



Jerusalem

Babylon

Lesson 11: *The Prophets and the Journey Home* (Condensed Version)

Objectives: To explain that:

- The Israelites were in exile in Babylon because they had turned away from God, but God had not forgotten his promise to Abraham and David, and he sent prophets to proclaim hope for God's people.
- After 70 years, in his mercy, God allowed his people to return to their land to rebuild the temple.
- God's people remembered his promises and that helped them to wait with hope for the Forever King.

"I Wonder" Questions:

What do you see in this picture? (People walking, a sign for Babylon and Jerusalem, a scroll, sun shining on a city in ruins...)

Is there anything you wonder about?

I wonder who these people are.

I wonder where they came from and where they are going.

I wonder why the man in blue is holding a scroll.

Let's find out more in our story...

Lesson Summary:

Last week we learned that the Israelites were taken away as prisoners because they worshipped idols and did not love or obey God. God allowed King Nebuchadnezzar to destroy the temple and take his people to Babylon. Even though the Israelites were in the distant land of Babylon, God still loved them and remembered them. He sent many prophets to tell the people of his plan to bring them back to their Promised Land and to give them new hearts to love God.

Some of the prophets God sent were: Ezekiel, Isaiah, Jeremiah and Daniel. They spoke God's words of love, correction and promise. All of the words of these prophets were written on scrolls and read to the people. The scrolls have been kept and read for thousands of years. Their writings are a part of our Bible today and part of the story of God's great love.

At the time of this story, the Israelites were kept in Babylon for nearly 70 years. Then, in his mercy, God brought the Israelites back to the Promised Land. They began to rebuild the temple and the broken walls of Jerusalem. After all of this, the people still had to wait and pray for God to send the promised Forever King. Many people knew that God was faithful and at just the right time, God would fulfill his promise.

Suggested Questions: What does this story tell us about God? (God loves people even in their sin, he sends hope and encouragement)

- What were the Israelites worshipping before they were taken to Babylon? (false gods and idols)
- Did God still love them even though he sent them out of the Promised Land? (absolutely) How did God show his love to his people? (He sent the prophets.) What was the role (job) of the prophets? (to listen to God, to warn people that they were going against God's ways, to tell them to repent, to bring God's word to the people, to encourage them and tell them of God's love and plans. They were God's messengers.)
- When God let his people return to their land, what did they need to do? (rebuild Jerusalem and the temple, pray and wait for the promised King)
- What did God give to his people that helped them pray and wait for God's promised Forever King? (The prophets and the law, God's Holy Book)

Bible Memory Verse: "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for peace and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope." (Jeremiah 29:11 – Paraphrased)