9

Building Up the Temple

Key References: Ezra 4-6; *Prophets and Kings*, chap. 46, pp. 567-581; *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 6, pp. 89-99; Our Beliefs, nos. 12, 8, 17.















powertext

"Consider now, for the LORD has chosen you to build a house as the sanctuary. Be strong and do the work" (1 Chronicles 28:10, NIV).

Sabbath

DO Do the activity on page 74.

powerpoint

We can worship God even when we are discouraged.

Has anyone ever slowed you down when you were excited about a project? How did you handle that person? To learn more about how the Israelites responded to challenges during the time the Temple was rebuilt in Jerusalem, read this Bible story.

The foundation of the temple had been laid, so the building of the Temple could now begin. A group of people who had returned from the captivity dedicated themselves to building the Temple. Nearby lived the Samaritans, a mixed race of people that resulted from marriages between the heathen nations from Assyria and the remnant tribes of Samaria and Galilee. They came to Zerubbabel, and the heads of the fathers' houses, and offered to help build the Temple along with the Israelites. "Let us build with you," they said, "for we seek your God as you do" (Ezra 4:2). But Zerubbabel and the rest of the leaders of Israel said, "You may do nothing with us to build a house for our God; but we alone will build to the LORD God of Israel, as King Cyrus the king of Persia has commanded us" (verse 3). They sensed the Samaritans' insincerity and didn't want to partner with a group of people who still worshipped idols.

The Samaritans had lived there a long time, and felt that the country belonged to them. They thought the Jews would try to take over the land. So the Samaritans tried to discourage the Jews and troubled them as they built. They "hired counselors against them to frustrate their purpose all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even until the reign of Darius king of Persia" (verse 5).

9

Sunday

READ Read Ezra 4:1-5 and this week's story, "Building Up the Temple."

LEARN Take a walk and think about the power text.

THINK For what might the Lord have chosen you?

PRAY Pray about each part of the text. Ask God to show you what He has chosen for you to do.

Monday

READ Read Ezra 4:6-24.

THINK Have you ever received a message telling you to stop doing something good? Why did the enemies of the Jews try to stop them from rebuilding Jerusalem?

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Ask God to be with you when someone tries to stop you from doing something He wants you to do.

Tuesday

READ Read Ezra 5.

FIND Look up the word "tattle" in the dictionary. Who in Ezra 5 acted like this?

THINK How do you feel when someone tattles on you? Have you ever tattled on anyone?

NOTE Remember to speak to a trusted adult if someone is doing or threatening to do something harmful.

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Thank God for being with you and prompting you to serve and worship Him.

The Samaritans wrote a letter to King Artaxerxes, accusing the Jews of building a rebellious and evil city. "Let it now be known to the king that, if this city is built and the walls completed, they will not pay tax, tribute, or custom, and the king's treasury will be diminished," they wrote. "We inform the king that if this city is rebuilt and its walls are completed, the result will be that you will have no dominion beyond the River" (verses 13, 16).

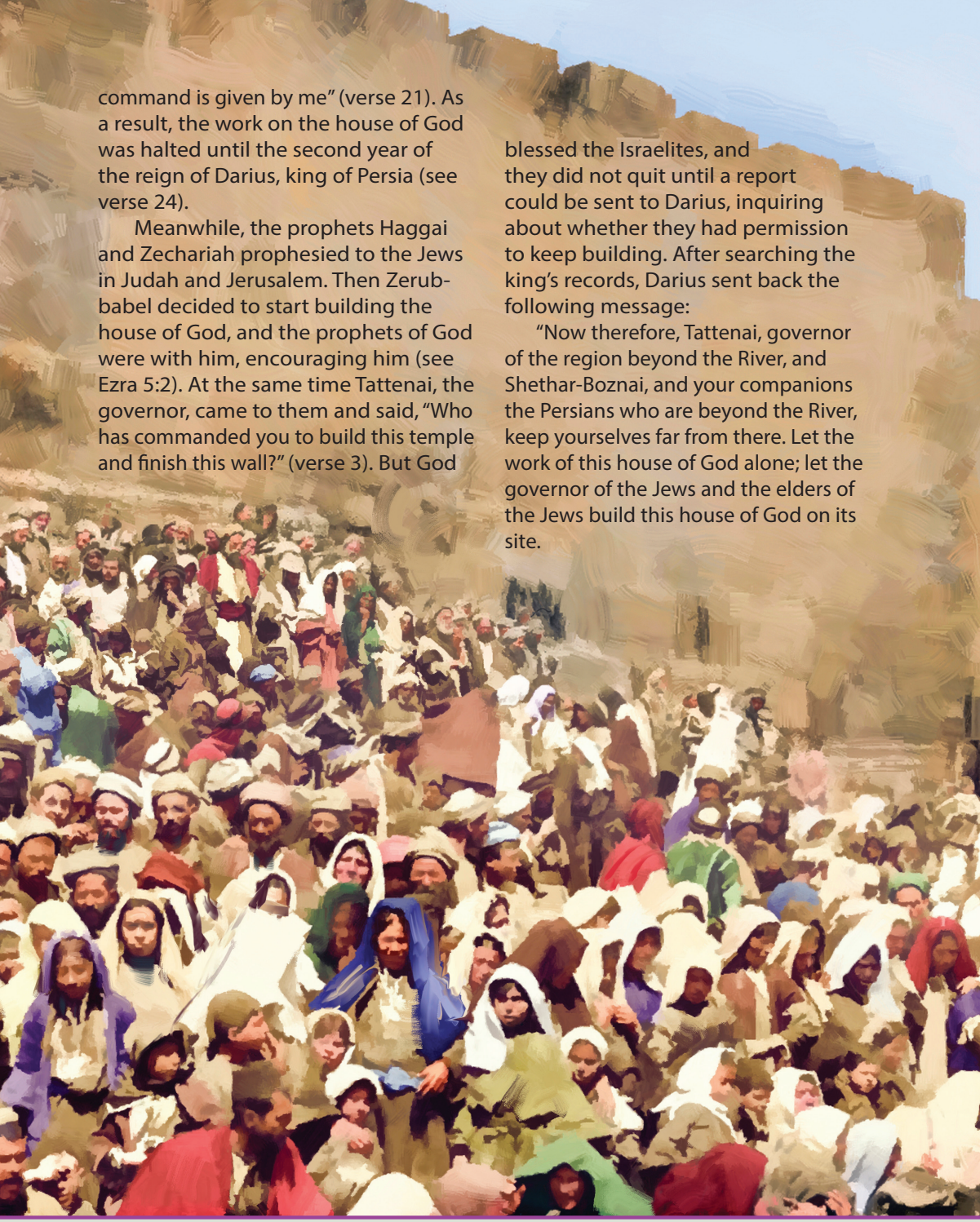
The king replied, "Now give the command to make these men cease, that this city may not be built until the



command is given by me" (verse 21). As a result, the work on the house of God was halted until the second year of the reign of Darius, king of Persia (see verse 24).

Meanwhile, the prophets Haggai and Zechariah prophesied to the Jews in Judah and Jerusalem. Then Zerubbabel decided to start building the house of God, and the prophets of God were with him, encouraging him (see Ezra 5:2). At the same time Tattenai, the governor, came to them and said, "Who has commanded you to build this temple and finish this wall?" (verse 3). But God blessed the Israelites, and they did not quit until a report could be sent to Darius, inquiring about whether they had permission to keep building. After searching the king's records, Darius sent back the following message:

"Now therefore, Tattenai, governor of the region beyond the River, and Shethar-Boznai, and your companions the Persians who are beyond the River, keep yourselves far from there. Let the work of this house of God alone; let the governor of the Jews and the elders of the Jews build this house of God on its site.



9

Wednesday

READ Read Ezra 6:1-12.

THINK The truth always wins, but sometimes it takes time. Ask an adult to tell you an experience they had with overcoming discouragement.

REMEMBER Praise God even when you are discouraged.

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Praise God for His help through tough situations.

Thursday

READ Read Ezra 6:13-18.

THINK How did the Israelites celebrate the building of the Temple?

PLAN What can you do to celebrate as you praise God? Record your answer in your Bible study journal.

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Praise God for His love and care for you.

Friday

READ Read Ezra 6:19-22.

REFLECT The Jews never gave up their dream of rebuilding the Temple. They persevered even though they were discouraged, because they wanted to worship God. What dream might your family need to persevere with?

CREATE Get together with your family and create a banner that encourages you to persevere. With their permission, take it to Sabbath School to show to your class.

REPEAT Say the power text aloud by memory.

PRAY Ask God to help your family persevere and praise Him with gratitude even when discouraged.

"Moreover I issue a decree as to what you shall do for the elders of these Jews, for the building of this house of God: Let the cost be paid at the king's expense from taxes on the region beyond the River; this is to be given immediately to these men, so that they are not hindered" (Ezra 6:6-8).

Soon the time came when the Jews finished building the Temple! The elders of the Jews built, and they prospered as the prophets Haggai and Zechariah had prophesied. "They built and finished it, according to the commandment of the God of Israel, and



according to the command of Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia" (verse 14).

After the Temple was completed, the people dedicated it to God. They celebrated the Passover with those who separated themselves in order to serve the Lord God of Israel. The Israelites kept the Feast of Unleavened Bread with gladness because the Lord was with them. They recognized that God had changed the heart of the Assyrian king toward them for the better. With grateful hearts the people acknowledged that it was the God of Israel who made their work to prosper and who helped them complete the building of the Temple (see verse 22).



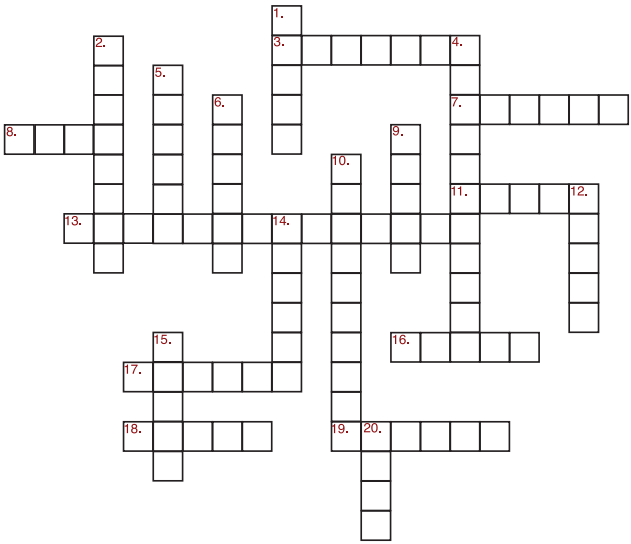
PUZZLE
9

KEEPING THE FAITH

Instructions: God is with us even in times of discouragement. The people mentioned in the puzzle had a strong faith in God and were still living by that faith when they died. God never abandoned them, just as He will never abandon us. Fill in the crossword with the names of persons who kept their faith in God.

Down:

1. I battled Goliath and won.
2. After the Lord handed me the Ammonites, I vowed to sacrifice whatever first came out of my house to greet me.
4. I hid my son for three months. (2 words)
5. I was led out of the lions' den.
6. I saw the angel of the Lord without fearing death.
9. I was taken from this life so that I would not experience death.
10. We crossed the Red Sea without fear.
12. I was able to bear a child in my old age.
14. I spoke about the exodus from Egypt and gave instructions about my bones.
15. I blessed both my sons, Jacob and Esau.
20. I offered God a better sacrifice than my brother.



Across:

3. I offered my son as a sacrifice.
7. I had to leave home early to work for God.
8. I was warned about the Flood.
11. I left Egypt not fearing the king's anger and led my people into freedom.
13. We fell down when people marched around us with blaring trumpets. (3 words)
16. I battled all the troops of Sisera.
17. I wrote the most complete picture of Christ in Old Testament times.
18. As I lay dying, I blessed each of Joseph's sons.
19. I pushed down the temple of Dagon.