



K-1st Lesson

Introduction

- ☛ We have learned that sin has consequences. Do you remember what a consequence is? *When something bad happens because of a poor choice we made.*

Refer to the Exodus to Malachi Timeline. We've seen many times in the Bible where people faced consequences because they chose to sin. Mention the following: Jonah trying to run from God, #26; God sending enemies against the Israelites when they worshipped idols, #27; God sending the Babylonians against Judah because they worshipped idols, #28.

When we choose to sin, it doesn't just hurt us. Many times, it will hurt others, too. Let's do an experiment to help us see how sin can spread. Bring out the object lesson supplies. You may have the students gather around to see and help. Pour milk onto the plate until it's about halfway full.

God gave his people, the Jews, special laws for how they were to worship him and treat each other. Let's use this food coloring for the Jewish people. Drip food coloring into the milk to create several patches of colors on the surface. Do not stir the food coloring in. It may take a few drops in each spot to create a good patch of color.

God said his people must not worship false gods or marry anyone who worshipped idols. When some of the Jews disobeyed, others decided to do the same wrong things. Direct several students to take a cotton swab and dip the tip into the dish soap. One by one, have them touch the tip of their swab into a colored patch in the milk. Pause to watch the color spread with each cotton swab.

See how the colors spread? The Jews' sinful actions spread, too. It affected their families and neighbors. And this is what we'll see happening with the Jewish people in our lesson today. Have helpers throw away the cotton swabs and all the students return to their seats.

Refer to Lesson 114 Flip Chart. We talked about Queen Esther in our last lesson.

- ☛ Was it luck, or was God in control of everything that happened to her and to the Jews? *God was in control.*

Refer to Lesson 113 Flip Chart. While Esther and many Jews were living in Persia, others were making their way back to Judah. We talked about the first group who went back with Zerubbabel to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem.

Today we will read about a second group of Jews returning home. This time a priest named Ezra led them back. Let's see what happened when Ezra made it home to Jerusalem.

The Return of Ezra

Ezra was a priest and a scribe, which was a person who read and wrote copies of the books of the law. So, Ezra knew God's laws very well.

- ☛ Refer to the Books of the Bible Poster. Which books in the Old Testament are books of the law? *Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.*

Ezra wanted to study the Law of the Lord, to do what it said, and to teach it to the people. He got permission from the king to take a group of Jews back to Judah. They would have to travel over 1,000 miles, but Ezra was ready. God had promised that the people would one day return to Jerusalem. And he was keeping his promise.

- ☛ What word means God will always keep his promises? *Faithful.*

God was showing his faithfulness to his people. Some of them had gone home with Zerubbabel. And now it was time for another group to go. They prayed for safety on the journey from enemy attack and ambushes.

- ☛ What is an ambush? *Allow answers.*

An ambush is a surprise attack by enemies, like thieves, who would hide along the road then jump out and attack. Ezra's group was bringing treasures with them, such as silver and gold. Thieves would probably love to steal all those nice things. But God protected them and brought them safely to Jerusalem.

The Reaction of Ezra

When Ezra arrived, it didn't take him long to see that the people who had returned with Zerubbabel earlier were not following the Law of the Lord. It had been several years since they

had come home, and they had forgotten God's laws and were disobeying God.

Ezra saw that the Jewish people were marrying women and men from the foreign nations around them. But God had commanded them NOT to do this very thing. The people from these other nations did not worship the true God. They were pagans, which means they worshipped false gods and idols.

- ☛ Did God want his people to worship false gods? *No!*

God wanted his people to marry only those who loved and worshipped him. But now, they were doing exactly what he said NOT to do.

Ezra 9:3

Listen to Ezra 9:3 to find out what Ezra did when he heard what the people were doing. *Have the student with the Bible bring it up and turn to the sticky note. Read the verse.*

- ☛ What did Ezra do to his clothes? *He tore his garment and cloak.*
- ☛ What did Ezra do to his hair? *He pulled out some of the hair on his head and beard.*

This may seem like a strange thing to do. But in those days, this was a way the priest could show how upset he was—by tearing his clothes and pulling his hair out. Ouch!

- ☛ What do you think it means that Ezra sat appalled? *Allow discussion.*

Appalled means shocked. Ezra couldn't believe what he was hearing! How could the Jews disobey God this way so soon after coming home? Did they forget that their sins were the reason God had sent them to Babylon in the first place? Ezra was very sad.

Show the Lesson Flip Chart. The Jews were disobeying God by marrying these foreign people. Husbands and wives started worshipping idols together, and they were also teaching their children to worship false gods. Their sin was spreading like the colors in our experiment.

God had commanded his people to marry only those who believed that he was the one true God—so that this kind of thing wouldn't happen.

The Response of the People

- ☛ So how did Ezra know that God had commanded them not to marry people of other nations? *Allow answers. It was in the laws God gave to Moses.*

Remember, Ezra studied the Law of God, the first five books of the Bible. He had come to Jerusalem ready to teach the people what God's Law commanded. Now that he had found out the Jews were marrying idol worshippers, what would he do? Let's read some more to find out.

Ezra 10:1-2

Listen to verse 1. *Read the verse.*

- ☛ What was Ezra doing in this verse? *Reread the first part of the verse, if necessary. Praying, confessing, weeping, casting himself down before God.*
- ☛ Who gathered around where Ezra was praying? *Men, women, and children.*
- ☛ What were these people doing? *They were weeping bitterly.*

Listen to verse 2 now. *Read the verse.*

- ☛ Why were the people weeping? They had broken what with God? *They had broken faith with God.*

The people were sorry for their sin but knew there was still hope for them if they turned from their sin and made things right with God. They promised to do the right thing and gathered in Jerusalem to deal with this problem.

Refer to the Flip Chart. On the day they met outside of the temple, it was pouring rain. The people were trembling because of the rain—and because of their sin. Ezra reminded the people of God's commands. When the Jews married foreign wives, they were disobeying God's Law. These wives did not love and worship God, and they were leading their husbands and children to worship false gods. When Ezra explained how they were disobeying God, the people realized they had sinned. They were very sorry for their sins and asked God for forgiveness.

- ☛ Remember how the colors got all mixed up in our experiment? Would it be easy to put the colors back again? *No.*

This problem was mixed up, too. It took about three months to fix it. The foreign wives and children had to be sent away; this was the consequence for the people's sin. But the people did the right thing by turning back to God and showing that they truly were sorry.



The Jews
married people
who worshipped
FALSE gods.

EZRA helped the
people understand.
They were **SORRY**
for their sin.

