



Everyday FAITH Family Page

Old Testament 4

Law/Gospel

God's just judgment on unbelief and sin is punishment and exile from Him forever. **In mercy and grace, God forgives my sins, reclaims me as His child, and blesses me with all good things for the sake of His Son, Jesus, who will take me to the new Jerusalem, my home in heaven, where there is joy and celebration forever.**

Bible Words

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.
Philippians 4:6

Sing

God loves me dearly,
Grants me salvation,
God loves me dearly,
Loves even me.

Jesus, my Savior,
Himself did offer;
Jesus, my Savior,
Paid all I owed

"God Loves Me Dearly," stanzas 1 and 4
Lutheran Service Book 392

God's People Go Home

Ezra 1-3; 7:11-28; Nehemiah 2:1-8; 12:27-43

Persia conquered the Babylonians in 539 BC while Jewish exiles lived there. The new king, Cyrus the Great, respected the customs and religions of the lands he conquered. He returned many prisoners of war to their homelands, often with treasures stolen from them.

The Jews benefited from Cyrus's generosity. He gave permission to go back to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple, the city, and its walls. He also returned 5,400 gold and silver items that were taken from the temple.

It took some time to organize, gather offerings, and travel back to Judah. Once there, the people built houses, and then rebuilt the altar of the Lord and started sacrificing. The next year, they began rebuilding the temple of the Lord.

People living near Jerusalem resisted these efforts early and often. They tattled to King Cyrus and his successors Darius and Xerxes (Ahasuerus), fearing that a strong wall in Jerusalem would enable rebellion. Political troubles in Egypt and other nations made the kings open to these accusations. Temple building stopped for fourteen years. The people finally finished the temple in 516 BC under the leadership of the Jewish governor Zerubbabel and the high priest Jeshua.

Under King Artaxerxes, Ezra and then Nehemiah moved back to Jerusalem to help their people. As a scribe and religious teacher, Ezra helped the people learn and practice God's Law. Nehemiah, the king's trusted cupbearer, returned to rebuild the city walls and gates. Under his leadership, the people completed this task in just fifty-two days!

Jesus reconciled sinners exiled from God. "In Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who has . . . broken down in His flesh the dividing wall of hostility" (Ephesians 2:13-14). Jesus builds bridges, not walls.

Prayer

Dear Jesus, when we sin, help us turn back to You and find peace and forgiveness only You can give. Amen.

