ways. You alone are worthy of worship. Thank You for giving us Your Word to help us learn about You and obey You. Thank You for sending Jesus to die for us and rise again to save us from sin. Give us strength to obey You. Amen.

Transition to activities to apply the story...