Confirmation

Week #5

What happened in the world between the Old Testament and the New Testament?

There are 400 years between the end of the Old Testament and the Beginning of the New Testament. How old is the United States?

Israel peaked as a United Kingdom under King David. It came under attack by neighboring countries. In 587 B.C., many Israelites were taken into captivity in Babylon. Some people were able to return, but they questioned God’s presence in the midst of their struggle.

Today we are going to learn a little about the Roman Empire, which was an occupying force in Israel during the time of Jesus.

The Jewish people longed for a messiah that would free them from foreign occupation.

Read Ezra 1:3

How would you feel if you were a Jewish person living in exile and just heard King Cyrus’ declaration?

What does it mean to you to have a place of worship and a regular community to worship with that you know and that knows you well?

Do you think the people going back to Jerusalem to rebuild the city and the temple would have an easy time? Have any of you lost your home, or moved when you didn’t want to?

Now read Nehemiah 9:16-17

What do you learn about God from these verses?

What had the people forgotten?

Have you ever felt powerless?

Where do you see oppression in the world today?

When a group of people is oppressed, sometimes it is safer for them to turn against and become angry with one another rather than the source of their opposition. The division is also a tool oppressors use to keep power—when people are divided against themselves, they cannot be united enough to pose a threat to the oppressor. If you were a prophet, what would you do or say to try to unite the people and keep them from dividing against themselves? Do you hear any current prophets calling for unity rather than division?

What is the most courageous thing you have seen someone do for the sake of another?

Two three letter words—the same two words—can fill in these gaps. What are they?

Unf--- ---paper. H--- ---Born.

T--- K---. G---fish –ts.

Beh--- ---sletter. G---en Re---

When have you noticed a gap—in someone’s thinking, in the tools you needed to get work done, somewhere else?

Who is in charge. The empires over the centuries differed in cultural elements, artistic styles, and religious beliefs, but one thing remained constant. Judea was never free. God’s promise that a son of David would sit on the throne of Jerusalem seemed lost.

Temple Timeline

586 BC Temple Destroyed by Babylonians

538 BC A remnant allowed to return

516 BC Temple Rebuilt Under the Persian Empire

167 Grave Images Greek King Antiochus IV Epiphanes (literally “God Manifest”) installed images of Greek Gods in the temple. Sketch something that people really love the doesn’t belong in the church.

160 BC A group of Jewish people reclaimed the temple from the Greek Empire

18BC Herod the Great, a Roman ruler who was not Jewish, completely rebuilt the temple. Why would this have been surprising for the Jewish people?

More and more people wondered when and how the foreign oppressors would be overthrown (Spiritually? Violently?) by a Descendent of David as predicted in the Scriptures. What does this tell you about the hopes people had for Jesus.

If Jesus were alive today, what parts of society do you think he would push against or work to change.

Write your ideas under each branch of society.

Religion

Culture

Government