

**REHOBOAM CAN'T WIN THE BATTLE
BECAUSE HE LEFT GOD'S LAW.
1 KINGS 14:21-31; 2 CHRON. 12:1-16**

Read 1 Kings 14:21-31; 2 Chron. 12:1-16

We have been studying about King Jeroboam and King Ahab. They reigned over the Northern Kingdom of Israel. We will now go back and study some of the kings of the Southern Kingdom, Judah. Remember that God had promised David that his descendants would rule forever. David's son, Solomon, however, did not follow God's commands. He married many foreign women and built idols for them to worship. This displeased God greatly. Solomon's son, Rehoboam, was the heir to the throne, but because of his father's sins, God would only allow him to rule over the southern kingdom (Judah). Solomon's servant, Jeroboam, would rule over the northern kingdom (Israel).

The division of the kingdom took place at the death of Solomon. When Solomon died, Rehoboam had the chance to turn the Israelites back to God. Solomon had been hard on the people. They asked Rehoboam to be kinder than his father. He first sought advice from the older men who had also been advisors to his father. They told him that if he gave the people what they wanted, the people would be his faithful servants. Rehoboam then turned to the young men he had grown up with and asked for their advice. They recommended that Rehoboam be even harder on the people than Solomon had been. Rehoboam foolishly took the advice of his young friends. The northern tribes were disheartened and returned to their homes. They chose a new king, Jeroboam.

Rehoboam, now king of Judah (and a part of Benjamin), had the opportunity to follow God's commands, but instead, he chose to build idols to pagan gods and worship them. Imagine how angry God must have been! In the fifth year that Rehoboam was king of Judah, Shishak, king of Egypt, attacked the land. God sent the prophet Shemaiah to Rehoboam in Jerusalem where he told him, "*Thus says the Lord, 'You have forsaken Me, so I also have forsaken you to Shishak.'*" Rehoboam was frightened and humbled by the prophet's revelation. God saw Rehoboam's humility and decided that He would not allow Shishak to completely destroy him.

Shishak did enter Jerusalem and take all of the treasures of the temple and of the king's palace including 500 golden shields that Solomon had made, but God did not allow him to kill Rehoboam or destroy Jerusalem.

While Rehoboam did have times of humility and subjection to God, the Bible tells us that during his seventeen-year reign, he did evil because he did not set his heart on the Lord. He allowed the people to worship pagan idols instead of the one true God.

God has always been with His people when they were faithful to Him. Rehoboam's grandfather, David, was a righteous man who served God faithfully. David was a great conquering, victorious king – the greatest in Israel's history. It's sad that only two generations later, Rehoboam had turned his back on serving God. It was foolish for Rehoboam to think that he would prosper when he was not keeping God's commands. It would be foolish for us to think we can prosper without God. God promises that He will be with us, but we must do our part – we must serve Him faithfully. Rehoboam was wise to humble himself before God when Egypt threatened. God humbles the proud but exalts the humble. But Rehoboam was not a great leader for his people because he never prepared his heart to seek God. Now is the perfect time for you to decide to be a great person. Now is the perfect time for you to decide to be a success in life. Now is the time to prepare your heart to seek God. If you don't, you won't be ready to lead a family to heaven someday.

Did you notice in the story of Rehoboam that God is in charge of the kingdoms of the earth? God decided when Judah would prosper and when Judah would be threatened and invaded. God, not any king or president has the power to bring victory and defeat, glory or destruction, to kingdoms and countries. God is the King of Kings – and Lord of Lords. Aren't you glad He is the one who is in charge of the world?

**JHOSHAPHAT DEFEATS THE MOABITES
BY DIGGING DITCHES. JUDAH BEATS HER ENEMIES BY
PRAYING, SINGING, AND PRAISING GOD.
2 KINGS 3:4-27; 2 CHRON. 19:4 – 20:30**

Read 2 Kings 3:4-27; 2 Chron. 19:4 – 20:30

After King Ahab of Israel died, his son, Jehoram, became king of Israel. He was an evil king, but not to the degree that his mother and father had been. (He put away his father's pillar of Baal.) During Ahab's reign, Moab had paid tribute to Israel and feared them. Upon Ahab's death, the King of Moab rebelled against Ahab's son. So Jehoram went out of Samaria and mustered all of Israel together. He also sent for Jehoshaphat, King of Judah, and said to him, *"The king of Moab has rebelled against me. Will you go with me to fight against Moab?"*

"I will go up," Jehoshaphat answered. *"I am as you are, my people as your people, and my horses as your horses."* They decided to go against Moab through the Wilderness of Edom and the king of Edom joined their effort against Moab. This journey through Edom to Moab took 7 days and there was no water in the land for them or for their horses. They would soon die if they didn't find water. So wise Jehoshaphat said, *"Is there no prophet of the Lord here, that we may inquire of the Lord by him?"* One of Jehoram's servants suggested they ask Elisha who was in the area, and so they went down to find him. Elisha knew that Jehoram and Israel did not follow after God. He said, *"As the Lord of hosts lives, before whom I stand, surely were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, I would not look at you, nor see you."* Because of Jehoshaphat's righteousness, Elisha agreed to help them.

The hand of the Lord came upon Elisha, and Elisha spoke to them, saying, *"Thus says the Lord: 'Make this valley full of ditches.' For thus says the Lord: 'You shall not see wind, nor shall you see rain; yet that valley shall be filled with water, so that you, your cattle, and your animals may drink.' And this is but a trivial thing in the sight of the Lord. He will also deliver the Moabites into your hand."*

Then it happened that in the morning, upon offering a grain offering to the Lord, that the land was filled with water. This wasn't a natural occurrence. This was a miracle of God. When the Moabites heard that the three kings had come to fight against them, they gathered up their armor and their weapons and stood at the border, looking across into Edom. *"The sun was shining on the water, and the Moabites saw the water on the other side as red as blood."* Instead of realizing that the reflection was playing tricks on their eyes, they assumed they were

seeing blood. They decided that the armies of Judah, Israel, and Edom must have quarreled and had killed each other. So they ran across to plunder their enemies and were shocked when Israel, Judah and Edom rose up together and attacked them. The three kings pursued the Moabites back into their own land, killed many, and destroyed their cities.

This victory was God's victory. God blessed the three kings with victory that day because one king, Jehoshaphat, had asked for His help.

Jehoshaphat served God and set his heart upon helping Judah serve God also. He instituted many changes in Judah while he reigned. He appointed judges in every city and insisted that they judge for the Lord, not for themselves. He instructed the priests to *"act in the fear of the Lord, faithfully and with a loyal heart."* Jehoshaphat was a wise king. He understood how to lead the people and understood that God would bless Judah as long as they worshiped Him. He told his people to *"behave courageously, and the Lord will be with the good."*

Jehoshaphat also knew how to cope with trouble when it arose. He heard that the Moabites, Ammonites, and the Edomites had joined forces to declare war against Judah. These three armies combined to be a powerful force. Jehoshaphat knew that Judah had no chance against them without the help of the Lord. II Chronicles tells us that *"Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. So Judah gathered together to ask help from the Lord; and from all the cities of Judah they came to seek the Lord."*

God sent His Spirit upon Jehaziel, the prophet. Jehaziel told Judah to not be dismayed at the great multitude. He further said, *"The battle is not yours, but God's. You will not need to fight in this battle. Position yourselves, stand still and see the salvation of the Lord, who is with you, O Judah and Jerusalem!"* Jehoshaphat was grateful and relieved to hear these words. Tomorrow, God would give them a victory. *"And Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground, and all Judah bowed before the Lord, worshiping the Lord."*

This is one of the most unusual battle stories that we have studied thus far. Jehoshaphat didn't appoint warriors to lead in the fight. God had told them they wouldn't need to fight. Instead, he appointed song leaders to lead in singing and praising God. So Judah came to the Wilderness of Tekoa, and *"began to sing and to praise."* And God caused the Moabites and the Ammonites, and everyone who had come against Judah, to turn on each other and destroy each other. *"So when Judah came to the place overlooking the wilderness, they looked toward the multitude; and there were dead bodies, fallen on the earth. No one had escaped."*

We can learn from Judah's victory. God won this war without ANY assistance from Judah. Judah was wise enough to turn to God for help, to trust God to fight for them, and to praise God before and after the battle. We, too, can turn to God, trust God, and praise God. God will fight for us. **GOD IS GOOD AT VICTORY!**

JOASH LOSES THE BATTLE BECAUSE HE IS NOT LOYAL.

2 CHRON. 22 – 24

Read 2 Chron. 22 - 24

Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, was a good king who worshiped God. He made a mistake though by making friends with Ahab, the wicked king of Israel. He also made a terrible mistake by allowing his son Jehoram to marry the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel. Her name was Athaliah, and she was awful. After Jehoshaphat died, his son, Jehoram, became king. Jehoram of Judah did not serve God. 2 Chronicles 21:6-7 says: *“And he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, just as the house of Ahab had done, for he had the daughter of Ahab as a wife; and he did evil in the sight of the Lord. Yet the Lord would not destroy the house of David, because of the covenant that He had made with David, and since He had promised to give a lamp to him and to his sons forever.”*

Jehoram of Judah died and his son Ahaziah became king. Ahaziah also walked in the ways of the wicked Ahab. His mother, awful Athaliah, Ahab and Jezebel's daughter, counseled him to do wickedly. Ahaziah went with his uncle, King Jehoram of Israel, Ahab's son, to fight against Syria.

God had said that all the family of Ahab would be destroyed. A man named Jehu was chosen by God to wipe out Ahab's family. While Ahaziah of Judah and his uncle, Jehoram of Israel, were visiting together in Israel, Jehu brought God's judgment on Ahab's family. When Jehu killed Ahab's son, his visitor, Ahaziah of Judah was killed, too.

When Athaliah, back in Judah, realized that her son Ahaziah was dead, she saw an opportunity to gain the throne of Judah and make herself queen. But first, she needed to make sure no sons of her son Ahaziah remained alive. These children, as children of the king, had the right to rule in Judah, not Athaliah, the mother of the king. So she had the royal grandchildren killed! However, God's great love and care was working here. God made sure that all the house of David was not killed by Athaliah. A woman named Jehoshabeath, who was a sister of Ahaziah (but probably not the daughter of Athaliah) escaped with baby Joash, one of Ahaziah's sons. Joash was only one year old. Jehoshabeath was the wife of Jehoiada, the high priest. They hid the baby in the house of God for six years while the wicked grandmother, Athaliah, reigned over Judah and introduced Baal worship to Judah.

When Joash was seven years old, Jehoiada decided it was time that Joash take his rightful place on the throne. Jehoiada gathered together the priests and Levites from throughout Judah. He told them that they were to protect Joash. When Joash was crowned king, the people began praising him saying, "Long live the king!" Athaliah heard the commotion and went into the house of the Lord to see what was happening. When she realized that an heir to the throne had been saved, she was outraged. The guards seized her and took her outside the house of the Lord to put her to death so that the house of the Lord would not be defiled.

Jehoiada and the people tore down the house of Baal and the altars of Baal, and put to death the priests of Baal. They rededicated themselves to serving God. The people rejoiced. Under Jehoiada's guidance, Joash decided to repair the temple. He collected money from all the people and did just that. He restored the temple and the utensils used in the worship of God. Judah followed God's commands all the days of Jehoiada.

When Jehoiada was 130 years old, however, he died. Joash should have learned how to follow God from all of his time with Jehoiada, but instead, after Jehoiada's death, he listened to the foolish advice of others. He allowed Judah to abandon the house of God and serve idols again. God sent prophets to Joash to warn him of the consequences of his actions, but he would not listen. Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada, went to Joash and said, "*Thus God has said, 'Why do you transgress the commandments of the Lord and do not prosper? Because you have forsaken the Lord, He has also forsaken you.'*" Joash commanded that Zechariah be stoned to death. How sad that after Jehoiada had been so good to him, Joash repaid that kindness by killing his cousin, Jehoiada's son.

God was not pleased to say the least. When a small Syrian army came up against Judah that year, God allowed them to destroy all of the officials and take the treasures out of Judah even though the Syrian army was much smaller than the army of Judah. Joash was left alive but very ill. Joash's own servants killed him while he lay sick in bed. They did this to revenge the killing of Zechariah. Joash was buried in Jerusalem as his ancestors had been, but he was not buried with the other kings.

Joash started life with so much going for him. He was raised by the high priest who taught him to love and serve God. Joash was on the right track for awhile, but once his righteous mentor was gone, he stopped serving God. How disappointed God must have been. We have seen many examples of God giving victories to his people when they are faithful, and now we have seen that when we turn our backs on God, He will not fight for us. If we are wise, we will learn from Joash's mistakes. Will you love God after your parents are gone? Will God be able to fight for you when you are old?

**GOD TAKES VICTORY FROM AMAZIAH AND UZZIAH WHEN
VICTORY GOES TO THEIR HEADS.****2 CHRON. 25 – 26****Read 2 Chron. 25 - 26**

After King Joash of Judah died, his son Amaziah took over the throne of Judah. The Bible makes an interesting statement about Amaziah. It says *that "he did what was right in the sight of the Lord, but not with a loyal [whole] heart."* We'll find out what that means as our lesson unfolds.

Amaziah started his reign the right way, listening to prophets of God and attempting to do God's will. In preparing to go to war with Edom, Amaziah gathered together *"three hundred thousand choice men, able to go to war, who could handle spear and shield."* In addition to these, he hired 100,000 mighty men of valor from the children of Ephraim in Israel. This turned out to be a mistake. A prophet came to him saying, *"O king, do not let the army of Israel go with you, for the Lord is not with Israel—not with any of the children of Ephraim."* The man of God told Amaziah that he would lose the war if he allowed the hired soldiers of Ephraim to go with him into battle. Even though he had already paid the Israelites 100 talents of silver, Amaziah followed God's direction. He sent them home. The men of Ephraim were furious at being sent home. They returned home to Judah with bitter hearts. On their way home, as Judah's army headed off to fight Edom, these hired-and-then-fired Israelites raided Judah's cities killing and stealing from them. God was right. These Israelites were evil and would not make good partners in a war.

After strengthening himself and preparing for war, Amaziah went to the Valley of Salt to fight Edom. Judah killed 10,000 evil Edomites. They took 10,000 more Edomites captive, took them up to the top of a cliff and threw them over the side *"so that they were dashed in pieces."* Amaziah followed God's battle plan and won a great victory.

After all of the fighting was over an amazing thing happened. Amaziah took Edom's idols with him back home, *"set them up to be his gods, and bowed down before them and burned incense to them."* God's wrath burned against Amaziah, and he sent a prophet to him, saying, *"Why have you sought the gods of the people, which could not rescue their own people from your hand?"* Amaziah wickedly replied, *"Have we made you the king's counsel? Cease! Why should you be killed?"* Then the prophet ceased after saying, *"I know that God has determined to destroy you, because you have done this and have not heeded my*

counsel.” The prophet tried to point out to Amaziah something that should have been painfully obvious to him already. Why would you bow down to a god that didn’t save the people you had just defeated? Why worship idols instead of the living God who gave you victory over your enemies?

Later, Amaziah sent word to Joash, the grandson of Jehu and king of Israel, that he wanted to fight. He declared war on Israel. Joash tried to tell him to stay at home and not cause trouble for anyone. He was warning Amaziah that he would lose if he tried to start this war with Israel. Amaziah wouldn’t listen and went to war. Judah lost the war badly and every man fled to his tent. Joash even took Amaziah captive. Why was Amaziah so strong against Edom and then so weak against Israel? Because the God of Victory fought for him against Edom, but fought against him when he became an idolator. When Amaziah turned away from God, he began to lose his power. He eventually ran away from Jerusalem and was killed at a place called Lachish.

The people of Judah crowned Amaziah’s son, Uzziah, king of Judah when he was just 16 years old. He reigned in Judah until he was 68 years old. Like his father, Uzziah also started out on the right path. II Chronicles 26:5 tells us that *“he sought God in the days of Zechariah, who had understanding in the visions of God; and as long as he sought the Lord, God made him prosper.”* During this time, Uzziah, with God’s help, conquered and controlled everyone around him. He won victories over the Philistines, the Arabians, and the Meunites. In addition to these, he had the Ammonites bringing tribute to Judah. *“His fame spread as far as the entrance of Egypt, for he strengthened himself exceedingly.”* Uzziah built towers in Jerusalem and towers in the desert. He dug wells and had livestock in the wilderness and fertile fields in the hill country. Farmers and vinedressers worked for him. He prepared a great army of more than 300,000. For this army he prepared shields, spears, helmets, body armor, bows, and slings to cast stones. *“And he made devices in Jerusalem, invented by skillful men, to be on the towers and the corners, to shoot arrows and large stones. So his fame spread far and wide, for he was marvelously helped till he became strong.”* Uzziah depended on God and God helped Uzziah. God made Uzziah great.

At this point Uzziah began to fail. He became too proud of his accomplishments. He became proud of himself. He started to believe that he had the right to do anything he wanted. He ignored and transgressed God’s law. One day he went into the temple of the Lord to burn incense, which was the job of priests not kings. When Azariah the priest rebuked him for breaking God’s law, Uzziah became furious with him. He refused to repent. At this moment, leprosy broke out on Uzziah’s forehead. God had stricken him. He hurried out of the Temple and lived out his days in an isolated house.

None of this had to happen. Uzziah had everything: wealth, fame, power, and God’s blessing. He just forgot he also had a king he must obey – the Lord of Lords and King of Kings. We have a tendency to forget this, also. We live in a rich

country, a land of opportunity. Sometimes we forget that God allowed us to be born into this country, into our families, with these opportunities. If we try to take credit for our successes, and make our own rules, and run our own lives, we will fail. God wins the victories and God must be the leader, give the orders, and get the glory.

HOMework – PARENT/CHILD DISCUSSION

The Highlights

1. Find Amaziah, king of Judah in the passage below. Highlight him **blue**.
2. Find the good in him. Highlight it **blue**.
3. Find his mistakes. Highlight them **red**.
4. Find God's instructions. Highlight them **yellow**.
5. Amaziah was worried about losing money. He'd already paid Israel's soldiers. Put a \$ by his words that show this.
6. Find God's answer to money worries in v. 9. Highlight it **yellow**.

2 Chronicles 25:1-10

- 1 Amaziah was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jehoaddan of Jerusalem.
- 2 And he did what was right in the sight of the LORD, but not with a loyal heart.
- 3 Now it happened, as soon as the kingdom was established for him, that he executed his servants who had murdered his father the king.
- 4 However he did not execute their children, but did as it is written in the Law in the Book of Moses, where the LORD commanded, saying, "The fathers shall not be put to death for their children, nor shall the children be put to death for their fathers; but a person shall die for his own sin."
- 5 Moreover Amaziah gathered Judah together and set over them captains of thousands and captains of hundreds, according to their fathers'

**KING HEZEKIAH AND JERUSALEM WERE SAVED
BY THE ANGEL OF THE LORD WHO KILLS
185,000 ASSYRIANS IN THE NIGHT.
2 KINGS 18:13 – 19:37**

Read 2 Kings 18:13 – 19:37

Following the reign of Kings Amaziah and Uzziah in Judah, Jotham reigned for 16 years. Jotham was a good king, but the people still worshipped other gods. Ahaz, Jotham's son, became king after his father's death, but he was wicked. King Ahaz offered his own children as sacrifices to the gods he worshipped. He ruled for 16 years, and then his son, Hezekiah became king.

King Hezekiah, unlike his father, was a righteous man. When Hezekiah became king, he immediately began turning the people back to God. He had the temple restored to its proper condition, and he reestablished the proper worship of the Lord. He sent letters throughout all the land (even to the remnant of Israelites left in the north) asking them to come to Jerusalem to worship. God was pleased that finally His people were turning back to Him.

The Assyrian nation had become powerful during this time. They were known for their cruelty to the nations they conquered. They had already taken Israel away into captivity (under King Shalmaneser), and they had not stopped there. These fierce warriors had conquered many other surrounding nations. Now, the Assyrians set their sights on conquering Judah.

The first invasion came during the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah's reign. The Assyrians came up against the fortified cities of Judah and seized them. King Hezekiah sent word to King Sennacherib asking what he wanted in return for leaving Judah alone. Sennacherib demanded a tribute (a large sum of money) which King Hezekiah paid.

Later, King Hezekiah rebelled against the Assyrians. King Sennacherib sent a huge army to Jerusalem with a message. Sennacherib's message was very plain. He mocked the God of Judah saying that no other god had been able to protect people from the Assyrians. He was stunned that Hezekiah believed that his God could defeat the Assyrians. Sennacherib's messengers tried to frighten the people of Jerusalem who were listening by telling them of the other nations they had conquered who had not been protected by their gods.

Later, King Sennacherib sent a letter to Hezekiah asking him again why he thought that Judah would be spared from the Assyrian army when all the other nations had been crushed. King Hezekiah took Sennacherib's letter and went to the temple. He laid it out before God and offered a moving prayer:

"O LORD God of Israel, the One who dwells between the cherubim, You are God, You alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth. Incline Your ear, O LORD, and hear; open Your eyes, O LORD, and see; and hear the words of Sennacherib, which he has sent to reproach the living God. Truly, LORD, the kings of Assyria have laid waste the nations and their lands, and have cast their gods into the fire; for they were not gods, but the work of men's hands-- wood and stone. Therefore they destroyed them. Now therefore, O LORD our God, I pray, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that You are the LORD God, You alone."

God sent word through the prophet Isaiah that, because Hezekiah had offered this prayer, God would protect Judah from the Assyrians. Sennacherib's arrogance and blasphemy against God meant his downfall, God would defeat him. That night an angel of the Lord killed 185,000 men of the Assyrian army. Sennacherib retreated home to Nineveh.

Amazingly, Sennacherib still did not worship the true God. When he returned to Nineveh, he continued worshipping his god, Nisroch. While he was worshipping, two of his own sons killed him with a sword.

From King Hezekiah we learn the power of prayer. Hezekiah had tremendous faith in God. He believed God could save Judah even though the Assyrian army was much more powerful than the Judean army. Hezekiah, knew a very important truth – no one is more powerful than God. When we are faced with difficult times, we should always remember that God is all-powerful. He loves us and wants to help us. He hears our prayers. **AND GOD IS GOOD AT VICTORY!**

**SHADRACH, MESHACH, AND ABEDNEGO
WIN THE VICTORY BY FACING DEATH FOR GOD.
DANIEL 3**

Read Daniel 3

Do you remember that God promised Abraham and Sarah that they would have a big family? God also promised that their family would have a special land. God said that from that family and from that special land would come a great blessing for all of mankind.

God always keeps his promises. Abraham and Sarah's family became large. That large family led by Moses and then Joshua came to and then entered the Promised Land. God gave the family (the Israelites) judges to help them when they needed heroes. But the Israelites wanted kings. Their first three kings were King Saul, King David, and King Solomon. Then (because of Solomon's idolatry) the kingdom divided in two parts – Israel (to the north) and Judah (to the south). The northern kingdom had no good kings! In spite of wonderful, powerful prophets (Elijah, Elisha, Amos and Hosea) the people of Israel became unspeakably wicked. Because of their evil choices, God allowed them to be destroyed by Assyria.

Meanwhile, Judah was more holy. A good king, Hezekiah, and good prophets, Isaiah and Micah, helped Judah move toward God, goodness, sacrifice, and prayer. God saved Judah from the Assyrian army. Later, however, Judah forgot God and became horrible. They became so horrible God allowed the Babylonians to invade Judah and carry away captives.

Many of the people of Judah became homesick exiles in the land of Babylon. King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon took captives away in three waves. While God allowed this to happen, He did not leave His people with no hope. God helped certain Jews (people from Judah) to rise above the hardship and serve as "homesick heroes" for the people. These people were chosen by God to affect history and inspire the Jews in a tough situation. Daniel was one of these heroes. His friends, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, were also heroes. They all served a special role during this time. They were considered to be the best and the brightest of Jewish youth and were chosen to serve in the palace. They were given some large responsibilities in the Babylonian kingdom. At first they met with King Nebuchadnezzar's approval. That was soon to change. Today we will learn about a time when God fought for Daniel's friends, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

There came a time when King Nebuchadnezzar set up a golden image that was 60 cubits high and 6 cubits wide. It was massive, and it could be seen from all around. After this image was in place, the king invited the important officials in the land to a dedication ceremony for the image. At this ceremony, a herald announced that at the sound of the “horn, flute, lyre, and psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music,” everyone was to fall down and worship the golden image.

It didn't take long for some Chaldeans (Babylonians) to approach the king with accusations about the Jews. These Chaldeans came to the king and said, *“There are certain Jews whom you have set over the affairs of the province of Babylon: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego; these men, O king, have not paid due regard to you. They do not serve your gods or worship the gold image which you have set up.”* In rage and fury, Nebuchadnezzar sent for these young men to give them one last chance to worship his image. He told them if they were ready to worship, then good. But if they would not worship the image, they would be thrown into the fiery furnace. He then asked them, *“And who is the god who will deliver you from my hands?”* Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego replied, *“O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O King. But if not, let it be known to you, O King, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up.”* Notice what these men said to the king. They said that their God was ABLE to deliver them. They weren't sure if He would choose to do so. This is the attitude that God wants each one of us to have. We need to believe and tell others that God is able to deliver us, if He chooses to. But we need to understand that He doesn't always answer our concerns and our prayers exactly as we want, or as quickly as we would like. We need to trust that He will do what is best for us. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego knew God could save them and they knew He would save them if it was His will. They knew God would do what was right and best.

“Then Nebuchadnezzar was full of fury, and the expression on his face changed toward Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Therefore he spoke and commanded that they heat the furnace seven times more than it was usually heated.” Understand that the furnace was hot enough to instantly kill a person even before he increased the heat. The king commanded some of the men in his army to bind up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and throw them into the furnace. Nebuchadnezzar's men carried out this command and were killed by the heat when they took the prisoners close to the fire. *“And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished; and he rose in haste and spoke, saying, ‘Did we not cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?’ They said to the king, ‘True, O king.’ ‘Look!’ He answered, ‘I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.’”*

At this point, King Nebuchadnezzar was convinced that God had won the victory for the three men that he was trying to kill. So he called for them to come out and come to him. All of the palace officials and the king's counselors watched as Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego emerged from the furnace untouched by the fire. The Bible tells us that the fire had no power over their bodies; *"the hair of their head was not singed nor were their garments affected, and the smell of the fire was not even on them."*

Nebuchadnezzar was a changed man after seeing this miracle. He said, *"Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who sent His Angel and delivered His servants who trusted in Him, and they have frustrated the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they should not serve nor worship any god except their own God!"* The king further declared that any who spoke foul words against God would be *"cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made an ash heap; because there is no other God who can deliver like this."* What an amazing statement, coming from the man who had asked *"who is the god who will deliver you from my hands?"* Nebuchadnezzar now knew the answer to his question. He now knew that his golden images were nothing compared to the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. He recognized where victory comes from. We can learn from Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. They stood up for God when their very lives were at stake. In doing so, they turned a man toward God who had previously denied His existence. Would we be strong enough to do what they did that day? Do we really believe that GOD IS GOOD AT VICTORY?

HOMework – PARENT/CHILD DISCUSSION

The Highlights

1. In the verses below find King Nebuchadnezzar's words that show he didn't know about our God. Highlight them in **red**.
2. Find the words of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego that show they know how powerful God is. Highlight those words in **yellow**.
3. Find the brave answer of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to the king's command to bow down and worship an idol. Highlight their decision in **blue**.
4. Find what Nebuchadnezzar's men did to Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Highlight it in **red**.
5. Cross out (X) the men who took Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to the furnace.

GOD USES ONE WOMAN (ESTHER) TO SAVE THE ISRAELITES FROM ANNIHILATION.

ESTHER

Read Esther

The people of Judah (and their kings) had disobeyed God repeatedly. Because of their horrible sins, they earned a terrible time-out in Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, destroyed Jerusalem. He killed many Jews and carried many away as slaves. Heroic slaves like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and Daniel caused Nebuchadnezzar to learn about and praise the God of heaven and earth.

But, Nebuchadnezzar's son Belshazzar was wicked and offensive to God. God sent the Medes and Persians to destroy Babylon. A Persian king named Cyrus let the first Jews return to Jerusalem. Today, we will learn about a young Jewish woman named Esther who became the queen of the Persian empire.

The king of the Persian Empire at the time of Esther was King Ahasuerus (believed to be Xerxes). He was wealthy and held lavish banquets frequently. During one such banquet, the king became drunk and called for his wife, Queen Vashti, to come before him and his guests so that they could see her beauty. Busy giving a banquet of her own, Queen Vashti refused the king's order. He was angry with her. No one could refuse the king. The king's counselors told him that he should banish her from his kingdom. They argued that she had set a bad example for all the other women of the kingdom. They feared that soon women would be rebelling against their husbands. King Ahasuerus took their advice and banished Vashti.

It wasn't long before the king decided to find a new queen. He gave a command that all the beautiful young virgins of the land should be brought before him so that he could choose another queen to replace Vashti. One of these young ladies was Esther (her Persian name was Hadassah). Esther was one of the Jews scattered throughout the Persian empire. She had been raised by her cousin Mordecai following the death of her parents. The Bible tells us that she was "*beautiful of face and form*" and that *she "found favor in the eyes of all who saw her."* When Esther went before the king, he loved her more than any of the other young ladies brought before him. He chose her to be the next queen.

Mordecai, Esther's cousin, checked on her frequently by sitting at the gate of the palace. One day, while waiting for news of Esther, he overheard a plot to kill the king. He immediately reported to Esther that the king was in danger. Esther relayed his message to the king. The assassins were executed, and the king was grateful.

One of the king's officials, Haman, was gaining popularity with the king. He was an arrogant man. He demanded that all bow down to him as he passed through the streets. Mordecai, a faithful follower of God, refused to bow down to Haman. This defiance outraged Haman. He learned that Mordecai was a Jew and devised a plan to kill all the Jews in the Persian empire. He went before the king and reported that there was a group of people living in the land who had different laws from the rest of the people. He convinced the king that it would be in his best interest to have these people annihilated. Haman agreed to pay the king a large sum of money if he would allow this genocide. The king issued a decree that it should be done.

When news of the decree became public, Mordecai and all the Jews mourned their fate. Esther heard of the plan and writhed in anguish. Mordecai sent word to Esther asking her to go before the king to change his mind. This was a dangerous request, however, because anyone who went before the king without being summoned would be put to death unless the king held out his golden scepter to him or her. Mordecai had faith that God would protect His people. He encouraged Esther to go before the king anyway. Esther bravely followed her cousin's advice.

It must have been a very tense moment when Esther went before the king waiting to see whether he would accept her visit or order her to be killed. The king was entranced by Esther and extended the golden scepter for her to come to him. He asked Queen Esther what it was that she desired. He told her he would give her anything she wanted – even up to half of the kingdom. Esther asked that the king and Haman come to a banquet she had prepared. They both joined her for the meal, and again the king asked her what she desired. She asked them to attend another banquet the following day. They agreed.

That night the king could not sleep. He ordered that the book of the history of his kingdom be brought and read to him. He heard the account of Mordecai saving his life by reporting a plot to kill him. He asked if Mordecai had ever been properly honored for such a heroic deed. His servants told the king that Mordecai had never been repaid for this brave act. The next morning the king asked Haman how he should properly honor someone who had been good to the king. Proud Haman, assuming the person to be himself, told the king that he should put robes and a crown on the honoree and lead him through the city for all to see. Of course, Haman was humiliated and enraged when he learned that the person to be honored was Mordecai. Haman decided to kill Mordecai by hanging him on gallows seventy-five feet tall.

Before he could carry out his plan, however, he had to attend Esther's second banquet. Again the king asked the queen what he could do for her. She told the king that she and her people were to be killed and asked that the king spare their lives. The king asked who it was that would presume to do such a thing. Esther revealed that it was Haman who was going to have her people destroyed. The king was so angry he left the room until he could gain control of himself. When he returned, the king saw that Haman was begging for his life, having falling on the couch where Esther was sitting. The king thought Haman was attacking her. He immediately ordered that Haman be executed. Haman was hung on the same gallows he had intended to use on Mordecai.

Even though Haman was dead, the Jews still had a problem. Once a decree had been issued, like the one ordering the Jews to be annihilated, it could not be revoked. Esther went before King Ahasuerus again, this time asking that he issue another decree: on the day the Jews were to be killed, they would be allowed to defend themselves. The king agreed to her request. When the day came, the Jews defeated those who were trying to kill them. The officials of the Persian kingdom aided the Jews because Mordecai had been named second in command of the empire.

The story of Esther is a great example of how God cares for His people. Even though they were scattered throughout the land of Persia, God gave them the victory over Haman through Esther. Esther's battle was not a literal battle. It was the victory of a righteous person who had faith that God would protect her and His people. We can have that same faith. We have faith and **GOD GIVES THE VICTORY.**

**GOD GIVES NEHEMIAH THE VICTORY OVER RIDICULE,
INTIMIDATION, EXHAUSTION AND AMBUSH SO HE CAN
REBUILD THE WALL OF JERUSALEM.
NEHEMIAH 2 – 7:3**

Read Nehemiah 2 – 7:3

The Jews endured 40 years of captivity in Babylon. Then the Medo-Persians overthrew Babylon. Eventually, a man named Cyrus became king of Persia. He saw no reason to continue enslaving the Jews. God had stirred up his heart to let the Jews go home and rebuild the temple. So the exiles began to return home in waves 70 years after they were first carried away into captivity. Zerubbabel and Ezra were home-again heroes. They led exiles back to Judah. Zerubbabel directed the rebuilding of the temple. Ezra taught God's law. There were, however, still a large number of Jews living in Persia. A man named Nehemiah lived in Persia as cupbearer to King Artaxerxes. Nehemiah was concerned about those who had gone back to Judah; he continually monitored their progress. One day, one of his brothers returned to Persia with a group from Judah. These men gave Nehemiah a report that saddened him. They told him that *"the survivors who are left from the captivity in the province are there in great distress and reproach. The wall of Jerusalem is also broken down, and its gates are burned with fire."* This grieved Nehemiah so that he wept, prayed, and determined that he wanted to return to Judah and improve the situation of the Jews and the city of Jerusalem.

Nehemiah had never been depressed in the king's presence before, but now it was obvious to the king that something was wrong. He asked Nehemiah what was wrong. Nehemiah told him that Jerusalem, the location of his fathers' tombs, was in ruins. When the king then asked him what his request was, Nehemiah quickly and immediately *"prayed to the God of heaven"* and asked the king if he could return to Judah to rebuild the wall of Jerusalem. The king was fond of Nehemiah. He wanted to grant Nehemiah's requests as long as Nehemiah would return to him. This must be a temporary assignment. The king gave Nehemiah permission to go and letters that would allow him to pass safely through foreign lands on his way to Judah. He also gave him timber to build the beams for the gates and the walls of Jerusalem, and for a house to live in. In Nehemiah 2:8, Nehemiah said, *"And the king granted them to me according to the good hand of my God upon me."*

Nehemiah's job would not be easy. He had enemies in Jerusalem. Sanballat and Tobiah were two foreigners who had gained positions of importance while the Jews were away in captivity. They were not pleased to see the Jews rebuild Jerusalem's walls. Nehemiah 2:10 says, "*when Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite official heard of it, they were deeply disturbed that a man had come to seek the well-being of the children of Israel.*"

After Nehemiah had been back in Jerusalem for 3 days, he arose in the middle of the night, took a few men with him, and went out to look at the gates and the walls of the city. He had not yet told anyone what God had set in his heart to accomplish in Jerusalem. After surveying the situation, he said to the officials of the city, "You see the distress that we are in, how Jerusalem lies waste, and its gates are burned with fire. Come and let us build the wall of Jerusalem, that we may no longer be a reproach." Nehemiah then told them everything—how God had blessed him and how King Artaxerxes had allowed him to come. In response to this information, the people replied, "*Let us rise up and build.*" Then they set their hands to do this good work.

When Sanballat, Tobiah, and another adversary, Geshem, heard of the Jews' plans they were furious. They began to ridicule the Jews and their efforts. Nehemiah did not let this shake him. He said, "*The God of heaven will prosper us; therefore we His servants will arise and build, but you have no heritage or right or memorial in Jerusalem.*"

The work began. Everyone had a job. Nehemiah organized the people into groups. Each group worked on a specific area. The people worked together toward a common goal that they all believed in. People of many different trades and talents worked together, side by side. There were priests, merchants, officials, and goldsmiths. Some repaired the section of wall by their own houses. Some repaired specific gates. Each person had a job and each did his job faithfully.

During all their labor, their enemies continued to mock them trying constantly to sabotage their building efforts. They called the Jews "feeble" and did anything they could think of to discourage God's people. But, the people worked on. Nehemiah 4:6 says "*So we built the wall, and the entire wall was joined together up to half its height, for the people had a mind to work.*"

Because their former efforts had not even slowed down the rebuilding, Sanballat and his friends decided to attack Jerusalem and create confusion among the workers. Nehemiah heard about their plans and put guards on duty night and day. Some guarded while others worked. "*Those who built on the wall, and those who carried burdens, loaded themselves so that with one hand they worked at construction, and with the other held a weapon. Every one of the builders had his sword girded at his side as he built.*" They were under great pressure and they were exhausted, but they believed Nehemiah when he said,

"Our God will fight for us." Nehemiah continued praying and trusted God to bring victory.

The wall was completely finished in only 52 days. That's less than 2 months! Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem heard that the wall was complete, but they still tried to cause trouble. They sent a letter to Nehemiah, accusing him of trying to make himself King of Judah. They tried to get Nehemiah to meet with them. They tried to trick him into meeting them in the temple. Nehemiah refused knowing that they were trying to kill him. Nehemiah didn't stop working for anything. God was watching out for Nehemiah. God wanted the wall rebuilt and gave Nehemiah victory over every obstacle he faced, including his enemies and his exhaustion. Nehemiah 6:16 says *"And it happened, when all our enemies heard of it, and all the nations around us saw these things, that they were very disheartened in their own eyes; for they perceived that this work was done by our God."*

HOMWORK – PARENT/CHILD DISCUSSION

The Highlights

1. In the verses below find the things Nehemiah did when he heard bad news about Jerusalem. Highlight them **blue**.
2. Find the good things Nehemiah says about God. Highlight them **yellow**.
3. Find the things Nehemiah asked God to do. Circle them.

Nehemiah 1:1-6, 11

- 1 The words of Nehemiah the son of Hachaliah. It came to pass in the month of Chislev, in the twentieth year, as I was in Shushan the citadel,
- 2 that Hanani one of my brethren came with men from Judah; and I asked them concerning the Jews who had escaped, who had survived the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem.
- 3 And they said to me, "The survivors who are left from the captivity in the province are there in great distress and reproach. The wall of Jerusalem is also broken down, and its gates are burned with fire."
- 4 So it was, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned for many days; I was fasting and praying before the God of heaven.

**PETER WINS THE BATTLE OVER SIN
AND GUILT BY REPENTING.**

**MATT. 26:30-35, 69-75; MARK 14:26-31, 66-72;
LUKE 22:31-34, 54-62; JOHN 13:36-38; 18:15-27
ACTS 4:15-22; 5:27-32**

Read the scriptures listed above.

The Persians allowed the Jews to return to their homeland, rebuild the Temple, and reestablish the worship of the true God. About 400 years passed between the last events recorded in the Old Testament and the events recorded in the New Testament, as the Jews waited for their Savior to be born. Jesus was born and spent the first 30 years of his life preparing for his life's work. When He started preaching and healing many of the Jews did not believe that he was the Son of God. They wanted to put Him to death. During this time, Peter was one of the apostles closest to the Savior. Peter was a man full of conviction and passion, and he loved Jesus.

On the night Jesus was betrayed and arrested, Jesus told the apostles that He would be going away from them and that they could not follow Him where He was going. Jesus was referring to His own death and resurrection. Peter, thinking literally, adamantly vowed that wherever Jesus went, he would go also. He even went so far as to say that he would die for the Lord. Jesus told him that before the rooster crowed that night, Peter would have denied Him three times.

That night, Jesus and His apostles went to the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus left the apostles and went into the garden to pray. When He returned, the apostles were asleep. Soon after, a band of Jews came to arrest Jesus. Peter, the passionate and faithful apostle, immediately pulled his sword and swung at one of the men, cutting off his ear. Peter was determined to protect his Lord or die trying, but Jesus told Peter to put his sword away. Violence was not the Lord's way of dealing with confrontation. The guards took Jesus to Caiaphas, the high priest, to be questioned. While Jesus was there, Peter waited in the courtyard. Three different people asked Peter if he was one of the disciples of Jesus, but Peter vehemently denied that he even knew the Lord. After his third denial, Peter heard a rooster crow. He remembered that Jesus had predicted his cowardice, and he began to weep.

Peter loved the Lord with everything that was in Him. He wanted to be a faithful servant, but he had sinned. He let fear get the best of him. Peter realized

then that he had behaved shamefully. He was sorry! He had two choices. He could repent and return to doing right, or he could leave God and Jesus and let Satan rule his life. Peter felt terrible about what he had done. He "wept bitterly." But he didn't give up on himself and he didn't give up on God. Peter had been with Jesus long enough to realize that Jesus and God would forgive him. After the crucifixion, Peter stayed with the other apostles. He went to the Lord's grave on the first day of the week. He was there when Jesus appeared to His disciples after the resurrection.

We know Peter won the battle over sin and guilt because Acts 2 tells us that Peter preached the first gospel sermon on the Day of Pentecost, the day the church started. Peter remained faithful to God. He was a hero of the early church. He stood up to the Jewish leaders who killed Jesus and said, "*Whether it is right in the sight of God to give heed to you rather than to God, you be the judge.*" (Acts 4:19b) Later, when these same leaders threatened him, he said, "*We must obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you had put to death by handing Him on a cross. He is the one whom God exalted to His right hand as a Prince and a Savior, to grant repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are witnesses of these things; and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him.*" (Acts 5:29b-32)

Can a sinner win? Yes! Peter won the victory over Satan and fear. Peter allowed God's plan for repentance and forgiveness to work in his life. GOD IS GOOD AT VICTORY!

HOMework – PARENT/CHILD DISCUSSION

The Highlights

1. In the verses below find Jesus' words that predict the future. Highlight them **yellow**.
2. Find Peter's claims that he won't fail Jesus. Highlight them **red**.

Matthew 26:30-35

- 30 And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.
- 31 Then Jesus said to them, "All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night, for it is written: 'I will strike the Shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.' (This meant that the disciples would become afraid and would leave Jesus just when he needed them the most.)
- 32 But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee."

**JUDAS LOSES HIS BATTLE WITH SIN AND GUILT
BY GIVING UP ON HIMSELF AND GOD.****MATT. 26:14-16, 21-25, 47-56; 27:3-10;****MARK 14:10-11, 18-21, 43-52;****LUKE 22:1-6, 21-23, 47-53;****JOHN 12:1-8; 13:21-30; 18:2-12;****ACTS 1:18-19**

Read the scriptures listed above.

In our last lesson we learned that Peter sinned. But, thanks to God, who gives us the hope of forgiveness through Jesus Christ, Peter could repent (change) and beat Satan. Judas, another of the twelve apostles, also sinned. But, he dealt with his sin differently.

Judas kept the money of the apostles. He was stealing from them. Shortly before His death, Jesus predicted that one of the twelve would betray Him. They all asked who it was, but Judas already knew. He had approached the chief priests and offered to betray Jesus for thirty pieces of silver, and they agreed.

Judas was with the mob that came to the garden of Gethsemane to arrest Jesus. He had told the guards beforehand that he would kiss Jesus to signify that He was the one they were seeking. Jesus was betrayed by one of the twelve men who should have been willing to die for Him.

Judas later regretted his actions, but instead of repenting and changing his life to serve God, he returned the thirty pieces of silver and then committed suicide. Satan won Judas' soul forever.

Peter and Judas both sat at Jesus' feet on numerous occasions. They both saw Jesus' miracles and heard Him teach. They had both served Jesus for three years during His ministry. They both sinned. Peter sinned by denying Christ, and Judas sinned by being consumed by greed. Both were sorry for their sins. They were similar in many ways. It's amazing that the outcome of their lives was so different. Peter repented of his sin and continued to serve the Lord. He began preaching the gospel to everyone and testifying that Jesus was the Son of God. He became one of the great heroes of the Bible. Satan lost the battle for Peter's soul. Judas, on the other hand, hanged himself and ended his own life.

His name is synonymous with someone who betrays his or her friends even to this day. Satan won the battle for Judas' soul.

We can learn important lessons from these two men. We can learn that even the great heroes of faith sinned. We are all human, and temptation and sin are part of being human. What makes the difference in where we spend eternity is how we deal with our sins. If we repent of our sins and become even more dedicated to serving God and overcoming our weaknesses, we follow Peter's example. If we let our sins discourage and defeat us to the point that we give up on God and ourselves, we follow Judas' example. Whose example will you follow? Who will win the battle for your soul?

HOMWORK – PARENT/CHILD DISCUSSION

The Highlights

1. In the verses below highlight in **red** the evil plans of the Jewish rulers and Judas.

Luke 22:1-6

- 1 Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread drew near, which is called Passover.
- 2 And the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might kill Him, for they feared the people.
- 3 Then Satan entered Judas, surnamed Iscariot, who was numbered among the twelve.
- 4 So he went his way and conferred with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray Him to them.
- 5 And they were glad, and agreed to give him money.
- 6 So he promised and sought opportunity to betray Him to them in the absence of the multitude.

2. In the verses below find Judas' sin. Highlight them **red**.
3. What does Judas love more than people – even Jesus? _____

John 12:1-8

- 1 Then, six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was who had been dead, whom He had raised from the dead.

**JESUS DIES TO RENDER POWERLESS THE DEVIL,
WHO HAD THE POWER OF DEATH!**

**HEBREWS 2:14-15; JOHN 16:33;
ACTS 2:24; 1 COR. 15:55-57**

Read the scriptures listed above.

Throughout our studies, we've seen Satan win some victories. Back in the Garden of Eden, Satan won a battle when Eve accepted his lies and then convinced Adam into sin, too. Their sins gave Satan a victory. But God would win the war.

God would rise up victorious in the end. God waited for the perfect time to deal the fatal blow to Satan. That time arrived, and God sent His Son to be born in Bethlehem to a virgin named Mary. Jesus came to win the final victory by dying. It might seem to some that Jesus lost any hope of victory by dying. After all, he was betrayed by a friend, captured in the garden of Gethsemane, bound, beaten, mocked, stripped, and finally crucified between two common thieves. This might appear, on the surface, to be a slaughter, not a victory.

If Jesus had stayed dead, then this would have indeed been a terrible defeat. The Devil would have won. But victory came on the third day, when Jesus rose up out of the tomb and conquered death, never to die again. The death and resurrection of the perfect Son of God meant *hope* for all Christians. It meant *eternal life* for God's faithful people.

Jesus' resurrection was the worst possible blow that could have been dealt to the Devil. This took away Satan's power over sin and death. When Jesus died, He provided the perfect sacrifice for sin. He brought grace, mercy, and forgiveness. This means victory for us if we turn to God for mercy after we have sinned. This means victory for us every time we go to a Christian's funeral and know that the righteous dead rise again to go live forever in the glorious presence of God. Jesus fought and won the war with sin and death for us, because He knew we **COULD NOT SAVE OURSELVES**. Just as the children of Israel could not win a victory without God's help, we cannot win without Him, either.

Jesus won the victory and gave us the hope of salvation by dying and beating death. But this isn't the end of this story. We must continue to fight Satan for our soul's salvation. We must continue in our **FAITH**. John tells us, "*And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.*" Paul's letter to the

Ephesians tells the Christians to put on the whole armor of God, in order to be able to fight against the Devil. Victory comes through Jesus' supreme sacrifice and our continued faith in Him.

HOMEWORK – PARENT/CHILD DISCUSSION

The Highlights

1. In the verses below find yourselves ("the children" who share in flesh and blood"). Highlight yourselves **blue**.
2. Find Jesus ("He" and "Himself"). Highlight Him **yellow**.
3. Find the word "death." Highlight it **brown**.
4. Find Jesus' death. Put a cross (†) over the word "death."
5. Find the Devil. Highlight him **red**.
6. Cross out (**X**) the Devil. Jesus is taking away his power to hurt and scare us.
7. What are people afraid of? (v. 15) _____

Cross it out (**X**). We are not slaves of sin and death any more because of Jesus!

Hebrews 2:14-15

- 14 Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil,
- 15 and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

**MY FAITH WILL OVERCOME THE WORLD.
I WILL CRUSH SATAN UNDER MY FEET SHORTLY.
1 PETER 5:8-10; JAMES 4:7; EPH. 6:10-18;
1 JOHN 5:4-5; ROMANS 16:19-20
I GIVE THANKS TO GOD WHO GAVE ME THE VICTORY THROUGH
JESUS OUR LORD.
1 COR. 15:55-57**

Read the scriptures listed above.

This quarter we have studied many lessons about victory. We have learned about God giving victory to those who follow Him. We have seen that defeat comes to those who neglect and reject God and God's direction. We learned that Jesus won the ultimate victory when He conquered sin by dying for sinners and conquered death by rising from the dead.

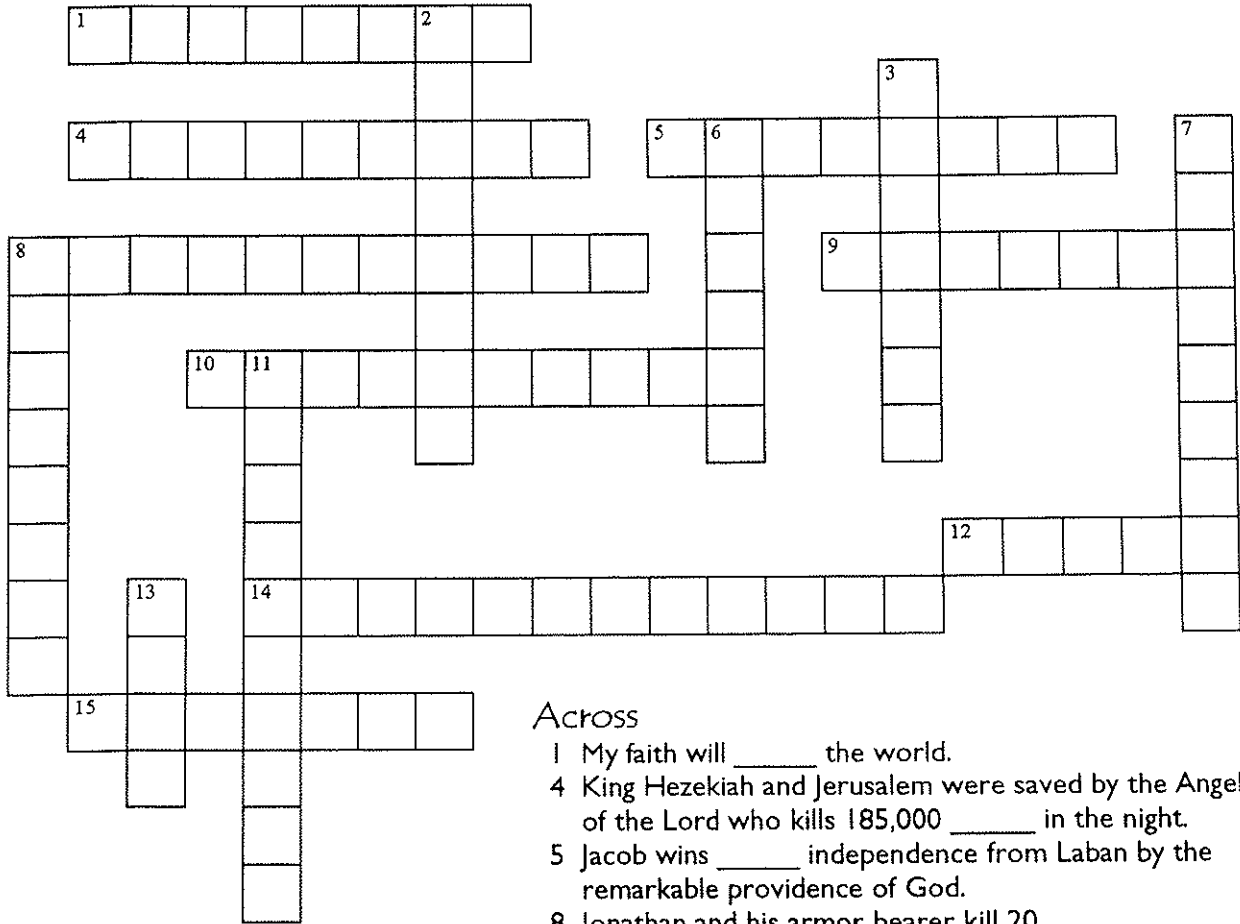
Now it is time for us to enter the war against Satan. We must take our turn in battle just like the heroes of the Old Testament. Read the following verses to arm yourself for the fight.

HOMEWORK – PARENT/CHILD DISCUSSION

The Highlights

1. In the following verses find the Devil. Highlight him and what he does **red**.
2. Find your jobs in the army of God. Highlight them **blue**.
3. Find God and Christ and what they will do for you. Highlight them **yellow**.

REVIEW



Across

- 1 My faith will _____ the world.
- 4 King Hezekiah and Jerusalem were saved by the Angel of the Lord who kills 185,000 _____ in the night.
- 5 Jacob wins _____ independence from Laban by the remarkable providence of God.
- 8 Jonathan and his armor bearer kill 20 _____.
- 9 God gives Nehemiah the _____ over ridicule, intimidation, exhaustion and ambush so he can rebuild the wall of Jerusalem.
- 10 Moses defeats the _____ by holding up his arms.
- 12 Deborah and Jael defeat _____, king of Canaan.
- 14 God uses one woman, Esther, to save the Israelites from _____.
- 15 Joshua defeats _____ by walking in circles.

Down

- 2 Jehoshaphat defeats the _____ by digging ditches.
- 3 David beats _____ with one small stone.
- 6 I give thanks to God who gave me the victory through _____ Jesus our Lord.
- 7 Israelites defeat _____ just by traveling.
- 8 Elijah defeats 400 _____ of Baal with one prayer.
- 11 Gideon's 300 defeat the _____.
- 13 Jesus _____ to render powerless, the devil, who had the power of death.

Word List

- | | | |
|--------------|------------|-------------|
| Amalekites | Egyptians | Moabites |
| Annihilation | Goliath | Overcome |
| Assyrians | Jabin | Philistines |
| Christ | Jericho | Prophets |
| Died | Midianites | Victory |
| Economic | | |