

Old Testament Survey I

A Christ-Centered Approach
to Studying Jesus' Bible



INSTRUCTOR'S GUIDE

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Instructor's Introduction

It is our hope and prayer that God would be pleased to use this curriculum for his glory. Thus, the intention of this curriculum is to spread a passion for the supremacy of God in all things for the joy of all peoples through Jesus Christ by equipping men, women, and young adults to serve as family, business and community leaders, full-time Christian workers, missionaries, pastors, and teachers. This curriculum is guided by the mission and vision of Bethlehem College & Seminary, which are more fully explained at bcsmn.edu. At the Bethlehem website, you will find the God-centered philosophy that undergirds and motivates everything we do. May God be glorified in us as we are satisfied in him alone!

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The *Old Testament Survey I: A Christ-Centered Approach to Studying Jesus' Bible* is intended to survey the message of the Old Testament, both at the individual book level and at the canonical level. That is, students will not only grasp the main message of each individual book of the Old Testament, but they will understand how that message contributes to the overall message of the Bible. Emphasis will be given to tracing the flow of redemptive history from the beginning of time until the inter-testamental period, showing how the entire Old Testament points to, prepares the way for, and is fulfilled by Jesus the Messiah. This will be accomplished by reading *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About* in its entirety and the majority of *Dominion and Dynasty*, as well as by first-hand study of some of the key biblical passages throughout the Old Testament.

🔗 OBJECTIVES

This course is designed to accomplish specific objectives. A student successfully completing this course should be able to:

- ▷ Articulate the significance of the Old Testament for Christians today and understand how key biblical passages from the Old Testament fit into the storyline of redemptive history.
- ▷ Explain the central message of each individual book of the Old Testament and understand how each book contributes to the overall message of the Bible.
- ▷ Understand how the entire Old Testament points to, prepares the way for, and is fulfilled by Jesus the Messiah.
- ▷ Discuss and apply the biblical truth that is presented in the curriculum to one's own life.
- ▷ Magnify the worth of God in a more meaningful and personal way by treasuring him in their heart above all else. We recognize that this, the ultimate objective of the course, is impossible apart from the grace of God in the working of the Holy Spirit, who exalts the risen Lord, Jesus Christ.

🔗 IMPLEMENTATION

As the instructor of this course, it is imperative that you are completely familiar with the curriculum. We therefore recommend that you read this entire section carefully and then skim through the rest of what is contained in this binder.

This course is designed to be taught in 12 lessons, ideally in 2 hours of in-class instruction and with approximately 2.5 hours of homework each week. To achieve the kind of undistracted focus and academic rigor that maximizes learning, we recommend that this course be taught as a weeknight class.

We anticipate, however, that this curriculum might be adapted for a Sunday school, small group, or discipleship setting. If this is necessary or most appropriate, we urge you to establish an expectation among your students that this course will require more concentration and commitment than a typical Sunday school class would. A tone of serious and earnest study should be set by the instructor before the course even begins.

Before the first class session, you will need to decide when and where this course will be offered. Record this information on the syllabus in the box labeled: “Course Information.” You may also want to include your contact information in this box. The schedule incorporated in the syllabus does not have assigned dates. Please write the intended dates for each lesson in the corresponding box. Once you have completed filling out the syllabus, photocopy it so that you may distribute one copy to each student enrolled in the course. The *Student’s Workbook* does not include a syllabus, so your students will not have a syllabus until you distribute one. Photocopying the syllabus is the only photocopying that is required of you by this curriculum.

During the first lesson, we recommend the following outline to structure your time:

- ▷ **Welcome / Prayer (5 min):** Greet the students as they arrive. Open the lesson by exalting God in prayer.
- ▷ **Personal Introductions (25 min):** Ask each student in the room to introduce themselves briefly by answering the following questions (and answer these questions yourself): What is your name? Can you tell the class a little about yourself? Why are you enrolled in this course and what are you hoping to gain from it?
- ▷ **Syllabus Review (10 min):** Distribute your customized course syllabus and then guide the class through it, reading each item and answering any questions that the students might have.
- ▷ **Break (5 min)**
- ▷ **Lesson 1—Jesus Bible: An Overview (~60 min):** Guide the class through Lesson 1. When you come to a question in the lesson, allow a few minutes for the students to answer each question, and then pause to discuss their answers. Lesson 1 is the only lesson you will take your students through without their prior preparation. For all subsequent lessons, students will work through the lesson on their own before coming to class. To prepare yourself for this lesson, you should attempt to answer the questions yourself before consulting the suggested answers in the *Instructor’s Guide*. Reading *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About* Chapter 1, as

well as *Dominion and Dynasty* pages 15–43 is also strongly recommended for preparation (*if you only have time to read one of these, read the first chapter of What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About*). Be sure to engage your students during this lesson, especially because the information presented will be new to them!

- ▶ **Overview of the Next Lesson / Closing (5 min):** Encourage the students to purchase the required textbooks if they don't have them already. Ensure that they understand what is required of them in preparation for the next class session. Then thank them for coming to the class and dismiss in prayer.

Subsequent Lessons

As the instructor, you will be expected to do all the preparation for each lesson that is required of the students and more. We strongly recommend that you obtain a *Student's Workbook* and attempt to complete the homework on your own before consulting this *Instructor's Guide*. The *Instructor's Guide* provides our suggested answers. Some questions in this curriculum are open-ended and could be answered in different ways. You may find that the answers contained in this manual may not be the clearest or most accurate answers possible. Therefore, we encourage you to improve upon our answers if you can. It is essential to understand that **this *Instructor's Guide* is meant to be a resource; the real authority is God's Word.**

Furthermore, we have deliberately omitted lesson outlines for Lessons 2-12. Our recommendation is to open the class in prayer. After that feel free to structure the class however you think it will be most helpful. You may begin by reading (or having a student read) one of the significant passages found in that week's lesson, or a text that stuck out to you in preparation for the class. Each lesson includes a "Bible Study" section designed to dig a little deeper into one of the more significant texts of each book. You may utilize this passage to discuss in class and discuss how it fits into the larger story of redemptive history. Or you may simply proceed through each day's study. The Discussion Questions at the end of each lesson are also designed for class use. You may discuss these at any point throughout the lesson. As an integrative assignment, students will be required to write a summary of that week's book of the Bible (with the exception of Lessons 2 and 3). Leave time to discuss the integrative assignment at the end of class (see recommendations for this in the Teaching Notes for Lesson 4). We consider it unnecessary to lecture through the material the students will have read in the various textbooks—discussing student questions on the reading should adequately cover the material. You will notice that **the material in each**

lesson should provide you with much more material than you can cover in two hours of thoughtful interaction. This is not a mistake in design and you should not feel obligated to provide the students with answers for every question. Rather, as the instructor, your responsibility should be to focus on areas where students have questions or interest.

You will also notice that the *Instructor's Guide* has material that is not included in the *Student's Workbook* in the form of Teaching Notes at the beginning of the lesson and throughout the course, in the side margins. Consult these notes after thoroughly reviewing the lesson.

It is our conviction that the best teachers foster an environment in the classroom which engages students. Adults learn by solving problems or by working through things that provoke curiosity or concern. Therefore, we discourage you from lecturing for the entire lesson. Although an instructor will constantly shape conversation, clarifying and correcting as needed, they will probably not talk for the majority of the lesson. This curriculum is meant to facilitate an investigation into biblical truth—an investigation that is shared by the instructor and the students. Therefore, we encourage you to adopt the posture of a “fellow-learner” who invites participation from everyone in the class.

Teaching Style

It might surprise you how eager adults can be to share what they have learned in preparing for each lesson. Therefore, you should invite participation by asking your students to share their discoveries. Here are some of our “tips” on facilitating discussion that is engaging and helpful:

- Don't be uncomfortable with silence initially. Once the first student shares their response, others will be likely to join in. If you cut the silence short by prompting the students, they are more likely to wait for you to prompt them every time.
- Affirm answers whenever possible and draw out the students by asking for clarification. Your aim is to make them feel comfortable sharing their ideas and learning, so be extremely hesitant to “shut down” a student's contribution or “trump” it with your own. This does not mean, however, that you shouldn't correct false ideas—just do it in a spirit of gentleness and love.
- Don't allow a single student or several students to dominate the discussion. Involve everyone and intentionally invite participation from those who are more reserved or hesitant.

- ▷ Labor to show the significance of their study. Emphasize the things that the students could not have learned without doing the homework.
- ▷ Avoid talking too much. The instructor should not monopolize the discussion, but rather guide and shape it. If the instructor does the majority of the talking, the students will be less likely to interact and engage, and will therefore not learn as much. Avoid constantly adding the “definitive last word.”
- ▷ The instructor should feel the freedom to linger on a topic or question if the group demonstrates interest. The instructor should also pursue digressions that are helpful and at least somewhat relevant. The instructor, however, *should* attempt to cover the material. So avoid the extreme of constantly wandering off topic, but also avoid the extreme of limiting the conversation in a way that squelches curiosity or learning.
- ▷ The instructor’s passion, or lack of it, is infectious. Therefore, if you demonstrate little enthusiasm for the material, it is almost inevitable that your students will likewise be bored. But if you have a genuine excitement for what you are studying, your class will be impacted positively. Therefore, it is our recommendation that, before you come to class, you spend adequate time working through the homework and praying so that you can overflow with genuine enthusiasm for the Bible and for God in class. This point cannot be stressed enough. Delight yourself in God and in his Word!

It may be necessary to again stress that **this curriculum is a resource**. As the instructor, you should feel the freedom to structure the class time and to discuss through the material in a way that promotes the maximum learning and enjoyment of your students. Lingering on certain questions, pursuing *helpful* digressions, examining relevant portions of Scripture, adding other supplemental material, and customizing the curriculum to fit your situation are all heartily approved.

Questions or Comments?

If you still have questions after reading this introduction and surveying the curriculum, you may contact Bethlehem College & Seminary at info@bcsmn.edu. We are also eager for your comments and suggestions! Thanks!



Old Testament Survey I

A Christ-Centered Approach to Studying Jesus' Bible

SYLLABUS

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Old Testament Survey I: A Christ-Centered Approach to Studying Jesus' Bible is intended to survey the message of the Old Testament, both at the individual book level and at the canonical level. That is, students will not only grasp the main message of each individual book of the Old Testament, but they will understand how that message contributes to the overall message of the Bible. Emphasis will be given to tracing the flow of redemptive history from the beginning of time until the inter-testamental period, showing how the entire Old Testament points to, prepares the way for, and is fulfilled by Jesus the Messiah. This will be accomplished by reading *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About* in its entirety and the majority of *Dominion and Dynasty*, as well as by first-hand study of some of the key biblical passages throughout the Old Testament.

OBJECTIVES

This course is designed to accomplish specific objectives. A student successfully completing this course should be able to:

- ▶ Articulate the significance of the Old Testament for Christians today.
- ▶ Explain the central message of each individual book of the Old Testament.
- ▶ Explain how each book contributes to the overall message of the Bible.
- ▶ Understand how key biblical passages from the Old Testament fit into the storyline of redemptive history. Every lesson will compel the student to read and meditate on the Word. Our desire is to encourage students to be Bereans (cf. Acts 17:11).
- ▶ Understand how the entire Old Testament points to, prepares the way for, and is fulfilled by Jesus the Messiah.
- ▶ Discuss and apply the biblical truth that is presented in the curriculum.
- ▶ Magnify the worth of God in a more meaningful and personal way by treasuring him in their heart above all else. We recognize that this, the ultimate objective of the course, is impossible apart from the grace of God in the working of the Holy Spirit, who exalts the risen Lord, Jesus Christ.

🔗 REQUIRED BOOKS (TEXTBOOKS)

- ▶ An English version of the Bible (all quotes in this curriculum will come from the *English Standard Version* [ESV] unless otherwise noted).
- ▶ Jason DeRouchie, ed., *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic & Professional, 2013). (abbreviated: WOTARCA)
- ▶ Stephen Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty: A Theology of the Hebrew Bible* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2003). (abbreviated: DD)

🔗 REQUIREMENTS

Students are expected to prepare for Lessons 2-12 by completing the lesson pages in a sequential order. Therefore, for each lesson a student should read the Introduction and the Lesson Objectives. Then the student should read the remainder of the lesson, answer the 20 questions contained therein, and complete all the required reading and the integrative assignment. The student may then review the discussion questions and record their own discussion question(s). Each lesson's workload has been divided into five daily assignments for the convenience of the student.

Though not required, a student may choose to read the book of the Bible that corresponds to each week's lesson. Another option is to read only the "Key Chapters for Bible Reading" that correspond to each week's lesson (~1-2 Chs./day). These may be found in Appendix A.

Students will pass this course if they attend at least 10 class sessions and complete all the assignments. Please contact the instructor with any problems or concerns.

🔗 SCHEDULE

Lesson	Date	Lesson Title
1		Jesus' Bible: An Overview
2		Getting the Big Picture
3		Genesis—Part 1
4		Genesis—Part 2
5		Exodus
6		Leviticus
7		Numbers
8		Deuteronomy
9		Joshua
10		Judges
11		1-2 Samuel
12		1-2 Kings

Jesus' Bible: An Overview

1

§ INTRODUCTION

For many Christians today the Old Testament gets overshadowed by the New Testament, which generally receives far greater attention from the pulpit and individual Bible reading. The result is that few people have a solid understanding of the Old Testament, its message, and its lasting value for Christians today. For many, the Old Testament consists of little more than a handful of familiar stories sprinkled among more obscure ones. Little connection is drawn between the two testaments, and, consequently, the crucial import of the Old Testament message is rarely appreciated when one reads the New Testament. Some believe that the most Christians can glean from the Old Testament is moral examples—some to be imitated and some to be avoided. And some would go so far as to say that the Old Testament has minimal value for the New Testament Christian.

But is this the correct way to view the Old Testament? After all, it does comprise a full 75 percent of our inspired Bible. Ought that much sacred text be dismissed or minimized so easily? The answer is a resounding “No,” and we will see why in this lesson. In addition to understanding the significance of the Old Testament for Christians today, we will also look at its structure and see how it contributes to the overall message of the Bible.

The extra-wide margin is here to allow room for extra notes, questions, etc. We have occasionally included additional information or reminders that we hope will be a help to you as you teach.

§ LESSON OBJECTIVES

After completing this lesson, the student should be able to

- ▷ articulate why the Old Testament is important for Christians today.
- ▷ understand the three-part structure of the Old Testament and its significance for the overall message of the Old Testament.



The purpose of this first lesson is to introduce the students to each other and to the course. The personal introductions suggested in the outline of the *Instructor's Introduction* are not frivolous. Rather, they should be a part of your deliberate effort to create an atmosphere in which student contributions to discussion are valued, respected, and engaged.

As the instructor, you are encouraged to read pages 15–43 of *Dominion and Dynasty*. Students will not be required to read this section, but it may help to prepare you for the first lesson. It is important for the instructor to have a firm grasp of the issues presented in both books to facilitate and supplement discussion during the class periods. We would also encourage you to read some of the additional resources for further preparation.

You may work through the material however you desire. It is not recommended merely to lecture through the material. Try to engage your students by discussing the questions presented, as well as any other questions that may have risen while you prepared for the lesson.

If you've worked through this first lesson in the *Student's Workbook*, you will have noticed that there are a number of blank spaces in the boxes containing quotes from the reading. What appears as a blank space in the *Student's Workbook* appears in this *Instructor's Guide* as an underlined word. Therefore, make sure to provide your students with the correct word to fill in the blank. Once the students have filled in all the blank spaces in each box, take a minute to discuss the quote. These fill-in-the-blank quotes will be found through each lesson.



JESUS ONLY HAD THE OLD TESTAMENT

The fact that Jesus never read books like Romans, Corinthians, or Revelation may come as a surprise. In fact, he never preached from the New Testament at all. Neither did Paul, Peter, or any of the other New Testament authors. In all their studying, preaching, and writing their only source of inspired text was what we now call the Old Testament. This means that all the passages in the New Testament that speak about the importance of God's Word for the Christian were referring to the Old Testament when they were penned. Obviously, once the New Testament was completed these verses applied to the whole canon of Scripture, but it should still serve to increase our view of the value of the Old Testament for Christians in the church age.

Consider these verses:

Romans 15:4

⁴ For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

2 Timothy 3:15–17

¹⁵ And how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

¹⁶ All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

2 Timothy 4:2–4

² Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. ³ For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, ⁴ and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.

1. What are some ways you could use the Old Testament to provide hope, to prove, to correct, or to train others in righteousness?

· **ANSWER.** *Answers will vary. The Old Testament is filled with promises of a restored kingdom where God's Son will rule in perfect righteousness and justice. These promises are still valid and ought to provide hope for Christians who live in a world that is broken by sin. (This is one possible answer).*

For Christians in the first century, the Old Testament *was* their Bible! Jesus identified the Old Testament as the Word of God (Mark 7:13) and considered it to be authoritative (Matt. 12:1–3).

2. Fill in the blanks as the instructor reads this quote:

“Jesus was convinced that what is now the first three-fourths of our Christian Bible ‘cannot be broken’ (John 10:35), would be completely fulfilled (Matt. 5:17–18; Luke 24:44), bore witness about him (Luke 24:27, 46; John 5:39, 46), and called for repentance and forgiveness of sins to be proclaimed in his name to all the nations (Luke 24:47). All this Jesus summarized as ‘the good news of the kingdom of God’ (Luke 4:43; cf. Acts 1:3)” (WOTARCA, 2).¹

The underlined words in this quotation are left blank in the Student Workbook. We suggest that the instructor read the quote aloud to allow students to check their work.

It is clear that Jesus and the New Testament authors had a high regard for the Old Testament, but *why* was this case?

THE OLD TESTAMENT SPEAKS ABOUT JESUS AND HIS KINGDOM

The reason the Old Testament is so important is because ultimately it speaks about Jesus and his kingdom. Some people would argue that this is not the case. The Old Testament is concerned with Yahweh and his dealings with the Jewish people, while the New Testament is concerned with Jesus and his dealings with Christians. But this thinking minimizes the unity of Scripture and places a false dichotomy between the God of the Old Testament and the God of the New Testament, as if they had a different mission in mind. In reality, there is only one God in all of the Bible, and his primary concern is to display his glory by establishing his kingdom among his one people. This message is intricately woven throughout *both* Testaments.

¹ Jason DeRouchie, ed., *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic & Professional, 2013). Used by permission. No duplication or distributed is permitted without written permission of the publisher.

How do we know the Old Testament speaks about Jesus and his kingdom?
Because Jesus himself tells us:

Luke 24:25–27

²⁵ And he said to them, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶ Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?” ²⁷ And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

Luke 24:44–47

⁴⁴ Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” ⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, ⁴⁶ and said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, ⁴⁷ and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.

3. What do these verses reveal about the Old Testament’s teaching on the Messiah (Christ) and his work?

· **ANSWER.** *The Messiah would die and be resurrected, and repentance and forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in his name to all nations.*

The Messiah’s mission included a brutal death, resurrection on the third day, and proclamation of salvation through him, not just to the Jews, but to all nations. After his resurrection Jesus teaches his disciples that all of this was taught in the Old Testament. Luke, in writing the sequel to his gospel², sheds light on what this mission would accomplish. He says it would establish the kingdom of God (Acts 1:1–5; cf. Luke 24:44–49). In other words, what is called the Messiah and mission in Luke 24 is called “kingdom of God” in Acts 1:3. This was the core message of Jesus’ teaching (cf. Matt. 4:17, 23; 9:35).

Matthew 4:17

¹⁷ From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

² Luke wrote both the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts (Luke 1:1–4; Acts 1:1). They are best read together because Acts continues the story begun in the gospel.

The book of Acts reveals that Paul's ministry is simply an extension of Jesus' work:

Acts 26:22–23

²² To this day I have had the help that comes from God, and so I stand here testifying both to small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses said would come to pass: ²³ that the Christ must suffer and that, by being the first to rise from the dead, he would proclaim light both to our people and to the Gentiles.

Acts 28:23

²³ When they had appointed a day for him, they came to him at his lodging in greater numbers. From morning till evening he expounded to them, testifying to the kingdom of God and trying to convince them about Jesus both from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets.

Acts 28:30–31

³⁰ He lived there two whole years at his own expense, and welcomed all who came to him, ³¹ proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance.

Paul was “testifying to the kingdom of God and trying to convince them about Jesus both from the Law of Moses and from the Psalms.” Earlier, we saw Jesus use “Moses and all the Prophets” to interpret to the men on the road to Emmaus “in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.” And to his disciples Jesus said, “Everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” Clearly the Old Testament spoke about Jesus and his kingdom.

4. Have you ever considered that you could learn about Jesus from the Old Testament? Record any thoughts or reactions you may have in hearing this.

· ANSWER. *Answers will vary*

If you were to search the Bible for the phrases “kingdom of God” or “kingdom of heaven,” the results might surprise you. “Kingdom of God” shows up 67 times in the New Testament and “kingdom of heaven” occurs 32 times. Neither phrase occurs in the Old Testament—not even once! However, the *concept* of God’s kingdom is found on nearly every page. And with all the teaching on the kingdom in the New Testament, we must assume that Jesus’ audience understood what he meant by the “kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 4:17; cf. 3:2). So how did the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms foretell the kingdom of God? We will see how the Old Testament develops this theme, but for now, it is sufficient to know that it is there and that it provides the background for Jesus’ teaching on the subject.

In summary, the New Testament is concerned primarily with the Messiah and his mission, which is intimately linked with repentance and forgiveness of sins among all nations. The New Testament describes this as the kingdom of God. The Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms/Writings all foretold that this kingdom would come and that the Messiah would rule over it. Now let’s consider this three-part division of the Old Testament that the New Testament authors often speak of.

THE STRUCTURE OF JESUS’ BIBLE

One of the questions that must be answered before considering the structure of Jesus’ Bible is whether or not there is unity within the Old Testament? At first glance, the Old Testament seems to be a hodgepodge of stories that don’t coincide. Indeed, many people’s knowledge of the Old Testament is limited to the stories they learned from Sunday School. But if you string them all together is there a big picture?

Although the Hebrew Bible is comprised of numerous genres written over a period of one thousand years by many different authors, there is remarkable unity in its overall message. Dempster states, “It is certain that the Hebrew Bible, despite being comprised of many texts, is not for that reason precluded from being a Text” (*DD*, 21). Or you could say, all of the hundreds of individual stories we read harmonize in such a way that they tell one big Story—the story of God’s plan to glorify himself by establishing his kingdom through a covenant relationship with his people. As with any good story, there needs to be certain elements: an introduction, action, conflict, climax, resolution, and a conclusion. In short, there needs to be a structured plot.

5. Before beginning today's lesson, would you have described the Bible as a *book* or as an *anthology* (collection) of literature that is not intended to be read in any order? Has your opinion changed?

· **ANSWER.** *Answers will vary. Although in some ways the Bible can be seen as an anthology, we would argue that it should be read as a book because it tells one overall story. While you can read different parts of it at different times, it is important to know the overall story and to read it this way at times.*

Our English Bibles are comprised of two testaments—the Old and the New—with a total of 66 books. Thirty-nine of these make up the Old Testament and they are arranged chronologically and by genre (following the Greco-Roman tendency to arrange literary collections this way). The sequence is Law, History, Poetry and Wisdom, and Prophecy. However, when Jesus was teaching about himself from the Old Testament, he did not say, “...Everything written about me in the Law, History, Poetry and Wisdom, and Prophecy.” Rather, he said, “...Everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms” (Luke 24:44). This is because the Jewish Bible³ used by Jesus and the apostles was apparently arranged in a different order than our Christian Old Testaments.

While the Jewish Bible contains the same 39 books as our Christian Old Testament, they are structured differently and grouped into three main divisions: The Law (*tôrâh*), the Prophets (*něbî'im*), and the Writings (*kětûbîm*). Sometimes the third division—the Writings—may be referred to as “the Psalms” because Psalms is the first major book in the Writings. Ancient Jewish literature confirms this three-fold structure which appears to be the oldest arrangement of the Hebrew Scriptures. The Hebrew Bible is often referred to as the Tanakh, an acronym derived from the first Hebrew letter of each of the three major divisions:

Tôrâh (Law)

Něbî'im (Prophets)

Kětûbîm (Writings)

³ The term “Jewish Bible” is simply a reference to the Hebrew Old Testament. It is called the “Jewish Bible” to distinguish the ordering from the Christian (i.e., English) Old Testament, though their content is the same.

ENGLISH OLD TESTAMENT

JESUS' BIBLE

<p>LAW</p>	<p>Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy</p>	<p>LAW (<i>tôrah</i>)</p>	<p>Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy</p>
<p>HISTORY</p>	<p>Joshua Judges Ruth 1 Samuel 2 Samuel 1 Kings 2 Kings 1 Chronicles 2 Chronicles Ezra Nehemiah Esther</p>	<p>PROPHETS (<i>něbí'im</i>)</p> <p>FORMER</p> <p>LATTER</p>	<p>Joshua Judges Samuel Kings</p> <p>Jeremiah Ezekiel Isaiah</p> <p>Hosea Joel Amos Obadiah Jonah Micah Nahum Habakkuk Zephaniah Haggai Zechariah Malachi</p> <p>THE TWELVE</p>
<p>POETRY & WISDOM</p>	<p>Job Psalms Proverbs Ecclesiastes Song of Songs</p>	<p>FORMER</p>	<p>Ruth Psalms Job Proverbs Ecclesiastes Song of Songs Lamentations</p>
<p>PROPHETS</p> <p>MAJOR</p> <p>MINOR</p>	<p>Isaiah Jeremiah Lamentations Ezekiel Daniel</p> <p>Hosea Joel Amos Obadiah Jonah Micah Nahum Habakkuk Zephaniah Haggai Zechariah Malachi</p>	<p>WRITINGS (<i>kětúbim</i>)</p> <p>FORMER</p> <p>LATTER</p>	<p>Daniel Esther Ezra-Nehemiah Chronicles</p>

6. Compare and contrast the two orderings of the Old Testament above. What differences do you notice? Count the number of books in each arrangement of the Old Testament (“The Twelve” are lumped into one book in the Hebrew Bible). How many are there? Why do you think there is there a difference?

- **ANSWER.** *The English Old Testament ends with the prophets while the Hebrew Bible places them in the middle of the Tanakh (This is the main difference. See WOTARCA, 12–15 [including footnotes] for other differences and their explanations). In the English Old Testament, there are 39 books. In the Hebrew Bible there are 24 books. While the number of books is different, the same content is present in both since many of the books in our English Bibles that are separate were originally written on one scroll (1–2 Samuel, 1–2 Kings, The Twelve, Ezra–Nehemiah, 1–2 Chronicles).*

Should the ordering of the Tanakh affect one’s interpretation? Some contend that it should not, since the order is not inspired and the original books were written on individual scrolls which precluded a fixed ordering. However, as has been stated, the Old Testament tells a Story, and when the Old Testament text was put into a *codex* (book form), the compilers necessarily had to choose an order. This process of identifying and ordering the books of the Bible is known as *canonization*. So was there intentionality in this process? The answer is “yes.”

To illustrate this point, in the story of The Lord of the Rings, each individual scene has its own purpose and message. However, when each scene is put together in its proper order, a bigger, grander story emerges. Further, if you rearranged the scenes, the story would change, and perhaps it would not make sense. The same is true of the Bible.

Just as reading the last quarter of Lord of the Rings (or watching the last quarter!) without reading what comes before it would not make much sense, so reading the New Testament without reading the Old Testament does not make much sense. And within the Old Testament itself, reading the whole sheds light on the individual parts. And the order of those parts matters.

7. According to what you have just read, why is it important to read the Bible in the proper order? Is this argument convincing? Why do you agree or disagree?

- **ANSWER.** *It is important because the Bible is comprised of many stories (or scenes) that tell one big story. If the scenes are rearranged, it may not make as much sense.*

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TANAKH'S STRUCTURE

So what significance is there to the ordering of Jesus' Bible? Let us briefly consider the storyline as it unfolds through the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings.

The Law

The story of the Old Testament has a definitive beginning, middle, and end. It begins in Genesis and ends with Chronicles, creating one overarching narrative that details the history of God's kingdom on Earth. Genesis reveals the creation of this kingdom as well as its fall and initial stages of restoration through the patriarchs. In Exodus, God redeems the descendants of Abraham from slavery, makes them into a nation, enters into a covenant relationship with them, and gives them the law to live by. Leviticus expounds this law, showing God's people their need to live holy lives in order for his presence to dwell among them, and then makes provision for that holiness through the sacrificial system. Deuteronomy is a retelling of Israel's history with an emphasis on heart obedience to the law, which was to govern the way they lived as they entered the Promised Land.

The Prophets

Next we come to the Former Prophets, where we see God's people conquering the Promised Land (Joshua). However, there was no king in Israel, and everyone did what was right in their own eyes (Judges). The judges God appointed were only a temporary fix, since God's people were always meant to be ruled by a King. The people sought a king (though not for the right reasons), and God granted their request through Saul and then David (Samuel). However, the book of Kings reveals that none of the human kings were the answer either, because they all failed to some degree. The Former Prophets close with the people in exile as a result of breaking Yahweh's covenant.

The chronological storyline pauses when we come to the Latter Prophets, which provide commentary explaining why Israel was experiencing what it was. Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Isaiah, and the Twelve all contain oracles from the prophets of God, condemning the people because of their sin, warning them of judgment, calling them to repentance, and offering hope through a new covenant and a new King who would establish justice and restore God's kingdom on Earth.

"The Twelve" refers to the Minor Prophets: Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.

The Writings

Then we come to the final division of the Tanakh: The Writings. The Former Writings give us insight into how God's people were responding to everything that had taken place. Ruth functions as a transition that shifts the focus from Israel's dark and dismal condition to a Redeemer who would come from the line of Judah. The Psalms express the people's emotions, while offering comfort in a Davidic King. Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Songs all provide insight into how to live a God-centered life in various contexts (suffering, parenting, marriage, etc.). The Former Writings conclude with Lamentations, which describes the people's attitude towards their exile and initial restoration. Regarding these two commentary sections (i.e., Latter Prophets and Former Writings) that break up the narrative history, Dempster helpfully points out, "It is here that a profound dialogue occurs, in which God addresses Israel in the first person through the voice of the prophets and Israel addresses God in the first person through the voices of the psalmists. This 'I-thou' pause provides important perspective on the Story—backward in retrospect and forward in prospect" (*DD*, 50).

The Latter Writings resume the storyline with Daniel who promises hope in a certain Son of Man who will end the world order of Babylon and establish a new kingdom—the kingdom of God. Esther shows God's sovereignty in preserving his people from destruction using unlikely means. The people are delivered from slavery once again, and the kingdom experiences tastes of restoration, though nothing like what the Prophets had foretold. Chronicles ends the Tanakh, interestingly with a command from King Cyrus for the people to "go up" into their own land. Thus the Tanakh ends with a foreshadowing of God's restored kingdom.

READING THE BIBLE AS LITERATURE

Reading the Bible as a story is important. The tendency in the church has been to drift toward rigorous study of small portions of text with the goal of "going deeper." This type of exegesis is valuable, but it is important to also continue to read the Bible as (inspired) literature and study the larger themes that are key to understanding the author's message.

8. Consider what Dempster says below, and fill in the blanks as the instructor reads this quote:

The underlined words in this quotation are left blank in the Student Workbook. We suggest that the instructor read the quote aloud to allow students to check their work.

“The inescapable fact is that the Bible is also God’s Word; that is, it is literature and must be first understood before its message can be heeded. In the words of Rabbi Ishmael, ‘The Torah uses language as human beings do.’ In other words, while the Bible may be God’s Word, it is not an esoteric ‘heavenly language’, but simply a message expressed in ordinary, human speech. Before the message can be obeyed, it must be first heard in the same way that ordinary speech is heard, with attention being paid to the rules of syntax, form and structure. It must be read and reread. Alter, a leading literary critic, makes a similar point:

Subsequent religious tradition has by and large encouraged us to take the Bible seriously rather than to enjoy it, but the paradoxical truth of the matter may well be that by learning to enjoy the biblical stories more fully as stories, we shall come to see what they mean to tell us about God, man and the perilously momentous realm of history” (DD, 25–26).

9. What advantages, if any, do you see to reading the Bible as literature? Does this downplay the fact that the Bible is also God’s divinely inspired Word? Explain why or why not.

- **ANSWER.** *Reading the Bible as a literary work that tells a story helps put all the little stories in their proper place. While the Bible is indeed God’s inspired Word, he used human beings who spoke human language to capture this Word in a way that makes sense in normal speech. Thus, reading the Bible as literature does not belittle its inspiration.*

We have seen why the Old Testament is important for Christians today, we have considered its three-part structure, and we have briefly overviewed the storyline of the Old Testament as it relates to this three-part structure. We will look closer at the storyline of the entire Bible in the next chapter, and then delve into Genesis in the following lessons.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- ▷ Stephen G. Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty: A Theology of the Hebrew Bible* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 15–43.
- ▷ Roger Beckwith, “The Canon of Scripture,” *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, edited by T. Desmond Alexander et al. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 27–34.
- ▷ “Overview of the Bible: A Survey of the History of Salvation,” *ESV Study Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 23–26.
- ▷ “The Canon of the Old Testament,” *ESV Study Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 2,577–2,579.
- ▷ “Reading the Bible as Literature,” *ESV Study Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 2,569–2,570.
- ▷ Tremper Longman and Raymond Dillard, *An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 13–37.

Getting the Big Picture

2

🔗 INTRODUCTION

In the previous lesson, we saw how the Old Testament is not merely a collection of independent texts, but a single *Text* that tells *a Story*. It is not just a group of books, but *a Book*. Though there are numerous stories in the Bible written by kings, prophets, shepherds, and priests over hundreds of years and in different lands, ultimately, the Bible tells one big Story. And only when this big Story is rightly understood will each of the little stories make sense. Or we could say it this way, only when we step back and see the whole forest will we rightly understand the individual trees and truly appreciate their uniqueness and purpose. Thus, before looking closer at each book of the Old Testament, we want to get an idea of the Story that ties each book together. We learned from Jesus and Paul that the Story of the Old Testament spoke of God's kingdom which would be established through Messiah Jesus. This kingdom included repentance and forgiveness of sins which would be proclaimed to all nations. Now let's consider *how* this would come about.

🔗 LESSON OBJECTIVES

After completing this lesson, the student should be able to

- ▷ understand the flow of redemptive history and how it displays God's glory.
- ▷ understand how the New Testament cannot be rightly understood without the Old Testament.

Total pages of reading for this week: 34



This lesson is important for laying a foundation for all that follows. The instructor may want to access some of the other resources listed in order to have a solid grasp of the storyline of Scripture.

Additional topic(s) to discuss:

Consider this question: If you were given only a magnifying glass to observe and describe Mount Rushmore, how accurate do you think your description would be? If you were given a wide-angled lens, how would your description change? How does this apply to how we read the Old Testament?

- **ANSWER.** *With a magnifying glass we would be able to see the worn surface of some rocks, small cracks and chips, etc., but our description would be skewed because we have no sense of proportion and cannot determine what the most prominent features are. With a wide-angled lens we would be able to see all four faces in their entirety, so our description would gain perspective, proportion, and accuracy. The same is true of the Bible. When we see the “big picture,” all the individual stories make more sense and are put in their proper place.*



Day 1

See teaching notes for an additional discussion-starter regarding understanding the Old Testament as a whole.

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY

In this lesson we want to understand the flow of redemptive history and how it displays God's glory. Biblical theology is helpful for this because "Biblical theology is principally concerned with the overall theological message of the whole Bible."⁴ It lets Scripture speak for itself on its own terms, without the systematic constructs the church has placed on the Bible (though these are helpful and have their place in Biblical study). In this way, the Bible can be read for what it is—a Book—which unfolds the story of God's redemptive plan as God reveals it piece by piece. This is called biblical revelation.

Different scholars have proposed various themes for the overall theological message of the Bible, and each one has its own nuance. Some argue that there is no central theme in Scripture, but as we have seen, the fact that the individual books of the Bible have been canonized into one Book with an intentional structure requires us to look for the overall message. Nonetheless, wisdom cautions us from being too dogmatic about such a theme because Scripture does not state one explicitly, and there is certainly value in approaching Scripture from various perspectives. That being said, we will consider two proposals throughout this lesson that shed light on the unity of Scripture and its overall message.

1. With your current understanding of the Bible, how would you summarize the overall theological message of the Bible?

• ANSWER. *Answers will vary*

Required Reading: *Dominion and Dynasty*, pages 45–49.

▷ stop at "The Middle of the Tanakh"

⁴ Brian Rosner, "Biblical Theology," in *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, edited by T. Desmond Alexander and Brian Rosner (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 3.

Dempster shows how the two bookends of the Tanakh (Genesis and Chronicles) tie the whole Old Testament together. Specifically, he points out the unique emphasis each book places on genealogies and geography.

Fill in the blanks from the reading:

“A key purpose of genealogies in some contexts is to show a divine purpose that moves history to a specific goal” (DD, 47).

The underlined words in this quotation are left blank in the Student Workbook. We suggest that the instructor read the quote aloud to allow students to check their work.

Genesis uses genealogies to move from Adam to the patriarchs, whose lives are then highlighted throughout the rest of the book. Genesis ends with a prophetic declaration that a descendant from the tribe of Judah would rule over the nations with a scepter and would preside over a bountiful land (Gen. 49:8–12). Chronicles uses genealogies to advance from Adam to David, a descendant from the tribe of Judah, whose reign foreshadowed a greater David who would sit on the throne of God’s kingdom and rule over the nations forever. Everything between Genesis and Chronicles serves to bridge this gap.

Genesis 49:10

¹⁰ The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet, until tribute comes to him; and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples.

1 Chronicles 17:7–14

⁷ Now, therefore, thus shall you say to my servant David, “Thus says Yahweh of hosts, ‘I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, to be prince over my people Israel....’ ⁸ And I will make for you a name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. ⁹ And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them....’ ¹⁰ Moreover, I declare to you that Yahweh will build you a house. ¹¹ ... I will raise up your offspring after you, one of your own sons, and I will establish his kingdom. ¹² He shall build a house for me, and I will establish his throne forever. ¹³ I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. I will not take my steadfast love from him, as I took it from him who was before you, ¹⁴ but I will confirm him in my house and in my kingdom forever, and his throne shall be established forever.”

Further, both books emphasize the importance of land. Throughout the Old Testament, God’s people are constantly entering and being exiled from the good

land God had prepared for them in Genesis 1 and 2. Specifically, Babel/Babylon is a common place of exile, both for God's first people (Gen. 3:23–24; 11:2, 9, 31) and for the nation of Israel (2 Kings 24–25). But despite the frequent exiles, there is always a great anticipation for God's people to dwell in God's land. Notice the theme of returning to the land in the final verse of both Genesis and Chronicles:

Genesis 50:24

²⁴ *And Joseph said to his brothers, "I am about to die, but God will visit (pāqad) you and bring you up out ('ālâ) of this land to the land that he swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob."*

2 Chronicles 36:23

²³ *Thus says Cyrus king of Persia, "Yahweh, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has charged (pāqad) me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever is among you of all his people, may Yahweh his God be with him. Let him go up ('ālâ)."*

2. Identify what Dempster argues are two of the most important themes in the main storyline of Scripture? (DD, 49)

· ANSWER. *Dominion and dynasty*

3. Through what will these themes be realized? Select the correct answer.

- a) the Mosaic covenant
- b) the Davidic house
- c) the crucifixion of Christ
- d) the obedience of God's people

Required Reading: *Dominion and Dynasty*, pages 49–51.

The middle of the Tanakh contains poems, laws, genealogies, blueprints, stories, visions, and prophecies, and yet they all harmonize to tell the big Story of redemption. It is interesting that God's redemptive plan takes so long to unfold. Ultimately, it won't be until the New Testament that all the pieces will fit together to form a beautiful Story. Nevertheless, throughout Israel's sinful history we see God's favor and redemptive actions towards his people (especially the Davidic line) time and time again.

As noted in the previous lesson, the book of Kings brings a pause to the narrative storyline, which is followed by a lengthy section of commentary (Jeremiah–Lamentations). The passage below concludes the Former Prophets, as God’s people are outside of their own land in slavery to a pagan nation.

2 Kings 25:27–30

²⁷ And in the thirty-seventh year of the exile of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, Evil-Merodach king of Babylon, in the year that he began to reign, graciously freed Jehoiachin king of Judah from prison. ²⁸ And he spoke kindly to him and gave him a seat above the seats of the kings who were with him in Babylon. ²⁹ So Jehoiachin put off his prison garments. And every day of his life he dined regularly at the king’s table, ³⁰ and for his allowance, a regular allowance was given him by the king, according to his daily needs, as long as he lived.

Jehoiachin, a descendant of David, was still the king of Judah at this time, though he was subject to the Babylonians. Notice the favor he is shown even while in exile. This was due to God’s promises to the Davidic line.

4. From a literary perspective, how is this passage strategically placed in the storyline of the Old Testament? (Consider where it lies in the overall structure of the Tanakh)

· **ANSWER.** *Though Israel’s situation seemed bleak (in exile), the fact that God showed favor to the Davidic king (Jehoiachin) lets the reader know that the story is not finished yet. The fulfillment of God’s promises to David are being foreshadowed at this seam in the Tanakh. The storyline will continue with the book of Daniel after the commentary section (Latter Prophets and Former Writings).*

Day 2

A HELPFUL APPROACH TO THE STORYLINE OF SCRIPTURE

In tandem with reading DeRouchie’s approach to the Story of the Bible, we will consider a similar, though slightly nuanced, approach, which hopefully will prove helpful in remembering the different stages of redemptive history. Both approaches highlight the kingdom of God as the central theme throughout Scripture.

Required Reading: *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About*, pages 1–7.

DeRouchie uses the acronym K-I-N-G-D-O-M to provide a framework for the story of redemptive history as it unfolds in Scripture.

5. Fill out the acronym and then draw lines to connect each historical stage with the biblical events contained therein (*WOTARCA*, 4):

<u>K ickoff & Rebellion [4]</u>	1) Exodus, Sinai, & Wilderness
<u>I nstrument of Blessing [5]</u>	2) Christ’s Return & Kingdom Consummation
<u>N ation Redeemed & Commissioned [1]</u>	3) Conquest & Kingdoms (United & Divided)
<u>G overnment in the Land [3]</u>	4) Creation, Fall, & Flood
<u>D ispersions & Return [7]</u>	5) Patriarchs
<u>O verlap of the Ages [6]</u>	6) Christ’s Work & the Church Age
<u>M ission Accomplished [2]</u>	7) Exile & Initial Restoration

The biblical story is structured around five covenants that God makes with his people throughout their history. Why is this important? Because God designed his kingdom to be upheld through a covenant relationship with his people. A covenant “conveys the idea of a solemn commitment, guaranteeing promises or obligations undertaken by one or both covenanting parties.”⁵ The promises often include blessings for obedience and curses/punishments for disobedience, while the obligations often involve obedience from the lesser party to the greater.

In redemptive history, God’s kingdom always comes about in the context of a relationship—that is, a covenant. Thus, the Bible is ‘covenantal revelation.’ The

⁵ P. R. Williamson, “Covenant,” in *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, 420.

first four⁶ covenants in the Bible are found in the Old Testament, while the last covenant, the New Covenant, is the focus of the New Testament. As DeRouchie notes, “Each of the five covenants culminates in the person and work of Messiah Jesus” (WOTARCA, 6).⁷ This is one of the reasons Jesus could say, “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them” (Matt. 5:17).

Fill in the blanks from the reading:

- “In fulfillment of the Adamic/Noah Covenant, Jesus is the Son of Man, last Adam, and image of God (Mark 10:45; 14:62; 1 Cor. 15:45; 2 Cor. 4:4).
- In fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant, Jesus is the offspring of Abraham and agent of universal blessing (Gen. 22:17b–18; Acts 3:25–26; Gal. 3:16).
- In fulfillment of the Mosaic (Old) Covenant, Jesus represents Israel and stands as God’s Son, Yahweh’s Servant, the one who fulfilled the laws demands, and the substance of all covenant shadows (Exod. 4:22–23; Isa. 49:3, 5–6; Matt. 3:17; Acts 3:25–26; Rom. 5:19; Col. 2:17; Heb. 9:9–12; 10:1).
- In fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant, Jesus is the King of the Jews and Son of David (Matt. 1:1; 2:2; 21:9; Luke 1:32–33).
- In fulfillment of the New Covenant promises, Jesus is the prophet like Moses who was to come and the only true mediator between God and man (Deut. 18:15, 18; Luke 7:16; 22:20; Acts 3:22–26; 7:37; 1 Tim. 2:5; Heb. 8:6; 9:15; 12:24)” (WOTARCA, 7).⁷

The underlined words in this quotation are left blank in the Student Workbook. We suggest that the instructor read the quote aloud to allow students to check their work.

6. How might knowing that God’s kingdom will come about in the context of a loving relationship with the King influence how one evangelizes unbelievers?

- **ANSWER.** Answers will vary. God’s kingdom will only spread as people enter into a covenant relationship with him. Presenting the gospel in such a way that people know it’s about a relationship, and not merely following rules, being religious, “cleaning up one’s act,” etc., is crucial.

⁶ Five if you split up the Adamic and Noah covenants.

⁷ Jason DeRouchie, ed., *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic & Professional, 2013). Used by permission. No duplication or distributed is permitted without written permission of the publisher.

THE PATTERN OF THE KINGDOM

We've seen that God's kingdom comes about through a covenant relationship, but what does his kingdom look like? Graeme Goldsworthy succinctly defines the kingdom of God: "*The Essence of the kingdom of God is God's people in God's place under God's rule.*"⁸ This theme runs from Genesis 1 through Revelation 22. Though the kingdom looks different throughout the story, three elements are always present: *God, his people, and a place*. One could say it forms a 'covenant triangle.' When all three are present and functioning the way God intended, then his kingdom is established. This covenant relationship—with all its ups and downs—forms the backbone that holds the whole story together.⁹

Vaughan Roberts has helpfully synthesized Goldsworthy's work and put it into a memorable paradigm, which we will consider throughout this lesson. The eight stages he identifies are: 1) The Pattern of the Kingdom; 2) The Perished Kingdom; 3) The Promised Kingdom; 4) The Partial Kingdom; 5) The Prophesied Kingdom; 6) The Present Kingdom; 7) The Proclaimed Kingdom; and 8) The Perfected Kingdom. The portion of Scripture that DeRouchie labels "Kickoff & Rebellion" (i.e., Genesis 1–11), Roberts divides into two stages: "The Pattern of the Kingdom" (Genesis 1–2) and "The Perished Kingdom" (Genesis 3–11).

Read Roberts' summary of the *Pattern of the Kingdom*:¹⁰

"In the Garden of Eden we see the world as God designed it to be. God's people, Adam and Eve, live in God's place, the garden, under his rule as they submit to his word. And to be under God's rule in the Bible is always to enjoy his blessing; it is the best way to live. God's original creation shows us a model of his kingdom as it was meant to be."

7. What does Roberts say will always happen to God's people when they submit to his rule?

· **ANSWER.** *They will enjoy his blessing!*

8 Graeme Goldsworthy, *Preaching the Whole Bible as Christian Scripture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000), 87.

9 Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom Through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 21.

10 Vaughan Roberts, *God's Big Picture: Tracing the Storyline of the Bible* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 23. Used by permission.

8. Identify the three elements of the covenant triangle within *The Pattern of the Kingdom* (i.e., Adamic covenant).

- ANSWER. God's People: Adam and Eve
- ANSWER. God's Place: The Garden of Eden
- ANSWER. God's Rule: God's Word (i.e., "Be fruitful; multiply; fill the earth; subdue it; don't eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.")

THE PERISHED KINGDOM

Read Roberts' summary of *The Perished Kingdom*:¹¹

"Sadly, Adam and Eve think life would be better if they lived independently of God. The results are disastrous. They are no longer God's people. They turn away from him and he responds by turning away from them. They are no longer in God's place; he banishes them from the garden. And they are not under God's rule, so they do not enjoy his blessing. Instead, they face his curse and are under his judgment. The situation is very gloomy. But God, in his great love, is determined to restore his kingdom."

In Genesis 3, God's people break the covenant by rejecting his rule (Gen. 2:17; 3:6). Immediately they experience the curse that God promised would come if they rebelled against their King. Adam and Eve are expelled from the Garden of Eden. That is, God's people are kicked out of God's land because they did not submit to God's rule. The kingdom has been dismantled.

However, in the midst of the curse shines a ray of hope. God makes a promise to his people that a son of the woman would one day crush the serpent's head and reestablish God's kingdom on Earth. God says this to the serpent:

Genesis 3:15

¹⁵ I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.

¹¹ Roberts, *God's Big Picture*, 23.

9. If God's kingdom perished because God's people *broke* the covenant, how do you suppose the kingdom will be reestablished? Use Genesis 3:15 to support your answer.

- **ANSWER.** *God's people must keep God's covenant perfectly in order for his kingdom to be reestablished. Genesis 3:15 gives us a hint that one of the woman's male descendants would be the one to accomplish this by destroying evil and establish shalom (peace).*

From Genesis 4–11, the story only grows dimmer. God's people constantly reject his rule over them to the point that God wipes out all creation, save Noah and his family (Gen. 6–9). After the flood, he makes a covenant with Noah, though even this did not fix the cursed world, since Noah and his descendants were sinful as well and therefore could not keep the covenant. By Genesis 11, the people on Earth attempt to build a city to magnify their own name! God's kingdom has indeed perished.

Day 3

THE PROMISED KINGDOM

Required Reading: *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About*, page 8.

▷ stop at “Exodus, Sinai, & Wilderness (Nation Redeemed & Commissioned)”

Read Roberts’ summary of *The Promised Kingdom*:¹²

“God calls Abraham and makes some unconditional promises to him: through Abraham’s descendants he will re-establish his kingdom. They will be his people, living in his land and enjoying his blessing, and through them all peoples on earth will be blessed. That promise is the gospel. It is partially fulfilled in the history of Israel, but is only finally fulfilled through Jesus Christ.”

The genealogies interspersed throughout the gloomy narratives in Genesis 4–11 are used to draw the reader’s attention to Abram, the son of Terah (Gen. 11:26). God calls Terah and his family to move from Ur of the Chaldeans (i.e., Babylon) to the land of Canaan, and then promises Abram that through his offspring all the nations would experience blessing (12:2–3), which, as we have seen, is the result of submitting to God’s rule. But who could submit to God’s rule in such a way that *all* nations would experience blessing?

Abram’s offspring would also possess the land God promised (15:17–18). Further, kings would come from Abram who would rule over that land and obtain the obedience of the nations (17:6; 35:11; 49:8–10). These promises are all designed to restore creation to its Eden-like condition, and they would be fulfilled through the woman’s offspring. Thus, the Abrahamic promises ought to build anticipation and intensify the hunt for this offspring!

10. How is God’s promise to Eve (3:15) fleshed out through his promises to Abram (12:1–3)?

- **ANSWER.** *God promised Eve that one of her offspring would crush the serpent’s head, bringing an end to evil and reestablishing peace in the world. God’s promises to Abraham expounded this promise by specifying the inclusion of land, royal offspring, and universal blessing, all of which would culminate in a restored kingdom.*

¹² Roberts, *God’s Big Picture*, 23.

THE PARTIAL KINGDOM

Required Reading: *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About*, pages 8–9.

▷ stop at “Exile & Initial Restoration (Dispersion & Return)”

11. According to DeRouchie, what is the primary reason God acted for his people by redeeming them from Egypt and giving them his law? (WOTARCA, 8)

· **ANSWER.** *For the sake of his name and reputation and for the display of his holiness.*

Read Roberts’ summary of *The Partial Kingdom*:¹³

“The Bible records how God’s promises to Abraham are partially fulfilled in the history of Israel. Through the exodus from Egypt, God makes Abraham’s descendants his very own people. At Mount Sinai he gives them his law so that they might live under his rule and enjoy his blessing, as Adam and Eve had done before they sinned. The blessing is marked chiefly by God’s presence with his people in the tabernacle. Under Joshua they enter the land and, by the time of Kings David and Solomon, they enjoy peace and prosperity there. That was the high point of the history of Israel. They were God’s people in God’s place, the land of Canaan, under God’s rule and therefore enjoying his blessing. But the promises to Abraham had still not been completely fulfilled. The problem was sin, the continual disobedience of the people of Israel. That was soon to lead to the dismantling of the partial kingdom as Israel fell apart.”

As we will see throughout the story, God is always faithful to his word. That means that when he makes a promise, it will come true no matter what.

Exodus 2:23–25

²³ *During those many days the king of Egypt died, and the people of Israel groaned because of their slavery and cried out for help. Their cry for rescue from slavery came up to God.* ²⁴ *And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.* ²⁵ *God saw the people of Israel—and God knew.*

¹³ Roberts, *God’s Big Picture*, 23–24.

12. What was the reason God listened to the people of Israel while they were in slavery?

- **ANSWER.** *God had made a covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob that included dominion (land) and dynasty (royal offspring). Israel had neither at this point, so God would have to act on their behalf to be faithful to his word.*

Indeed, we see glimmers of the patriarchal promises coming true. “The people of Israel were fruitful and increased greatly; they multiplied and grew exceedingly strong, so that the land was filled with them” (Exod. 1:7; cf. Gen. 1:28). God redeems the people of Israel from slavery and brings them into the good land that he had promised to their forefathers. God gives Israel the law so that they would be blessed as they submitted to his rule. Notice God’s redemption precedes the giving of the law. It was God’s covenant that established the relationship, not the law. Nonetheless, if they keep the covenant stipulations they will be blessed (Lev. 26:1–13; Deut. 28:1–14), and if they break the covenant they will be cursed (Lev. 26:14–45; Deut. 28:15–68).

13. True/False: God gave Israel the law so that, through their laborious attempts to keep it, they would become his people.

After forty years of wandering in the wilderness, Israel finally enters the land God had promised to them. Under the leadership of Joshua, they conquer the land and establish a kingdom. However, now they are a kingdom without a king. And their repeated failure to follow the law highlighted their need for something—or someone—greater to rule over them in righteousness, someone to empower their obedience to God.

God gives his people a king, Saul, but he did not lead the people well and failed in his role as king. The second king was David, who ruled Israel the way God intended for his people to be governed—that is, under the authority of God’s word. Under David’s rule, Israel experienced many of the promises of the Abrahamic covenant. It was the climax of Israel’s history. Had God’s kingdom been completely restored?

Sadly, David was not the promised offspring either. His sin with Bathsheba (among other sins) proved he was not the answer to the world’s curse. The kingdom was divided into two nations, whose kings, for the most part, did not submit to God’s rule (1–2 Kings). Israel was therefore exiled from the land

because of their failure to keep the covenant. The kingdom that had been partially fulfilled was now wrecked again.

Required Reading: *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About*, pages 12–15.

- ▷ begin at “The Divine Author of the Old Testament Distinguished the Law, the Prophets, & the Writings”
- ▷ stop at “The Divine Author of the Old Testament Highlighted How the Old (Mosaic) Covenant Was Established, Enforced, & Enjoyed”
- ▷ This reading will be review from the previous lesson.

Day 4

THE PROPHESED KINGDOM

The Prophesied Kingdom is the period of time during Israel's exile. As was mentioned earlier, the Latter Prophets and Former Writings stand outside (or more specifically, *within*) the main storyline and they function as commentary on the main narrative. Thus, chronologically, the Latter Prophets take place during the events recorded in Daniel–Chronicles as well as the latter half of the book of Kings. The prophets are preaching to Israel and Judah during their downfall and exile.

Required Reading: *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About*, pages 9–10.

- ▷ begin at “Exile & Initial Restoration (Dispersion & Return)”
- ▷ stop at “Christ’s Work & the Church Age (Overlap of the Ages)”

The prophets were God’s messengers to his stiff-necked, law-ignoring, self-righteous people. They warned Israel that, if they continued to reject God’s rule, they would continue to experience his curse. On the other hand, if they repented, they would experience God’s blessing. The overall tone of the prophets is negative because God’s people could not seem to muster up the ability to obey him. Nor does it seem like they wanted to.

But God is always faithful to his word, and he had made a promise to the woman that evil would not win in the end, and he had made promises to Abraham that someone from his line would exercise dominion, have a dynasty, and bring blessing to the world. God would deliver Israel once again from their impossible situation.

Consider these verses:

Isaiah 48:9, 11

⁹ *For my name’s sake I defer my anger, for the sake of my praise I restrain it for you, that I may not cut you off...* ¹¹ *For my own sake, for my own sake, I do it, for how should my name be profaned? My glory I will not give to another.*

Ezekiel 36:22–23

²² Therefore say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord GOD: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations to which you came. ²³ And I will vindicate the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, and which you have profaned among them. And the nations will know that I am Yahweh, declares the Lord GOD, when through you I vindicate my holiness before their eyes.

Haggai 1:8

⁸ Go up to the hills and bring wood and build the house, that I may take pleasure in it and that I may be glorified, says Yahweh.

14. Underline all the reasons God gives for why he would act on behalf of his people Israel. Summarize your observations:

- ANSWER. Answers will vary. God would act for Israel for his own name's sake.

Daniel resumes the storyline of the Tanakh, shifting the focus from Israel's bleak situation to the hope of a future King who would finally restore the kingdom of God forever.

Daniel 2:44

⁴⁴ And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever.

Daniel 7:13–14

¹³ I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. ¹⁴ And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.

15. According to Daniel, who would be given all dominion and establish an everlasting kingdom?

· ANSWER. "One like a son of man."

Read Roberts' summary of *The Prophesied Kingdom*:¹⁴

"After the death of King Solomon civil war broke out and the kingdom of Israel split into two parts: Israel in the north and Judah in the south. Neither was strong. After 200 years of separate existence, the northern kingdom of Israel was destroyed by the Assyrians. The southern kingdom struggled on for another century, but then it too was conquered and its inhabitants were taken into exile in Babylon. During this depressing period in their history God spoke to the people of Israel and Judah through some prophets. He explained that they were being punished for their sin but still offered hope for the future. The prophets pointed forward to a time when God would act decisively through his King, the Messiah, to fulfill all his promises. The people of Judah must have thought that that time had come when they were allowed to return from exile, but God made it clear that the great time of salvation was still in the future. That is where the Old Testament ends: waiting for God's King to appear to introduce his kingdom."

16. According to Roberts, through whom would God act to fulfill all his promises?

· ANSWER. *His King, the Messiah.*

Required Reading: *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About*, pages 15–17.

- ▷ begin at "The Divine Author of the Old Testament Highlighted How the Old (Mosaic) Covenant Was Established, Enforced, & Enjoyed"
- ▷ stop at "Synthesis & Conclusion"

17. True/False: The Prophets are dominated by a positive thrust, giving voice to the faithful remnant that hoped in the consummation of God's kingdom.

¹⁴ Roberts, *God's Big Picture*, 24.

Day 5

THE PRESENT KINGDOM

The New Testament opens with these words: “The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham” (Matt. 1:1). Without an understanding of the Old Testament, this verse would seem insignificant. But because of the first three-fourths of the story, it is laden with theological significance. Immediately, Matthew links this new character Jesus Christ (i.e., Messiah) with the offspring of Abraham and the offspring of David. That is, the one through whom all the nations would be blessed, who would exercise dominion through royal authority, who would sit on the throne of David forever, and who would establish the kingdom of God, had finally come!

Read Roberts’ summary of *The Present Kingdom*:¹⁵

“Four hundred years passed after the completion of the Old Testament before Jesus began his public ministry with the words, ‘The time has come ... The kingdom of God is near’ (Mark 1:15). The waiting was over; God’s king had come to establish God’s kingdom. His life, teaching and miracles all proved that he was who he said he was: God himself in human form. He had the power to put everything right again, and he chose a very surprising way of doing it: by dying in weakness on a cross. It was by his death that Jesus dealt with the problem of sin and made it possible for human beings to come back into relationship with his Father. The resurrection proved the success of Jesus’ rescue mission on the cross and announced that there is hope for our world. Those who trust in Christ can look forward to eternal life with him.”

One can imagine why it was so difficult for the Jewish people to accept Jesus as their longed-for Messiah. If he was to sit on a throne, why was he born in a stable? If he was to subject Israel’s enemies under his feet, why did he not carry a sword? If he was to exercise dominion over all kingdoms, why was he crucified under the Roman government?

The Israelites in the Old Testament believed the “Day of Yahweh (the LORD)” would happen at a single point in time. That is, the Messiah would come, overthrow and judge Israel’s enemies, deliver Israel from bondage, establish a kingdom, and rule in righteousness, justice, and peace forever.

¹⁵ Roberts, *God’s Big Picture*, 24.

However, the New Testament expands the “Day of Yahweh” from a *point in time* to a *period of time*, a time that would take place between Christ’s first and second comings. In his divine plan, God decided that Jesus would come the first time to deal with sin, Israel’s *real* enemy, and he would do so in weakness as a suffering servant. He defeated sin and death at its own game by dying on the cross and then rising from the dead! This was the first necessary step to restoring the kingdom of God—removing the problem that caused the kingdom to perish in the first place.

Hebrews 9:26–28

²⁶ *But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.* ²⁷ *And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment,* ²⁸ *so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.*

18. According to Hebrews 9:26–28, why did Christ enter the world the first time? What will Christ do when he comes the second time?

- **ANSWER.** *Christ appeared the first time as a humble servant to deal with sin by offering himself as a sacrifice. He will appear a second time as a victorious king to save those who are eagerly waiting for him by establishing his kingdom forever.*

THE PROCLAIMED KINGDOM

Read Roberts’ summary of *The Proclaimed Kingdom*:¹⁶

“By his death and resurrection Jesus did all that was necessary to put everything right again and completely restore God’s kingdom. But he did not finish the job when he was first on earth. He ascended into heaven and made it clear that there were be a delay before he returned. The delay is to enable more people to hear about the good news of Christ so they can put their trust in him and be ready for him when he comes. We live during this period, which the Bible calls ‘the last days’. It began on the Day of Pentecost when God sent the Spirit to equip his church to tell the whole world about Christ.”

¹⁶ Roberts, *God’s Big Picture*, 25.

The period of redemptive history in which we live is often called “the overlap of the ages.” Biblical authors call it “the last days” (Joel 2:28–32 and Acts 2:16–17; 2 Tim. 3:1; Heb. 1:2; 2 Pet. 3:3). This is because God’s kingdom has *already* intruded into the world and has begun to grow (Matt. 13:24–33). Yet, God’s kingdom has *not yet* been fully consummated. God has ordained his kingdom to grow as his people, the Church, live as salt and light in the world (Matt. 5:13–16) and preach the gospel of the kingdom throughout the whole world (Acts 28:23; cf. Matt. 28:18–20). Pentecost issued the expansion of the church as God’s Word would be proclaimed from Jerusalem to all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth (Acts 1:8).

Required Reading: *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About*, pages 10–11.

- ▷ begin at “Christ’s Work & the Church Age (Overlap of the Ages)”
- ▷ stop at “Christ’s Return & Kingdom Consummation (Mission Accomplished)”

Matthew 28:18–20

¹⁸ *And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.”* ¹⁹ *Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,* ²⁰ *teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”*

19. Whose responsibility do you think it is to share the gospel of the kingdom with the whole world (i.e., pastors, missionaries, etc.)?

- **ANSWER.** *All Christians are disciples of Christ and have therefore been commanded by Jesus to make other disciples. This does not mean all Christians have to be “missionaries” (in the sense of going overseas), but they must be making disciples in whatever context God has placed them in.*

THE PERFECTED KINGDOM

Read Roberts' summary of *The Perfected Kingdom*:¹⁷

“One day Christ will return. There will be a great division. His enemies will be separated from his presence in hell, but his people will join him in a perfect new creation. Then at last the gospel promises will be completely fulfilled. The book of Revelation describes a fully restored kingdom: God’s people, Christians from all nations, in God’s place, the new creation (heaven), under God’s rule and therefore enjoying his blessing. And nothing can spoil this happy ending. It is no fairy story; they really will all live happily ever after.”

When Christ returns as the conquering King, he will restore the kingdom of God that was established in Genesis 1–2. Read these verses from Revelation:

Revelation 5:9–10

⁹ And they sang a new song, saying, “Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, ¹⁰ and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth.”

Revelation 11:15

¹⁵ Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever.”

Revelation 21:1–3

⁹ Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.”

¹⁷ Roberts, *God’s Big Picture*, 25.

20. Can you identify the three elements of the covenant triangle in *The Perfected Kingdom*?

· ANSWER.

A1. *God's People: Christians from every tribe and language and people and nation*

A2. *God's Place: The new heaven and new earth*

A3. *God's Rule: Jesus Christ will reign forever*

Required Reading: *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About*, pages 11–12.

- ▷ begin at “Christ’s Return & Kingdom Consummation (Mission Accomplished)”
- ▷ stop at “The Divine Author of the Old Testament Distinguished the Law, the Prophets, & the Writings”

Required Reading: *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About*, pages 17–20.

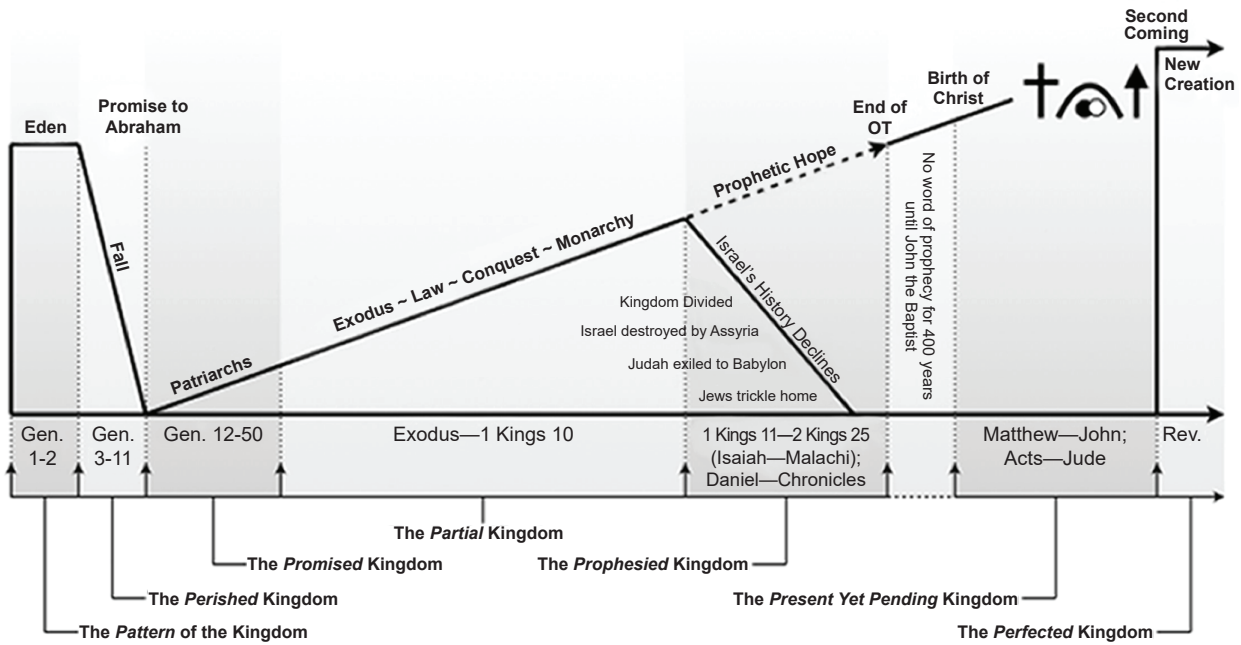
- ▷ begin at “Synthesis & Conclusion”

21. How does DeRouchie summarize the Bible’s message? (WOTARCA, 19)

· ANSWER. *God’s kingdom through covenant for his glory in Christ Jesus.*

Consider this diagram of the kingdom of God throughout redemptive history. This diagram collapses Roberts’ *The Present Kingdom* and *The Proclaimed Kingdom* into *The Present Yet Pending Kingdom* to reflect the already/not yet aspect of God’s kingdom on Earth. The y-axis represents the “fullness” of the kingdom, though this is not entirely accurate because God’s people went through countless cycles of rebellion and repentance that cannot be neatly displayed on a diagram. Nonetheless, it gives a visual representation of the general fullness of God’s kingdom throughout redemptive history.

Diagram of the Kingdom of God ¹⁸



¹⁸ This diagram is adapted from Vaughan Roberts' diagram in Roberts, *God's Big Picture*, 157.



§ INTEGRATIVE ASSIGNMENT

It is easy to forget that as God's church we are part of a larger story. Our salvation is the result of promises made to Eve, Abraham, and David that have yet to be completely fulfilled. This means that every day we wake up, we have a purpose for living, even among the mundane activities of life. Write down a few specific implications this has for your life (e.g., how you spend your time, what you pray for, how you view your job, what relationships you will invest in, etc.).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



Review the following questions in preparation for discussion. As you have worked through this lesson, record any lingering questions that you may have.

1. What is one new insight that you gleaned from this lesson, and how will it change the way you read your Bible?
2. Does Roberts' paradigm for the storyline of Scripture (i.e., "The Pattern of the Kingdom," the "Perished Kingdom," etc.) or DeRouchie's paradigm (i.e., "Kickoff and Rebellion," "Instrument of Blessing," etc.) help you more? Can you think of your own paradigm for understanding the storyline of Scripture?
3. Why is it important to have an understanding of the overall storyline of the Bible and be able to briefly communicate it to someone from memory?
4. Your own question(s):

§ ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

See Appendix B: Resources for Children for a list of similar resources designed for children.

- ▷ “God’s Plan of Salvation,” ESV Study Bible, (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 2,501–2,503.
- ▷ Vaughan Roberts, *God’s Big Picture: Tracing the Storyline of the Bible* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002).
- ▷ Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom Through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012).
- ▷ Graeme Goldsworthy, *Gospel and Kingdom* (Exeter: Paternoster, 1981).
- ▷ *Preaching the Whole Bible as Christian Scripture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000).
- ▷ Christopher Wright, *Knowing Jesus Through the Old Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992).

Genesis—Part 1

3

§ INTRODUCTION

We are now ready to plunge into the Tanakh! Genesis details the beginning of the story of redemption (indeed, the beginning of time). Genesis 1–11 covers the history of the world from creation until roughly 2000 B.C., a staggering amount of time in relatively few pages. Once we get to Genesis 12, however, it’s as if the narrator pushes the “slow motion” button, for the remaining 39 chapters of Genesis cover only four generations (Abraham through his great-grandchildren) a period of about 300 years.

Genesis 1–3 are extremely significant to understand, since these chapters form the introduction, not only to the Law and the Old Testament, but also to the entire Bible. Like any good introduction, these chapters introduce the main characters, the plot, the tension, and the background to the story. In fact, some theologians have suggested that every major theological theme in the Bible can find its roots in the first three chapters of Genesis! Whether this assertion is valid is up to the reader to determine. But either way, Genesis 1–3 are “indispensable for understanding the Bible” (*DD*, 58). For this reason, we are going to spend more time on these particular chapters than we will on most others. This lesson will cover Genesis 1–11, and the next lesson will cover Genesis 12–50.

§ LESSON OBJECTIVES

After completing this lesson, the student should be able to

- ▷ understand the significance of Genesis 1–3 for the rest of the Bible.
- ▷ answer the four main worldview questions according to Scripture.
- ▷ summarize *The Pattern of the Kingdom* and *The Perished Kingdom* (i.e., Genesis 1–11).

Total pages of reading for this week: 39



This lesson is quite dense, more so than any other. This means you will have to be selective in what you discuss during class time. That being said, Genesis 1–3 are perhaps the most foundational chapters in all the Bible, so be sure to cover the major topics addressed in the readings and lesson.

Day 4 ends with a thought that may raise questions (it is also listed as Discussion Question #3). It is the idea that a fallen world redeemed by Christ is more glorifying to God than merely an innocent world. This quote by John Piper may be helpful during this discussion:

“The ‘seventh’ point, the best-of-all-possible worlds, means that God governs the course of history, so that, in the long run, His glory will be more fully displayed and His people more fully satisfied than would have been the case in any other world. If we look only at the way things are now in the present era of this fallen world, this is not the best-of-all-possible worlds. But if we look at the whole course of history, from creation to redemption to eternity and beyond, and see the entirety of God’s plan, it is the best-of-all-possible plans and leads to the best-of-all-possible eternities. And therefore this universe (and the events that happen in it from creation into eternity, taken as a whole) is the best-of-all-possible-worlds.”

This quote comes from a blog post on the Desiring God website (<http://www.desiringgod.org/articles/what-does-piper-mean-when-he-says-hes-a-seven-point-calvinist>).

Here is another quote from N. D. Wilson that may shed light on the discussion:

“What is the best of all possible things? That which is infinite, always present and undecaying. That which is both many and one. That which is pure, ultimate, and yet humble. That which is spirit and yet personal. That which is just and yet merciful. Yahweh, God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.”

“What is the best of all possible art [worlds]? That which reveals, captures, and communicates as many facets of that Being as is possible in a finite frame.”

N. D. Wilson, *Notes From the Tilt-A-Whirl* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2009), 108.



Day 1

“IN THE BEGINNING...”

We will begin this lesson by reading the text and making some important observations.

§ BIBLE STUDY: Read Genesis 1:1–2:3 and answer the questions that follow:

Genesis 1:1–2:3

¹ *In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. ² The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.*

1

³ *And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. ⁴ And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. ⁵ God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.*

2

⁶ *And God said, “Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.” ⁷ And God made the expanse and separated the waters that were under the expanse from the waters that were above the expanse. And it was so. ⁸ And God called the expanse Heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.*

3

⁹ *And God said, “Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.” And it was so. ¹⁰ God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good.*

¹¹ *And God said, “Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind, on the earth.” And it was so. ¹² The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed according to their own kinds, and trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. ¹³ And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.*

¹⁴ And God said, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night. And let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and years, ¹⁵ and let them be lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light upon the earth.” And it was so. ¹⁶ And God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. ¹⁷ And God set them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth, ¹⁸ to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. ¹⁹ And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.

4

²⁰ And God said, “Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the heavens.” ²¹ So God created the great sea creatures and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarm, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. ²² And God blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.” ²³ And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

5

²⁴ And God said, “Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds—livestock and creeping things and beasts of the earth according to their kinds.” And it was so. ²⁵ And God made the beasts of the earth according to their kinds and the livestock according to their kinds, and everything that creeps on the ground according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.

²⁶ Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” ²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

²⁸ And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” ²⁹ And God said, “Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food. ³⁰ And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so. ³¹ And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

6

²¹ Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. ² And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. ³ So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.

7

Consider it this way: if you were reading a novel and a certain character appeared 32 times on the first page, you would surely think he is going to be important throughout the rest of the story!

1. Circle every time the word “God” appears. How many instances are there? What does this indicate about God’s role in the story?

· *ANSWER.* “God” occurs 35 times in Genesis 1:1–2:3. God is the main character, not just in Genesis, but in the whole Bible.

2. Underline every time the phrase “And God said…” appears, and then underline its corresponding “…and it was so” phrase. What does this tell us about the Word of God?

· *ANSWER.* God’s Word is powerful, and it will never fail (cf. Rom. 9:6). That is, everything God says will come about.

3. Write the numbers “1,” “2,” “3,” etc. in the space to the left of each day. Now consider the amount of space between each number. What do you notice about the sixth day? Notice how the introduction to the sixth day is significantly different than the previous five days of creation. What does God create on the sixth day, and how does the author use literary effects to highlight this particular day?

· *ANSWER.* The sixth day is given significantly more text than the previous five days. This is because God creates mankind on the sixth day. The author begins the sixth day with a different formula (“Let us make man in our image…”) which he did not do with any other day. From a literary standpoint, the author seems to be drawing attention to the creation of mankind amid the rest of God’s creation.

GOD AS CREATOR

God’s story begins with God as the Creator of the entire universe. In the beginning, God simply was there. There has never been a time when God did not exist, nor will there *ever* be a time when God does not exist—he is eternal (Isa. 57:15).

This eternal God has always existed in three persons: The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Forever, they have been loving and delighting in one other in a covenant relationship.¹⁹ This is the fundamental nature of God and it overflows into his creation.

¹⁹ Theologians call this covenant relationship that exists between the persons of the Godhead the “(eternal) covenant of redemption.” “In that covenant, before the world existed, the Father, the Son, and the Spirit already turn toward us, with a purpose to create, redeem, and gather a church for everlasting fellowship. As in all God’s external

While God the Father was the one taking the initiative to create, the Spirit was also present and involved in creation (Gen. 1:2). We learn later in Scripture that the divine, spoken word of God by which the universe was created was Jesus, the Son of God.

John 1:1–3

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made.

Colossians 1:16

¹⁶ For by him [Jesus] all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible.

When this eternal, triune God opens his mouth to speak, entire galaxies burst into existence. His word is powerful. The phrase “And God said . . . and it was so” shows up eight times in Genesis 1 (1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26). His word never fails! Everything he says comes to pass. The author wants us to get a sense of the magnitude and omnipotence of this Creator God.

GOD AS KING

As you read through the story, you quickly realize that God not only is the Creator of the Universe, but he is also the King of the Universe. Because God created everything, nothing is superior to him. Being the Creator necessarily implies that he is also the King. This is perhaps the most important thing to understand about God from Genesis 1–2. Why? For several reasons:

1. As King, God determines what is good and what is not good.

It does not take long to realize that everything God does is good (Gen. 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31)! “And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good” (1:31). However, we also see that God determines what is not good. It is not good for humans to dwell in isolation from one another. We were created to live in community, just like the triune Godhead (2:18). It is also not good to disobey the King, which brings us to the next point.

operations, both the eternal decree itself and its execution in history are accomplished from the Father, in the Son, through the Spirit” (Michael Horton, *The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology for Pilgrims on the Way* [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011], 309).

2. As King, God sets the rules.

Genesis 2:16–17

¹⁶ And Yahweh God commanded the man saying, “You may surely eat of every tree in the garden, ¹⁷ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”

The fact that the man was forbidden to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil teaches us that God reserves the right to determine what is good and what is evil, not man. God makes the calls in his kingdom, not his people.

3. As King, God deserves to be worshiped.

Psalm 95:3–7

³ For Yahweh is a great God, and a great King above all gods. ⁴ In his hand are the depths of the earth; the heights of the mountains are his also. ⁵ The sea is his, for he made it, and his hands formed the dry land. ⁶ Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before Yahweh, our Maker! ⁷ For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand.

4. Based on what we have seen in this section, why does God require our obedience and worship?

• **ANSWER.** *God made everything and therefore has authority over all of it.*

In summary, God, whose name shows up 35 times in Genesis 1:1–2:3, is the main character in this story. He is both the creator and the king of the entire universe who determines what is good and bad, who sets the rules, and who deserves whole-hearted worship.

LAND

The story describes a land that God is preparing. This land is going to have massive significance throughout the plot of the whole story.²⁰ At first, the land

²⁰ Most English translations convey the idea that God is creating the entire earth throughout Genesis 1:1–2:3. However, the word “earth” is the same Hebrew word for “land,” which is the more common use of the word throughout the Old Testament. “Land” conveys a different image than “earth.” While it is true that God created the earth, indeed the whole universe, this happens in Genesis 1:1, while Genesis 1:2 shifts the focus to a specific piece of land, namely the Promised Land. For more on this view, see John H. Sailhammer, *Genesis Unbound: A Provocative New Look at the Creation Account*

is uninhabitable and unfit for man to dwell in, but God turns it into a garden paradise that is “very good.”

Genesis 1:2

² *The earth [land] was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep.*

Genesis 1:11

¹¹ *And God said, “Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind, on the earth.” And it was so.*

Genesis 1:29

²⁹ *And God said, “Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food.”*

Genesis 2:9

⁹ *And out of the ground Yahweh God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food.*

Genesis 2:12

¹² *And the gold of that land is good; bdellium and onyx stone are there.*

God brings order out of chaos by preparing a land that is very good (1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31; 2:9, 12) —one characterized by order and beauty, and in which he can dwell with his people in a perfect relationship. In this sense, the Garden of Eden functions as a holy sanctuary where God meets with his people, a theme that appears throughout the story.²¹

Required Reading: *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About*, pages 25–26.

▷ stop at “The Author of Genesis Used Genealogy to Highlight the Divine Origin & Significance of All Creation”

(Colorado Springs, CO: Dawson Media, 2011), 15–17. The word “land” shows up 21 times in Genesis 1:1–2:3, second only to God (35 times). Interestingly, the only noun mentioned more often than this in the entire Pentateuch is the word “Yahweh.” The third most common noun in the Pentateuch is “son.” This is an intriguing observation when one considers the covenant triangle between God, man (namely, his Son), and land!

²¹ See Greg Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004).

Day 2

MANKIND IS THE CLIMAX OF CREATION

We've looked at God, the main character, as well as the land that he is preparing for his people. Now it is time to consider human beings and their uniqueness among God's creation. Though the land is good, the climax and crown of God's creation is, without question, mankind.

Required Reading: *Dominion and Dynasty*, pages 55–62.

▷ stop at “The Garden of Eden”

Genesis 1:26–28

²⁶ Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” ²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. ²⁸ And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

Several indicators in the text let us know that day six is the climax of the creation narrative.

1. First, God does not create man the way he creates everything else simply by saying, “Let there be....” It's as if God pauses and takes counsel among the triune Godhead before he performs this act.

Genesis 1:26

²⁶ Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.”

2. Second, God does not create mankind “according to their kind” like he does everything else in his creation. In fact, the phrase “according to their kind” shows up ten times (Gen. 1:11, 12, 21, 24, 25) before we come to Genesis 1:26, and when we do, there is a sudden shift. No longer is God creating things according to their own kind, but according to his own image and likeness.

Genesis 1:26–27

²⁶ Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness...”

²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

3. Third, from a literary standpoint, more text is given to day six than any other day in the creation account.

Fill in the blanks from the reading:

“Thematically as well as verbally, humanity is crowned the royalty of creation. Whereas other creations come about by the divine word in a predictable manner (‘Let there be ... and it was so.’), there is a pregnant theological pause before the creation of humanity. God takes counsel with himself before speaking” (DD, 57).

The underlined words in this quotation are left blank in the Student Workbook. We suggest that the instructor read the quote aloud to allow students to check their work.

Consider these two statements:

Dempster: “The goal of creation is anthropological” (DD, 57).

DeRouchie: “The ultimate goal behind all God’s actions is the preservation and display of his glory, and it is to this end that all Scripture points. Because all things are from him, through him, and to him, God’s glory is exalted over all things (Rom. 11:36) and should be the goal of our lives (1 Cor. 10:31)” (WOTARCA, 18).²²

5. Do Dempster’s and DeRouchie’s statements contradict each other? If so, explain why. If not, explain how they can be harmonized.

- **ANSWER.** Although on the surface they may seem to contradict each other, both authors agree that the ultimate goal of creation is the glory of God. Dempster focuses on the literary aspect of Genesis 1, in which mankind is given more attention than the rest of creation. However, he states later that mankind has been stamped with the image of God, and therefore God wants to make much of himself throughout his creation.

It may be helpful to point out this quote to help your students answer this question. Dempster says, “In a deft literary move, with the use of these terms [“image” and “likeness”] the writer makes the goal of creation anthropological and thus doxological, since to crown the creation with the creation of humanity is firmly to stamp God’s own image in the very heart of the created order” (DD, 62).

Clearly human beings are the climax of God’s creation. But why is this the case?

²² Jason DeRouchie, ed., *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic & Professional, 2013). Used by permission. No duplication or distributed is permitted without written permission of the publisher.

THE IMAGE OF GOD

The image of God in man is the fundamental distinction between man and all other creatures. No other creature was given this privilege and responsibility. In the same way that a photograph points to the actual object the image represents, human beings are created to point all creation to God by representing him well.

The term “likeness” focuses on the human in relation to God. *Man can be described as the son of God.*²³ There are certain characteristics or qualities that we share with God, much the same way a physical son possesses certain characteristics and qualities of his father. In fact, the image of father and son is often used for God’s relationship with his people (Exod. 4:22; Jer. 31:9; Hos. 11:1; Matt. 3:17; John 1:12). Also, kings in the ancient world were often referred to as “sons of god” because their behavior was to reflect the god they served.

Remember, for all eternity God has dwelt within the community of the Trinity, loving each other, communicating with each other, serving each other, delighting in each other, and being devoted to one another. As we mentioned before, you could say that the triune Godhead exists in a covenant relationship. Human beings are created in *that* likeness. Our relationships with others and with God should reflect God’s covenantal nature.

God’s likeness is to spread throughout the world as his “sons” are fruitful and multiply and have other sons who are made in their likeness. There is an intimate relationship of love and trust between a Father and a son that is crucial for a covenant to exist.

Genesis 1:27

²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

Genesis 5:1–3

¹ This is the book of the generations of Adam. When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God. ² Male and female he created them, and he blessed them and named them Man when they were created. ³ When Adam had lived ¹³⁰ years, he fathered a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth.

Read Dempster’s comment on the relationship between “image” and “sonship”:

²³ Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom Through Covenant*, 194–95.

“By juxtaposing the divine creation of Adam in the image of God and the subsequent human creation of Seth in the image of Adam, the transmission of the image of God through this genealogical line is implied, as well as the link between sonship and the image of God. As Seth is a son of Adam, so Adam is a son of God. Language is being stretched here as a literal son of God is certainly not in view, but nevertheless the writer is using an analogy to make a point” (DD, 58–59).

The New Testament draws this same connection. Adam is called the “son” of God: “The son of Enos, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God” (Luke 3:38). This relational element of “sonship” is crucial for God’s covenant relationship with his people, which we will see in a moment.

6. Because *every* human being is created in the image of God, and therefore possesses royal dignity, how should this affect the way we think about and treat the needy poor, the reputation-blemishing “outsiders,” our enemies, back-stabbing friends, untrustworthy husbands, gossipy wives, rowdy children, harsh bosses, irritable neighbors, etc.? Record some of your thoughts.

· ANSWER. *Answers will vary*

Fill in the blanks from the reading:

“Being made in the image of God signifies humans exercising dominion as God’s vice-regents of creation” (DD, 59).

The underlined words in this quotation are left blank in the Student Workbook. We suggest that the instructor read the quote aloud to allow students to check their work.

The term “image” focuses on the human in relation to the world. *Man can be described as a servant king.*²⁴ One of the first things we see about man is that he is to have dominion over all the earth. Thus, man is to represent God’s rule and extend it throughout the whole world.

Genesis 1:26

²⁶ *Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”*

24 Ibid., 194–95.

Genesis 1:28

²⁸ *And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”*

The word “image” is often used of physical statues that kings in the ancient world would place in distant lands that were under his control in order to make sure everyone in that land knew that he was the rightful king (e.g., Dan. 3:1). In a similar way, God has placed man in his creation as a living statue, or image, that points all creation to the rightful King.

Man is not to rule creation harshly, but to rule with love and to serve creation on behalf of God, the big King. This relationship between man and the rest of creation can best captured by the term “servant kingship.”²⁵ Notice that God places man in the garden to guard it and take care of it. Also, man has the responsibility to name the animals just like God named each part of his creation (cf. 1:5, 8, 10).

Genesis 2:15

¹⁵ *Yahweh God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.*

Genesis 2:19–20

¹⁹ *Now out of the ground Yahweh God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name.* ²⁰ *The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field.*

Jesus, the Son of God *par excellence*, exemplifies what kind of servant kingship we are to exercise.

Mark 10:45

⁴⁵ *For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.*

7. According to Dempster, what does it mean to be human?

- **ANSWER.** *To bring the world under the dominion of the image of God.*
(DD, 58)

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 200.

Consider this quote:²⁶

“Man is the divine image. As servant king and son of God mankind will mediate God’s rule to the creation in the context of a covenant relationship with God on the one hand and the earth on the other. Hence the concept of the kingdom of God is found on the first page of Scripture.”

In summary, the phrase “image/likeness of God” would have communicated two ideas to the initial readers: (1) rulership and (2) sonship. Another way to say this is that mankind is to exercise *dominion* by being a *dynasty* that reflects God himself. As God’s image-bearing son, man mediates God’s rule to all creation.

Psalm 8:5–8

⁵ Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. ⁶ You have given him dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet, ⁷ all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, ⁸ the birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas.

Required Reading: *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About*, pages 26–27.

- ▷ begin at “The Author of Genesis Used Genealogy to Highlight the Divine Origin & Significance of All Creation”
- ▷ stop at “The Author of Genesis Emphasized the Purpose of Creation in Relation to Its One, Loving, Transcendent Creator”

8. What literary form does the author of Genesis use to show that every human being is made in the image of God?

- **ANSWER.** *The author of Genesis uses genealogies to trace the roots of humanity back from every race and ethnic group to Adam and Even who were created in the image of God.*

Genesis is structured around ten units which are all introduced by the formula, “These are the generations of...” As one reads through the book, the focus narrows from the whole world to the family line of Abraham, through whom all the families of the earth would be blessed.

²⁶ Ibid., 201.

Day 3

THE PATTERN OF THE KINGDOM

“Another way of describing this emphasis on human dominion and dynasty would be by the simple expression “the kingdom of God”. The earth is created for human dominion and rule, which reflects the divine rule. For human beings to function as the image of God they need a territory, a dominion to rule over. And to have the land without human beings is also pointless, for the kingdom needs a king, the dominion a dynasty” (DD, 62).

Having considered God, the land, and mankind, we are ready to put the pieces together and see how God intended for his kingdom to function. But all the pieces have to work together in order for this to happen.

God is the Creator and King. He sustains his universe and provides everything it needs to thrive: food, water, sunlight, humans to work the ground, companionship, authority, etc. Human beings are dependent on God for everything (Acts 17:25). They image God by ruling over creation and taking care of it. As a result, the ground produces food for mankind to live. The land also provides a restful place where man can dwell with his God. As man submits to God’s rule, God blesses him and the fruit of his labor. And as a result of all this, God’s glory would fill the earth. This harmonious, covenant relationship is what God’s kingdom ought to look like—it’s *The Pattern of the Kingdom*.

Consider one theologian’s description of how God’s kingdom is supposed to function:²⁷

“The webbing together of God, humans, and all creation in justice, fulfillment, and delight is what the Hebrew prophets call shalom. We call it peace, but it means far more than mere peace of mind or a cease-fire between enemies. In the Bible, shalom means universal flourishing, wholeness, and delight—a rich state of affairs in which natural needs are satisfied and natural gifts fruitfully employed, a state of affairs that inspires joyful wonder as its Creator and Savior opens doors and welcomes the creatures in whom he delights. Shalom, in other words, is the way things ought to be.”

27 Cornelius Plantinga Jr., *Not the Way It’s Supposed to Be: A Breviary of Sin* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995), 10.

Within the covenant triangle, *land* seems to be the element that gets the least amount of attention among Christians, yet God is clear that the land is an integral part of our covenant with him, since it is one of God’s means of blessing and cursing. If God’s image-bearers do not take care of the earth, then the earth will not be a source of blessing for mankind like God intended for it to be.

9. As you look around your neighborhood or the planet, what are some ways the earth has been affected by the curse? As an image-bearer, what is one specific way you can exercise dominion (subdue – Gen. 1:28), cultivate, or protect the earth (work and keep – 2:15)?

· **ANSWER.** *Answers may vary. Land is being exploited for selfish gain; trash and litter ruin the beauty of creation; pollution damages the ozone layer and causes health problems as people breathe in the toxins from their own carelessness; landfills are constantly being filled with non-biodegradable waste which makes the land useless for growing anything. Mankind has the responsibility to “work and keep” this creation (Gen. 2:15). Following our city’s recycling ordinance is one way we can prevent excess pollution of this beautiful world that God created.*

Required Reading: *Dominion and Dynasty*, pages 62–66.

- ▷ begin at “The Garden of Eden”
- ▷ stop at “The Fall”

Dempster further explains the covenantal relationship between God, man, and creation. “The man and woman are referential creatures, existing in and for relationship: to God, to each other and to the ground” (*DD*, 65). Read Dempster’s summary:

10. Fill in the blanks from the reading:

“In summary, the text clearly focuses on the genealogy of heaven and earth, which results in the birth of humanity, describing its ideal environment in which there is complete harmony between humanity and God, the primal human community, and between humanity and nature. Humanity’s task is to serve and keep the garden, which means having dominion. This role can be maintained by having the ‘run’ of the garden except in one matter. Human beings must remember their limits by not eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.... Significantly, a negative obligation is placed upon the primal couple, the violation of which will destroy their existence” (*DD*, 65–66).

The underlined words in this quotation are left blank in the Student Workbook. We suggest that the instructor read the quote aloud to allow students to check their work.

11. True/False: We should try to separate the genealogical aspect of creation from the geographical aspect in order to understand each one's role properly.

Required Reading: *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About*, pages 27–30.

- ▷ begin at “The Author of Genesis Emphasized the Purpose of Creation in Relation to Its One, Loving, Transcendent Creator”
- ▷ stop at “The Author of Genesis Identified Human Revolt Against God as the Base Cause of Global Wickedness & Death”

Read the blessing that Aaron the priest would later bless the people of Israel with:

Numbers 6:24–26

²⁴ *Yahweh bless you and keep you; ²⁵ Yahweh make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; ²⁶ Yahweh lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace [shalom].*

12. In light of Plantinga's description of the garden (above) and the meaning of *shalom*, what would this blessing have entailed for God's people? (see also WOTARCA, 30)

- **ANSWER.** *Aaron was not merely blessing the people with peace from enemies or various tensions, he was blessing them with the wholeness, health, delight, and universal flourishing that God created the world to experience. He was blessing them with the ideal vision of human life (WOTARCA, 30).*

The chapter division between Genesis 1 and 2 is unfortunate because it portrays man as the end of God's creation. While man was the climax of everything God created, he was not the end goal; *rest* is the end goal.

Genesis 2:1–3

¹ *Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. ² And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. ³ So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.*

All the other days of creation ended with the refrain, “And there was evening and morning, day...” No such refrain is present when we come to day seven, on which God rested from all his work. In a sense, day seven has never ended, and God has been resting ever since.²⁸ God’s rest is not a lazy rest, but a sovereign rest. Genesis 2:1–3 pictures God as a King sitting down on his throne with the entire universe under his sovereign control. All creation is functioning just as God desires. All relationships between God, man, and creation are perfect. God desires that mankind live with him in this perfect state of rest, or *shalom*. Those who accept God’s rule will experience rest (Matt. 11:28–29; Rev. 14:12–13), while those who reject his rule will have no rest (Rev. 14:11).

When God’s people submit to his rule and he dwells among them, they are blessed, as is the case in Genesis 1 and 2. God is their God, and they are his people. This is the perfect covenant relationship. After the fall, biblical authors use this formula throughout the Bible to describe the time when God’s covenant with his people would be renewed. Consider Jeremiah 31:33: “And I will be their God, and they shall be my people.” There would be a return to Eden one day!

In summary, God creates a kingdom in Genesis 1–2 that is perfect. God’s people are in God’s place under God’s rule. This is the pattern for the way things should be. God is ruling sovereignly over the universe, while his people are functioning as his mini-rulers over creation. Man lives in perfect fellowship with God and therefore experiences his blessing. Life is good, the way it was supposed to be.

The Kingdom of God	
<u>The Kingdom of God</u>	<u>The Pattern of the Kingdom</u>
God’s People	Adam and Eve
God’s Place	The garden
God’s Rule	God’s word; perfect relationships

28 Roberts, *God’s Big Picture*, 31.

Day 4

.....

See Teaching Notes for additional information for today's discussion.

The underlined words in this quotation are left blank in the Student Workbook. We suggest that the instructor read the quote aloud to allow students to check their work.

THE PERISHED KINGDOM

Required Reading: *Dominion and Dynasty*, pages 66–68.

- ▷ begin at “The Fall”
- ▷ stop at “Genealogical and Geographical Hope”

Required Reading: *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About*, pages 30–32.

- ▷ begin at “The Author of Genesis Identified Human Revolt Against God as the Base Cause of Global Wickedness & Death”
- ▷ stop at “The Author of Genesis Stressed God’s Promise to Restore Creation Through a Specific Family Line & Human Being”

Fill in the blanks from the reading:

“An expression like ‘ cosmic tragedy ’ is a more suitable expression than ‘ fall ’” (DD, 66).

13. Consider the world in which we live. Watching five minutes of the daily news will tell you that the world is not the way it’s supposed to be. Write down three specific ways *shalom* has been broken in this world.

• ANSWER. *Answers will vary*

When we get to Genesis chapter 3 we encounter a sudden turn of events as a serpent slithers into the scene. Immediately, red flags should go up for the reader. Something doesn’t seem right. Who is this talking snake? On what authority does he question God’s word? As he dialogues with the woman, the snake shifts from subtle deceit (Gen. 3:1) to flagrant denial of God’s word (3:4–5), telling Adam and Eve that they will *not* die if they eat from the tree God told them not to eat from.

Genesis 3:4–5

⁴ But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. ⁵ For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

Now the woman was faced with a decision. Would she believe that God was the true King and trust that he is the only one who is able to determine good and evil? Or would she deny God’s rule, and take it upon herself to choose what was good and what was evil? That is, would she try to be her own king?

Genesis 3:6

⁶ So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.

The woman was seeking moral autonomy. That is, she attempts to deny God’s authority and make her own rules by determining what was right and what was wrong for herself. One author insightfully comments, “Their sin is that of law-making, not just law breaking.... They were usurping [God’s] authority and establishing their independence. That has been the nature of sin ever since.”²⁹

14. Think of some specific sins you struggle with. How is each one, at its core, a desire to be independent from God, perhaps even an attempt to make your own laws? Record your thoughts.

· ANSWER. *Answers will vary*

At this point in history, everything changes. What was once a perfect kingdom with God ruling over his people in a good land is now shattered. Mankind decided to reject God’s rule and thus broke the covenant relationship. This was not the way things were supposed to be. God’s people had rebelled and the result was anarchy in God’s kingdom. They had rejected him as their King.

When God’s people reject God’s rule, they no longer enjoy his blessing. Rather, they experience curse. The epitome of all curse in the Bible is separation from God. Thus, Adam and Eve were banished from God’s presence to the East of Eden (3:23–24). But first God pronounced curses on them and on the serpent.

²⁹ Ibid., 39.

Genesis 3:14–19

¹⁴ Yahweh God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. ¹⁵ I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”

¹⁶ To the woman he said, “I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.”

¹⁷ And to Adam he said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, ‘You shall not eat of it,’ cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; ¹⁸ thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. ¹⁹ By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

The results of the curse were not merely spiritual, but had ramifications for every aspect of life. What were once perfect, harmonious relationships were now broken and twisted. The serpent was sent to his belly and was told to eat dust, and his desire to rule God’s creation would cause immeasurable conflict with God’s true vice-regents (3:14–15). The process of being fruitful and multiplying, which was dependent on God’s blessing (1:22, 28), was now met with tremendous pain, specifically for the woman. Now the blessing of offspring would come at a high cost. What was once a perfect relationship between the man and woman, with the woman loving and helping her husband, would now be marked by tension and a competitive desire to rule over him (3:16). Man’s relationship to the earth is now burdensome as he struggles to control it. The earth no longer produces only good for the man, but thorns and thistles (3:17–19). It will be hard work just to survive. Thus man’s relationship with the land has been broken. Adam blames his wife for his sin, even though he was there watching as the snake tempted Eve (3:6). He did not care for and protect her like God had intended for him to (cf. 2:15). His relationship with his wife is not how God designed it to be.

Ultimately, however, man’s relationship with God was the most serious, and God punished them accordingly. “Human beings turn away from God in rebellion and he turns away from them in judgment.”³⁰ Adam realizes his guilt

³⁰ Ibid., 40.

now, and he hides from God. This is not the way things were supposed to be! There is a barrier between man and God that is not supposed to be there.

Genesis 3:22–24

²² *Then Yahweh God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil. Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever—”*²³ *therefore Yahweh God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken.*

²⁴ *He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.*

Even though the man and woman experience exile from God’s presence, the text indicates that this was for their good— “Lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever—” (Gen. 3:22). Had they eaten from the tree of life while in their cursed condition, there would have been no hope for redemption. But that’s not what happens in this story!

A “SEED” OF HOPE

Required Reading: *Dominion and Dynasty*, pages 68–72.

- ▷ begin at “Genealogical and Geographical Hope”
- ▷ stop at “Creation and Covenant”

Genesis 3:14–15

¹⁴ *Yahweh God said to the serpent, ...*¹⁵ *“I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”*

Embedded within the serpent’s curse is an ember of hope. God says there will be enmity between the woman and the serpent and between their offspring. This is good news, because just earlier the woman was taking sides with the serpent! God is promising to restore the created order by defeating the one who caused it all to go wrong, namely the devil (Rev. 12:9; 20:2). This would happen through a son of the woman.

The underlined words in this quotation are left blank in the Student Workbook. We suggest that the instructor read the quote aloud to allow students to check their work.

15. Fill in the blanks from the reading:

“In the light of the immediate context, the triumph of the woman’s seed would suggest a return to the Edenic state, before the serpent had wrought its damage, and a wresting of the dominion of the world from the serpent” (DD, 68).

In other words, the woman’s offspring would restore the kingdom of God one day. In many ways, the rest of the Bible is an outflowing of Genesis 3:15.

However, the battle between the woman’s offspring and the serpent’s offspring will not be easy. The woman’s seed will be hurt in the battle—it will be costly for him. But in the end, it is the serpent’s offspring who is dealt the fatal blow to the head! This begins a hunt for the offspring, and this is one of the reasons why there are so many genealogies in the Bible! As we move through Genesis, the author is narrowing the focus from all humanity to a single, male offspring who will defeat Satan and sin, and reestablish God’s kingdom.³¹

Have you ever pondered what the world would be like if Adam and Eve had never sinned? For one thing, the Bible would be very short—only two chapters! It is easy for Christians to long for the pre-fallen world. However, God had a sovereign plan that did not include Adam and Eve living forever in an innocent world; nor did it include them living forever in a cursed world (Gen. 3:22–23). They would die, because it is only through death that resurrection can come (1 Cor. 15:12–26). The fall was part of God’s great plan to rescue his people and restore all creation to a perfect condition. And on that day, after experiencing the love of Christ who died and rose to redeem us from the curse, we will know God in a deeper way than Adam and Eve ever would have, and God will receive more glory. One song writer puts it this way:

*And when the world is new again
And the children of the King
Are ancient in their youth again
Well maybe it’s a better thing
To be more than merely innocent
But to be broken and redeemed by love
Maybe this whole world is bent
But it’s waking up
And I’m waking up*

31 In particular, Genesis is structured around ten genealogies that all trace the chosen line. For a treatment of this structure and its relationship to the mission of God, see Jason S. DeRouchie, “The Blessing-Commission, the Promised Offspring, and the toledot Structure of Genesis,” JETS, forthcoming at time of publication.

*'Cause I can hear the voice of one
Crying in the wilderness
Make ready for the kingdom come
Don't you want to thank someone for this?³²*

16. Can you think of a circumstance when an awful event turned out for good and it became clear that God used it to make himself known all the more? Or perhaps you are experiencing a situation right now that is clearly a result of the curse. How can Genesis 3:15 and other promises of a restored kingdom provide comfort for you?

· **ANSWER.** *Answers will vary*

32 Andrew Peterson, *Don't You Want to Thank Someone*, Light for the Lost Boy, 2012.

Day 5

DOWNWARD SPIRAL OF CORRUPTION

After the curse is issued, Eve gives birth to a male offspring. Perhaps this would be the offspring who will set things right! Remember, the key to kingdom restoration is through the offspring of the woman who will crush the head of the serpent (Gen. 3:15). But it is soon clear that this is not the case as the second tragic sin is recorded—murder! Cain kills his brother out of jealousy and God sends Cain away from his presence...to the East (4:16; cf. 3:24).

Despite this sin, mankind is being fruitful and multiplying. In Genesis 5, Adam has a son who has a son who has a son, etc. This genealogy continues the hope that the woman's offspring would still come one day. Also, Adam's offspring are born in his image (5:3), which, as we know, is the image of God (1:26, 27; 3:1-2). Thus God's initial desire for his people is being partially realized, though in a diminished way. For every instance of birth in this genealogy is followed by the unrelenting refrain, "...and he died." Except for one!

Genesis 5:21-24

²¹ When Enoch had lived 65 years, he fathered Methuselah. ²² Enoch walked with God after he fathered Methuselah 300 years and had other sons and daughters. ²³ Thus all the days of Enoch were 365 years. ²⁴ Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him."

17. Read just a few of the verses preceding Genesis 5:21-24. How does the account of Enoch differ from the others in the genealogy? What phrase is lacking that is found in all the other accounts? What message could the author be trying to communicate by this?

· **ANSWER.** *The phrase "and he died" is not found in the account of Enoch. The fact that Enoch did not die because he walked with God (Gen. 5:22-24) seems to foreshadow that there is still hope for eternal life for those who follow God.*

Required Reading: *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About*, pages 32–33.

- ▷ begin at “The Author of Genesis Stressed God’s Promise to Restore Creation Through a Specific Family Line & Human Being”
- ▷ stop at “The Means for Universal Restoration”

The account in Genesis 4 thrusts us into a downward spiral of corruption as we work through Genesis 4–11. Everything seems to be getting worse and worse. By the time we get to Genesis 6, what God had created as very good has become exceedingly corrupt.

Genesis 6:5–6

⁵ *Yahweh saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.* ⁶ *And Yahweh regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart.*

Yet Noah’s father had given his son the name “Noah,” meaning “rest,” in the hopes that he would be the offspring to set things right again. Compare these passages:

Genesis 3:17 (NASB)

¹⁷ *Then to Adam He said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, ‘You shall not eat from it’; Cursed is the ground because of you; In toil you will eat of it all the days of your life.*

Genesis 5:28–29 (NASB)

²⁸ *Lamech lived one hundred and eighty-two years, and became the father of a son.* ²⁹ *Now he called his name Noah, saying, “This one will give us rest from our work and from the toil of our hands arising from the ground which Yahweh has cursed.”*

18. True/False: Though Noah’s name meant “rest,” he was not the promised offspring of the woman who would undo the curse and restore God’s kingdom.

As the King, God chooses to judge the world with a flood because of the pervasiveness of sin.

Genesis 6:7

⁷ So Yahweh said, "I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, man and animals, and creeping things and birds of the heavens, for I am sorry that I have made them."

Genesis 6:17

¹⁷ For behold, I will bring a flood of waters upon the earth to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life under heaven. Everything that is on the earth shall die.

His judgment involves undoing what he created in Genesis 1. Notice the "de-creation" language:

Genesis 7:21–23

²¹ And all flesh died that moved on the earth, birds, livestock, beasts, all swarming creatures that swarm on the earth, and all mankind. ²² Everything on the dry land in whose nostrils was the breath of life died. ²³ He blotted out every living thing that was on the face of the ground, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens. They were blotted out from the earth. Only Noah was left, and those who were with him in the ark.

But this is not the end of the story!

Required Reading: *Dominion and Dynasty*, pages 72–75.

- ▷ begin at "Creation and Covenant"
- ▷ stop at "The Genealogy of Shem and the Call of Abram: Land, Descendants, Universal Blessing"

19. True/False: According to Dempster, Noah's family and the animals emerge from the ark into a new world that is just like the garden of Eden.

Amid the wicked generation, there was one man who found favor in God's sight. Just like Enoch had walked with God, so Noah walks with God. He is blameless (6:8–9). God preserves Noah and his family through the waters of judgment, and he establishes his covenant with him, giving him the same mandate he had given Adam and Eve.

Genesis 9:1

¹ And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.”

Genesis 9:8–11

⁸ Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, ⁹ “Behold, I establish my covenant with you and your offspring after you, ¹⁰ and with every living creature that is with you . . . ¹¹ that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.”

Sadly, however, within three verses of God establishing his covenant with Noah, Noah falls into sin (9:20–21), proving that he was not the one who would set things right. The hunt for the offspring was still in full swing. The following genealogy (Ch. 10) brings the reader’s attention to the line of Shem, which is interrupted by a narrative story (11:1–9). In this story, the people of the earth try once again to usurp God’s authority by *not* spreading and filling the earth (11:4; cf. 1:28), and even more serious, by trying to make a name for themselves, not for God.

Genesis 11:4

⁴ Then they said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth.”

Notice three things about their actions (11:3–4):

1. They try to work their way up to heaven in order to establish their own kingdom, as it were.
2. They want to make a name for themselves.
3. They don’t want to spread, multiply, and fill the earth like God purposed for mankind to do (cf. 1:28).

God will not put up with man’s rejection of his rule. Notice three things about God’s actions (11:5–9):

1. He comes down from heaven.
2. He confuses their language so that they cannot complete the tower and make a name for themselves.
3. Then he scatters them all over the earth.

Then we get to Genesis 11:10, which continues the genealogy of Shem, God's chosen line of offspring. The name Shem means "name" in Hebrew. The author is using is a wordplay. The people of Babel wanted to make a name (*shem*) for themselves, but God is going to make a name for himself through the line of Shem (11:10–29).

In most of the narratives so far, there has been an element of hope amidst the sin and judgment. God gave mankind hope that the woman's offspring would one day set things right (3:15). God determined that man should not live forever in a fallen condition (3:22). God protected Cain after he murdered Abel so that no one would kill him (4:15). Enoch showed that it was possible for man to walk with God and not experience death (5:24). God preserved Noah and established his covenant with him when he judged the rest of the world (6:18; 9:1–7). Thus, though the overall tone from Genesis 4–11 is negative, there are significant glimpses of hope piercing through the dark clouds of sin that point forward to the fulfillment of God's promise—namely a restored kingdom!

20. Why do you think God chose to take so long to fulfill his promise in restoring his kingdom? Consider what Peter says in his epistle:

2 Peter 3:4–13

⁴ [Scoffers] will say, "Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation."⁵ For they deliberately overlook this fact, that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God,⁶ and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished.⁷ But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.

⁸ But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.⁹ The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.¹⁰ But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.

¹¹ Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness,¹² waiting for and hastening the

coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn!¹³ But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

- **ANSWER.** *God’s word will not fail. Just as he created the world and destroyed it with a word, so will he judge the world a second time with a word. Peter indicates that God is not slow to fulfill his promises, but patient towards sinners. His delay is actually a demonstration of his mercy, so that more sinners can repent. But at any moment, he could return to create a “new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.”*

Summary: The pattern of the kingdom that God established in Genesis 1 and 2 has been destroyed by sin. “Human beings are no longer God’s people by nature; we have turned away from him. We no longer live in his place; we have been banished from the garden. And we reject his rule and live as if we ruled the world.”³³ The once-perfect relationships between God, man, and creation have all been shattered, because mankind has rejected God’s rule as King and attempted to build its own kingdom, with man on the throne, not Creator God. As a result, man has experienced death, curse, and exile. Nothing is the way it was supposed to be. The kingdom has perished. But fortunately, God’s story does not end here...

The Kingdom of God		
<u>The Kingdom of God</u>	<u>The Pattern of the Kingdom</u>	<u>The Perished Kingdom</u>
God’s People	Adam and Eve	No one
God’s Place	The garden	Banished
God’s Rule and Blessing	God’s word; perfect relationships	Disobedience and curse

33 Roberts, *God’s Big Picture*, 43



§ INTEGRATIVE ASSIGNMENT

In one paragraph, discuss God's authority as Creator to do with his creation as he sees best. What are some implications of this reality?



Review the following questions in preparation for discussion. As you have worked through this lesson, record any lingering questions that you may have.

1. From what you've learned this lesson, how would you answer the four main worldview questions?
Who is God?
Who are we?
What is wrong with this world?
How will it be fixed?
2. Plantinga's quote (Day 3) describes the world as it should be. Consider the world in which we live, and discuss ways in which the world is "not the way it's supposed to be." As Christians, what are ways we can actively engage with our community and world to restore "shalom" even on a small scale?
3. Have you ever considered that the fall will make Christ's return that much more glorious? Just like an artist paints shadows on a canvas to emphasize the light, and an author writes tension into his novel to make the resolution more speculator, so God has ordained evil in his world to highlight his sovereign grace demonstrated through Jesus and his work on the cross (Eph. 2:1–10). Discuss the idea that a fallen world redeemed by Christ is more glorifying to God than merely an innocent world.
4. Your own question(s):

§ ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- ▷ Peter Gentry and Stephen Wellum, *Kingdom Through Covenant* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012). See pages 181–202 for a discussion on “image and likeness.”
- ▷ Jason DeRouchie, “The Blessing-Commission, the Promised Offspring, and the *Toledoth* Structure of Genesis,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 56 (2013): 219–247.
- ▷ Cornelius Plantinga Jr., *Not the Way It's Supposed to Be: A Breviary of Sin* (Grand Rapids, MI; Eerdmans, 1995).
- ▷ “History of Salvation in the Old Testament: Preparing the Way for Christ,” *ESV Study Bible*, (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 2,635–2,636.

Genesis—Part 2

4

🔗 INTRODUCTION

We've looked at the beginning of God's story of redemption. Specifically, we've seen how God designed his kingdom to function, namely in a perfect state of *shalom* where relationships flourished as God's people dwelt in God's land under God's rule. Then we saw how sin hijacked that kingdom and destroyed all the healthy relationships that existed, the most important of which was man's relationship with God. Because this vital link was broken, the whole kingdom dismantled. The good creation has been perverted and twisted by mankind, and Genesis 3–11 recounts this downfall. As Dempster graphically noted, "The creation is being raped by a humanity engaged in widespread evil" (*DD*, 72).

Though the reader has seen glimpses of hope in the midst of all the corruption, the ultimate solution to the fall has not yet been found. The offspring of the woman has not crushed the head of the serpent and restored God's blessing in the world, so the search is still on. By the end of Genesis 11, we know that this blessing would come through the line of Shem, Noah's son. The genealogy gets even more specific to a descendant named Terah who moves his family from the East (place of exile) towards the land of Canaan, though he only makes it part way before he dies. His son Abram and Abram's wife Sarai are left childless and lingering in a land not their own. Who are these people, and what did God plan to do with them? The rest of Genesis answers these questions.

🔗 LESSON OBJECTIVES

After completing this lesson, the student should be able to

- ▷ understand Israel's role in the context of a global curse and a universal need for God's kingdom to be restored.
- ▷ explain how God's promise of land, offspring, and blessing are preserved through human impossibilities.
- ▷ summarize the book of Genesis in his own words.

Total pages of reading for this week: 25



At some point throughout this lesson (probably Day 1), it will be important to discuss the distinction between Israel of the Old Testament and the modern-day nation of Israel. In Day 1, the question is raised, “Was the world created for Israel, or was Israel created for the world?” The answer is that Israel was created for the world. However, make sure students do not have the understanding that this means modern-day Israel is still God’s means of blessing to the world. Many circles within evangelicalism make the mistake of believing that God’s promises to Israel have not yet been fulfilled and that we ought to bless the nation of Israel today so that we may also be blessed (Gen. 12:3). However, God’s promises to Israel were fulfilled in the person of Jesus, the true Israelite, and the Israel of the Old Testament was destroyed in 70 A.D. The modern day nation of Israel was never in the mind of the biblical authors.

There will likely be discussion about the topic of God’s election. The instructor should be prepared to answer some hard questions regarding this topic. You may consult Sam Storms’ book *Chosen for Life* or John Piper’s book *The Justification of God* listed in the Additional Resources. This article is a helpful and concise argument for the doctrine of election: <http://www.desiringgod.org/articles/five-reasons-to-embrace-unconditional-election>. There are many more rescues on the Desiring God website (www.desiringGod.org) that treat this precious doctrine (simply search for “election” on the website).

Beginning with this lesson and continuing with every subsequent lesson, students will be asked to summarize the message of each book in their own words (Integrative Assignment). It may be a good idea to leave time during class to share their summaries with the other students. You could ask for volunteers to share what they wrote, or you could split the class into groups of two or three and have each person share their summary. This will motivate them to think through their summary and make it clear rather than just to write something down to complete the lesson. Student feedback is a great way to learn and grow in our ability to communicate ideas clearly. It may be helpful to have them write their summary in such a way that a 5-year-old could understand it. This will also help them to be clear and simple.



Day 1

THE PROMISED KINGDOM

Required Reading: *Dominion and Dynasty*, pages 75–77.

- ▷ begin at “The Genealogy of Shem and the Call of Abram: Land, Descendants, Universal Blessing”
- ▷ stop at “The Abram Story: Geography and Genealogy”

Fill in the blanks from the reading:

The underlined words in this quotation are left blank in the Student Workbook. We suggest that the instructor read the quote aloud to allow students to check their work.

“At the beginning of Israel’s history, then, is the fundamental fact that it has been made for the benefit of the world. Israel’s calling is fundamentally missiological; its purpose for existence is the restoration of the world to its pre-Edenic state” (DD, 76).

Required Reading: *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About*, pages 33–34.

- ▷ begin at “The Means for Universal Restoration”

In eleven chapters, the author of Genesis recounted the events of world history from the beginning of time to a little before 2000 B.C. A lot has happened up to this point. Indeed, a lot has gone wrong, and the reader is expecting something dramatic in order for the world to be set right again. When we get to Genesis 12 the narrator presses the “slow-motion” button, as it were, and it takes the remaining 39 chapters of Genesis to describe just four generations—Abraham through his great-grandson, Judah. The significance of this family line is hard to exaggerate as God’s kingdom promises will be fulfilled through one of their offspring. And it all begins with Genesis 12:1–3, one of the most important texts in the entire Bible.

🔗 BIBLE STUDY: Read Genesis 12:1–3 and answer the questions that follow:

Genesis 12:1–3

¹ Now Yahweh said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. ² And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

1. List all the promises you can find that God makes to Abram in these three verses.

• **ANSWER.** 1) God would give Abram a land (12:1); 2) God would make him into a great nation (12:2); 3) God would bless Abram (12:2); 4) God would make his name great (12:2); 5) God would make Abram a blessing to others (12:2); 6) God would give Abram victory over enemies (12:3); and 7) God would bless the world through Abram (12:3).

2. What word shows up five times in these three verses? Circle the word. What word shows up five times in Genesis 3–11 (3:14, 17; 4:11; 5:29; 9:25)? In light of this observation, what do you think the author is trying to communicate in Genesis 12:1–3?

• **ANSWER.** The word “bless(ing)” shows up five times in Genesis 12:1–3. The word “curse” shows up five times in Genesis 3–11. The five instances of “blessing” in the three verses counters the five instances of “curse” in Genesis 3–11, signaling that a curse-reversal is in process. God will restore blessing to the world through Abram’s family.

The underlined words in this quotation are left blank in the Student Workbook. We suggest that the instructor read the quote aloud to allow students to check their work.

All of these promises may be synthesized into three succinct promises: land, offspring, and blessing. To become a great nation requires many people, a land, and a government that exercises dominion. To possess a great name entails an international reputation. The fact that God would curse Abram’s enemies implies that Abram would exercise dominion over them. Abram’s seed (i.e., the seed of the woman) would be victorious over those who curse God’s people (i.e., the seed of the serpent). All of this climaxes in the greatest promise—blessing that would extend to all the families of the earth.

In a story about God's kingdom (i.e., God's people in God's place under God's rule), the promises God makes to Abraham have massive implications! Notice the three promises: (1) much offspring (genealogy/dynasty); (2) land (geography/dominion); and (3) to be a blessing to all nations. Against the backdrop of Genesis 1–11, this text rings of hope and promise!

Notice also that Genesis 1–11 have a global focus, while Genesis 12 focuses on one family. This is because it is through Abram's family that God would bring blessing to a curse-ridden world. The curse had wrecked God's kingdom and infected every family on earth who were then living "in exile" (10:1–11:9). But God would restore his kingdom on earth through Abram's line. Thus, Abram's descendants (who would become the nation of Israel) would play the pivotal role in bringing blessing back to the entire world. Right from the very beginning, God's plan of salvation includes not just one people, but all the nations of the world!

3. Was the world created for Israel, or was Israel created for the world? Explain your answer. (See *DD*, 76 and *WOTARCA*, 34 for help)

- **ANSWER.** *Genesis 3–10 describe the results of the curse and its universal effects. By the time we get to Genesis 12, it is clear that the world is in need of God's blessing. Thus, God's promise to Abram that his offspring would bless all the families of the world informs us that Israel was created as God's primary means to bless the world. Therefore, Israel was created for the world.*

We saw in Genesis 3:15 that there would be ongoing conflict between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. The first example of this after the fall takes place between Eve's first and second sons. Cain, an offspring of the serpent, tried to snuff out the offspring of the woman by killing Abel, his older brother (4:1–15). But this attempt failed as God provided another son who would carry the promise.

God's promise to Abram is similar. Included within the promises is the reality of opposition. There would be people who would try to curse Israel and put an end to this kingdom-restoring family (12:3). But God is bigger and stronger than all of his enemies, and he tells Abram he would curse those who tried to curse him (12:3). There is a foreshadow of this victory embedded in the text, as "those who bless you" is plural while "whoever curses you" is singular. The implication is that, ultimately, Abram's offspring will be blessed and will defeat all who try to thwart God's plan of redemption. We will see an explicit example of this in the book of Numbers. Consider this example from the New Testament:

Matthew 2:1–20

¹ Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, ² saying, “Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him....” ¹¹ And going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. ¹² And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way. ¹³ Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him....” ¹⁶ Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, became furious, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had ascertained from the wise men.... ¹⁹ But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, ²⁰ saying, “Rise, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child’s life are dead.”

4. Consider the actions of the wise men and Herod. How is Genesis 12:3 realized in the events surrounding the birth of Jesus? What event in history would you say is the climax of the conflict between the woman’s seed and the serpent’s seed? Explain your answer.

· **ANSWER.** *The struggle between the woman’s seed and the serpent’s seed continues throughout the whole story. The wise men come to bless Jesus and are blessed as a result; Herod tries to kill Jesus but does not succeed and eventually dies. The climax of this conflict occurred on the cross when the seed of the serpent apparently gained victory over the seed of the woman. However, Jesus ultimately proved victorious over Satan by rising from the dead and therefore reversing the curse. One day, when Christ returns there will be no more conflict.*

The rest of this lesson will trace the promises of land, offspring, and blessing as they are passed from Abram to Isaac to Jacob and then to Judah throughout the book of Genesis. We will note the opposition these promises face and God’s faithfulness to overcome it.

Day 2

ABRAHAM

The promises God makes to Abraham are slow in being fulfilled (just like the ones given to Adam and Eve), and they meet obstacles at almost every corner. Nonetheless, the book of Genesis shows that God is the one who miraculously preserves his own promises, despite human impossibilities. Let's trace the promises as they extend from Abraham through the first few generations, noting how God is the ultimate fulfiller of his covenant promises.

Required Reading: *Dominion and Dynasty*, pages 77–80.

- ▷ begin at “The Abram Story: Geography and Genealogy”
- ▷ stop at “Focus on Descendants”

Though Abram had been given tremendous promises, the present reality is that he is an old, landless, childless, “no-name” nomad wandering the rugged Middle East terrain. The narrative is intertwined with accounts of this inauspicious man and his powerful, faithful God.

For instance, just four verses before God promised that Abram would become a great nation, the text mentions that his wife, Sarai, was barren (Gen. 11:30). How would God overcome this obstacle? Then, as Abram is surveying the promised land, the text states that there are Canaanites living in the land (12:6). How would this be their new home if it was already being possessed by a people greater than Abram's family? Nevertheless, God reassures Abram of his promise (12:7). This is immediately followed by a famine in the land which forces Abram to move his family to Egypt (12:10). Once in Egypt, Abram lies about Sarai's relationship to him in order to save his own neck and almost jeopardizes the promise of offspring (12:11–20). Then Abram gives his nephew Lot the choice of which land to dwell in, since together they were too large to occupy the same territory. This is another close call as Lot chooses the Jordan Valley rather than the land of Canaan that was promised to Abram's descendants (13:8–12). Once again, God reassures Abram of his promise (13:15, 17).

A lot is riding on this one family—namely, the restoration of God's kingdom and the blessing of all the nations. Though obstacles lay in the path, and though Abram is by no means perfect, he continues to seek after God, and God begins to bless him in fulfillment of his promise.

5. What significant event happens in Genesis 14 that shows Abram's prominence among all the kings of the earth? (see Gen. 14:17–24 or *DD*, 79)

· **ANSWER.** *After Abram defeats the other kings, Melchizedek, the priest of God Most High, blesses Abram and gives him gifts. Specifically, he blesses Abram by “God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth” (Gen. 14:19). Thus, the one whose descendants would bless the world is receiving an initial blessing in order that the Creator’s global purposes might be fulfilled.*

When we get to Genesis 15, God does something very dramatic to demonstrate his faithfulness. Abram still has no child and wonders how God could fulfill his promise of offspring through a barren couple. In response, God shows him that he is thinking from an earthly perspective and that he needs to “look toward heaven” and think from God’s perspective.

Genesis 15:5–6

⁵ *And he brought him outside and said, “Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your offspring be.”* ⁶ *And he believed Yahweh, and he counted it to him as righteousness.*

6. God is still working powerfully. Describe a time in your life when a situation seemed impossible from a human perspective, but God worked powerfully to overcome the obstacle.

· **ANSWER.** *Answers will vary*

We see amazing faith in Abram at this point as he believes God’s word against all human reasoning. This narrative also demonstrates that, from the very beginning of God’s story, righteousness is based on belief in God’s promises. It is not based on one’s own actions or goodness, but on God’s unfailing word. Faith is the foundation for all righteousness for all times!

7. True/False: Abram was counted righteous because he was more obedient than most men in his generation.

To confirm that his promises would come true, God enshrines them in an oath that was sealed through a sacrificial ceremony that involved the shedding of blood (Ch. 15). What God does in this ceremony is shocking. He passes through

the pieces of the animals, which communicate that the same would happen to him if his promises failed to come true! In other words, if God's people did not possess a land, he would take upon himself the curse for breaking the covenant!

“Abram has thus begun the journey of faith in response to the call of God; his faith has faltered by going down to Egypt and lying about his wife. He tries to domesticate the promise. Nevertheless, he has triumphed in his faith. God has made a covenant with him and sworn an oath that the patriarch's descendants would receive the land” (DD, 80).

The fulfillment of these promises (as is becoming more and more apparent) will once again take a long time. In fact, God tells Abram that his descendants will be sojourners in a land not their own for 400 years (15:13)! They will even be oppressed during this time, which seems contrary to the promise of a great name.

Yet God remains faithful to his word. Abram is nearly a century old when God approaches him again (Ch. 17). This time, God is going to establish a formal covenant between himself and Abram (whose name is then changed to Abraham). This covenant focuses more on Abraham's offspring than on the land, though the two are inseparable. God would multiply him (17:2) and make him fruitful (17:6) as he had commanded Adam and Eve to do in the garden (1:28) and Noah and his family after the flood (9:1). God is determined to magnify his name among all creation through his faithful image-bearers!

Notice that kings will come from Abraham. His offspring will be royal! Thus, Abraham will have a dynasty that will exercise dominion. We saw a foreshadow of this promise when Abram conquered the five Mesopotamian kings in Genesis 14. This is the means by which God is going to set the world right again. But in order for all this to happen, God will have to establish a covenant relationship with his people that will never fail.

Genesis 17:6–9

⁶ I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make you into nations, and kings will come from you. ⁷ And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you. ⁸ And I will give to you and to your offspring after you the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God.”

⁹ And God said to Abraham, “As for you, you shall keep my covenant, you and your offspring after you throughout their generations.”

Genesis 17:16

¹⁶ I will bless [Sarah], and moreover, I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she shall become nations; kings of peoples shall come from her.

One final aspect we want to look at in regards to God's covenant with his people is the conditionality of the covenants. Many people do not like to think of the Abrahamic covenant as conditional because God is making unilateral (one-way) promises to Abraham. However, the language of conditional vs. unconditional is not helpful when speaking of the covenants because every covenant God makes with man contains a clear expectation of obedience. Consider these verses:

Genesis 12:1–2

¹ “Go from your country ... ² you will be a blessing [literally, “be a blessing”].”

Genesis 17:1

¹ When Abram was ninety-nine years old Yahweh appeared to Abram and said to him, “I am God Almighty; -walk before me and be blameless.”

Genesis 17:9

⁹ And God said to Abraham, “As for you, you shall keep my covenant, you and your offspring after you throughout their generations.”

In fact, we see that the blessing to the nations is dependent on Abraham's offspring's obedience to Yahweh.

Genesis 18:19

¹⁹ For I have chosen [Abraham], that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of Yahweh by doing righteousness and justice, so that Yahweh may bring to Abraham what he has promised him.

Genesis 26:4–5

⁴ I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and will give your offspring all these lands. And in your offspring all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, ⁵ because Abraham obeyed my voice and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.

One scholar says this, “God has made commitments, obligations, and promises, but these are not to be fulfilled without an obedient son in the covenant relationship.”³⁴ A covenant cannot be maintained if only one end of the relationship is being faithful. God needs a son made in his likeness who could keep the covenant perfectly. This is a real problem, since every human being is under the curse and therefore has a sinful nature. Would there ever be a human who would keep God’s covenant so that God’s kingdom could be re-established? Whoever this human was, he would be the serpent-crusher promised to the woman and the royal offspring of Abraham who would exercise dominion over the earth and bring blessing to all mankind.

Required Reading: *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About*, pages 35–36.

▷ stop at the paragraph that begins with “The promise of a great name...”

Hebrews 11:8–16

⁸ *By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.*

⁹ *By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise.* ¹⁰ *For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God.* ¹¹ *By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since she considered him faithful who had promised.* ¹² *Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born descendants as many as the stars of heaven and as many as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore.*

¹³ *These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.* ¹⁴ *For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland.* ¹⁵ *If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return.* ¹⁶ *But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city.*

8. According to the author of Hebrews, what compelled Abraham to leave everything he knew to go to a land not his own?

· **ANSWER.** *Abram had faith in God which drove him to radical obedience. He believed that there was a greater inheritance to receive than merely the land of Canaan. He believed that he would dwell in God’s city one day!*

34 Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom Through Covenant*, 286.

Day 3

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ISAAC

Required Reading: *Dominion and Dynasty*, pages 80–85.

▷ begin at “Focus on Descendants”

Fill in the blanks from the reading:

“For the first time God promises Abraham that, in addition to blessing the world through Isaac, the aged patriarch will possess the gates of his enemies; that is, he will decisively defeat the enemy by taking him at his most vulnerable point (Gen. 22:17). In the context of the story of Abraham and Israel this text certainly means one thing: that the nascent Israelite nation will have military success. But in the context of Genesis 1–11 that military success has much wider theological ramifications. For the real enemy is the serpent, and to transfer appropriately the expression ‘to take the gate of the enemies’ in this sphere would mean to strike a blow to the serpent’s head” (DD, 84–85).

The underlined words in this quotation are left blank in the Student Workbook. We suggest that the instructor read the quote aloud to allow students to check their work.

9. What event in history do you think was the fulfillment of God’s promise to his people that they would possess the gate of their enemies?

• **ANSWER.** *Through the cross and resurrection, Jesus, God’s Son, broke down the gates of hell so that he could ransom all the elect and bring them into his kingdom. Jesus told his disciples that he would build his church and the gates of hell would not prevail against it (Matt. 16:18).*

A decade passed after God confirmed his promises to Abram with an oath (Gen. 15). Abram and his wife are nearly a century old and they still have no biological son! The promise of a son seemed ridiculous—indeed, impossible—at this point. Abram proposes a solution for God. He would have a child through Sarah’s servant Hagar, and that son would be the heir through whom the promises would be fulfilled. But God promises again that this ancient couple would bear a biological son through whom the promises would be carried. Abram and Sarah both laugh in God’s face, but God was serious.

Genesis 17:15–19

¹⁵ *And God said to Abraham, “As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. ¹⁶ I will bless her, and moreover, I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she shall become nations; kings of peoples shall come from her.” ¹⁷ Then Abram fell on his face and laughed and said to himself, “Shall a child be born to a man who is a hundred years old? Shall Sarah, who is ninety-nine years old, bear a child?” ¹⁸ And Abraham said to God, “Oh that Ishmael might live before you!” ¹⁹ God said, “No, but Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his offspring after him.”*

10. Before you criticize Abram and Sarai for laughing, put yourself in their shoes. Who is the oldest person you know? Do you know a man or woman who is 100 years old? How do you think you would respond if that person said they were going to have a baby? Can you think of other ways you tend *not* to believe God?

• **ANSWER.** *Answers will vary*

It is becoming clear that God works in ways that are contrary to man’s thinking. In fact, many times he chooses to work in such a way that makes it impossible for human beings to take any credit. This is because God is concerned first and foremost with his own glory. This is not a selfish thing, for God alone is worthy to be glorified, and he created everything for this purpose (Isa. 43:7; 48:11; Rom. 11:36; 1 Cor. 8:6; 11:12; Col. 1:16; Heb. 2:10). Nothing is more valuable than God... even his promises!

God wants to test Abraham to make sure he believes these truths. So after his longed-for son Isaac is born, God asks Abraham to do something unthinkable—to sacrifice Isaac as an offering!

Genesis 22:2

² *He said, “Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.”*

What hope is there of God’s promises being fulfilled if Isaac dies? God is teaching even at this early stage that it will take a miracle for the gospel to be

fulfilled. Abraham demonstrates faith in God's promise (cf. Heb. 11:17–19), and God provides a substitute at the last moment in order to preserve Isaac's life.³⁵ Once again, we see that God must provide a miracle for his plan to be accomplished, and in this way, he would receive the most glory.

Notice God's response to Abraham's obedient faith:

Genesis 22:17–18

¹⁷ I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies, ¹⁸ and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice.

Now read Hebrews 11:17–19.

Hebrews 11:17–19

¹⁷ By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was in the act of offering up his only son, ¹⁸ of whom it was said, "Through Isaac shall your offspring be named."¹⁹ He considered that God was able even to raise him from the dead, from which, figuratively speaking, he did receive him back.

11. What does the author of Hebrews say about Abraham's faith?

- **ANSWER.** *Abraham was willing to sacrifice his son Isaac because he believed that God was able to raise him from the dead in order to fulfill his covenant promises!*

35 There is an interesting observation in this narrative that foreshadows a greater sacrifice. When Isaac asks his father where the *lamb* is for the burnt offering, Abraham responds by saying that "God will provide for himself the *lamb* for a burnt offering" (Gen. 22:8). Later in the narrative, however, we see that it was a *ram* that was caught in the thicket and sacrificed in place of Abraham's promise child (Gen. 22:13). It is possible that the apostle John picks up on this point in his gospel when he records John the Baptist's reaction to seeing Jesus walk his way. "Behold, the *Lamb* of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29). Though Abraham was willing to offer his own son as a sacrifice, God spared him from this so that Isaac could carry the covenant promises down to Abraham's true son, Jesus, the Son of God, whom God would *not* spare but offer up as a sacrifice so that his covenant promises could be fulfilled and blessing would extend to all the families of the earth!

God continues to bless this family as Abraham sends his servant to Mesopotamia to find a wife for Isaac. God prospers the servant's journey, and the promise of blessing is given to Isaac's wife, Rebekah, as she leaves her home to go live with her new husband in the land of Canaan. "The creation blessing of Genesis 1:28 continues to reverberate through the pages of the Text (cf. 3:15; 8:17; 9:1, 7; 17:6; 22:17)" (DD, 85).

Genesis 24:60

² *And they blessed Rebekah and said to her, "Our sister, may you become thousands of ten thousands, and may your offspring possess the gate of those who hate him!"*

When another famine strikes the land, Isaac decides to go down to Egypt rather than trusting God to provide for him in his land, an act that mirrors his own father's actions (Gen. 12:10). But God stops him and teaches him a lesson.

Genesis 26:1–5

¹ *Now there was a famine in the land, besides the former famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went to Gerar to Abimelech king of the Philistines.*

² *And Yahweh appeared to him and said, "Do not go down to Egypt; dwell in the land of which I shall tell you. ³ Sojourn in this land, and I will be with you and will bless you, for to you and to your offspring I will give all these lands, and I will establish the oath that I swore to Abraham your father. ⁴ I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and will give to your offspring all these lands. And in your offspring all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, ⁵ because Abraham obeyed my voice and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws."*

12. True/False: God's covenant promises extended to Isaac because of his father's faithfulness to God.

In summary, the promises made to Abraham are passed down a generation to his son Isaac. Despite numerous obstacles, God's word has not failed, and the hope for a royal offspring is still alive!

Day 4

JACOB

Required Reading: *Dominion and Dynasty*, pages 86–88.

▷ stop at “The Joseph Story and Universal Blessing”

Again, the perpetuation of the line of promise is met with the obstacle of barrenness as Isaac and Rebekah cannot conceive. But through Isaac’s prayers, God blesses the couple with twin progeny (Gen. 25:20–21). The babies fight within her womb and she inquires of God who answers, “Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you shall be divided; the one shall be stronger than the other, and the older shall serve the younger” (25:23).

This may not appear significant to a twenty-first century reader, but in Isaac’s day the firstborn son had both great responsibility and great privilege. A prophecy like this would seem very backwards. Yet, God often works in “backward” ways in order to prevent humans from boasting (among other reasons). God’s chosen are often unlikely candidates. In this particular narrative, the younger son is told he will have authority over the firstborn. The birth narrative of these twins highlights God’s electing purposes.

Consider how the apostle Paul uses the births of the patriarchs to teach God’s electing purposes:

Romans 9:6–13

⁶ But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel, ⁷ and not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring, but “Through Isaac shall your offspring be named.” ⁸ This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring. ⁹ For this is what the promise said: “About this time next year I will return, and Sarah shall have a son.” ¹⁰ And not only so, but also when Rebekah had conceived children by one man, our forefather Isaac, ¹¹ though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad—in order that God’s purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of him who calls— ¹² she was told, “The older will serve the younger.” ¹³ As it is written, “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.”

Isaac's birth teaches that God's election is not based on genealogy. This may come as a surprise in a story that's so focused on genealogy. But Paul says that not everyone who descends from Abraham is a true child of Abraham. It is based on God's promise; that is, his choice of who will receive the blessing and who will not.

Jacob's birth teaches that God's election is not based on one's own righteousness, but on God's grace. He chose Jacob to carry the blessing and not Esau before either of them had done anything good or bad. It definitely was not because of Jacob's exemplary character (cf. Gen. 27:35–36).

Throughout the story, we will see that God often does not choose the individuals we would choose to accomplish his purposes. He often chooses the weak, young, oppressed, despised, and even sinful ones so that it is very clear who is the one in control—God, the Creator King!

13. Have you ever considered the doctrine of election from this angle? According to Romans 9:11 (above) what is the reason Paul says God chose to bless Jacob and not Esau?

· *ANSWER. God chose Jacob "in order that his purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of him who calls." God has purposes that we cannot fathom when it comes to salvation, but the greatest purpose is that he alone would be magnified through his sovereign grace demonstrated through Christ.*

14. Why do you think God chooses weak and imperfect people to fulfill his promises? (See 1 Corinthians 1:26–31 for help.)

· *ANSWER. Weak and imperfect people are more likely to boast in God and not in themselves when they are saved from their lost state, or when God uses them to fulfill his purposes. When it is clear that God was the one who acted, it is more glorifying to God.*

Interestingly, the way in which Jacob secures God's blessing is through deceit (Gen. 27). Essentially he steals the blessing from his older brother Esau. Though the ends do not justify the means, Rebekah and Jacob's actions fulfill God's prediction (27:28–29). Later, we see Isaac blessing Jacob again. The promise of blessing has been passed down to another generation!

Genesis 28:3–4

⁶ God Almighty bless you and make you fruitful and multiply you, that you may become a company of peoples. ⁷ May he give the blessing of Abraham to you and to your offspring with you, that you may take possession of the land of your sojournings that God gave to Abraham!”

On his way to Paddan-Aram to find a wife, Jacob has a dream that confirms this blessing. Dempster says this:

“The vision is interpreted by the words. The ramp connecting earth and heaven graphically links the unity of heaven and earth with the sleeping Jacob. Geography and genealogy coalesce on a rock in a field. God will build his tower through a seed found in this land. Or, in the language of the text, the blessing (read the blessing) will come through Jacob and his seed” (DD, 86–87).

Genesis 28:13–15

¹³ And behold, Yahweh stood above it and said, “I am Yahweh, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac. The land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring. ¹⁴ Your offspring will be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south, and in you and your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed. ¹⁵ Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land. For I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised.

15. God always keeps his promises. This ought to encourage us as we face difficult circumstances in life. What is one promise God has made in his word that applies to a particular situation in your life right now that you can hold on to?

• **ANSWER.** *Answers will vary*

As Jacob serves his uncle Laban for his two daughters, everything he does blesses Laban’s family (30:29–30). God blesses Jacob with twelve children (29:31–30:24)! It is through these children that the promise of a great nation begins to take shape. Jacob insists on leaving Laban and returning to his own land, the land of Canaan. Jacob leaves Paddan-aram as a wealthy man with many possessions and many children.

Required Reading: *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About*, pages 36–37.

- ▷ begin at the paragraph that begins with “The promise of a great name...”
- ▷ stop at the paragraph that begins with “Finally, the promises climaxed...”

On his way back to his country, Jacob has another significant encounter with God. Fill in the blanks from the reading:

The underlined words in this quotation are left blank in the Student Workbook. We suggest that the instructor read the quote aloud to allow students to check their work.

“In a dramatic encounter with God that became a defining moment for the entire nation, Isaac’s son Jacob (“Heel Grabber”) was renamed Israel (“Fighter/Striver with God”), thus bestowing on the nation its name. His body bore the wounds of a struggle through which he won blessing from God for his family (32:1–32). Jacob foreshadowed a greater Israel (see Isa. 49:3, 5–6) who in a titanic struggle would emerge victorious but bear deep wounds in winning the blessing for the entire world (52:13–53:12; cf. Acts 3:25–26; Gal. 3:13–14; 2 Cor. 5:21). This latter Israel would be given a name that would be above every name—the name “Lord,” and thus he, as Abraham’s greater son, would fulfill this incredible promise (Phil. 2:9–10)” (WOTARCA, 36).³⁶

16. True/False: Jacob was given a name that was above every name, since he was the fulfiller of God’s promises.

Genesis 35:11–12

¹¹ *And God said to [Jacob], “I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply. A nation and a company of nations shall come from you, and kings shall come from your own body.”* ¹² *The land that I gave to Abraham and Isaac I will give to you, and I will give the land to your offspring after you.*

The promise is still alive as the hunt for the offspring continues. God’s promises to his people have overcome countless hurdles in just three generations of people. But there is still a long time before these promises would be completely fulfilled.

³⁶ Jason DeRouchie, ed., *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic & Professional, 2013). Used by permission. No duplication or distributed is permitted without written permission of the publisher.

Day 5

JUDAH (THANKS TO JOSEPH)

After the narrative of Jacob's life we come to the last section of Genesis (Gen. 37–50) which focuses on the life of Joseph. This may come as a surprise because the last three generations described were from the line of the promise. But Joseph is not the chosen seed; his brother Judah is. We will see the significance of this in a moment.

Required Reading: *Dominion and Dynasty*, pages 88–92.

▷ begin at “The Joseph Story and Universal Blessing”

Required Reading: *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About*, pages 37–38.

▷ begin at the paragraph that begins with “Finally, the promises climaxed...”

17. Who are the three prominent figures that Dempster says are highlighted in this final section of Genesis, and why are they significant? (*DD*, 88–89)

• **ANSWER.** *Joseph, Jacob/Israel, and Judah. Jacob and Judah are God's chosen line whose descendants will inherit the promises while Joseph is the instrument God uses to preserve this chosen line.*

In Genesis 37, Joseph dreams that his eleven brothers and father and mother will one day bow down to him as he rules over them. Though his brothers attempt to kill him, God ironically uses their evil plot against him to save their very lives (50:20). Joseph is brought out of the Promised Land where he eventually exercises dominion over Egypt and blesses the nations by providing grain during the famine (41:56–57). But more significantly, he preserves the chosen seed, Judah, from dying off.

18. Why do you think so much attention is given to Joseph if he is not the chosen line?

• **ANSWER.** *The reason the author gives so much attention to Joseph is because he is the one who saves the chosen line from dying in the famine. He exercises dominion in Egypt where Jacob and his other sons must flee to for food, and Joseph is the one to provide it for them. Joseph was not the ancestor of the serpent-crusher. Rather, he preserved the chosen line.*

Interestingly, Judah, the chosen seed is not presented in the best light. First he seems to be indifferent to how the other brothers treat Joseph (37:26–27), while Reuben seems to care much for Joseph. Then, in the very next chapter, we read that Judah sleeps with a prostitute who turns out to be his daughter-in-law Tamar (Ch. 38). It is through the son of this scandalous relationship that God’s chosen seed would one day come!

19. Does it surprise you that God would use an immoral relationship like this in his plan to redeem the world? Jot down some of your thoughts (emotional reactions, insights, encouragement, etc.).

· ANSWER. *Answers will vary*

But as the story progresses, Judah is portrayed as the compassionate and noble one who offers his own life for his younger brother Benjamin (43:8–9; 44:32–33). This type of character is more reflective of the one through whom God would one day restore his kingdom.

Jacob’s family eventually sojourns to Egypt to live there. On the way, God reassures Jacob that his descendants would return to the land God promised to his grandfather Abraham. But he also states that it will be in Egypt where he makes him into a great nation!

Genesis 46:3–4

³ Then he said, “I am God, the God of your father. Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for there I will make you into a great nation. ⁴ I myself will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also bring you up again, and Joseph’s hand shall close your eyes.”

At the end of his life Jacob stands before Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, and blesses him, his family, and his country (47:7–10). Though Pharaoh is the most powerful man on earth, this scene shows who is truly the source of blessing—this weary old man from the line of Abraham! Already, God’s promise to bless the nations is being partially realized.

When Jacob is on his deathbed he gathers his sons around him and foretells their futures.

Genesis 49:8–10

⁸ Judah, your brothers shall praise you; your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies; your father’s sons shall bow down before you.... ¹⁰ The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet, until tribute comes to him; and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples.

20. What is significant about Judah's future role in the world?

- **ANSWER.** *Judah's future includes dominion and blessing which clearly distinguishes him as the agent through whom God's universal blessing would come to the world.*

Judah will exercise dominion! It is through Judah's line that God's promised blessing will extend to all the world. A descendent of Judah would be the longed-for serpent-crusher who would undo the curse and re-establish God's kingdom.

The very end of Genesis recounts Joseph dying and telling his brothers that they will return to the promised land. He requests that his bones be buried back in the land of Canaan, which foreshadows the return of God's people to their land.

Genesis 50:24–25

²⁴ And Joseph said to his brothers, "I am about to die, but God will visit you and bring you up out of this land to the land that he swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob." ²⁵ Then Joseph made the sons of Israel swear, saying, "God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here."

In summary, the perished kingdom in Genesis 3–11 finds a remedy in God's promise of a future kingdom wherein God's people (Abraham's descendants) would live in God's place (land of Canaan) under God's rule and thus experience God's blessing. God's promise to Abraham is preserved through Isaac, Jacob, and Judah, who we see will exercise dominion and bring blessing to all the families of the earth.

The Kingdom of God			
<u>The Kingdom of God</u>	<u>The Pattern of the Kingdom</u>	<u>The Perished Kingdom</u>	<u>The Promised Kingdom</u>
God's People	Adam and Eve	No one	Abraham's descendants
God's Place	The garden	Banished	Canaan (specifically Jerusalem and temple)
God's Rule and Blessing	God's word; perfect relationships	Disobedience and curse	Blessing to Israel and nations



§ INTEGRATIVE ASSIGNMENT

In one short paragraph, summarize in your own words the main message of the book of Genesis so that someone with no biblical knowledge could understand.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



Review the following questions in preparation for discussion. As you have worked through this lesson, record any lingering questions that you may have.

1. Why do you suppose God chose to restore his kingdom through such a long, complex process rather than “snapping his finger” after Genesis 3:6 and making everything right again?
2. As Genesis makes clear, God chooses who will be his people apart from their line of descent and apart from their own righteousness. How should we who are in a covenant relationship with God respond to God’s electing purposes?
3. No one deserves God’s blessing, and it is only those who have faith in Christ who do. Discuss how God’s promises are a source of blessing for believers and a source of cursing for unbelievers.
4. Your own question(s):

•••••

§ ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- ▷ Jason DeRouchie, “The Blessing-Commission, the Promised Offspring, and the *Toledoth* Structure of Genesis,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 56, 2013.
- ▷ Sam Storms, *Chosen for Life* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007).
- ▷ John Piper, *The Justification of God: An Exegetical & Theological Study of Romans 9:1–23* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1993).
- ▷ “History of Salvation in the Old Testament: Preparing the Way for Christ,” *ESV Study Bible*, (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 2,636–2,637.

Exodus

5

🔗 INTRODUCTION

In Genesis, we learned about God's kingdom. We saw God's pattern for his kingdom, how the kingdom perished because of man's sin, and then we saw God's promise to restore his kingdom on earth through the seed of Eve, Seth, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and finally Judah. A male, royal descendant from this line would one day crush the serpent's head, exercise dominion in a land, re-establish God's kingdom, and bring blessing to the curse-ridden world. These gospel promises were met with obstacle after obstacle, but God remained true to his word and always preserved his promises. However, by the end of Genesis, God's people are *outside* their land, they are only 70 in number, they are subject to a nation that is *exercising dominion over them*, and the world still lay under God's curse. Exodus continues the story begun in Genesis, showing that God's purposes in creation and his promises to Abraham were not void. We see God intervene on behalf of his people, redeeming them from slavery and entering into a covenant relationship with them. Everything God does is for a purpose, and Exodus shows us what that purpose is.

🔗 LESSON OBJECTIVES

After completing this lesson, the student should be able to

- ▷ understand God's purpose behind all his actions.
- ▷ explain how God redeems his people from bondage.
- ▷ explain how God's presence demands a holy life.

Total pages of reading for this week: 37



Day 1 focuses on an important theological theme that is crucial for students to understand. Here are a few quotes from *Desiring God* that may be helpful to bring into the discussion:

- “God’s own glory is uppermost in His own affections. In everything He does, His purpose is to preserve and display that glory. To say that His glory is uppermost in His own affections means that he puts a greater value on it than on anything else. He delights in His glory above all things.”
(Piper, *Desiring God*, 41–42)
- “God’s ultimate goal therefore is to preserve and display His infinite and awesome greatness and worth, that is, His glory. God has many other goals in what He does. But none of them is more ultimate than this. They are all subordinate. God’s overwhelming passion is to exalt the value of His glory. To that end, He seeks to display it, to oppose those who belittle it, and to vindicate it from all contempt. It is clearly the uppermost reality in His affections. He loves His glory infinitely.”
(Ibid., 42)
- “God loves to behold His glory reflected in His works. So the eternal happiness of the triune God spilled over in the work of creation and redemption. And since this original happiness was God’s delight in His own glory, therefore the happiness that He has in all His works of creation and redemption is nothing other than a delight in His own glory. This is why God has done all things, from creation to consummation, for the preservation and display of His glory. All His works are simply the spillover of His infinite exuberance for His own excellence.”
(Ibid., 44)

Additional topics to discuss:

- ▷ The relationship between Pharaoh hardening his own heart (Exod. 8:15, 32; 9:34), God hardening Pharaoh’s heart (Exod. 4:21; 7:3; 9:12; 10:1, 20, 27; 11:10; 14:4, 8, 17), and the neutral “Pharaoh’s heart was hardened” (Exod. 7:13, 14, 22; 8:19; 9:7, 34).
- ▷ God desires that his people give cheerfully, not grudgingly (Exod. 25:2; 35:5, 21, 22, 26, 29; 36:2; cf. 2 Cor. 9:7).



Day 1

Day 1 has more required reading than Days 2–5. Thus, the discussion of the reading will be kept to a minimum even though the content is very important!

In this lesson, be prepared to answer questions from students concerning God's pursuit of his own glory. This can raise all sorts of questions, especially if the student has never been exposed to this God-centered theology.

The instructor may want to read or review Chapter 1 of John Piper's *Desiring God* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah, 2003), 31–50, or listen to the resources on the *Desiring God* website (www.desiringgod.org). See Teaching Notes for additional quotes that may be helpful.

GOD WANTS TO BE KNOWN... AND THIS IS A GOOD THING

§ BIBLE STUDY: Read these passages and answer the questions that follow:

Consider God's work in creation:

Psalm 8:1

¹ O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens.

Psalm 19:1

¹ The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.

Isaiah 6:2-3

² Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. ³ And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is Yahweh of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!"

Isaiah 43:6-7

⁶ I will say to the north, Give up, and to the south, Do not withhold; bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the end of the earth, ⁷ everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.

Revelation 4:11

¹¹ Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created.

Consider God's work in redemption:

Psalm 79:9

⁹ Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of your name; deliver us, and atone for our sins, for your name's sake!

Ephesians 1:3-14

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, ⁴ even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love ⁵ he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, ⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. ⁷ In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, ⁸ which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight ⁹ making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ ¹⁰ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. ¹¹ In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, ¹² so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. ¹³ In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

1. Underline every instance of the glory of God in these verses. What is God's single purpose in both creation and redemption?
 - **ANSWER.** *The created world (including mankind) exists to display the glory of God; the whole earth is full of his glory. In addition, God redeems mankind "to the praise of his glory."*

Now consider God's deliverance of Israel from Egypt:

Exodus 9:13-16

¹³ Then Yahweh said to Moses, "Rise up early in the morning and present yourself before Pharaoh and say to him, 'Thus says Yahweh, the God of the Hebrews, "Let my people go, that they may serve me. ¹⁴ For this time I will send all my plagues on you yourself, and on your servants and your people, so that you may know that there is none like me in all the earth. ¹⁵ For by now I could have put out my hand and struck you and your people with pestilence, and you

would have been cut off from the earth. ¹⁶ But for this purpose I have raised you up, to show you my power, so that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth.”””

Exodus 14:13-18

¹³ And Moses said to the people, “Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of Yahweh, which he will work for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again. ¹⁴ Yahweh will fight for you, and you have only to be silent.” ¹⁵ Yahweh said to Moses, “Why do you cry to me? Tell the people of Israel to go forward. ¹⁶ Lift up your staff, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, that the people of Israel may go through the sea on dry ground. ¹⁷ And I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they shall go in after them, and I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his host, his chariots, and his horsemen. ¹⁸ And the Egyptians shall know that I am Yahweh, when I have gotten glory over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen.”

2. Why does God deliver Israel from Egypt in the way that he does? What was he trying to accomplish?

- **ANSWER.** God does not wipe out Pharaoh and the Egyptians in one stroke because he intends to display his power in Pharaoh. God wants his name (or glory) to be proclaimed in all the earth. By fighting Israel’s battle himself (Exod. 14:14), God will demonstrate that it is by his power alone that Israel is delivered. Again, he does this so that he would be glorified and known as the true God.

In Exodus, we see God’s ultimate motive behind everything he does—namely, to display his great name so that the whole world may see his glory and know that he alone is God! This divine purpose is shown in God’s deliverance of his people, as God demonstrates his power and glory through a prolonged display of signs and wonders that diminish Pharaoh and the Egyptian gods and bring glory to his name.

Required Reading: *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About*, pages 40–46.

- ▷ stop at “The Author of Exodus Celebrated Yahweh’s Power to Redeem His People from Slavery”

3. Fill in the blanks from the reading:

“Examining the use of ‘ know ’ and other factors shows that Yahweh’s primary concern in the exodus was the revelation and demonstration of his own name and glory ” (WOTARCA, 42).³⁷

The underlined words in this quotation are left blank in the Student Workbook. We suggest that the instructor read the quote aloud to allow students to check their work.

Required Reading: *Dominion and Dynasty*, pages 93–98.

- ▷ stop at the paragraph that begins with “When viewed against the wider context...”
4. When God reveals himself to Moses in the burning bush, what hope does his name entail that would give Moses confidence as he went back to Egypt to deliver Israel? (see Exod. 3:11–17 and *DD*, 96)
- **ANSWER.** *God reveals his name which means “I AM/WILL BE” (Exod. 3:14). This entails both God’s presence that will be with Moses and his sovereign freedom to do as he chooses (he cannot be manipulated). In other words, God was in control of Pharaoh, and he would be with Moses!*

³⁷ Jason DeRouchie, ed., *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic & Professional, 2013). Used by permission. No duplication or distributed is permitted without written permission of the publisher.

Day 2

PASSOVER AND REDEMPTION

God commissions Moses to confront Pharaoh, commanding him to let God's people go (Exod. 3:10). God tells Moses that he would perform signs and wonders before Pharaoh and all Egypt (3:19–20). However, the first nine signs (plagues) shockingly do not move Pharaoh to let God's people go. Rather, he hardens his heart and refuses to yield to the God of Israel. The problem with this is that the God of Israel is also the God of the whole world, and he wants everyone to know that! Pharaoh would not get away with such stubbornness and defiance to the living Creator God.

By the end of the first nine plagues, the land of Egypt is utterly decimated. This is no *VeggieTales* story! From a human standpoint things could not possibly have gotten worse. Yet God had one more sign to perform in order to make himself known—the Passover.

Required Reading: *Dominion and Dynasty*, pages 98–100.

- ▷ begin at the paragraph that begins with “When viewed against the wider context...”
- ▷ stop at “The Goal of the Exodus”

5. According to Dempster, what is the irony of the Passover in regards to the firstborn children of Israel and Egypt? (*DD*, 98–99).

- **ANSWER.** *Although Pharaoh had tried to kill the Hebrew children before (1:22), now it was the firstborn of the Israelites who would live and the firstborn of the Egyptians who would die. The firstborn son of Yahweh will have dominion over the firstborn son of Pharaoh!*

While Pharaoh was the most powerful man on earth and his firstborn son would have been the heir to his throne, God wanted all Egypt to know that Israel, God's firstborn son (Exod. 4:22), would exercise dominion over Pharaoh's progeny. To accomplish this, God would strike dead all the firstborn in Egypt while passing over every house that had the blood of a lamb on the doorposts.

Exodus 12:12–13

¹² For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am Yahweh. ¹³ The blood shall be a sign for you, on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt.

6. What was required for God's sinful people to survive his furious judgment?

· **ANSWER.** *God's people must sacrifice a lamb and be covered by its blood.*

It is not insignificant that Jesus was arrested and sentenced to death on the night of Passover (Luke 22:7, 54; 23:23–25, 33). The true Lamb of God (John 1:29) would be sacrificed, and his blood would be applied to the hearts of his people so that on the day of judgment God's furious wrath will "pass over" his people. The apostle Paul declared, "Christ, our Passover Lamb, has been sacrificed" (1 Cor. 5:7). This should evoke praise and worship in the hearts of those who have been covered by Christ's blood! We do not have to fear the Destroyer!

Required Reading: *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About*, pages 46–48.

- ▷ begin at "The Author of Exodus Celebrated Yahweh's Power to Redeem His People from Slavery"
- ▷ stop at "The Author of Exodus Disclosed Yahweh's Gracious Provision of His Covenant with Israel"

7. According to Turner, what New Testament event parallels the exodus event of the Old Testament? Explain the outcome of each event.

· **ANSWER.** *The exodus event is parallel to the cross-resurrection event in the New Testament. In Turner's words, "In each case, the great redemptive act (exodus/cross) produces the covenant community of God's people (Israel/church) who are called to serve God and his universal mission" (WOTARCA, 46).³⁸*

³⁸ Jason DeRouchie, ed., *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic & Professional, 2013). Used by permission. No duplication or distributed is permitted without written permission of the publisher.

“Passover established the concept of salvation by substitutionary sacrifice, as the death of the lamb yielded redemption” (WOTARCA, 47).³⁹

The exodus event teaches us that God is the conquering King who must fight for his people. They cannot save themselves! When the Israelites had left Egypt and were trapped between the shore of the Red Sea and the Egyptian army, Moses exhorts the people, “Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of Yahweh, which he will work for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again. Yahweh will fight for you, and you have only to be silent” (Exod. 14:13–14). God’s triumph over Pharaoh and the Egyptians is just a foretaste of his ultimate triumph over the seed of the serpent.

Read Exodus 15:1–18:

Exodus 15:1–18

¹ *Then Moses and the people of Israel sang this song to Yahweh, saying,*

*“I will sing to Yahweh, for he has triumphed gloriously;
the horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea.*

² *Yahweh is my strength and my song,
and he has become my salvation;
this is my God, and I will praise him,
my father’s God, and I will exalt him.*

³ *Yahweh is a man of war;
Yahweh is his name.*

⁴ *“Pharaoh’s chariots and his host he cast into the sea,
and his chosen officers were sunk in the Red Sea.*

⁵ *The floods covered them;
they went down into the depths like a stone.*

⁶ *Your right hand, O Yahweh, glorious in power,
your right hand, O Yahweh, shatters the enemy.*

⁷ *In the greatness of your majesty you overthrow your adversaries;
you send out your fury; it consumes them like stubble.*

⁸ *At the blast of your nostrils the waters piled up;
the floods stood up in a heap;
the deeps congealed in the heart of the sea.*

⁹ *The enemy said, ‘I will pursue, I will overtake,
I will divide the spoil, my desire shall have its fill of them.
I will draw my sword; my hand shall destroy them.’*

¹⁰ *You blew with your wind; the sea covered them;
they sank like lead in the mighty waters.*

³⁹ Jason DeRouchie, ed., *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic & Professional, 2013). Used by permission. No duplication or distributed is permitted without written permission of the publisher.

- ¹¹ “Who is like you, O Yahweh, among the gods?
Who is like you, majestic in holiness,
awesome in glorious deeds, doing wonders?”
- ¹² You stretched out your right hand;
the earth swallowed them.
- ¹³ “You have led in your steadfast love the people whom you have redeemed;
you have guided them by your strength to your holy abode.
- ¹⁴ The peoples have heard; they tremble;
pangs have seized the inhabitants of Philistia.
- ¹⁵ Now are the chiefs of Edom dismayed;
trembling seizes the leaders of Moab;
all the inhabitants of Canaan have melted away.
- ¹⁶ Terror and dread fall upon them;
because of the greatness of your arm, they are still as a stone,
till your people, O Yahweh, pass by,
till the people pass by whom you have purchased.
- ¹⁷ You will bring them in and plant them on your own mountain,
the place, O Yahweh, which you have made for your abode,
the sanctuary, O Lord, which your hands have established.
- ¹⁸ Yahweh will reign forever and ever.”

8. Underline every verb whose subject is Yahweh (underline everything Yahweh does). What does this tell you about Yahweh and about Israel’s salvation?

- **ANSWER.** “Triumphed” (v. 1; cf. v. 21); “thrown” horse and rider (v. 1; cf. v. 21); “become” my salvation (v. 2); “cast” Pharaoh’s chariots and host (v. 4); “shatters” the enemy (v. 6); “overthrow” his adversaries (v. 7a); “send out” his fury (v. 7b); “blew” with his wind (v. 10); “stretched out” his right hand (v. 12); “led” and “guided” his people (v. 13); “purchased” his people (v. 16); “bring” and “plant” his people (v. 17); and “reign” (v. 18). This language tells us that Yahweh is Israel’s divine warrior King and he fights for his people. “Their salvation was a result of God’s ultimate quest to gain victory over his enemies” (WOTARCA, 48).⁴⁰

God acts for his people and delivers them from bondage. While the Egyptian bondage was merely physical, it will become evident that God’s people are still in bondage to something much more powerful than Pharaoh. And it would take something much greater than the blood of a lamb to rescue them from this bondage.

⁴⁰ Jason DeRouchie, ed., *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic & Professional, 2013). Used by permission. No duplication or distributed is permitted without written permission of the publisher.

Day 3

COVENANT AND LAW

The events of Exodus 19–20 have massive significance not only for the people of Israel but for us today. Through God’s deliverance, the redeemed people of Israel have now become a nation, and God desires that they reflect his character so that all the nations might know who this sovereign Yahweh is. To this end, he enters into a formal covenant relationship with them whereby he would be their God, and they would be his people. The purpose for this new covenant is to fulfill the promises he made in the Abrahamic covenant. Thus, the Mosaic covenant flows out of the Abrahamic covenant and is one of God’s means of bringing the latter to fruition.

Exodus 19:2–6

² *There Israel encamped before the mountain,* ³ *while Moses went up to God. Yahweh called to him out of the mountain, saying, “Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the people of Israel: ⁴ You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself. ⁵ Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; ⁶ and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel.”*

Notice it is Yahweh who initiates the relationship, not his people (Exod. 19:4). This is important!

“Israel, God’s ‘son’ (4:22–23), is Abraham’s offspring, and God’s larger mission to use the elect nation to reach the world shapes the particular way he treats Israel and the particular mission he would give her at Sinai (see esp. 19:4–6). Major lines of continuity, therefore, exist between the Abrahamic covenant and the covenant at Sinai, and recognition of this link helps clarify what God is doing in Exodus” (WOTARCA, 42).⁴¹

⁴¹ Jason DeRouchie, ed., *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic & Professional, 2013). Used by permission. No duplication or distributed is permitted without written permission of the publisher.

9. True/False: We should view the covenant at Sinai as God starting his relationship over with Israel, and it would now be based on their obedience to the law rather than on the Abrahamic promises.

Only when Israel followed Yahweh's instruction would they image his character to the nations and thereby function as priests and a channel of blessing to them (Gen. 12:3). They would show the rest of the fallen world what a right relationship with Yahweh should look like.

Required Reading: *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About*, pages 48–52.

- ▷ begin at “The Author of Exodus Disclosed Yahweh’s Gracious Provision of His Covenant with Israel”
- ▷ stop at “The Author of Exodus Emphasized the Significance of Yahweh’s Presence among His People”

“At Sinai, Yahweh formalized his relationship with Israel through a covenant, and he revealed to the people how to live in response to his gracious redemption”
(WOTARCA, 48).⁴²

10. Turner states, “The programmatic statement of Israel’s mission in Exodus 19:5–6 shows how Israel can fulfill the (universal) climax of the Abrahamic covenant: ‘In you all the families of the earth will be blessed’” (WOTARCA, 49).⁴¹ According to Turner, what two roles would Israel play to bring this universal blessing?

- **ANSWER.** *Israel had a royal and a priestly role. As God’s “treasured possession” and “holy nation” they would represent God’s power and holiness (image-bearers). As a “kingdom of priests” they would mediate between God and the nations. In this way, Yahweh would be made known to the whole earth, and blessing would come to all the families.*

1 Peter 2:9

⁹ But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

⁴² Jason DeRouchie, ed., *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic & Professional, 2013). Used by permission. No duplication or distributed is permitted without written permission of the publisher.

11. Read #3 in the inset on page 52 of WOTARCA. According to Turner, who fulfilled the Old Covenant's mission for Israel to be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation in order to bless the world?

· ANSWER. *God's New Covenant people.*

Contrary to what modern culture might tell us, it is not a bad thing to live under authority. In fact, to live under God's authority is the only way to enjoy God's blessing. When Adam and Eve were given the command not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, it was for their good. Only when they broke God's law did it become dangerous for them, since it separated them from the living God. The only way for God's presence to dwell among his people is if they are submissive to his rule, which is what the Mosaic covenant sought to re-establish.

Deuteronomy 10:12–13

¹² And now, Israel, what does Yahweh your God require of you, but to fear Yahweh your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve Yahweh your God with all your heart and with all your soul, ¹³ and to keep the commandments and statutes of Yahweh, which I am commanding you today for your good?

12. True/False: God gave Israel the law merely to demonstrate who had authority over them—it had no practical benefit for them.

Consider what Roberts says about the relationship between God's law and God's presence:⁴³

"If the rejection of God's law brings death and curse (separation from God), the restoration of the law enables life and blessing (relationship with God as he draws near again). The 'blessing promise' is therefore chiefly fulfilled in this period of the history of Israel in two ways: by the giving of God's law on Mount Sinai and then by his presence with his people in the tabernacle."

When Israel obeys God's voice and keeps his covenant, then they will show what a proper relationship between God and man ought to look like. This is a priestly function, since its goal was to bring all the other nations into a right relationship

43 Roberts, *God's Big Picture*, 68.

with God. But it is also the function of a son. Just like Adam was to display God's character for all the world to see, so Israel, as God's firstborn son (Exod. 4:22), is to display to all the nations God's character (likeness).

God's promise to bless Abraham and his offspring will come about as Israel keeps the law. In this way Israel will be blessed, and through her, all the nations. Thus, the Mosaic covenant is given to Israel in order to bring God's promises to Abraham to fruition.

It is crucial to understand that the law does not create the relationship with God; God's grace creates the relationship. It is God who takes the initiative to enter into a covenant relationship with his people (19:4). The preface to the Ten Commandments shows us this.

Exodus 20:2–3

² I am Yahweh your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. ³ You shall have no other gods before me.

God gives Israel his law in order to govern their covenant relationship with him (Exod. 19–20). The Ten Commandments are a summary of all the laws that God gave to Moses. They are the basic covenant stipulations, written by the finger of God, while all the other laws are practical outworkings of these. But even the Ten Commandments can be boiled down to two commandments.

Matthew 22:36–40

³⁶ "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" ³⁷ And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. ³⁸ This is the great and first commandment. ³⁹ And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. ⁴⁰ On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."

Romans 13:8–10

⁸ Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. ⁹ For the commandments ... are summed up in this word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." ¹⁰ Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

The purpose of the Ten Commandments is to protect the rights of others, not to limit one's freedom. Because God is concerned about creating a community

of people that reflect his image, this is important. As God's people, Israel was to love one another by "not murdering, not committing adultery, not stealing, etc." Thus, the Ten Commandments may rightly be described as "A Bill of Other People's Rights."⁴⁴ In the same way, Christians fulfill the law by loving one another and thereby proving we are disciples of Jesus (John 13:35; cf. Phil. 2:3).

Required Reading: *Dominion and Dynasty*, pages 100–102.

- ▷ begin at "The Goal of the Exodus"
- ▷ stop at the paragraph that begins "The next chapters depict Moses' ascent..."

44 Daniel Block, "Deuteronomy," in *New International Version Application Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 161.

Day 4

GOD'S DWELLING WITH MAN

After God redeemed his people from slavery, established his covenant with them, and gave them his law, we see seven chapters describing in scrupulous detail the instructions for making a tent (Exod. 25–31). But this is no ordinary tent—God is going to live in this tent! Thus, Israel must pay close attention to every detail.

Exodus 25:8

⁸ *And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst.*

Exodus 29:45–46

⁴⁵ *I will dwell among the people of Israel and will be their God.* ⁴⁶ *And they shall know that I am Yahweh their God, who brought them out of the land of Egypt that I might dwell among them. I am Yahweh their God.*

13. Where was the last place we saw God dwelling with his people? Select the correct answer.
- a) in the garden of Eden
 - b) on the ark
 - c) in the land of Canaan
 - d) on Mt. Sinai

It is striking that thirteen chapters (chs. 25–31, 35–40) are given to describing the blueprints and construction of the tabernacle as the people of God labor to prepare a place that is suitable for such a holy God as Yahweh. The plans were thorough and tedious. God, however, created his sanctuary with mere words (cf. Gen. 1)!

The fact that this creating, redeeming, covenant-making God desires to dwell with his people is an amazing reality! Just like in the original creation, God would dwell among his people. Because God is the source of life, his presence dwelling among his people is extremely important. It is Yahweh's presence that distinguishes Israel from the rest of the nations.

Exodus 33:16

¹⁶ *For how shall it be known that I have found favor in your sight, I and your people? Is it not in your going with us, so that we are distinct, I and your people, from every other people on the face of the earth?*

Deuteronomy 4:7

⁷ For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as Yahweh our God is to us, whenever we call upon him?

Required Reading: *Dominion and Dynasty*, pages 102–104.

- ▷ begin at the paragraph that begins “The next chapters depict Moses’ ascent...”
- ▷ stop at “A Fundamental Problem and a New Covenant”

14. Dempster describes a “geography of holiness” that is delineated at Sinai (DD, 103). Explain what this means and then show how it is reflected in the design of the tabernacle.

- **ANSWER.** *At Sinai, only Moses could ascend the mountain and be in the direct presence of God; the elders and assistants are able to ascend the mountain only partially; and the people are forbidden to come near the mountain. In the tabernacle, only the high priest could enter the Holy of Holies where God’s presence was (and that only once a year); the priests could enter the holy place where they performed certain sacrifices; and the people had to remain in the courtyard where other sacrifices took place. Each “zone” was one step removed from the divine presence.*

Required Reading: *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About*, pages 52–54.

- ▷ begin at “The Author of Exodus Emphasized the Significance of Yahweh’s Presence among His People”
- ▷ stop at “The Author of Exodus Called Israel to Respond to Yahweh’s Disclosure of Himself & His Will”

15. What does Turner compare the tabernacle to? What are some of the clues in the text that support this comparison?

- **ANSWER.** *Turner compares the tabernacle to the original creation of the world—specifically, the Garden of Eden. The instructions for the tabernacle take place in seven speeches (25:1; 30:11, 17, 22, 34; 31:1, 12—like the seven days of creation; Gen. 1); the sixth speech describes the installation of two Spirit-filled human beings to oversee the building project (30:1–11—like Adam and Eve on day six; Gen. 1:26–28); the seventh day highlights the importance of Sabbath-keeping (31:12–17—like God’s Sabbath rest on day seven; Gen. 2:1–3); the fabrics and curtain designs (25:4; 26:1, 31); cherubim are present (25:18–22; cf. Gen. 3:24); the gold lampstand represents the tree of life (Exod. 25:31–40; cf. Gen. 3:22).*

The theme of tabernacle runs throughout Scripture. As we saw, the Garden of Eden was a sanctuary where God dwelt with his people and where Adam and Eve served him. The next manifestation is here at Sinai where God's people are commanded to make a tent so that his presence would reside among them once again. The next manifestation is the temple which Solomon will build (1 Kings 6, esp. 6:12–13).

Now read John 1:14:

John 1:14

¹⁴ *And the Word became flesh and dwelt [lit. tabernacled] among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

16. John picks up on the theme of tabernacle in the Old Testament.

According to him, what is so significant about Jesus' coming to earth?

- **ANSWER.** *When Jesus came to earth, God was dwelling among his people once again, just like he had done in the OT.*

It is at the very end of the book that God comes to inhabit the tabernacle, and it is a glorious moment for the people of Israel!

Exodus 40:34

³⁴ *Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of Yahweh filled the tabernacle.*

Yahweh's glorious presence is the best *and* the worst thing Israel could have experienced. It all depended on how they would respond to Yahweh and his newly established law.

Day 5

THE RESPONSE OF GOD'S PEOPLE

17. Think of a time when someone you knew, loved, and cared for intentionally hurt or sinned against you (perhaps a child, parent, friend, spouse, neighbor, etc.). Describe how that made you feel.

• **ANSWER.** *Answers will vary*

Intentionally placed between the tabernacle blueprints (Exod. 25–31) and the construction of the tabernacle (chs. 35–40) is a narrative that reeks of disloyalty. Israel does not even make it 40 days after God enters into a covenant relationship with them and gives them the ten commandments before they break the first two foundational commandments!

First two commandments:

Exodus 20:2–4

² *I am Yahweh your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.* ³ *You shall have no others gods before me.* ⁴ *You shall not make for yourself a carved image.*

Israel's sin:

Exodus 32:1

¹ *When the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people gathered themselves together to Aaron and said to him, "Up, make us gods who shall go before us. As for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him."*

Exodus 32:4

⁴ *And [Aaron] received the gold from their hand and fashioned it with a graving tool and made a golden calf. And they said, "These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!"*

Despite the people's word that they would indeed obey what Yahweh commanded (Exod. 19:8; 24:3, 7), their ability to carry out that pledge was questionable, and Yahweh would not disregard his word. The people broke faith with him, and they deserved to be punished. Consider Dempster's note on this:

"The sin forces God to threaten to destroy Israel in agreement with the covenant and to start again with Moses. But Moses pleads (certainly not on the basis of the recently broken Sinai covenant) on the basis of the descendants promised in the covenant with Abraham as grounds for saving Israel (Exod. 32:13). It is only this reason that decisively moves God to have mercy on Israel" (DD, 104).

God commands Moses to go down the mountain because his people have turned away from him. When Moses sees the idolatry of the people he breaks the two tablets containing the law, symbolizing that the people had broken the covenant with Yahweh. Yahweh's anger burns against Israel, and he plans to destroy them like he did the whole earth in Genesis 6–8, but Moses intercedes on behalf of the people imploring God to relent of his anger and forgive his people.

Exodus 32:13

¹³ Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, your servants, to whom you swore by your own self, and said to them, "I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have promised I will give to your offspring, and they shall inherit it forever."

18. On what basis does Moses plead with God to forgive the people of Israel?

· ANSWER. *On the basis of his promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.*

Required Reading: *Dominion and Dynasty*, pages 104–107.

- ▷ begin at "A Fundamental Problem and a New Covenant"
- ▷ stop at "Leviticus: Sacrifice and Holiness"

After Moses appeals to God and God relents from destroying his people, Moses begs God to show him his glory (Exod. 33:18). Though no one can see God and live (33:20), God revealed himself to Moses in a magnificent way. Notice two significant passages:

Exodus 33:18–20

¹⁸ Moses said, “Please show me your glory.” ¹⁹ And he said, “I will make all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you my name, ‘Yahweh.’ And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I show mercy. ²⁰ But,” he said, “you cannot see my face, for man shall not see me and live.”

Exodus 34:5–7

⁵ Yahweh descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of Yahweh. ⁶ Yahweh passed before him and proclaimed, “Yahweh, Yahweh, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children’s children, to the third and the fourth generation.”

19. What aspect of Yahweh’s character receives the most emphasis in these verses? In the context of Israel’s sin of idolatry, why is the revelation of Yahweh’s name and character—that is, his glory—so important?

· **ANSWER.** *Yahweh’s compassion and grace are emphasized the most. This is important because Israel’s only hope for survival is the mercy of God. If he were to punish the people for their sin (which is also part of his character), then they would be consumed. But in these verses God is highlighting his compassion and grace (compare Exod. 20:5–6 with 34:6–7).*

It is because of this compassion and grace that Yahweh renews his covenant with Israel (34:10, 27). Moses writes the law on new tablets and then descends from the mountain as his face shown with the glory of Yahweh (34:29–35).

Required Reading: *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About*, pages 54–56.

- ▷ begin at “The Author of Exodus Called Israel to Respond to Yahweh’s Disclosure of Himself & His Will”

20. True/False: We should think of the Abrahamic covenant as unconditional and the Mosaic covenant as conditional.

Turner discusses the continuities and discontinuities between the Abrahamic and the Mosaic covenants. He points out that the Abrahamic covenant emphasizes blessing as a *gift* from God while the Mosaic covenant emphasizes blessing as a *reward* for obedience (*WOTARCA*, 55). Thus, God's promises to Abraham have not been nullified by the establishment of the Mosaic covenant. It is on this basis that Moses pleads with God to forgive the people (32:13). Yet, God cannot disregard his covenant with Moses either! If his people reject his rule over them, they will receive curse, not blessing.

Can you sense the tension rising between God's promises and their fulfillment? We have seen this before in Genesis, where God's promises met obstacle after obstacle. But God was faithful to overcome all of those. But after establishing the covenant at Sinai, how can he remain faithful to his promises to Abraham and yet also be faithful to punish his people if they are disobedient? It seems that God is working himself into a predicament.

At this point in the story, we know that God needs an obedient son who will image him perfectly to the world. This son would come from the line of Eve, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Judah. He would crush the serpent's head, exercise dominion over the nations, and he would also be obedient to the Mosaic covenant. Yet none of God's people have been able to do this so far. The golden calf incident is only one of many indicators that the people of Israel were unable to meet God's holy demands. They had been redeemed from the bondage of Egypt, but they were still chained to their sinful hearts!



§ INTEGRATIVE ASSIGNMENT

In one short paragraph, summarize in your own words the main message of the book of Exodus so that someone with no biblical knowledge could understand.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



Review the following questions in preparation for discussion. As you have worked through this lesson, record any lingering questions that you may have.

1. Why is it not wrong for God to pursue his own glory? Why is it wrong for humans to pursue their own glory?
2. Discuss the parallels between Israel's redemption from Egypt and a Christian's redemption from sin.
3. Discuss the role of law keeping (obedience) in the life of New Covenant members (Christians) and how it relates to one's justification. Consider John 14:15 (cf. John 14:21, 23; 15:10; 1 John 2:3; 5:3; 2 John 6).
4. Your own question(s):

§ ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- ▷ John Piper, *Desiring God: Meditations of a Christian Hedonist* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah, 2003), 31–50.
- ▷ Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom Through Covenant: A Biblical Theological Understanding of the Covenants* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 302–304. (Consult these pages for a helpful discussion of the relationship between the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants which is discussed on Day 3).
- ▷ Greg Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004).
- ▷ R. J. McKelvey, “Temple,” in *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, edited by T. Desmond Alexander and Brian Rosner (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 806–811.
- ▷ “History of Salvation in the Old Testament: Preparing the Way for Christ,” *ESV Study Bible*, (Wheaton: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 2,637–2,638.

Leviticus

6

🔗 INTRODUCTION

The wonderful promises God made to his people throughout the story have not yet come true, at least not completely. We have seen glimpses of fulfillment as God made his people into a nation, redeemed them from slavery, entered into a covenant relationship with them, and gave them his law to govern their way of life. Yet Israel has not responded the way one would expect. Rather, God's acts of mercy have been met with grumbling, idolatry, and vain promises of obedience. What would God do about this?

One option would be to destroy his people like he did the world in Genesis 7. This would be entirely faithful to his promises of curse for disobedience. God has every right to punish his creation when it rejects his rule. But is there another option? The book of Leviticus shows us God's plan to provide a way for his sinful people to maintain a relationship with him. This plan was consistent with his name—"Yahweh, Yahweh, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin" (Exod. 34:6-7)—and just like the Passover, it involved the shedding of blood.

🔗 LESSON OBJECTIVES

After completing this lesson, the student should be able to

- ▷ understand the problem a holy God creates for sinful people.
- ▷ explain why the sacrificial system was necessary.
- ▷ understand why we are to live holy lives.

Total pages of reading for this week: 23



The topic of sanctification will probably generate some discussion during this week. In Day 5, the idea that our working and willing is God's working and willing in us may raise some questions. As the instructor, you should consult some of the resources listed in the additional resources. But here are a few quotes by John Piper (that come from the listed resources) that may be helpful for discussion:

- “Paul commands me to work out my salvation, because God is the one who works this in me. My willing and working is God's willing and working. It is a miracle. But I do not wait passively, I act the miracle.”
- “Why should there be “fear and trembling” as I attack my sin and bring about salvation from self-pity? The reason given in the text is not a threat. It's a gift. Work and will to kill your sin, and do it with fear and trembling, because God Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, redeemer, justifier, sustainer, Father, lover is so close to you that your working and willing are his working and willing. Tremble at this breathtaking thought. God Almighty is in you. God is the one in you willing. God is the one in you working. My “continuous, sustained, strenuous” effort is not only being carried out in the very presence of all-holy God, but is the very continuous, sustained, strenuous effort of God himself. I am not waiting for a miracle. I am acting a miracle. My action is God's action in fighting my sin. My willing is God's willing.”

Additional topics to discuss:

- ▷ Discuss the different types of sacrifices in the sacrificial system (Lev. 1–7) and how each one is fulfilled in Christ.



Day 1

A HOLY GOD AND AN UNHOLY PEOPLE

Required Reading: *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About*, pages 102-105.

- ▷ stop at “The Author of Leviticus Clarified the Place of Sacrifice & Atonement in Covenant Worship”

History is still working towards a state of rest (*shalom*). This was the goal of creation, and God would bring it about through his promises to Eve and to the patriarchs. But rest requires a properly functioning covenant, with God’s people in God’s place under God’s rule. In Exodus, God promised to dwell among his people as long as they obeyed his commandments and lived holy lives. Would God’s people keep their end of the covenant? *Could* they?

“While often neglected, Leviticus provides a vital canonical witness to God’s holiness and to the ‘good news’ announced to the exodus generation (see Heb. 4:2, 6). Anticipating in beautiful ways the work of Messiah Jesus, the book served as a guide to worship and ethics, clarifying how priests and laity were to properly behave before a holy God. It also testifies to God’s sustained gracious work announced in the previous books” (WOTARCA, 57).⁴⁵

Hebrews 4:2, 6

² *For good news came to us just as to them, but the message they heard did not benefit them, because they were not united by faith with those who listened....*

⁶ *Since therefore it remains for some to enter [God’s rest], and those who formerly received the good news failed to enter because of disobedience...*

⁴⁵ Jason DeRouchie, ed., *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic & Professional, 2013). Used by permission. No duplication or distributed is permitted without written permission of the publisher.

1. What do you think the “good news” was that the exodus generation received? Why did it not benefit them?

· **ANSWER.** *God had promised to dwell among them and be their God and to give them rest in the land (Exod. 6:7; 25:8; 29:45–46) as long as they believed his word. Because they did not believe his word (“they were not united by faith”), they all died in the wilderness.*

The problem with a holy God and an unholy people is that a covenant relationship cannot be maintained. While God’s love for his people is unparalleled, his holiness is also unparalleled. A sinful people cannot possibly approach God to worship him in a worthy manner.

“Modern worship is often characterized by ethos, talent, polish, and celebration over an assumed love provided by God to his darling worshippers. In sharp contrast, worship in Leviticus is marked by danger, expulsion, personal and corporate ethics, burning flesh, dried blood, sin, impurity, death, and a marked distinction between Israel and their holy redeemer God” (WOTARCA, 58).⁴⁶

§ **BIBLE STUDY:** Read these passages and answer the question that follows:

Leviticus 11:44–45

⁴⁴ *For I am Yahweh your God. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy. You shall not defile yourselves with any swarming thing that crawls on the ground.* ⁴⁵ *For I am Yahweh who brought you up out of the land of Egypt to be your God. You shall therefore be holy, for I am holy.”*

Leviticus 19:2

² *Speak to all the congregation of the people of Israel and say to them, You shall be holy, for I Yahweh your God am holy.*

Leviticus 20:26

²⁶ *You shall be holy to me, for I Yahweh am holy and have separated you from the peoples, that you should be mine.*

Leviticus 21:8

⁸ *You shall sanctify him, for he offers the bread of your God. He shall be holy to you, for I, Yahweh, who sanctify you, am holy.*

⁴⁶ Jason DeRouchie, ed., *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic & Professional, 2013). Used by permission. No duplication or distributed is permitted without written permission of the publisher.

2. Underline every reason God gives for his people to be holy. What is the simple logic God gives for his people to be holy, and how does this reflect the truths we discussed in Genesis 1:26–27?

- **ANSWER.** *Because God is holy, his people should also be holy. This is because we are made in God's image and likeness and should therefore reflect his holy character.*

Leviticus stresses the need to take God's holiness seriously (cf. Lev. 10:1–2)! One commentator states, "The holiness of God is undoubtedly the main emphasis in the Book of Leviticus."⁴⁷

Many Christians tend to think that the God of the New Testament is more loving and less wrathful than the God of the Old Testament. This thinking leads to a small view of sin. God cannot ignore sin any more now than he ever did in the Old Testament. Consider this passage from Hebrews:

Hebrews 10:26–31

²⁶ For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, ²⁷ but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries. ²⁸ Anyone who has set aside the law of Moses dies without mercy on the evidence of two or three witnesses. ²⁹ How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace? ³⁰ For we know him who said, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay." And again, "The Lord will judge his people." ³¹ It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

⁴⁷ Allen P. Ross, *Holiness to the LORD: A Guide to the Exposition of the Book of Leviticus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 44.

3. What is the logic that the author of Hebrews uses to explain how God deals with sinners under the new covenant versus sinners under the old covenant?

· **ANSWER.** *God will judge all those who take sin lightly. Those who committed sin under the old covenant could be killed as a punishment. Therefore, those who sin under the new covenant deserve even greater punishment because they have “trampled under foot the Son of God, and have profaned the blood of the covenant by which they were sanctified, and have outraged the Spirit of grace.” The new covenant is better all around, namely because Christ is the fulfiller, and therefore, to sin against Christ and be unfaithful to this covenant is even more traitorous.*

How then should we respond in light of God’s holiness? As Yahweh says over and over throughout Leviticus, “BE HOLY!” We will consider *how* to do this in Day 5.

Hebrews 12:14

¹⁴ *Strive ... for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.*

4. Consider your own life. Are there areas of sin that you are not taking seriously? Jot down some thoughts and take time to ask God to forgive you and help you to understand his holiness more.

· **ANSWER.** *Answers will vary*

Day 2

A BRIEF THEOLOGY OF SACRIFICE

As we saw yesterday, there is a tension between God's holiness and his people's sinfulness. Israel already demonstrated their propensity to sin against God, but God had also promised to dwell in their midst (Exod. 25:8). Thus, in order to be faithful to his covenant, God had to provide a way for sin to be dealt with. He did this through the sacrificial system. The sacrifice was established as a picture to show the penalty for man's sin, and to demonstrate God's mercy to his covenant people through the provision of a substitute.

You may wonder why God chose to institute *the sacrificial system* to deal with his people's sin problem. Could he not just have pardoned his people with a word and been done? Why all the blood and gore? It may be helpful at this point to back up and consider the sacrificial system in light of the big picture.

After the fall man no longer desired to glorify God, which is the ultimate purpose of his existence. Sin entered the world through Adam and severed man's relationship with God, and the consequence of this sin is death (Gen. 2:17; Rom. 6:23; 5:12). How then could God fulfill his purpose of glorifying himself through depraved men who were condemned to death? He could not simply overlook sin or forgive man of his depravity by "sweeping it under the rug," for this would violate his holy justice. Sin deserves death and nothing less. Even before God created the world, he devised a plan that would atone for (meaning to make restitution, cover) man's sin and restore his ability to glorify God, while maintaining his perfect justice.

5. What would you think if a judge pardoned a guilty murderer merely because he asked for forgiveness? Why do you think people believe God will simply excuse their sin on the day of judgment with no punishment?

· **ANSWER.** *It would be an outrageous act of injustice for a judge to pardon a murderer. His crime deserves punishment. Many people believe that their sin is no big deal and God will simply forgive them if they ask, but this contradicts God's perfect justice. Every sin requires a righteous judgment.*

The book of Leviticus begins with seven chapters that explain the sacrificial system in all its gory detail. As one commentator notes:⁴⁸

“The shedding of blood and burning of animals may seem primitive and unpleasant to the modern believer, but the truths that these acts convey are essential to God’s program of redemption.”

God’s plan of redemption involved the shedding of innocent blood as a substitute for guilty humans. What is the significance of blood? Why must blood be shed in order to provide atonement for iniquity? God created man from the dust of the ground and then breathed life into him which established him as a living being. Blood sustains this life, since “the life of the flesh is in the blood” (Lev. 17:11).

Follow this reasoning: *Blood represents life; therefore, the shedding of blood represents death. And because sin deserves death, sin deserves the shedding of blood.*

Consequently, every human being deserves to be slaughtered as a penalty for his or her own sin in order to maintain God’s justice.

However, because God is merciful (Exod. 34:6–7), he graciously allowed the penalty of man’s iniquity to be fulfilled by spilling the blood of an innocent substitute. God requires the shedding of blood for the remission of sins (Heb. 9:22). But through a substitutionary sacrifice, this demand is satisfied. We will consider from a theological standpoint what this sacrifice actually accomplishes (namely, atonement) tomorrow. For now, it is sufficient to understand that this idea of substitution links the whole ritual of sacrifice (Lev. 1–7) to the grace of God that enables sinners to live and enter his presence through the death of a substitute.

Required Reading: *Dominion and Dynasty*, pages 107–108.

- ▷ begin at “Leviticus: Sacrifice and Holiness”
- ▷ stop at the paragraph that begins with “The classic description of the priest’s activity...”

“It is the high priest alone who can who can have access to God’s immediate presence, representing the people.... In his person the people can live in the geographical zone of God’s presence” (DD, 107–108).

48 Ibid., 86.

Hebrews 4:14–16

¹⁴ Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. ¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶ Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

6. Taking both Hebrews 4:14–16 and Dempster’s quote into consideration, who is every believer’s high priest, and what does this mean for the believer?

• **ANSWER.** *Jesus, the Son of God, is the high priest of every believer. This means they can have access to God’s presence (throne of grace) through Christ’s mediatorial role.*

Required Reading: *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About*, pages 59–61.

- ▷ begin at “The Author of Leviticus Clarified the Place of Sacrifice & Atonement in Covenant Worship”
- ▷ stop at “The Result of Sacrifice: Atonement”

7. Match the different types of sacrifice with their appropriate descriptions:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| 1. Peace (Fellowship) C | A. Mandatory atonement for <i>desecration</i> of God’s holy things or the property of others; the focus was on reconsecration of God’s sacred things or people with compensation for specific sins against others. |
| 2. Guilt (Reparation) A | B. Mandatory atonement for <i>contamination</i> of God’s holy places or objects; the focus was on purification or consecration of individuals or community after specific sins. |
| 3. Grain D | C. This optional act of worship celebrated the offerer’s fellowship with Yahweh and was given in the context of thanksgiving, vows, general praise (i.e., “free will”), or ordination. |
| 4. Burnt E | D. As a recognition of God’s goodness and provision, this optional act of worship expressed devotion to God and regularly accompanied other offerings. |
| 5. Sin (Purification) B | E. Pre-tabernacle this was the only offering to atone for sin; after the tabernacle it is an optional act of worship that atoned for sins in general, accompanied other offerings, and expressed devotion, commitment, and complete surrender to Yahweh. |

8. What did the placing of one's hand on the head of the sacrificial animal represent? (cf. Lev. 1:4; 4:4, 15, 24, 29, 33)

- *ANSWER. This visibly declares that "this figure now represents me." It is through this act that the sin and impurity of the offerer is transferred to the sacrificial animal. It also represented the act of repentance.*

The rituals found in the book of Leviticus hold profound theological implications that apply directly to both Old Testament Israel and New Testament believers. God's redemptive plan centers on the shed blood of his Son Jesus Christ, who was the One to whom all the sacrifices in the Old Testament pointed to. We will see what this shed blood accomplishes for God's people tomorrow.

Day 3

ATONEMENT

It is important to realize that merely killing animals did not cleanse sin or defilement. Blood itself does not have some mystical power to forgive sins. That is, the actual chemistry of the fluid cannot miraculously make the guilty innocent when it is spilled. Most of Israel's surrounding nations practiced similar rituals of sacrifice; however, these acts did not justify their defilement in any way. Behind the sacrifices practiced by the nation of Israel was a much deeper reality which distinguished it from the pagan nations.

Sin is the rejection of God's rule that results in a broken relationship with him. In order for thi relationship to be restored, God's wrath must be appeased, and the sin must receive a just retribution. Sacrifices function as a visible symbol of this restoration process, which is called atonement.

"In Leviticus, atonement is the process by which God purifies and (re-)consecrates his contaminated and desecrated tabernacle and people by pouring out his wrath on the sinner or onto a substitute, thus restoring the relationship and right order" (WOTARCA, 61).⁴⁹

Leviticus 17:11

"For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it for you on the altar to make atonement for your souls, for it is the blood that makes atonement by the life."

The sinner must realize that he has broken God's law and that his sin deserves death. Then he must repent of his sin, and believe that, because of his steadfast love, God is willing to accept a substitute on his behalf. In other words, the sinner must have faith in God's covenant promises in order to receive forgiveness. Faith involves believing that God can do what I cannot do on my own—namely bridge the gap between my sinfulness and his holiness. This was the case for Israel, and it is the case for believers today. The Israelites could go through the motions at the tabernacle just like Christians today can go through the motions at church without contrition for sin or a genuine love for Yahweh.

49 Jason DeRouchie, ed., *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic & Professional, 2013). Used by permission. No duplication or distributed is permitted without written permission of the publisher.

But God hates outward actions (even sacrifices!) that are not accompanied by brokenness and repentance over sin (Psa. 51:16–17; Micah 6:6–8). Only when the sacrifices were accompanied by faith would they atone for sins and appease God’s wrath.

THE DAY OF ATONEMENT

Required Reading: *Dominion and Dynasty*, pages 108.

- ▷ begin at the paragraph that begins with “The classic description of the priest’s activity...”
- ▷ stop at the paragraph that begins with “The subsequent Holiness Code...”

Leviticus 16:15–16

¹⁵ Then he shall kill the goat of the sin offering that is for the people and bring its blood inside the veil and do with its blood as he did with the blood of the bull, sprinkling it over the mercy seat and in front of the mercy seat. ¹⁶ Thus he shall make atonement for the Holy Place, because of the uncleannesses of the people of Israel and because of their transgressions, all their sins. And so he shall do for the tent of meeting, which dwells with them in the midst of their uncleannesses.

Leviticus 16:20–22

²⁰ And when he has made an end of atoning for the Holy Place and the tent of meeting and the altar, he shall present the live goat. ²¹ And Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, and confess over it all the iniquities of the people of Israel, and all their transgressions, all their sins. And he shall put them on the head of the goat and send it away into the wilderness by the hand of a man who is in readiness. ²² The goat shall bear all their iniquities on itself to a remote area, and he shall let the goat go free in the wilderness.

9. On the Day of Atonement, what does the act of sending a goat into the wilderness represent? What result does this have for God’s people?

- **ANSWER.** *It is a symbolic act wherein the sin of God’s people is transferred to the goat and then removed from the camp. The result is that God’s holy presence can remain with them throughout the next year.*

Required Reading: *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About*, pages 61–62.

- ▷ begin at “The Result of Sacrifice: Atonement”
- ▷ stop at “The Author of Leviticus Distinguished the Holy & Common, the Unclean & Clean in Covenant Worship”

10. What was the difference between the Day of Atonement and the daily sacrifices?

- **ANSWER.** *For the daily sacrifices, the offerer would lay his hand on the head of the sacrificial animal and “transfer” his sins to the sacrifice, whose blood was then taken into the holy precincts and atoned for. But on the Day of Atonement, the clean blood of the bull and goat was sprinkled in the Holy of Holies and on all the temple furniture in order to “absorb” the contamination from the previous year. Then the priest would transfer the sins of the community to the live goat and send it into the wilderness to remove the sins from the people.*

Yesterday we raised the question of whether or not God is just in forgiving sins. As a just judge, God *must* punish sin. God provided the sacrificial system so that an animal substitute could be punished in place of a guilty human. The next logical question is how can the death of an innocent *animal* pay for a *human* offense? After all, “It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins” (Heb. 10:4)!

Read these verses:

Romans 3:23–26

²³ For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, ²⁵ whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God’s righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. ²⁶ It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

1 John 1:9

⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

11. How can God *justly* forgive the sins of human beings?

- **ANSWER.** *The sacrifices of the old covenant were only shadows of the actual sacrifice found in Christ (Heb. 10:1). Thus, the sacrificial system provided the opportunity for Israel to exercise faith in Yahweh and secure atonement, but those sacrifices were only temporary and could never pay the full penalty for man's sin. Thus, God had to "pass over" the sins committed under the old covenant until Christ could come and pay for the sins of all time through his death and shed blood.*

The sacrificial system that God establishes in Leviticus is good! It is a gracious gift from a merciful God to a sinful people that grants them forgiveness and therefore life. But the sacrificial system in the old covenant was only a shadow of the ultimate sacrifice that would come nearly 1,500 years later (Heb. 10:1). That is, Christ's sacrifice on the cross is the *only* sacrifice that can truly accomplish the atonement of sin (Heb. 10:1–25). It is the cross event to which Leviticus points us, since it is only at the cross where divine mercy and justice meet.

12. If someone were to ask you, "How can God be both just and merciful at the same time?" how would you answer them?

- **ANSWER.** *Because he is just, God must punish all sin. Yet in his mercy God punished his own Son for the sins of those who would believe in him.*

Day 4

HOLY VS. COMMON

Required Reading: *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About*, pages 62–67.

- ▷ begin at “The Author of Leviticus Distinguished the Holy & Common, the Unclean & Clean in Covenant Worship”
- ▷ stop at “The Author of Leviticus Called Israel to Display Holiness through the Practice of Covenant Ethics”

To begin this discussion, it is important to realize that God alone is the standard of holiness. There is nothing outside him that can judge whether his character and actions are good or bad (refer to the discussion on Genesis 1). It follows, then, that people and objects are only holy as they conform to *his* character.

Leviticus 11:44–45

⁴⁴ For I am Yahweh your God. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy. You shall not defile yourselves with any swarming thing that crawls on the ground. ⁴⁵ For I am Yahweh who brought you up out of the land of Egypt to be your God. You shall therefore be holy, for I am holy.”

Leviticus 19:2

² Speak to all the congregation of the people of Israel and say to them, You shall be holy, for I Yahweh your God am holy.

Leviticus 20:26

²⁶ You shall be holy to me, for I Yahweh am holy and have separated you from the peoples, that you should be mine.

What does it mean to be holy? One theologian describes holiness this way:⁵⁰

“Throughout Scripture, holiness is preeminently a characteristic of God himself. The terminology is used to signify that God is wholly other, distinct and separate from everything that he has made, and different from the gods of human imagination. As the Holy One, he acts in judgment against human sin and its consequences. Remarkably, however, he also chooses to dwell amongst those whom he has redeemed. They are ‘sanctified’ or made holy by God’s manifesting himself to

⁵⁰ D. G. Peterson, “Holiness,” in *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, 544–545.

them, drawing them into a special relationship with himself and making provision for their sinfulness. The holy people of God are then called to live in a way that demonstrates the reality of their relationship with God and with one another. A pattern of sanctification is established for Israel under the Mosaic covenant that foreshadows the definitive work of Jesus Christ and the operation of the Holy Spirit for believers under the new covenant. Indeed, the notion of a holy God among holy people in a holy place is ‘the enduring eschatological hope of the Scriptures.’”

God is not only majestic, transcendent, and separate from all creation, but he is morally pure and righteous in everything he does. This is what it means to be holy. Holiness is not merely one of God’s attributes, but it characterizes all of his attributes. God’s love is holy, God’s justice is holy, God’s wrath is holy, God’s faithfulness is holy, etc. It is fitting that God’s creation should reflect his holy character.

Leviticus describes several categories of people and objects. They can either be holy, or they can be common. If they are common, then they can either be clean or unclean. Because the world is under the curse, God’s people and things frequently undergo changes in their “degree of holiness.” They can *digress* from a holy state to a clean state to an unclean state. Or they can *progress* from an unclean state to a clean state to a holy state. For anyone to enter Yahweh’s holy presence in a common state would mean certain death! It was therefore the priests’ job to determine the state and condition of people and objects and to help them progress towards holiness by teaching them how their holy God wanted them to live.

Leviticus 10:10–11

¹⁰ *You are to distinguish between the holy and the common, and between the unclean and the clean,* ¹¹ *and you are to teach the people of Israel all the statutes that Yahweh has spoken to them by Moses.*

13. Fill in the blanks from the reading:

“To persist in uncleanness was to embrace an exilic type of death (outside the symbolic Eden of the tabernacle) that separated one from God and destroyed all other relationships. In contrast, a true covenant worshipper desired God’s presence, understood his uncleanness and impurity, sought for reconciliation, and was moved away from death toward life-giving holiness” (WOTARCA, 64).⁵¹

The underlined words in this quotation are left blank in the Student Workbook. We suggest that the instructor read the quote aloud to allow students to check their work.

⁵¹ Jason DeRouchie, ed., *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic & Professional, 2013). Used by permission. No duplication or distributed is permitted without written permission of the publisher.

Mooney points out three spheres of life that are influenced by “the holiness continuum”: people, space, and time. In one sense, all of God’s people are holy (Lev. 20:26). God has chosen his people to be separate from all the other nations, and they are to reflect his holy character. However, it was the priests in particular that God charged with the task of mediating between himself and his sinful people. They represented the people before God. This meant they had to live holy lives and to help God’s people live holy lives, which required sacrifices to atone for their sin. As representatives, only the priests could enter into the holy place, and only the high priest could enter into the Holy of Holies, and then only once a year (Day of Atonement).

1 Peter 2:9–10

⁹ But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. ¹⁰ Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

14. In light of the status and role of priests in the Old Testament, what is significant about Peter’s statement concerning the church?

- **ANSWER.** *God has chosen a particular people for himself called the church. Peter calls the church “a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession,” language used to describe priests in the Old Testament. Thus the church has the same (or similar) role as the priests did in the Old Testament—namely, to mediate between God and the world and to teach them how a holy God wants them to live.*

In addition to people, places are also influenced by “the holiness continuum.” God requires the space where he dwells to be holy. We saw in Exodus the construction of the tabernacle and how the intensity of holiness increases as one moves from the courtyard into the tabernacle proper into the holy place and finally into the Holy of Holies (Exod. 25:9; 26:33; 27:9–19; 29:4, 31, 32, 42). It is here—the holiest place on the planet—where God dwelt. Only the high priest could enter this most sacred place. The “layers of holiness” are not meant to keep God’s people from him. On the contrary, the layers show how holy and “other than” God is from sinful human beings. The mere fact that God chose to dwell among his people is a demonstration of his mercy and love.

Hebrews 10:19–22

¹⁹ Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰ by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, ²¹ and since we have a great priest over the house of God, ²² let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

15. In light of the old covenant where *only* the high priest could enter the Holy of Holies *only* once a year, what is so significant about this passage?
- **ANSWER.** *This passage teaches that all believers have direct access to God (in the true Holy of Holies) because they have been cleansed by the blood of Jesus. There is no longer a barrier (i.e., veil/curtain) between God and man!*

The last sphere Mooney considers is time, which is also influenced by “the holiness continuum.” Israel celebrated certain feasts and festivals throughout the year as physical reminders of specific acts God performed among them.

16. What did the Day of Atonement and the year of jubilee mark?
- **ANSWER.** *Both marked God’s liberating power: the Day of Atonement marked God’s liberating power from sin; the year of jubilee marked God’s liberating power from debt or servitude.*

Day 5

‘HOW SHOULD WE THEN LIVE?’

Read the following passages (emphasis has been added):

Leviticus 11:44–45

⁴⁴ *For I am Yahweh your God. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy. You shall not defile yourselves with any swarming thing that crawls on the ground.* ⁴⁵ *For I am Yahweh who brought you up out of the land of Egypt to be your God. You shall therefore be holy, for I am holy.”*

Leviticus 19:2

² *Speak to all the congregation of the people of Israel and say to them, You shall be holy, for I Yahweh your God am holy.*

Leviticus 20:7

⁷ *Consecrate yourselves, therefore, and be holy, for I am Yahweh your God.*

Leviticus 20:26

²⁶ *You shall be holy to me, for I Yahweh am holy and have separated you from the peoples, that you should be mine.*

Leviticus 21:8

⁸ *You shall sanctify them, for he offers the bread of your God. He shall be holy to you, for I, Yahweh, who sanctify you, am holy.*

Required Reading: *Dominion and Dynasty*, pages 108–110.

- ▷ begin at the paragraph that begins with “The subsequent Holiness Code...”
- ▷ stop at “Numbers: Journey to Hell and Back”

In Leviticus, there is an important textual logic:

“After the indicative of sacrificial forgiveness (Lev. 1–16), climactically realized in the Day of Atonement, there is the ethical imperative of holiness. Israelites are expected to mirror the divine likeness to the world; more specifically, to be holy as he is holy (Lev. 19:2) and so to function as priestly mediators of God” (DD, 108–09).

The fundamental difference between Christianity and all other religions is highlighted in the structure of Leviticus: *the indicative precedes the imperative*.⁵² This is the message of redemption throughout all of Scripture. First, God acts for his helpless people. Only then are they able to live in a way that pleases him and reflects his character.

The phrase “Be holy, for I am holy” that is found throughout Leviticus rings of Genesis 1 when God made man in his image and likeness (Gen. 1:26–27). This also fits with Israel’s mission to be a “holy people” in the midst of a cursed world (Exod. 19:4–6). The question is, “How would this be accomplished?”

Required Reading: *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About*, pages 67–71.

▷ begin at “The Author of Leviticus Called Israel to Display Holiness through the Practice of Covenant Ethics”

17. True/False: Israel’s worship was acceptable to God despite her ethic-less lifestyle.

God gives Israel motivation for obedience by rewarding them with blessing. But if they are not obedient to Yahweh they will receive curses. Leviticus chapter 26 details these blessings and curses. Interestingly, the blessings only make up 11 verses (Lev. 26:3–13; cf. Deut. 28:1–14) while the curses make up 26 verses (Lev. 26:14–39; cf. Deut. 28:15–68). It’s as if Moses is anticipating that the people are not going to keep God’s law. The future does not look very bright for Israel!

⁵² Another way to say this is “Justification precedes sanctification.” God saves his people and then begins the process of changing them into his image. It does not work the other way. That is, we do not try to make ourselves holy before we are acceptable to God. This is the way all other religions work at the most fundamental level. Other texts that reflect this “indicative followed by imperative” idea are: Exod. 19:4 and 19:5–6; 20:2 and 20:3ff.; Rom. 1–11 and 12–16; Eph. 1–3 and 4–6).

“The life of worship had to assume the realistic distinction between the worshipper and the object of worship. Because Yahweh was holy, his people must in turn be holy, relating to God with true repentance (5:5, 17), humility (9:24; 10:3), and dependent surrender (e.g., Ch. 19). Only in this way could they enjoy sustained life (i.e., covenant blessings) in relation to God (26:1–13). Carelessly engaging God at the tabernacle or demonstrating the same negligence by unethical living would result in catastrophe—namely, the covenant curses, involving the removal of all divine provision and protection and the loss of their distinct identity and purpose in life (26:14–33)” (WOTARCA, 59).⁵³

📖 **BIBLE STUDY:** Read the passages below and answer the questions that follow:

How can a sinful people be holy? There are two ways Leviticus reveals. The first is the *imperative*, “You shall be holy, for I Yahweh am holy” (Lev. 20:26; cf. 11:44–45; 19:2; 21:8). The second is the *declaration*, “I am Yahweh who sanctifies you” (22:32; cf. 21:8, 15, 23; 22:9, 16). On the surface these two statements appear contradictory, and many Christians tend to emphasize one over the other. But this apparent tension is God’s beautiful design to purify his people.

The question here is part of a broader question concerning God’s sovereignty and man’s responsibility. In the context of becoming holy (i.e., sanctification), who does the work? God or man? The answer? Yes!

Consider these verses which teach that man has the responsibility to be holy (emphasis has been added to the following passages):

Leviticus 11:44

⁴⁴ *For I am Yahweh your God. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy.*

Colossians 3:5

⁵ *Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.*

Colossians 3:12

¹² *Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience.*

⁵³ Jason DeRouchie, ed., *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic & Professional, 2013). Used by permission. No duplication or distributed is permitted without written permission of the publisher.

Ephesians 4:1

¹ *I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called.*

Now consider these verses which teach that God is the one who sanctifies us:

Leviticus 22:32

³² *And you shall not profane my holy name, that I might be sanctified among the people of Israel. I am Yahweh who sanctifies you.*

Romans 6:22

²² *But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life.*

Romans 8:1–4

¹ *There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*

² *For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. ³ For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴ in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.*

1 Thessalonians 5:23–24

²³ *Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴ He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.*

These verses provide a helpful understanding of how God's work relates to man's work:

Leviticus 20:7–8

⁷ *Consecrate yourselves, therefore, and be holy, for I am Yahweh your God.*

⁸ *Keep my statutes and do them; I am Yahweh who sanctifies you.*

Romans 8:13

²⁶ *For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.*

1 Corinthians 15:10

¹⁰ *But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me.*

Philippians 2:12–13

¹² *Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, ¹² for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.*

18. How would you succinctly explain the relationship between God's work and our work in the process of sanctification?

- **ANSWER.** *Believers are to work hard at their sanctification precisely because God is at work in them! My work is God's work in me!*

The work of sanctification is a miracle that the Holy Spirit performs in every believer. Yet, every believer also has the responsibility (indeed, the command) to put sin to death! This takes hard work, intentionality, humility, and endurance. And all of these are only possible as the Holy Spirit works within a person. It is not that man does part, and God does part. Rather, a believer's willing and acting *is* God's willing and acting in him. It is a miracle. But the believer should not wait for the miracle to happen to him. *He should act the miracle!* (See the additional resources at the end of this lesson for more on this idea).

19. In your own life, have you tended to emphasize God's work (passive) or your own work (active) when it comes to sanctification? Explain why you think this is and how you can maintain a proper view of sanctification.

- **ANSWER.** *Answers will vary*

20. What does it mean for you to be holy in the coming week?

- **ANSWER.** *Answers will vary*

 INTEGRATIVE ASSIGNMENT



In one short paragraph, summarize in your own words the main message of the book of Exodus so that someone with no biblical knowledge could understand.



§ DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Review the following questions in preparation for discussion. As you have worked through this lesson, record any lingering questions that you may have.

1. When you think of God as holy, what comes to your mind? Is God's holiness attractive to you? Describe a time when you were overcome by God's holiness (see Isaiah's response to God's holiness in Isaiah 6:1-6).
2. How would you explain God's holiness to someone and use it to show them their need for a sacrifice? How should we talk about the sacrifice of Christ in a culture that views it as barbaric or irrelevant?
3. Discuss God's mercy and justice and how they are simultaneously displayed at the cross.
4. Your own question(s):



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- ▷ Allen P. Ross, *Holiness to the Lord* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002).
- ▷ D. G. Peterson, “Holiness,” *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, edited by T. Desmond Alexander and Brian Rosner (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 544–50.
- ▷ J. E. Hartley, “Holy and Holiness, Clean and Unclean,” *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch*, edited by T. Desmond Alexander and David Baker (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 420–31.
- ▷ R.C. Sproul, *The Holiness of God* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1998).
- ▷ Jerry Bridges, *The Pursuit of Holiness* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2001).
- ▷ John Piper, “I Act the Miracle,” Blogpost, 2011 (resource on Desiring God website: <http://www.desiringgod.org/blog/posts/i-act-the-miracle>).
- ▷ John Piper, “I Act the Miracle,” Sermon, 2011 (resource on Desiring God website: <http://www.desiringgod.org>). This sermon is shorter than the next and was the “seed” that grew into the longer message that follows.
- ▷ John Piper, “Act the Miracle: Future Grace, the Word of the Cross, and the Purifying Power of God’s Promises” Conference Message, 2012 (resource on Desiring God website: <http://www.desiringgod.org>).
- ▷ “History of Salvation in the Old Testament: Preparing the Way for Christ,” ESV Study Bible, (Wheaton: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 2,638.

Numbers

7

🔗 INTRODUCTION

Exodus 19 through Numbers 10 records Israel’s stay at Mt. Sinai. This section forms the center of the Pentateuch, both literarily and thematically. It was at Sinai that God gave his people his law. All of the tedious descriptions of the tabernacle and the sacrificial system as well as the countless laws anticipated Israel’s possession of the Promised Land. All of it was driving to this ultimate goal. The book of Numbers contains the “final checklist” before Israel embarks on this journey. The book then records the “progress” of this journey, which begins as a hopeful trek but then turns into a dismal trudge and eventually a defeated halt, all because Israel *regresses* into a state of sin and unbelief. Ironically, it is a pagan sorcerer who recognizes God’s promises to Israel and provides the brightest ray of hope in the entire book. As a result of their sin, the exodus generation dies in the wilderness leaving behind a somber warning to their children to follow after Yahweh.

🔗 LESSON OBJECTIVES

After completing this lesson, the student should be able to

- ▷ describe the tension between God’s promises and their delayed fulfillment.
- ▷ understand why the exodus generation all died in the wilderness.
- ▷ explain the importance of believing God’s word.

Total pages of reading for this week: 26



If you feel you need more information for this lesson, we suggest that you obtain copies of the Recommended Resources to help gain a broader perspective on the topics discussed. In addition to those resources, Jason DeRouchie also recommends several commentaries at the end of each chapter of *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About*. For the book of Numbers, DeRouchie recommends

- ▷ Ashley, Timothy R. *The Book of Numbers*. NICOT. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993
- ▷ Cole, R. Dennis. *Numbers*. NAC. Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2000
- ▷ Gane, Roy. *Leviticus, Numbers*. NIVAC. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004
- ▷ Wenham, Gordon J. *Numbers*. TOTC. Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 2008.

Please note that we believe these commentaries would be helpful to you as you seek to know God and his Word, however, they offer diverse theological approaches and are the word of man, not of God, so their claims should be carefully evaluated and subjected to scripture—the highest authority for Christians.



Day 1

.....

THE FULFILLMENT OF PROMISES?

At the forefront of Numbers is the anticipation of the children of Abraham inheriting the land. God's covenant promises of multiplying offspring (cf. Gen. 13:16; 15:5; 17:2, 6; 22:17) and giving land (cf. 13:15, 17; 15:18; 17:8) are the means of restoring God's kingdom and thus blessing all the nations of the earth.

Yet, it has been well over 500 years since these promises were given to Abraham. How long would it take for God to fulfill them? The book of Numbers highlights this tension between God's covenant promises and their delayed fulfillment.

Numbers 14:22–23

²² None of the men who have seen my glory and my signs that I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and yet have put me to the test these ten times and have not obeyed my voice, ²³ shall see the land that I swore to give to their fathers. And none of those who despised me shall see it.

1. Put yourself in Israel's shoes. Have you ever been promised something or expected something to happen that took much longer than you thought it would take to come about? How does faith play into waiting for God's promises? (See Hebrews 11:1)

· **ANSWER.** *“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen” (Heb. 11:1). Faith is believing that what God said is true, even though it may not appear so at the present moment. We should believe that God's promises will come about as if they already have!*

Required Reading: *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About*, pages 72–76.

Numbers 1–10 show Israel getting prepared for the journey to the promised land. A census is taken which reveals that Abraham’s offspring have multiplied from 12 (Gen. 35:22), to 70 (46:27; Exod. 1:5), to well over 600,000 (Num. 1:46; cf. 10:36)! Possession of the land is expected in the imminent future (10:29, 35). God’s presence is among the camp (10:11–12). And God’s instrument of blessing to the world receives a blessing herself (6:22–27). The energy is high as God’s promises seem to be on the verge of fulfillment!

Numbers 6:23–27

²³ *Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, Thus you shall bless the people of Israel: you shall say to them,*

²⁴ *Yahweh bless you and keep you;*

²⁵ *Yahweh make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you;*

²⁶ *Yahweh lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.*

²⁷ *So shall they put my name upon the people of Israel, and I will bless them.*

2. In light of Israel’s mission to bless the nations by pointing them to Yahweh (Exod. 19:5–6), why would God’s blessing have been so important for Israel?

· **ANSWER.** *In order to be a blessing, Israel must first be blessed herself. Israel could only obey Yahweh’s voice if he blessed them with the ability to do so. Just like Adam and Eve’s ability to be fruitful and multiply depended on God’s blessing, so Israel’s mission to bless the world by mediating between the nations and God depended on his blessing.*

Despite the positive outlook in the first ten chapters, the very next verse in Numbers reveals the true disposition of Israel’s heart.

Numbers 11:1

¹ *And the people complained in the hearing of Yahweh about their misfortunes, and when Yahweh heard it, his anger was kindled, and the fire of Yahweh burned among them and consumed some outlying parts of the camp.*

Shortly after this, the ten scouts that were sent into the land “gave a bad report of the land” (13:32) which resulted in the people begging to return to Egypt (14:1–4)—a reversal of redemption! They even speak of Egypt by hijacking the language God used to describe his Promised Land, a slap in the face to Almighty God.

Exodus 3:8

⁸ *I [Yahweh] have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey.*

Numbers 16:13

¹³ *Is it a small thing that you [Moses] have brought us up out of a land flowing with milk and honey, to kill us in the wilderness, that you must also make yourself a prince over us?*

Even Moses doubted God's word when he promised to provide for his people.

Numbers 11:21–23

²¹ *But Moses said, "The people among whom I am number six hundred thousand on foot, and you have said, 'I will give them meat, that they may eat a whole month!'"* ²² *Shall flocks and herds be slaughtered for them, and be enough for them? Or shall all the fish of the sea be gathered together for them, and be enough for them?"* ²³ *And Yahweh said to Moses, "Is Yahweh's hand shortened? Now you shall see whether my word will come true for you or not."*

Thus, the delayed fulfillment was not because God was unable to bring about his promises; rather, it was God's response to his people's persistent faithlessness. The promises of land and offspring diminish drastically in Numbers 11–25 as the people wander for decades in the desert and nearly an entire generation dies off.

3. What does the death of an entire generation of people reveal about God's view of sin?

• **ANSWER.** *God takes sin very seriously.*

In stark contrast to the preceding section, chapters 26–36 do not record any Israelite death. Numbers 26 contains the second census which covers the next generation who would take possession of the land. The situation seems much more positive. Battles are won just outside Israel's borders, and land divisions are made even before they possess it. These preparations indicate that future possession of the land would indeed come about. But as Schmutzer points out, "Stress was also made that the Land could be forfeited by failing to take

God seriously (33:55–56; 35:33–34)” (WOTARCA, 75).⁵⁴ God’s promises are still extended to Israel. Yet her sinful heart constantly places her in precarious situations and causes the reader to question whether or not she will attain the promises by faith.

4. Which of these statements best describes Israel? Select the correct answer.
- a) After Israel left Sinai, she appear to be changed and ready to follow wholeheartedly after Yahweh.
 - b) Though the second generation seems more hopeful, Israel’s track record indicates that covenant blessings are not in the picture for God’s people.
 - c) Israel’s sin has pushed her beyond the reach of her covenant God.
 - d) Israel saw her time in the wilderness as a way to draw near to and depend on Yahweh.

⁵⁴ Jason DeRouchie, ed., *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic & Professional, 2013). Used by permission. No duplication or distributed is permitted without written permission of the publisher.

Day 2

GOD'S PRESENCE

Required Reading: *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About*, pages 77–80.

- ▷ stop at “The Author of Numbers Detailed the Role of Moses’ Mediation for Israel, As Well As Other Agents”

One theme that continues to appear is God’s presence among his people. From the very beginning of time, God desired to dwell with his people. Then we saw a fresh demonstration of this desire at Sinai where God entered into a covenant relationship with his people. This relationship was intended not only as a blessing for Israel (Num. 6:24–27), but also to enhance God’s reputation among the nations.

Numbers 14:13–20

¹³ But Moses said to Yahweh, “Then the Egyptians will hear of it, for you brought up this people in your might from among them, ¹⁴ and they will tell the inhabitants of this land. They have heard that you, O Yahweh, are in the midst of this people. For you, O Yahweh, are seen face to face, and your cloud stands over them and you go before them, in a pillar of cloud by day and in a pillar of fire by night. ¹⁵ Now if you kill this people as one man, then the nations who have heard your fame will say, ¹⁶ ‘It is because Yahweh was not able to bring this people into the land that he swore to give to them that he has killed them in the wilderness.’ ¹⁷ And now, please let the power of the Lord be great as you have promised, saying, ¹⁸ ‘Yahweh is slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, forgiving iniquity and transgression, but he will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, to the third and the fourth generation.’ ¹⁹ Please pardon the iniquity of this people, according to the greatness of your steadfast love, just as you have forgiven this people, from Egypt until now.” ²⁰ Then Yahweh said, “I have pardoned, according to your word.”

5. After the spies give a bad report of the land and instill fear in the people of Israel, God's wrath burns against them. What does Moses appeal to when interceding on behalf of the people?

- **ANSWER.** *Moses appeals to God's reputation. If he punished and destroyed his people, then all the nations would mock him since he "was not able to bring this people into the land he swore to give to them." Moses also appeals to the character of God that he revealed in Exod. 34:6-7. God is "slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love."*

Yahweh promises to dwell among his people as long as they serve him wholeheartedly. This applies in the wilderness and also in the land they were going to possess.

Numbers 35:34

³⁴ *You shall not defile the land in which you live, in the midst of which I dwell, for I Yahweh dwell in the midst of the people of Israel.*

Psalm 16:11

¹¹ *You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fulness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.*

6. According to Psalm 16:11, why should God's people long for God's presence?

- **ANSWER.** *God's presence provides the deepest pleasure for the longest amount of time.*

God's presence is vital to his people because a covenant is all about a relationship. God redeemed Israel to enter into a relationship with her, not merely to give her a plot of land. While land is an important element in the covenant triangle (where else would God dwell with his people?), at the heart of a covenant is a loving relationship. If God's people were not faithful to him, he would not and could not dwell among them.

Numbers 14:11

¹¹ *And Yahweh said to Moses, "How long will this people despise me? And how long will they not believe in me, in spite of all the signs that I have done among them?"*

While Leviticus showed God's holiness and the people's need to be holy through the sacrificial system, Numbers highlights the holiness and centrality of Yahweh another way.

Numbers 1:53

⁵³ *But the Levites shall camp around the tabernacle of the testimony, so that there may be no wrath on the congregation of the people of Israel. And the Levites shall keep guard over the tabernacle of the testimony.*

7. According to Schmutzer, what significant component of Numbers stresses the need for the centrality of Yahweh in all of life? (see WOTARCA, 78)

- **ANSWER.** *The structure of Israel's camp is designed in such a way that the tabernacle where God's presence dwelt was at the very center of all 12 camps. The tribe of Levi surrounded and "guarded" the holiness of the tabernacle. In Schmutzer's words, "God's holy presence must be taken seriously, and the camp design helped focus on this fact!" (WOTARCA, 78).*⁵⁵

Jesus told his disciples that he would be with them "to the end of the age" (Matt. 28:20). This, of course, is possible through the Holy Spirit of Jesus who dwells in every believer. God's people have become his "temple" in which he dwells (Eph. 2:21–22).

1 Corinthians 6:19–20

¹⁹ *Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own,* ²⁰ *for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.*

8. What is Paul's reason for glorifying God in our body? How much more holy ought we to be in light of this?

- **ANSWER.** *We are to glorify God in our body because we are the temple in which the Holy Spirit dwells. If Israel had strict laws to guard the holiness of the tabernacle, then Christians should be even more careful to live holy lives.*

⁵⁵ Jason DeRouchie, ed., *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic & Professional, 2013). Used by permission. No duplication or distributed is permitted without written permission of the publisher.

Day 3

REJECTION OF GOD'S RULE

Required Reading: *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About*, pages 132-134.

- ▷ begin at “The Author of Numbers Detailed the Role of Moses’ Mediation for Israel, As Well As Other Agents”
- ▷ stop at “The Author of Numbers Emphasized the Wilderness as a Unique Place of Israel’s Spiritual Maturity”

God grants his people numerous leaders throughout their history. At this point in time, Moses was clearly the God-ordained man who was to lead Israel through the wilderness. Moses speaks to God “mouth-to-mouth” (Num. 12:8) and mediates God’s revelation to Israel (36:13). As such, God expects his people to follow Moses and submit to his leadership.

Numbers 12:8

⁸ *With him I speak mouth to mouth, clearly, and not in riddles, and he beholds the form of Yahweh. Why then were you not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?*

Strikingly, when this role began, so did opposition to his leadership and to those associated with him.

Numbers 12:2

² *And [Miriam and Aaron] said, “Has Yahweh indeed spoken only through Moses? Has he not through us also?”*

Numbers 16:3

³ *They assembled themselves together against Moses and against Aaron and said to them, “You have gone too far! For all in the congregation are holy, every one of them, and Yahweh is among them. Why then do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of Yahweh?”*

9. Why do you think the people of Israel turned against Moses and complained so frequently, even though they had seen God do miraculous deeds for them? How do you think their attitudes would have changed towards Moses if they had been able to enter the Promised Land immediately after leaving Egypt? What does this reveal about their hearts?

· *ANSWER.* *The people were experiencing trying times in the wilderness and their hearts were hardened. Moses would have naturally been the one to whom they would complain. Had Moses led them right into the Promised Land, they would have praised him. Their hope was in Moses, not Yahweh.*

Israel's rebellion against Moses is characteristic of all human sin, which, at its root, is rebellion against God's authority. Though Moses has unparalleled access to God matched with impeccable integrity and moral poise (12:3), they do not like to be told what to do. When anything goes wrong, Moses is the one to whom they complain. Israel's opposition of God's appointed leader moves Yahweh to judge the people with death (16:35), destructive plagues (16:47–49; 25:8), and fiery serpents (21:6).

A pattern of 'intercessive-dialogue' develops in the book of Numbers as the people of Israel complain time and time again (e.g., 11:1–3).

10. Place the four steps of this 'intercessive-dialogue' in the proper order. (WOTARCA, 81)

- | | |
|----------|---|
| <u>2</u> | God's anger and threat |
| <u>4</u> | A commemorative named tagged on the location of the event |
| <u>1</u> | The people's complaint |
| <u>3</u> | Moses' intercession |

The author of Hebrews considers Israel's rebellion in the wilderness and learns from their mistake:

Hebrews 3:7–12

⁷ *Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says,*

“Today, if you hear his voice,

⁸ *do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion,*

on the day of testing in the wilderness,

⁹ *where your fathers put me to the test
and saw my works for forty years.*

¹⁰ *Therefore I was provoked with that generation,
and said, ‘They always go astray in their heart;
they have not known my ways.’*

¹¹ *As I swore in my wrath,
‘They shall not enter my rest.’”*

¹² *Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart,
leading you to fall away from the living God.*

11. What does the author of Hebrews call the church to do so that they won’t repeat Israel’s failures? What is one practical way of doing this?

- **ANSWER.** *He calls them to guard against “an evil, unbelieving heart” that would lead them “to fall away from the living God.” The very next verse in Hebrews (3:13) says that exhorting one another every day will help prevent you from being hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. Living in community is important.*

Numbers tells us that Moses was the meekest man on earth (12:3) and that God spoke with him “mouth-to-mouth” (12:8). Yet it also shows us that Moses was a human and therefore had a sin nature. When the people of Israel are in the wilderness of Zin, they quarrel and complain that they have no water. God tells Moses to take his staff and to speak to the rock, and water would come out for all the people (20:2–11). But something shocking happens as a result.

Numbers 20:10–12

¹⁰ *Then Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly together before the rock, and he said to them, “Hear now, you rebels: shall we bring water for you out of this rock?”* ¹¹ *And Moses lifted up his hand and struck the rock with his staff twice, and water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their livestock.* ¹² *And Yahweh said to Moses and Aaron, “Because you did not believe in me, to uphold me as holy in the eyes of the people of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land that I have given them.”*

While commentators try to determine precisely what Moses did that caused God to deny him the blessing of entering the Promised Land, the author has intentionally left this out. Rather, he focuses on Moses’ heart and God’s evaluation of it.

12. According to the text, what is the reason that God denies Moses and Aaron the blessing of entering the Promised Land?

- **ANSWER.** *Because they did not believe in God and therefore uphold him as holy in the eyes of the people.*

Consider this quote from John Sailhamer:⁵⁶

“The writer no doubt wants to get the larger message about the incident recorded here. He was not so much interested that we know the details of this or that act of Moses and Aaron that led to God’s punishing their unbelief. Indeed, it could reasonably be argued that Moses and Aaron had not done anything specifically wrong. In some respects the narrative is like that of Cain and Abel’s offerings (Gen. 4:1–7), where we read simply that God accepted Abel’s offering but not Cain’s. The writer does not dwell on the nature of either offering; rather, he goes right to the heart of the question—to the Lord’s evaluation of the offerers rather than the offerings. So also in this narrative is a clear statement from God as to why Moses and Aaron could not enter the land: they did not believe. Just as the people had failed to believe God and trust in him in Ch. 14, so also Moses and Aaron came up short in the area of faith.”

When God’s people fail to believe him, they not only miss out on blessing, but God is not glorified. This is a problem, since Israel’s role is to be a kingdom of priests that mediate between holy Yahweh and the sinful nations (Exod. 19:6). They are to represent him, but if they don’t believe his word, then this cannot happen. And God always acts to preserve his reputation among the nations (cf. Num. 14). He will punish unbelief when it fails to honor him as the holy God he is.

56 John Sailhamer, *NIV Compact Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994), 132–133.

Day 4

A FAITHLESS GENERATION

On Day 1 we looked at God's covenant promises throughout the book of Numbers. We saw that there was a tension between the promises and their delayed fulfillment, and that the reason for this tension was Israel's faithlessness, not God's powerlessness. Today we will consider one of the most blatant manifestations of the people's unbelief and the results this had for the nation of Israel.

Required Reading: *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About*, pages 134-139.

- ▷ begin at "The Author of Numbers Emphasized the Wilderness as a Unique Place of Israel's Spiritual Maturity"

Chapters 13 and 14 of Numbers form a pivotal point in Israel's history as the focus shifts from the exodus generation to the conquest generation. God tells Moses to send 12 spies into the land of Canaan to scout it out before their arrival (Num. 13:1-3, 17-20). Upon their return, the spies acknowledge that the land is indeed a fruitful land, but they fear its inhabitants and ultimately decide that they cannot possess it.

Numbers 13:27-28

²⁷ And they told him, "We came to the land to which you sent us. It flows with milk and honey, and this is its fruit. ²⁸ However, the people who dwell in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified and very large."

Numbers 13:31-32

³¹ "We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we are." So they brought to the people of Israel a bad report of the land that they had spied out, saying, "The land, through which we have gone to spy it out, is a land that devours its inhabitants, and all the people that we saw in it are of great height."

The people respond by turning their hearts from God, rebelling against Moses and Aaron, and desiring to go back to Egypt.

Numbers 14:2-4

² And all the people of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron. The whole congregation said to them, "Would that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or would that we had died in this wilderness!" ³ Why is Yahweh bringing us into this land, to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will become a prey. Would it not be better for us to go back to Egypt?" ⁴ And they said to one another, "Let us choose a leader and go back to Egypt."

We can see in this passage the massive influence that unbelief and pessimism can have on others. The demeanor of 10 spies influences the entire congregation of Israel towards unbelief. In fact, out of all the spies, only Caleb and Joshua believe that God would fulfill his promises.

Numbers 13:30

³⁰ But Caleb quieted the people before Moses and said, "Let us go up at once and occupy it, for we are well able to overcome it."

Numbers 14:6-9

⁶ And Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, who were among those who had spied out the land, tore their clothes ⁷ and said to all the congregation of the people of Israel, "The land, which we passed through to spy it out, is an exceedingly good land. ⁸ If Yahweh delights in us, he will bring us into this land and give it to us, a land that flows with milk and honey. ⁹ Only do not rebel against Yahweh. And do not fear the people of the land, for they are bread for us. Their protection is removed from them, and Yahweh is with us; do not fear them."

13. Are there areas of your life where unbelief or a bad attitude has had a foothold? If so, consider how this may be influencing others (spouse, children, co-workers, neighbors, pastor, etc.), and write down one practical way you can change your attitude or behavior to be a blessing to others rather than a cause to grumble. Consider Caleb and Joshua's response for an example of the right attitude.

• ANSWER. Answers will vary

Despite the faith-filled confidence of Caleb and Joshua, in the end, the people listen to the unbelieving spies, and as a result of this tragic episode God promises that not one person in the exodus generation would live to see the promised land except Caleb and Joshua!

Numbers 14:21–23

²¹ But truly, as I live, and as all the earth shall be filled with the glory of Yahweh, ²² none of the men who have seen my glory and my signs that I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and yet have put me to the test these ten times and have not obeyed my voice, ²³ shall see the land that I swore to give to their fathers. And none of those who despised me shall see it.

Ironically, God grants Israel's complaining request to die in the wilderness (14:2), and their children whom they said would become prey (14:3) would actually enjoy what their parents rejected (14:31–33). No one who had seen the 10 plagues, who had witnessed the death of all the firstborn in Egypt, who had walked through the Red Sea on dry ground, who had eaten bread from heaven and drunk water from a rock would live to see the land God was bringing them to (14:26–30)! The journey to Canaan, which should have taken only weeks, took 40 years because of their faithlessness! And these 40 years were stained by conflict with God.

Numbers 32:13

¹³ And Yahweh's anger was kindled against Israel, and he made them wander in the wilderness forty years, until all the generation that had done evil in the sight of Yahweh was gone.

14. Have you ever experienced God's hand of discipline because you failed to believe his word or you were resistant to obey in some area? What effect did this have on your demeanor?

· ANSWER. Answers will vary

15. Fill in the blanks from the reading:

“The antithesis of safety and supply, the wilderness was essentially negative—a place of hunger, chaos, and death. Surrounded by the cursed reality that results from sin, Israel was to learn about the necessity of persevering faith in Yahweh. The wilderness provided a buffer between liberation and land, and God used it as a crucible for developing Israel's trust in her liberating King” (WOTARCA, 84–85).⁵⁷

The underlined words in this quotation are left blank in the Student Workbook. We suggest that the instructor read the quote aloud to allow students to check their work.

⁵⁷ Jason DeRouchie, ed., *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic & Professional, 2013). Used by permission. No duplication or distributed is permitted without written permission of the publisher.

The apostle Paul tells us that Israel's unbelief in the wilderness happened as a warning to us (1 Cor. 10:1–13). All of her idolatry (10:7), sexual immorality (10:8), testing God (10:9), and grumbling (10:10) is meant to instruct Christians to “take heed lest they fall” (10:12).

1 Corinthians 10:5–6

⁵ Nevertheless, with most of them God was not pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness. ⁶ Now these things took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did.

1 Corinthians 10:11–13

¹¹ Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come. ¹² Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. ¹³ No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.

16. To what promise does Paul point believers so that they will not repeat Israel's failures?

- **ANSWER.** *God has promised not to tempt us beyond our ability to endure. Every temptation in life will be met with grace to resist turning away from Yahweh.*

It was a colossal act of rebellion for Israel not to believe in the God who had redeemed her from slavery to Egypt; it is even a greater act of rebellion for Christians not to believe in the God who has redeemed them from slavery to sin. Of all people, Christians ought to be the most grateful and whole-hearted worshippers of Yahweh. Roberts draws out this parallel:⁵⁸

“If we have faith in Christ, we too have been set free from slavery (to sin, not to Egypt) by a Passover sacrifice (of Jesus, not of a lamb), and have been set on a journey to the promised land (heaven, not Canaan). We must make sure that we do not fall because of sin and unbelief, but that we keep trusting God until we reach the destination.”

⁵⁸ Roberts, *God's Big Picture*, 76.

Day 5

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A RECAP OF NUMBERS AND A RAY OF HOPE

Required Reading: *Dominion and Dynasty*, pages 110–113

- ▷ begin at “Numbers: Journey to Hell and Back”
- ▷ stop at “Balaam’s Blessings: A Reaffirmation of Abraham”

17. Fill in the blanks from the reading:

“However, if *Exodus* and *Leviticus* were negative about the Israelite ability to fulfill the Sinai covenant, *Numbers* is downright pessimistic. As soon as the journey from Sinai to the land of promise commences, the people move from disaster to disaster, or, in the telling place names gives to the first few stops along the way, from ‘Fiery Blaze’ (11:3) to ‘Graveyard’ (11:34). They rebel against their leadership (12) before their journey comes to a complete dead end (13–14), and the desert becomes one vast burial ground for the nation” (DD, 111).

The underlined words in this quotation are left blank in the Student Workbook. We suggest that the instructor read the quote aloud to allow students to check their work.

18. Dempster makes an intriguing observation regarding the way God treats his people for similar sins before and after Sinai (DD, 112–113). What is the gist of his observation? Do you think it is valid? Why or why not?

- **ANSWER.** *After Sinai, God punishes Israel’s sin more severely than he did before Sinai. This is because God gave Israel the law at Sinai which was a means of grace to govern the way they were to live. If they followed the law, they would experience blessing, but if they did not, they would be cursed. God expects his people to live in light of the knowledge they have been given (Luke 12:48). Thus, Dempster’s observation is valid.*

Required Reading: *Dominion and Dynasty*, pages 113–117.

- ▷ begin at “Balaam’s Blessings: A Reaffirmation of Abraham”
- ▷ stop at “Deuteronomy: At the Border of Canaan”

The overall theme in Numbers has been Israel’s unbelief. Ironically, one of the greatest rays of hope comes from the mouth of a pagan sorcerer who is hired to curse the people of Israel. While God’s people consistently question God’s word, this Gentile understands that God’s word never fails (Num. 23:19).

Balak hires Balaam to curse Israel because he knows that whoever Balaam blesses is blessed while whoever Balaam curses is cursed (23:6), a statement that proves to be true throughout the ensuing narrative. The problem is that God's promise to Abraham (Gen. 12:3) overrides Balaam's ability to curse the ones whom God had blessed (23:20–21). Thus every time Balaam opens his mouth to curse Israel, blessings came out!

🔗 **BIBLE STUDY:** Consider the final two blessings that Balaam pronounces on God's people. Read the passages below and answer the questions that follow:

Numbers 24:5–9

- ⁵ *How lovely are your tents, O Jacob,
your encampments, O Israel!*
- ⁶ *Like palm groves that stretch afar,
like gardens beside a river,
like aloes that Yahweh has planted,
like cedar trees beside the waters.*
- ⁷ *Water shall flow from his buckets,
and his seed shall be in many waters;
his king shall be higher than Agag,
and his kingdom shall be exalted.*
- ⁸ *God brings him out of Egypt
and is for him like the horns of the wild ox;
he shall eat up the nations, his adversaries,
and shall break their bones in pieces
and pierce them through with his arrows.*
- ⁹ *He crouched, he lay down like a lion
and like a lioness; who will rouse him up?
Blessed are those who bless you,
and cursed are those who curse you.*

Numbers 24:17–19

- ¹⁷ *I see him, but not now;
I behold him, but not near:
a star shall come out of Jacob,
and a scepter shall rise out of Israel;*

*it shall crush the forehead of Moab
and break down all the sons of Sheth.*

¹⁸ *Edom shall be dispossessed;
Seir also, his enemies, shall be dispossessed.
Israel is doing valiantly.*

¹⁹ *And one from Jacob shall exercise dominion
and destroy the survivors of cities!*

19. What promises does Balaam acknowledge for the people of Israel?

· **ANSWER.** *They will be a great nation (vv. 5–7); a powerful king will come from Israel (v. 7); Israel’s enemies will be crushed (v. 8, 17–18); those who bless Israel will be blessed and those who curse Israel will be cursed (v. 9); a ruler will come out of Jacob (v. 17) and exercise dominion (v. 19).*

20. Who is the royal one that v. 17 speaks of (see Gen. 49:8–10; Num. 24:9; Rev. 5:5; 22:16)? What will he do when he comes (vv. 17–19)?

· **ANSWER.** *Verse 17 speaks of Jesus who comes as a Lion from the tribe of Judah. He is also the bright and morning star and the offspring of David. When he comes he will destroy all God’s enemies (and thus re-establish God’s kingdom).*

God is fulfilling his promise to Abraham that whoever curses Israel would be cursed (Gen 12:3). God is also confirming his word to Judah that one of his offspring would exercise dominion and destroy everything that rejects God’s rule (Gen. 49:8, 10). God’s word cannot fail!

“In summary, then, the Balaam oracles envision a king emerging from Israel to destroy its enemies. In language identical to the blessing of Judah in Genesis 49, he is like an invincible lion (Num. 24:5–9). Similarly, in the next oracle of Balaam, a star and a sceptre arise from Israel to smash the heads of the Moabites, who represent the enemy of Israel (Num. 24:16–24). The genealogical line of descent is lucid (Gen. 3:15; 12:3; 49:10)” (DD, 117).



§ INTEGRATIVE ASSIGNMENT

In one short paragraph, summarize in your own words the main message of the book of Numbers so that someone with no biblical knowledge could understand.

 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



Review the following questions in preparation for discussion. As you have worked through this lesson, record any lingering questions that you may have.

1. Why do you think it is so easy for God's people to forget the wonderful things he has done for them and to grumble and complain as a result? How might Psalm 103 (esp. vv. 1–5) or other passages serve as a reminder for what God has done for us?
2. Discuss specific promises God has made in his word and think of specific ways we can claim those promises in everyday life.
3. Describe a time when your faith was being tested, and share how you responded. What did God teach you through this?
4. Your own question(s):

§ ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- ▷ “History of Salvation in the Old Testament: Preparing the Way for Christ,”
ESV Study Bible, (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 2,638–2,639.

Deuteronomy

8

📖 INTRODUCTION

At this point in the story of redemption God has made massive promises of a restored kingdom through the seed of the woman, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Judah. God has chosen Israel to be his own treasured possession, redeemed them from slavery, and entered into a covenant relationship with them. Despite all the love they have been shown, Israel's heart was prone to wander and they failed to believe that God would keep his promises, and therefore they did not enter the land. They broke the covenant he had just made with them, which led to a miserable 40 years of wandering aimlessly in a desert where an entire generation died off.

Deuteronomy provides a lens through which to understand Israel's covenant history. They had failed to keep the covenant at Sinai; yet, God graciously renewed this covenant, instructing his stubborn people that they must live according to his rules in the land he was giving them to possess. Submitting to God's rule would lead to blessing and life (as it always does), but rejecting his rule would lead to curse and death (as it always does). Moses shows that God desires heart obedience. This is the dominant theme in Deuteronomy: "Love Yahweh your God with all your heart" (Deut. 6:5; cf. 30:6); however, it is abundantly clear that this love was to be expressed in obedience to Yahweh's rules and commandments (4:1; 5:33; 6:3, 24; 8:1; 30:6). Yet, the people still cannot obey God, and Moses shows them that what they really needed was a new heart. This would come in a new covenant.

📖 LESSON OBJECTIVES

After completing this lesson, the student should be able to

- ▷ understand how whole-hearted love for Yahweh should affect every sphere of life.
- ▷ understand the motivation and foundation for obedience to God.
- ▷ explain how Deuteronomy communicates the gospel.

Total pages of reading for this week: 29



If you feel you need more information, we suggest that you obtain copies of the Recommended Resources to help gain a broader perspective on the topics discussed. In addition to those resources, Jason DeRouchie also recommends several commentaries at the end of each chapter of *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About*. For the book of Deuteronomy, DeRouchie recommends

- ▷ Block, Daniel I. *Deuteronomy*. NIVAC. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012
- ▷ Craige, Peter C. *The Book of Deuteronomy*. NICOT. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976.
- ▷ McConville, J. Gordon. *Deuteronomy*. AOTC. Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2002.
- ▷ Wright, Christopher J.H. *Deuteronomy*. NIBCOT. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996

Please note that we believe these commentaries would be helpful to you as you seek to know God and his Word. However, they offer diverse theological approaches and are the word of man, not of God, so their claims should be carefully evaluated and subjected to scripture—the highest authority for Christians.



Day 1

COVENANT RENEWAL

Deuteronomy is the last and climactic book of the Pentateuch. God's people are preparing to enter the land that God has promised to their forefathers. The entire exodus generation has died due to covenant failure, and Moses has warned the younger generation to heed their fathers' example. Because of his steadfast love and mercy, God does not wipe out his people completely, but he reaffirms and develops the covenant relationship that had begun at Sinai with the next generation, making them heirs of the promises.

Deuteronomy 1:8

⁸ *See, I have set the land before you. Go in and take possession of the land that Yahweh swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give to them and to their offspring after them.*

Deuteronomy 29:1

¹ *These are the words of the covenant that Yahweh commanded Moses to make with the people of Israel in the land of Moab, besides the covenant that he had made with them at Horeb [Sinai].*

Required Reading: *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About*, pages 140-143.

DeRouchie begins his chapter on Deuteronomy with this strong statement:

"Perhaps no other book colors the tapestry of biblical thought like Deuteronomy"
(WOTARCA, 88).⁵⁹

⁵⁹ Jason DeRouchie, ed., *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic & Professional, 2013). Used by permission. No duplication or distributed is permitted without written permission of the publisher.

1. What is one reason DeRouchie makes this claim? (see WOTARCA, 88) ⁶⁰

- **ANSWER.** *Deuteronomy clarified for the post-wilderness generation the significance of all that comes before Deuteronomy, and it provided them with a constitution for guiding their covenant relationship with Yahweh in the Promised Land.*

The body of Deuteronomy consists of three sermons by Moses to the nation, in which he exhorts them to keep God's law for their good. He does not merely reiterate the law; rather, he explains how it is to govern every part of their lives so that they would be blessed in the Promised Land. God's people were to follow Deuteronomy's exposition of the law until the promises given to Abraham were fulfilled (see Gal. 3:23–29). At that point, God's people would be united to Christ by faith in fulfillment of the Abrahamic promises (3:29), and would no longer be governed by Moses' instruction, but by Christ himself. But for now, this "guardian" was the standard by which to live, which is why Moses named it "The Book of the Torah [Instruction]" (Deut. 31:26).

Deuteronomy 4:1

¹ *And now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the rules that I am teaching you, and do them, that you may live, and go in and take possession of the land that Yahweh, the God of your fathers, is giving you.*

To heed the instruction would result in life and blessing; to ignore it would result in curse, and ultimately, death.

Deuteronomy 11:26–28

²⁶ *See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse: ²⁷ the blessing, if you obey the commandments of Yahweh your God, which I command you today, ²⁸ and the curse, if you do not obey the commandments of Yahweh your God, but turn aside from the way that I am commanding you today, to go after other gods that you have not known.*

Not only would Israel be blessed by keeping God's law, but the whole world would be blessed. As they keep God's law, their lives will reflect the character of God, and in this way they will image God to the other nations, just like Adam and Eve were created to do (Gen. 1:26–28). This was the whole purpose of the covenant at Sinai (Exod. 19:4–6).

⁶⁰ Jason DeRouchie, ed., *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic & Professional, 2013). Used by permission. No duplication or distributed is permitted without written permission of the publisher.

Deuteronomy 4:5–8

⁵ See, I have taught you statutes and rules, as Yahweh my God commanded me, that you should do them in the land that you are entering to take possession of it. ⁶ Keep them and do them, for that will be your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, “Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.” ⁷ For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as Yahweh our God is to us, whenever we call upon him? ⁸ And what great nation is there, that has statutes and rules so righteous as all this law that I set before you today?

Deuteronomy 7:6

⁶ For you are a people holy to Yahweh your God. Yahweh your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.

Required Reading: *Dominion and Dynasty*, pages 117–118

- ▷ begin at “Deuteronomy: At the Border of Canaan”
 - ▷ stop at the paragraph that begins “Geographical blessing depends on...”
2. Dempster states that Deuteronomy is full of “elements of suspense, urgency, and anticipation” (DD, 118). Why is this the case? That is, what was about to happen?
- **ANSWER.** *God’s people were on the brink of the Promised Land after wandering for 40 years in the wilderness, and they were about to inherit the land. There was anticipation as to whether they would keep God’s law or not.*

The question looms large in the reader’s mind: Will this generation fail like the previous one? Deuteronomy shows God’s people what they must do to prevent this from happening—namely, love Yahweh their God with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength (Deut. 6:5). We will return to this idea on Day 3.

The underlined words in this quotation are left blank in the Student Workbook. We suggest that the instructor read the quote aloud to allow students to check their work.

3. Fill in the blanks from the reading:

“Canaan is the place of blessing, wilderness the place of curse (Deut. 8:7–16)” (DD, 118).

Throughout the book, two themes are repeatedly highlighted. The first is that God is about to give his people the land he had promised to Abraham hundreds of years ago (1:25; 2:29; 3:20; 4:1; 7:1; 11:8, 29, 31; 16:20; 17:14; 18:9; 23:21; 24:4; 26:1; 27:2, 3). The second theme is that Yahweh would dwell with his people in that land. Specifically, it is in his sanctuary, “the place that Yahweh will choose to cause his name to dwell” (12:5, 11, 21; 14:24; 16:6; 26:2).

Read what Dempster has to say on this point:

“The idea of causing a name to dwell in the sanctuary means not just that God owns the sanctuary in a special way, but that this is the place of Yahweh’s residence in the midst of Israel: his name is associated with his person and character and this, therefore, is the place of his mercy and grace (Exod. 34:5–7), where God takes up residence in Israel. Divine presence and holy land echo the lost glory of Eden” (DD, 118).

4. God told Pharaoh, “For this purpose I have raised you up, to show you my power, so that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth” (Exod. 9:16). How does Yahweh’s raising up Israel accomplish the same goal? Is there any difference?

· **ANSWER.** *God also raises up Israel so that his “name may be proclaimed in all the earth.” This would happen by him residing (or causing his name to dwell) in the sanctuary. The nations would see Yahweh’s character represented in Israel as they kept his law. God does all things to magnify the glory of his name, as we saw in the book of Exodus.*

Day 2

.....

MAN DOES NOT LIVE BY BREAD ALONE

Required Reading: *Dominion and Dynasty*, pages 118–120.

- ▷ begin at the paragraph that begins “Geographical blessing depends on...”
- ▷ stop at the paragraph that begins “There are two deuteronomic laws...”

Required Reading: *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About*, pages 144–146.

The religion of the Israelites was never about mere conformity to a set of rules. In fact, it was not even about “religion.” Man wasn’t created for religion; rather, man was created to have an intimate relationship with God. It was this way from the beginning, and when Adam and Eve broke that relationship, God took the initiative to make another covenant relationship with his people. This relationship (Abrahamic covenant) was made long before God gave his people the law. Thus, God’s grace is the foundation of every human’s relationship with God, both Israel in the Old Testament and Christians today.

But God does not remain hidden from his people. He reveals his character in many ways, the most significant being his word. It is through the law that Israel understands who Yahweh is and what he is like. The laws reveal his character—his love for the poor, his mercy towards the oppressed, his perfect justice, his liberating power, and his holy anger. Thus, as God’s people follow God’s law, they would conform to his nature and experience blessing, the epitome of which is life itself.

Deuteronomy 4:1

¹ *And now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the rules that I am teaching you, and do them, that you may live, and go in and take possession of the land that Yahweh, the God of your fathers, is giving you.*

Deuteronomy 30:19–20

¹⁹ *I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore choose life, that you and your offspring may live, ²⁰ loving Yahweh your God, obeying his voice and holding fast to him, for he is your life.*

Deuteronomy 32:47

⁴⁷ For it is no empty word for you, but your very life, and by this word you shall live long in the land that you are going over the Jordan to possess.

Perhaps the most explicit passage that addresses this truth is Deuteronomy 8, which Jesus refers to 1,500 years later.

📖 **BIBLE STUDY:** Deuteronomy 8:1–3; Matthew 4:1–4

The well-known story of Jesus' temptation (Matt. 4:1–11) takes on much more significance when one understands it in light of the original context from which Jesus quotes. All three verses he uses to fight Satan come from Deuteronomy: 8:3; 6:16; and 6:13. We will consider his first temptation and his response from Deuteronomy 8:3. First, consider the context from Deuteronomy:

Deuteronomy 8:1–3

¹ The whole commandment that I command you today you shall be careful to do, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land that Yahweh swore to give to your fathers. ² And you shall remember the whole way that Yahweh your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, that he might humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments or not. ³ And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of Yahweh.

5. According to this passage, how would Israel experience the covenant promises of land and blessing?

· **ANSWER.** *Through obedience to the word of God.*

God brought Israel into the wilderness not only to see what was in their heart, whether they would obey him or not, but through severe testing he would teach them that they would only receive the covenant promises if they submitted to his word.

Likewise, God leads Jesus into the wilderness to test him (Matt. 4:1). Jesus fasts for 40 days and is therefore hungry (4:2). Satan knows Jesus is the Son of God (cf. 3:17), but he wants Jesus to use his divine power to meet his earthly needs (something he could easily have done) rather than relying on his heavenly Father.

Matthew 4:1–4

¹ Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. ² And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. ³ And the tempter came and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.” ⁴ But he answered, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”

6. What did Jesus do in the wilderness that the children of Israel failed to do? What was the result?

- **ANSWER.** *Jesus believed God’s word and therefore experienced the covenant promises that the children of Israel failed to receive.*

It is significant that God’s declaration of the title “son” on both Israel (Exod. 4:22) and Jesus (Matt. 3:17) happen at key moments in their history (Israel’s redemption from Egypt and Jesus’ baptism) and is immediately followed by a period of testing that would reveal where their allegiance really lies (Deut. 8:2; Matt. 4:1). Further, what hangs on this testing is the fulfillment of God’s covenant promises. For Israel, this includes life and blessing in the Promised Land; for Jesus, this includes fulfilling his redemptive purposes as the Messiah and establishing the kingdom of God. This kingdom, which would be governed by Jesus (28:18–20), was the ultimate fulfillment of God’s covenant promises to Israel. Thus, Matthew 4:1–11 is a recapitulation of Israel’s history in the wilderness. Jesus, like Israel, was about to enter into the land and establish God’s kingdom (4:12–17, esp. v. 17). Yet he has to be tested first to see whether he would obey God or not (cf. Deut. 8:3). Where Israel fails the test, Jesus is victorious! Jesus is the true Son of God!

DON'T PUT THE CART BEFORE THE HORSE!

Many religions require obedience to some set of rules, a book, a particular standard, etc. So what makes Christianity different? As has already been mentioned, our obedience does not create our relationship with God; God's grace does. God-dependent faith is at the root; obedience is the fruit. Thus obedience grows out of a heart that God has "re-wired" to love him and fear him.

Deuteronomy 6:1-3

¹ Now this is the commandment—the statutes and the rules—that Yahweh your God commanded me to teach you, that you may do them... ² that you may fear Yahweh your God ... by keeping all his statutes and his commandments, which I commanded you, all the days of your life, and that your days may be long.

³ Hear therefore, O Israel, and be careful to do them, that it may go well with you, and that you may multiply greatly.

7. What is the proper sequence to a biblical walk with God? Select the correct answer. (see WOTARCA, 90-91)
 - a) (Obeying God → The Reading or Teaching of God's Word → Hearing God's Word → Learning to Fear God) = Life
 - b) (Learning to Fear God → Obeying God → The Reading or Teaching of God's Word → Hearing God's Word) = Life
 - c) (The Reading or Teaching of God's Word → Hearing God's Word → Learning to Fear God → Obeying God) = Life
 - d) (Hearing God's Word → Obeying God → The Reading or Teaching of God's Word → Learning to Fear God) = Life

8. How does this particular sequence guard against the common misunderstanding that Christianity is a legalistic religion?
 - **ANSWER.** *"Obeying God" flows from a heart that fears God, and a heart that fears God can only come by hearing his word. Thus, at the foundational level, Christianity is God's initiative to make a people for himself through his revealed word. Obedience does not create this relationship, his gracious word does. Obedience flows from this and leads to life.*

Day 3

LOVE YAHWEH YOUR GOD

Required Reading: *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About*, 145-150.

- ▷ stop at “The Author of Deuteronomy Detailed the Perils of Sin, the Pleasures of Surrender, & the Promise of Grace”

In Deuteronomy God does not just call for an outward obedience to his commandments; he calls for heart obedience, because what God desires most from his people was a deep, loving relationship. But it’s more than a mere desire. It’s a command! And it’s not just any command, but the supreme command (Matt. 22:26–40)! Not to love God with all one’s heart is the essence of all sin.

Deuteronomy 6:4–5

⁴ *Hear, O Israel: Yahweh our God, Yahweh is one.* ⁵ *You shall love Yahweh your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.*

Deuteronomy 10:12–13

¹² *And now, Israel, what does Yahweh your God require of you, but to fear Yahweh your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve Yahweh your God with all your heart and with all your soul,* ¹³ *and to keep the commandments and statutes of Yahweh, which I am commanding you today for your good?*

Loving God, however, was not the end goal. Love for God was to overflow into love for others. This is why Jesus said the second greatest commandment is just like the first. Interestingly, when Deuteronomy 6:4–9 (the *Shema*) was quoted in ancient times, Leviticus 19:18 was often added to the end in light of Jesus’ words. It says, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

Matthew 22:36–40

³⁶ *“Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?”* ³⁷ *And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.* ³⁸ *This is the great and first commandment.* ³⁹ *And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.* ⁴⁰ *On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.”*

9. What is the fundamental call in which all the laws are summed up? Why are there so many other laws?

- **ANSWER.** *To love God and neighbor. This is what God's people are to do. All the other laws clarify how God's people were to love him and their neighbors.*

10. Write down one specific way that your love for God can manifest itself by an act of love for someone you know *this week*.

- **ANSWER.** *Answers will vary*

"The immediate context of Deuteronomy 6 suggests that 'love' for Yahweh was to be a life-encompassing, community-embracing, exclusive commitment to the Sovereign One ... that calls for every closet of our lives to be filled with radical God-centeredness" (WOTARCA, 93, 94).⁶¹

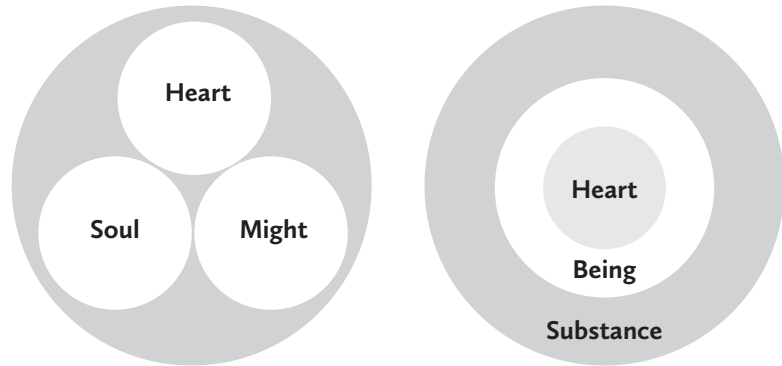
It is too easy to dichotomize life into the "spiritual" and the "secular" realms. We go to church on Sunday, and we may read our Bibles in the mornings, but the vast majority of our life is spent in the mundane, "non-spiritual" activities of life. This kind of thinking is foreign to the Bible. Rather, every area of life ought to be viewed as it relates to God. Our entertainment, our leisure, our nine-to-five, our parenting, our neighboring, our hobbies, our diet, are all to reflect God's character since he is Lord over all of it! This is the call in Deuteronomy. Every area of our lives is to be radically God-centered!

Deuteronomy calls us to love Yahweh with all our "heart," "soul," and "might" (cf. 6:5; 10:12–13). DeRouchie explains what is meant by these terms (WOTARCA, 93):

- *Heart:* All that is internal—one's desires, emotions, attitudes, perceptions, and thoughts.
- *Soul (being):* One's entire Being—all that is part of the "heart" plus everything outward: one's body, words, actions, reactions.
- *Might (substance):* Not only physical strength, but also all that one has available for honoring God: spouse, children, house, land, animals, wardrobe, tools, toys, etc.

⁶¹ Jason DeRouchie, ed., *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic & Professional, 2013). Used by permission. No duplication or distributed is permitted without written permission of the publisher.

11. Which of these diagrams best represents this understanding of “heart,” “soul,” and “might”? Can you identify one specific example in your life for each sphere that does not reflect whole-hearted love for Yahweh? How can you love God better in these areas?



• **ANSWER.** *The diagram on the right reflects the three expanding, overlapping spheres of life with which we are to love Yahweh.*

• **ANSWER.** *Answers will vary*

“All that we are and have should ring out, ‘My God is Yahweh!’” (WOTARCA, 93).⁶²

Loving God is not an option. It is the essence of a covenant relationship, and apart from a covenant relationship, no one can know God. Further, as Deuteronomy makes abundantly clear, this love necessarily manifests itself in obedience. That is, our love for God must change the way we live day to day, even among the mundane things of life. This kind of living will lead to a blessed life!

⁶² Jason DeRouchie, ed., *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic & Professional, 2013). Used by permission. No duplication or distributed is permitted without written permission of the publisher.

ROYAL OFFSPRING

Required Reading: *Dominion and Dynasty*, pages 120–121.

- ▷ begin at the paragraph that begins “There are two deuteronomic laws...”
- ▷ stop at the paragraph that begins “As noted before...”

From early on in Israel’s history, God had promised that kings would come from Abraham (cf. Gen. 17:6, 16; 49:10). His offspring would exercise dominion over the nations. Although Israel desires a king for the wrong reason (Deut. 17:14), God would grant their request (17:15), and even at this point he set up guidelines that would distinguish Israel’s kings from the kings of the nations around them.

Deuteronomy 17:15–20

¹⁵ *You may indeed set a king over you....* ¹⁶ *Only he must not acquire many horses for himself or cause the people to return to Egypt in order to acquire many horses, since Yahweh has said to you, ‘You shall never return that way again.’* ¹⁷ *And he shall not acquire many wives for himself, lest his heart turn away, nor shall he acquire for himself excessive silver and gold.* ¹⁸ *And when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, he shall write for himself in a book a copy of this law, approved by the Levitical priests.* ¹⁹ *And it shall be with him, and he shall read in it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear Yahweh his God by keeping all the words of this law and these statutes, and doing them,* ²⁰ *that his heart may not be lifted up above his brothers, and that he may not turn aside from the commandment, either to the right hand or to the left, so that he may continue long in his kingdom, he and his children, in Israel.*

12. How was Israel’s king to rule differently than the kings of the nations around them?

- **ANSWER.** *Israel’s king was to follow after Yahweh with all his heart. This would be accomplished by copying the entire book of the law, then reading it all the days of his life, and thereby fearing Yahweh. Israel’s king was still under the authority of Israel’s true King, Yahweh.*

Day 4

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MOSES

Required Reading: *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About*, pages 150-157.

- ▷ begin at “The Author of Deuteronomy Detailed the Perils of Sin, the Pleasures of Surrender, & the Promise of Grace”

God’s desire has always been to have an intimate relationship with his chosen people. He desires to bless his people as they submit to his rule. And he desires to dwell among them in a land that also experiences blessing. In other words, God longs for his kingdom on Earth, and this will only come about through a covenant relationship with his people. The making of this covenant relationship is known as the gospel, because it is good news!

Deuteronomy shows that the old covenant is not sufficient to bring about the covenant promises because God’s people still possess sinful hearts. But it also shows what God would do with his people in order to make them covenant keepers and thereby experience the covenant blessings. Ultimately, it is Christ alone who keeps the covenant and secures the blessings for all those who place their faith in him. However, God’s word also says that something will be different in the hearts of those who are members of this new covenant.

We saw yesterday that God desires heart obedience from his people. Throughout Deuteronomy, Moses frequently warns the people of Israel of two snares that would prevent whole-hearted obedience and love to Yahweh once they entered the land. The first snare is prosperity. It is important to realize that prosperity is not inherently wrong. In fact, many of the blessings God promised for his people involved material prosperity (Deut. 28:1–14 cf. Lev. 26:3–13). However, if you have all your needs met, it can be a great temptation to think you don’t need God anymore. Moses warns Israel against this snare.

Deuteronomy 8:11–14

¹¹ Take care lest you forget Yahweh your God by not keeping his commandments and his rules and his statutes, which I command you today, ¹² lest, when you have eaten and are full and have built good houses and live in them, ¹³ and when your herds and flocks multiply and your silver and gold is multiplied and all that you have is multiplied, ¹⁴ then your heart be lifted up, and you forget Yahweh your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

Deuteronomy 8:17–18

¹⁷ Beware lest you say in your heart, ‘My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth.’ ¹⁸ You shall remember Yahweh your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth, that he may confirm his covenant that he swore to your fathers, as it is this day.

The second snare is paganism. God demands whole-hearted allegiance since he alone is God, and he alone is worthy to be worshipped. This is the primary reason God commands his people to destroy those who are living in the Promised Land, along with all their idols. If they did not, the people of Israel would be tempted to worship their gods.

Deuteronomy 7:3–4

³ You shall not intermarry with them, giving your daughters to their sons or taking their daughters for your sons, ⁴ for they would turn away your sons from following me, to serve other gods. Then the anger of Yahweh would be kindled against you, and he would destroy you quickly.

Deuteronomy 7:25

²⁵ The carved images of their gods you shall burn with fire. You shall not covet the silver or the gold that is on them or take it for yourselves, lest you be ensnared by it, for it is an abomination to Yahweh your God.

Deuteronomy 11:16

¹⁶ Take care lest your heart be deceived, and you turn aside and serve other gods and worship them.

13. How do both of these snares manifest themselves in American culture?

Identify one specific way that either of these snares is a temptation in your life and write down some practical ways you can guard against it.

- **ANSWER.** America is a very prosperous nation. Most people do not feel that they need God because all their needs are met by money. Thus it is easy to forget Yahweh. Also, America is filled with idolatry. People worship money, possessions, positions, reputation, pleasure, entertainment, comfort, etc. When one lives in this culture, it is easy to adopt the same ways of thinking. This is paganism.

In order to motivate his people to keep his commandments, God provides blessings for obedience (Deut. 28:1–14) and curses for disobedience (28:15–68). These blessings and curses are based upon past grace which was manifest in Israel's redemption and the covenant made at Sinai. That is, they are not the *basis* for the covenant relationship; they are *means of grace* to help God's people keep their end of the covenant by nurturing confidence in his future promises. In regards to these blessings and curses, DeRouchie says this:

14. Fill in the blanks from the reading:

"We will make different choices in the present if we truly believe that the outcome of one decision over another will produce more satisfying results. By believing God's Word, hope is created, and what we hope for tomorrow changes who we are today" (WOTARCA, 95).⁶³

The underlined words in this quotation are left blank in the Student Workbook. We suggest that the instructor read the quote aloud to allow students to check their work.

God purposefully created mankind to seek happiness.⁶⁴ And as we've seen from the very beginning of this story, happiness and blessing only come when God's people submit to God's rule. This is why obedience is so important.

The problem, however, is that God's people are under a curse and their desires have been twisted to seek things that displease God. And to seek anything other than God is to miss out on infinite pleasure and joy (Ps. 16:11).

Just like in Leviticus 26, Deuteronomy's list of curses (Deut. 28:15–68) is much longer than the list of blessings (28:1–13), foreshadowing a dismal future for Israel. Despite all these motivations and all the grace God showed to Israel, Moses describes the people of Israel as rebellious, unbelieving, and stubborn. The book also reveals the reason for their hard hearts.

Deuteronomy 29:4

⁴ *But to this day Yahweh has not given you a heart to understand or eyes to see or ears to hear.*

63 Jason DeRouchie, ed., *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic & Professional, 2013). Used by permission. No duplication or distributed is permitted without written permission of the publisher.

64 See also John Piper's discussion of Christian Hedonism in the introduction to *Desiring God: Meditations of a Christian Hedonist* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah, 2003), 17–28.

Moses understands that under Israel's current condition, they would not inherit the covenant promises. He warns the people over and over that, *if* they disobey, then they will be cursed. But throughout the book, it's as if Moses becomes more and more pessimistic that they will keep God's law. By the end of the book, he speaks in terms of *when* they disobey (30:1), not *if* they disobey (4:25–28). Thus, although the people inherit the land and enjoy temporary blessing, in the long run, God's people would experience the curse of the covenant stipulations.

Deuteronomy 31:16

¹⁶ *And Yahweh said to Moses, "Behold, you are about to lie down with your fathers. Then this people will rise and whore after the foreign gods among them in the land that they are entering, and they will forsake me and break my covenant that I have made with them."*

Deuteronomy 31:20

²⁰ *For when I have brought them into the land flowing with milk and honey, which I swore to give to their fathers, and they have eaten and are full and grown fat, they will turn to other gods and serve them, and despise me and break my covenant.*

Israel has sinful hearts that need serious work if they are to be the kind of people God intends for them to be. This shows them their need for something—or someone—greater than themselves to undo the curse that controls their hearts.

Moses anticipates a day when God would make a new covenant with them in which he would give them new hearts capable of obeying him (30:1–10).

Deuteronomy 30:6, 8

⁶ *And Yahweh your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring, so that you will love Yahweh your God with all your heart and with all your soul that you may live.... And you shall again obey the voice of Yahweh and keep all his commandments that I command you today.*

15. According to this passage, what did God's people need in order to obey him? See Ezekiel 36:26–27 for help.

· **ANSWER.** *God's people needed new (circumcised) hearts in order to obey him.*

Throughout redemptive history God makes several covenants with his people, all of which they break. Because God is just, he must uphold his covenant promises which include curse for disobedience (28:15–68; Lev. 26:14–39). Every human being is under God’s curse because we have all failed to image him in a manner that reflects his holy character. Thus, beginning with Adam and Eve’s initial sin, the massive reservoir of God’s wrath began filling up; however, God’s mercy functioned as a dam that prevented him from flooding his people with wrath. He could not let their sin go; yet, somehow he also had to fulfill his promises to Abraham (Gen. 12:1–3; 15:17–18; 22:16–18) and to the woman (3:15). From a human standpoint, God was working himself into a predicament.

Proverbs 17:15

¹⁵ *He who justifies the wicked and he who condemns the righteous are both alike an abomination to Yahweh*

Romans 4:5

⁵ *And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness.*

This tension is the very reason why Messiah Jesus came to earth—to bear the curse for all God’s people throughout history. This single act was the only possible solution to uphold God’s justice while extending his mercy towards sinful people!

Galatians 3:13–14

¹³ *Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree”—¹⁴ so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith.*

16. Summarize Galatians 3:13–14 in your own words.

- **ANSWER.** *Jesus experienced the covenant curse that we deserved so that the covenant blessings could be extended to any sinner who places his faith in Christ.*

Although the gospel becomes clearer and clearer as God’s revelation unfolds, even in Deuteronomy we see the fundamental elements: God’s unmerited grace (Deut. 5:6; 7:7–8; 9:5–6), man’s sin (31:16, 20, 29), and God’s promise of a future work that would solve the tension between his justice and mercy (30:1–10; cf. 28:1–68).

Day 5

YAHWEH ALONE IS GOD

Required Reading: *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About*, pages 100–102.

Deuteronomy 4:5–8

⁵ See, I have taught you statutes and rules, as Yahweh my God commanded me, that you should do them in the land that you are entering to take possession of it. ⁶ Keep them and do them, for that will be your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, ‘Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.’ ⁷ For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as Yahweh our God is to us, whenever we call upon him? ⁸ And what great nation is there, that has statutes and rules so righteous as all this law that I set before you today?

17. What was the missional goal of Israel’s obedience and love to Yahweh?

- **ANSWER.** *Israel’s obedience would display the greatness of God and his word, resulting in the reestablishment of Yahweh worship on a global scale.*

18. What is the governing truth at the core of Israel’s worldview? (see WOTARCA, 101)

- **ANSWER.** *Yahweh alone is God (Deut. 4:35; 6:4; 33:26).*

Required Reading: *Dominion and Dynasty*, pages 121–123.

▷ begin at the paragraph that begins “As noted before...”

Deuteronomy 4:30–31

³⁰ When you are in tribulation, and all these things come upon you in the latter days, you will return to Yahweh your God and obey his voice. ³¹ For Yahweh your God is a merciful God. He will not leave you or destroy you or forget the covenant with your fathers that he swore to them.

19. True/False: Hope, not judgment, is the last word for Israel.

Deuteronomy 33:26, 29

²⁶ *“There is none like God, O Jeshurun,
who rides through the heavens to your help,
through the skies in his majesty...*

²⁹ *Happy are you, O Israel! Who is like you,
a people saved by Yahweh,
the shield of your help,
and the sword of your triumph!
Your enemies shall come fawning to you,
and you shall tread upon their backs.”*

20. As believers, how should we respond to God’s covenant-initiating and sustaining grace? Take a moment to meditate on the above passage and then thank God for his salvation!

- **ANSWER.** *We should find our hearts satisfied in God and humbled because of what he has done for us.*

By the end of the Pentateuch, God’s people are still not in God’s land that was promised way back in Genesis 12. They are still “east of Eden.” The exodus generation had broken God’s covenant, and thus none of them (save Caleb and Joshua) would see the Promised Land. God renews the Sinai covenant with the younger generation and establishes them as a new Israel. As they prepare to enter the land, there is a big question in the reader’s mind. Will the people obey Yahweh or not? Though Moses exhorts the nation to obedience, he seems to indicate that covenant curses are likely in the picture for Israel. But there is also a glimmer of hope for a future time when God would create new hearts in his people so that they would love him once again.

 INTEGRATIVE ASSIGNMENT



In one short paragraph, summarize in your own words the main message of the book of Deuteronomy so that someone with no biblical knowledge could understand.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Review the following questions in preparation for discussion. As you have worked through this lesson, record any lingering questions that you may have.

1. How can you love God with *all* your heart, soul, and might (Deut. 6:5) and yet still love your spouse, children, family, friends, neighbors, etc.? Should we feel guilty about having deep affections for loved ones, as if they are competing with our love for God?
2. It is easy to say that we love God and others, but our actions often prove otherwise. What was the greatest demonstration of God's love for his people (see John 15:13 and Rom. 5:8)? What are some practical ways that our love for God and others should reflect this act of love?
3. Are God's promises of blessing (reward) for obedience and curse (punishment) for disobedience the same thing as a bribe (Deut. 10:17; 16:19; cf. Deut. 28)? Why or why not?
4. Your own question(s):



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- ▷ Daniel Block, “Deuteronomy,” in *New International Version Application Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012).
- ▷ “History of Salvation in the Old Testament: Preparing the Way for Christ,” *ESV Study Bible*, (Wheaton: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 2,639–2,640.

Joshua

9

📖 INTRODUCTION

Moses dies at the end of Deuteronomy, and leadership of the nation is passed on to Joshua. Though the Pentateuch ends with a level of uncertainty about the state of Israel's future, the second generation has a much more positive outlook than the exodus generation had. With a renewed covenant relationship, the people are anticipating God's promises coming to fruition. In Joshua, the people by and large are submitting to God's rule and therefore enjoying God's blessing. They conquer the Promised Land and begin the establishment of a nation under the rule of Yahweh. It appears that Yahweh is finally taking large strides to restore his kingdom in a tangible way.

📖 LESSON OBJECTIVES

After completing this lesson, the student should be able to

- ▷ articulate the role of the Former Prophets in the overall storyline.
- ▷ articulate in what ways God fulfilled his promises to Abraham in Joshua and in what ways they remained unfulfilled.
- ▷ explain what Yahweh's Wars of Judgment are.

Total pages of reading for this week: 29



Yahweh Wars of Judgment are no doubt one of the more difficult topics you may face as the instructor. For preparation, in addition to reading the articles listed in “Additional Resources” section, you may find it helpful to read some commentaries on passages that describe Yahweh’s command to utterly destroy all inhabitants of the land. Here are a few to consider: Joshua 6:21; 8:26; 10:40; 11:14; cf. Deut. 7:2, 8–9; 20:16–17. Some recommended commentaries are listed in “Key Resources for Further Study” at the end of each chapter in *WOTARCA*.

Additional topics to discuss:

- ▷ Cities of refuge (Josh. 20). What are these and what was their purpose?
- ▷ What does it mean that, “not one word of all the good promises that Yahweh made to the house of Israel had failed; all came to pass” (Josh. 21:43–45; cf. 23:14)?



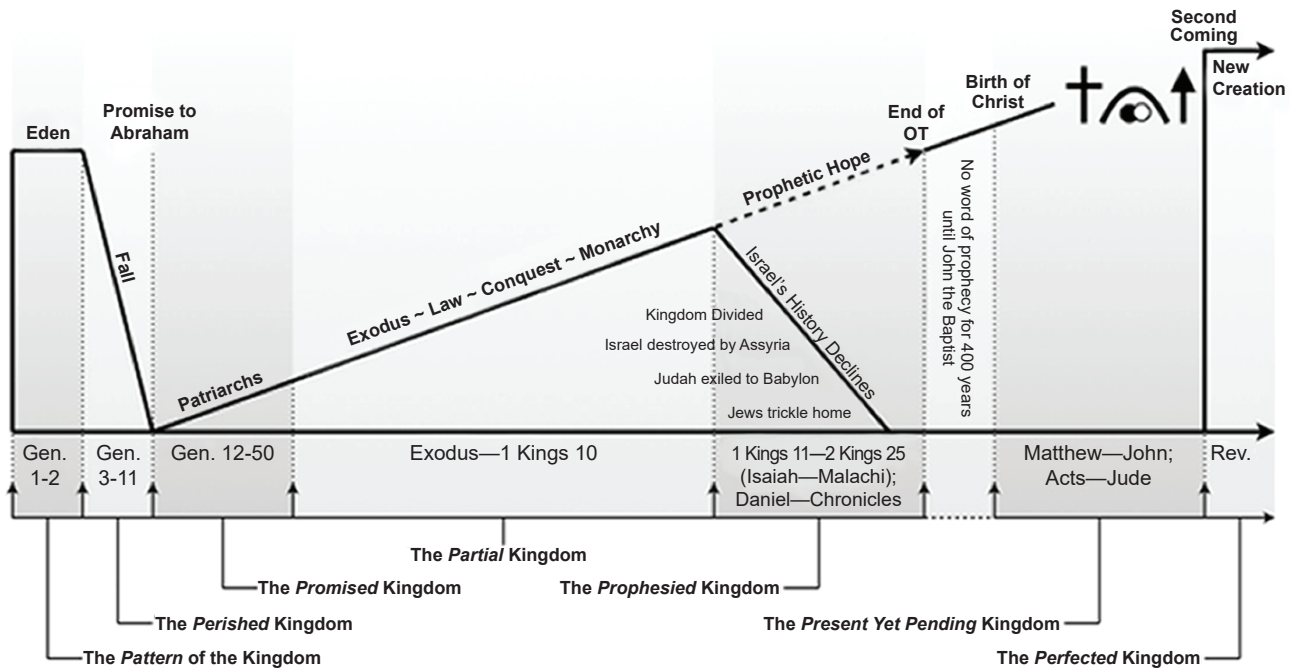
Day 1

THE FORMER PROPHETS

Before considering the book of Joshua, we will overview the second major division of the Tanakh, the Prophets, which is divided into the Former and Latter Prophets. The Former Prophets consist of Joshua, Judges, 1–2 Samuel, and 1–2 Kings, which continue the storyline begun in the Pentateuch.

Below is the diagram presented in Lesson 2 which lays out a visual representation of the kingdom of God throughout redemptive history. Notice where we are on the timeline. We are still in *The Partial Kingdom*, between “Law” and “Conquest.” In DeRouchie’s paradigm the Former Prophets begin a stage he titles *Government in the Promised Land*, for obvious reasons.

Diagram of the Kingdom of God



In this stage, God's kingdom experiences massive advances as many of the promises to Abraham are being fulfilled, including possession of the land, triumph over enemies, becoming a great nation, and even blessing other nations. However, the covenant at Sinai still looms over the shoulder of God's people like the Grim Reaper, waiting to execute judgment on God's covenant breakers. And this is exactly what happens. We see Israel's history decline as the story progresses, though the hope for God's people simultaneously increases as the prophets proclaim a new covenant and a new king who would restore God's kingdom on Earth.

Required Reading: *Dominion and Dynasty*, pages 125–126.

▷ stop at “Joshua: Occupation and Settlement”

1. What is the Deuteronomistic History? Select the correct answer.
 - a) The period of time covered in the book of Deuteronomy when Moses preached to the nation of Israel in Moab.
 - b) The account of the obedience of God's people as they enter the land and love Yahweh with all their heart like Moses had commanded in Deuteronomy.
 - c) Everything that takes place between Israel's covenant at Mt. Sinai and Israel's entrance into the land of Canaan.
 - d) The working out in history of the blessings and curses of Deuteronomy in the life of the Israelite nation.

2. True/False: From the beginning of Israel's history until its end, the people's behavior could be characterized as the fulfilling of the covenant.

“As far as the larger canonical context is concerned, the promise to the woman of a seed that would triumph over the seed of the serpent and restore humanity to its lost royal glory as vice-regent of creation seems dead. The covenant with the fathers seems to be a travesty, as the demands of the Sinai covenant have brought down the verdict of death and curse on Israel. Israel, the firstborn son of God, has been disobedient.... He has been buried in an exilic graveyard” (DD, 126).

Required Reading: *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About*, pages 172–174.

3. By what were all the people and events in Joshua–Chronicles evaluated? (WOTARCA, 165)
 - **ANSWER.** *Deuteronomy's covenant principles*

The verses below come from the first and last chapters of the Prophets (Joshua 1 and Malachi 4, respectively), which bookend this lengthy section of Israel's history and clue us in to the focus of the Deuteronomistic History.

Joshua 1:7–8

⁷ Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may have good success wherever you go. ⁸ This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.

Malachi 4:4

⁴ Remember the law of my servant Moses, the statutes and rules that I commanded him at Horeb for all Israel.

4. From the beginning of the Prophets until the end, what was Israel's primary responsibility?

· **ANSWER.** *To obey the law of Moses.*

Interestingly, the only other place in the Tanakh where the phrase “meditate on [the law] day and night” occurs is Psalm 1:2, which is the first major book in the Writings. Thus, both the Prophets and the Writings—the latter two sections of the Tanakh—begin with the exhortation to keep God's word at the center of one's life. Specifically, it is the Mosaic (Old) covenant that is to govern Israel's walk with Yahweh.

This was God's plan for his people until a new “prophet like Moses” came and mediated a new covenant (Deut. 34:10; cf. 18:15, 18; Luke 7:16; John 1:21, 25, 45; Acts 3:22–26; 7:37), wherein God's law would be written on the hearts of each covenant member (Jer. 31:31–34)!

Day 2

HOME SWEET HOME

For centuries now, God's people have been sojourners in lands not their own. The promise of land (Gen. 15:18; 17:8) hung over their heads like a carrot they could not reach, as God tested their faith and obedience and taught them that they would only experience life and blessing in the land if they submitted to his rule. These were hard lessons to learn, and they cost one whole generation their very lives. But God's mercy and grace extends towards a new generation who would experience the promises their fathers failed to (Josh. 21:43). Thus, the conquest is viewed "as a turn from the rebellion and punishment in the wilderness to a renewed covenant commitment to Yahweh" (WOTARCA, 174).

Required Reading: *Dominion and Dynasty*, pages 126–128.

- ▷ begin at "Joshua: Occupation and Settlement"
- ▷ stop at "Geographical 'Overkill'"

Joshua describes the inheriting of the Promised Land using 'creation mandate' language: God's people *subdue* the land (18:1; cf. Gen. 1:28) and exercise dominion over its inhabitants. This dominion involves the killing of God's enemies who dwelt in the land.

Joshua 10:24–26

²⁴ *And when they brought those kings out to Joshua, Joshua summoned all the men of Israel and said to the chiefs of the men of war who had gone with him, "Come near; put your feet on the necks of these kings." Then they came near and put their feet on their necks.* ²⁵ *And Joshua said to them, "Do not be afraid or dismayed; be strong and courageous. For thus Yahweh will do to all your enemies against whom you fight."* ²⁶ *And afterward Joshua struck them and put them to death, and he hanged them on five trees. And they hung on the trees until evening.*

5. According to Dempster, what does this event echo from the larger context of the story of redemption? (DD, 127)
 - **ANSWER.** *In Dempster's words, "There are echoes of the seed of the woman's crushing the serpent's head and of the placing of the curse upon the seed of the serpent" (DD, 127).*

Required Reading: *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About*, pages 172–174.

The book of Joshua presents the Promised Land as a new Eden where God would dwell with his covenant people and where they would experience the rest God designed for both his people *and* his creation (cf. Gen. 2:1–3).

Joshua 1:13

¹³ *Remember the word that Moses the servant of Yahweh commanded you, saying, “Yahweh your God is providing you a place of rest and will give you this land.”*

Joshua 21:44

⁴⁴ *And Yahweh gave them rest on every side just as he had sworn to their fathers. Not one of all their enemies had withstood them, for Yahweh had given all their enemies into their hands.*

Joshua 11:23

²³ *So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that Yahweh had spoken to Moses. And Joshua gave it for an inheritance to Israel according to their tribal allotments. And the land had rest from war.*

However, the rest described in Joshua is merely a shadow of the ultimate rest that would come when Messiah Jesus would conquer his real enemies—sin and death—and restore *shalom*, first in the souls of his people (at his first coming), and then in the whole world (at his second coming). Those who have rejected God’s rule, however, will find no rest for all eternity.

Hebrews 4:1–3, 8–9

¹ *Therefore, while the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us fear lest any of you should seem to have failed to reach it.* ² *For good news came to us just as to them, but the message they heard did not benefit them, because they were not united by faith with those who listened.* ³ *For we who have believed enter that rest....* ⁸ *For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken of another day later on.* ⁹ *So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God.*

Matthew 11:28–29

²⁸ *Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*

²⁹ *Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.*

Revelation 14:11–13

¹¹ *“And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever, and they have no rest, day or night, these worshipers of the beast and its image, and whoever receives the mark of its name.”* ¹² *Here is a call for the endurance of the saints, those who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus.* ¹³ *And I heard a voice from heaven saying, “Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.” “Blessed indeed,” says the Spirit, “that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them!”*

6. What did the Israelites experience in the Promised Land that they had longed for, for so many years? How is this different from what believers in Christ experience under the new covenant?

- **ANSWER.** *The Israelites experienced rest from wandering, from enemies, and from hunger and thirst. Under the new covenant, Christians experience rest from their sin and vain attempts to find peace with God.*

🔗 BIBLE STUDY: Joshua 1:1–9

Joshua 1:1–9

¹ *After the death of Moses the servant of Yahweh, Yahweh said to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses’ assistant,* ² *“Moses my servant is dead. Now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, into the land that I am giving to them, to the people of Israel.* ³ *Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given to you, just as I promised to Moses.* ⁴ *From the wilderness and this Lebanon as far as the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites to the Great Sea toward the going down of the sun shall be your territory.* ⁵ *No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you or forsake you.* ⁶ *Be strong and courageous, for you shall cause this people to inherit the land that I swore to their fathers to give them.* ⁷ *Only be strong and very*

courageous, being careful to do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may have good success wherever you go. ⁸ *This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.* ⁹ *Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for Yahweh your God is with you wherever you go.”*

7. What themes do you find in the first chapter of Joshua that anticipate a fulfillment of God’s promises to his people? List as many as you can find.

· **ANSWER.** *God is giving the Promised Land to his people (vv. 2, 3, 4, 6); God would give them victory over their enemies (v. 5); God would be with his people (vv. 5, 9).*

8. What does Yahweh command Joshua to do three times? Underline this phrase. How would Joshua (and Israel) obey this command and therefore “have good success” in the land?

· **ANSWER.** *Yahweh commands Joshua (and Israel) to “Be strong and courageous.” They would only be able to do this if they were “being careful to do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded you.” In other words, they must keep God’s word at the center of their lives and be careful to obey all that was written in it. Only then would they have good success and inherit the promises.*

Day 3

YAHWEH'S SOVEREIGNTY

A theme that keeps reappearing in this story is God's desire to make himself known. We have seen numerous examples of this throughout the Pentateuch in the way God graciously worked for his people despite their sinfulness. God is orchestrating history so that everyone might know that he is God and that he alone deserves worship.

Required Reading: *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About*, pages 175–178.

- ▷ stop at “The Author of Joshua Stressed the Need to Know and Heed God's Expectations for His People”

Joshua 2:11

¹¹ *Yahweh your God, he is God in the heavens above and on the earth beneath.*

Exodus 19:5

⁵ *All the earth is mine.*

Psalm 24:1

¹ *The earth is Yahweh's and the fullness thereof,
the world and those who dwell therein.*

9. What are some ways that Yahweh demonstrates his sovereignty over both nature and nations in the book of Joshua? What are some ways that Yahweh demonstrates his sovereignty over both nature and nations in the world today?
 - **ANSWER.** *God stopped the Jordan river from flowing (Josh. 3:15–17); God caused the walls of Jericho to fall flat (6:20); God sent hail and halted the sun (10:11–14); God drove out Israel's enemies with hornets (24:12). Today, God is removing kings and setting kings up in nations around the world (Dan. 2:21). He also ordains natural disasters to happen for his sovereign purposes, one of which is to build his church.*

10. Which of the following characteristics of God is *NOT* highlighted in the book of Joshua? Select the correct answer.

- a) God's mercy towards the poor and sojourner
- b) God's holiness
- c) God is a warrior for his people
- d) God is faithful to his covenant

Required Reading: *Dominion and Dynasty*, pages 128–129.

- ▷ begin at “Geographical ‘Overkill’”
- ▷ stop at “A Coming Canopy of Darkness”

In order for God to make himself known, his presence must be evident among his people (cf. Exod. 33:16; Deut. 4:7), especially among their leader.

Joshua 3:7

⁷ *Yahweh said to Joshua, “Today I will begin to exalt you in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with you.”*

With a renewed covenant commitment, a leader who fears God, and Yahweh’s presence among them, Israel is now ready to enter the land! The people are finally submitting to God’s rule and therefore are experiencing his blessing. It is becoming clear to everyone that Yahweh, the God of the Israelites, is acting on behalf of his people, and there is no way to stop him.

Joshua 2:9–11

⁹ *And [Rahab] said to the them, “I know that Yahweh has given you the land, and that the fear of you has fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land melt away before you. ¹⁰ For we have heard how Yahweh dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon and Og, whom you devoted to destruction. ¹¹ And as soon as we heard it, our hearts melted, and there was no spirit left in any man because of you, for Yahweh your God, he is God in the heavens above and on the earth beneath.*

Joshua 5:1

¹ As soon as all the kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan to the west, and all the kings of the Canaanites who were by the sea, heard that Yahweh had dried up the waters of the Jordan for the people of Israel until they had crossed over, their hearts melted and there was no longer any spirit in them because of the people of Israel.

God dries up the water of the Red Sea (2:10) and then dries up the water of the Jordan River (5:1) as Israel marches toward their enemies' land. Yahweh's fame precedes them and sends shock waves into the land that melts the hearts of their enemies (2:9; 5:1). This is what happens when God's people are loyal and faithful to his covenant. God works a miracle for Israel as they conquer Jericho (ch. 6), the first city they encounter in the Promised Land.

However, this blessing is soon followed by a curse as God's people encounter the second city in the land. The people of Israel presume upon God's presence and hastily and carelessly attack the city of Ai. Notice what happens to God's people:

Joshua 7:5

⁵ And the men of Ai killed about thirty-six of their men and chased them.... And the hearts of the people melted and became as water.

As soon as Israel breaks faith with Yahweh, their hearts melt just like the hearts of the Canaanites had. In contrast to God drying up the Red Sea (2:10) and the Jordan River (5:1) for his people, their hearts become like water (7:5). It's as if God responds to Israel's disobedience by returning the waters on his own people like he did the Egyptian army in the Red Sea (Exod. 14:26–28).

The story is even more stunning as one realizes the cause for this tragedy.

Joshua 7:1

¹ But the people of Israel broke faith in regard to the devoted things, for Achan ... of the tribe of Judah, took some of the devoted things. And the anger of Yahweh burned against the people of Israel.

Joshua 7:20–21

²⁰ And Achan answered Joshua, "Truly I have sinned against Yahweh God of Israel, and this is what I did: ²¹ when I saw among the spoil a beautiful cloak from Shinar, and ²⁰⁰ shekels of silver, and a bar of gold weighing ⁵⁰ shekels, then I coveted them and took them. And see, they are hidden in the earth inside my tent, with the silver underneath.

11. What is significant about *who* committed this wickedness? What is significant about *what* he did? Compare Joshua 7:21 to Genesis 3:6: “So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate.”

· **ANSWER.** *A man from the tribe of Judah (!) repeats the sin of the woman in the garden by “seeing,” “desiring,” and “taking” something God had clearly prohibited (cf. Gen. 3:6) and then trying to hide the evil from God (Gen. 3:8).*

The woman’s sin of “seeing,” “desiring,” and “taking” what God had prohibited led to the curse of mankind. It was through one of her offspring from the tribe of Judah (Gen. 49:10) who would restore the kingdom of God. Yet in Joshua, we see the woman’s seed repeating her initial failure in the garden. Apparently, things are not as good as they seem at the beginning of Joshua.

Besides Achan’s sin, the most glaring act of disobedience in Joshua is Israel’s failure to drive out all the Canaanites, an act that would lead to their downfall (Josh. 13:13; 15:63; 17:12–13).

Joshua 16:10

¹⁰ *However, they did not drive out the Canaanites who lived in Gezer, so the Canaanites have lived in the midst of Ephraim to this day but have been made to do forced labor.*

12. True/False: Israel was guaranteed the land of Canaan because God had promised it to Abraham; therefore, it didn’t matter how they lived.

Even though there are accounts of Israel’s sin in Joshua, the overall focus of the book is on their obedience to Yahweh and their conquest of the land, as Yahweh sovereignly fights like a Warrior for his people and fulfills his promises to them.

Joshua 24:31

³¹ *Israel served Yahweh all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the leaders who outlived Joshua and had known the work that Yahweh did for Israel.*

Day 4

THE FINAL CALL

Required Reading: *Dominion and Dynasty*, pages 129–130.

- ▷ begin at “A Coming Canopy of Darkness”
- ▷ stop at “Judges: The Darkness Settles”

13. Dempster highlights Joshua’s final two speeches at the end of the book. What is the focus of each speech, and what chapter is each found in? How do these speeches reflect Moses’ final speeches to Israel in Deuteronomy (see Deut. 30–31)?

- **ANSWER.** *Speech 1: Joshua 23: “The first speech focuses on the initial success of the conquest and expresses concern lest the people fail to finish the job” (DD, 129). Speech 2: Joshua 24: “A renewal of the Sinai covenant” (DD, 129–130). Moses commands the people to be faithful to the covenant by loving Yahweh, which will come to fruition in the new covenant (Deut. 30; cf. Josh. 24), and to “be strong and courageous” in the land (Deut. 31; cf. Josh. 23), just like Joshua does.*

Required Reading: *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About*, pages 178–181.

- ▷ begin at “The Author of Joshua Stressed the Need to Know and Heed God’s Expectations for His People”
- ▷ stop at “The Author of Joshua Defined Israel’s Relationship to the Promised Land”

Overall, the book of Joshua is positive. The conquest of the land of Canaan is seen as a fulfillment of God’s promises to Abraham (cf. Gen. 15:18; cf. Josh. 23:14).

Joshua 11:15–16

¹⁵ *Just as Yahweh had commanded Moses his servant, so Moses commanded Joshua, and so Joshua did. He left nothing undone of all that Yahweh had commanded Moses.* ¹⁶ *So Joshua took all that land, the hill country and all the Negeb and all the land of Goshen and the lowland and the Arabah and the hill country of Israel and its lowland.*

Joshua 21:43–45

⁴³ Thus Yahweh gave to Israel all the land that he swore to give to their fathers. And they took possession of it, and they settled there. ⁴⁴ And Yahweh gave them rest on every side just as he had sworn to their fathers. Not one of all their enemies had withstood them, for Yahweh had given all their enemies into their hands. ⁴⁵ Not one word of all the good promises that Yahweh had made to the house of Israel had failed; all came to pass.

God's people are in God's place under God's rule and are therefore enjoying his blessing! Has God's kingdom been re-established? Has the curse been undone? Only time will tell. But the end of the book gives us some clues.

14. True/False: Most of the book of Joshua records Israel's successes, for during this time they generally did heed God's commands, regardless of how difficult or strange the orders appeared.

After the conquest, Joshua makes clear that Israel's possessing the land is contingent upon their obedience to the Mosaic covenant, which, as usual, doesn't seem too promising. In his farewell speech, Joshua cautions Israel to take heed to God's Word lest they be expelled from the land to which God has brought them.

Joshua 23:6–8

⁶ Therefore, be very strong to keep and to do all that is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, turning aside from it neither to the right hand nor to the left, ⁷ that you may not mix with these nations remaining among you or make mention of the names of their gods or swear by them or serve them or bow down to them, ⁸ but you shall cling to Yahweh your God just as you have done to this day.

Joshua 23:11–13

¹¹ Be very careful, therefore, to love Yahweh your God. ¹² For if you turn back and cling to the remnant of these nations remaining among you and make marriages with them, so that you associate with them and they with you, ¹³ know for certain that Yahweh your God will no longer drive out these nations before you, but they shall be a snare and a trap for you, a whip on your sides and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from off this good ground that Yahweh your God has given you.

Joshua 23:15–16

¹⁵ *But just as all the good things that Yahweh your God promised concerning you have been fulfilled for you, so Yahweh will bring upon you all the evil things, until he has destroyed you from off this good land that Yahweh your God has given you.* ¹⁶ *If you transgress the covenant of Yahweh your God, which he commanded you, and go and serve other gods and bow down to them. Then the anger of Yahweh will be kindled against you, and you shall perish quickly from off the good land that he has given to you.*

15. We see here a tension between God's unconditional promises of land to Abraham and the fact that these promises seem to be contingent upon obedience to the Sinai covenant, which, as we have seen, does not seem realistic for God's people. How do you think Israel will be obedient enough to secure the promises God made to Abraham?

- **ANSWER.** *The Sinai covenant which contains the law is showing God's people that they are incapable of meeting God's righteous standard. Israel will not be able to be obedient enough; only the true Israel, Jesus Christ, will obey God perfectly and secure the Abrahamic promises for all the offspring of Abraham (Gal. 3:29).*

The book's final call leaves the reader wondering whether or not God's people would live under God's rule.

Joshua 24:15

¹⁵ *Choose this day whom you will serve.... But as for me and my house, we will serve Yahweh.*

In fact, just a few verses after this call, Joshua says something prophetic that characterizes the next 500 years of Israel's history.

Joshua 24:19

¹⁹ *But Joshua said to the people, "You are not able to serve Yahweh, for he is a holy God. He is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions or sins."*

16. Fill in the blanks from the reading:

The underlined words in this quotation are left blank in the Student Workbook. We suggest that the instructor read the quote aloud to allow students to check their work.

“The statement that Israel is unable to serve Yahweh is unparalleled in the Old Testament, and in some ways it relates to the verdict, to which prophets like Jeremiah and Ezekiel were driven, that Israel lacks the capacity ‘to live with and belong to God.’ But this verdict has already been anticipated at Sinai (Exod. 32; Lev. 10), the departure from Sinai (Num. 10–25) and in the Mosaic farewell speech (Deut. 4:23–28; 29:21–27). The capacity Israel lacks is a heart that will keep Torah (Deut. 30:6)” (DD, 130).

Similar to Israel, Christians are called to serve and obey Yahweh in a way that is consistent with their covenant relationship with God (Eph. 4:1). However, this new covenant makes believers citizens not of a physical land (at least not yet; cf. Matt. 5:5; Rom 4:13; Rev. 21:1–7), but of a non-physical, spiritual kingdom.

Colossians 1:13–14

¹³ *He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son,* ¹⁴ *in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.*

Believers’ ultimate inheritance is kept in heaven, where they will enjoy eternal fellowship with the triune God on the new heaven and new earth!

1 Peter 1:3–4

³ *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,* ⁴ *to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, unfading, kept in heaven for you.*

Day 5

YAHWEH WARS OF JUDGMENT

One topic that still needs to be discussed is Yahweh Wars of Judgment (or “Holy Wars”). For many people, Christians and non-Christians alike, the fact that Yahweh commands his people to completely destroy entire cities and people groups, including women and children, is an outrageous thought. Indeed, it has caused many to reject Christianity altogether. Admittedly, this is a sensitive topic, especially in today’s culture that idolizes so-called “tolerance.”

Deuteronomy 7:2

² And when Yahweh your God gives them over to you, and you defeat them, then you must devote them to complete destruction. You shall make no covenant with them and show no mercy to them.

Deuteronomy 7:9–10

⁹ Know therefore that Yahweh your God is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations, ¹⁰ and repays to their face those who hate him, by destroying them. He will not be slack with one who hates him. He will repay him to his face.

Yahweh Wars of Judgment are the initiative of God himself to declare war on a particular enemy wherein “God himself enters history and takes the role of a warrior, fighting both human and spiritual enemies.”⁶⁵ God commands his people when and whom to fight. God’s presence is with the army symbolized by the ark of the covenant. And God is the one who fights for his people, who are usually few in number or are commanded to use less effective weapons than their enemies in order to show that the victory belongs to Yahweh.

If these wars were waged according to international law just like other wars throughout history (even with the added aspect of Yahweh’s engagement in the war) there would be little problem. However, one scholar points out the deeper issue:⁶⁶

65 Tremper Longman III, “Warfare,” *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, edited by T. Desmond Alexander and Brian Rosner (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 835–836.

66 Ibid., 837.

“Perhaps the most difficult aspect of Yahweh war for modern readers to understand is the herem. This is a difficult word to translate, but it expresses the idea that all the booty and the prisoners of war are the property of Yahweh. After all, Yahweh is responsible for the victory; he deserves the spoils. This means, on the one hand, that all the spoils (the precious metals and other treasures) are placed in the temple treasuries. On the other hand, it means that all the prisoners of war—men, women, and children—are executed. Sinful people who do not atone for their sin by sacrifice are destroyed because of their wrongdoing.”

In *WOTARCA* pp. 182–183, DeRouchie has a helpful chart (Fig. 7.2) that describes these Yahweh Wars of Judgment for modern readers who find this concept difficult to digest.

Required Reading: *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About*, pages 181–185.

▷ begin at “The Author of Joshua Defined Israel’s Relationship to the Promised Land”

17. Which of the following is *NOT* a description of Yahweh Wars of Judgment? Select the correct answer.
- a) Violators become the enemy
 - b) All precious metals won in battle belong to the people
 - c) Yahweh does the fighting and alone gives the victory
 - d) War is a religious undertaking

It is important to view Yahweh Wars of Judgment in light of the big picture which we have been rehearsing throughout this curriculum. Yahweh alone is God. He made the world, and therefore he is King. It is mankind who took the initial steps to reject his rule. Thus, it is mankind—that is, every single human being—who deserves divine punishment. “Warfare is God’s ‘strange’ work (Is. 28:21) in which he judges evil. The purpose of Yahweh war is the eradication of sin. Its climax is the final judgment.”⁶⁷ Please note, God does *not* wipe out the Canaanites because they are not Israelites but because they worship other gods besides him.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 839.

18. Respond to the objection that Yahweh Wars of Judgment endorsed ethnic cleansing. (see WOTARCA, 182)

- *ANSWER.* *Yahweh Wars of Judgment had nothing to do with racism, nationalism, or prejudice. Rather, they are Yahweh's aggressive wars of retributive judgment against sustained wickedness and rebellion (WOTARCA, 182).*

19. Define and distinguish Yahweh's judgment wars of annihilation from his judgment wars of defense and subjugation. Give an example of each.

- *ANSWER.* *Yahweh's judgment wars of annihilation had more to do with putting an end to sustained wickedness. The battle was not over until the entire enemy population was killed including men, women, and children. One example of this would be the Flood (Gen. 6:5-7, 11-13). Yahweh's judgment wars of defense and subjugation had to do with Yahweh's response to those who did not submit to the terms of peace with God and his people, or to those who declared war on Israel. The battle was not over until the enemy aggression ceased and all enemy warriors were dead. God's people could then take any of the spoil. One example of this would be the plagues and destruction of Egypt after Pharaoh's refusal to let Israel go (Exod. 7-15).*

20. Explain how the crucifixion of Jesus can be considered a war of judgment.

- *ANSWER.* *This can be seen two ways: First, God is devoting to destruction his own Son as the curse-bearer for all covenant breakers of all times. Second, Christ is defeating all God's enemies—namely sin and death—by dying and rising from the dead. “He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him” (Colossians 2:15). “But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 15:57).*

While every human being deserves the just wrath of God (Rom. 3:23; 6:23), he has mercifully provided a way for those who take refuge in Christ to be saved from the flood of his wrath (8:1). This salvation is possible only because Christ himself underwent God's judgment of sin and thereby accomplished victory over sin and death—the greatest Yahweh war of judgment ever fought (Col. 2:15; 1 Cor. 15:57).



§ INTEGRATIVE ASSIGNMENT

In one short paragraph, summarize in your own words the main message of the book of Joshua so that someone with no biblical knowledge could understand.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



Review the following questions in preparation for discussion. As you have worked through this lesson, record any lingering questions that you may have.

1. Israel's success in the Promised Land depended on Yahweh's presence and willingness to fight for them, which was dependent on their obedience. Describe a situation in your life that was clearly impossible without the presence and work of God. Did God "fight" on your behalf, or did he teach you to be more God-dependent through a "defeat"?
2. Discuss what aspects of God's promises are fulfilled in the book of Joshua and what aspects have yet to be fulfilled.
3. How would you respond to someone who says they could never worship a God who willed for innocent people to be slaughtered by the hands of his own people?
4. Your own question(s):

§ ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- ▷ Tremper Longman III, “Warfare,” *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, edited by T. Desmond Alexander and Brian Rosner (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 835–839.
- ▷ F. R. Ames, “Warfare and Divine Warfare,” *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Prophets*, edited by Mark Boda and Gordon McConville (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2012), 827–835.
- ▷ “History of Salvation in the Old Testament: Preparing the Way for Christ,” *ESV Study Bible*, (Wheaton: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 2,640.

Judges

10

🔗 INTRODUCTION

At the end of Joshua, Israel's leader warned them three times to destroy the gods of the Canaanites whose land they were dispossessing (Josh. 24:14–28). The people confidently declared their allegiance to Yahweh, yet they never vocalized their willingness to destroy the pagan gods—a silence that would quickly lead to their downfall. Judges describes Israel's early history in their new land, and it is a history characterized by conflict and *unrest*. As Israel plunges headlong into sin, they continually find themselves at the bottom of a pit, looking up to their forgotten God and crying out for help. In comparison with their *faithlessness*, God's *faithfulness* shines bright as he sends judges to deliver his people time and time again. But judges were never God's plan to save his people—a King was!

🔗 LESSON OBJECTIVES

After completing this lesson, the student should be able to

- ▷ grasp the cyclical nature of Judges.
- ▷ see how Yahweh's covenant faithfulness remains despite Israel's sin.
- ▷ understand the hopelessness of Judges and the need for a king as an ultimate solution to Israel's sin problem.

Total pages of reading for this week: 17



It may be helpful to examine some of the judges in detail to understand their role in Israel's history. You could use "The Downward Spiraling Cycles of Disobedience in Judges" (Fig. 8.1, *WOTARCA*, 189) and identify each stage of the cycle using a specific judge. For instance, take the narrative of Gideon (Judges 6–8):

Idolatry: "The people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of Yahweh" (Judges 6:1).

Foreign oppression: The Midianites oppressed Israel for seven years, destroying their crops with their livestock (6:1–6).

Cry for help: The people of Israel cried out for help to Yahweh (6:6–7).

Deliverance: God sent a prophet who appoints Gideon as a judge to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Midianites (6:8–18; 7:1–25).



Day 1

MISSION: UNACCOMPLISHED

Required Reading: *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About*, pages 186–192.

- ▷ stop at “The Author of Judges Traced How Israel’s Covenant Disloyalty Forfeited the Blessings and Brought Curses”

The underlined words in this quotation are left blank in the Student Workbook. We suggest that the instructor read the quote aloud to allow students to check their work.

1. Fill in the blanks from the reading:

“In contrast to what the English word implies, the “judges” of this book did not normally hold court or make legal decisions. Processes and people (elders or family heads) were in place to handle civil questions, and priests taught and ruled in religious matters. The judges in this period were deliverers raised up by Yahweh to lead Israel militarily and to govern them” (WOTARCA, 186).⁶⁸

Almost immediately in the book of Judges we see the failure of God’s people to complete their mission (Josh. 1:19, 21, 27–36). They were to completely annihilate the Canaanites who were in the land (Deut. 7:2) because God knew that co-dwelling with worshipers of pagan gods would be a snare for his fickle people (7:16; Josh. 23:13). But “instead of destroying the pagan culture of Canaan, they absorbed it and became just like the nations around them, losing their identity as the people of God” (WOTARCA, 188; cf. Exod. 19:4–6).

68 Jason DeRouchie, ed., *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic & Professional, 2013). Used by permission. No duplication or distributed is permitted without written permission of the publisher.

Judges 1:27–28

²⁷ Manasseh did not drive out the inhabitants of Beth-shean and its villages, or Taanach and its villages, or the inhabitants of Dor and its villages, or the inhabitants of Ibleam and its villages, or the inhabitants of Megiddo and its villages, for the Canaanites persisted in dwelling in that land. ²⁸ When Israel grew strong, they put the Canaanites to forced labor, but did not drive them out completely.

Judges 2:1–3

¹ Now the angel of Yahweh went up from Gill to Bochim, And he said, “I brought you up from Egypt and brought you into the land that I swore to give to your fathers. I said, ‘I will never break my covenant with you, ² and you shall make no covenant with the inhabitants of this land; you shall break down their altars.’ But you have not obeyed my voice. What is this you have done? ³ So now I say, I will not drive them out before you, but they shall become thorns in your sides, and their gods shall be a snare to you.”

A cycle of sin and repentance develops in Israel that becomes a pattern.

Judges 2:11

¹¹ And the people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of Yahweh and served the Baals.

Judges 2:16–18

¹⁶ Then Yahweh raised up judges, who saved them out of the hand of those who plundered them. ¹⁷ Yet they did not listen to their judges, for they whored after other gods and bowed down to them. They soon turned aside from the way in which their fathers had walked, who had obeyed the commandments of Yahweh, and they did not do so. ¹⁸ Whenever Yahweh raised up judges for them, Yahweh was with the judge, and he saved them from the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge. For Yahweh was moved to pity by their groaning because of those who afflicted and oppressed them.

This cycle was not just a two-dimensional pattern, but a downward spiral as the evil increased each time.

Judges 2:19

¹⁹ *But whenever the judge died, they turned back and were more corrupt than their fathers, going after other gods, serving them and bowing down to them. [Emphasis added]*

The people actually began to serve the gods of the Canaanites!

Judges 3:5–6

⁵ *So the people of Israel lived among the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. ⁶ And their daughters they took to themselves for wives, and their own daughters they gave to their sons, and they served their gods.*

2. Briefly describe the cycle that occurs at least six times (3:7, 12; 4:1; 6:1; 10:6; 13:1) in the book of Judges. (see WOTARCA, 188–189)

· **ANSWER.** 1) *Israel turns to the idolatry of the Canaanites; 2) Yahweh disciplined them by giving them into the hands of their enemies; 3) The people cried out to Yahweh; 4) Yahweh faithfully raised up judges to deliver them.*

The judges were God's means of delivering his people during this time period. However, they were never God's ultimate means of solving his people's sin problem. Israel needs a King to rule over them in righteousness, wisdom, and power.

3. Miller says that Israel's downward trajectory can be seen clearly through two lenses. What are these two lenses? Select the correct answer.

- a) Morality and self-discipline
- b) Pride and idolatry
- c) Laziness and disobedience
- d) Idolatry and morality

4. Select two of the attractions of idolatry (Fig. 8.3, WOTARCA, 191) that manifest themselves in your own life. Write down what it looks like for you to destroy these idols this week.

· **ANSWER.** *Answers will vary*

Day 2

THE EFFECTS OF SIN

Required Reading: *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About*, pages 192–194.

- ▷ begin at “The Author of Judges Traced How Israel’s Covenant Disloyalty Forfeited the Blessings and Brought Curses”

In Genesis 3, God’s kingdom perished due to the sin of God’s people. We noted how every relationship—between humans and God, humans and other humans, humans and land, and God and land—was broken and there was no longer *shalom*, but anarchy in God’s kingdom. The book of Judges is replete with examples showing the ramifications of these broken relationships in everyday life.

Judges is the second book in the Deuteronomistic History, which, as we saw in the previous lesson, is the outworking of the Sinai covenant in the history of Israel from the time of Joshua until the New Covenant. Every person and event is analyzed through the lens of the Old (Sinai/Mosaic) Covenant, which includes blessings for obedience (Lev. 26:1–13; Deut. 28:1–14) and curses for disobedience (Lev. 26:14–39; Deut. 28:15–68). Judges shows how disobedience to God’s law (i.e., rejecting God’s rule) forfeits covenant blessings and earns covenant curses.

5. Describe your reactions or thoughts in regard to Israel’s persistent disobedience. Are there areas in your life where you are persistently disobedient?

· **ANSWER.** *Answers will vary*

6. Miller shows how “disloyalty to the covenant effectively dehumanized Israelite society” (WOTARCA, 192). What aspects of the image of God does he mention are forfeited by covenant disloyalty? Can you think of any others?

· **ANSWER.** *To think, to feel, to love, to rule over the earth, to relate to others, and to participate in the blessing of recreation (WOTARCA, 192).*

Israel clearly did not reflect the heart of God. They not only exploited and mistreated the weak and oppressed in society, but they were also stained by the Canaanite culture that they failed to destroy.

James 1:27

²⁷ Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.

🔗 BIBLE STUDY: Judges 2:11–23

Judges 2:11–23

¹¹ And the people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of Yahweh and served the Baals. ¹² And they abandoned Yahweh, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt. They went after other gods, from among the gods of the peoples who were around them, and bowed down to them. And they provoked Yahweh to anger. ¹³ They abandoned Yahweh and served the Baals and the Ashtaroth. ¹⁴ So the anger of Yahweh was kindled against Israel, and he gave them over to plunderers, who plundered them. And he sold them into the hand of their surrounding enemies, so that they could no longer withstand their enemies. ¹⁵ Whenever they marched out, the hand of Yahweh was against them for harm, as Yahweh had warned, and as Yahweh had sworn to them. And they were in terrible distress.

¹⁶ Then Yahweh raised up judges, who saved them out of the hand of those who plundered them. ¹⁷ Yet they did not listen to their judges, for they whored after other gods and bowed down to them. They soon turned aside from the way in which their fathers had walked, who had obeyed the commandments of Yahweh, and they did not do so. ¹⁸ Whenever Yahweh raised up judges for them, Yahweh was with the judge, and he saved them from the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge. For Yahweh was moved to pity by their groaning because of those who afflicted and oppressed them. ¹⁹ But whenever the judge died, they turned back and were more corrupt than their fathers, going after other gods, serving them and bowing down to them. They did not drop any of their practices or their stubborn ways. ²⁰ So the anger of Yahweh was kindled against Israel, and he said, “Because this people have transgressed my covenant that I commanded their fathers and have not obeyed my voice, ²¹ I will no longer drive out before them any of the nations that Joshua left when he died, ²² in order to test Israel by them, whether they will take care to walk in the way of Yahweh as their fathers did, or not.” ²³ So Yahweh left those nations, not driving them out quickly, and he did not give them into the hand of Joshua.

7. Underline every instance of covenant failure on Israel's part. Circle (or otherwise mark) all the consequences of their sin (the curses). Highlight (or otherwise mark) every instance of Yahweh's covenant faithfulness. Summarize your observations below.

· *ANSWER. Though Yahweh showed steadfast love and faithfulness to his people, they persistently rebelled against him and broke the covenant. It was for this reason that they experienced all the curse they did.*

8. What is similar about God's response to sin in Judges 2:20–23 and Romans 1:18–25? Why do you think God does this?

· *ANSWER. In each passage, God gives his people over to the very thing that caused them to break the covenant. In Judges 2, God's people had not driven out the Canaanites but had adopted their pagan lifestyle. Therefore, he gave them over to the nations who were still in the land. In Romans 1, humans rejected the knowledge of God for idols and their own lusts. Therefore, God gave them over to these sinful desires. God knows that if humans worship anything besides him, it will result in their ruin.*

Judges 10:10–14

¹⁰ *And the people of Israel cried out to Yahweh, saying, "We have sinned against you, because we have forsaken our God and have served the Baals." ¹¹ And Yahweh said to the people of Israel, ... ¹³ "You have forsaken me and served other gods; therefore I will save you no more. ¹⁴ Go and cry out to the gods whom you have chosen; let them save you in the time of your distress."*

As punishment for sin, God often gives his people over to the very thing that causes them to break the covenant in the first place. It's as if God grants sinners their wish, because he knows that what they crave is the very thing that will destroy them. While on the surface this may seem cruel, it is actually God's means of teaching his people to be more satisfied in him which will produce more joy than any sin could ever offer.

Day 3

THE JUDGES

Required Reading: *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About*, pages 195–197.

- ▷ stop at “The Author of Judges Highlighted the Covenant Faithfulness of Yahweh in Providing for Israel’s Need”

In Day 1, it was noted that the judges are not agents who made legal decisions for Israel, as the word implies in our day and age. Rather, God raises up judges to deliver Israel from the messes their sin gets them into. This deliverance usually involves military actions against Israel’s enemies or oppressors.

Interestingly, the judges that God raises up are probably not the type of people we would choose to be the heroes of the story. In fact, very few of the judges we read about in the book are exemplary in their character. Apart from Caleb, Othniel, and Ehud, most of them are quite shady and they certainly did not lead the nation well. If God’s people were going to live in God’s land under God’s rule, they would need more than these judges to help them.

9. Why do you think God chose to use such unfitting men (and women) to save his people? What other examples have we seen of this principle?

- **ANSWER.** *God often uses unlikely means to accomplish his purposes so that he gets the glory. We have seen God choose barren women to give birth to his chosen line as well as strange military tactics for Israel to conquer the land. Both of these show it is God who fulfills his promises.*

The story of Gideon and his 300-man army is a familiar one. What is not emphasized, however, is the aftermath of this event, which has much broader implications for the story line of Scripture. Despite Gideon’s initial reluctance to take God at his word (6:36–40), God uses Gideon and his unimpressive army to deliver God’s people from the hand of the Midianites.

Judges 7:2

² *Yahweh said to Gideon, “The people with you are too many for me to give the Midianites into your hand, lest Israel should boast over me, saying, ‘My own hand has saved me.’”*

Judges 7:7

⁷ *And Yahweh said to Gideon, “With the 300 men who lapped I will save you and give the Midianites into your hand, and let all the others go every man to his home.”*

Judges 7:22

²² *When they blew the 300 trumpets, Yahweh set every man’s sword against his comrade and against all the army. And the army fled as far as Beth-shittah toward Zererah.*

Because of his recent triumphs, the people of Israel want Gideon to rule over them, revealing their shallow understanding of what makes a good king. All they seek in a king is power and the ability to rule over and conquer their enemies. But power was not one of the prerequisites that Moses had laid out for the Israelite kings (Deut. 17:14–20). Fortunately, Gideon appears to have the right perspective and answers them accordingly.

Judges 8:22–23

²² *Then the men of Israel said, “Rule over us, you and your son and your grandson also, for you have saved us from the hand of Midian.”* ²³ *Gideon said to them, “I will not rule over you, and my son will not rule over you; Yahweh will rule over you.”*

Though Gideon denies the position of king, he immediately begins to act like one as he obtains a harem (8:30) and makes an ephod from the captured gold of the Ishmaelites (8:27). Typically, an ephod was a garment to be worn only by priests, but this one may have been associated with idol worship, since it becomes a snare to him, to his family, and to all Israel (8:27; cf. Isa. 30:22 which uses a related word). Then he does something telling—he names his son “Abimelech” (8:31) which means “My father is a king.” The true colors of Gideon’s heart shine through!

Gideon saved God's people from the Ishmaelites, but not from their sinful hearts. The judges prove to be effective "bandages," but they were not the cure to Israel's cancerous heart.

Judges 8:28

²⁸ So Midian was subdued before the people of Israel, and they raised their heads no more. And the land had rest forty years in the days of Gideon.

Judges 8:33–35

³³ As soon as Gideon died, the people of Israel turned again and whored after the Baals and made Baal-berith their god. ³⁴ And the people of Israel did not remember Yahweh their God, who had delivered them from the hand of all their enemies on every side, ³⁵ and they did not show steadfast love to the family of Jerubbaal (that is, Gideon) in return for all the good that he had done to Israel.

10. Which sentence best describes the general role of the judges in this book? Select the correct answer.

- a) Because of their fickle hearts, God does not put the judges in leadership positions.
- b) The judges ruled as kings and were seen as kings in the eyes of the people.
- c) The judges have glaring character flaws, but God still uses them to accomplish his purposes.
- d) The judges modeled loyalty to Yahweh for the people of Israel to follow.

Not surprisingly, Abimelech goes one step further than his father by conspiring and killing his 70 brothers so that he would be made king over the people.

Judges 9:6

⁶ And all the leaders of Shechem came together, and all Beth-millo, and they went and made Abimelech king.

Judges 9:22

²² Abimelech ruled over Israel three years.

Intriguingly (not to mention humiliatingly), it is a woman who crushes the head of Abimelech and puts an end to this wicked ruler from the line of the serpent (9:53, 56; cf. Gen. 3:15). Clearly Abimelech is not God's answer to the world's curse.

The last five chapters of Judges (17–21) highlight the climax of Israel’s moral decay—Israel has become like Sodom (Ch. 19; cf. Gen 19). Israel needs godly leadership. They need a *king* characterized by God’s Torah. Judges hints that everything would be better if Israel only had a king. Consider this refrain that permeates the book’s conclusion.

Judges 17:6

⁶ *In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.*

Judges 18:1

¹ *In those days there was no king in Israel.*

Judges 19:1

¹ *In those days, when there was no king in Israel.*

Judges 21:25

²⁵ *In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.*

11. Why does the author repeatedly affirm that there was no king in Israel during the time of the judges? How does this refrain anticipate the book of Samuel?

· **ANSWER.** *This refrain shows the incapacity of the judges to save Israel. The judges were a temporary “fix” to Israel’s problems. Israel needed a king, which anticipates the book of Samuel when Israel gets their first king.*

While Judges clearly emphasizes the shortcomings of the judges, consider what the author of Hebrews has to say about them.

Hebrews 11:32–34

³² *And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets—³³ who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,³⁴ quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, were made strong out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight.*

12. What does the author of Hebrews commend in the lives of these sinful judges? How does this provide encouragement for you?

- *ANSWER. Although sinful, the judges expressed faith in God, and therefore God used them to accomplish his purposes. This is encouraging for us, since we too are sinful. It is our faith in Christ that God commends, not our own righteousness!*

Day 4

THE FAITHFULNESS OF YAHWEH

Required Reading: *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About*, pages 197–198.

- ▷ begin at “The Author of Judges Highlighted the Covenant Faithfulness of Yahweh in Providing for Israel’s Need”

If there is any good in the book of Judges, it is the covenant-keeping faithfulness of Yahweh. Just like the shadows in a painting highlight the rays of light, so too does Israel’s sin highlight God’s mercy and patience towards hopeless people. The people of Israel do not seem to be truly repentant over their sin, even though they cry out to God time and time again.

Judges 10:15–16

¹⁵ *And the people of Israel said to Yahweh, “We have sinned; do to us whatever seems good to you. Only please deliver us this day.”* ¹⁶ *So they put away the foreign gods from among them and served Yahweh, and he became impatient over the misery of Israel.*

As is usually the case, their actions speak louder than their words.

Judges 13:1

¹ *And the people of Israel again did what was evil in the sight of Yahweh, so Yahweh gave them into the hand of the Philistines for forty years.*

2 Corinthians 7:10

¹⁰ *For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death.*

13. How do you think Paul would have characterized Israel’s repentance in the book of Judges? Explain your answer?

- **ANSWER.** *Israel’s repentance was a worldly grief which means they were sorry for their sin only because it had negative consequences, not because it was inconsistent with Yahweh’s character. Ultimately, this kind of grief leads to death because the heart remains unchanged.*

The underlined words in this quotation are left blank in the Student Workbook. We suggest that the instructor read the quote aloud to allow students to check their work.

14. Fill in the blanks from the reading:

“Only once in the book did the author explicitly mention a confession of sin and repentance from idols (10:16), and the deeper decline in sin afterwards leads the reader to believe that their repentance was at best short-lived and probably superficial” (WOTARCA, 197–198).⁶⁹

15. True/False: Although Israel broke nearly every part of the deuteromic covenant, it would have been unrighteous for God to expel them from the land because of his promise to Abraham.

Judges answers the question that was raised at the end of Deuteronomy and at the end of Joshua: Will Israel keep the covenant with Yahweh? Clearly, the answer is a resounding “No!” Even the second generation that seemed promising at first failed to live under God’s rule. It only takes one generation to fall away from Yahweh.

Judges 2:10–12

¹⁰ And all that generation also were gathered to their fathers. And there arose another generation after them who did not know Yahweh or the work that he had done for Israel. ¹¹ And the people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of Yahweh and served the Baals. ¹² And they abandoned Yahweh, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt. They went after other gods, from among the gods of the peoples who were around them, and bowed down to them. And they provoked Yahweh to anger.

Exodus 34:6–7

⁶ Yahweh passed before him and proclaimed, “Yahweh, Yahweh, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, ⁷ keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children’s children, to the third and the fourth generation.”

16. Compare the two passages above. What aspects of Yahweh’s character are highlighted by Israel’s sin in the book of Judges?

- **ANSWER.** Yahweh is indeed merciful and slow to anger. This is seen in his frequent deliverances of Israel from the hand of their enemies. However, he is also just to punish their sins. Every generation’s sin affects the following generation, though God can break even this chain as he did with the conquest generation.

69 Jason DeRouchie, ed., *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic & Professional, 2013). Used by permission. No duplication or distributed is permitted without written permission of the publisher.

Day 5

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GOOD, BUT NOT GOOD ENOUGH

Required Reading: *Dominion and Dynasty*, pages 130–133.

▷ begin at “Judges: The Darkness Settles”

It has been noted that Judges is a depressing transition from the positive thrust of Joshua. One of the reasons shows up in the very first chapter with a shocking description of Israel’s failure to conquer the entire land, which reveals their lack of devotion to God.

Judges 1:27–35

²⁷ *Manasseh did not drive out the inhabitants of Beth-shean and its villages ... for the Canaanites persisted in dwelling in that land.* ²⁸ *When Israel grew strong, they put the Canaanites to forced labor, but did not drive them out completely.*

²⁹ *And Ephraim did not drive out the Canaanites who lived in Gezer, so the Canaanites lived in Gezer among them.*

³⁰ *Zebulun did not drive out the inhabitants of Kitron...*

³¹ *Asher did not drive out the inhabitants of Acco...*

³³ *Naphtali did not drive out the inhabitants of Beth-shemesh...*

³⁴ *The Amorites pressed the people of Dan back into the hill country, for they did not allow them to come down to the plain.* ³⁵ *The Amorites persisted in dwelling in Mount Heres...*

Another reason Judges is so depressing is that Israel’s love affair with idolatry is put on display.

17. According to Dempster, what has Israel become by the end of Judges (*DD*, 131)? Select the correct answer. What happens as a result (see *Judg.* 20–21)?
- a) God’s covenant people
 - b) Sodom
 - c) A holy nation
 - d) A violent people

• **ANSWER.** *Because they broke the covenant, “A holy war must be conducted on the people of God” (*DD*, 131). The tribe of Benjamin is decimated as a result.*

Without question, the judges God appoints for his people are a means of grace to prevent them from being completely wiped out of existence by their enemies, and even to prevent them from going further into sin than they would otherwise. The frequent (though brief) deliverances throughout the book of Judges function as foreshadows of the great deliverance God had promised his people, as well as the entire world.

18. True/False: The judges are human saviors for Israel because they are endowed with God's Spirit.

19. Fill in the blanks from the reading:

"Samson, the supernaturally born Israelite, was set apart as a Nazirite with a distinctive vocation. He constantly breaks his religious vows, is enamored of Philistine women, loses his identity and physical strength through these encounters, becomes a slave and has his eyes gouged out by the enemy. He represents his own people, who had a supernatural origin, were set apart from among the nations with a distinctive vocation, broke their vows, and were enamored of foreign idols, until finally they lost their identity and spiritual power and became the blind slaves of their oppressors in exile" (DD, 132).

The underlined words in this quotation are left blank in the Student Workbook. We suggest that the instructor read the quote aloud to allow students to check their work.

In the end, however, the failure of the judges to administer righteousness in the nation points to Israel's need for a greater, more permanent leader who would be obedient to the Torah. He must not only lead the nation well, but he must also model virtue and a life transformed by God's word.

20. What was the nation of Israel in need of? How do Genesis 17:6, 49:10, and Numbers 24:17-19 provide hope for God's people during the time of the Judges?

· **ANSWER.** *Israel needs a righteous king. These passages promise that a king will come from Jacob who will exercise dominion and therefore restore peace to God's people.*

 INTEGRATIVE ASSIGNMENT



In one short paragraph, summarize in your own words the main message of the book of Judges so that someone with no biblical knowledge could understand.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Review the following questions in preparation for discussion. As you have worked through this lesson, record any lingering questions that you may have.

1. Discuss “The Attractions of Idolatry” on p. 191 of *WOTARCA*. How do these manifest themselves in the culture around you? How do they manifest themselves in the church?
2. The refrain at the end of Judges (“There was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.”) reflects the ideology of our post-modern culture. In what ways was this ideology manifest in Israel? In what ways is it manifest in our culture today?
3. Discuss the differences between the role of judges and the role of kings. Why would a judge never be able to save God’s people in an ultimate sense? How does Jesus, the true King, provide salvation for his people?
4. Your own question(s):

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- ▷ “History of Salvation in the Old Testament: Preparing the Way for Christ,” *ESV Study Bible*, (Wheaton: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 2,640.

1–2 Samuel

11

🔗 INTRODUCTION

The book of Judges left the reader wondering what Israel’s fate would look like. The people certainly do not reflect the divine image, and they clearly are not a holy nation who is blessing other nations around them. Israel is in their land... along with the Philistines! This was not the way it was supposed to be. God’s people were supposed to be living in God’s land under his rule. But, because their lives were not characterized by obedience to the Torah, they forfeited the blessings of rest and victory over enemies. The nation was a wreck, and the judges could not fix it.

1–2 Samuel records the transition from a “leaderless” nation that does whatever seems right to them, to a nation led by a “man after God’s own heart.” The ideal king Israel needs is someone whose heart is characterized by God’s Torah. David appears to be this man, and God makes massive promises to him, including a kingdom (dominion) and a dynasty that will last forever. This promise is based on obedience to the Mosaic covenant, which neither David nor his descendants keep perfectly. The succeeding kings only get worse, and the kingdom splits into two parts, both of which end up in captivity outside of the Promised Land. We see the influence that leadership has on a people in this book, and we long for the type of King that will rule perfectly forever.

🔗 LESSON OBJECTIVES

After completing this lesson, the student should be able to

- ▷ understand how Israel transitioned from the judges to kings.
- ▷ recognize what God does and doesn’t desire in a king, and how David and Saul exemplify those ideals, respectively.
- ▷ articulate the significance of the Davidic covenant in light of the redemptive story.

Total pages of reading for this week: 31



If you feel you need more information, we suggest that you obtain copies of the Recommended Resources to help gain a broader perspective on the topics discussed. In addition to those resources, Jason DeRouchie also recommends several commentaries at the end of each chapter of *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About*. For 1-2 Samuel, DeRouchie recommends

- ▷ Arnold, Bill T. *1 and 2 Samuel*. NIVAC. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003.
- ▷ Bergen, Robert D. *1,2 Samuel*. NAC. Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1996.
- ▷ Davis, Dale Ralph. *1 Samuel and 2 Samuel*. Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2001, 2007.
- ▷ Tsumura, David. *The First Book of Samuel*. NICOT. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007.

Please note that we believe these commentaries would be helpful to you as you seek to know God and his Word. However, they offer diverse theological approaches and are the word of man, not of God, so their claims should be carefully evaluated and subjected to scripture—the highest authority for Christians.



Day 1

FROM JUDGES TO KINGS

Required Reading: *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About*, pages 200–203.

- ▷ stop at “The Author of 1–2 Samuel Demonstrated the New to Take Seriously Yahweh’s Holy, Powerful, and Dangerous Presence”

By the time the book of Judges comes to a close, the worship of Yahweh has been defiled by the people of Israel. They simply will not submit to his rule; in fact, his rule is hardly even known.

1 Samuel 3:1

¹ *The word of Yahweh was rare in those days; there was no frequent vision.*

1. What is the question that emerges from the text at the end of Judges? Select the correct answer.
 - a) When will God establish the new covenant?
 - b) Who will be the next judge to rescue Israel?
 - c) Why can’t Israel seem to obey Yahweh?
 - d) Who will save Israel from their mess?

The judges had already proved their impotence to solve Israel’s problems. Now, the priest Eli cannot intervene, since he cannot even discipline his own two sons (Hophni and Phinehas; cf. 1 Sam. 2). Thus God raises up Samuel to deliver the people from their godless condition.

Samuel was not only the last judge (7:15–17), but also a prophet (3:20). The office of prophet was designed to provide a check for the king by ensuring that Yahweh remains the true King of Israel. Prophets had direct access to the king because they spoke by the authority of God.⁷⁰

⁷⁰ Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom Through Covenant*, 392.

“One of the central themes presented in 1–2 Samuel is the transition in leadership from ineffective judges (and corrupt priests) to the effective monarchy of David, in which the king also led (like a priest) in worshipping God rightly” (WOTARCA, 203).⁷⁰

1–2 Samuel recounts the transition from the judges to this anointed and exalted king, who Yahweh uses to restore the worship of himself among Israel. Part of this process, however, includes a number of priestly functions. The combination of king and priest is not new to the storyline (Gen. 14:18; cf. Psa. 110). In fact, just as Adam had both kingly and priestly roles in the Garden of Eden (cf. Gen. 1:26, 28; 2:15), so Yahweh was looking for a new Son who would both exercise dominion over the world and mediate between him and his people (Heb. 7).

1 Samuel 2:10

¹⁰ *The adversaries of Yahweh shall be broken to pieces;
against them he will thunder in heaven.
Yahweh will judge the ends of the earth;
he will give strength to his king
and exalt the horn of his anointed.*

1 Samuel 2:35

³⁵ *And I will raise up for myself a faithful priest, who shall do according to what is in my heart and in my mind. And I will build him a sure house, and he shall go in and out before my anointed forever.*

2. Who was the key transitional figure in the book of 1 Samuel (cf. Chs. 1–8)? Select the correct answer, and then describe how he is a transitional figure in the history of Israel. (see WOTARCA, 202)⁷¹

- a) Samuel
- b) Saul
- c) David
- d) Eli

· **ANSWER.** *Samuel was the last judge (7:15–17) and a prophet (3:20), and he inaugurated the monarchy (8:22; 10:1, 24–25; 16:13).*

⁷¹ Jason DeRouchie, ed., *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic & Professional, 2013). Used by permission. No duplication or distributed is permitted without written permission of the publisher.

Required Reading: *Dominion and Dynasty*, pages 134–136.

▷ stop at “A New Historical Grammar”

The book of Samuel begins with a man named Elkanah who has a wife named Hannah. Hannah is barren and afflicted so she prays to God. After God answers her prayer for a child, we see her song of praise to God in Chapter 2.

1 Samuel 2:8–10

⁸ *He raises up the poor from the dust;
he lifts the needy from the ash heap
to make them sit with princes
and inherit a seat of honor.*

*For the pillars of the earth are Yahweh's,
and on them he has set the world.*

⁹ *He will guard the feet of his faithful ones,
but the wicked shall be cut off in darkness,
for not by might shall a man prevail.*

¹⁰ *The adversaries of Yahweh shall be broken to pieces;
against them he will thunder in heaven.
Yahweh will judge the ends of the earth;
he will give strength to his king
and exalt the horn of his anointed.*

Hannah's prayer highlights the fact that Yahweh is a God who delights in reversing the state of affairs both for those who are proud, lofty, and powerful, and also for those who are lowly, oppressed, afflicted, and weak. In light of the end of Judges, this prophetic prayer would certainly ring of hope for God's people. “He is going to reverse the fortunes of his people by means of a king with universal dominion whom Yahweh is going to anoint to rule for him.”⁷²

Dempster emphasizes the significance of Hannah's prayer as the hermeneutical lens through which to read the entire book of 1–2 Samuel. God is going to deliver his people from the godless state they are in.

72 Jeremy Farmer, “From Creation to Christ” (seminar presented at Morning Star Baptist Church, Rockford IL, 2009).

3. The verses above (1 Sam. 2:8–10) constitute the last of three stanzas in Hannah’s song. What is the focus of each of the three stanzas? What is the significance of this progression? (see *DD*, 136)

· **ANSWER.** *Stanza 1: Hannah’s personal reversal; Stanza 2: Israel’s reversal; Stanza 3: the world’s reversal. This progression shows that the reversal of Hannah’s fortunes can also happen to Israel and to the whole world; indeed, it will happen through an anointed king.*

4. Fill in the blanks from the reading:

“The final stanza depicts the ultimate goal of this power at work in history. There will be a new world order (2:8b), based not on human strength (2:9) but on divine power. Yahweh will impart that power to his Messiah to rule the world and thereby raise the Messiah’s horn over his enemies” (*DD*, 136).

The underlined words in this quotation are left blank in the Student Workbook. We suggest that the instructor read the quote aloud to allow students to check their work.

Day 2

WE WANT A KING!

Required Reading: *Dominion and Dynasty*, pages 136–138.

- ▷ begin at “A New Historical Grammar”
- ▷ stop at “The Smallness of ‘Height’”

Israel’s politically and religiously deplorable state, along with Philistine oppression and international “peer-pressure,” motivates them to seek a king. In one sense, it is not wrong for Israel to ask for a king, since it is clear from Scripture that God has always intended for Israel to have one; he even made provisions for a king (Deut. 17:14–20).⁷³ Further, a king is the hope to which the book of Judges and the song of Hannah point.

- Humans were created to be kings over creation (Gen. 1:26–28).
- Adam was placed in the garden to exercise dominion over it (2:4–25).
- God told Abraham and Sarah that kings would come from them (17:6, 16).
- Abraham’s grandson Jacob was also promised that kings would come from him (35:11).
- Jacob then blessed his sons, foretelling that the scepter would not depart from Judah (49:10).
- Balaam prophesied that a king was among Israel (Num. 23:21) and that a scepter would rise out of Jacob (24:17).
- Moses made provisions and guidelines for the king who would rule over Israel (Deut. 17:14–20).

Just as Moses had predicted, the people ask for a king. However, Moses’ provision of a king was “accommodated by legislation that transforms the institution of kingship” (*DD*, 138). That is, Israel’s king was to be different than all the kings of the surrounding nations. Specifically, Israel’s king was to be Yahweh-fearing and Torah-loving. But notice Israel’s request:

⁷³ Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom Through Covenant*, 392.

1 Samuel 8:4–5

⁴ Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah
⁵ and said to him, “Behold, you are old and your sons do not walk in your
ways. Now appoint for us a king to judge us like all the nations.”

5. From this passage, what is the reason Israel desires a king?

- **ANSWER.** So that they would be like the other nations. They saw the kings of the Canaanites exercising dominion and thought the answer to their problems must be in a human king as well.

The author of Samuel makes it clear that Israel’s motives are wrong and Yahweh views their request for a king as a rejection of his kingship over them. One author puts it this way: “They want a king *instead of* God rather than a king *under* God.”⁷⁴

1 Samuel 8:7–9

⁷ And Yahweh said to Samuel, “Obey the voice of the people in all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over them. ⁸ According to all the deeds that they have done, from the day I brought them up out of Egypt even to this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so they are also doing to you. ⁹ Now then, obey their voice; only you shall solemnly warn them and show them the ways of the king who shall reign over them.”

1 Samuel 8:22

²² And Yahweh said to Samuel, “Obey their voice and make them a king.”

1 Samuel 12:12

¹² You said to me, “No, but a king shall reign over us,” when Yahweh your God was your king.

74 Roberts, *God’s Big Picture*, 80.

6. Why do you think Yahweh granted his people's request for a king when he saw it as a rejection of his own rule over their lives and he knew it would cause them trouble down the road? (Consider God's promises all the way back to the beginning of the story).

· **ANSWER.** *God had promised to use a human king to accomplish his redemptive purposes, as long as the king lived according to God's word. Though most of Israel's kings were evil, Jesus Christ was the perfect King who would restore God's kingdom.*

At the end of his life, Samuel recalls Israel's history and then charges the people of God to "fear Yahweh and serve him and obey his voice and not rebel against the commandment of Yahweh" so that "it will be well" (1 Sam. 12:14). Here is Israel's response:

1 Samuel 12:19–20

¹⁹ And all the people said to Samuel, "Pray for your servants to Yahweh your God, that we may not die, for we have added to all our sins this evil, to ask for ourselves a king." ²⁰ And Samuel said to the people, "Do not be afraid; you have done all this evil. Yet do not turn aside from following Yahweh, but serve Yahweh with all your heart.

Thus, only two chapters after the people of Israel anoint Saul as king over them, they acknowledge their mistake in asking for a king! Yet Samuel encourages them not to be afraid of their evil request, but to keep following Yahweh and serving him with all their heart (12:20, 24).

1 Samuel 12:22

²² For Yahweh will not forsake his people, for his great name's sake, because it has pleased Yahweh to make you a people for himself.

7. Why does Yahweh not destroy his people for rejecting his rule in their lives? Select the correct answer.
- a) Their new king would bring about repentance in the nation.
 - b) To preserve the glory of his name.
 - c) The people had not completely rejected his rule.
 - d) A loving God would do no such thing.

Required Reading: *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About*, pages 203–207.

- ▷ begin at “The Author of 1–2 Samuel Demonstrated the New to Take Seriously Yahweh’s Holy, Powerful, and Dangerous Presence”
- ▷ stop at “The Author of 1–2 Samuel Displayed God’s Ideal for Kingship by Contrasting Saul’s Failures with David’s Successes”

One of God’s covenant promises to Israel was that he would dwell with his people (Exod. 25:8; 29:45–46; 40:34–38). Exodus describes the construction of the ark of the covenant where Yahweh’s presence would dwell. Again, Yahweh’s presence among Israel was *the* distinguishing mark from all the other nations.

8. Hays points out three episodes concerning the ark in 1–2 Samuel that demonstrate the holiness, power, and danger involved with Yahweh’s presence. Choose one of these episodes and summarize it. Then explain what it teaches you about Yahweh’s presence.

ANSWER. *The ark is captured by the Philistines and placed before their god Dagon. Two days in a row, the Philistines woke up to find the statute of Dagon face-down before the ark, “bowing” to Yahweh (1 Samuel 4:1–7:17). Yahweh’s presence is supreme over all gods.*

When David was transporting the ark to Jerusalem, it toppled on the cart and Uzzah reached out to steady it. As soon as he touched the ark, he died (2 Samuel 6:1–23). Yahweh’s presence is infinitely holy. Because of his sin, man is not worthy to approach God.

After David had sinned with Bathsheba, his son Absalom and much of the nation of Israel turned against David. He fled Jerusalem, leaving the ark behind, because his relationship with Yahweh had been damaged. He was separated from Yahweh’s presence as a result of his sin (much like Adam and Eve) (2 Samuel 15:24–29). Sin separates us from God’s presence.

Day 3

GOD LOOKS AT THE HEART

9. List some qualities you think are important for the leader of a nation to possess. Which of those you listed are “external” qualities, and which ones reflect the heart?

• **ANSWER.** *Answers will vary*

Required Reading: *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About*, pages 207–211.

- ▷ begin at “The Author of 1–2 Samuel Displayed God’s Ideal for Kingship by Contrasting Saul’s Failures with David’s Successes”
- ▷ stop at “The Author of 1–2 Samuel Underscored the Crucial Role of God’s Covenant with David in Redemptive History”

Sadly, the people have no interest in a Deuteronomy 17 kind of king. They want a tall, powerful man who will be able to save them from their enemies, regardless of his character. They measure leadership qualities by the outward appearance. After the Samuel narrative, the rest of the book (Chs. 9–31) recounts the rise and fall of Saul, the first king of Israel, as well as the rise of David, his successor.

1 Samuel 9:2

² *And [Kish] had a son whose name was Saul, a handsome young man. There was not a man among the people of Israel more handsome than he. From his shoulders upward he was taller than any of the people.*

1 Samuel 10:1

¹ *Then Samuel took a flask of oil and poured it on [Saul’s] head and kissed him and said, “Has not Yahweh anointed you to be prince over his people Israel? And you shall reign over the people of Yahweh and you will save them from the hand of their surrounding enemies.*

Though Saul is large in stature, he is weak in character and faith (1 Sam. 13:13–14; 15:22–29; 17:11). His debut presents him as a buffoon who lacks the courage to assume his new role.

1 Samuel 10:21–24

²¹ And Saul the son of Kish was taken by lot. But when they sought him, he could not be found. ²² So they inquired again of Yahweh, “Is there a man still to come?” and Yahweh said, “Behold, he has hidden himself among the baggage.” ²³ Then they ran and took him from there. And when he stood among the people, he was taller than any of the people from his shoulders upward. ²⁴ And Samuel said to all the people, “Do you see him whom Yahweh has chosen? There is none like him among all the people.” And all the people shouted, “Long live the king!”

But Saul is more than a coward; he is blatantly disobedient. God commands Saul to destroy Amalek and all that they have because they oppressed Israel upon their entrance into the land (1 Sam. 15:1–3). Yet Saul does not obey Yahweh (15:9), lies about it (15:13, 20) and then shifts the blame (15:15, 21). His actions are seen as a rejection of God’s rule (15:11, 19, 26). Samuel rebukes him:

1 Samuel 15:22–23

²² And Samuel said, “Has Yahweh as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of Yahweh? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to listen than the fat of rams. ²³ For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and presumption is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of Yahweh, he has also rejected you from being king.

10. What is one specific way that you replace genuine obedience with religious actions that only appear to please God?

· ANSWER. Answers will vary

Saul’s external appearances are only a facade. He lacks real power since he does not trust or love God with his heart, but persistently disobeys him. As a result, the people are not blessed under Saul’s kingship, and God strips away the kingdom from him. Just as Hannah prayed, God is humbling the proud and “tall” ones.

1 Samuel 15:26

²⁶ And Samuel said to Saul, “I will not return with you. For you have rejected the word of Yahweh, and Yahweh has rejected you from being king over Israel.

Required Reading: *Dominion and Dynasty*, pages 138–141.

▷ begin at “The Smallness of ‘Height’”

“No sooner is Saul installed as king than he sins and Yahweh rejects him. It is Israel at Sinai all over again” (DD, 138).

After Saul is rejected as king, Yahweh sends Samuel to Jesse and his sons to choose who will be God’s next anointed king. But God does not choose the one whom everyone thought would be the next king (the firstborn, Eliab). Instead, he chooses the youngest of Jesse’s sons, who is a lowly shepherd.

1 Samuel 16:17

¹⁷ But Yahweh said to Samuel, “Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For Yahweh sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but Yahweh looks on the heart.”

David may be small in stature compared to Saul, but he has a big heart, and one that loves Yahweh.

1 Samuel 16:12–14

¹² And Yahweh said, “Arise, anoint him, for this is he.” ¹³ Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers. And the Spirit of Yahweh rushed upon David from that day forward. And Samuel rose up and went to Ramah. ¹⁴ Now the Spirit of Yahweh departed from Saul, and a harmful spirit from Yahweh tormented him.

David is portrayed as the ideal king. Throughout 1–2 Samuel, there is a stark contrast between Saul’s cowardliness, foolishness, and rebellion and David’s humility, courage, and faith in Yahweh (e.g., 2 Sam. 6). Humble David is being exalted by Yahweh, just like Hannah’s prayer prophesied. God’s presence with David is clear from the early narrative of his single-handed defeat of Goliath, God’s enemy (1 Sam. 17). This is perhaps the most explicit example of David’s heart devotion to Yahweh. It also epitomizes the main message of the book: God exalts the lowly and humbles the proud. Consider Hannah’s prayer and how it is embodied in the story of David and Goliath.

1 Samuel 2:9–10

*⁹ He will guard the feet of his faithful ones,
but the wicked shall be cut off in darkness,
for not by might shall a man prevail.*

¹⁰ *The adversaries of Yahweh shall be broken to pieces;
against them he will thunder in heaven.
Yahweh will judge the ends of the earth;
he will give strength to his king
and exalt the horn of his anointed.*

1 Samuel 17:45–47

⁴⁵ *Then David said to the Philistine, “You come to me with a sword and with a spear and with a javelin, but I come to you in the name of Yahweh of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. ⁴⁶ This day Yahweh will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you down and cut off your head. And I will give the dead bodies of the host of the Philistines this day to the birds of the air and to the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, ⁴⁷ and that all this assembly may know that Yahweh saves not with sword and spear. For the battle is Yahweh’s, and he will give you into our hand.*

11. What is the main point of the story of David and Goliath? Select the correct answer.
- a) We need to have more courage like David to overcome the “giants” in our lives.
 - b) When engaging in spiritual warfare, we must stand by and let Yahweh fight for us.
 - c) Yahweh’s enemies are doomed to failure when his people skillfully use the word of God to fight in order to gain the victory.
 - d) Israel’s God, Yahweh, is the one true God, and salvation belongs to him alone.

This historical battle personifies the spiritual battle between Yahweh and the gods of the earth. While the gods of this world may appear big and powerful, ultimately, they are under Yahweh’s authority, and God’s people should not fear them, nor should they serve them. Yahweh, on the other hand is all-powerful and he will not be defied.

God often uses unlikely means to accomplish his purposes, a theme consistent with Hannah’s prayer. In fact, this theological theme runs throughout Scripture. God delights in using the foolish, lowly, weak, despised, poor things in life to accomplish his purposes (1 Cor. 1:20–31).

1 Corinthians 1:20–31

²⁰ *Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?* ²¹ *For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe.* ²² *For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom,* ²³ *but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles,* ²⁴ *but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.* ²⁵ *For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.*

²⁶ *For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth.* ²⁷ *But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong;* ²⁸ *God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are,* ²⁹ *so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.* ³⁰ *And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption,* ³¹ *so that, as it is written, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.”*

12. How is the theme of Hannah’s prayer and 1–2 Samuel evident in the message of the gospel? According to Paul, why did God choose to work salvation this way?

· **ANSWER.** *The message of the gospel is foolishness to many people because God used unlikely means—namely, the death of his Son—to accomplish the salvation of the world. Because God worked his salvation this way, no one—namely, the proud, the strong, the wise, the noble—can boast before God.*

At last, Israel has the kind of king that God wants for his people, “a man after [God’s] own heart” (1 Sam. 13:14), who rules under the authority of God’s word. God is with David and exalts him (2 Sam. 5:10). The people give their hearts to him (3:36). Further, this is the first king to emerge from the tribe of Judah! The text brings together the themes of genealogy and geography as the hunt for the serpent-crusher narrows, and God’s people are finally in their land. David brings the ark of God to Jerusalem which becomes the capital of Israel and the permanent dwelling place of God (2 Sam. 6). Would David be the one to restore God’s kingdom and rule in righteousness and justice (8:15)?

Day 4

THE DAVIDIC COVENANT

It is difficult to overstate the significance of 2 Samuel 7. The story of redemption has been driving towards a restored kingdom wherein a son of God who images him perfectly exercises dominion over the earth and thereby brings blessing to the whole world. For the last seven lessons we have been working through *The Partial Kingdom* wherein God made a people for himself, entered into a covenant relationship with them, gave them his law to live by, brought them into a good land, and gave them victory over their enemies. Though none of this happened as easily or as quickly as Israel (or the reader!) would have predicted, the story still seems to be building towards a climax. That is, it appears that God has been reconstructing his kingdom, and we are waiting eagerly for the final piece—a king from the tribe of Judah who will crush the serpent’s head, exercise dominion in a godly way, and therefore bless the world. Is David this man?

Required Reading: *Dominion and Dynasty*, pages 142–143.

▷ stop at “Thematization of David”

Once David is firmly established as king and secures the nation from enemy harm, he decides to build a house (temple/sanctuary) for Yahweh (2 Sam. 7:2). Yahweh responds that David would not build him a house, but that he would build a house (dynasty/royal family line) for David, and one that would last forever (7:5–16).

“Thus is introduced one of the most important chapters in the entire Hebrew Bible: 2 Samuel 7. The matters of geography and genealogy have been settled: Jerusalem and David, Zion and Scion. From this one location in world geography and this one person in world genealogy will flow blessing to the entire world and its inhabitants. This is the theme of this chapter that reverberates throughout the rest of the Bible. Both of these themes merge in a powerful way through the use of the word ‘house’ (bayit) which has a dual meaning, denoting on the one hand a building in a specific location and on the other a dynasty” (DD, 142).

Required Reading: *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About*, pages 211–213.

- ▷ begin at “The Author of 1–2 Samuel Underscored the Crucial Role of God’s Covenant with David in Redemptive History”
- ▷ stop at “The Author of 1–2 Samuel Portrayed David’s Sin and Its Consequences to Show the Need for One Greater Than David”

🔗 **BIBLE STUDY:** 2 Samuel 7:5–16

2 Samuel 7:5–16

⁵ Thus says Yahweh: Would you build me a house to dwell in? ⁶ I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent for my dwelling. ⁷ In all places where I have moved with all the people of Israel, did I speak a word with any of the judges of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, “Why have you not built me a house of cedar?” ⁸ ... I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, that you should be prince over my people Israel. ⁹ And I have been with you wherever you went and have cut off all your enemies from before you. And I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. ¹⁰ And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may dwell in their own place and be disturbed no more. And violent men shall afflict them no more, as formerly, ¹¹ from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel. And I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover, Yahweh declares to you that Yahweh will make you a house. ¹² When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. ¹³ He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. ¹⁴ I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men, ¹⁵ but my steadfast love will not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. ¹⁶ And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.

13. Underline every promise you see to David in these verses. How do these promises reflect the promises made to Abraham?

- **ANSWER.** God is going to make for David a great name (v. 9; cf. Gen. 12:2), give his people a land and plant them in it (v. 10; cf. Gen. 12:1; 15:18), put an end to Israel’s oppressors by cursing them (vv. 10, 11; cf. Gen. 12:3); make a dynasty (vv. 11, 13, 16; cf. Gen. 12:2), and establish a kingdom (vv. 12, 13, 16; cf. Gen. 12:2).

14. These promises are given to David, though many of them concern a descendant of his. What does God promise concerning the coming king from David's line (vv. 12–16)? What clue in the text indicates that God does not have a mere human king in mind? Circle the word that gives us that clue (hint: it appears three times).

· **ANSWER.** *David's offspring will have an everlasting kingdom (vv. 12, 13, 16), he will build a house for Yahweh's name (v. 13), he will be the son of God (v. 14), he will be disciplined (v. 14), and he will be loved by God forever (v. 15). Three times, God says this descendant's kingdom will be established forever. This cannot refer to a mere human king.*

15. How does Jesus fulfill these promises? (See Matt. 1:1; 3:17; Mark 12:35–37; Luke 1:32–33; John 2:18–22; Acts 2:24–36; Rom. 1:1–4; Rev. 5:5; 22:16).

· **ANSWER.** *Jesus is the son of David who, because of his resurrection, sits on David's throne and rules over God's kingdom forever. Jesus is also the beloved Son of God. Though Jesus did not commit any iniquity, he was disciplined for the sins of God's people.*

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DAVIDIC COVENANT

Some would argue that 2 Samuel 7 is the pinnacle of the entire Old Testament. The Davidic covenant marks the high point in Israel's history and is laden with theological significance that influences the rest of the Bible. In light of redemptive history, all God's promises to the woman and to Abraham will now be funneled through the line of David, whose descendant will rule over God's kingdom forever. God's enemies—namely sin and death—will be destroyed, and blessing will extend to the nations.

Notice that God requires obedience from David, as a father requires obedience from his son. “The covenant between Yahweh and David was defined as a father-son relationship.” Verses 14–15 show that obedience is expected from the king; however, this expectation of the king is placed between two statements about Yahweh's faithfulness and sure promises to David of descendants, a kingdom, and a throne. So God's promises support the need for a faithful, obedient son.⁷⁵

75 Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom Through Covenant*, 395.

As we saw in Genesis 1, “son” refers to one who reflects the character of the one he serves (cf. Gen. 5:1–3; Luke 3:38). We noted that kings in the ancient world were commonly considered “sons of god” because they represented the character of the god they served to the people.⁷⁶ Thus, David was to embody the Torah of Yahweh and lead the people in doing the same. Only when this happened, would David’s throne “be established forever” (2 Sam. 7:16).

Consider Psalm 72, which may have been David’s prayer for his son Solomon at his coronation in anticipation of a future fulfillment of the Davidic covenant.⁷⁷

Psalm 72:7–8

⁷ *In his days may the righteous flourish,
and peace abound, till the moon be no more!*

⁸ *May he have dominion from sea to sea,
and from the River to the ends of the earth!*

Psalm 72:17

¹⁷ *May his name endure forever,
his fame continue as long as the sun!
May people be blessed in him,
all nations call him blessed!*

16. According to Psalm 72, how long will the Davidic king rule over the ends of the earth? Select all that apply.

- a) Until 586 B.C., when the Babylonians destroy Judah
- b) Until the moon no longer exists
- c) Until Christ returns
- d) As long as the sun shines

There are only two possible options for the fulfillment of 2 Samuel 7. Either a king in the Davidic line will be born every generation forever, or there will be a son born in the Davidic line who will live forever. Psalm 72:7 says that righteousness and peace will abound “in his days,” that is, “until the moon is no more.” The only person whose days can be defined as “until the moon is no more” is Messiah Jesus, who rose from the dead and lives forever! The Davidic covenant, therefore, points us to Christ!

⁷⁶ Ibid., 396–397.

⁷⁷ The other option is that Psalm 72 was written by Solomon himself. Either option points the reader beyond these two human kings for the fulfillment of the Davidic covenant.

Day 5

A TURNING POINT

Required Reading: *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About*, pages 213–216.

- ▷ begin at “The Author of 1–2 Samuel Portrayed David’s Sin and Its Consequences to Show the Need for One Greater Than David”

From 1 Samuel 16–2 Samuel 10, David is presented in the best possible light. One wonders if he is the royal deliverer who would set God’s kingdom back in order.

17. What were some of the deeds David accomplished that made him appear to be the promised deliverer of Israel?

- **ANSWER.** *David defeats Israel’s enemies (1 Samuel 18:7), he was the ideal king of Deuteronomy 17:14–20, he “fixed” the mess at the end of Judges (Judges 21:25), he completes the conquest that Joshua had begun and expanded Israel’s borders (2 Samuel 8–10), and he established Jerusalem as the capital and placed the ark of Yahweh there as the central place of worship (2 Samuel 6).*

As one reads the accounts of 2 Samuel 11, his jaw drops as this “man after God’s own heart” throws aside the Torah and commits adultery with one of his soldier’s wife, and then murders the man to cover up his sin! This is a turning point, not only in the life of David, but also in the redemptive history of the Old Testament. Things would never be quite right for God’s people.

18. Can you think of some leader (politician, athlete, church leader, parent, etc.) in this day and age who failed to live up to his or her role by committing some shameful act? What effect does this have on those who looked up to that particular leader?

- **ANSWER.** *Answers will vary*

Nathan the prophet confronts David (2 Sam. 12:7) who quickly repents, and Yahweh amazingly forgives him (12:13; cf. Psa. 51).

19. How can Yahweh simply forgive David when the law demands that he be put to death?

- **ANSWER.** *God designed the sacrificial system to appease his wrath until Christ came and paid the penalty for the sins of all God's people for all times (Rom. 3:21–26).*

However, there are still negative consequences from David's sin, and the story takes a negative turn. David's life, his kingdom, and his "house" (i.e., family) unravel. The child of his adulterous relationship dies (12:14, 19), his son Absalom, along with most of Israel, turn on him (15:13) so that he has to flee Jerusalem (15:14–31), the kingdom splits into two (20:2), and the Philistines rise up again (21:15–22). Sin always produces curse.

Required Reading: *Dominion and Dynasty*, pages 143–147.

▷ begin at "Thematization of David"

David's sin with Bathsheba is not his only sin recorded in Samuel. Towards the end of the book David decides to take a census of the nation to see just how powerful his kingdom is, an act that turns his attention away from Yahweh and onto his own might. As judgment, God gives David three options to choose from: (1) a seven-year famine, (2) pursuit by enemies for three months, or (3) a three-day plague (2 Sam. 24:10–14).

20. Which option did David choose, and what was his reason for doing so? According to Dempster, what text undergirds his decision? (see *DD*, 146)

- **ANSWER.** *David chooses the three-day plague because he knew behind God's anger was deep mercy and compassion. He would rather fall into the hands of the living God than anything else. Exodus 34:6–7 displays this nature: "Yahweh, Yahweh, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin..."*

The book of Samuel teaches that Yahweh is a God who delights in reversing the fortunes of people, from haughty to humble, and from lowly to exalted. This is demonstrated in God's choice of a king for his people—a man small in stature, but whose heart reflects the divine nature (1 Sam. 13:14). David delivers Israel from its terrible state and becomes the key to the future of Israel and also of the nations. Although in one sense David truly is a “man after God's own heart,” in the end he is still a sinful human and incapable of healing the hearts of the people. He is not the Messiah promised to Eve (Gen. 3:15), to Abraham (22:17b–18), and to Judah (49:10). It is one of his descendants who will fulfill the covenant promises God made to him and to those before him. A Son of David will crush the serpent's head and sit on David's throne forever!

Revelation 22:16

¹⁶ I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you about these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star.



§ INTEGRATIVE ASSIGNMENT

In one short paragraph, summarize in your own words the main message of the book of 1–2 Samuel so that someone with no biblical knowledge could understand.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



Review the following questions in preparation for discussion. As you have worked through this lesson, record any lingering questions that you may have.

1. In light of Hannah's song of praise (1 Samuel 2), share an instance when you saw God reverse your fortunes or the fortunes of someone else. Did God humble the proud and powerful, or did he exalt the lowly and oppressed?
2. Discuss why Yahweh allowed Israel to place a human king over them when he saw it as a rejection of his own rule. Discuss the relationship between submitting to a national leader and submitting to Yahweh (see Romans 13:1–7).
3. Respond to this statement: "In the future millenium, David will again sit on his throne in Jerusalem."
4. Your own question(s):

§ ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- ▷ “History of Salvation in the Old Testament: Preparing the Way for Christ,”
ESV Study Bible, (Wheaton: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 2,641–2,642.

1–2 Kings

12

§ INTRODUCTION

From the beginning of the story, we have seen that God desires for all his people to *rule* the earth (Gen. 1:28). After the fall, God promises to restore creation to a state of *shalom* through a *ruler*, specifically one from the woman's offspring who will crush the serpent's head (3:15). In Genesis 17, God tells Abraham it is through his family that this *ruler* will come and bless the world (17:6; cf. 12:3). By the end of Genesis, the author has narrowed the options down to Abraham's great-grandson Judah, who will *rule* over the peoples of the earth (49:10). Later, Moses foresees that Israel would one day have a real king who would *rule* over the people in the land (Deut. 17:14–20). Samuel introduces the first king, Saul, who fails miserably and proves he is not the highly anticipated *ruler* of God's people. Saul is followed by David, a man after God's own heart, who *rules* with power and wisdom because he lives under God's *rule*. Under David's *rule*, God's people experience all the covenant blessings promised in the Torah. The people now have a land and a permanent home, they experience rest from their enemies, they multiply and become numerous, and they enjoy the blessing of living under God's *rule*.

This concept of rulership (i.e., kingship) provides the background for the book of 1–2 Kings. It is here that the reader is presented with the ensuing history of the kings of Israel, as the kingdom is handed down from David to his son Solomon (1 Kings 1:28–30). Under David's rule the kingdom expands, but it is Solomon who establishes Israel as chief among all the nations of the ancient world. This period is the climax of Israel's history—the “golden age.” It appears that all of God's promises have been fulfilled and that God's kingdom has been re-established. God's people are dwelling in God's place under God's rule and enjoying God's blessing.

While the reigns of David and Solomon constitute a “golden” era in Israel's history, they are certainly not unstained by sin and conflict. We saw this in the

latter half of Samuel, but the book of 1–2 Kings only contains more disobedience and curse. Although David had been given extraordinary promises of an everlasting dynasty, neither he nor his first successor is able to usher them in. Indeed, part of the purpose of 1–2 Kings is to show that none of David's descendants could keep the Mosaic covenant and therefore would not be the ones to fulfill the promises God made to David. Israel runs headlong into idolatry, and the kingdom is divided into two. Both nations experience the climax of the covenant curses—exile from the Promised Land.

🔗 LESSON OBJECTIVES

After completing this lesson, the student should be able to

- ▷ describe the general pattern of leadership in the nation of Israel.
- ▷ explain what caused the decline of Israel which led to the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities.
- ▷ articulate what hope Israel retained while experiencing covenant curses and exile.

Total pages of reading for this week: 29



Since this is the last lesson of *Old Testament Survey I, A Christ-Centered Approach to Studying Jesus' Bible*, it might be appropriate to spend about 30 minutes at the end of class either discussing any remaining questions or discussing ways in which the students' understanding of redemptive history has changed over the semester. Perhaps discuss how this will enhance their reading of the whole Bible, not just the Old Testament. This might help draw things together in their minds and give them a sense of closure.

Also, this curriculum is the first of two parts. If at all possible, the second part of the course should be taught by the same instructor, and students should be encouraged to complete the entire curriculum in order to benefit the most from it.



Day 1

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THE GOLDEN AGE

Required Reading: *Dominion and Dynasty*, pages 147–148.

- ▷ begin at “Kings: The Dead End of Exile”
 - ▷ stop at “Echoes of Exodus: Tabernacle and Idolatry”
1. True/False: Solomon’s request for wisdom was rooted in a desire to be like God, “knowing good and evil,” similar to Eve’s desire in the garden.

It was mentioned in the introduction to this lesson that David and Solomon’s reigns marked a golden age in Israel’s history. Consider the state of Israel at the beginning of 1 Kings:

Israel is God’s people:

Genesis 22:17

¹⁷ *I [Yahweh] will surely bless you [Abraham], and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore.*

1 Kings 4:20

²⁰ *Judah and Israel were as many as the sand by the sea. They ate and drank and were happy.*

Israel is in God’s place.

Genesis 15:18

¹⁸ *On that day Yahweh made a covenant with Abram saying, “To your offspring I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates.”*

1 Kings 4:21

²¹ Solomon ruled over all the kingdoms from the Euphrates to the land of the Philistines and to the border of Egypt. They brought tribute and served Solomon all the days of his life.

Israel is under God's rule and is blessed.

Deuteronomy 31:26

²⁶ Take this Book of the Law and put it by the side of the ark of the covenant of Yahweh your God, that it may be there for a witness against you.

1 Kings 8:21

²¹ And there I have provided a place for the ark, in which is the covenant of Yahweh that he made with our fathers, when he brought them out of the land of Egypt.

1 Kings 4:24–25

²⁴ For he had dominion over all the region west of the Euphrates from Tiphshah to Gaza, over all the kings west of the Euphrates. And he had peace on all sides around him. ²⁵ And Judah and Israel lived in safety, from Dan even to Beersheba, every man under his vine and under his fig tree, all the days of his life.

We even see a foretaste of the blessing being extended to other nations!

Genesis 12:3

³ I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.

1 Kings 4:34

³⁴ And people of all nations came to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and from all the kings of the earth, who had heard of his wisdom.

1 Kings 10:13

¹³ And King Solomon gave to the queen of Sheba all that she desired, whatever she asked besides what was given her by the bounty of King Solomon. So she turned and went back to her own land with her servants.

2 Kings 5:14

¹⁴ So [Naaman, the leper from Syria] went down and dipped himself seven times in the Jordan, according to the word of [Elisha] the man of God, and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.

So why are God's promises being fulfilled at this point in Israel's history? 1–2 Kings make it crystal clear that the nation's destiny depends primarily on its leadership. Israel is blessed under King David and King Solomon because they submit to God's rule and they enforce it among the people. Only in this way would God's people enjoy his blessing (cf. 2 Samuel 7:5–16).

THE NOT SO GOLDEN AGE

Required Reading: *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About*, pages 218–223

- ▷ stop at “The Author of 1–2 Kings Showed the Importance of Yahweh's Prophets in Israel's History”

But not everything is as good as it seems. Ever since God created Adam, he expected obedience from his people, as a father expects obedience from his son (cf. Gen. 2:17). Though he made massive promises to Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and David, God's people are not given the freedom to live however they please (cf. Rom. 6:1). Rather, they are to submit to his rule. But as we have seen in the story, none of God's “sons” have lived in perfect submission to his rule. Thus, there is a tension between God's promises and their fulfillment. In 1–2 Kings, the reader is not given much hope that Israel will last long under God's rule, even if its king possesses the right genes.

Just as David sinned and proved he was not the king to fulfill the promises God made to him (see 2 Sam. 11–12), so Solomon proves that he is not the promised offspring. At first, Solomon is a wise and powerful ruler, but as time goes on, we see that his character is lacking in many ways and he is not the ideal king that Deuteronomy 17 had prescribed.

1 Kings 4:26

²⁶ Solomon also had 40,000 stalls of horses for his chariots, and 12,000 horsemen.

1 Kings 10:14, 21, 27

¹⁴ Now the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was 666 talents of gold.... ²¹ All King Solomon's drinking vessels were of gold.... None were of silver; silver was not considered as anything in the days of Solomon.... ²⁷ And the king made silver as common in Jerusalem as stone.

1 Kings 11:1–4

¹ Now King Solomon loved many foreign women ... ² from the nations concerning which Yahweh had said to the people of Israel, "You shall not enter into marriage with them, neither shall they with you, for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods." Solomon clung to these in love. ³ He had 700 wives, who were princesses, and 300 concubines. And his wives turned away his heart. ⁴ For when Solomon was old his wives turned away his heart after other gods, and his heart was not wholly true to Yahweh his God, as was the heart of David his father.

2. Look up Deuteronomy 17:14–20. What is the only requirement of an Israelite king that Solomon met?

· **ANSWER.** *Solomon was not a foreigner (Deuteronomy. 17:15).*

As a result of Solomon's unfaithfulness to God, God strips the kingdom from him, first removing ten whole tribes from under his rule.

1 Kings 11:11

¹¹ Therefore Yahweh said to Solomon, "Since this has been your practice and you have not kept my covenant and my statutes that I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom from you and will give it to your servant."

Overall, 1 Kings 1–11 presents Israel in a very positive light. This is the climax of Israel's history, the golden age. But once we get to 1 Kings 12, everything changes, and the kingdom begins to fall apart, as it had in Genesis 3. Israel rapidly declines into moral decay and experiences the covenant curses promised in Deuteronomy 28:15–68, beginning with a divided kingdom and ending in exile from God's Promised Land. The nation's leadership led to the division of the kingdom in 930 B.C.

3. Fill out the following chart with the basic information of each of the kingdoms of Israel:

	Southern Kingdom: Judah	Northern Kingdom: Israel
Number of Tribes	<u>1(2) tribes</u>	<u>10 tribes</u>
Number of Dynasties and Kings	<u>1 dynasty (of David); 20 kings</u>	<u>10 dynasties; 20 kings</u>
Initial Ruler	<u>Rehoboam</u>	<u>Jeroboam I</u>
Capitals	<u>Jerusalem</u>	<u>Samaria</u>
Worship Centers	<u>Jerusalem</u>	<u>Bethel and Dan</u>
Economic Status	<u>Struggling</u>	<u>Wealthy</u>
Destruction	<u>586 B.C. by Babylon</u>	<u>723 B.C. by Assyria</u>

There is a direct link between the downfall of Israel's leadership and the downfall of the nation. God's people need godly leadership, specifically, a King who will rule them in righteousness and peace. This is central to God's purposes of redemption. This king must be obedient to the Mosaic covenant, since the Mosaic covenant reflects the very heart of Yahweh.

4. The fact that even David, the "man after God's own heart" (1 Sam. 13:14), was not the royal offspring who would restore God's kingdom is quite shocking. What does this tell us about the character of the true King God was looking for?
- **ANSWER.** *The true King must be more righteous than David. He must be completely obedient to the Mosaic covenant. In short, he must be perfect.*

Day 2

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THE PROPHETS

Required Reading: *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About*, pages 223–229.

- ▷ begin at “The Author of 1–2 Kings Showed the Importance of Yahweh’s Prophets in Israel’s History”
- ▷ stop at “The Author of 1–2 Kings Measured Kingdom Success in the Light of Past Covenants”

5. A prophet was (select the correct answer):

- a) a man sent by God to deliver his people from their sin and political troubles.
- b) anyone who wears camel hair and eats locusts.
- c) an ambassador sent by God to call his people back to their covenant relationship with Yahweh.
- d) someone who speaks future oracles on behalf of God.

During the moral decline of Israel, God sends prophets to his people whose primary role is to hold up the Mosaic Covenant like a mirror, showing how far they are drifting from God’s law. When a prophet speaks, Yahweh speaks, whether the people or king like what he says or not (2 Kings 24:2; cf. 1 Kings 22:8, 17, 19–23)!

2 Kings 17:13–14

¹³ Yet Yahweh warned Israel and Judah by every prophet and every seer, saying, “Turn from your evil ways and keep my commandments and my statutes, in accordance with all the Law that I commanded your fathers, and that I sent to you by my servants the prophets.”¹⁴ But they would not listen, but were stubborn, as their fathers had been, who did not believe in Yahweh their God.

2 Kings 36:16

¹⁶ But they kept mocking the messengers of God, despising his words and scoffing at his prophets, until the wrath of Yahweh rose against his people, until there was no remedy.

6. According to Fowler and DeRouchie, how were the people supposed to believe the prophets' message and therefore obey their voice? Did Israel heed their warnings?

· **ANSWER.** *The prophets performed miracles and foretold future events that were all meant to validate that their message was indeed from God. For the most part, Israel did not heed the prophets' warnings.*

1 Kings 18:36, 38–39

³⁶ And Elijah the prophet came near and said, "O Yahweh, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that you are God in Israel, and that I am your servant, and that I have done all these things at your word...." ³⁸ Then the fire of Yahweh fell and consumed the burnt offering and the wood and the stones and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. ³⁹ And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces and said, "Yahweh, he is God; Yahweh, he is God."

7. Similar to the book of Judges, a cycle develops in 1–2 Kings. Yet there is a striking difference in this cycle. Which of the following is *NOT* part of the cycle of 1–2 Kings (WOTARCA, 227)? Select the correct answer, then explain why you think this absence is significant.

- a) The prophet announced Yahweh's judgment
- b) Yahweh's king or people rebelled
- c) Yahweh raised up a prophet
- d) The king or people repented

· **ANSWER.** *Both the kings and the people have forsaken Yahweh's law to the point that the cycle no longer includes repentance over sin. While they certainly do go through periods of reform, the overall trajectory is downhill.*

In 1–2 Kings, Yahweh is not only enraged at Israel's kings but also the kings of the nations around Israel. Ever since Genesis, Yahweh has shown himself to be a global God, not merely a familial or tribal deity. That is, Yahweh is King over the entire world, not just over the descendants of Abraham. God makes this fact known to Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, who arrogantly rejects Yahweh's authority over him. Listen to the haughty words of King Sennacherib:

2 Kings 18:35

³⁵ Who among all the gods of the lands have delivered their lands out of my hand, that Yahweh should deliver should deliver Jerusalem out of my hand?

In answer to Hezekiah's prayer, God sends the prophet Isaiah to put Sennacherib in his place. Isaiah speaks on behalf of Yahweh:

2 Kings 19:22

*²² Whom have you mocked and reviled?
Against whom have you raised your voice
and lifted your eyes to the heights?
Against the Holy One of Israel!*

2 Kings 19:28

*²⁸ Because you have raged against me
and your complacency has come into my ears,
I will put my hook in your nose
and my bit in your mouth,
and I will turn you back on the way
by which you came.*

2 Kings 19:35–37

³⁵ And that night the angel of Yahweh went out and struck down ^{185,000} in the camp of the Assyrians. And when people arose early in the morning, behold, these were all dead bodies. ³⁶ Then Sennacherib king of Assyria departed and went home and lived at Nineveh. ³⁷ And as he was worshiping in the house of Nisroch his god, Adrammelech and Sharezer, his sons, struck him down with the sword and escaped into the land of Ararat. And Esarhaddon his son reigned in his place.

8. What lesson can we learn from those who arrogantly reject Yahweh's rule? (consider James 4:6 in your answer)

Also see Hebrews 10:31:
"It is a fearful thing to fall into
the hands of the living God."

- **ANSWER.** *Those who reject Yahweh's rule will receive certain punishment for their pride, namely the "opposition" of Yahweh, while those who humbly submit to him will receive grace.*

Day 3

COVENANT LOYALTY

Required Reading: *Dominion and Dynasty*, pages 148–150.

- ▷ begin at “Echoes of Exodus: Tabernacle and Idolatry”
- ▷ stop at “The Reckless Plunge into Exile: Israel and Election”

Dempster points out the significance of Solomon’s construction of the temple—namely, that Yahweh’s presence comes to dwell once again among his people (1 Kings 8:10–11). The centrality of God’s presence is intended not just for Israel but for the whole world. Consider Solomon’s prayer at the dedication of the temple:

1 Kings 8:43

⁴³ *...in order that all the peoples of the earth may know your name and fear you, as do your people Israel. And that they may know that this house that I have built is called by your name.*

1 Kings 8:60

⁶⁰ *...that all the peoples of the earth may know that Yahweh is God; there is no other.*

Couched between these two global prayers is a plea for forgiveness. Solomon knows the people will sin (8:46), and that they will not “be wholly true to Yahweh our God, walking in his statutes and keeping his commandments” (8:61), and therefore, to be a blessing to the whole world would require forgiveness of sin, which is based not on the Sinai covenant but on God’s promises to David. Israel, along with the whole world, is in desperate need of Yahweh’s presence and forgiveness of sins.

Required Reading: *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About*, pages 229–234.

- ▷ begin at “The Author of 1–2 Kings Measured Kingdom Success in the Light of Past Covenants”
- ▷ stop at “The Author of 1–2 Kings Gave Hope for Kingdom Restoration Beyond Exile”

The author of 1–2 Kings is not primarily concerned with the lasting reputation of the kings of Israel, which would have been detrimental in the ancient world where a lasting legacy was greatly desired. Rather, he is concerned with how they lived in light of God’s covenant with his people. Thus, many connections with previous covenants are made throughout 1–2 Kings. On Day 1, we saw many of these connections with the Abrahamic covenant, and in the previous lesson, we studied the Davidic covenant (2 Sam. 7). Interestingly, it appears that the promises contained in the Davidic covenant are contingent on his heir’s faithfulness to the Mosaic covenant.

1 Kings 2:1–4

¹ *When David’s time to die drew near, he commanded Solomon his son, saying,*

² *“I am about to go the way of all the earth. Be strong, and show yourself a man,³ and keep the charge of Yahweh your God, walking in his ways and keeping his statutes, his commandments, his rules, and his testimonies, as it is written in the Law of Moses, that you may prosper in all that you do and wherever you turn,⁴ that Yahweh may establish his word that he spoke concerning me, saying, ‘If your sons pay close attention to their way, to walk before me in faithfulness with all their heart and with all their soul, you shall not lack a man on the throne of Israel.’”*

9. We have noted an apparent tension between God’s land promise to Abraham and his promise to curse Israel through exile from the land if they are disobedient to the Mosaic covenant. How does a similar tension exist between the Davidic and Mosaic covenants?

• **ANSWER.** *God promised that David would not lack a man to sit on his throne forever (2 Sam. 7:13, 16; 1 Kings 2:4; 8:25), yet this was dependent on whether that king would obey the Mosaic covenant (1 Kings 2:3–4).*

Thus, the Mosaic covenant is the primary lens for understanding the decline of Israel, as each king is evaluated by their adherence to the law of Yahweh.

“1–2 Kings is distinctly theological, addressing how each king responded, whether rightly or wrongly, to Yahweh and his purposes” (WOTARCA, 230).⁷⁸

⁷⁸ Jason DeRouchie, ed., *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic & Professional, 2013). Used by permission. No duplication or distributed is permitted without written permission of the publisher.

🔗 BIBLE STUDY: 1 Kings 9:1-9

1 Kings 9:1-9

¹ As soon as Solomon had finished building the house of Yahweh and the king's house and all that Solomon desired to build, ² Yahweh appeared to Solomon a second time, as he had appeared to him at Gibeon. ³ And Yahweh said to him, "I have heard your prayer and your plea, which you have made before me. I have consecrated this house that you have built, by putting my name there forever. My eyes and my heart will be there for all time. ⁴ And as for you, if you will walk before me, as David your father walked, with integrity of heart and uprightness, doing according to all that I have commanded you, and keeping my statutes and my rules, ⁵ then I will establish your royal throne over Israel forever, as I promised David your father, saying, 'You shall not lack a man on the throne of Israel.' ⁶ But if you turn aside from following me, you or your children, and do not keep my commandments and my statutes that I have set before you, but go and serve other gods and worship them, ⁷ then I will cut off Israel from the land that I have given them, and the house that I have consecrated for my name I will cast out of my sight, and Israel will become a proverb and a byword among all peoples. ⁸ And this house will become a heap of ruins. Everyone passing by it will be astonished and will hiss, and they will say, 'Why has Yahweh done thus to this land and to this house?' ⁹ Then they will say, 'Because they abandoned Yahweh their God who brought their fathers out of the land of Egypt and laid hold on other gods and worshiped them and served them. Therefore Yahweh has brought all this disaster on them.'"

10. The word "if" communicates a condition. Circle every time you see the word "if" and then underline the conditions that Yahweh gives to Solomon. Now circle the word "then" that follows each condition, and underline the results of each condition. How would Solomon's (Davidic) throne be established forever?

• **ANSWER.** *Solomon's throne would be established forever if he walked before Yahweh with integrity of heart and uprightness, doing according to all that Yahweh has commanded and keeping his statutes and rules. In short, the Davidic throne depended on a Davidic descendant's obedience to the Mosaic covenant.*

11. These two “if/then” statements are merely reflections of what broader principle in the redemptive story? (see Lev. 26 and Deut. 28)

- **ANSWER.** *God will always bless obedience and curse disobedience. This was seen as early as Genesis 1, and it continues throughout redemptive history.*

Before Israel entered the land, they rebelled against God in the wilderness. God was going to destroy them, but Moses appealed to God’s reputation among the nations (cf. Deut. 9:28). He feared the nations would say things like: “It is because Yahweh was not able to bring this people into the land that he swore to give them that he has killed them in the wilderness” (Num. 14:16).

12. In 1 Kings 9 (after the conquest), God’s people still possessed the ability to rebel, but what would change about the nations’ response to such a catastrophe? (see v. 9). Why do you think this is the case?

- **ANSWER.** *After the conquest, the nations had seen Yahweh’s power and authority over all kings and all gods as he acted for his people Israel. Therefore, if Israel rebelled against God and God were to punish them by exiling them from the land (or even destroying them), the nations would recognize that Israel’s fate was the result of their disobedience to their powerful God, not a result of their God.*

COVENANT DISLOYALTY

Sadly (and as you may have guessed) Solomon does not keep the Mosaic covenant. He breaks all but one of Moses’ stipulations for Israelite kings (Deut. 17:14–20), and it all starts with his desire for foreign women (1 Kings 11:1–10). It is a sad but true lesson that *what turns your head turns your heart*.

The results of Solomon’s sin are catastrophic: the kingdom is removed from him (1 Kings 11:11) and then divides into two. Because the kings of Israel and Judah persistently broke the Sinai covenant, God exiled them from the good land that he had promised to them. By the end of the book, the nation’s covenant violation appears to be complete with the loss of land, leadership, temple, and freedom. The people who once said, “All that Yahweh has said, we will do” (Ex. 19:8; 24:3, 7; Deut. 5:27; 26:17) have utterly forsaken God’s word.

Day 4

“BUT WAIT, THERE’S MORE!”

1–2 Kings shows how monarchy failed miserably in Israel due to the covenant rebellion of the kings and people. But there was still hope in a gracious, faithful God, who would work through his Messianic deliverer. Yahweh would be faithful to his promises to the Davidic line (1 Kings 8:25–26).

Required Reading: *Dominion and Dynasty*, pages 150–153.

- ▷ begin at “The Reckless Plunge into Exile: Israel and Election”
- ▷ stop at “The Middle of the Story: A ‘Shoot’ of Hope in Exile”

13. Although Israel plunges into disaster and there seems to be no one who fears Yahweh (1 Kings 19:10, 14), what principle does Dempster point out that guarantees the survival of the people and of the divine promise (*DD*, 151)? Why is this important?

- **ANSWER.** *The principle of election. This is important because if God did not choose (elect) some people to be his, then mankind would never choose God. It’s the only way for God’s promises to come true.*

Yet, it does not seem like even this truth can prevent the people from running their course into destruction. 2 Kings 17:6–23 describes the destruction of the northern kingdom of Israel as the Assyrians destroy Samaria, the capital, and the people are exiled out of their land in 723 B.C. in accordance with the covenant promises God had made with them (cf. Deut. 28:47–50).

2 Kings 18:11–12

¹¹ *The king of Assyria carried the Israelites away to Assyria ...* ¹² *because they did not obey the voice of Yahweh their God but transgressed his covenant, even all that Moses the servant of Yahweh commanded. They neither listened nor obeyed.*

The southern kingdom underwent various reforms and lasted one century longer than its northern sister kingdom. However, the few decent kings that came from the Davidic line were only influential enough to curb Judah's wickedness temporarily. In the end, they too were exiled out of their land by the Babylonians in 586 B.C. (2 Kings 24–25).

2 Kings 23:27

²⁷ And Yahweh said, "I will remove Judah also out of my sight, as I have removed Israel, and I will cast off this city that I have chosen, Jerusalem, and the house of which I said, My name shall be there."

2 Kings 25:21

²¹ And the king of Babylon struck them down and put them to death at Riblah in the land of Hamath. So Judah was taken into exile out of its land.

"The northern kingdom, with its non-Davidic dynasties, provides a foil for the southern kingdom. There are twenty northern kings in about 200 years, and twenty-one kings in the south in a period almost twice as long. More importantly, there are ten dynastic changes in the north and none in the south.... By contrasting the south with the north and highlighting the name 'David' in the south, the instability of the northern dynasties accentuates the Davidic dynasty and its foundational promise. The name 'David' shines in the text as a lamp in the darkness" (DD, 152).

14. What king of Judah served Yahweh "with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his might" (2 Kings 23:25)?

- a) David
- b) Hezekiah
- c) Ahab
- d) Josiah

Required Reading: *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About*, pages 234–235.

- ▷ begin at "The Author of 1–2 Kings Gave Hope for Kingdom Restoration Beyond Exile"
- ▷ stop at "Conclusion"

As Israel's history declines in accordance with the Mosaic covenant curses, God's promise of a Davidic ruler is amazingly preserved. While God's promise to punish his people for their sin must be fulfilled, so too must his promise of a Davidic descendant exercising dominion forever. Consider these statements of hope amid the many declarations of punishment:

1 Kings 11:13

¹³ However, I will not tear away all the kingdom, but I will give one tribe to your son, for the sake of David my servant and for the sake of Jerusalem that I have chosen.”

1 Kings 11:36

³⁶ Yet to his son I will give one tribe, that David my servant may always have a lamp before me in Jerusalem, the city where I have chosen to put my name.

1 Kings 11:39

³⁹ And I will afflict the offspring of David because of this, but not forever.

1 Kings 15:3–5

³ And he walked in all the sins that his father did before him, and his heart was not wholly true to Yahweh his God, as the heart of David his father.

⁴ Nevertheless, for David's sake Yahweh his God gave him a lamp in Jerusalem, setting up his son after him, and establishing Jerusalem, ⁵ because David did what was right in the eyes of Yahweh and did not turn aside from anything that he commanded him all the days of his life, except in the matter of Uriah the Hittite.

2 Kings 8:19

¹⁹ Yet Yahweh was not willing to destroy Judah, for the sake of David his servant, since he promised to give a lamp to him and to his sons forever.

It's as if the light of Jerusalem's existence was almost completely out. There is darkness in the land as a result of Israel's sin. But because of God's promises to David, he preserves a tiny lamp with a faintly burning wick, which, as the prophet Isaiah tells us, God will not extinguish (Isa. 42:3).

15. According to Fowler and DeRouchie, “the book concludes with two contrastive episodes that together capture the overall message of the book” (WOTARCA, 234). What are these two episodes, and what aspect of the overall message of 1–2 Kings does each highlight?

- **ANSWER.** *The first episode was the assassination of Gedaliah, Nebuchadnezzar’s appointed governor of Judea, by the royal family (David’s descendants), which caused those remaining in the land to flee to Egypt (2 Kings 25:22–26). Thus, the royal family (i.e., David’s descendants) had a negative influence that led the nation into exile. The second episode is the release of king Jehoiachin, Judah’s last Davidic monarch, from a Babylonian prison and his exaltation to a place of honor (2 Kings 25:27–30). Thus, Yahweh is unrelenting in his faithfulness to keep his kingdom promises to David.*

God’s promises never fail!

1 Kings 11:39

³⁹ *And I will afflict the offspring of David because of this, but not forever.*

16. Record any thoughts, reflections, or questions you may have regarding the decline of Israel, God’s chosen people, at this stage in their history.

- **ANSWER.** *Answers will vary*

Day 5

“INTERMISSION”

The book of 1–2 Kings brings us to the end of the Former Prophets, and also to the end of *The Partial Kingdom*. Israel’s history reached a climax under the reigns of David and Solomon, though it was short-lived. Neither David nor his sons could maintain God’s kingdom in a state of perfect *shalom*. Ever since Genesis 3, sin has been working against God’s people and wreaking havoc in God’s kingdom. God’s people are not in God’s land, and they are not under God’s rule. In fact, the prophet Hosea tells us that Israel has failed to image Yahweh so miserably that God refuses to call them his people (Hos. 1:9). Nonetheless, Yahweh’s steadfast love is unshakable. He made promises to restore his kingdom through Eve’s seed, Abraham’s offspring, and David’s descendant, and he will be faithful to keep his word.

Required Reading: *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About*, pages 235–236.

▷ begin at “Conclusion”

17. True/False: The book of 1–2 Kings hints that the story is not over but that there will be a restored remnant of Israel.

Required Reading: *Dominion and Dynasty*, pages 153–156.

▷ begin at “The Middle of the Story: A ‘Shoot’ of Hope in Exile”

18. It is possible to read 1–2 Kings and see a God who has abandoned his promise in Genesis 3:15 due to a rebellious son. According to Dempster, why is this not accurate? (see *DD*, 154)

- **ANSWER.** *In view of the larger story, God has made other promises that include heart circumcision, repentance, return from exile (Deut. 30:1–10), forgiveness of sins (1 Kings 8:46–50), and dominion over the earth by one of Judah’s descendants (Gen. 49:10; Num. 24:17–19). Thus, God has not abandoned his promises; he has merely delayed their fulfillment.*

The last four verses of this section of the Tanakh are laden with hope.

2 Kings 25:27–30

²⁷ And in the thirty-seventh year of the exile of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, Evil-merodach king of Babylon, in the year that he began to reign, graciously freed Jehoiachin king of Judah from prison. ²⁸ And he spoke kindly to him and gave him a seat above the seats of the kings who were with him in Babylon. ²⁹ So Jehoiachin put off his prison garments. And every day of his life he dined regularly at the king's table, ³⁰ and for his allowance, a regular allowance was given him by the king, according to his daily needs, as long as he lived.

19. State in your own words the significance of this passage.

- **ANSWER.** *Israel is at the end of their rope. Their sin has cast them headlong into covenant curses. Yet even in exile, God shows favor to Jehoiachin, a Davidic king, which gives hope to his people that God has not forgotten his promises to David. He will indeed restore his kingdom through a greater “Son of David.”*

Isaiah 11:1

¹ There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.

Vaughan Roberts comments on this stage of redemptive history:⁷⁹

“The golden age they had enjoyed under Solomon is nothing but a distant memory; the partial kingdom has been dismantled. There is very little evidence that they are God’s people; they are not in God’s place, but in exile; and they face the curse of God’s judgment rather than his blessing. It is as if the fall has happened all over again. God had warned them before they entered the promised land that they would be evicted if they did not obey him (Deut. 28:25, 63–64; Josh. 23:12–13). But they have rejected his rule and, as a result, they are banished from his presence.”

79 Roberts, *God’s Big Picture*, 86.

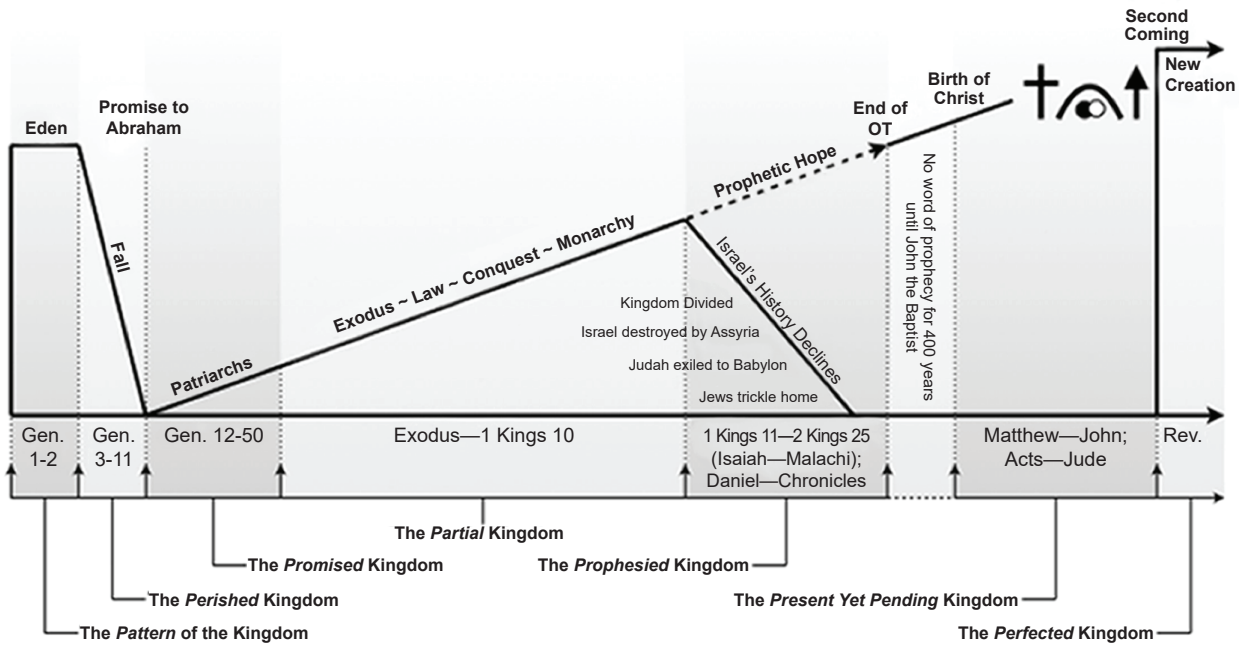
But as we saw way back in Genesis 1, God’s word never fails, and his promise of a serpent-crusher still awaited fulfillment. The partial kingdom included many wonderful realities: redemption from slavery in Egypt, God’s presence among his people in the tabernacle and temple, the sacrificial system and forgiveness of sins, and even some godly and powerful kings. Yet all of this was only a partial fulfillment of God’s kingdom. It was a model of the real kingdom that would be established by “Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham” (Matt. 1:1). *The Partial Kingdom* had been dismantled as a result of Israel’s sin, but God had not forgotten his promises to restore *shalom* to all creation. This he would do through his real Son, Jesus the Messiah.

20. Why do you think God spent so much time constructing *The Partial Kingdom* only to tear it apart because of his people’s sin? Why didn’t he restore his kingdom through Christ the first time? Record your thoughts or questions.

· ANSWER. *Answers will vary*

The Kingdom of God				
<u>The Kingdom of God</u>	<u>The Pattern of the Kingdom</u>	<u>The Perished Kingdom</u>	<u>The Promised Kingdom</u>	<u>The Partial Kingdom</u>
God’s People	Adam and Eve	No one	Abraham’s descendants	The Israelites
God’s Place	The garden	Banished	Canaan	Canaan (specifically Jerusalem and temple)
God’s Rule and Blessing	God’s word; perfect relationships	Disobedience and curse	Blessing to Israel and nations	The law and the king

Diagram of the Kingdom of God ⁸⁰



⁸⁰ Technically, there is overlap between The Partial Kingdom and The Prophesied Kingdom, as you can see in the diagram. The prophets speak to Israel during the period of Israel's decline, which we have examined in this lesson. This "prophetic hope" is represented by the dotted line that continues upward, anticipating the fulfillment of God's kingdom promises in Christ. After the decline of Israel, the return from exile and the initial restoration are recorded in the Latter Writings (Daniel—Chronicles). We will discuss this in greater detail in part 2 of this curriculum.

 INTEGRATIVE ASSIGNMENT



In one short paragraph, summarize in your own words the main message of the book of 1–2 Kings so that someone with no biblical knowledge could understand.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Review the following questions in preparation for discussion. As you have worked through this lesson, record any lingering questions that you may have.

1. Discuss some of the famous wicked leaders throughout history. How did God deal with the kingdoms they built? What confidence can we draw from passages like Romans 12:19 in regards to wicked rulers whose lives epitomized evil and injustice? Can you think of other relevant passages?
2. Many people (believers and unbelievers alike) have been “turned off” to the church because all they see in it is hypocrisy, self-righteousness, and sin. How would you respond to someone who views the church this way? What promises do Christians have that God has not completely abandoned his people to run headlong into sin?
3. One of the benefits of studying history (including the Bible) is that we can learn from others’ mistakes and not repeat them. Identify some of the idols in your life or in the life of the church and then discuss how these idols can practically be destroyed so that the church does not fall into the same idolatry that Israel did.
4. Your own question(s):



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- ▷ “History of Salvation in the Old Testament: Preparing the Way for Christ,”
ESV Study Bible, (Wheaton: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 2,642–2,644.

Key Chapters for Bible Reading

A

Appendix A

Genesis 1–3, 9, 12, 15, 17, 22, 49
Exodus 1:1–6:13; 14–15; 19–24; 32–34
Leviticus 1, 4, 5, 16, 19, 26
Numbers 1, 2, 13, 14, 22, 24
Deuteronomy 4; 5–11; 17:14–20; 28–30; 32
Joshua 1–2; 5:13–8:35; 24
Judges 1:1–3:6; 19–21
1–2 Samuel > 1 Samuel 1–3; 8; 12; 15–17; 2 Samuel 7; 11–12; 24
1–2 Kings > 1 Kings 3; 8:1–9:9; 10:14–12:33; 16:29–17:1; 18; 2 Kings 17, 21:1–23:27; 25
Isaiah 6; 7; 9; 11; 36–37; 40; 44; 52:13–53:12; 65–66
Jeremiah 1; 7–9; 11:1–13; 23:1–8; 31; 33; 36; 39
Ezekiel 1; 18; 34; 36:16–37:28; 40–44; 48:30–35
Hosea 1–2
Joel 1–2
Amos 5:18–24; 9:10–15
Micah 3:9–4:5; 5:1–5; 6:6–8; 7:14–20
Habakkuk 1:1–4; 2:4; 3:16–19
Zephaniah 1:1–2:3
Zechariah 3–4; 8
Malachi 3:16–4:6
Psalms 1–2; 8; 19; 22–24; 42–43; 51; 89; 95–99; 136
Job 1–2; 19; 28; 38–42
Proverbs 1; 8–9; 31:10–31
Ruth 1–4
Song of Songs 7–8
Ecclesiastes 1:1–11; 3:1–15; 9; 12
Lamentations 3
Esther 4
Daniel 1; 9
Ezra 7; 9; Nehemiah 8; 9
1–2 Chronicles: 1 Chronicles 17; 29; 2 Chronicles 3–7; 16–17; 34–36

Big-Picture Bible Resources for Children

B

Appendix B

The following are excellent resources for children that help them grasp the big picture of the Bible from a young age. They are also helpful for adults and can be used for family worship settings.

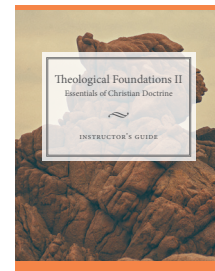
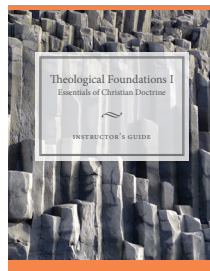
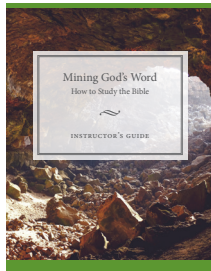
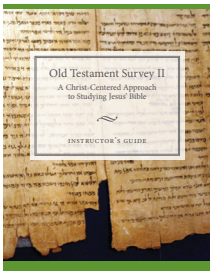
- ▷ David Helm, *The Big Picture Story Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2004).
- ▷ Sally Lloyd-Jones, *The Jesus Storybook Bible: Every Story Whispers His Name* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007).
- ▷ Marty Machowski, *The Gospel Story Bible: Discovering Jesus in the Old and New Testaments* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2011).
- ▷ Starr Meade, *Mighty Acts of God: A Family Bible Story Book* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010).
- ▷ Kevin DeYoung, *The Biggest Story: How the Snake Crusher Brings Us Back to the Garden* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway 2015).

Old Testament Survey I

A Christ-Centered Approach to Studying Jesus' Bible

Old Testament Survey I: A Christ-Centered Approach to Studying Jesus' Bible is intended to survey the message of the Old Testament, both at the individual book level and at the canonical level. That is, students will not only grasp the main message of each individual book of the Old Testament, but they will understand how that message contributes to the overall message of the Bible. Emphasis will be given to tracing the flow of redemptive history from the beginning of time until the inter-testamental period, showing how the entire Old Testament points to, prepares the way for, and is fulfilled by Jesus the Messiah.

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