

Kings, Prophets, and Exile. Volume 3, Session 9
Caesar

Today's story starts out with the theater crew talking about the new director and the changes he wants to make. The new director, Boman, wants to stop doing plays about God's story and instead wants to focus on the Roman Empire and Caesar. Under Roman authority, God's people were allowed to practice their old customs but were to worship Caesar as God's only son instead of Jesus! They were also made to pay taxes to Caesar. Becky does not think Boman's changes are the right thing to do. She wants to keep doing plays about God's big story. She wants to protest the new director's plans. Much like, during Jesus' time and Caesar's rule, the Jews protested, resented having to pay taxes, and wanted to continue practicing giving to God. Becky has hope when she discovers there is another smaller stage she and her friends can produce plays about God instead of Caesar.

During this time Rome ruled over the Jews with a heavy handed and brutal way of enforcing the laws. Caesar Augustus taxed all the people in his nations. Caesar expanded Rome's kingdom by adding territories and ruling over other nations such as Europe, Asia Minor, Brittain to India. Caesar worshipped pagan Roman gods and actually allowed himself to be worshipped as a living god. The Jews were able to keep their beliefs but were under laws and restrictions under the Sanhedrin and Pharisees during these times. The Sanhedrin and Pharisees believed the law and rituals saved them. Tax collectors dishonestly took more money than what was taxed so they could pocket this money for themselves. John the Baptist came as a hope that the true Savior / Messiah will be coming to rescue the Jews from these wrong ways of belief and the brutal way that Rome ruled over them. John the Baptist preached of repentance and hope in the Messiah that will come after him to provide salvation from their sins.

1. Read Luke 1: 67-79
 - a. Who is John's father? (v. 67 - Zechariah)
 - b. What was John the Baptist's role? (v. 76 - Prophet)
 - c. Who was John the Baptist preparing the way for? (v 76. The Lord, Jesus)
2. Read Malachi 3:1; Matthew 11:10; Mark 1:2; Luke 7:27; Luke 1: 13-17; Luke 1: 39-41; Mark 1: 1-7; Luke 3:1-19;
 - a. Who is John the Baptist? (Jesus' cousin)
 - b. What happened to John the Baptist after preaching the message (Luke 3: 20 – he was sent to prison)
 - c. What was John's main message when preaching? (Luke 3: 3 – baptism & repentance)
 - d. What is John's main purpose? (Malachi 3:1, Matthew 11:10, Mark 1:2, & Luke 7:27 – prepare the way for the Messiah, Jesus)
 - e. What is the "hope" he speaks of? (Luke 3: 3 forgiveness from sins)