

THE PURPOSES OF GOD

A Biblical Perspective

“For I did not shrink back from declaring to you the whole purpose (will, plan, counsel) of God.” Acts 20:27 Apostle Paul

O LORD, you are my God. I will exalt you; I will praise your name, for you have done wonderful things, plans formed of old, faithful and sure. Prophet Isaiah 25:1

“From Genesis to Revelation we feel that this book is in a real sense a unity. It is not a collection of fragments, but has, as we say, an organic character. It has one connected story to tell from beginning to end; we see something growing before our eyes; there is a plan, purpose, progress; the end folds back on the beginning, and, when the whole is finished, we feel that here again, as in the primal creation, God has finished all his works, and behold, they are very good.” James Orr

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Leader's Guide

- The purpose of this study is to introduce the God of the Bible, His purposes, and plans to people who have little if any background or knowledge about the Christian faith.
- Romans 15:4 says, “For everything written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.” Without the Old Testament, our understanding of the full revelation of redemption given in the New Testament would be impossible. The Old Testament gives us the background and vocabulary for adequately explaining what God has done for us in Christ. The Old Testament makes the work of Christ more understandable as it gives us symbols and pictures of what the Messiah will one day accomplish. This then helps us to appreciate the gospel even more.
- The study is set up in a discussion format in order to help the students discover for themselves the answers to the questions. Avoid turning the lesson into a lecture. Try to get the students to answer their own questions by pointing them to the appropriate verses in the Bible.
- Try to stay with the text you are studying and avoid discussing topics unrelated to the lesson. The goal is for them to understand what the Bible says and not to debate each other's opinions, the reliability of the Bible or even agree with what it says.
- Use the same translation.
- Encourage everyone to share their observations.
- Avoid Christian jargon. Be prepared to explain common words used in the Bible. Example: Gen 1 What does it mean that God blessed them?
- Don't try to cover every detail of the passage. In each lesson are certain key points that we want to clearly communicate. Determine ahead of time what these points are and what questions you will use to help them discover each truth. Write down any good questions you think of or they ask so that you can include them in a future addition of this study.
- The “answers” found in this study are simply some observations. Use them only as a guide to finding your own better answers to the questions.
- In each lesson there is a Purpose statement and an Introduction. The purpose statement is there for your benefit, not to read to the students. This is what you want them to discover during the lesson and what you want to emphasize. The Introduction is what you can use to begin the lesson. This will give them the background needed to better understand that lesson.
- Worldview Questions – this is a way to introduce each study by beginning with practical questions of life that most people ask at one time or another. The leader can begin the study by asking some of these questions and then invite people to give their responses. The hope is to get people to think about these important questions and to make them “thirsty” to know the answer. The study will then introduce a Biblical worldview to answer those questions.

Introduction to the Bible

Why would a person want to make sense of the Bible?

The Bible is God's special revelation of Himself. Our word for Bible comes from the Greek word, *biblios*, meaning holy book. We commonly refer to the Bible as Scripture. The Bible is has two main sections. The Old Testament refers to the 66 books that describe God's relationship with humanity from the creation of the world until about 400 BC. The New Testament picks up with the account about 400 years later when Jesus is born. This part of the Bible details Jesus' life, teachings, and the beginnings of what we call Christianity. There are 27 books or letters in this section.

- The books of the Bible were written over a time span of 1500 years by over 40 different authors from vastly different backgrounds.
- It was written in three different continents - Asia, Africa and Europe – and in three different languages – Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic. It covers many controversial subjects with one grand unifying and consistent theme – that of God redeeming man through Jesus Christ.
- The Bible has several types of literature in it. Historical narrative, Laws, poetry, wisdom, prophecy, parables, letters, and apocalypse. When reading it is important to understand which type of literature you are reading.
- The Bible is the best selling book of all time, is the source of the greatest love and affection as well as the object of some the fiercest criticism. It is now available in over 3,000 languages and growing.

HOPE video Introduction segment. :30-3:10 <https://www.thehopeproject.com/en/the-english-hope>

Lesson 1 Creation – Genesis 1

Purpose: To reveal the true God as the Bible presents Him. This lesson will introduce God's character, His purposes for the world, and His rule over it.

Worldview Questions

- Where did we come from?
- What does it mean to be human?
- Is the world good? What is evil, right or wrong?
- What is true or false? How can I know?
- What is our purpose in life? Why are we here?

The HOPE video pick your language CH 1 <https://www.thehopeproject.com/en/the-english-hope>

Read Genesis 1:1-2:3

1. What can we learn about God from this account of creation? What can you learn about God from the first sentence? How did God create the universe?
 - God is eternal vs 1, the world is not eternal.
 - God is sovereign - what He says - happens. He is in control. God's Word works on His behalf and is powerful. His will is accomplished. vs 1
 - God is powerful, intelligent. He is able to create vs 1 Created from nothing!
 - God speaks creation into existence with just His words. His word alone has the power to create vs 3,6,9,11,14,26
 - God is personal, has personality. A thing does not create. Creativity demands personality.
 - God is Spirit - He is invisible vs 2
 - o Us? 1:26 Bible explains this more fully later on.
 - God is present everywhere vs 2 He is distinct from creation.
2. What common phrase is repeated at the end of each day?
 - All that God has made is good. No improvements are necessary. He does not make mistakes. He is pleased with His creation. He Himself must also be good. :4,10,12, 18, 25, 31
 - It was perfect, without defect as is God Himself.
3. Do you notice any patterns in the days of creation, 1-3 and then 4-6? What does this reveal to us about God?
 - God is a God of order and planning. He is a God of purpose. What He creates, He fills. God has created everything with a specific purpose in mind. Earth had no form (or shape) & was empty. Without function
 - He created the sun, moon, and stars to give light and to mark time 1:14-18
 - Physical laws that govern the universe. Structure and order are a reflection of God's character.
 - He told the animals to be fruitful and increase 1:22 According to their kind. 1:24,25
 - He told man to increase, fill the earth, subdue it, rule over it 1:28
 - God is a judge – He determined what was good

4. Why do think God created the world?

- For our good, for our provision and pleasure. 1:29,30, 2:9
- As a divine sanctuary in which He rests, rules, is worshipped. 2:1-3

5. What can we learn about mankind? How is he different than the rest of creation? 1:26

- Man is unique from the rest of creation. He is different from the animals. God blessed them. Men and women are equal, made in the image of God.
- Dominion – rule over the rest of creation
- God **blessed** them.
 - o What do these key words mean?
 - Blessed :28 – honor, favor, set apart , privilege
 - Image – likeness, reflection. Example: Parents and children
- Man has value because God made us, and made me in His likeness.
- Man is accountable to God. God commands the man to do something – to multiply and fill the earth.

6. In what ways do you think mankind is made in God’s likeness?

- Made to rule, have dominion.
- Man has personality - a mind, a will, ability to make decisions and emotions.
- Reason, morality, language, capacity for relationships, creativity.

7. What do vs 28-31 show us about God?

- o He is the supreme ruler vs 28 He gave responsibility to man to rule in His place
- o He is loving vs 29,30 He provided for His creation
- o He is good vs 31 His creation proved it

8. What did God do on the seventh day? Why?

- Rest
- To make this day different than the others. (Chinese word for Sunday.)
- God enters the temple that He has made in order to rest or rule/inhabit.
 - o Cosmos portrayed as a temple. Is 66:1

9. What is your favorite part of this account? Why? What is new for you? What is the hardest part for you to believe is true?

Genesis 1 counters the following common beliefs:

- The material, physical world is evil, only the spiritual is of value. God is only interested in the spiritual world. (God made all things good)
- The existence of the universe is a result of chance.
- The sun, moon, stars determine one's destiny. (They only mark time, not determine it.)
- God is a spirit or force that lives within all of creation. The earth is divine.
- Men are superior to women.
- Work is a negative thing brought on because of mankind’s sin.
- God is not knowable, He is distant. Rather He has blessed mankind. He cares about people.

Lesson 2 **Creation** **Genesis 2**

Purpose: to highlight characteristics of man's relationship with God and with one another, what it means to be made in His image, and the fact that man is a spiritual being.

Worldview Questions

- The nature of humans? Are we a species of animal?
- Are humans accountable to anybody?
- What is not good in the world?
- Where did the idea of marriage originate or come from? What is the purpose of marriage?
- Where does your self image come from? How do you see yourself? What is shame?
- How do we know right from wrong, good from evil? Where does morality originate?
- Is sexuality defined by us?

Introduction: Genesis 1 is an overview of creation, while chapter 2 goes back and fills in details about the creation, especially in regard to the creation of mankind.

Read Genesis 2:4-25

1. What did God prepare for Adam? 2:9

- God prepared good things for Adam, garden, tree of life vs 9,15 God provides what we need. 2:8,18
- Man was dependent upon God for survival just as we are today. vs 8

2. How did God make man different from the animals? 2:7, 1:26, 27

- God took special care in creating man. vs 7 Mankind is made of two parts. Physical body and the breath of life or our spirit/soul. This is where our ideas, desires and attitudes are formed.
- Man made from the dust. No previous existence.
- Man is a spiritual being - therefore it is only on the spiritual level that we can truly be fulfilled. Yet most people seek fulfillment only on a physical, material level.
- Man was made in the image of God except in his knowledge of evil. 3:22
- Let us make man. Gen 1:26 Said of no other part of creation. Unique. God exists in plurality.
- Image – similar but not identical and often representative of it. A representation of God
- Likeness – similarity

3. In what ways are we like God?

- Rule over the earth and animals
- Created male and female – plurality, social being
- Moral beings, right and wrong, conscience. They hid when they knew they had done something wrong. This makes us accountable to God.
- Spiritual – we have a spiritual part of us besides our bodies. God does not have a body.
 - This part of us lives forever.
 - We can grow, change to become like God through His Spirit within us.
- Mental – ability to reason, think logically, learn 2:15
 - We continue to develop.

- Language, abstract language, learning other languages
- Awareness of distant future
- Creativity
- Relational – the ability to receive and give real love. Not good to be alone. depth of relationships, marriage reflects the nature of God. 2:18,20
- Authority – the right to rule over the rest of creation. 2:15, 19,20
- Physical – not our bodies as such. Emotions – we feel. complexity 2:25
 - Ability to see, hear, speak, taste, touch, smell
 - Our ability to reproduce offspring in our image and likeness.
- Volitional - ability/freedom to choose 2:16

Reflect

- A piece of paper money has no value in and of itself. Its value is derived from the fact that it represents something valuable, usually gold or silver that is stored safely in a treasury vault. The paper money is, in a sense, the printed “image” of that gold or silver. Likewise people - all people - have value because they are made in the image of the God whose value is so great that it simply cannot be measured. Many people believe their value and worth are based on things like performance, wealth, fame, looks, etc. But according to the Bible, we are all valuable because we are made in the image of God.
- A famous painting has value not because of the cost of the materials, but because of who painted it. Who made it, who created it is what gives it value.
- Is there something other than God that causes you to feel valuable? What would happen to your sense of personal worth if that thing were taken from you?
- Human history is full of examples of man’s inhumanity to man: war crimes, genocide, terrorism, etc. What difference would it make if every person on earth believed that every other person on earth had immeasurable value having been made in the image of God?
- How would a person’s self-image be affected if he really believed that he was made in the image of God?
- What difference does (or should) it make to you to know that you are made in the image of God?

Read Genesis 2:15-18

4. What can we learn about God? What do we see God doing in 2:16-18?

- God communicates to His creation; 2:16,18 Both man and God communicate. God speaks to man directly. Fellowship or relationship with man begins. What does God say?
 - 1:28 a command. God’s first word to the mankind.
 - 1:29-30 a testimony. God explains
 - 2:17 a prohibition.
- God shows His knowledge over the future. 2:17
- God has authority to set limits over His creation. 2:17 God gives man one prohibition, one thing not to do, and man is not given a reason why but only the consequences - death. Death is a result of disobedience. Man needed to trust God in this one area.
 - The implication of this command is that God alone knows what is best and good for man

and what is not good. To enjoy the good, man must trust God and obey His commands. If man disobeys, he will have to decide for himself what is good and what is not good. Only God knows what is truly good.

- God judges. The result of disobedience would be death. Separation physically and spiritually from God. 2:17
5. What are the names of the two trees in the middle of the garden? What do you think they represent?
- Tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Similar to the concept of wisdom that an adult shows in knowing right from wrong and knowing what decision is best for them. Adam and Eve were to trust God to know what was best for them. Only God knows what is truly good for man. For us to enjoy this good, we need to trust God's word to us and obey Him. By eating from this tree, man was taking upon himself the responsibility to know and choose what was best for him rather than trusting in God for this.
6. What results from eating the fruit on these trees?
- Life and death.
7. Do you think that death was originally part of God's plan for man?
8. Why do you think God put the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the garden?
- To give man a choice, free will.
 - The existence of love requires the freedom to choose.
 - God did not want to make us robots, but instead to choose to obey Him.
 - To see if man would trust God to know (have wisdom) what is best for them rather than trusting in themselves to make that decision.

Read Genesis 2:18-25

9. What did God tell Adam to do?
- Work the garden. 2:15
 - Man is given a job - to work and take care of the garden. It is from God that we are given our purpose in life. 2:15
 - Name the animals. 2:19
 - Not eat from the tree of good and evil. 2:17
10. What is the problem? What is not good? What can we learn about humans and God?
- Man had a relationship with God but not a relationship with an equal that he could love.
 - God knows our needs, even ahead of time.
 - God alone knows what is good and not good. He knows what we need.
 - It is not good for man to be alone. God made us for relationship. God designed men and women to complement one another, not compete against one another.

11. What do you think God meant by helper?

- helper – partner, exact correspondence to; not inferior but a needed ally/partner, same term used of God. The person who is the helper takes a different role or position in a specific task with regard to the person being helped.
- A mother or father helps their children get dressed. This does not make the child more important as a person.
- Helper for what?
 - To fill the earth, have children, multiply
 - To work the garden
 - Companionship
- Men and women created equally but different in God's eyes. 1:27, 5:1-2
 - Men and women are equally important and equally valuable to God. Both men and women reflect God's character in their differences.

12. What do you think is the significance of God bringing the animals to Adam and asking him to give them names? :19,20

- No animal found as a suitable partner. Dog is not man's best friend!

13. What can we learn about God and humans from the creation of the first woman?

- God creates a partner from his own flesh rather than from one of the animals.
 - She is made of the same substance as man. Not from the dirt. Adam affirms this when he sees her. Bone of my bones, flesh of my flesh.
- God establishes the family unit based on the husband and wife.
- Marriage is God's idea.

14. What do you think it means that they were naked and felt no shame? :25

- They had nothing to hide on the inside (thoughts, desires, motives) or the outside (to cover with clothes). God made us very good. Can you imagine having nothing to hide? But this is not the case today. Something has changed.

15. What is your favorite part of this account? Why?

Lesson 3 Genesis 3 - The Fall

Purpose: to explain the origin and effects of disobedience to a holy God. This is a key lesson. Without an understanding of sin and its results one cannot hope to understand the rest of the Bible or the gospel.

Worldview Questions

- Why do people have such a hard time getting along with each other?
- What is the meaning of shame?
- What is man's basic problem? What is wrong with the world?
- Is the physical, natural world all that exists?
- Is there such a thing as evil? Is there a spiritual world?

Introduction: In the first two lessons we learned some things about God, the world and mankind. Many people consider this chapter to be one of the most important in the Bible. The results of what happen in this chapter can still be felt today.

- In other places in the Bible we know that the serpent in Genesis 3 was Satan in disguise. Notice that Satan is not introduced in this chapter. Satan was created by God sometime before He created the world. He is a spirit or angel that rebelled against God, was judged and was thrown out of God's presence in heaven to the earth. He now roams the earth doing all kinds of evil and bringing harm to people everywhere. God will one day permanently destroy him. Rev 12:7-9
 - o Other verses 2 Pet 2:4, Jude 6 , Is 14:12-15

Read Genesis 3:1-6

1. What do you think is the serpent's goal or purpose in suggesting to Eve to eat from the tree?
 - to destroy God's good creation, the people made in His image.
2. How did the serpent convince Eve to disobey God? What observations can you make? What caused Eve to change her mind and disobey God?
 - Satan begins by casting doubt on God's Word. His tactics have changed little. The Word of God is still under attack and doubted as to its authenticity, reliability and authority.
 - Eve answers correctly but adds to God's word. Eve would have had to learn of this command from Adam.
 - The focus of the discussion is on the one thing they could not do rather than the freedom they had.
 - Satan now denies the truth of God's Word and calls God a liar.
 - Satan implies that God has evil motives for this prohibition. :5 Satan suggests that we are better off on our own rather than living under God's authority. Eve was not convinced of God's perfect love and provision and so she considers Satan's lies.
 - Eve was attracted by the fruit's nourishment, beauty and ability to give wisdom. God had already provided these in the garden itself and in a relationship with Him.

- It was her desire to gain wisdom for herself, to be independent of God by deciding for themselves what was good or not good for them.

3. What word would you use to describe what both Adam and Eve did?

- Rebellion against God. Disobedience to God. Sin. Sin is trying to meet your desires in ways other than what God intended.

4. In the Bible Satan is later described as the father of lies. What lies did Satan use to deceive Adam and Eve?

- Satan attacked by trying to redefine the answer to the following questions.
 - What is true? God had said His word is true but Satan directly challenged this.
 - What is right? Eve trusted her own evaluation as what was right and what would be good for her rather than allowing God's words to define right and wrong.
 - Who am I? Creatures of God, dependent on Him and subordinate to Him. The temptation to be like God 3:5 was the attempt to put themselves in the place of God.

Read Gen 3:7-24 - Results or consequences of disobedience

5. How did Adam and Eve's relationship with each other change? 3:7,12,16

- Their eyes were opened. They had a new awareness - of nakedness and shame which they needed to hide. :7
 - An awareness of their sin. A fear of exposure caused them to hide.
- They blamed others for their sin. Adam blamed Eve and indirectly God Himself, Eve blamed the serpent.
- The relationship between men and women in marriage is strained. :16
 - Desire – desire to conquer or rule over. Same word as in Gen 4:7
 - Rule – strong term, absolute as of a dictator, suggests harshness.

6. How was their relationship with God changed? 3:8,10, 12, 23

- They hid from God in the garden.
- Guilt and fear entered into their relationship with God. Adam was afraid that God would discover his sin, so he hid.
- They are banished from the garden and from a special relationship with God.
- Sin separates us from having a close relationship with each other and with God.

7. Who did God curse? 3:14, 17

- The serpent - forced to crawl on his belly. Hostility between the offspring of the woman and Satan. The offspring of the serpent is Satan. The offspring of the woman is a coming future person whom we will call in this study the Promised One. God's Promised One will defeat Satan and evil in this world. 3:15 the first announcement of the gospel to follow.
- The ground :17 This will make life more difficult.

8. What was the woman's punishment? 3:16 Man's? 3:17-19
- Primary role now accomplished in pain. Childbearing and providing food.
 - Women will have greater pain in bearing children.
 - Men will spend their lives working hard in order to survive. Work was not part of the curse. Man was given work to do before this happened.
 - Futility of life - work hard and then die.
 - They were separated from God. Moved out of the garden.
 - Death. Why didn't they die right away?
9. How does God show His love for Adam and Eve even after they disobeyed Him?
- God takes the initiative and looks for Adam after they sinned. 3:9
 - God calls him by name.
 - The curses were part of God's plan to lead people back to God.
 - Futility of life
 - fear of death
 - guilt.
 - God promised ultimate victory through the Promised One over Satan and evil one day. 3:15 This is a promise that one day the seed (descendant) of the woman would crush the head of Satan.
 - Heb 2:14,15
 - Romans 16:20
 - God makes clothes for them :21. God covers their nakedness or the result of our sin. God did not accept the clothes they made as an sufficient covering for their disobedience. Only God can do this adequately. He covers their sin by sacrificing part of His creation. Death had never been seen on earth before now.
 - Disobedience brings death. Death means separation.
 - An animal had to die, be sacrificed, in order to cover their sin. God provided the sacrifice for them. People cannot cover their own sin.
 - Idea of Substitution introduced. Jn 1:29, Heb 9:27,28, 1 Pet 2:24, 3:18
 - God blessed them with death so that their painful toil would not last forever. :19
 - God keeps them from now eating from the tree of life and living forever in this condition of painful toil. 3:24 Rev 22:2,14
 - Connection to New Testament Read Mt 22:1-14 Where was the man supposed to get the clothes from? What do the clothes represent?
 - Is 61:10
 - Zechariah 3:1-5
 - Ezekiel 16:1-13
10. What is your favorite part of this account? Why?

Lesson 4 The Flood

Purpose: To show that sin and disobedience are universal and that the penalty for our sin is death. This lesson shows that we will be held personally accountable to God for our sins. This is important for all people to know because God will again judge the world all who have lived in it. 2 Pet 3:1-16 The life that we live here on earth is not all that there is to life.

Worldview Questions

- What is wrong with the world? What are the world's biggest problems?
- Is man basically good or evil? How do we define good or evil?

Introduction: Gen 6. 1500 years (about 10 generations) have passed since Adam and Eve. They had other children who also had children until the earth had a large population. Most of these people chose to live a life in disobedience to God and what He revealed to them.

The Flood - The point here is not to argue about whether or not the flood actually happened but to give each person something to consider before they reject the account completely as a historical event.

- There are currently 213 ancient flood traditions written down independently by peoples largely unconnected with each other. By continent:

| | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 31 from Europe | 17 from Africa and Middle East |
| 37 from Australia and South Sea | 59 from North American Indians |
| 23 from Asia | 46 from Central and South America |
- All of these traditions agree on 3 major points and most agree on a 4th point as well. They are:
 1. Universal destruction of both humans and animals by water
 2. An ark or boat is provided as a means of escape
 3. A small remnant of mankind is saved to continue the race.
 4. Man's evil and wickedness was the cause of the disaster.
- This information does not prove that the flood happened but it does point to the conclusion that something must have happened long ago. How else could these ancient records be explained?

Read Gen 6:5-7:5

1. What is the situation on earth at this time? What are people doing?
 - Man's wickedness increased to the point that it was all that they did. vs 5
 - Violence was the result of man's evil thoughts vs 11,13
 - The whole earth had become corrupt. Sin was widespread, all had sinned. 6:12,13
 - Man has a sin nature. Sin is a condition of our being not just a list of wrong acts that we sometimes commit.
2. How does this differ from what God desired the earth to be filled with? Gen 1:27,28
 - God wanted the earth filled with people made in His image.

Do you think that the earth is much different today?

3. What was God's attitude toward all that He saw happening on the earth? How did He feel?
- God was grieved, His heart was now also filled with pain because of man's sin. vs 6 God does not hate man but He hates our sin.
 - Angry, wrath against anything contrary to His own pure, perfect character.
 - A stench, repulsive, something that must be gotten rid of.

Why do you think God felt grief?

- Is it painful to watch your creation destroy itself. Like parents watching children fight and hurt each other.
- God must judge sin and He cannot tolerate it forever. He is holy

4. How was Noah different? 6:8-10, 8:1

- He listened to God and did his best to obey him. vs 8-10 He was not perfect, but righteous - obeyed what was right. He walked with God or lived with God. He was not separated from God by his disobedience. He was not sinless, but had faith in God which caused him to obey.
- God accepted Noah vs 8
- God remembered Noah and saved them. 8:1

What do you think it means that Noah walked with God?

- Relationship. You do not normally walk with a stranger.
- Unity – to walk together.
- Obedience

5. How did Noah display faith in God? Hebrews 11:7

- Obedient 6:22, 7:9, 16
- Believed God's Word to him was true and acted on it. 6:17-22

Read Genesis 7:5-12, 24, 8:1, 5, 15-17, 8:20-9:17

6. What was the purpose of the ark? 7:1,7

- To save those who trusted in God - Noah and his family were the only ones to do this.
- To maintain God's creation of living things after the flood.
- The ark was a symbol or warning of God's coming judgment. Nobody had ever seen a boat before, especially so large. Yet we have no evidence that anyone repented of their sin and believed God. Gen 7:1 Only Noah was found to be righteous.
- Note Genesis 6:3. The 120 years mentioned here, may refer to the time from when God announced the coming judgment until it took place. During this time the ark was built.

7. What is the first thing Noah does when he comes out of the ark? 8:20 Why do you think Noah does this?

- Builds an altar and makes a sacrifice
- Why? For his own sin. The flood did not change the basic nature of man to sin.
- In obedience to God. A recognition of his sin and the need for it to be covered, atoned for by the shedding of blood. Noah was also a sinner who needed to be forgiven.

How does God respond? 8:21 Why was He pleased?

- He accepts the sacrifice, substitution to pay for our sin. He desires our worship, our praise, a relationship with us so much that He accepts the sacrifice as payment for our sin for now.

8. Where does God say sin originates in 8:21? Where do people today say “bad behavior” comes from?

- Does sin come from parenting, lack of education, poor economic situation or it is deep within us from childhood?

9. Why did God send the flood if He knew that man's basic nature would not be changed? 8:21

- To show us that we are accountable to Him and that our problem is deep within each of us - sin. A new generation of Noah's righteous descendants did not solve man's sin problem.

10. Why do you think God holds man accountable for murder? 9:3-6

- Each person is of great value to God because they are made in His image. God as our creator has this right.

11. Why are they told not to eat the meat with blood in it? 9:3-4

- Respect for blood because the life is in the blood.

12. What authority does God now give to man in order to “contain” or limit man’s sin? Verse 9:6

- Man is given the right through government to punish and take the life of a murderer.

13. What covenant or promise did God make with Noah? 9:8-11

- The promise was to never destroy the earth again with water.

14. What is your favorite part of this account? Why?

15. What can we learn about God and people from this account? Review

- Man is filled with evil and when left to himself will produce wickedness and violence.
- All of mankind is sinful. It is universal. Even Noah had to offer a sacrifice.
- Our sin grieves God. Sin brings separation and death.
- God is patient toward our sin but He cannot ignore it forever.
- God must judge sin.
- Man is accountable to God for how he lives his life in this world.
- God provides a way to be saved from the judgment caused by our sin.
- God accepts those who put their faith in Him and His Word.
- God will come again to judge sin. Life on earth will be similar to the days of Noah.

NT Connection. What does Jesus and Peter say the flood account should be a reminder to us about today?

- Mt 24:36-44
- 2 Pet 3:1-13

Lesson 5 Tower of Babel

Purpose: to show that the nations of the world are all part of God's plan. God then chooses one man through whom He promises to bless all the nations. Abraham becomes a model of what true faith in God looks like.

Introduction : Many years have passed since Noah and the flood. Noah's descendants began spreading out around the world.

Worldview Questions

- What makes a nation? Where did the nations of the world come from? What is the future of the nations? Is one nation better than another? Is one ethnicity better than another?

Read Genesis 9:1, 19, 10:32, 11:1-9

Notes:

Historical time period. 2200 BCE Many of the people groups mentioned in Genesis 10 can be identified with relative certainty. In general, the descendants of Ham settled in North Africa and the eastern Mediterranean coast, the descendants of Shem in Mesopotamia and Arabia, and the descendants of Japheth in Europe and the greater area of Asia Minor. Genesis 10 catalogues the results of the event described in chapter 11.

The Plain of Shinar is in present day Iraq.

1. What were the people doing in Genesis 11?

- Building a tower and a city

2. Why did they build a tower? :4

- They wanted to make a name for themselves. A symbol of pride?
- They did not want to be scattered over the earth. This was in disobedience to God's command 9:1.
- The tower was a symbol of their unity and power which would hold them together. Instead of spreading out and filling the earth, they disobeyed God, gathered together and began building a tower in order to become great and exalt themselves. The tower was a symbol of their unity and power which would hold them together. This tower also had religious significance and symbolized their own efforts or religion to reach God. They were full of pride. God desires oneness but not in this way. They were seeking fulfillment apart from God and His commands.
- Historical note: Ziggurats are monumental temple-towers found throughout the area of ancient Mesopotamia. They were commonly built of sun-dried mud and straw bricks held in position with bitumen as mortar. Stairways ascended to the top of these structures, where a small temple/shrine sat on the summit.
- The Ziggurat of Nanna at Ur, which was constructed during the reign of Ur-Nammu (c. 2113–2095 b.c.) See this link to learn more. <https://smarthistory.org/ziggurat-of-ur/>



3. What is God doing here? How does He respond? What does He do?

- He watched. He confused their language.
- God is still interested in them, He does not abandon them. God knew what they were doing. Nothing surprises Him. God hates pride.

4. Why do you think God confused their language?

- To limit the spread and degree of sin. To fill the earth with His glory, His image bearers. The people sought a unity based on their own pride, their own name, rather than in God. Human effort at unity around their own glory rather than God's.
- God did this in order to force them to obey His command to spread out so that the earth would not be filled with violence once again.
- The idea of nations with different languages, cultures and identities becomes a central theme in God's purposes for the world.

5. What is the result of God's action?

- The people separate by language and spread over the earth. This is the beginning of languages, cultures and nations of the earth. God is the Lord over all the nations. They were His idea.

6. What is your favorite part of this account? Why?

- No nation is superior to another or 'sub-human'. All nations have come from Noah and his three sons. This desire to be great and have a great name is the beginning of warfare among nations.

7. What can we learn about God from this account?

- He is the Father of all nations
- He hates man's pride.
- He is sovereign over people and nations.

New Testament Connection

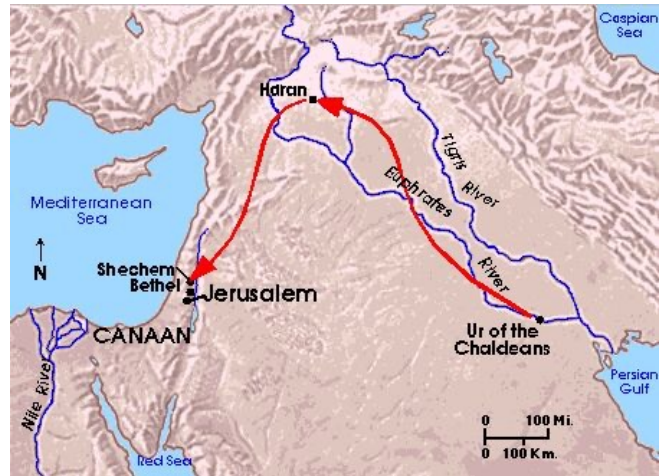
Babel Reversed in the church age.

- See Acts 2:1-12. The beginning of the church is marked by people from many nations of the world hearing about the wonders of God in their own language.
 - Pentecost attracted Jews from all over the world to Jerusalem to celebrate the annual festival. Those who heard the apostles' message in their native languages at Pentecost came from various regions within the two great competing empires of the day—the Roman Empire and the Parthian Empire—with Jerusalem near the center
- Rev 5:9,10 The nations are brought back together into one Kingdom of God Rev 7:9
- God is bringing the nations back into One nation with Himself as the King.
 - Nation called the Kingdom of God, the universal Church
 - Leader – God is our King
 - Lineage – we all have been born again and have God as our Father
 - Land- not on earth, in heaven
 - Language/culture – learning to live as children of the King. To live as followers of Jesus.

Lesson 6 Abraham

Introduction: Some consider Gen 1-11 as the introduction to the grand narrative of the Bible in that it sets the stage and the background for God's work of redeeming His entire creation.

God chooses one man and promises to make his descendants into a great nation. Abram is a descendant of Shem, one of the sons of Noah. He reveals Himself, His plan and His promises to him and his descendants. Abram lived around 2,000 BC. This is the beginning of the account of how God will fulfill His promise in Genesis 3:15.



Read Genesis 12:1-7

1. What did God tell Abram to do? What do you think was required for Abram to actually do this?
 - He was told to leave his family and country and go a place that he would be shown.
 - Abram needed faith - the ability to trust that what God promised, He would do.
2. What did God promise to give to Abram?
 - God promised to make him into a great nation.
 - Make his name great. God promised to do for Abram what the people of Babel tried to do for themselves.
 - To bless him.
 - To make him a blessing to others 12:3 This refers to the Promised One that God would send. Through Abram and his descendants all peoples on earth would one day be blessed. This includes you and your family. This is the Promised One who would defeat evil. Gen 3:15
 - To give this land to his offspring. 12:7 This is present day Israel.
3. Did Abram have any children at this time? No How old was Abram? 75

Read Gen 15:1-7 10 years later

4. Why does God tell Abram not to be afraid? 15:1
 - Because God is His shield and reward.
5. What does Abram call God? What does this mean? 15:2
 - Sovereign Lord. The master is in control of all things.
6. What question does Abram ask? 15:2,3 What does God promise to Abram?
 - How can you bless me when I have no children of my own?
 - An heir, many offspring.

7. How does Abram respond? 15:6

- Faith is the right response to God's promises and commands. Faith involves believing in and trusting God.

8. Abram was to have faith in what? What were they talking about when this promise is made?

- The promise of a son who's descendant would one day bless all nations.
- Our faith today is in the same Son. Abraham looked ahead, we look back to the same Son.

9. How does God respond to Abram's faith? What is righteousness?

- God responds by calling Abram righteous, or right before God, acceptable to God.
- Credited – settling a monetary account through a payment. Through faith, Abram is credited with right standing before God.

New Testament Connection: Righteous by faith

- Gal 3:6-9
 - Who is a child of Abraham?
 - When was the gospel first announced? Gen 12:3
- Gal 3:16-18 Genesis 12:7 13:15 seed
- Romans 4:1-3 – we are justified before God by our faith and not our works.

Read Gen 15:7-16, 17-18

10. Why do you think God reveals the future to Abraham?

- To show Abram that He is God. Only God can know the future.
- God has a plan
- Nature of a covenant. One sided promise. Only God passes through the pieces.

11. What is your favorite part of this account? Why?

Additional study option Genesis 16 and 17

Read Gen 16 Hagar and Ishmael – shows that the promise does not need the help of man for it to be fulfilled.

- What does Sarai suggest to Abram?
- Why do you think he agrees to this plan?
- Abram is 86 years old when Ishmael is born.

Read Gen 17 – Abraham now 99 years old.

- Covenant – father of many nations
- Abram's name changed to Abraham
- Nations and kings will come from you.
- Circumcision given as a sign of the covenant or promise.
- 17:19-22 promise within a year.

Extra Reading Sodom and Gomorrah. The God who is righteous and just. This section is particularly important for those who struggle with the justice of God when reading about events such as the flood account, the plagues in Egypt or the conquest of the promised land.

Read Genesis Chapter 18-19:29

- Who visits Abraham? Are these men, angels, God or who? Support your answer with the verse references. One is LORD :22
- What do the visitors promise to Abraham? A child
- Why do you think the Lord decides to show Abraham what He is about to do? :17 because he will become the father of many nations. An example for him and his descendants to obey.
- What is Abraham's concern regarding the Lord's plan to destroy the cities? 23 God's justice
- How does the Lord answer Abraham's concern?
- What do you think about Lot? What did he do right? What did he do wrong?
- In what ways does God show mercy to Lot and his family?
- Why is Lot's wife destroyed?
- Why did Lot's sons in law also perish?
- What did Lot and his daughters need to do in order to be spared from the destruction?
- In what ways is this account like the other accounts we read so far regarding God's judgment of mankind's sin?

Primary study continued -

Read Gen 21:1-3 God changes Abram's name to Abraham. 25 more years have passed since God first spoke to Abram. Abraham is now 100 years old and Sarah is 90. Despite this God miraculously fulfills His promise to Abram.

Read Gen 22:1-19 Isaac is now about 13 years old.

12. What does God ask Abraham to do? Why do you think God does this? :1

- God wanted to test Abraham's faith in Him.

13. What does Abraham do? Why do you think he was able to obey? :8

- Obeys. He demonstrates that his love for God is even greater than his love for his son. This is why he is so famous as the father of faith to Jews, Muslims and Christians. He believed God's promises and obeyed even when it was difficult. Abraham had confidence in God to fulfill His promise to him of many descendants even if Isaac was killed. The Bible tells us that Abraham believed that God was able to raise the dead in order to fulfill His promises.

14. How is Abraham's actions a picture of faith in God? What does it mean to put your faith in God?

- He believed God's Word to him and then obeyed it, acted on it even when He could not understand it completely.
- Romans 4:20-21 talks about this if you have time to look at it.

15. What does God do? What does Abraham call that place as a result? 22:14

- He provides the sacrifice at just the right time in order to save Isaac.
- The Lord will provide. Present day Jerusalem.

NT Connection: How is Isaac a 'type' of Christ? We can define a type as a "prophetic symbol" because all types are representations of something yet future. More specifically, a type in Scripture is a person or thing in the Old Testament that foreshadows a person or thing in the New Testament.

- Beloved, promised son, miracle birth
- Carried the wood up the mountain
- Was willing to be a sacrificed
- Abraham believed that God could raise him from the dead. Hebrews 11:17-19
- The testing of Abraham with Isaac is a picture of what God Himself would one day do with His own son Jesus. Jn 1:29, 3:16 Hebrews 11:17-19 James 2:21-24

16. What can you learn about God from these accounts?

- God judges man's sin and disobedience
- God uses men to fulfill His purposes
- He is sovereign - in control
- God makes promises
- God desires to bless all nations
- God is the provider
- Faith is believing God's Word
- We respond to God with faith

17. What can you learn about what God expects of people?

- - Faith in His word and promises
- - obedience to His commands/humility

Lesson 7 Moses and the Passover

Purpose: to illustrate the God's faithfulness to keep His promise to rescue/save His people from slavery through faith in His provision. This will foreshadow Jesus' coming sacrifice for all mankind.

Background: Read Gen 15:12-14. God tells Abraham ahead of time what will happen to his descendants. God knows the future. Abraham's grandson was Jacob. He had 12 sons who's descendants became the 12 tribes of Israel. A severe famine forced them to move to Egypt to find food. Eventually the Egyptians turned these foreigners into slaves for fear that they might one day fight against them. They were in Egypt for about 400 years but God had not forgotten them! The book of Exodus means "going out" and in it God tells how He rescued His people out of Egypt. This occurred about 1450 B.C.

Review of Genesis.

Abraham Sarai

Isaac

Rebecca

Ishmael

Esau and Jacob – Rachel Leah Jacob's name changed to Israel

12 sons – the Jewish nation

Joseph – goes to Egypt. Family later joins him there.

Read Exodus 1:1-14, 22 – the oppression of the Israelites.

- God chose a man named Moses to rescue His people. The story about him is found in the beginning of Exodus. God sent miraculous plagues against the land of Egypt in order to prove to them that God is truly The One True God and they must obey Him. Pharaoh, the leader of the Egyptians, refused to listen to Moses. These plagues are recorded in chapters 7-12. God spared His people during these plagues.
- The last plague is about to begin but before it does, God gives some special instructions to His people.

Summarize Moses' birth, early life, flight to Midian Exodus 1-2

Call of Moses Read Exodus 3:1-15

1. What does Moses learn about God?

- Knows His name, God of his fathers – history
- Holy – unlike any other, cannot even look at Him. Unlike us. Too high.
- Name – I am who I am. Self sufficient, eternal

2. What is God's purpose in sending these plagues?

Read Exodus 6:7-8 Ex 7:5, 15-18 Ex 11:1, 4-5

Passover Read Exodus 12:1-14, 21-28

3. What instructions does God give to His people? What does He tell them to do?

- :2 Begin your calendar with this event. New Year's day

- :3,6 Take a lamb for each family. 1 year old males without defect.
- Take care of them for 4 days. Then slaughter them at sunset.
- :7 Put the blood on the doorframes of their houses.
- :8 Eat the meat roasted over a fire.
- :10 Burn the rest of the animal.
- :11 Be ready to travel.
- :14 Remember this event every year.
- :22 Stay inside the house until morning!

Note: Remember that these Israelites did not know a lot about this God who said He was going to rescue them. They had been slaves for 400 years and all they knew about were some promises made hundreds of years previously to their ancestor named Abraham.

4. This passage reveals God acting in at least 2 roles. What are they?

- Judge 12:12
- Redeemer 12:13
- Promise keeper – to rescue them out of slavery as promised to Abraham and Moses

5. What do you think it would take for them to obey these instructions?

- Faith, belief in His word to them.

6. Who does God say He will judge through this event? 12:12

- The gods of Egypt from the king who was considered god to the animals such as the bull and goat who were worshipped.

7. Do you notice any similarities between this account and the one where Isaac is spared by a ram caught by its' horns while on the mountain with his father Abraham?

- In both cases a spotless, healthy animal is provided as a substitute for a man's death. An animal takes the place of the person who was to die.

8. Why do you think God places such significance on this event? 12:2, 14

- God wanted His people to remember this event for all generations to come. 12:26,27

9. What happens that night? What is the purpose of the blood on the doors? 12:13

- The angel of death passes over the houses with the blood on the doors?

Read Genesis 12:29-42

10. Do you think that only the Israelites could have put the blood on the doors or could the Egyptians have possibly done this as well if they believed? 12:38 Who are all these "other" people?

- Possibly other internationals living in the land and/or Egyptians who came to believe in the God of the Israelites.
- Look at Ex 9:20-21. Some Egyptians feared or respected the word of God.
- The sign the angel of death looks for is not Israelites living inside the house but only for the blood on the door.

11. What happened in the morning?

- Pharaoh releases the people. 12:31
- Egyptians give them gold and silver. 12:35,36
- The people leave Egypt quickly.
- The people worshipped. :27, 31, 42
- They were now free to leave Egypt so that they could serve Him freely.

12. Do you remember where else you read about an animal being killed that then delays the death of a person ?

- God makes clothes for Adam and Eve from the skins of an animal
- Abraham and Isaac – God provides a lamb caught in the bushes as a substitute for Isaac.

13. What do you think God want to teach both the people of Israel and Egypt?

- Ex 6:7, 7:5 That He is the Lord.

14. What can we learn about God from this account?

- He is faithful to His promises- He told Abraham ahead of time that He would do this.
- He is aware of the suffering of people who are oppressed.
- He is a just judge over mankind.
- The penalty for disobeying God is death.
- He is powerful. Miracles are not a problem.
- He is able to rescue. He provided a way of escape from the angel of death by the blood of a substitute.
- God also uses men to accomplish His purposes.
- He is the only true God.

15. What is your favorite part of this account? Why?

NT Connection Passover in the New Testament.

- The Passover as a picture of what Jesus would do one day for His people.
 - Jn 1:29,
 - 1 Cor 5:6-8
 - Luke 22:7-8, 14-20
 - When does this last supper take place? What are they celebrating?
 - How does Jesus change the meaning or significance of the Passover meal?

The Hope Video Ch 6 <https://www.thehopeproject.com/en/chapter/people-of-the-promise>

Lesson 8 The Law and Sacrifice

Purpose: To clarify God's nature and the standard of righteousness that He requires. To show that nothing we can do will bring acceptance with God and that we need a mediator in order to be accepted by God.

Introduction: God did fulfill His promise to Abraham. His descendants became a numerous nation of people who eventually became slaves in Egypt. God called a man named Moses to lead His people out of Egypt into the land God had promised to give to Abraham. After God rescued them from Egypt, He began to prepare them to enter the land by giving them a set of rules or laws they were to live by as God's people. The purpose of the Law was to make God's people different from the other nations of the world and to limit sin until the Promised One comes.

Worldview Questions

- What do you think the world would be like if there were no laws or police to enforce them? Is there such a thing as universal laws or truths that apply to all people and nations? Is there such a thing as right and wrong? Who determines what these are?

The Law

Read Exodus 19:1-9, 16-19

1. What did God do for the people? 19:4-6
 - He brought them out of Egypt to Himself and made them a holy nation of priests.
 - Holy – set apart, different.
 - Kings and priests.
 - Priest – mediator (ambassador) between God and men. God speaks to them. They were to represent God to the other nations of the world.
 - Treasured possession – we belong to God because He created us.
2. What was going to make Israel different from other nations? 19:5 What did God require of the people?
 - Having God's law and obeying it fully

Read Ex 20:1-21

3. Why do you think God reminds them of what He did before He gives the commands? 20:2
 - To remind them of His love for them and He desires good for them.
4. Summarize the meaning of each of the commandments. Are there any commands that you do not understand?
 - #1 Recognize God for who He is. Exclusive. No rivals to the One true God.
 - #2 Worship is spiritual, no images. God determines how we should worship Him.
 - #3 Treat everything about God with reverence.

- #4 Keep God first in your life. Obey His commands.
- #5 Relationships with superiors.
- #6 Murder – includes all forms of malice
- #7 Adultery – all forms of impurity in thought, speech, behavior
- #8 Property rights.
- #9 All violations of truth, deceit
- #10 Covet: improper desires toward anything belonging to others. Contentment.

5. How many of the commands deal with our relationship with God? How many with our relationship to other people? What do you think is the connection?
- The first 4 commands deal with our relationship to God while the last 6 deal with our relationships with people.
 - A right relationship with God is evidenced by right relationships with people.
6. Do you think anybody has ever kept all of these commands perfectly? Have you?
7. Why do you think God gave the people commands that He knew they could not perfectly obey?
- He did this to show people how sinful they really are. Without having God's standards we would begin to think that we are pretty good people, especially if we simply compare ourselves to other people. God wanted to show man that they could not gain His approval by their good works, hard effort or even obedience. This would force the people to begin to look to God's Promised One to help them.
 - The Law acts like a mirror in showing us what we really look like. The Law is designed for reflecting but not cleaning. The Law has no power to make us good on the inside.
 - They cause us to look to God for forgiveness.
8. Why do you think God gave His people rules to live by? Optional cross reference Is 48:17-19
- For our good. 20:12
 - To show His love. 20:6
 - to limit man's sin (evil) until a future time. Like having speeding limits on the road.
 - To reveal or highlight man's sinful nature. Like comparing 105 brightness paper to 82 brightness. Both look white until compared to each other. We think we are pretty good when we compare ourselves to other people a little less "right" than ourselves.
9. Why were the people afraid? 20:18
- They were fearful of God, His power and that they would die.
10. What did the people ask of Moses and why did they do this? 20:19
- They rejected the privilege of hearing God's word directly and asked Moses to be their mediator for them.
11. What is your favorite part of this account? Why?

New Testament connection

Which of the commandments are mentioned by Jesus in Mt 5? How does Jesus redefine what they mean? What does this tell you about Jesus' identity?

- Mt 5:17-22, :27-30, :43-48.
- **Mt 22:34-40** What is the greatest commandment?
- Consider Romans 3:9-20. What does Paul say about our ability to keep these laws?
- **Luke 18:18-30** Rich young ruler cannot keep enough of the Laws to go to heaven.

Sacrifice - Optional Additional Discussion

Problem: How does a holy God maintain a relationship with His people when they sin, when they break His commands?

Background

If God is going to bind Himself to human beings something has to be done about the sin that inevitably enters the lives of the people of God. God's temporary solution for the problem of sin is animal sacrifice.

Sacrifice is seen throughout the events we have read so far in the Bible.

- Clothes for Adam and Eve made from animal skin.
- Abraham asked to sacrifice his son. An animal substitute is provided and accepted.
- Passover – a sheep is killed to replace the firstborn son in each family.
- These show us that blood is required. Something has to die. The penalty for sin is death.
- God does accept a substitute in each case in place of humans dying.

The Law was specific about when to sacrifice, what to sacrifice, and how to sacrifice. There were a variety of sacrifices or burnt offerings, and each type of offering served a different function. But in general, these sacrifices were designed to show gratitude to God, to demonstrate a contrite heart before God, and to atone for sin.

That word atone, or atonement, is significant in the Bible. An easy way to remember the meaning of atonement is to break it down like this: at-one-ment. Essentially, atonement is all about reconciling, making amends for what has gone wrong and reestablishing peace where there was conflict.

The importance of blood in atonement Leviticus 17:11

- It is a symbol of life.
- It is necessary to make atonement for our sins. Life (in the blood) given for our life.
- It is given by God as a way for man to be made right with God again.

Animal sacrifices gave the Israelites a tangible way of showing their sorrow and desire to have their relationship with God restored. Sacrifices also provided a substitute that could be offered in Israel's place.

Day of Atonement. Read Leviticus 16

- Only the high priest is allowed to enter the holy of holies and only once a year.
- A bull is offered for the sins of the priest.
- Sins of the people are confessed over and transferred to the animal. Substitution.
- Two goats are selected, one is killed and the other escapes. One represents the means and the other the result of atonement. Our sins are paid for by death and the result is our sins are separated from us.

The problem with the animal sacrifices

- They had to be repeated each day, each year.
- They were only a shadow, a temporary solution.
 - Hebrews 10:4 “it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.” The substitute had to be an appropriate equivalent. Animals do not equal humans.
 -
- Sacrifices had to be made with the right heart attitude of the people. One of true repentance. Often not the case. God is concerned with our heart. Malachi 1:10 Hosea 6:6

The Hope Video Chapter 7

<https://www.thehopeproject.com/en/chapter/called-to-walk-in-the-ways-of-god>

Lesson 9 Prophets and Kings Messiah

Introduction Review the history of Israel from Moses to the Kings. A timeline of Bible history might be helpful. <http://timeline.biblehistory.com/home>

Christianity is based on history and not the teachings of just one person at one point in time.

- <https://www.thehopeproject.com/en/chapter/called-to-walk-in-the-ways-of-god>

King David

Background to Israel's kings

1 Sam 8:1-9, 19-22 The people ask for a king so that they can be like the other nations.

- Saul 1050-1010 David 1010-970

God's promises to David. From the perspective of God's redemptive purpose for the world, God's covenant with David is one of the most important statements of the Bible. The occasion for the establishment of God's covenant with David was David's desire to build a house for God.

Read 2 Sam 7:1-17

1. What promises did God make to David in 2 Sam 7:1-17? What do you think is unusual about these promises?
 - that David's throne would be established forever; :13
 - that a son of David would build a house for God's name; :13
 - That one of David's descendants would become God's son. :14 Hebrews 1:5
 - Three times the words "forever" appear. No wonder this covenant was central to Israel's hope: when God promises to do something forever, all of eternity is being shaped.
 - We know from verse 12 that God intends for David to die.
 - Yet verse 16 says: "Your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me; your throne shall be established forever." This must mean that the kingdom of David would be established and secured by a descendant. But Solomon is depicted as a sinner who has to be chastened. The kingdom can never be secure in the hands of a sinner.
 - These three promises became the basis of all Messianic prophecies in the Old Testament.
 - Part of God's promises found fulfillment during David's lifetime. Solomon, his son, built a majestic house of worship in Jerusalem.
 - But Solomon and his descendants did not keep the Law of the Lord.
 - Eventually the kingdom and Israel's kings were carried away into captivity and removed.

Prophets

- Despite Israel's disobedience, God continued to speak to them through people called prophets. A prophet is someone who can hear God's voice directly and then accurately tell the people what God has said. God sent many prophets to His people to encourage them to obey God, turn from idols, trust in Him and look for His promised victory in the future.
- 12 prophets wrote down what God told them and we have these words in the Bible. They lived and wrote between 850 BC and 400 BC.

- Isaiah is considered to be one of the greatest prophets. He lived between 750 and 700 BC. One of God's main messages through Isaiah was that the One true God is the only One who can foretell the future accurately, with no mistakes. Isaiah also had much to say about the coming Promised One from God.

Read Is 44:6-11

2. How is God described?
 - King, Redeemer, Almighty, first and last, all knowing, Rock.
3. What is a redeemer? 44:6
 - Someone who buys back something that was originally their own. Ransom is another word. When someone is kidnapped, money is demanded from the close relatives in order to get back what was rightfully theirs all the time.
4. Why does God say that there is nobody else like Him? 44:7
 - Because only He can foretell the future. It is proof of His power, existence, knowledge and control.
5. Why shouldn't they be afraid? 44:8 God knows the future.
6. How are idols described? (important question if working with Buddhists or Hindus) :8-11
 - Worthless, profits nothing. 44:12-20 details more about idols.

Read Is 48:3-6

7. How does God describe the people? 48:4
8. What did God say was the purpose of prophecy? 48:5
 - To prevent the people from attributing events to the work of idols.
9. How does God prove His identify? :6 God proves His identity by His prophecies.

Prophets and the Promised One

- There are more than **300 predictions about the promised One** in the Old Testament. The following list contains 20 of the most famous. God gave these prophecies so that no one would miss Him when He arrived. These prophecies were all recorded between 400-1000 years before the Promised One arrived.
- Review the list of prophecies. **Handout**

Below is an example of some of the prophecies regarding the coming King or Messiah

- Jeremiah stresses that the coming king will fulfill the condition of righteousness (in **Jer. 23:5-6**):
"Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In his days

Judah will be saved and Israel will dwell securely. And this is the name by which he will be called: 'The Lord is our righteousness'"

- Ezekiel 34:23: "I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd."
- Ezekiel 37:24: "My servant David will be their king, and they will have only one shepherd. They will obey my regulations and be careful to keep my decrees."
- **Isaiah 9:6,7** "For unto us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government will upon his shoulder, and his name will be called 'Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.' Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over his kingdom to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore."
 - So the surety of the covenant with David lies ultimately in the fact that God himself will come as king and sit upon the throne.
- One of the most famous and extensive prophecies about the Messiah and what He will do is found in Isaiah 53 written in approximately 740 BCE. Read this chapter and see what you can discover about this Messiah.

Read Is 52:13 - 53:12

- In the next lessons we will see how God fulfilled these prophecies. These are recorded in the next major section of the Bible called the New Testament.

10. What is your favorite part of this lesson? Why?

NT Connection Jesus as the Messiah

- When the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary in Luke 1:31-33 he said, "Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

Prophecy Checklist

| <u>Old Testament</u> | <u>Date</u> | <u>Content</u> | <u>New Testament</u> |
|----------------------|-------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Isaiah 9:6-7 | 700 BC | descendant of King David | Matt. 1; Luke 1:32 |
| 2. Isaiah 7:14 | 700 BC | born of a virgin | Matthew 1:25 |
| 3. Micah 5:2 | 700 BC | born in Bethlehem | Luke 2:4-7 |
| 4. Isaiah 42:6 | 700 BC | a light to the nations | Luke 2:32 |
| 5. Hosea 11:1 | 725 BC | called back from Egypt | Matt. 2: 13-15, 19-20 |
| 6. Zechariah 9:9 | 515 BC | riding on a baby donkey | Mark 11:1-10 |
| 7. Zech. 11:12-13 | 515 BC | sold for 30 pieces of silver | Matt. 26:14-15 |
| 8. Psalm 41:9 | 1000 BC | betrayed by a companion | Mark 14:44-45 |
| 9. Psalm 27:12 | 1000 BC | accused by false witnesses | Mark 14:56-59 |
| 10. Isaiah 50:6 | 700 BC | hit and spit upon | Mark 14:65 |
| 11. Isaiah 53:7 | 700 BC | no response to accusations | Mark 15:5 |
| 12. Psalm 69:4 | 1000 BC | hated for no reason | Mark 15: 14 |
| 13. Isaiah 53:3 | 700 BC | rejected by the Jews | Mark 15: 15 |
| 14. Psalm 22:16 | 1000 BC | hands and feet pierced | Mark 15:24 |
| 15. Psalm 22:18 | 1000 BC | clothing was gambled for | Mark 15:24 |
| 16. Isaiah 53:12 | 700 BC | died with evil people | Mark 15:27 |
| 17. Psalm 22:6-8 | 1000 BC | mocked and insulted | Mark 15:29-32 |
| 18. Psalm 22: 1 | 1000 BC | the cry of separation | Mark 15:33-34 |
| 19. Isaiah 53:9 | 700 BC | buried among the wealthy | Mark 15:43,46 |
| 20. Psalm 68:18 | 1000 BC | return to heaven | Acts 1:9 |

Lesson 10 The Promised Messiah Arrives

Purpose: To begin identifying the Lord Jesus Christ as the Promised One by examining His origins and early life.

Introduction:

- We now begin to study the second major division in the Bible called the New Testament. Testament is a promise or agreement.
- The first 4 books of the NT record the story of the Promised One. They were written by 4 different men. Each of them gives us a little different perspective on the life of the Promised One. Like 4 different witnesses of a car accident, each person sees something a little different from where they were standing. Together these books are called the gospels which means good news.

Review from last week. God intended that the nation of Israel be His representative to the other nations as they obeyed His law. Through the prophet Isaiah God speaks of Israel having failed to be the “kingdom of priests” to the nations that He desired them to be.

- Is 26:18 “We were with child, we writhed in pain, but we gave birth to wind. We have not brought salvation to the earth; we have not given birth to people of the world.”

The Prophet speaks of God’s intention to bring His salvation to all nations.

- Is 49:5,6 And now the Lord says – he who formed me in the womb to be his servant to bring Jacob back to Him and gather Israel to Himself, he says: “It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept, I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth.”

God now puts into action the plan that He announced long before through His prophets to restore all people to a right relationship with Him.

Read Luke 1:26-38

1. What does the angel say will be true about Jesus? :31,32
 - Great, Son of the Most High, throne of David, reign forever = the Messiah, kingdom
2. Who was Jesus’ father? How was Jesus conceived? Why is it important that Jesus didn't have a human father?
 - The Holy Spirit of God. This is another example of a miracle birth.
 - Since Jesus did not have a human father, He was without sin. He was perfect and never sinned His entire life.. For God's plan to work this had to be true.
3. Was Jesus human? Was He like us? Yes, except that He did not sin.
4. How does God respond to those who find this hard to believe? :37

Read Mt 1:1, 18-25

5. Who are Jesus' ancestors mentioned here? Why do you think these particular people are mentioned?
What does the word 'Christ' mean?

- Some of Jesus' ancestors include Abraham and David - prophecy #1 God made special promises to these two men that are now being fulfilled with Jesus' coming.
- Christ means chosen one, special one or even Promised One. :18
- Jesus means, "God who saves".

6. What does the angel of the Lord tell Joseph about Jesus? :20,21 Why do you think people need to be "saved from their sins"?

- He is conceived by the Holy Spirit and will save his people from their sins.
- The penalty for sin against God is death. Remember the garden and the flood accounts.

Prophecy #2 God does what He says. The prophet is Isaiah

7. Why do you think God would want to be with us (Immanuel)? :23 Can you remember another time that God was with man?

- He loves us.
- In the garden of Eden.

Read Lk 2:1-12, 25-32

8. Where was Jesus born?

Prophecy #3. Lk 2:4

9. What did God have to do to insure that this prophecy was fulfilled? 2:1-3

- He had to cause Caesar to call for a census at the very time Mary would give birth.

10. What does the angel say to the shepherds concerning the significance of this birth? :10,11

- Good news for all people. A Savior has been born to you.

11. What does man need a Savior for? What do people need saving from?

- To save us from the penalty for our sins - death.

12. How is Simeon's statement a fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham? :29-32, Genesis 12:3

- God promised Abram that one of his descendants would be a blessing to all people.

Prophecy #4

Read Mt 2:1-15

13. To whom does God reveal the birth of His promised one?

Note: Magi from the east, shepherds. Magi – wise men who were probably astrologers – studied the stars to gain wisdom, foretell the future, gain direction for life.

14. Why do you think God only reveals Jesus' birth to some foreigners, some shepherds and a few other people?

- God was not ready to reveal the true identity of Jesus yet.
- ???

15. How is the Christ (Promised One) describe in this prophecy? 2:6

- Ruler
- Shepherd – what does a shepherd do? Protect, feed, guide, care for.

16. In what ways was Jesus' birth unusual?

- Conception by the Holy Spirit, virgin birth, humble circumstances, angels announcing, foreign scholars visiting/worshipping a baby.

17. What can we learn about Jesus from these accounts?

- Jesus is God with us, He is the Savior and the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham.
- He is humble Philippians 2:5-8

Next lesson we will look at a small sample of what Jesus did and said while alive on this earth.

Optional text.

John's account of Jesus' coming is very different from Luke and Matthew.

Read John 1:1-18

Note how John calls Jesus the "word" to describe Him before His being born on earth. 1:14

1. How is the "word" described? What words are used to describe Jesus?
2. What are some of the things that John says the "word" has done before His birth and during His lifetime?
3. How would you put verse :18 into your own words.

Lesson 11 Jesus' Life and Teachings

Purpose: To demonstrate that Jesus' life and teachings all validated His identity as God in the flesh.

Introduction: We will look at the ministry years of Jesus which lasted for only 3 and a half years beginning when He was 30 years old. His ministry can be divided into two areas - what He did and what He taught. We will only have time to look at a small portion of His life as recorded in the Gospels.

His Ministry: What He did.

1. Read Mk 1:21-28 Jesus' authority over evil spirits.

Why were the people amazed at Jesus' teaching? :22 What was different about it?

- He taught with His own authority. He didn't quote other famous teachers as was the custom of the day. He had a new teaching.

Who did the demons say that Jesus was? :24

- The Holy One of God or the Christ. Even the demons knew that Jesus was the Promised One from God.

2. Mk 2:1-12 power to heal and forgive sins

Would you agree with the statement that only God can forgive sins? :7 Why?

How would you answer Jesus' question in vs 9 when He asks which is easier to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven', or to say, 'Rise, take up your bed and walk'?

- Verse 10. Jesus did what could be verified, the healing of the man who could not walk, to show that He had the power and authority to also forgive sins.

3. Read Luke 7:11-17 Jesus raises the dead

How did Jesus raise this man from the dead? What did He do?

- He spoke to the dead man! The power of Jesus' words to create life.

What does this remind you of that we previously studied?

- God as the creator spoke the creation into existence.

How did the people respond to Jesus' miracle? :16

- They called Him a great prophet and one who has come to help His people.

4. Read Mk 4:35-41 Jesus controls the nature.

How does Jesus show His power and authority in this situation? Who does He talk to?

- He is able to command even the wind and waves to obey Him and they do. This isn't so hard to believe if you remember that He is their Creator who created the universe by speaking it into existence.

What were the disciples terrified of? :38, 40-41

- At first they are afraid of the storm, of possible death, and then of Jesus' identity.

Why does Jesus question them about their faith? :40

- Because faith is the response that God requires from us, this is what pleases Him. Remember Abraham and His faith.
- Faith in His Words, "Let us go over to the other side." :35
- Faith requires two things, an object of our faith (who/what our faith is in), and a promise from that person.

5. Read Mk 10:45-52 Jesus heals the blind.

Why does Jesus say that He came to Earth. :45

- He came to serve, to give His life as a ransom for many. Ransom is money that is paid to get back what is rightfully yours. A ransom is paid to redeem something.

What does Jesus say healed the blind man? :52

- Faith in Jesus. It is this faith that connects us to God's power.

His Ministry: What He taught

6. Read Lk 6:46-49

What is wrong with calling Jesus Lord and then not obeying Him?

- They are opposite actions. If someone is your Lord you will obey them.

What is the difference between the two men and what are the consequences of their actions?

- One hears his words. The other hears and obeys.
- Complete destruction results when we ignore God's words.

7. Read Luke 18:31-34 Jesus predicts His death.

What did Jesus predict would happen to Him in the future?

- He will fulfill the prophecies written about Him, He will be persecuted by the Romans, beaten, killed and then rise from the dead.

Why do you think Jesus told His followers about this ahead of time?

- So that we it happens they will know that it was not an accident but God's plan.

8. Read John 10:7-21, 22-33 Jesus says He is the good shepherd/Promised One
How is the good shepherd different from the hired one?
- 5 times Jesus mentions that He lays down His life.

Who do you think are the other sheep in v 16? Non Jewish people.

What does Jesus mean that He lays down His life in vs 18?

- Jesus willingly chose to die for His sheep, us!

How does Jesus answer the question about whether He is the Promised One? :24

- He claims that He is the Messiah, the the Promised One and that His miracles prove it.

What is true of His sheep? :27,28

- They listen to His voice, they follow Jesus, they have eternal life, they are secure.

Who does Jesus claim to be in vs 30? God If you really want to know what God is like, who does Jesus say you should look at?

9. Read Jn 14:1-7 Jesus says that He is the only way to God
How does Jesus want us to respond to Him vs 1? Trust in Him/God.
What does Jesus promise to those who trust Him? :1-3

- Peace, a room in His house, He will come back for and take us to be with Him.

How do we get to where Jesus is going (heaven and God)? :6

- By believing in Jesus Christ.

How does Jesus say that a person can come to know God? :7 By knowing Jesus.

- Next lesson we will look at how Jesus fulfilled the rest of the prophecies and why people can only be accepted by God by putting their faith in Jesus.

Lesson 12

The Most Important Message

Purpose: To understand why faith in Jesus Christ is the only way to find acceptance with God.

Introduction: This is the last session in this course. Everything that we have studied until now points us to today's lesson. Last time we looked at what Jesus did and taught. Jesus claimed to be the Messiah, God Himself in flesh and that by faith in Him any person can be saved. Today we will look at how and why this is true. Jesus is now 33 years old. He has completed his three and a half year ministry of teaching and healing. This lesson will cover the last week in Jesus' life on earth.

Review: Read Mt 26:1-2

1. What does Jesus say will happen to Him in the future? When will this happen? Why do you think Jesus told them about this ahead of time?

Read Mt 26:14-16 Betrayal

- Fulfillment of prophecy #7.

Read Mt 26:47-56 Jesus Arrested

- Prophecy #8

2. What reason does Jesus give for not defending themselves and allowing Himself to be arrested?

- All these things must happen in order to fulfill the Scriptures.

Read Mk 14:55-56, 60-65 The Trial

3. Did the Jewish leaders find any evidence of wrongdoing against Jesus?

- Despite all the false witnesses, none could agree.

4. How did Jesus answer the question of the high priest about whether He was the Promised One of God? :61

- He said that He was and in the future you will see Him next to God and coming in the air. Blasphemy is to speak about God with abuse or contempt.

Prophecy #9, #10, and #11

- Jesus is now condemned to die by the Roman governor Pilate who is convinced by the Jewish rulers to do this.

Read Mk 15:15-20 Roman Beatings

Prophecy #12 and #13.

Read Mk 15:22-39

5. What prophecies are fulfilled here?

- Prophecy #s 14-18.

- Explain that crucifixion was the Roman form of capital punishment in which the victim's wrists and ankles were nailed to a piece of wood.

6. Why did you think that Jesus had to die?

- Death is God's penalty for sin and disobedience. (Remember Adam and Eve, Noah) Because Jesus was God and therefore perfect, He was able to pay the just penalty for our sin. He willingly died for us so that we could find life.
- 1 Pet 3:18 "For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God."

7. Why had God forsaken Jesus? Prophecy #18.

- Remember that sin separates people from each other and people from God (Gen 3). When Jesus took our sin on Himself, He was separated for a time from His Father.

Read Mt 27:57-66 Burial of Jesus

- Prophecy # 19

8. What evidence was there that Jesus was in fact dead?

- A Roman soldier watched him die (he would have been very familiar with death), soldiers did not break his legs since he was already dead, Joseph wrapped up his body, a stone was placed over the tomb, Mary watched, His side was pierced and blood and water came out indicating death had already taken place.

Read Mt 28:1-20 Resurrection

9. What evidence is there for the resurrection?

- Witnesses, empty tomb, no body found.

10. Why do you think that the resurrection is so important to the Christian faith?

- It was proof that Jesus was who He said He was, that His words could be trusted and that He has the power over death.

Read Acts 1:9-11 (1:1-11) Jesus' Ascension

- Prophecy #20

Read Mt 24:36-39, 42-44 Jesus' return

11. What will people be doing on the earth when Jesus returns?

- They will be living as though nothing is about to happen just like in the days of Noah.

12. What does Jesus tell His followers to do? How can one be ready for His return?

- To keep watch, to be ready for His return.
- Jesus will return to the earth again to take those who believe in Him to be with Him in heaven, while those who have rejected Him as the Promised One of God will be judged for their sins.
- One will be ready for His return based on their answer to the following question.

Read Mt 16:13-17

13. The Most Important Question: Now that you have heard these things, who do **you** believe Jesus is? Is He who He said He was? Is He the final sacrifice for our sins? Is He the fulfillment of the prophets? Is He God's Promised One? Is He God?

- What do you believe? This is the most important decision that you will ever make. If you believe Him to be God's Promised One, the One who paid for your sins, then you will want to surrender your life to Him as your King. He will forgive you when you repent of your sin and begin to follow Him as the Leader of your life. When you make this decision, God will forgive you and accept you as His child. Would you like to pray right now and tell Him that you believe?

Epilogue - God's story continues after Jesus' resurrection and ascension to heaven. Before His ascension Jesus tells His disciples to go into all the nations and make disciples, or followers of Jesus.

Read Mt 28:18-20 and Acts 1:8

The Christian church is born and grows starting primarily with Jewish people but quickly expanding to include people from many nations. The account of the first 30 years after Jesus' life is found in the books of Acts.

The final letter in the Bible is called Revelation. It deals with the future of the world, judgment over evil and the creation of a new heaven and earth.

1 These 4:13-18 the future of God's people on earth

Rev 1:1-8

Rev 5:6-14 What does John see in his vision of heaven?

Rev 7:9-17 Who does John see in heaven and how did they get there? What is God doing?

Rev 20:11-15 Final judgment

Rev 21:1-4 The new creation

