

121

the
STORY
of
GOD

THROUGH THE STORY
OF SCRIPTURE

OLD TESTAMENT

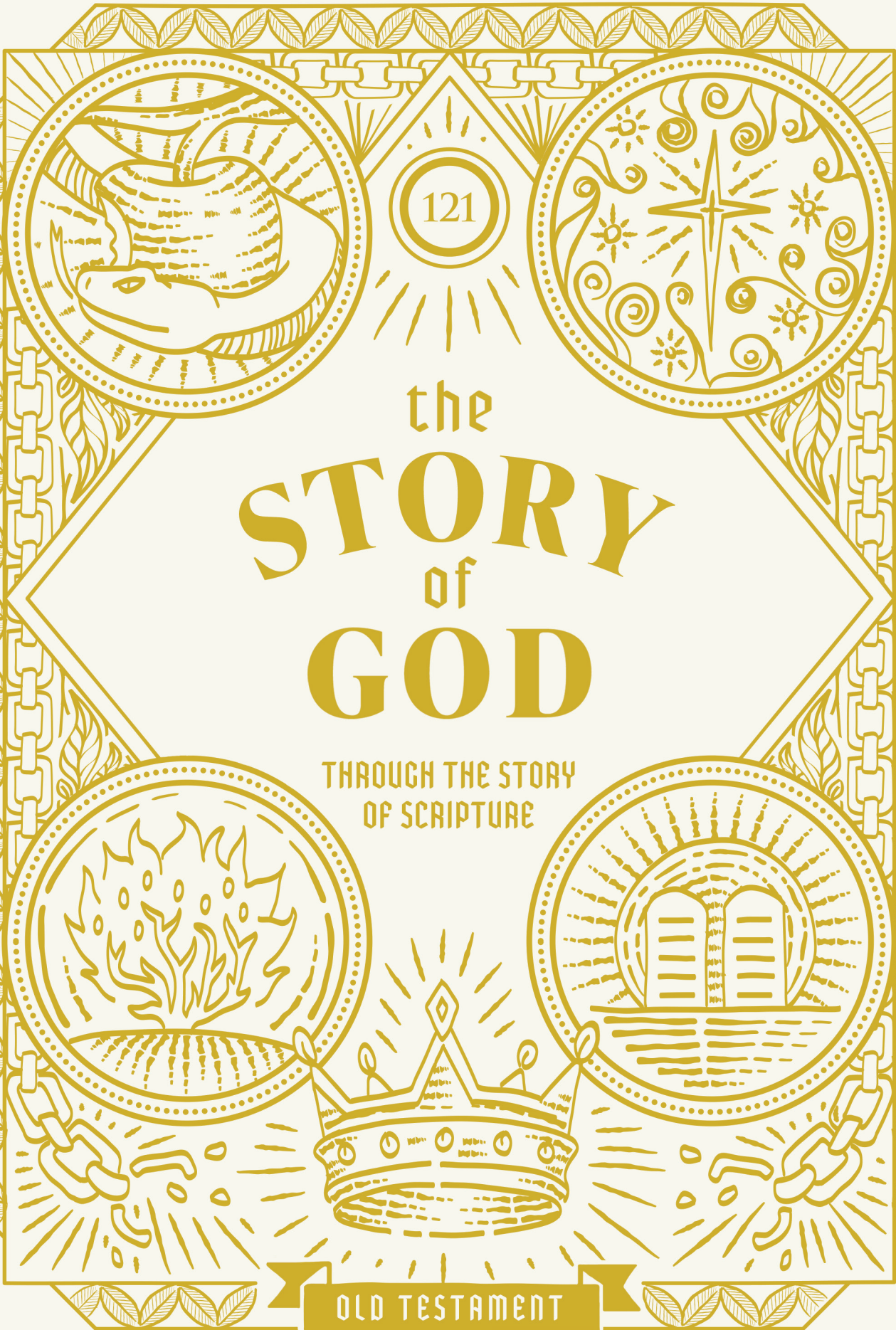


Table of Contents

Week One Introduction	3
Week Two Creation and Crisis	11
Week Three Covenant	23
Week Four Calling Out	37
Week Five Commandments	51
Week Six Conquest and Canaanization, Part One	69
Week Seven Conquest and Canaanization, Part Two	83
Week Eight Creation of the Kingdom, Part One	97
Week Nine Creation of the Kingdom, Part Two	111
Week Ten Communion and Common Sense, Part One	127
Week Eleven Communion and Common Sense, Part Two	141
Week Twelve Crumbling of the Kingdom, Part One	155
Week Thirteen Crumbling of the Kingdom, Part Two	173
Week Fourteen Captivity and Coming Home	189
Week Fifteen Interlude Between the Testaments	203

Additional Resources

Judges	88
A Kingdom Divided	158
The Northern and Southern Kingdoms	166
The Temple	174
Roman Roads	209
Jesus Family Line	218

*This study is based on the book, *Living God's Word: Discovering our Place in the Great Story of Scripture* by J. Scott Duvall and J. Daniel Hays.

* This study uses ESV as the Bible translation.

Week 1

Introduction to the Story of God through the Story of Scripture

The Bible is one true story that declares God’s plan from the beginning of creation. All of it points to Him. It is through comprehending His story as a whole (the metanarrative), that we are able to understand the world in which we live: the problems we face, the solution, and how it all affects us in our daily lives. As we gain a fuller appreciation of God, our reverence for Him increases.

Our desire for this study is that we may learn how the Bible unites to form one narrative. We also hope our confidence in reading the Word will expand, resulting in overflowing worship and awe of the Lord. As we behold Him in the details, may we begin to grasp His faithfulness and goodness to us through Christ.

This Bible Study Is Divided Into 12 Sections



Creation & Crisis

In the beginning of the Story, God created the world and everything in it, including the first two people who walked with the Lord in intimacy. However, the people chose to disobey God and sin entered the world. The results of their sin were consequences that we still struggle with today: sin, pain, death, and separation from God. Thus began the crisis of sin.



Covenant

In response to the crisis, God began to point toward His plan for redemption. He established a covenant with a man named Abraham. A covenant is an

agreement between two parties that specifies requirements (and usually consequences) for at least one party. The rest of the Old Testament will hinge on this covenant and will ultimately be fulfilled in Jesus Christ.



Calling Out

Generations later, Abraham's descendants found themselves oppressed as slaves of Egypt. The Lord raised up a leader named Moses. God used Moses to deliver them out of slavery through a series of plagues. The exodus out of Egypt foreshadowed the deliverance we have as slaves to sin and death through our Messiah Jesus.



Commandments

After God delivered His people, He gave them the Law in the form of commandments so that they could live within the boundaries He had established for them. God set the boundaries in such a way that they would enjoy the blessings that came from God's presence when they walked in obedience to Him.



Conquest & Canaanization

God raised up a leader named Joshua to lead the charge into the promised land (Canaan). After the death of Joshua and during the time of the judges, God's people lived in the promised land, yet began to rebel against Him.



Creation of the Kingdom

Though God was their king, His people wanted an earthly king which He gave them. In this section of the story, the twelve tribes of Israel lived in a united kingdom centralized in Jerusalem. God made a covenant with King David that He would give David a descendant whose kingdom was

established forever, which pointed to Jesus. They enjoyed God's presence in the tabernacle up until the time when David's son, King Solomon, built a temple. God's presence had dwelt in the tabernacle and moved with the people as they traveled through the wilderness. The temple was to be where God manifested Himself.



Communion & Common Sense in the Kingdom

Unlike the rest of the story so far, this section is primarily poetic and not chronological. The Psalms are a book of songs displaying the intimate relationship between God and His people. Proverbs, Job, Ecclesiastes and the Song of Solomon are wisdom books which contain instructions for wise living and relationships.



Crumbling of the Kingdom

After Solomon died, a civil war resulted in the splitting of Israel into two different kingdoms: Israel (the northern kingdom) and Judah (the southern kingdom). During this time, God sent prophets to warn the people and to try to move them to repentance. They spoke of judgments that would come if the people continued in their sin and consistently welcomed God's people to return to Him. The prophets also spoke of hope in a future Messiah who will bring redemption.

Despite being warned, God's people didn't listen and judgments came. First Israel was conquered by the Assyrians, then Judah was conquered by the Babylonians. Both kingdoms were exiled from the promised land.



Captivity & Coming Home

The people of Judah were captives in Babylon, but God was still at work (as we see in the book of Daniel). After a time in exile, the people returned to the promised land, however they were still under foreign rule. The Old

Testament ends with anticipation of the coming Messiah, yet what followed was 400 years of silence.



Christ

After the long period of silence, Jesus, the Son of God, was born as a baby. He lived the perfect life without any sin. He came sharing the good news of salvation through faith in Him. He spoke of the fulfillment of the covenant promises. Jesus taught, performed miracles, and drew a group of twelve disciples to Himself. God's plan unfolded as Jesus died on the cross taking the punishment for our sin and was raised from the dead giving us victory over sin and death.



Church

The good news of Jesus's death and resurrection went out and those who repented and believed in Jesus became part of His body, the church. Jesus' ministry continued through His people. The Holy Spirit came to live in the members of the church, empowering them to know God and make disciples of all nations. While the Jews were part of God's people from the beginning in the Old Testament, the Gentiles were grafted into the people of God through Jesus. As both Jews and Gentiles came to a saving faith in Jesus, God's desire to bless all nations through Abraham was finally fulfilled.



Consummation

God's promises will come to fulfillment when He destroys evil and death. His creation will be restored as the new heavens and new earth are ushered in. Those who have rebelled against God and refuse to recognize Jesus as Lord will suffer judgment and separation from God. Those who have trusted in Christ will live with Him face to face forever. There will be no more sin or death or mourning or pain!

Wrap Up

Have you ever been taught the overarching story of the Bible?

Which of the twelve C's do you feel most comfortable with and which of them do you want to learn more about?

Creation and Crisis

Covenant

Calling Out

Commandments

Conquest and Canaanization

Creation of the Kingdom

Communion and Common Sense in the Kingdom

Crumbling of the Kingdom

Captivity and Coming Home

Christ

Church

Consummation

What did you learn about how the twelve Cs point to the gospel?

What do you hope to get out of this study?

Week 2



Where are we in the Great Story?

Creation and Crisis

Key Players

God, Adam and Eve, Noah

Book of the Bible

Genesis 1-9; 11

Key Verse

“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.”

-Genesis 1:1

Group Ice Breaker Questions

What are some things that are uniquely you?

Overview

The first section of the Bible covers the description of the setting of the story, the earth, and an introduction of the main characters, God and man (Genesis 1-2).

God’s creation of the world and the relationship He shared with the first people in the beginning will be described. Beginning in Genesis 3, a crisis will be introduced that will continue to unfold throughout the Story. God will give a glimpse into how He will resolve that crisis even though the resolution won’t come until the very end.

Day 1

Read Genesis 1-2 (Creation).

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth and created the first people to populate the earth. God is the creator and the main character in the story. People are secondary as part of His creation.

Notice the phrases “God created” and “was good”.

1. How many times is the phrase “God created” used in these chapters?

2. What do you think God meant by ‘good’? How many times did He call something good?

3. What do you learn about God in these verses?



Going Deeper

How should we respond to God knowing that He is our Creator and we are His creation? How should the truth of Genesis 1:27 impact how we treat others?

4. Who is the “us” referred to in Genesis 1:26? How does this impact how you view the rest of the chapter?

5. Who is the Spirit in Genesis 1:2?

6. Read Colossians 1:15-20. What does this tell us?



Going Deeper

Why did God rest on the seventh day? What does it mean that He declares that day as holy?

7. How would you describe the state of life in the Garden? The relationship between Adam and Eve? The relationship between God and His creation?

State of Life

Adam & Eve

God & His Creation



Key Verse

Write Genesis 1:1 below.



Prayer and Reflection

Spend time praising the Lord for who He is and for His Creation. Praise the Lord that you were created in His image.

Day 2

We would define sin as failure to conform (be obedient) to any command of God, whether explicitly (by act of commission or omission) or implicitly (by thought).

See Matthew 5:21–30.

At the end of Genesis 2, Adam and Eve were living in peace with God, surrounded by God's presence and blessing. In this chapter, the first crisis in creation is caused by God's own people.

Read Genesis 3 (Crisis).

1. What was life like in the Garden before sin?

2. In Genesis 2:17 God's instructions were very clear. How did the serpent twist God's words in Genesis 3:4–5 and deceive Adam and Eve?

3. In Genesis 3:14–24, how did Adam and Eve's relationship with God change as a result of their sin?

4. How do you see the effects of the curses in Genesis 3:14–19 throughout history and today? Choose one curse and explain the effects through history and today.

5. Why was sin entering the world a crisis?

6. Read Romans 5:12-14. In what ways was Adam our representative?



Key Verse

Fill in the blanks for Genesis 1:1 below.

“In the _____, God created the _____ and the _____.”



Prayer and Reflection

Adam and Eve blamed others for their sin, realized they were naked, felt ashamed, and covered themselves. In what ways have you tried to blame others and cover up your sin? Spend time repenting before God.

Day 3

After Adam and Eve were driven out of the garden, they began to have children in order to “fill the earth.” The effects of sin continued into the next generation.

Read Genesis 4.

1. How did sin escalate in Genesis 4?

2. Read Hebrews 11:4 and 1 John 3:12. What do we learn about Cain’s heart and Abel’s heart in the offering?

3. What did God say sin was doing in Genesis 4:7?

4. What did Cain’s reaction to God’s question in Genesis 4:9 reveal about Cain’s heart?’



Key Verse

Fill in the blanks for Genesis 1:1 below.

“In the beginning, _____ created the heavens and the earth.”



Prayer and Reflection

How are you actively battling to rule over your sin? Spend time praying Ephesians 6:10-18.

Day 4

Who are the Nephilim?

The Nephilim are mysterious creatures that appear in Genesis 6:4 and again in Numbers 13:33.

While there is not a consensus from scholars on exactly who they are, they are described as giants or semi-divine beings.

To learn more about them, read here.



God responded to the sin and wickedness of the world by destroying the earth with a flood. God saved Noah and his family, as well as representative animals. The flood subsided and God began afresh with Noah.

Read Genesis 6–8.

In Genesis 1:31, God saw everything that He had made and called it very good.

1. What had happened since then that culminated in Genesis 6:5–12?

2. What was the consequence of the extreme sin?

3. How did Noah stand out from the rest of humanity?

4. What was the first thing that scripture records Noah doing after coming out of the ark?

5. What do you learn about God's character in these chapters?

6. Where do you see hope in the story of the flood?



Key Verse

Fill in the blanks for Genesis 1:1 below.

“ _____, God _____ the heavens and the earth.”



Prayer and Reflection

How have you experienced God's faithfulness amidst the brokenness of the world? If you are going through a hard time, ask God to reveal hope to you in the midst of the struggle. Praise Him that He is the God of hope as He points us to His larger story of redemption.

Day 5

God made a covenant with Noah, showing His faithfulness even amidst the brokenness of the world. Mankind, however, continued in their sinful ways. The consequences resulted in a scattering of people into different groups with different languages.

Read Genesis 9 and 11:1–9.

1. What covenant did God make with Noah? How does this covenant apply to us today?

2. In Genesis 11:1–9, how were the people disobedient to God’s directions after the flood in Genesis 9:7? What were the consequences of their disobedience?

3. Who was God speaking to in Genesis 11:6–7? Who is the “us” in “let us go down...?”



Going Deeper

Read Acts 2:1–13 and discuss how these events worked as a reversal of one aspect of the consequence of Genesis 11:8–9.



Key Verse

Write Genesis 1:1 from memory below.



Prayer and Reflection

Spend some time asking God to search your heart and show you ways that you are trying to seek control instead of trusting Him. Praise the Lord that we are able to see and know His glory as we understand more of who He is through His Word.

Jesus in Creation and Crisis

As sin entered the world, God gave Adam and Eve a glimpse into the Savior to come. The promise is first mentioned in Genesis 3:15 when God said “he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.” God was telling Satan that even though he will bruise the heel of the Savior, ultimately Christ will have victory and overcome evil. Our hope is that even amidst sin and brokenness, Christ will return in victory and defeat sin and death.

Wrap Up

Summarize the events of Creation and Crisis.

In this week’s study, what did you learn about God that was new to you?

Week 3



Where are we in the Great Story?

Covenant

Key Players

Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Jacob's twelve sons

Book of the Bible

Genesis 11-17; 50

Key Verse

“And he believed the Lord, and he counted it to him as righteousness.”

-Genesis 15:6

Group Ice Breaker Questions

Share a bit about the history of your family. What is your lineage?

Making Connections

At the first of the story God created the heavens and the earth and everything in them. The first two humans, Adam and Eve, were created and shared an intimate relationship with God. The first crisis occurred when sin entered into the world through the disobedience of Adam and Eve. Sin's consequences were suffering, pain, and death. The mark of sin was carried forward to every generation following Adam; as we read about the next several generations we see people disobeying God for their own control and glory, but we also see reminders of God's goodness and faithfulness. In this section, the promise of God's plan of salvation will begin to unfold.

Day 1

The Abrahamic Covenant is an unconditional covenant, which means it is not based on the people's actions.

God made a covenant with Abram. This covenant is a glimpse into God's plan to restore all things and bring salvation to His people.

Read Genesis 11:27-12:20.

1. A covenant is an oath-bound relationship between two or more parties. How does that definition apply to the text? In what ways is the covenant with Abram different from this definition of covenant?

2. What did God tell Abram to do in Genesis 12:1?

3. List all of the things God said He would do in Genesis 12:2-3.

4. What did Abram have to do to obey God according to Genesis 12:4-6?

5. How did Abram sin in Genesis 12:10-16? How did God protect Abram from the consequence of his sin?



Key Verse

Write Genesis 15:6 below.

The Abrahamic
Covenant is land, seed
(descendants), and
blessing.



Prayer and Reflection

Has God ever called you to step out into the unknown to trust in Him?
How did you see God at work?

Day 2

God kept His covenant with Abram as He blessed him and the people around him.

Read Genesis 13-14.

- 1. How did Abram show wisdom in resolving the conflict with Lot?**
- 2. What did God promise in Genesis 13:14-18? How did this relate to what God had promised in Genesis 12:2-3?**
- 3. Write down everything you learn about Melchizedek in Genesis 14:17-24.**
- 4. Read Hebrews 7. List anything new you discover about Melchizedek. How did he point to Jesus?**
- 5. Looking back at Genesis 14:20, why do you think Abram gave Melchizedek a tenth of everything?**



Key Verse

Fill in the blanks for Genesis 15:6 below.

“And he _____ the Lord, and he counted it to him as righteousness.”



Prayer and Reflection

While the world focuses on material blessings, God’s blessings to us are often gifts like peace, joy and contentment. How have you been blessed because of your trust in God? Spend some time praising the Lord for his many blessings to you.

Day 3

Read Genesis 15.

God formally entered into the covenant with Abram. God was the one who bound the covenant together and promised to fulfill it.

1. Why did Abram not need to fear in Genesis 15:1? How is God like a shield?

2. Abram felt comfortable bringing questions to the Lord. What two concerns did he bring to Him in Genesis 15:2 and 15:8?

3. On what basis was Abram counted as righteous in Genesis 15:6?

4. As Abram continued to trust and follow, how did God get more specific as He repeated His promises? See Genesis 12:2-3, 13:14-17 and 15:18-21.



Key Verse

Fill in the blanks for Genesis 15:6 below.

“And he believed the Lord, and he _____ it to him as righteousness.”



Prayer and Reflection

Spend some time thanking the Lord that we don't have to fear because He is our shield. Are you in a certain situation that brings fear and anxiety? Take your fear and anxiety to the Lord and ask Him to remind you that He is with you and His plans will not be thwarted.

There are several major covenants in the Bible that shape the Story of God:

The Noahic Covenant
(Genesis 9)

The Abrahamic Covenant
(Genesis 12-17)

The Mosaic Covenant
(Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy)

The Davidic Covenant
(2 Samuel 7)

The New Covenant
(Jeremiah 31)

Day 4

In Eastern countries, a change of name signals a new circumstance in the individual. The name Abram means exalted father while the new name, Abraham, means father of multitudes. In this instance, God changed his name to summarize the covenant He made with Abraham.

Read Genesis 16-17.

1. Summarize what happened in Genesis 16:1-6. What does this section reveal about Abram and Sarai? Do people have the same issues today?

2. What do we learn about God from Genesis 16:7-16? How did this encourage Hagar?

3. What did God promise Abram in Genesis 17:1-8? What did God command Abram to do for the covenant to happen in Genesis:17:1-2?



Going Deeper

List all of the names and their meanings mentioned in chapters 16 and 17. Which names changed? What do you learn about each person through their name?

4. Why did God call Abraham to circumcise himself and his offspring in Genesis 17:10? What was the point of circumcision?

5. How is God's kindness displayed in Genesis 17:15-21?

6. How did Abraham show a heart to obey in Genesis 17:23-27?



Key Verse

Fill in the blanks for Genesis 15:6 below.

“And he believed the _____, and he counted it to him as _____.”



Prayer and Reflection

How have you experienced God as El-Roi, the one who sees you, and El-Shaddai, the Almighty God?

Day 5

Read Genesis 22:1-18.

1. How did Abraham demonstrate faith and give glory to God?

2. What did Abraham know to be true about God that allowed him to move forward in faith? See Romans 4:20-21, and Hebrews 11:17-19.

Read Genesis 26.

3. Why did God refer to Himself as “the God of your father Abraham” to Isaac in Genesis 26:24?

4. What was the significance of God repeating the covenant to Isaac in Genesis 26:3-5? Refer also to Genesis 17:7.

Isaac had two sons, Esau and Jacob. Jacob was chosen by God to be the one whom through the covenant continued.

Read Genesis 35:9-15.

5. What was the significance of God repeating the covenant to Jacob?

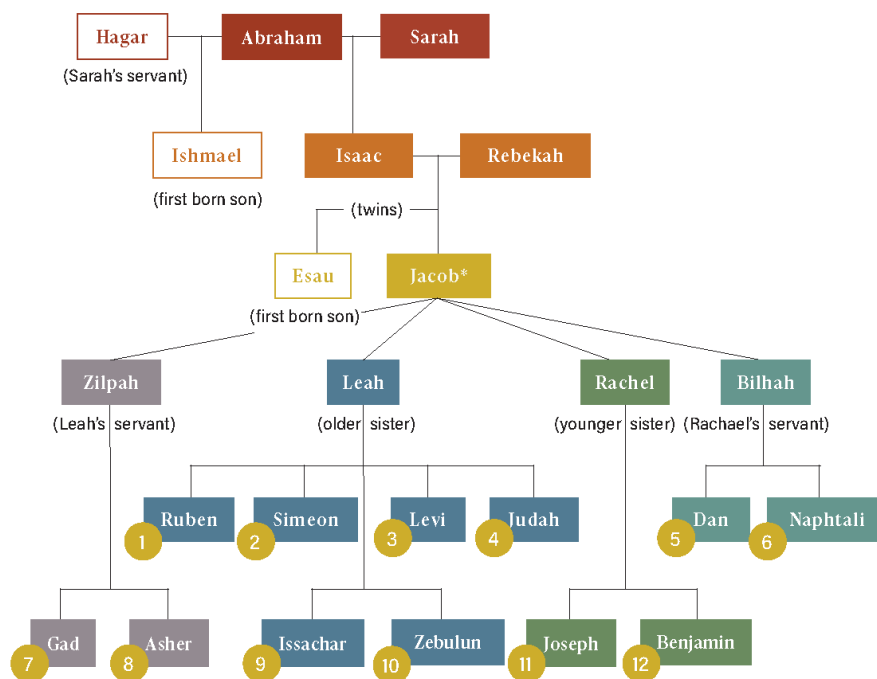
6. What new name did God call Jacob and what name did God call Himself?

Jacob was blessed with twelve sons whose descendants would eventually form the twelve tribes of the nation of Israel. Jacob favored his son, Joseph, which infuriated his brothers. To get rid of him, they sold Joseph as an Egyptian slave. While in Egypt, God showed favor to Joseph and blessed him. He went from slave to Pharaoh's second in command. Joseph used the wisdom and insight God gave him to save many people from a famine, including his entire extended family. When Joseph was reunited with his brothers, he forgave them and their relationship was restored.

Read Genesis 50:1-26.

Twelve Tribes of Israel

Genealogy from Abraham to the Sons of Jacob



*Jacob is often called "Israel" in scripture after God changes his name in Genesis 32:27-28.



Going Deeper

What does Genesis 50:20 say about the character of God? How have you seen those attributes on display throughout the book of Genesis?

7. What does Genesis 50:20 say about humanity?



Key Verse

Write Genesis 15:6 from memory below.



Prayer and Reflection

How has God brought forgiveness and restoration to your life? Spend some time thanking Him that He is a God who forgives and restores us. Thank Him that we have the ultimate gift of forgiveness through the cross of Jesus and that we have been restored into a relationship with Him.

Jesus in the Covenant

The covenant with Abraham ultimately points to Jesus. Jesus is the blessing. It is through Jesus and in Jesus that we receive the blessing of God to be in His presence forever.

The story of Abraham being tested to sacrifice his son, Isaac, is a beautiful picture of the sacrifice of Jesus for us. There are many parallels between this story and the story of Jesus.

Isaac and Jesus are both beloved sons who had been promised

(Genesis 17:19, 22:2, Matthew 1:21-23, 3:17)

Isaac and Jesus both follow their father obediently toward death.

(Genesis 22:6-9, Matthew 26:39)

Isaac and Jesus both carry the wood for their own sacrifice.

(Genesis 22:6, John 19:17)

In both situations, God provides a sacrificial substitute. God provides the ram as the substitution for Isaac. God provides Jesus as the substitution for us. (Genesis 2:28, John 1:29, 1 Peter 3:18)

Wrap Up

For each of the following sections, write a one sentence summary:

Creation and Crisis

Covenant

In this week's study, what did you learn about God that was new to you?

Week 4



Where are we in the Great Story?

Calling Out

Key Players

God, Moses, Pharaoh

Book of the Bible

Exodus 1-6, 11-14

Key Verse

“God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” And he said, “Say this to the people of Israel: ‘I AM has sent me to you.’” -Exodus 3:14

Group Ice Breaker Questions

Have you ever been called out to a new place unexpectedly (i.e. a move, a new job or a new phase of life)? How did that make you feel?

Making Connections

In response to sin entering the world and the brokenness that came with it, God established a covenant with Abraham and his descendants. God was faithful to bless Abraham’s family as they waited for the future fulfillment of His covenant promises. The twelve sons of Jacob became the nation of Israel and went to Egypt during a famine. At the conclusion of Genesis, the Israelites were at peace with the Egyptians.

In Exodus, however, conflict will arise between the Egyptian leaders and the Israelites. In the midst of the conflict, God will continue to keep His covenant with Abraham.

Day 1

Read Exodus 1-2.

- 1. What part of the covenant with Abraham was God fulfilling in Exodus 1:7?**
- 2. What three things did Pharaoh do to prevent the further growth of the Israelites? See Exodus 1:9-22.**
- 3. How was God faithful to the Israelites even amidst oppression?**
- 4. What stands out to you in Exodus 2:1-10?**
- 5. How does this part of the story demonstrate God's faithfulness?**
- 6. In what ways did God go to great lengths to save Moses's life?**



Going Deeper

Exodus 2:23-24 tells us that God remembers his covenant. Why would that language be used here?



Key Verse

Write Exodus 3:14 below.



Prayer and Reflection

Are you or have you ever been in a season where you felt like God has abandoned you? How does this passage speak to us in those moments? Thank Him that He sees you, knows your suffering, and is with you.

Day 2

Read Exodus 3-4:23.

1. What evidence of God’s holiness do you see in Exodus 3:2-6?

2. How did God refer to Himself in Exodus 3:6, and what does that say about His character?

3. What name did God reveal to Moses in Exodus 3:14?

What is God’s name? In Exodus 3:14 God reveals his name to Moses, I AM WHO I AM. God wanted all people to know that He alone is the one true God who exists eternally and is completely unique and high above everything He created. He wanted them to know that His character is unchanging and He is active and present with all of His creation. His plans are certain and His promises are sure. The Hebrew word translated as the LORD in Exodus 3:15 is YHWH.

4. What was God calling Moses to do in Exodus 3:16 - 22?

God responded with three “I have” statements in Exodus 3:7-8:

I have seen the affliction of my people.

I have heard their cry.

I have come down to deliver them.

5. Why did God harden Pharaoh's heart?



Key Verse

Fill in the blanks for Exodus 3:14 below.

“God said to Moses, “_____ who _____.” And he said,
“Say this to the people of Israel: ‘_____ has sent me to you.’”



Prayer and Reflection

How has God revealed Himself to you? Spend time praising the God of the universe that He made Himself known to you!

Day 3

Hebrews = Israelites

Abraham, Isaac, and Moses all shared an intimate relationship with God. They were comfortable approaching the Lord to share their concerns and fears.

Read Exodus 5:1- 6:13.

1. How did Pharaoh respond to Moses's request to let the Hebrews go so they could worship the Lord in Exodus 5:2 and 5:6 - 9?

2. How did God encourage Moses in Exodus 6:1-8?

3. How did that encouragement move Moses to action?

4. What caused the Israelites to not listen to Moses in Exodus 6:9?

5. What do these two chapters say about God's relationship with Moses?



Key Verse

Fill in the blanks for Exodus 3:14 below.

“_____ said to _____, “I AM WHO I AM.” And he said, “Say this to the people of _____, “I AM” has sent me to you.”



Prayer and Reflection

How has God taken you and made you a part of His people? Spend some time praising God that He is your God and that you are a part of His people.

Day 4

In Exodus 7-10, Moses continued to go to Pharaoh and demand that he let the Israelites (i.e. Hebrews) go to worship the Lord. God continued to harden Pharaoh's heart in order that judgment would play out and so the Egyptians would know that He is the Lord.

In these chapters, God sent the plagues: the Nile River turned to blood, frogs, gnats, flies, the death of the livestock, boils, hail, locusts, and darkness. After each plague, Pharaoh's heart was hard, and he did not let the people go.

Read Exodus 11-12.

Read Isaiah 53:6 - 12 and 1 Peter 1:19. How did the lamb in Exodus 12:3-5 foreshadow Jesus?

1. Why did they need to put blood on the doorframes of their houses in Exodus 12:22-27?

2. Why did the Lord tell them to make the Passover a memorial day in Exodus 12:24-27?

3. How did the people respond in Exodus 12:27?

4. How did the last plague demonstrate God's power and justice?



Key Verse

Fill in the blanks for Exodus 3:14 below.

“God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” And he said, “_____ this to the people of Israel: ‘I AM has _____ me to you.’ ”



Prayer and Reflection

Are you facing a circumstance that seems unjust? Spend time thanking God that He is just and that you can trust His judgment.

Day 5

Read Exodus 13:17-14:31.

- 1. In Exodus 13:21-22, God manifested His presence with them in a new way, fire by night and a pillar of cloud by day. How did this benefit them?**
- 2. What did God want the Egyptians to know about Him in Exodus 14:4?**
- 3. What did the Israelites' response in Exodus:14:10-12 reveal about their hearts toward the Lord?**
- 4. In what ways had God already fought for the Israelites throughout these chapters in Exodus?**
- 5. Summarize the events in Exodus 14:19-31.**
- 6. What did the Israelites see about God in Exodus 14:30-31? How did they respond?**



Key Verse

Write Exodus 3:14 from memory below.



Prayer and Reflection

The Lord who sent the plagues and parted the Red Sea to save the Israelites is the same God who rescued you from sin and death. Spend time praising Him that you have been rescued and redeemed!

Jesus in the Calling Out

The dramatic elements of the exodus of God's people points to Jesus. Just like the blood was put on the doorframe of their homes in order that death would pass them by, so we are covered by the blood of Jesus and death passes over us. As the Egyptians who refused to acknowledge God suffered judgment, so too will people who reject Jesus also suffer judgment.

Wrap Up

For each of the following sections, write a one sentence summary:

Creation and Crisis

Covenant

Calling Out

In this week's study, what did you learn about God that was new to you?

In addition to the Israelites escaping Egypt, Exodus 12:38 also tells us that numerous other people joined the Israelites and fled. This is an example of God welcoming others to be His people, a theme that will continue throughout Scripture.

Week 5



Where are we in the Great Story?

Commandments

Key Players

God, Moses, the Israelites

Book of the Bible

Exodus 19-20; Deuteronomy 6 and 28

Key Verse

“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.”

- Deuteronomy 6:4-5

Group Ice Breaker Questions

Are you a rule follower, a rule bender, or a rule breaker?

Making Connections

God brought the people out of Egypt and out of the yoke of slavery. He showed his power and might by redeeming them during the Passover and parting the Red Sea.

In this section, the Israelites will be guided by the presence of God. God will also give them His laws, called commandments, to live by.

Day 1

Consecrate means to make or declare to be sacred, by certain ceremonies or rites: to appropriate to sacred uses; to set apart, dedicate, or devote to the service and worship of God.

Read Exodus 19.

1. What were the requirements and privileges of the covenant God made with Moses in Exodus 19:5-6?

2. God promised Israel they would be a “treasured possession” in Exodus 19:5, versus a possessor of treasures. What is the difference?

3. What instructions were given to the people to prepare them in Exodus 19:10-15?

4. Why might God give such specific instructions for how He was to be approached? How would wearing clean clothes, refraining from sexual activity, and keeping a safe distance impact the way the Israelites perceived God?

5. Visualize the scene on the morning of the third day at Mount Sinai. What do you think God intended to communicate to the people through this display of His power?



Key Verse

Write Deuteronomy 6:4-5 below.



Prayer and Reflection

Mount Sinai became like a temple when God dwelt there. What a privilege for the Israelites, as it signaled a special relationship between them and God. But unlike the Israelites, who immediately begged “don’t let God speak to us or we will die,” we, as followers of Jesus, have the Holy Spirit who dwells in us. Refer to 1 Corinthians 6:19-20. Spend time praising God for His Spirit that dwells in us.

Day 2

Read Exodus 20.

1. Fill in the chart below from 20:1-17.

	Commandment	What God Values	What God Hates
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			

Why is God jealous? God's jealousy is righteous. Our jealousy isn't. When people are jealous, it is the sense of being envious of someone who has something we do not have. God is jealous for what is rightly His: worship that belongs to Him.

2. In what ways are the first four commandments similar? In what ways are the last six commandments similar?



Going Deeper

How is the second commandment forbidding carved images different from the first commandment which says “you shall have no other gods before me”? What different aspects of flawed worship do they address?

3. Why do you think breaking or obeying the second commandment would affect future generations (Exodus 20:5-6)?

4. In the ancient Near East, names represented a person's character. When we speak of the name of God, we are referencing everything that is true about who He is, not just distinguishing Him from other gods. In this sense, taking His name in vain would mean misrepresenting His character in any way. What are some ways we misrepresent His character with our speech?

5. How does observance of Sabbath rest help us find rest in the Lord?

6. Look up the word honor and write the definition. How does the idea of honoring our parents connect the first four commandments to the last five?



Key Verse

Fill in the blanks for Deuteronomy 6:4-5 below.

“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your _____ and with all your _____ and with all your _____.”



Prayer and Reflection

Our relationship with others is always tied to our relationship with God. Think of a person you currently find difficult to love. How is your reluctance to love that person an indicator of a deficit in your love for God? Ask for God’s help to love that person. Thank the Lord that He loves you even when you are hard to love.

Day 3

Reread Exodus 20.

- 1. How have you expressed love and honor to your parents, even as an adult?**

- 2. Why is murder so offensive to God? Refer to Genesis 9:5-6. Does the Bible forbid all killing?**

- 3. Why might God have considered adultery such a damaging sin to Israel?**

- 4. Specifically, what type of dishonest speech did the ninth commandment condemn? Why do you think God singled out this type of lying? What desires motivate us to speak falsely about someone? See Proverbs 25:18.**

- 5. Look up the definition for desire and covet. What is the key difference between the two? Why do you think God included specific examples of this command?**



Going Deeper

Look up Matthew 22:34-40. How did Jesus' response address the heart of the Ten Commandments?

6. Pagan worshipers built altars out of smoothly hewn stone (i.e. cut or shaped by tools). Like the Tower of Babel, these altars were often constructed with steps intended to act as a stairway to the heavens. Pagans sometimes exposed themselves and performed sex acts on these steps as part of their worship. With this in mind, what do you think God wanted His worshipers to understand in Exodus 20:25-26 about how He is to be approached?



Key Verse

Fill in the blanks for Deuteronomy 6:4-5 below.

“ _____, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is _____.
Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.”



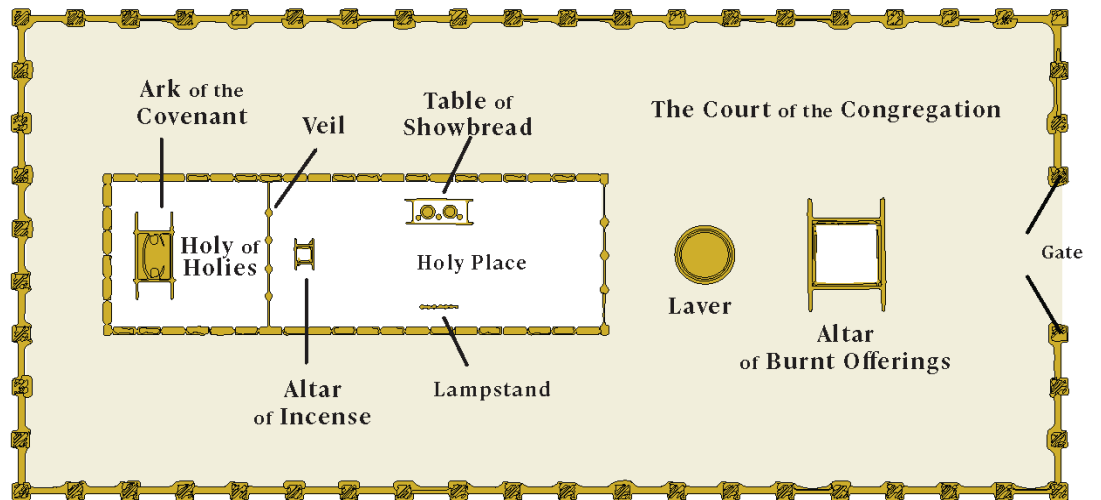
Prayer and Reflection

Christians live in the tension between trembling at God's power and drawing near to Him as our Father. What potential danger is there in over-emphasizing one of these truths at the expense of the other? Is your own approach to God unbalanced by either being overly fearful or overly familiar? How can you return to a more balanced view of God?

Day 4

The Tabernacle

Supposed Layout of the Tabernacle, 1500 BC - 957 BC



Throughout this section of scripture, God dwelt with His people in the wilderness. God was their God, and they were His people. God related to them through His presence.

In Exodus 25-40, the Israelites built the tabernacle, a tent for the presence of God to live in and move with His people. It was built according to God's detailed instructions given to Moses. This was the place where God manifested His glory as He moved with His people on their journey in the wilderness and into Canaan.

It had three main sections. The first section was the courtyard which contained a bronze altar and a bronze laver (wash basin). The Israelites were commanded to bring many types of sacrifices here for the priests to offer on their behalf. The second section was known as The Holy Place. It contained a golden lampstand, table for bread and altar of incense. Only the priests could enter here where they tended to each element. The sections were divided by large curtains covered in cherubim.

The innermost section was called the Most Holy Place or the Holy of Holies. Only the High Priest was allowed to enter here once a year on the Day of Atonement. This is where the Ark of the Covenant resided with the atonement cover atop it. God's glory filled the tabernacle as seen in Exodus 40:34.

Who were the priests?

Leviticus 16 outlined the detailed purification rituals that were required for a priest to enter the Most Holy Place in the temple. In Exodus 28:31-35, they were told to add bells to the robe of the high priest so that he would not die.

Throughout Leviticus, God told them how they must live while His presence dwelt with them. Four times they were told "Be holy, because I am holy," summing up the instructions given in the book. The overarching theme is that when the holy presence of God came to live in their midst, they needed to be conscious of His greatness and live accordingly as a

clean and set apart people. However, the extent of the people's fallen nature could never achieve the standard set by a holy God.

In Leviticus, God in His kindness laid out a sacrificial system to make substitutionary atonement for sin through animal and grain sacrifice. This gave them a way to restore their relationship with God. The sacrifices were done in the tabernacle before the Lord, on behalf of the people. These sacrifices pointed to the ultimate sacrificial death of Jesus on our behalf.

In Numbers, God led them to the promised land, but the Israelites refused to enter. They claimed the people who lived there were too big and would be too hard to defeat. They cowered in fear and refused to go into the land that God had promised them, even though this was the entire purpose of their exodus from Egypt. This was the land that was promised to their forefathers in the Abrahamic Covenant! God gave them what they wanted; He sent them back to the wilderness to wander for another 40 years until the generation that refused to enter into the Promised Land all died.

Before the new generation entered, God reminded His people of His relationship with them and how they should live in the Promised Land. The book of Deuteronomy is the second telling of the original law given to Moses. The law pointed them to an abundant life of blessings that God longed to give them. If they obeyed, God would live with them and bless them. If they choose to disobey, there would be judgments in the form of curses.

Read Deuteronomy 6.

1. Why did you think God repeated the commandments that He had given the Israelites in Exodus 20?

2. How did Moses instruct the Israelites to love the Lord their God in Deuteronomy 6:5?

3. How would following the instructions in Deuteronomy 6:6-9 impact them, their children, and future generations?

“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might...”

This is the beginning of the first portion of the Shema, found in Deuteronomy 6:4-9. Its name comes from the first word of the passage which in the original Hebrew is shema, or “to hear.” Generations of faithful Jews have prayed the Shema Prayer twice daily to remind themselves to listen to the Lord with a heart to obey out of love and reverence for Him. Jesus referred to it as the greatest commandment in Mark 12:30.

5. In Deuteronomy 6:10-15, what warning did God give for when they entered the Promised Land?



Going Deeper

Jesus quoted Deuteronomy 6:13 and 16 during His temptation in the wilderness. Refer to Matthew 4 and Luke 4. How might these truths be applied to you today?



Key Verse

Fill in the blanks for Deuteronomy 6:4-5 below.

“Hear, O Israel: _____ our God, _____ is one. Love _____ your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.”



Prayer and Reflection

In Deuteronomy 6:20-25, the Lord told the Israelites to speak often about how He had saved them. Write out your testimony below. Praise God for how He has been at work in your life. Ask Him to allow you to share it with someone soon.

Day 5

Read Deuteronomy 28.

- 1. What are the blessings promised to the Israelites in Deuteronomy 28:1-14?**
- 2. What conditions were set for the Israelites to receive the blessings outlined?**
- 3. What were the themes of the consequences of disobedience in Deuteronomy 28:15-68?**
- 4. How did the curses serve as a warning to the Israelites about the consequences of disobedience?**
- 5. What role did the concept of covenant play in the blessings and curses described in this chapter?**

Key Verse

Write Deuteronomy 6:4-5 from memory below.



Prayer and Reflection

Sit before God and ask Him to reveal any areas of your life where you are not walking in obedience. Ask God to convict you and turn you away from your disobedience by giving you a desire to walk in obedience to Him.

Jesus in the Commandments

In Deuteronomy 30:6, Moses spoke to the people about a future time when God would circumcise His people's hearts. With circumcised hearts, these future children of God would be able to love the Lord with all their hearts and souls, so that they might live. Moses' words spoke ahead to all whose dead hearts have been made alive through Jesus. Through the power of the Holy Spirit the presence of God resides within each heart that has trusted in Jesus.

Wrap Up

For each of the following sections, write a one sentence summary:

Creation and Crisis

Covenant

Calling Out

Commandments

In this week's study, what did you learn about God that was new to you?

Week 6



Where are we in the Great Story?

Conquest and Canaanization

Key Players

God, Joshua, and the Israelites

Books of the Bible

Joshua 1-7

Key Verse

“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.” - Joshua 1:8

Group Ice Breaker Questions

What instructions did a parent give you repeatedly before you left the house?

Making Connections

To this point, God has fulfilled several of His promises in the Abrahamic Covenant. He made the people numerous, forming them into a great nation. He blessed them, blessed those who blessed them, and cursed those who cursed them. He tried to take them into the Promised Land. Yet because of their disobedience, the Israelites had not yet entered it. In the book of Joshua, they finally will.

Day 1

Read Joshua 1.

In Joshua 1:7, the phrase *good success/ be successful* refers to achieving favorable outcomes in accordance with God's will. It signifies not just material success, but also spiritual prosperity that comes from following God's commands and walking in obedience to His Word.

1. What instructions and promises did God give to Joshua in Joshua 1:1-9 as he prepared to lead the Israelites into the Promised Land?

2. What command did God give Joshua in Joshua 1:6 that was repeated multiple times in this chapter? Why would that be important?

3. How did God's presence in Joshua 1:9 provide assurances and confidence for Joshua as a leader?

4. How did the people affirm Joshua as the leader in Joshua 1:16-18?



Key Verse

Write Joshua 1:8 below.



Prayer and Reflection

Which command given to Joshua would be the toughest for you to obey?
Which of the promises would be most helpful to you?

Day 2

Rahab and Ruth were both included in Jesus' lineage even though they were not originally part of the nation of Israel: "The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham."

Read Joshua 2.

- 1. What was the mission of the two spies sent by Joshua to Jericho?**
- 2. Who was Rahab and what role did she play in the events of this chapter?**
- 3. How did Rahab's conversation with the spies reveal her understanding of God's power and sovereignty?**
- 4. What agreement did Rahab and the spies make for her and her family's safety?**
- 5. What lessons can we learn from Rahab's story about God's mercy and redemption?**

“Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram, and Ram the father of Amminadab, and Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of David the king.”

- Matthew 1:1-6



Key Verse

Fill in the blanks for Joshua 1:8 below.

“This Book of the Law shall not depart from your _____, but you shall meditate on it _____ and _____, 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.”



Prayer and Reflection

How can we apply the example of Rahab’s faith and courage to our own lives as believers today? What areas are you struggling to trust in the Lord and have courage? Take them to the Lord and ask Him to build your faith in Him and to give you courage to step out in boldness.

Day 3

Read Joshua 3.

To read more about
the Ark of the
Covenant, see Exodus
25:10-22.

1. How did the priests demonstrate their faith and obedience to God's commands?

2. What would it have meant to the Israelites to see the Ark of the Covenant, which represented the presence of God, going before them across the Jordan River?

3. How did the crossing of the Jordan River in Joshua 3:14-17 symbolize a new beginning for the Israelites as they entered the Promised Land? Think back to the Red Sea crossing in Exodus 14.

4. How would the events in chapter 3 have strengthened the Israelites' confidence in Joshua's leadership and in God's presence with them?



Key Verse

Fill in the blanks for Joshua 1:8 below.

“This Book of the Law shall not _____ 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 _____, and then you will have good _____.”



Prayer and Reflection

How can the crossing of the Jordan River serve as a metaphor for stepping out in faith and trusting God in our own lives? What personal applications can you draw from the account of the Israelites crossing the Jordan River for your walk with God today?

Day 4

Read Joshua 4-5.

1. What was the purpose of the twelve stones taken from the Jordan River in Joshua 4:1-9?

2. How might the events in Joshua 4 have strengthened the Israelites' faith and trust in God as they entered the Promised Land?

3. In Joshua 5:1-9, how did they demonstrate obedience to the covenant God had made with Abraham?

4. What were they to remember by observing the Passover at Gilgal in Joshua 5:10-11? Refer also to Exodus 12:12-14.

5. Why did they no longer need the manna when they got to the land of Canaan in Joshua 5:12?

6. Describe the encounter Joshua had in Joshua 5:13-15. Why do you think God arranged that encounter with Joshua?



Key Verse

Fill in the blanks for Joshua 1:8 below.

“This _____ shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall _____ 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.”



Prayer and Reflection

How can we apply the principle of setting up spiritual markers to remember God’s faithfulness and provision based on the example in Joshua 4:19-24? What events would be important to remember in your own life?

Day 5

Read Joshua 6 - 7.

- 1. What instructions did God give to Joshua regarding the conquest of Jericho for the first six days in Joshua 6:3?**
- 2. What were they to do differently on the seventh day of marching according to Joshua 6:4-7?**
- 3. Why do you think God chose such a dramatic and supernatural way to bring down the walls of Jericho instead of a conventional military strategy?**
- 4. How was Rahab rewarded for her faith and actions in Joshua 6:22-25?**
- 5. Rahab was not originally a part of the nation of Israel. Yet God welcomed her in as a part of His people despite her past. What did Rahab and her family's salvation suggest about God's character?**

While sin can be individual, the effect of sin is always corporate. It always impacts other people.

6. What does it mean that Achan sinned and yet it says that Israel sinned? What was the impact of Achan's sin in Joshua 7:12?

Trading Places

Rahab (Joshua 2)	Achan (Joshua 7)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A Canaanite prostitute• Faithful to God• Hid the spies• Helped save God's people• Was delivered from death• Became an Israelite	

Key Verse

Write Joshua 1:8 from memory below.



Prayer and Response

It is often hard to wait for God to do things His way or wait for His timing to do them. What lessons do you learn from the Israelites' victory at Jericho about trusting in God's strategies and timing in your own life?

Jesus in the Conquest and Canaanization

The main characters of the story so far have been part of the people of God, the Israelites. Rahab, however, was not originally an Israelite; she was a Canaanite. She put her trust in the Lord by protecting them, received salvation from Him and was brought into God's family. We too were outsiders moving toward death who were brought into the family of God. Christ rescued us and gave us salvation through His broken body and shed blood.

Wrap Up

For each of the following sections, write a one sentence summary:

Creation and Crisis

Covenant

Calling Out

Commandments

Conquest and Canaanization

In this week's study, what did you learn about God that was new to you?

Week 7



Where are we in the Great Story?

Conquest and Canaanization, Part 2

Key Players

Othniel, Ehud, Deborah, Gideon, Jephthah, Samson

Books of the Bible

Judges

Key Verse

“In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.” - Judges 21:25

Group Ice Breaker Questions

What would a classroom look like if it was filled with kids who all did what was right in their own eyes and did not listen to their teacher’s instructions? Have you ever been somewhere similar? If so, were you more like the students or more like the teacher in this scenario?

Making Connections

After God delivered his people from the Egyptians, He prepared them to go to the Promised Land. He gave them the commandments to teach them how to live in His presence within the blessings He had for them. Their new leader, Joshua, led them into the Promised Land through a series of successful battles, driving out the nations occupying the land.

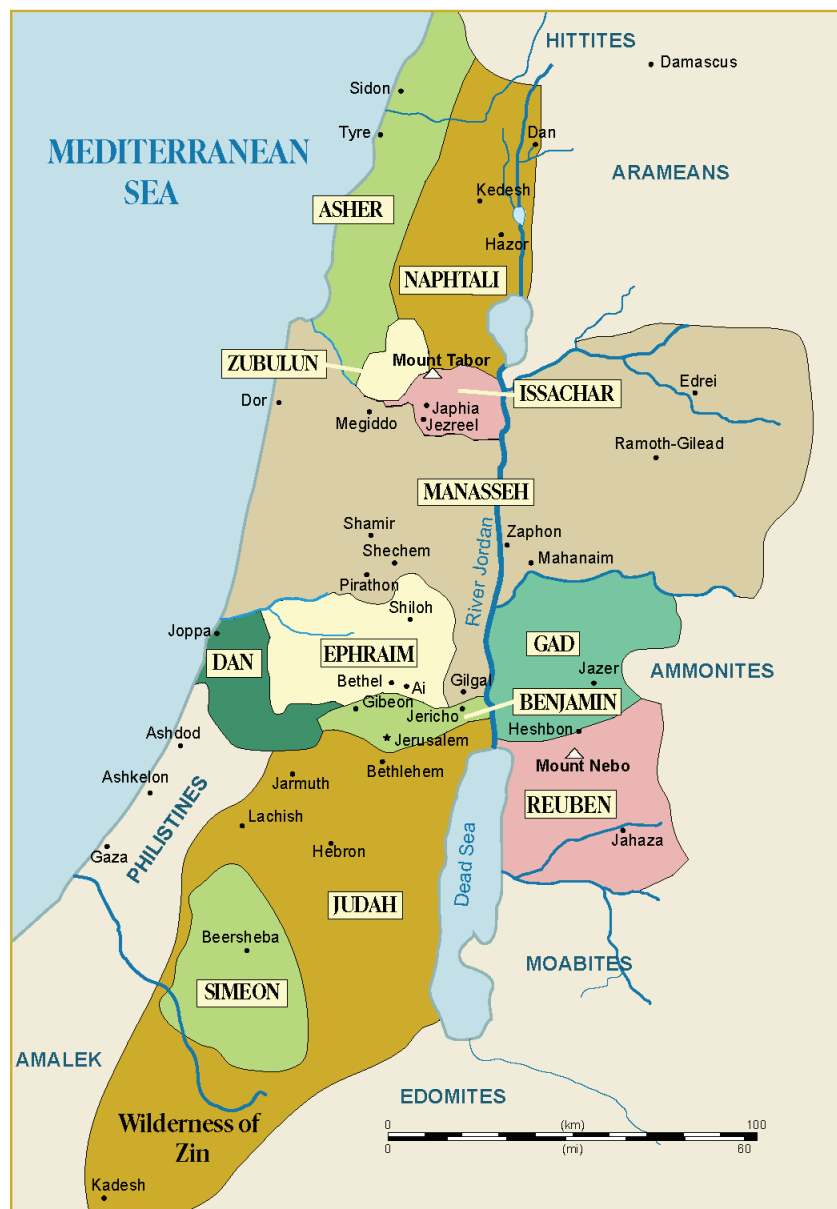
In the rest of Joshua, the people defeated the major cities, first in the south and then in the north. None of their enemies withstood them. God gave the Israelites the land that He had promised to Abraham. They took possession of it by dividing up the land for each tribe.

At the end of Joshua, God called the Israelites to remember their covenant with Him, and they pledged to obey His commandments and to worship Him alone.

In the book of Judges, Joshua and the generation who followed him, who had kept God's commands, will pass away. In their absence, God's people will begin to wander away from the Lord. God will raise up judges to rescue the people.

Division of Canaan

The Twelve Tribes of Israel 1200-1050 BC According to the Book of Joshua



Day 1

The tribes of Israel failed to obey God fully. Because of their disobedience, they were unable to take possession of all the land God had promised them. Some of them became subject to forced labor, and others began to worship the gods of the land.

Read Judges 2.

1. What message did the angel of the Lord bring to the Israelites in Judges: 2:1-3?

2. How did the Israelites respond to the rebuke and warning from the angel of the Lord in Judges 2:4-7?

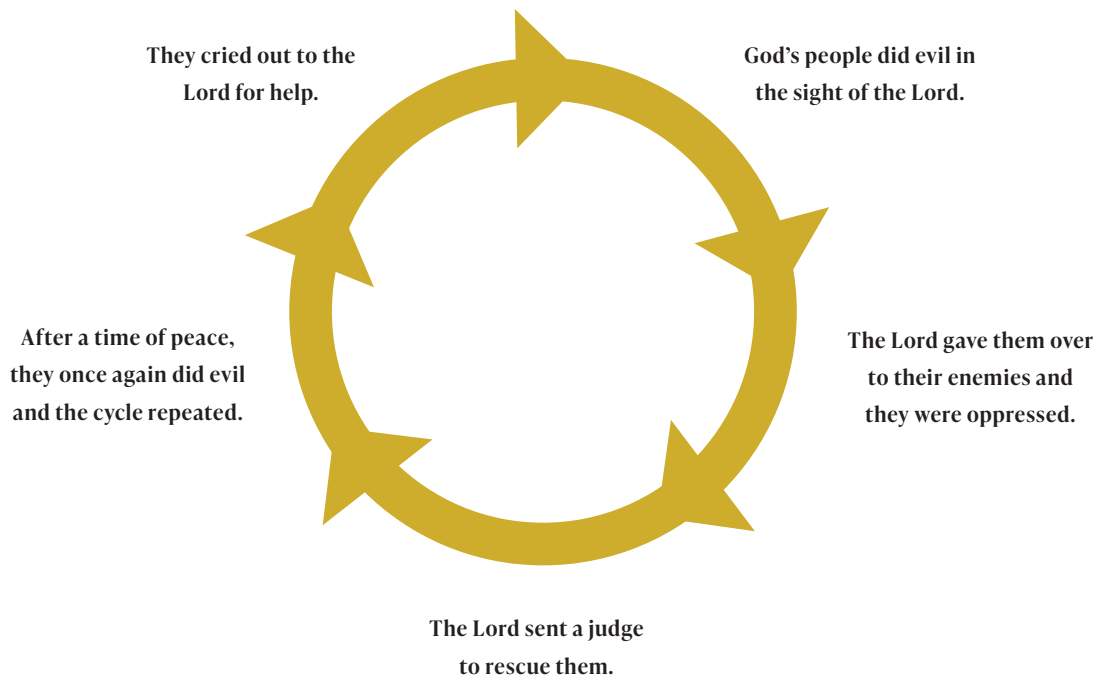
3. How did the death of Joshua mark a significant transition in the leadership and spiritual condition of the Israelites in Judges 2:6-10?

4. How would you characterize the next generation in Judges 2:10-13?

5. What consequences did the Israelites face as a result of their turning away from the Lord and following after other gods in Judges 2:14-15?

 **Going Deeper**

A cycle was repeated over and over in Judges:



6. What attributes of God do you see in each step of this cycle?



Key Verse

Write Judges 21:25 below.



Prayer and Reflection

What patterns can you identify in the cycle of sin that are relevant to your own relationship with God? What principles can you apply as you seek to remain faithful and obedient to Jesus in all circumstances?

Day 2

Between the time of Judges 3 and 1 Samuel 8, Israel had several major judges. God used them to rescue His people. Some of them were good, but some of them, like the people they were sent to deliver, spiraled down into ever worsening sin.

Here is a summary of some of the judges not covered in this study:

The Judges of Israel Approximately 1350 BC - 1052 BC

Judge	Reference	Years of Oppression/Rest	Total Years of Rule*
Othniel	Jud. 3:7-11	8 (3:8) 40 (3:11)	48 years
Ehud	Jud. 3:12-30	18 (3:14) 80 (3:30)	98 years
Shamgar	Jud. 3:31, 5:6	- -	Unknown
Deborah	Jud. 4-5	20 (4:3) 40 (5:31)	60 years
Gideon	Jud. 6-8	7 (6:1) 40 (8:28)	47 years
Tola	Jud. 10:1-2	- 23 (10:3)	23 years
Jair	Jud. 10:3-5	- 22 (10:2)	22 years
Jephthah	Jud. 10:6-12:7	- 24 (10:8; 12:7)	24 years
Ibzan	Jud. 12:8-10	- 7 (12:9)	7 years
Elon	Jud. 12:11-12	- 10 (12:11)	10 years
Abdon	Jud. 12:13-15	- 8 (12:14)	8 years
Samson	Jud. 13-16	40 (13:1) 20 (15:20; 16:31)	60 years
Eli (judge and priest)	1 Sam. 1-4	- 40 (4:18)	40 years
Samuel (judge and prophet)	1 Sam. 3:20; 7:6	- 22 (7:2)	22 years (until Saul was anointed king)

≈ 5 Years of Oppression

≈ 5 Years of Rest

The "Spirit of the Lord" is said to have come upon these four judges: Othniel (Judg 3:10), Gideon (Judg 6:34), Jephthah (Judg 11:29), and Samson (Judg 13:25, 14:6,19, 15:14).

*Added together, the dates in this column total about 410 years. However, many of the episodes in Judges overlap each other, unfolding in different parts of the land.

Adapted from ESV Bible App <https://www.esv.org/resources/esv-global-study-bible/chart-07-01/>

- Othniel was a man of good character and delivered the Israelites from Mesopotamia.
- Ehud smuggled a sword into a meeting with the king of the Moabites and killed him, delivering Israel.
- Deborah followed the Lord and led the people into battle. She summoned Barak to lead an army against Canaan. Under her leadership, Israel achieved a significant victory.
- Gideon was given four miraculous signs so that he would trust and obey God. His story ended when he wore something only priests were supposed to wear, which his family then worshiped.
- Jephthah made a foolish vow: if God gave him victory, then he would sacrifice the first thing that came out of his house. God gave him victory, and he ended up sacrificing his daughter.

Key Verse

Fill in the blanks for Judges 21:25 below.

“In those days there was no _____ in Israel. Everyone did what was _____ in his own eyes.”

Prayer and Reflection

Have you ever compromised your faith and values for the sake of personal desire? Ask God to search your heart and show you where you might have done this. Spend time before the Lord in confession. Then spend time praising God that He has brought it to light. Ask Him to break you of the bonds of pleasure over obedience.

Day 3

“...Samson appears to serve as a symbol of Israel. Incredibly gifted and full of tremendous potential, he chooses to ignore God and fritter it all away, chasing after foreign women, who symbolize foreign gods.”

- J. Scott Duvall and J. Daniel Hays

Samson was set apart as a Nazarite before his birth. As a part of the Nazarite vows (Numbers 6:1-21), he could not drink alcohol, touch a dead body, or cut his hair. In Judges 14, Samson broke his vow by touching a dead lion.

Read Judges 15-16.

1. How would you describe Samson’s actions in Judges 15:1-8? Do you think Samson was being the judge God wanted here?

2. How did God use Samson for His purposes in Judges 15:9-15?

3. In regards to Delilah, how did Samson do what was right in his own eyes in Judges 16:4-31?

4. What was Samson’s final act that demonstrated God’s superiority over the false gods of the Canaanites in Judges 16:23-31?

5. How would you describe Samson in his role as judge at the end of his life?



Going Deeper

What parallels can you draw between the birth of Samson and other significant births in the Bible: Isaac in Genesis 21, Samuel in 1 Samuel 1, and John the Baptist in Luke 1:5-25, etc.?



Key Verse

Fill in the blanks for Judges 21:25 below.

“ _____ there was no king in Israel. _____ did what was right in his own eyes.”



Prayer and Reflection:

What lessons can you learn from Samson’s ultimate act of faith and sacrifice about the power of repentance, redemption, and God’s ability to use even our failures for His glory? Praise God that even our sin cannot thwart His plans!

Day 4

Read Judges 19-20.

1. What happened in the story of the Levite and his concubine in Judges 19 that highlighted the utter moral and social decay present in Israel during that time?

2. How did the tribes of Israel respond to the atrocity committed in Gibeah? How does this demonstrate the importance of seeking justice and upholding moral standards in society?

3. How did the tribes of Israel prepare for battle against the tribe of Benjamin in Judges 20?

4. How would you compare how Israel as a whole followed God under Joshua and how Israel followed God during the time of this story?



Key Verse

Fill in the blanks for Judges 21:25 below.

“In those days there was no king in _____. Everyone did what was right in _____.”



Prayer and Reflection

This story is shocking, disgusting and hard to read, especially as it happened with God’s people. We still see horrors of injustice and violence today. Spend time praying for God to push back the darkness in His people and give His people a desire to glorify Him.

Day 5

Read Judges 21.

1. What was the aftermath of the civil war? How did this reveal the consequences of unchecked sin, lack of leadership, and the need for repentance and restoration?

2. What actions did the tribes of Israel take to address the loss of the tribe of Benjamin and the need to provide wives for the surviving tribe? How does this reflect their desperation and moral compromise?

3. How did the elders of Israel justify their actions to the remaining Benjamites and the need to rebuild the tribe?

4. At the end of the book of Judges, what can we conclude about Israel's blatant disregard for God and their fellow humans made in God's image?

5. Genesis 6:5-6 described how God felt about sin in the world before the flood. How do you think God felt about the sin of His people during the time of the judges?



Key Verse

Write Judges 21:25 from memory below.



Prayer and Reflection

Praise God for his holiness and faithfulness. Are you grieved over your sin? Spend time asking God to give you a correct view of your sin, and a deep gratitude for God's salvation.

Jesus in the Conquest

The time of the judges points to the need for a Savior. The people of God became more and more disobedient to Him and the result was darkness and depravity. The book of Judges should make us grateful for the salvation we find in Jesus. He is the light of the world.

Wrap Up

For each of the following sections, write a one sentence summary:

Creation and Crisis

Covenant

Calling Out

Commandments

Conquest and Canaanization

In this week's study, what did you learn about God that was new to you?

Week 8



Where are we in the Great Story?

Creation of the Kingdom

Key Players

Naomi, Ruth, Samuel, Saul, David

Books of the Bible

Ruth, 1 Samuel

Key Verse

“For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.” - 1 Samuel 16:7b

Group Ice Breaker Questions

Who has been a loyal friend to you?

Making Connections

After God used Joshua to lead the people into the promised land, the faithful generation died away. The generations after were led by judges who moved the people away from worship and obedience to God.

In this portion of Scripture, God will raise up a new God fearing leader of the people named David.

Day 1

Read Ruth 1- 4.

In Deuteronomy 7, God forbade the Israelites to marry outside the people of God, yet Naomi's sons married Moabite women. In Ruth 1:16, Ruth committed to Naomi's God, making the decision to leave her home and family.

1. What did Naomi's decision to return to Bethlehem and her advice to Ruth and Orpah in Ruth 1:6-15 reveal about her faith in God?

2. What do you learn about Ruth from her response in Ruth 1:16 -18?

3. In chapter two, Ruth gleaned in the fields to gather food for her and Naomi. What did this demonstrate about Ruth's character?

4. In chapter three, Naomi advised Ruth to approach Boaz, their (kinsman) redeemer, at the threshing floor. What did this plan reveal about how Naomi felt about Ruth?

5. In chapter four, what did Boaz's interaction with the leaders at the gate show about his character? See also Ruth 3:11-13.

6. Look back at the beginning of Ruth. In what ways did God demonstrate His faithfulness to each of the following:

Naomi

Ruth

Boaz

Boaz' mother was Rahab. Rahab and Ruth were both brought into God's family even though they were not Israelites. Each of them demonstrated a remarkable faith. Their names appear in the genealogy in Matthew 1 that lists the lineage of Christ. This is a reminder that God's plan from the beginning of time was to include people from all nations into His redemptive story.



Key Verse

Write 1 Samuel 16:7b below.



Prayer and Reflection

Spend time praising God for the mercy and grace you have received through Jesus. Marvel that His plan of salvation included drawing you to Himself.

Day 2

The book of 1 Samuel begins in the time of the judges when the people were not following God's commands. A man named Eli served as priest. He had two disobedient sons who were not fit to become priests in his place. At the same time, a God fearing woman named Hannah gave birth to a boy named Samuel. Samuel ended up serving as priest after Eli and his sons died. He also served as a judge and was the one who anointed Israel's first king.

Read 1 Samuel 8-9.

1. In 1 Samuel 8:4-8 and 19-20, what caused Israel to demand a human king? How did Samuel and God respond to this demand?

2. What warnings did Samuel give to the Israelites in 1 Samuel: 8:10-18 about the consequences of having a human king?

3. What did the Israelites' insistence on having a human king reveal about their spiritual condition?

4. What are the dangers of placing trust in human leaders or systems instead of relying on God's wisdom, guidance, and sovereignty?

5. In Samuel 9:1-17 how was Saul described? How did Saul's encounter with Samuel on his journey to find his father's lost donkeys reveal God's plan?



Key Verse

Fill in the blanks for 1 Samuel 16:7b below.

“For the Lord _____ not as man _____ : man _____ on the outward appearance, but the Lord _____ on the heart.”



Prayer and Reflection

When have you had temptations to seek security and leadership from sources other than God? Pray that God would help you seek only Him.

Day 3

Read 1 Samuel 10.

1. In 1 Samuel 10:1-8, what instructions did Samuel give to Saul after he anointed him as king?

2. Describe Saul's encounter with the prophets and the Spirit of God coming upon him in 1 Samuel 10:9-12. How did this demonstrate the transformative power of God's Spirit?

3. In 1 Samuel 10:20-22, when the time came for Samuel to present Saul as king to the people, Saul could not be found because he was hiding among the baggage. What does this say about Saul's character?



Key Verse

Fill in the blanks for 1 Samuel 16:7b below.

“For the _____ sees not as _____ sees: _____ looks on the outward appearance, but the _____ looks on the heart.”



Prayer and Reflection

Has there ever been a time when you have “hidden” from the job God has called you to do? How has God prepared and equipped you for kingdom work?

Day 4

Read 1 Samuel 17-18.

1. Even though David was anointed the king in secret, the fight with Goliath brought him to the forefront. What did the confrontation between the Israelites and the Philistines show about David?

2. What challenges did Goliath pose to the Israelite army in 1 Samuel 17:2-11? How did they reveal the lack of faith and courage among Saul's soldiers?

3. What reasons did David give to Saul for his confidence in facing Goliath in 1 Samuel 17:32-37?

4. How was David and Jonathan's relationship different from David and Saul's relationship?

5. How was David's character different from Saul's character?



Key Verse

Fill in the blanks for 1 Samuel 16:7b below.

“For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the _____ ,
but the Lord looks on the _____.”



Prayer and Reflection

Reflect on a time when God prepared you for something in the future.
Spend time praising God for going before you and walking alongside you.

Day 5

Read 1 Samuel 19.

1. What did Jonathan intervening on David's behalf show about his character in 1 Samuel 19:1-7?

2. In contrast, what did Saul's attempts to harm David expose about his character in 1 Samuel 19:10-24?

3. How did God protect David in the face of danger?

4. Read Psalm 59. This psalm was written by David when Saul was trying to kill him.

5. What does Psalm 59:9 say about David's faith in God?

6. What stands out to you about Psalm 59:16-17?



Key Verse

Write 1 Samuel 16:7b from memory below.



Prayer and Reflection

In times of trouble, what is a verse that you can cling to that reminds you to trust in the Lord? Pray God's Word and thank Him for being a place where you can always seek refuge.

Jesus in the Creation of the Kingdom

In the story of Ruth, the kinsman redeemer points to Jesus as our redeemer. Jesus pays for our debts and makes a way for us to be with the Lord. We also see a lineage through Ruth that ultimately becomes the lineage of Jesus.

Wrap Up

For each of the following sections, write a one sentence summary:

Creation and Crisis

Covenant

Calling Out

Commandments

Conquest and Canaanization

Creation of the Kingdom

In this week's study, what did you learn about God that was new to you?

Week 9



Where are we in the Great Story?

Creation of the Kingdom

Key Players

David and Solomon

Books of the Bible

2 Samuel, 1 Kings

Key Verse

“And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.” - 2 Samuel 7:16

Group Ice Breaker Questions

What do you tend to notice about someone when you first meet them? What new things do you start to notice after you get to know someone better? What does God know about us that no one else can?

Making Connections

Generation after generation, God continued to keep his covenant with Abraham and all of his descendants. Ruth was a poor widow from Moab who lived during the time of the Judges. At a time when everyone did what was right in their own eyes, Ruth stood out for her loyalty and faithfulness. She was brought into the family of God when she married Boaz. Ruth and Boaz had a son named Obed, who was the father of Jesse, and the grandfather of King David.

David was called a man after God’s own heart (1 Sam 13:14), but he was not perfect. In this section, he will sin and need God’s forgiveness. God will also make an important new covenant with David, promising a future righteous king who will reign forever.

Day 1

“One of the most significant events in David’s life occurs in 2 Samuel 7. David wants to build God a ‘house’ (meaning a temple). Instead, God declares that he will build David a ‘house’ (meaning a dynasty). Indeed, 2 Samuel 7 is one of the most important chapters for biblical history and theology, for here God establishes the Davidic Covenant. As part of this covenant, God promises that a descendant of David will be established on the throne of a kingdom that will last forever.”

- J. Scott Duvall and J. Daniel Hays

David became king after Saul’s death. Under David’s leadership, Jerusalem became the capital of Israel. David modeled extravagant worship when he danced before the Lord with all his might while the Ark of the Covenant was returned to God’s people.

Read 2 Samuel 7.

1. What did God promise to do for each of the following?:

David (2 Samuel 7:9b and 11) -

The people (2 Samuel 7:10) -

His future son, Solomon (2 Samuel 7:12-15) -

2. What kind of house did God promise to make through David’s lineage in 2 Samuel 7:11b and 16-17?



Going Deeper

Read Isaiah 9:6-7, Luke 1:30-33, Acts 2:29-36 and Revelation 11:15-17. How does Jesus fulfill God’s promise to David?

3. Summarize how David responded to God in 1 Samuel 7:18-23. How would you describe their relationship?



Key Verse

Write 2 Samuel 7:16 below.



Prayer and Reflection

What encourages you about the relationship between David and God? In 2 Samuel 7:9 God tells David that He has been with him wherever he went. When you picture God in your mind do you see him as near to you, speaking to you and responding to you in love? Or something else? Spend some time talking to him and listening to his response.

Day 2

Read 2 Samuel 11.

1. In 2 Samuel 11:1-3 what red flags do you see in David's behavior?



Going Deeper

What similarities do you notice between David in 2 Samuel 11:3-4 and Eve in Genesis 3:6 (listed below)? What lies of Satan might David have believed in this moment?

“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...” - Genesis 3:6

2. Consider the story from the perspective of each of the following. How were they described? How were they affected by David's actions?

Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11:2-5 and 26-27a) -

Uriah (2 Samuel 11:3 and 6-16) -

Joab (2 Samuel 11:1 and 14-25) -

God (2 Samuel 11:27b) -

3. What sins did David commit? Against whom?

4. Read Genesis 4:7 and James 1:14-15. David had won victories over many enemies. What was he battling in this story that he was unable or unwilling to defeat?



Key Verse

Fill in the blanks for 2 Samuel 7:16 below.

“And your _____ and your _____ shall be made sure forever before me. Your _____ shall be established forever.”



Prayer and Reflection

What emotions do you feel after reading about David’s sin? Have there been scandals of other leaders that you have admired and trusted that have affected you? Talk to God about it and listen for His response.

Day 3

Read 2 Samuel 12:1-25.

1. According to the last phrase of 2 Samuel 11 and the first phrase of 2 Samuel 12, who sent Nathan and why?

2. In 2 Samuel 12:1-4 Nathan told David a story. How were David's actions in 2 Samuel 11 similar to the story? How were they different?

3. In 2 Samuel 12:5-6 how did David feel after hearing Nathan's story? What judgment did he think the man in the story deserved? How did David's emotions mirror God's from question 1 above?

4. In 2 Samuel 12:10-12 what were the consequences of David's sin?

5. Who did David say he sinned against in 2 Samuel 12:13? How do you think his feelings changed once he realized he was the man Nathan had described in his story?

6. According to David's own words, what consequence did he deserve that he did not receive?



Going Deeper

In 2 Samuel 12:14-23, we learn of the final consequence of David's sin. Make a list of David's actions both while the child was alive and after he died. Next to each action, list a character trait that David demonstrated that he believed about God through that action.

The death of David and Bathsheba's first born son is troubling. David faced many consequences for his sin, but God allowed him to live even though he deserved to die. His innocent child, who did no wrong, tragically died instead.

Where is God's justice in this part of the story? Why would He allow this to happen? Not knowing all the answers to these questions can be very unsettling. God wants us to remember His character when we don't understand. He is the loving creator of life. He is perfectly just. He is the comforter who mourns with those who mourn.

The story is building to a day when God will send His own Son into the world because of His great love for us. Our salvation will come at a great price. Jesus will live a perfectly sinless life, yet He will take the punishment we deserve. Those who place their faith in Jesus will not face death. They will be forgiven and live eternally as part of God's family.

David and Bathsheba mourned the death of their firstborn son greatly. In their grief, God graciously gave them a second son, Solomon. When Nathan called Solomon "Jedidah" (beloved by God) he was reminding them that God's faithful love still remained. Solomon will grow up to be king and will build the temple, just as God had promised to David.



Key Verse

Fill in the blanks for 2 Samuel 7:16 below.

“And your house and your kingdom shall be made _____
_____ before me. Your throne shall be established _____.”



Prayer and Reflection

Read through Psalm 51, David’s song of repentance. Use it to pray to God and listen for his response.

Day 4

Read 1 Kings 3:5-14.

1. In 1 Kings 3:7-9, what did Solomon ask God to give him that pleased the Lord? Why did he ask for it?

2. List all the things God promised to give Solomon in 1 Kings 3:11-13. What does this show about God's heart?

3. In 1 Kings 3:14 what was Solomon to do in response? What are the implications that David is to be his example, even after his sin?

Read 1 Kings 8:54-58 and 9:1-9.

4. When the building of the temple was completed, Solomon prayed a beautiful prayer in 1 Kings 8:54-58. Use 1 Kings 9:3 to rewrite God's answer to Solomon's prayer in your own words below.

5. God had given Solomon great wisdom and riches just as he had promised. According to 1 Kings 3:4-5 what else would Solomon need in order to walk as his father had walked? What would be the result if he did?

6. In 1 Kings 3:6-9, what would be the consequences if Solomon or his children turned aside from following the Lord?



Key Verse

Fill in the blanks for 2 Samuel 7:16 below.

“And _____ house and _____ kingdom shall be made sure forever before _____ . _____ throne shall be established forever.”



Prayer and Reflection

Spend some time expressing gratitude for all of the gifts God has given you. Thank him for hearing you when you pray. Thank him for the good examples of faithful people in your life who have shown you how to walk with him.

Day 5

Read 1 Kings 10:11.

1. In Deuteronomy 17, God gave Moses instructions for Israel's future kings. Fill in the chart below concerning King Solomon's reign.

Deuteronomy 17	King Solomon
16a The king, moreover, must not acquire great numbers of horses for himself.	
16b or make the people return to Egypt to get more of them, for the Lord has told you, "You are not to go back that way again."	
17a He must not take many wives, or his heart will be led astray.	
17b He must not accumulate large amounts of silver and gold.	

2. In 1 Kings 11:6, Solomon was compared to David, a man after God's own heart. What was different about the condition of Solomon's heart? Refer also to 1 Kings 3:2-4. Note that the phrase "high places" refers to idol worship.

3. The Lord was angry with Solomon because his heart had turned away from Him. In 1 Kings 11:11, what was the consequence of Solomon's sin?

4. According to 1 Kings 11:12-13, how did God show Solomon mercy? For whose sake did He show mercy? (list two)

5. Read Matthew 21:8-9, John 7:42, Romans 1:2-4 and Revelation 5:5. How was God faithful even when King Solomon was not?

 **Key Verse**

Write 2 Samuel 7:16 from memory below.



Prayer and Reflection

What are the things of this world that threaten to lead your heart away from the Lord? Are there warning signs from God that you are ignoring about your sin? Talk to him about it and listen to his response.

Jesus in the Creation of the Kingdom

David, as a righteous king, points us to Jesus, the fully righteous King. The covenant God made with David is fulfilled in Jesus who rules forever over God's kingdom.

King David sinned egregiously and King Solomon's heart turned away from the Lord, but God is forever faithful. He will keep all of the promises he made in His covenant with David. Through this broken family line, King Jesus will come to earth, live a perfect life, and die in our place. He alone is the one who saves us. Jesus is the King of Kings who reigns forever. He sits enthroned in heaven and we await His triumphant return.

Wrap Up

For each of the following sections, write a one sentence summary:

Creation and Crisis

Covenant

Calling Out

Commandments

Conquest and Canaanization

Creation of the Kingdom

In this week's study, what did you learn about God that was new to you?

Week 10



Where are we in the Great Story?

Communion and Common Sense in the Kingdom

Key Players

David

Books of the Bible

Psalms

Key Verse

“Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night.”

- Psalm 1:1-2

Group Ice Breaker Questions

Describe a few of your closest relationships. What makes each of them special? Would you describe your relationship with God in similar terms? Why or why not?

Making Connections

“Communion is at the heart of the book of Psalms. Israel’s pagan neighbors ‘worshiped’ their gods; that is, they offered sacrifices, burned incense, celebrated festivals, and so on. But there was little relationship or communion between the people and the gods. The God of Abraham is dramatically different. When he entered into covenant relationship with Israel, He stated, ‘I will be your God; you will be my people; I will dwell in your midst.’ This statement implies a real relationship, complete with communication and communion.”

- J. Scott Duvall and J. Daniel Hays

Day 1

Like the Torah, the Psalms are also divided into five books.

Read Psalm 1.

This psalm contrasts two types of people:

1. Read Isaiah 5:20, Isaiah 32:6. Who are the wicked?

2. Read Genesis 15:6, Who are the righteous?

3. Use Psalm 1:1 to fill in the rest of the chart below for what the blessed man does not do.

action	where?	of whom?	How is the action progressing?
walk	in the counsel	the wicked	He is moving

4. In Psalm 1:2, what is the blessed man doing?

5. Draw the analogy in Psalm 1:3 below. What stands out as significant to you?

6. According to Psalm 1:5, where will the wicked and sinners not stand? How are the righteous able to stand there? Refer to question one.

7. How does God want us to respond to the plight of the wicked?



Key Verse

Write Psalm 1:1-2 below.



Prayer and Reflection

If you are able, go outside and spend some time in nature. Read Psalm 8, a song written by David praising God as the Creator. Stop and pause at each verse and talk to God about what you're reading, listening for His response and enjoying the two way relationship you have with Him.

Day 2

Read Psalm 9.

1. The phrase “I will” repeats several times. List below all the actions David resolved to do.

2. What happened to David’s enemies in God’s presence?

3. Where is God sitting?

4. For how long?

5. What is He doing there?



Going Deeper

6. Read Genesis 17:5, 1 Kings 8:60, and Isaiah 56:7. What is God's plan for the nations?

7. In Psalm 9:9, 2-13 and 18, to whom is God responding?

8. According to Psalm 9:10-11, 14 and 19-20, how should we react to what God is doing?



Key Verse

Fill in the blanks for Psalm 1:1-2 below.

“_____ is the man who _____ not in the counsel of the wicked, nor _____ in the way of sinners, nor _____ in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the Lord and on his law he meditates day and night.”



Prayer and Reflection

In its original language, this Psalm is a kind of acrostic poem when it's combined with Psalm 10, going through the Hebrew alphabet. What are some of the wonderful attributes of God? Pray them A to Z and listen for His response.

Day 3

Read Psalm 19.

1. In verses Psalm 19:1-6, how is God's creation glorifying Him?

2. How are God's own words glorifying Him? Use Psalm 19:7-9 to complete the chart below.

	_____ of the Lord	What it is?	What it does?
7a	law	perfect	revives the soul
7b			
8a			
8b			
9a			
9b			

3. In Psalm 19:12-14, how did David model how we can glorify God through our actions, words, and thoughts?

4. What two things did David call God at the end of the Psalm? What does this tell you about their relationship?

5. To what would you compare God?



Key Verse

Fill in the blanks for Psalm 1:1-2 below.

“Blessed is the _____ who walks not in the _____ of the wicked, nor stands in the _____ of sinners, nor sits in the _____ of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the Lord and on his law he meditates day and night.”



Prayer and Reflection

How is God’s Word at work in your life for good? How much do you treasure it? How would you describe the words of your mouth and the meditations of your heart over the past week? Talk to God about it and listen for His response.

Day 4

Read Psalm 22.

1. How is the tone of the beginning of this Psalm different from the tone of the other ones we have read so far?

2. Describe how David was feeling about each of the following:

God (Psalm 22:1-2) -

Himself and his circumstances (Psalm 22:6-8) -

His enemies (Psalm 22:11-13 and 16-18) -

His physical symptoms (Psalm 22:14-15) -

3. What spiritual practice was David modeling in these passages: Psalm 22: 3-5, 9-10 and 19-21?

4. List several things people were doing in response to God's care for them in Psalm 22:23-31.

This Psalm is known as a Messianic Psalm because it speaks of the person and work of Jesus. It was sung by God's people for hundreds of years before Christ was born and quoted by Christ on the cross in Matthew 27:46. Write out the phrases that point ahead to the suffering that Jesus will endure.



Key Verse

Fill in the blanks for Psalm 1:1-2 below.

“ _____ is the _____ who walks not in the counsel of the _____, nor stands in the way of _____, nor sits in the seat of _____; but his delight is in the law of the Lord and on his law he meditates day and night.”



Prayer and Reflection

Is there anything heavy on your heart that you need to talk to God about? What do you need to remember about God’s character and goodness in this moment? Read through Psalm 23, thanking Jesus that He is your Good Shepherd in all of the circumstances of your life.

Day 5

Read Psalm 74.

- 1. Who wrote this Psalm? According to 1 Chronicles 16:4-7 what was his role?**
- 2. What questions did Asaph ask of God in Psalm 74:1 and 74:10-11?**
- 3. This is a psalm of lament. How was Asaph feeling? Do you feel comfortable expressing similar feelings to God? Why or why not?**
- 4. In Psalm 74:3-9, what event did he describe?**
- 5. Use Psalm 74:12-17 to list several things Asaph remembered. Next to each phrase, list an attribute that Asaph demonstrated that he believed about God by recalling it.**

6. What was Asaph asking God to do in Psalm 74:2 and 74:18-23 when he said “remember” and “don’t forget”?



Key Verse

Write Psalm 1:1 from memory below.



Prayer and Reflection

Like the Torah, the Psalms are also divided into five books. The verses listed below are the final verses of each of the five books. Read them and spend some time today in praise to God!

“Praise be to the LORD, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. Amen and Amen.” -Psalm 41:13

“Blessed be his glorious name forever; may the whole earth be filled with his glory! Amen and Amen!” -Psalm 72:19

“Blessed be the LORD forever! Amen and Amen.” -Psalm 89:52

“Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting! And let all the people say, “Amen!” Praise the LORD!” -Psalm 106:48

“Let everything that has breath praise the Lord! Praise the LORD!”
-Psalm 150:6

Jesus in Communion and Common Sense in the Kingdom (Psalms)

Communion is an intimate sharing of thoughts and feelings between people who are in a close relationship with each other.

As we read this week, Psalm 1:3 described a tree planted by streams of water. In John 4:14, Jesus called Himself a spring of living water. As we are rooted to Jesus, the source of life, in close communion with Him, like the tree we will spiritually thrive.

Wrap Up

For each of the following sections, write a one sentence summary:

Creation and Crisis

Covenant

Calling Out

Commandments

Conquest and Canaanization

Creation of the Kingdom

Communion and Common Sense in the Kingdom

In this week's study, what did you learn about God that was new to you?

Week 11



Where are we in the Great Story?

Communion and Common Sense in the Kingdom

Key Players

David, Solomon and Job

Books of the Bible

Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Job

Key Verse

“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.” - Proverbs 1:7

Group Ice Breaker Questions

What is the best advice you have ever received? What is the worst? What are some idioms that you have heard that may or may not be great advice (i.e. Don't bite off more than you can chew)?

Making Connections

God is the creator and sustainer of all things. He knows best how His people should live. At Mt Sinai, God gave Moses the Ten Commandments and the rest of the Law. God wanted His people to represent His good character to the whole world. Over and over, however, they choose to live foolishly and reject His ways. God continued to instruct His people through the wisdom books. These books work together to help us understand how to live well in the world He has made.

Day 1

Read Proverbs 1.

1. Find the words that are similar to wisdom in Proverbs 1:2-6 and write them below. Based on this, what is the purpose of the book of Proverbs?

2. According to Proverbs 1:7, where does knowledge begin?

3. What was Solomon's message to his son in Proverbs 1:8-19? Based on what you know about the story so far, why would this have been important for him to hear?

4. In Proverbs 1:20-22, Lady Wisdom is speaking in public places so that all can hear. Use the following verses to write a description of three types of people she is addressing:

The simple ones (Proverbs 14:15)

The scoffers (Proverbs 21:24)

The fools (Proverbs 1:7)



Going Deeper

Proverbs 1:23-33 described Lady Wisdom calling out, promising blessings for those who obeyed. The people continually rejected her wisdom and suffered the consequences, and yet, she continued to call out with an opportunity for them to turn toward her. Where have you seen this play out in the story so far between God and His people?



Key Verse

Write Proverbs 1:7 below.



Prayer and Reflection

Skim through Proverbs 10. Spend some time thanking God that He is a loving and wise Father who wants to guide you in wisdom. Talk to Him about any of His instructions that you may be foolishly ignoring. Ask Him to give you a willing heart to follow Him.

Day 2

Read Ecclesiastes 1:1-2:11.

In the original Hebrew, the word “hebel” (pronounced hevel) is repeated thirty eight times in the book of Ecclesiastes; five times in the second verse alone. Understanding the nuanced meaning of hebel is essential to understanding the message of the whole book. It refers to breath or vapor and is often used to describe something that looks solid, but isn’t; something that exists only for a short time, has little substance or can’t be grasped (i.e. clouds or smoke).

1. Look up Ecclesiastes 1:2 in the ESV, NIV, HCSB and MSG translations of the Bible. What words are used for hebel in each?

2. Rewrite the question asked in Ecclesiastes 1:3 in your own words. Have you ever asked a similar question? If so, when?

3. According to Ecclesiastes 1:4 and 1:11, what happens to each generation and the things they do?

4. In contrast to hebel, the Hebrew word “olam” (or in Greek, aiōnios) means eternity. Read Isaiah 51:6 and 11, 2 Corinthians 4:16-18, and 1 Peter 1:23-25. List below several things that are hebel (see definition above) and several things that are olam/aionios (will last forever, eternal).

5. In Ecclesiastes 1:12-18 and 2:1-8, what did Solomon’s heart seek? How did he feel after all of his efforts in Ecclesiastes 1:17-18 and 2:11?

Key Verse

Fill in the blanks for Proverbs 1:7 below:

“The fear of the _____ is the beginning of knowledge; _____
despise wisdom and instruction.”

Prayer and Reflection

What are you chasing that is hebel? Spend some time talking to God about it and listening to His response. Ask for His help in seeking that which is eternal.

Day 3

Read Ecclesiastes 3

In Proverbs, Solomon gave wisdom principles that we should live by. If you follow the principles, more often than not, this is what is going to result. In Ecclesiastes, however, Solomon, who called himself the Teacher or the Preacher, observed that life didn't always work out that way. Sometimes even when people did what was right, they endured hardship and injustice.

1. How did Solomon view God's relationship with people in the following verses?

Ecclesiastes 3:10-11

Ecclesiastes 3:14-15

Ecclesiastes 3:17-18

Ecclesiastes 3:21

2. In Ecclesiastes 3:12-13 and 22 what was Solomon's advice since he could find nothing better for them to do? Is this good advice? Why or why not?

Read Ecclesiastes 12: 9-14.

3. In the conclusion of Ecclesiastes, a narrator appeared to comment on Solomon's search for wisdom and meaning. According to Ecclesiastes 3:13-14, what was the narrator's conclusion?



Going Deeper

Reread the definition of hebel from yesterday's homework. The root of the name for Cain's brother, Abel, was hebel in the original Hebrew. Abel rightly sought the Lord. How then was his life hebel? How was it not? Refer to Genesis 4:1-8.

4. Hebel is also used to describe idols and idol worshippers. Read 2 Kings 17:15 and Jeremiah 2:5. How were idols hebel, and how did they lead to the people worshiping them to become hebel?



Key Verse

Fill in the blanks for Proverbs 1:7 below.

“The fear of the Lord is the _____ of knowledge; fools despise and _____.”



Prayer and Reflection

Hebel is like a cloud. Spend some time outside observing the clouds. Talk to the Lord about the brevity of the life He has given you. Thank Him that He is not hebel; he is El Olam, the Everlasting God. Thank Him for the hope you have in Him for eternal life. Pray for your friends who do not yet have a relationship with the Lord.

Day 4

The book of Job wrestles with the question of how godly people are to cope with tragedies in their life that can't be explained and seem unfair.

Read Job 1.

1. In Job 1:1, how was Job described?

2. According to Job 1:5, what specific sin did Job fear his children might commit?

In Job 1:6-12, there is a sudden and surprising shift from what could be seen on earth to what was occurring in the unseen spiritual realm. Satan was presenting himself before God after roaming throughout the earth.

3. Describe the interaction between God and Satan in Job 1:8-12.



Going Deeper

Read John 10:10, Ephesians 1:20-23, 1 Peter 5:8-10 and Revelation 12:10. List several characteristics about Satan and several characteristics about God below.

4. Pause to consider the immensity of Job’s loss in Job 1:13-19. How did Job express his grief in Job 1:20-21?

5. Compare Job 1:11 and Job 1:22. What did Job not do in response to his grief?



Key Verse

Fill in the blanks for Proverbs 1:7 below.

“The fear of the Lord is the _____ of knowledge; fools despise and _____.”



Prayer and Reflection

As believers, we can be like Job and have hope even though we mourn. Describe a time when you have witnessed grieving and worship mingled together.

Day 5

Summary of Job 2-37

Job's suffering continued. He became covered in painful sores and his own wife urged him to curse God. His agony became so great that he wished he had never been born. At first, Job's friends came and sat with him in silence. This was the source of Job's greatest comfort from them.

For most of the story, however, his friends tried to explain what had happened. They pridefully assumed that they knew everything about how the world worked. They concluded that Job must have committed some horrible sin for which he needed to repent. Their words only caused more suffering because this wasn't true. In the beginning of the story, God declared Job to be blameless.

Finally, Job became so frustrated and confused that he demanded a day in court with God. He wanted God to explain why He had allowed this injustice to happen. God confronted him in the whirlwind.

Read Job 38:1-11.

1. In Job 38:2-11, what was God reminding Job through these questions? Refer to Genesis 1-2.

2. Even though God did not explain why He was allowing suffering in Job's life, how was His answer good news?

Read Job 42:1-6 and 10-16.

3. How did Job respond to God in Job 42:1-6?

4. Look up Job 42:11b in the ESV, NLT, and NIV versions of the bible. What words are used in each to describe what the Lord brought upon Job?

5. Read John 16:33, Psalm 23:4, Psalm 34:18, John 11:33-36 and 2 Corinthians 1:3-4. We don't know why God allows bad things to happen, but what can we cling to in the midst of our suffering?

Key Verse

Write Proverbs 1:7 from memory below.

Prayer and Reflection

God loves us and wants us to draw near to him. The wisdom books show us how to commune with him:

- Through Job, we remember to trust God when we don't understand.
- In the Psalms, we learn how to praise and cry out to Him with all of our heart.
- We look to Proverbs for His wisdom that guides us in our daily lives.
- Ecclesiastes reminds us that meaning in life comes from seeking Him above all else.

Spend some time today thanking God for his constant care and love for you.

Jesus in Communion and Common Sense in the Kingdom (the Wisdom Books)

From a young age, Jesus taught with great wisdom and understanding that astounded all who heard Him. He often used parables to explain what the kingdom of God was like.

Jesus not only taught with great wisdom, He also acted with great wisdom. He knew God's words well and used them to resist temptation in the wilderness. He obeyed the Law completely and yet was often accused of breaking it by the Pharisees. In the Sermon on the Mount, He explained that the commandments weren't just about outward actions (i.e. do not murder), but were also about the motivations of the heart. When asked about the greatest commandment, He summed up the whole Law by saying that we should love God with all that we are and love others as ourselves.

Like Job, Jesus was a man of great suffering.

Wrap Up

For each of the following sections, write a one sentence summary:

Creation and Crisis

Covenant

Calling Out

Commandments

Conquest and Canaanization

Creation of the Kingdom

Communion in the Kingdom

In this week's study, what did you learn about God that was new to you?

Week 12



Where are we in the Great Story?

Crumbling of the Kingdom

Key Players

Rehoboam, Isaiah, Jeremiah

Books of the Bible

1 and 2 Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah

Key Verse

“Ah, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, offspring of evildoers, children who deal corruptly! They have forsaken the LORD, they have despised the Holy One of Israel, they are utterly estranged.” - Isaiah 1:4

Group Ice Breaker Questions

What is something you regret in your life?

Making Connections

God established the kingdom of Israel in response to the people’s plea for a king. Under King David’s leadership, the kingdom flourished. David’s faithfulness to the Lord pointed the people to the one true God. Consequences occurred, however, when David gave into temptation with Bathsheba. Nevertheless, God kept His promises to David, and his son Solomon became king. Solomon, and thus the kingdom, was given amazing wealth and wisdom. God promised that Israel would continue to be blessed as long as Solomon was faithful to walk in obedience to God’s Law. Tragically, however, Solomon drifted away from following God with his whole heart. He worshiped other gods and led the people to do the same. In this section, the kingdom will be divided in two and many of the future kings will lead God’s people into idolatry. Their rejection of God will cause them to lose out on the blessings He had promised if they would have obeyed.

Day 1

Today marks the start of week twelve, the halfway point of our study of the story of God. This is an important day to reflect and be encouraged by how much you have learned so far and to consider how it fits together as we move forward. Spend some time reviewing your homework from each week before answering the questions below.

Week Two: Creation and Crisis

- 1. What was it like in the beginning (Genesis 1-2)?**

- 2. Describe the crisis that occurred (Genesis 3).**

Week Three: Covenant

- 3. What were the promises God made in the covenant with Abraham (Genesis 15)?**

Week Five: Commandments

- 4. After God miraculously delivered the Israelites from Egypt in the Exodus, God gave them commands through Moses on how they were to live as His people. What did the people say they would do (Exodus 19:8)?**

5. What happened that showed their lack of commitment to their pledge (Exodus 32:7-8)?

6. What were the terms of the covenant God made with the people of Israel (Deuteronomy 28)?

Weeks Eight and Nine: Creation of the Kingdom

7. What did Samuel warn the people about when they asked for a king (1 Samuel 8)?

8. What were the promises God made in the covenant with David (2 Samuel 7)?



Key Verse

Write Isaiah 53:6 below.



Prayer and Reflection

As you reflect back over the story so far, what stands out to you? Praise the Lord for His sovereign care of us, His people.

A Kingdom Divided

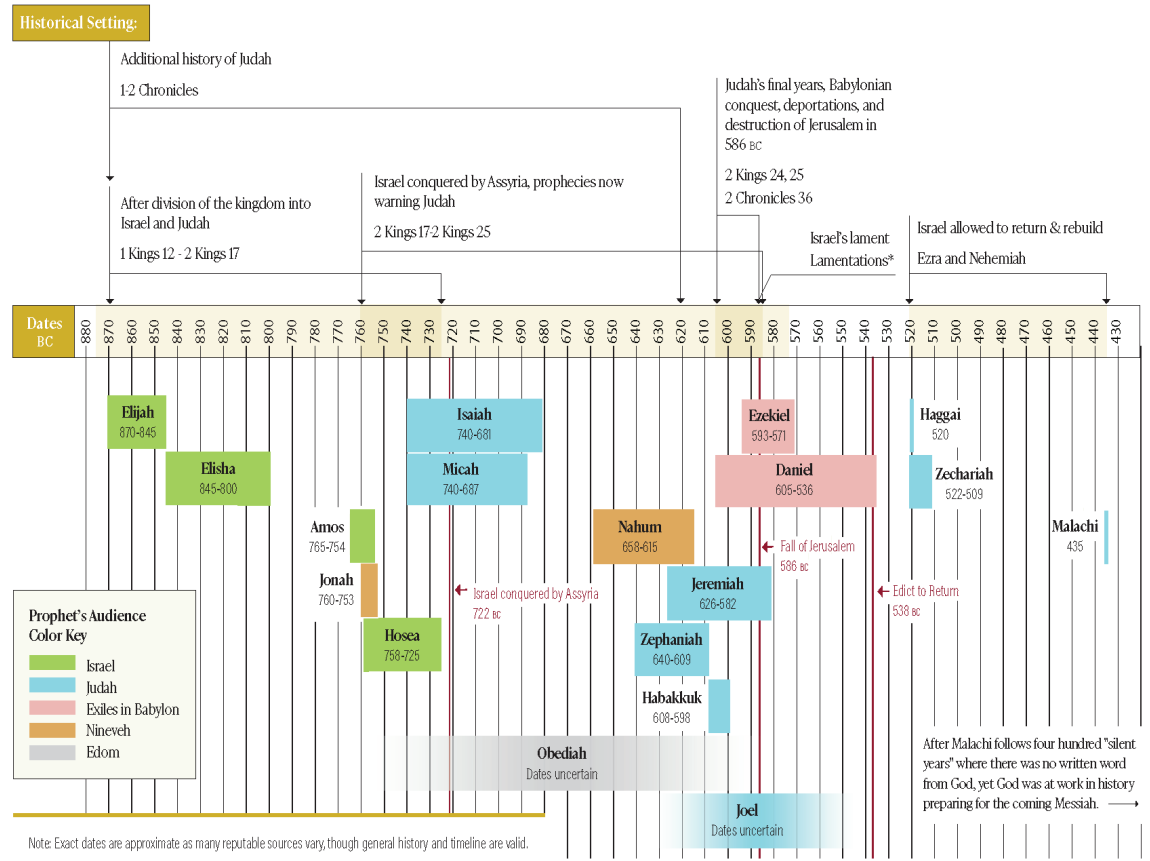
The Southern Kingdom:

- Known as Judah
- Number of tribes: two (Judah and Benjamin)
- Capital: Jerusalem
- King: Rehoboam

The Northern Kingdom:

- Known as Israel
- Number of tribes: ten
- Capital: Samaria
- King: Jeroboam

Timeline of the Prophets



Day 2

Rehoboam was Solomon's son. In this chapter, he arrived at Shechem, a city in Israel, for his coronation as the new king.

Read 1 Kings 12.

1. When Rehoboam arrived in Shechem, what did the people request from him in 1 Kings 12:4?

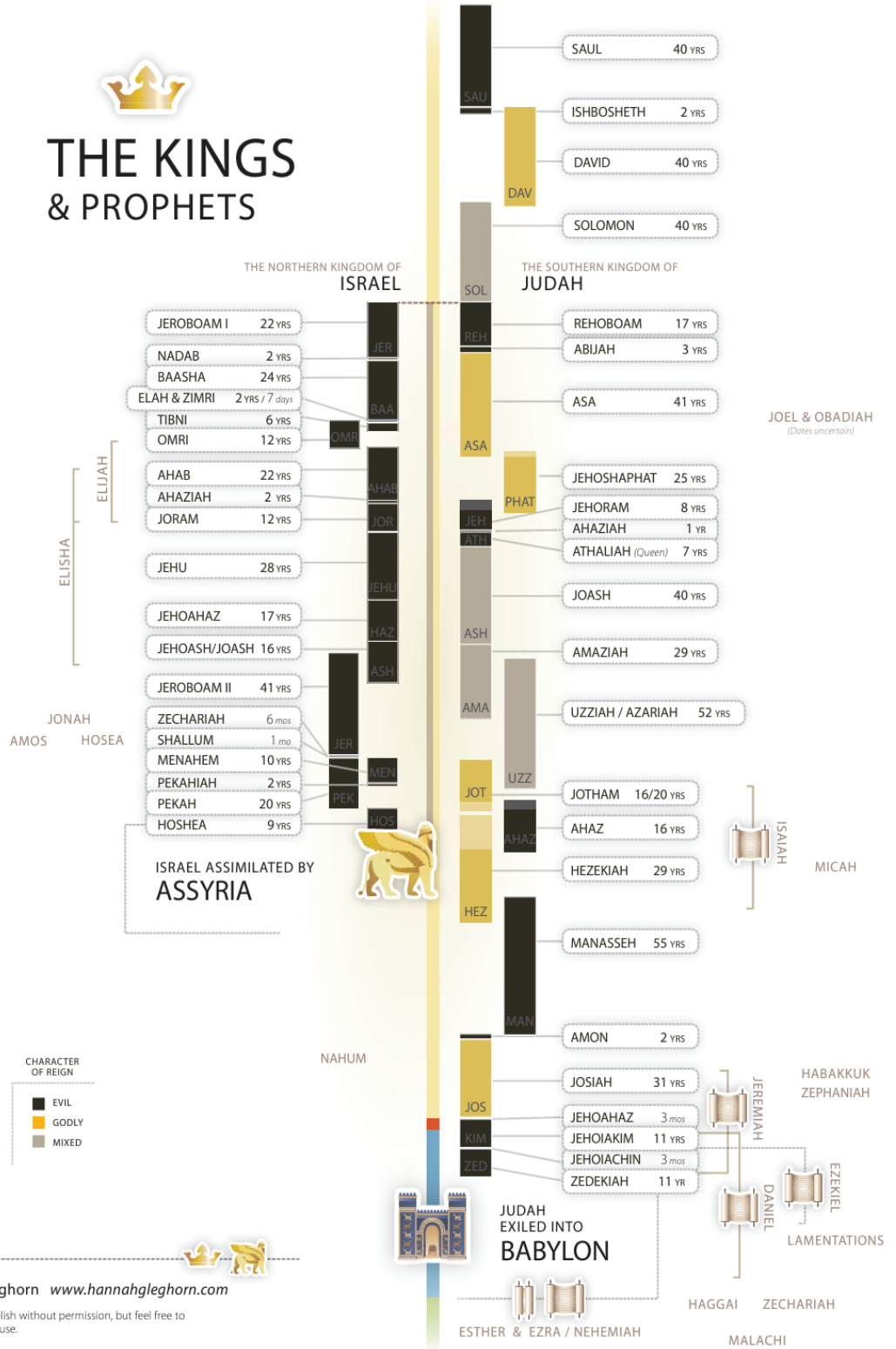
2. What was Rehoboam's answer in 1 Kings 12:13 - 15?

3. After Rehoboam's answer, what happened in 1 Kings 12:20?

God's people rejected Rehoboam as their king. The previously united kingdom split in two in 930 BC. Of the twelve tribes of Israel, only two remained loyal to him and were called Judah. The other ten tribes kept the name of Israel and proclaimed Jeroboam as their king.

Look at the chart of the kings and prophets on the next page. Use the key to answer the following:

THE KINGS & PROPHETS



© Hannah Gleghorn www.hannahgleghorn.com

Please do not republish without permission, but feel free to recopy for personal use.

Dating from *A Chronology of the Hebrew Kings* by Edwin R. Thiele, with corrections by later scholars including Mr. Rodger C. Young.

4. What do you notice about the quality of leadership of the Kingdom of Israel?

5. What do you notice about the quality of leadership of the Kingdom of Judah?

6. In the verses below, underline the phrases that showed God's desire to be with His people.

“I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you.” - Genesis 17:7

“I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God. Then you will know that I am the Lord your God, who brought you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians.” - Exodus 6:7

“Then you will live in the land I gave your ancestors; you will be my people, and I will be your God.” - Ezekiel 36:28

“So you will be my people, and I will be your God.”
- Jeremiah 30:22

7. Reread Exodus 20:18 - 21. How did the people feel about hearing directly from God?

Forsake means to
quit or leave entirely;
abandon; desert

From the beginning of creation, God wanted to be present with His people. But God's people turned away from Him; they were afraid of Him. Not only did they turn away from Him, they refused the judges God sent to help them govern themselves. They wanted a king; a person like their neighboring nations who would represent them instead of God Himself. God allowed them to live with kings, and because they were all human and sinful, the consequences of their actions were a divided kingdom. But, God Himself continues to clearly communicate His desire to be present with His people.

Key Verse

“All we like _____ have gone _____; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.” - Isaiah 53:6

Prayer and Reflection

God is King of Kings and Lord of Lords. His desire is to be in close communion with the people He has created. We can choose to accept Him or reject Him as King of our lives, but that doesn't change who He is. Who is your king? What does your heart seek?

“Forsake means to quit or leave entirely; abandon; desert”

Day 3

Read Isaiah 1 and 2.

In this section God will send the prophets. Prophets were people chosen by God to speak messages from the Lord to His people.

Isaiah was a prophet who spoke to God’s people during the events of 2 Kings. God sent Isaiah to remind Judah of their promise to follow the Lord (refer to Exodus and Deuteronomy). The first several chapters of the book of Isaiah read like a court case. God called two witnesses, the heavens and the earth, to testify against His people who were residing in the southern kingdom of Judah.

1. What was God’s first indictment against the people of Judah in Isaiah 1:2?

2. What was the second indictment against them in Isaiah 1:4?

3. Reread God’s command in Deuteronomy 10:17-20. How does Isaiah 1:23 show their rejection of God’s word?

4. In Isaiah 1:11 - 15, the Israelites were still offering the sacrifices that God had commanded. At first glance, it may seem like they were abiding by the covenant. What words did God use to describe their offerings, however, in Isaiah 1:13?

5. God sent a message of redemption and hope in Isaiah 1:16-20, even after they had committed these sins. What did God's message reveal to them about His character and nature?

"The Prophets proclaim without any ambiguity that religious ritual without faithfulness to the covenant (worshiping God alone and practicing social justice) is worthless. In fact, God declares that he detests such practices." - J. Scott Duvall, J. Daniel Hayes

Key Verse

"_____ like sheep have gone astray; we have turned – _____ – to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of _____." - Isaiah 53:6

Prayer and Reflection

God is trustworthy and reliable. Read Isaiah 2:22 in the NIV. In whom are you putting your trust? Ask the Lord to help you place your full trust in Him.

"Through his prophets, God begs his people to repent and return to him, but both Israel and Judah continually refuse to acknowledge God and to repent." - J. Scott Duvall, J. Daniel Hayes

Day 4

Kingdom of Israel

As of Approximately 830 BC



First Read 2 Kings 17.

1. In 2 Kings 17:7-23, God summarized the commandments from Deuteronomy 28 that the Northern Kingdom failed to keep. (Samaria refers to the capital of the ten tribes of the Northern Kingdom of Israel). What was the result of their disobedience in 2 Kings 17:6?

2. In 2 Kings 17:24, the Northern Kingdom was assimilated with several other nations. According to 2 Kings 17:33-34, what was Israel's punishable offense?

Look back at the chart of the kings from Day 2. Jeremiah was a prophet during the reign of King Josiah, after the Northern Kingdom had been taken captive by the Assyrians. His primary message was to call the people of Israel and Judah back into a right relationship with God and to introduce a new covenant between God and His people.

Read Jeremiah 3:6-4:4.

3. Jeremiah 3:6-10 uses graphic figurative language to describe the sins of Israel and Judah. What is the primary sin with which God charges Israel and Judah?



Going Deeper

God could have used any type of relationship to describe His care and concern for His people. Why do you think He used marriage to convey His desired relationship with us? Why then would the sins listed in Jeremiah 3:6-10 be especially offensive? (The book of Hosea gives a more complete picture of this relationship and God's response.)

4. Even though they had grieved him so, what offer did God make for both Israel and Judah in Jeremiah 3:11 - 18?



Key Verse

“All we like sheep _____; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the _____ of us all.” - Isaiah 53:6



Prayer and Reflection

“Go, and proclaim these words toward the north, and say, ‘Return, faithless Israel, declares the Lord. I will not look on you in anger, for I am merciful, declares the Lord; I will not be angry forever.’” - Jeremiah 3:12

God's heart was broken. His beautiful bride that He loved and cared for so dearly had been completely unfaithful to Him. She had rejected His

faithful love time and time again. He longed for her to be one kingdom united under His leadership, but she was divided and defeated by her own sin. Yet He is the forever faithful groom calling for His beloved to return so that He can bless her once more. What draws your heart away from God's faithful love? Spend some time answering His call to return.

Jesus in The Crumbling of the Kingdom

The prophets' message was clear; idolatry was leading the people farther and farther away from the one true God and into devastating consequences. But the prophets also pointed to the hope of a future Messiah who would come and make all things new. Jesus is the Messiah. He fulfills every prophecy. He is the only way to God. He is the way, the truth, and the life. He was their hope then, and He is our hope today and forever.

Day 5

Week 1-12 Review

As we complete Week Twelve, our halfway point, please take time to consider the additional wrap up questions below:

What have you learned about God that you didn't know before?

What events point to the need for a Savior?

On the very first day of homework (Week One, Day One), you were asked what you hoped to get out of the study. What progress have you made?

 **Key Verse**

Write Isaiah 53:6 from memory below.

Wrap Up

For each of the following sections, write a one sentence summary:

Creation and Crisis

Covenant

Calling Out

Commandments

Conquest and Canaanization

Creation of the Kingdom

Communion and Common Sense

Crumbling of the Kingdom

Week 13



Where are we in the Great Story?

Crumbling of the Kingdom

Key Players

Ezekiel, Jeremiah, Isaiah

Books of the Bible

Ezekiel, Jeremiah, Isaiah

Key Verse

“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.” - Isaiah 53:6

Group Ice Breaker Questions

How has the promise of future rewards helped you to remain disciplined in a particular area?

Making Connections

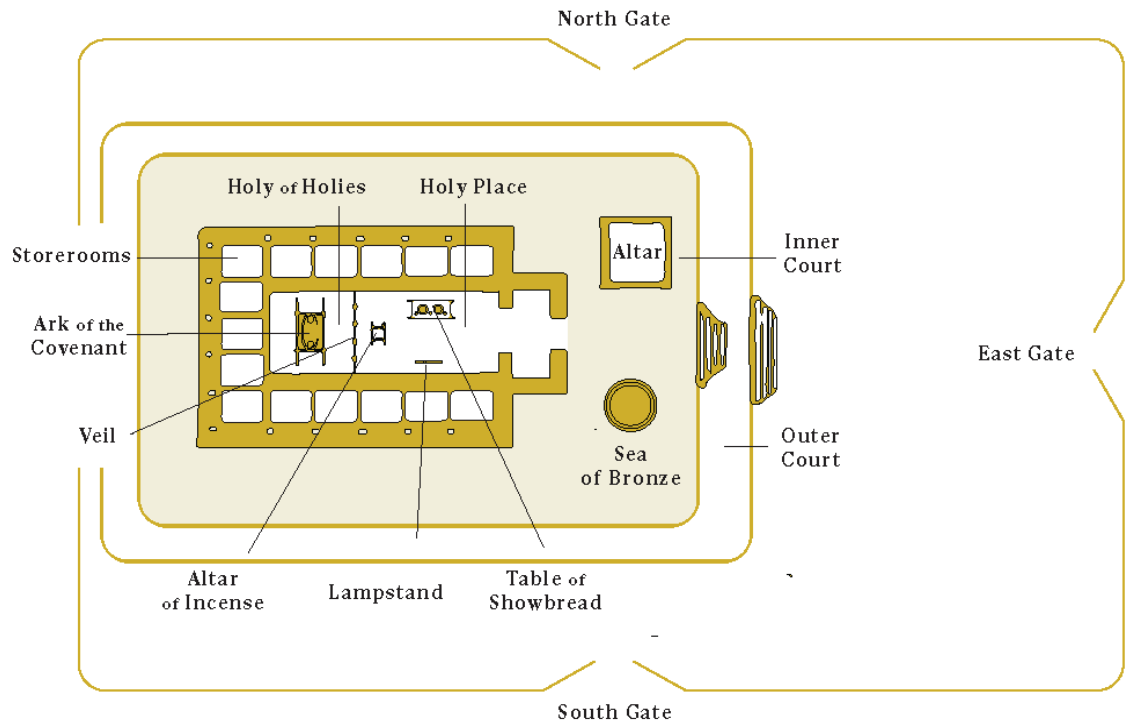
During Solomon’s reign, he used his own people as forced labor (1 Kings 5:13-14). This was in direct violation of how God had commanded future kings to behave. Solomon acted with the cruelty of an Egyptian Pharaoh in order to create spectacular buildings and fortify the city. When he died, his son Rehoboam took Solomon’s place as king. Rehoboam continued to force the people into slave labor that was even harsher than his fathers.

As a result, the people rebelled, a civil war broke out, and the kingdom was split in two. The Southern Kingdom, made up of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, was called Judah. Its capital was in Jerusalem. The Northern Kingdom retained the name of Israel. It consisted of the other ten tribes, and its capital was in Samaria.

Day 1

Solomon's Temple

Supposed Layout of First Temple, Approximately 966 BC



Once the people were dwelling securely in the Promised Land, King Solomon built the temple. The temple functioned the same way as the tabernacle, but as a permanent structure. See the tabernacle that is outlined in detail on Page 60 for more information on the elements and the role of the priests

Read Ezekiel 8, 10.

In this passage, God gave the prophet Ezekiel a vision about what was happening in the temple in Jerusalem.

3. In Ezekiel, what was being worshiped throughout God's Holy Temple?

4. What things were sitting in the temple in Ezekiel 8:10?

5. What happened in Ezekiel 10:18-19 and 11:22-23? Why do you think this was necessary, given what was happening in the temple? See Isaiah 45:5 for assistance.

 **Key Verse**

Write Isaiah 53:6 below.

 **Prayer and Reflection**

God's glorious presence had led the Israelites out of Egypt in the Exodus. His presence rested in the tabernacle as they wandered in the wilderness and filled His holy temple. His people were constantly reminded that He was with them. Ponder the gravity of God's presence leaving the temple. How would you feel if you were an Israelite?

"The presence of God will not return to the temple until Jesus Christ walks in through the gates." - J. Scott Duvall and Daniel Hays

Day 2

Read 2 Kings 25:1-21.

1. What events took place in this chapter?

Verses	Event
25:1	Nebuchadnezzar attacked Jerusalem
25:9	
25:13-17	
25:21b	

2. Reread Deuteronomy 28:15-51. Which of the curses had come true for Judah?



Key Verse

“All we like _____ have gone _____; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.”

- Isaiah 53:6



Prayer and Reflection

Though these stories are difficult to read, we see God’s justice and righteousness at work. If God promised to do something as a consequence, yet did not follow through, we could not trust Him to follow through on punishing evil and seeking justice today. In what ways is God’s justice a comfort to you?

Day 3

The Northern Kingdom of Israel is sometimes referred to as Ephraim or Samaria. Ephraim was the name of one of its ten tribes and Samaria was the name of its capital.

Read Jeremiah 31.

1. What is the remnant?

God is always faithful to His promises, despite our failures. God made a covenant with Abraham that His line would continue. Thus, in all their wanderings and captivity, God preserved a group of people called the remnant. The next few weeks of our study will deal primarily with that remnant.

2. Read the last sentence of Jeremiah 30. In what days will the prophecies from Jeremiah 31 take place?

3. What will God do for the people of Israel according to Jeremiah 31:8-10?

4. How will God demonstrate His grace and mercy as He welcomes them home? (See Jeremiah 31:13 and 25, among others.)

“The only hope for the human failure caused by enslavement to sin is divine redemption that a God of grace provides. God is not only able but also willing to save.” - Dr. Thomas L. Constable.

5. In Jeremiah 31:31 - 34, what did God declare that He will do?



Going Deeper

Read Jeremiah 31:33 and Romans 2:29. What do these verses say about the heart? What is the significance of the heart?



Key Verse

“ _____ like sheep have gone astray; we have turned _____ – to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of _____.”

- Isaiah 53:6



Prayer and Reflection

In Jeremiah 31:9, God describes Himself as a father who will lead them on a straight path. When you picture God in this way, how does that impact you?

**Tom Constable is the Department Chairman and Senior Professor of Bible Exposition at Dallas Theological Seminary.*

Day 4

Since the fall, God has used men as intermediaries between Himself and mankind: first men, then judges, kings, priests, and prophets.

Read Judges 2:16 - 19 and Judges 21:25.

1. Did the Israelites listen to the judges?

2. 1 Samuel 8 shows a transition from judges to kings. What did 1 Samuel 8:3 - 5 show us about one rationale for that transition?

3. Compare Leviticus 10:10-11 (printed below) and Ezekiel 22:26. What were the priests doing that they should not be doing? (Note that ‘her’ is the pronoun God often uses for Israel.)

“You are to distinguish between the holy and the common, and between the unclean and the clean, and you are to teach the people of Israel all the statutes that the Lord has spoken to them by Moses.” - Leviticus 10:10 - 11

Read Ezekiel 34.

4. In Ezekiel 34:1 - 10, God spoke through the prophet Ezekiel about the failure of the shepherds (including priests) who were supposed to care for God’s people. Describe their failures.

5. The rest of the chapter tells what God will do as Israel's perfect shepherd who will never fail his people. Use Ezekiel 34:11-31 to describe how God cares for his people.



Going Deeper

What are the similarities between the new covenant of peace in Ezekiel 34:25 - 31 and the new covenant found in Jeremiah 31:31-34?

“And you are my sheep, human sheep of my pasture, and I am your God, declares the Lord God.” - Ezekiel 34:31



Key Verse

All we like sheep _____; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the _____ of us all. - Isaiah 53:6



Prayer and Reflection

When you picture God as your perfect shepherd, how does that impact you?

Day 5

Read Isaiah 52:13 - 53:12.

Ezekiel 34 spoke of a new Shepherd. Jeremiah 31 revealed a new covenant. In Isaiah 52, we are told that the Servant will accomplish peace between God and man again.

1. Who is the Servant pictured in Isaiah 52 and 53?

2. Why was this Servant pierced in Isaiah 53:5?

According to Dr. Constable,* this passage is often thought of as one song or poem, composed of five stanzas with three verses each. In the table below, write descriptions of the themes observed from each of the five stanzas.

Verses	Theme	Description
52:13-15	The servant exalted	
53:1-3	The servant despised	
53:4-6	The servant wounded	
53:7-9	The servant cast off	
53:10-12	The servant satisfied	

Going Deeper

In what ways will the Suffering Servant, as depicted in this section, go through the same humiliation that the Israelites went through as they turned away from God and were carted off into enemy territory?

Key Verse

Write Isaiah 53:6 from memory below.

Prayer and Reflection

Take a moment to thank Him for the truth found in Psalm 103:13-14 (listed below).

“As a father shows compassion to his children, so the Lord shows compassion to those who fear him. For he knows our frame; he remembers that we are dust.” - Psalm 103:13-14

Jesus in the Crumbling of the Kingdom

“... there is a bright side to this chapter in the Story. The prophets look beyond the destruction of Jerusalem and the exile and describe a wonderful time of future restoration when the Messiah will come to establish a righteous kingdom filled with true eternal blessings, in contrast to the current corrupt and crumbling kingdoms of Israel and Judah.” - J. Scott Duvall and J Daniel Hays

Wrap Up

For each of the following sections, write a one sentence summary:

Creation and Crisis

Covenant

Calling Out

Commandments

Conquest and Canaanization

Creation of the Kingdom

Communion and Common Sense in the Kingdom

Crumbling of the Kingdom

In this week's study, what did you learn about God that was new to you?

Week 14



Where are we in the Great Story?

Captivity and Coming Home

Key Players

Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, Malachi

Books of the Bible

Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, Malachi

Key Verse

“And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.” - Daniel 12:2

Group Ice Breaker Question

When was the last time that you felt out of place somewhere?

Making Connections

In 2 Kings 17, the Northern Kingdom had fallen to Assyria. One hundred and fifty years later in 2 Kings 25, the Southern Kingdom also fell. The Babylonians burned Jerusalem and the temple to the ground, carrying off any survivors to Babylon. Both of the divided kingdoms were conquered and exiled. After the fall of Jerusalem, the glory of the Lord left the temple. In this section, we'll study several passages about the Israelites in captivity.

Day 1

Read Daniel 1-3 and 6.

Daniel was in the first group of Israelites to be carried off as captives to Babylon.

1. In Daniel 1:17, who gave Daniel and his companions wisdom? What does that tell you about how God felt about His people, even though they were in exile?

2. How did Daniel respond when he heard of the king's failed dream interpretation in Daniel 2:17 - 18? Whom did Daniel credit for its successful interpretation in Daniel 2:28?

3. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego made a profound statement in Daniel 3:16 - 18 after being mocked by the King of Babylon. What was that proclamation? In times of uncertainty in our lives, can we make the same bold statement?

Daniel 4 ends with Nebuchadnezzar giving a poignant proclamation in praise to the Most High God.

4. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were leaders in Babylon, promoted by the king himself at the request of Daniel, but they still ended up in a fiery furnace. Daniel was in a high position with the king, yet he still found himself in the lion's den. How did God use these miracles in the lives of the kings who witnessed them? (Daniel 3:26-30 and 6:19-2.)



Going Deeper

In what ways does our society today feel like the one in which Daniel lived? What lessons can we learn from Daniel about how to stay devoted to God in our current times? (Cite verses to discuss in your life group.)



Key Verse

Write Daniel 12:2 below.



Prayer and Reflection

What truths do you know about God that can help you stand strong like Daniel and his friends?

Day 2

“Haggai focuses on rebuilding the temple. As the years pass and pressure mounts, the first wave of returned exiles has abandoned any idea of rebuilding the temple. They have, in essence, relegated the worship of God to the outer fringes of their concern. Haggai challenges them to move the worship of God to the center of their lives and rebuild the temple.”

- J. Scott Duvall, J. Daniel Hayes

Read Haggai 1 - 2.

1. Haggai was a prophet during the time of the exile. In Haggai 1:2, what did he hear that the Israelites were saying about rebuilding the temple?

2. How did God respond to their comment? See Haggai 1:4-6.

3. In Haggai 2:5, what did God say about His Spirit? Where was it?

4. According to Haggai 2:6-9, God promised to shake the whole earth and then do what?

5. The second temple was sorely lacking compared to the temple Solomon had built, yet God said that the latter glory will outweigh the former. How will this be possible? Who does this foreshadow that has been promised?



Key Verse

“And many of those who _____ in the dust of the earth shall _____, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.” - Daniel 12:2



Prayer and Reflection

In Haggai 2:4-5, God commanded the people to be strong and not fear because His Spirit was with them. Then He called them to step forward in faith to do the work He had called them to do. What kingdom work is God calling you to do and how can you boldly move forward knowing God is with you and has equipped you with all that you will need to accomplish it?

Day 3

Read Ezra 1:1 - 2:1, 3:1-3, 4:1-3

1. Summarize the events of Ezra 1.

2. When we read about Cyrus, it's easy to believe he was a man who believed in the one true God. In Ezra 1:2-3, how did Cyrus describe God that might suggest otherwise?

3. The rebuilding of the temple was done in stages. What was built first according to Ezra 3:2? What are some reasons given for why they built this first?

4. Zerubbabel was a leader among the people who returned to rebuild the temple. The cornerstone was laid in chapter 3. What happened next in Ezra 4:1 - 3? Then what did the people of the land do in Ezra 4:4?

5. The temple was sitting, waiting for completion. In Ezra 5:1, what jump-started the building project anew? What happened in Ezra 6:13-15?

“[Ezra] shows God’s power in covenant faithfulness, moving even pagan kings to accomplish his redemptive purposes.” - Crossway Bibles

In chapter seven, Ezra came to Jerusalem to rebuild its walls.



Key Verse

“And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting _____, and some to _____ and everlasting _____.” - Daniel 12:2



Prayer and Reflection

God sent the prophets to speak on His behalf. Who is speaking into your life, pointing you to God?

Day 4

In the book of Ezra, King Cyrus allowed part of the Israelites to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple (Ezra 1:1 - 4). Then another wave of Israelites returned to Jerusalem under Ezra (Ezra 6 - 10). Finally a priest, and a third and final group of Israelites returned to Jerusalem with Nehemiah in 445 BC.

Read Nehemiah 1-4, 8.

1. Read Nehemiah's prayer in Nehemiah 1:4 -11. Picture yourself as Nehemiah. You are an exile in a foreign land. The temple has been destroyed for nearly 150 years. Do you think you could have this much faith in God keeping His covenant? Why or why not?

2. Even though he was in exile, Nehemiah had been educated about God and His promises to Moses. What does this tell us about God's faithfulness to retain a remnant, as we saw in Isaiah? (Read about the remnant in Isaiah 10:20-22).

3. Nehemiah faced political opposition to the rebuilding of the wall around Jerusalem in chapter four. What did God do to help them in Nehemiah 4:15? What can we learn about God from this turn of events?

4. What was their initial response to the law being read to them in Nehemiah 8:6? What was their posture? Once they understood the Law of God clearly, how did they respond In Nehemiah 8:9?

5. The leadership told the Jewish people to celebrate the Feast of Booths or Tabernacles. This feast was celebrated regularly to help the Israelites remember their journey out of slavery in Egypt and into the promised land in Canaan. During this journey the people lived in booths (i.e. tents). How do you think it would have felt to the Jewish people during the time of Nehemiah to celebrate this festival now that they had returned to Jerusalem from exile?



Key Verse

“And many of those who sleep in the dust of the _____ shall awake, some to _____ life, and some to shame and _____ contempt.”
- Daniel 12:2



Prayer and Reflection

What is your response to God’s commands? Spend time praising the Lord for His holiness.

Day 5

Read Malachi 1-4.

Malachi is the last book of the Old Testament. Malachi was a prophet after the rebuilding of Jerusalem, after the people wept for their lack of obedience to the Lord.

1. Chapter 1 of Malachi largely addresses how God felt about the priests' poor behavior (see Malachi 1:6-14). Where else in our study have we seen poor priestly behavior?

2. Malachi 2:1-3a discusses the consequences of the priests' blatant disregard for God's holiness and His Law. In Malachi 2:8 what was the outcome of the priests' disobedience?

3. Despite God’s disappointment with Israel and Judah, the remnant now gathered in Jerusalem. God continued to speak tenderly to them. List several things He promised in chapters three and four.

4. The Lord revealed several of His character traits in chapter three. List them below.



Key Verse

Write Daniel 12:2 from memory below.



Prayer and Reflection

The priests during the time of Malachi caused their people to stumble because of their false teaching. Read what Paul had to say about causing another believer to stumble in 1 Corinthians 8:13 (listed below). Ask the Lord if any of your actions or words may be causing others to stumble. Ask Him to help you better mirror Paul’s attitude.

“So if what I eat causes another believer to sin, I will never eat meat again as long as I live - for I don’t want to cause another believer to stumble.”
- 1 Corinthians 8:13

Wrap Up

For each of the following sections, write a one sentence summary:

Creation and Crisis

Covenant

Calling Out

Commandments

Conquest and Canaanization

Creation of the Kingdom

Communion and Common Sense in the Kingdom

Crumbling of the Kingdom

Captivity and Coming Home

In this week's study, what did you learn about God that was new to you?

Week 15



Where are we in the Great Story?

Interlude Between the Testaments

Key Players

Cyrus, King of Persia, Alexander the Great, Aris

Books of the Bible

Intertestamental period and the years of silence

Key Verse

“How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me?” - Psalm 13:1

Group Ice Breaker Questions

Describe a time when you had to wait on something and what that felt like.

Making Connections

At the end of the Old Testament, God kept His promise and a remnant returned to the Promised Land. Israel began to rebuild. A small temple had been built, but God's presence had not returned to it. They had reestablished Jerusalem, where they were worshiping the Lord. Although idol worship was not happening, there were problems with priests, social injustice, and hearts that were wandering.

The prophets spoke of a coming Messiah, encouraging the people to hope.

Day 1

1. How did you feel about the blank page?

The page was blank to remind us there were 400 years of nothing after the Old Testament ended and before the New Testament began. Everything stopped. Stop and consider what that must have felt like.

2. We left last week with stern words from Malachi about the Jewish people's lack of obedience to the Law, as led by corrupt priests. In what ways do you identify with that?

3. What can we do in order to better understand God? What tools has He given us so we might know Him?

4. As we enter into this time, let's reflect on what it meant that the people had to wait. God went silent. You might know what it feels like to wait on the Lord. Have you had to wait on the Lord in a specific instance?

5. Have you ever cried out to the Lord and felt His silence?

The time of silence was prophesied in Amos 8:11, “The time is surely coming,” says the Sovereign LORD, when I will send a famine on the land - not a famine of bread or water but of hearing the words of the Lord.”

6. The blank page is for you to write what would have carried you through this time. What truths about God would have sustained you until you heard from Him again? Fill the blank page with what you know about God and His promises that would have been a solace to you during the period of silence.

Day 2

Hellenistic: a word used to denote Greek culture, language, and history.

This week will look different from previous weeks. The information provided will enrich your understanding of what occurred in the time between the two testaments and enhance your knowledge of the culture in which Jesus was born. Please read through the information carefully and reflect on the questions provided.

Historical/Political Changes

The sun sets on the Old Testament with the last words of Malachi, and the world entered into a period of spiritual silence for over 400 years. As we close the pages of the Old Testament, Israel had been under Persian control for about one hundred years and would remain for another hundred years. (Cyrus was a king of Persia who allowed the Israelites to rebuild the temple.)

Persia was defeated by Alexander the Great of Macedonia in 323 BC. Alexander the Great was a student of Aristotle, a famous Hellenistic philosopher. When Alexander the Great inherited the throne after the death of his father, he promoted Greek language, Greek philosophy, and Greek culture. While he strongly promoted Greek culture, he did not demand it, and for a time Jewish people were allowed to worship God while under Hellenistic rule.

“A brilliant military leader, Alexander built an empire by conquest that stretched from Greece down through Syria and Palestine into Egypt, and across southern and central Asia as far as the frontiers of India.” - Subby Szterszky

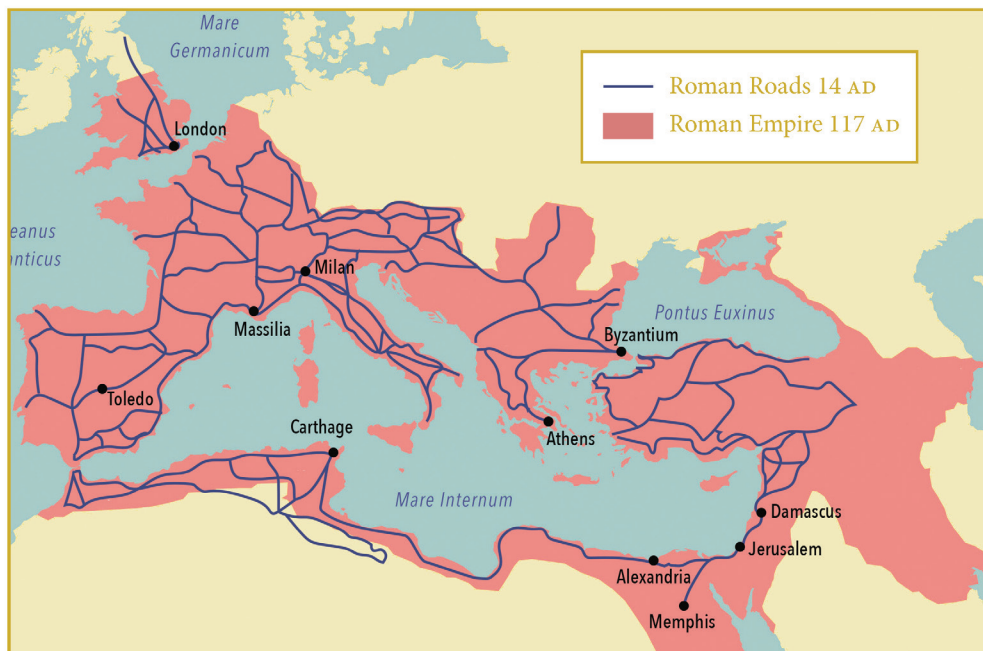
When Alexander died, a time of political unrest followed; Alexander’s kingdom was split between several rulers, and while none of them were wonderful, the Jewish people were still able to worship God and were not forced to worship other gods. However, the Hellenistic culture was worldly. The term “Hellenized Jews” was coined during this period to describe those who were Jewish in religion, but Greek in culture.

It was under the leadership of a king named Antiochus that the temple was desecrated again; he dedicated the temple to the Greek god, Zeus. To even the most Hellenistic of Jews, this move was too far. A priest named Mattathias and his three sons, collectively known as the Maccabees, which means hammers, overthrew Antiochus and established a newly independent nation of Israel in 142 BC. That freedom ended eighty years later when the Romans, who had steadily been conquering land all over the Middle East, conquered Judea in 63 BC. When Jesus arrived on the scene nearly a century later, the Romans were still in control of the Jewish land.

The Dead Sea Scrolls were produced during the period of time between the Old and New Testaments. All but the book of Esther have been discovered, though many not in their entirety.

It was during this intertestamental period that the Romans slowly built a vast network of roads. The roads made travel possible in regions of the world that previously were isolated, as travel was a life-threatening endeavor.

Roman Roads at the Time of Christ 14 AD



Later, in the New Testament, these roads made Paul's missionary journeys possible, the diaspora (scattering) of the Jewish people conceivable, and is an example of how God uses kingdoms and politics for the expansion of the gospel.



Prayer and Reflection

Summarize what you learned today. How do you see God's sovereignty even in the silence? Then read Isaiah 4:2-6, how would God's promises help them trust that He was at work even though He wasn't making it evident to them?

"God will not turn away from doing you good. He will keep on doing good. He doesn't do good to His children sometimes and bad to them other times. He keeps on doing good and He never will stop doing good for ten thousand ages of ages. When things are going bad that does not mean God has stopped doing good. It means He is shifting things around to get them in place for more good, if you will go on loving Him."

- John Piper

Day 3

Government Set-Up

In Numbers 11:16 and Deuteronomy 16:18, God told His people to set up a council of leaders or judges to help determine legal matters and disputes. In larger cities, that council was called a Sanhedrin. In smaller cities, judges fulfilled this role. After the temple was rebuilt during the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, the high court met in the temple in Jerusalem. This high court was made up of seventy men and the current high priest and was called the Great Sanhedrin.

Rome started as a republic in 500 BC, and became the Roman Empire in 27 BC. The Roman Empire continued to grow via conquest and military victories, and in so doing necessitated taxes from those they had conquered, including the region of Judea. The taxes were required, and the Roman Empire decided to use Jewish men to collect the taxes the Romans imposed from the Jewish people.

Remember when the United States broke from Britain because they didn't want taxation without representation? This was similar. Imagine if a world superpower came in and said, "We're going to take over the United States, and we're going to tax you. Your locally elected sheriff, whom you love and cherish, will collect those taxes, and we're going to pay him to do so." Then the sheriff came in and took your money to give to the new government who was oppressing you. If you couldn't pay, he began to take your home, your car, your assets. This is someone you trusted to represent you, who now is representing your oppressor and taking from you.

Next, imagine that you see that same sheriff driving that car he took from you, or living in your home that you had to use to pay your taxes. How would you feel?

This is the way that Rome used the lands and people it had conquered. They came in, took from their constituents, and the result was division among those who would otherwise have been united against a common enemy. As an empire, Rome's tactics were effective. Over generations, tax collectors became some of the most hated people in their lands, and they were Jewish men.



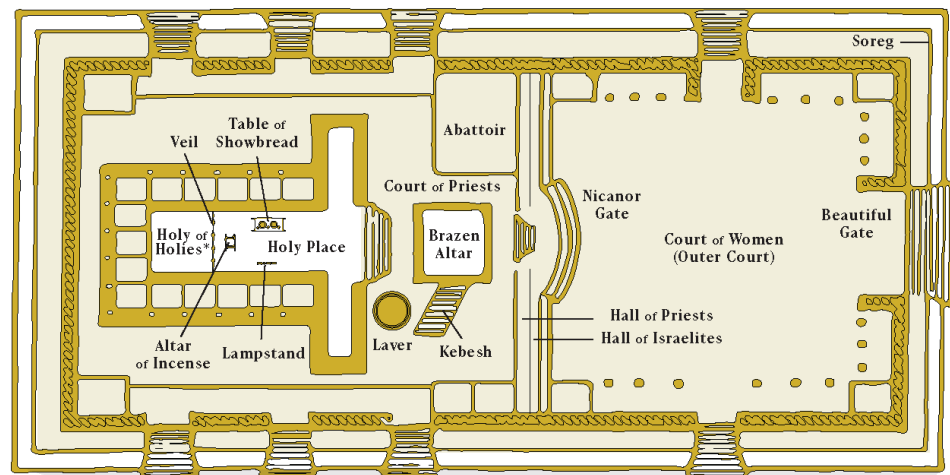
Prayer and Reflection

Summarize what you learned today. How do you see God's sovereignty even in the silence? Then read Isaiah 9:6-7. During this period of silence, how would the prophecies of the coming Messiah help them trust that God was at work even though He wasn't making it evident to them?

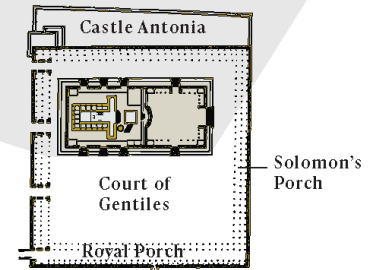
Day 4

The Temple

Supposed Layout of the Second Temple, Jerusalem 20-19 BC



* The second Temple did not contain the Ark of the Covenant. The Bible does not specify an exact date for when the Ark was lost. The last biblical mention of the Ark being in the Temple is during the reign of King Josiah in 2 Chronicles 35:3. After this, there is no further mention of the Ark in the scriptural records, particularly during or after the Babylonian conquest of Jerusalem in 586 BC, when the Temple was destroyed. It is generally believed that the Ark was either destroyed, hidden, or taken during this period, but the exact details remain a mystery.



Tabernacle, Temple, Synagogue, Church

When God delivered His people from the grasp of the Egyptians, He led them with a pillar of smoke during the day and a pillar of fire by night. The presence of God literally led His people where He wanted them to go, which is helpful when you're leading a group of over one million people without any kind of navigation system!

God's presence was with His people, and they constructed a tabernacle. The tabernacle was a fancy, mobile tent where the priests would go to offer sacrifices to God. Even though this was a temporary dwelling place for God, He still gave very specific instructions about how it was to be constructed and where things would go. He even asked His people to use their skills to help build it.

The temple in the Old Testament was a place God told Solomon to build

as His permanent residence in Jerusalem instead of using the tabernacle. It was a place where God made His presence apparent, and where God clearly demonstrated His holiness. Sacrifices were made in the temple. Sacrifices were required by God to have a right relationship with God before the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus. When the glory of the Lord left the temple, His presence did not leave His people; He was still among them and leading them.

When the Jewish people returned from Babylonian captivity, they reconstructed the walls of Jerusalem and rebuilt the temple. This is called the “second temple period”, which lasted from about 516 BC until 70 AD, when the temple was destroyed by the Romans.

There is some evidence that the Jews met for teaching and prayer in Babylon, and some call this the birth of the synagogue. However, synagogues really took root as a teaching center and gathering place for Jews when the Jews were dispersed due to persecution, primarily from the Romans.

According to M. G. Easton, “The establishment of synagogues wherever the Jews were found in sufficient numbers helped greatly to keep alive Israel’s hope of the coming of the Messiah, and to prepare the way for the spread of the gospel in other lands. The worship of the Christian Church was afterwards modeled after that of the synagogue.”

Synagogues, then, took a posture of a teaching spot for Jewish people, much as we think of churches today.

Prayer and Reflection

Summarize what you learned today. How do you see God’s sovereignty even in the silence? Then read Psalm 126. During this period of silence, how would the Psalms of Ascent, songs that the people sang on their way to the second temple, help them trust that God was at work even though He wasn’t making it evident to them?

Day 5

Can you imagine not hearing anything from God after fairly consistently hearing from him for millennia? He's visited you on a mountain top with clouds, lightning, and thunder. He's spoken through priests, prophets, and kings, and now... nothing.

After a period of time, the priests understood that the Old Testament was complete and began to write them down and teach them as one unit. With Greek and Aramaic becoming the dominant languages of the day, Jewish scribes (part of the Hellenistic Jews) translated the Old Testament into Greek, known as the Septuagint.

“The scribes, elders and rabbis arose as the leading scholars of the day who would study, interpret and apply the principles of the Jewish Scriptures. Largely due to their work during the intertestamental period, various scriptural doctrines were developed and brought into sharper focus. These included the nature of angels and demons, the pre-cosmic fall of Satan, resurrection and the afterlife beyond the brief hints in the Prophets and the psalms, and growing expectation of a coming Davidic Messiah.” - Subby Szterszky

As more scribes and Jewish leaders worked with the Mosaic law (including the Ten Commandments), they had to clarify some of the questions that Jewish men and women had, such as, “What constitutes work?” as they were trying to consider how to abide by the Sabbath laws. As these questions continued, the religious leaders who answered formed a group we now know as the Pharisees. Those Pharisees eventually added what we now call an “oral tradition”, which was not Scripture but was intended to aid in the interpretation of Scripture. Jesus later speaks harshly to this group because they believed their oral tradition was more important than Scripture.

Another Jewish sect was born in the period between the Old and New Testaments, called the Sadducees. The Sadducees represented the aristocrats and wealthy of the day, and used their position in the Sanhedrin to affect religious and governmental decisions. The Sadducees

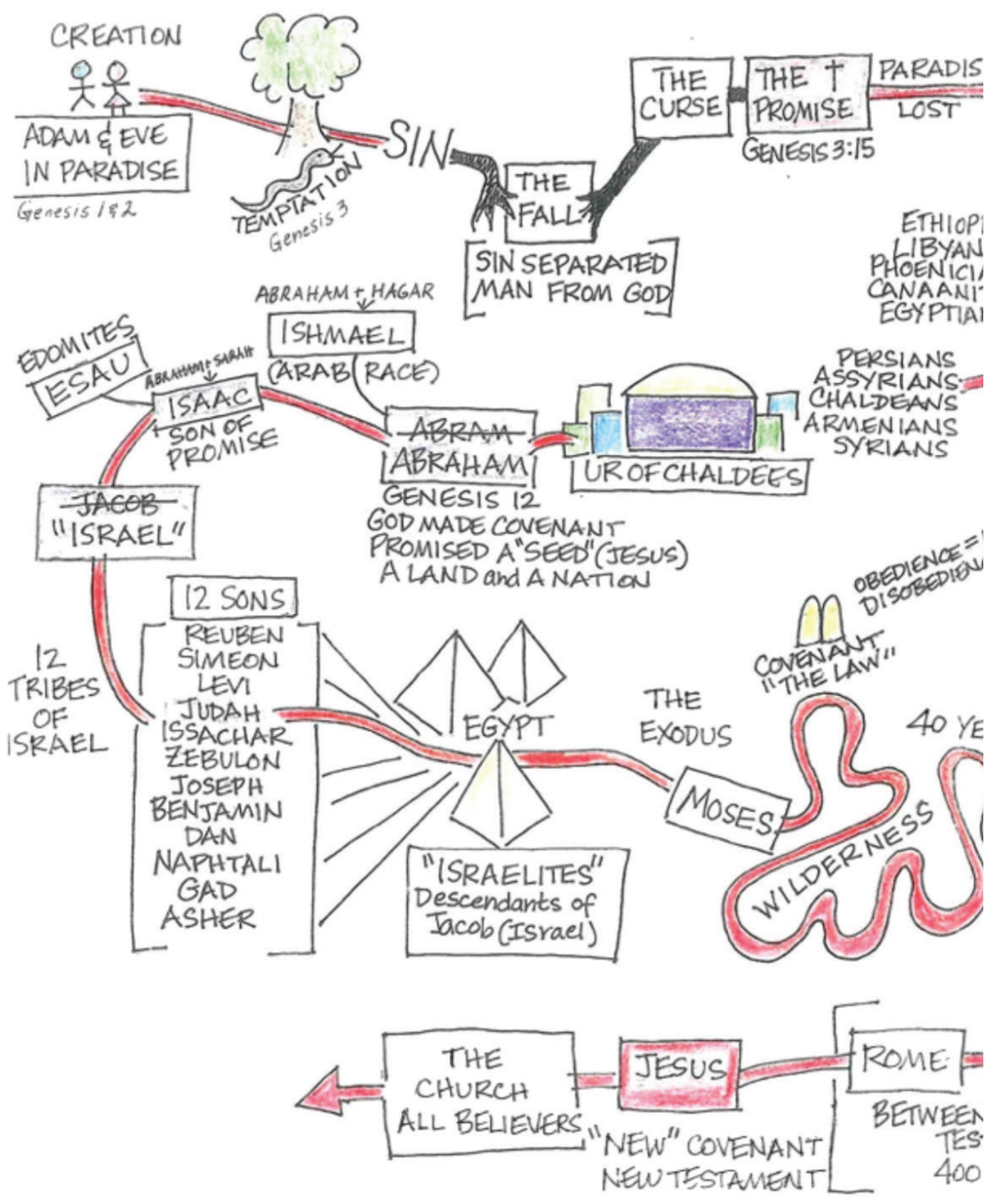
rejected all of the Old Testament except the first five books (Mosaic). They believed the word was what Moses gave and did not believe anything else should be added. They did not believe in the oral tradition.

Among all of these changes, there were still Jewish people who held fast to their God, the God who demonstrated His faithfulness to His covenants given to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Among them, a man named Zechariah and his wife, Elizabeth, miraculously became pregnant with a baby named John. John would eventually pave the way for the ministry of Jesus. The new day of Jesus was beginning to dawn.



Prayer and Reflection

Summarize what you learned today. How do you see God's sovereignty even in the silence? Then read Ezekiel 36:22-27. During this period of silence, how were God's people trying to honor Him with their actions? How would God's promises for the future help them trust that God was at work even though He wasn't making it evident to them?



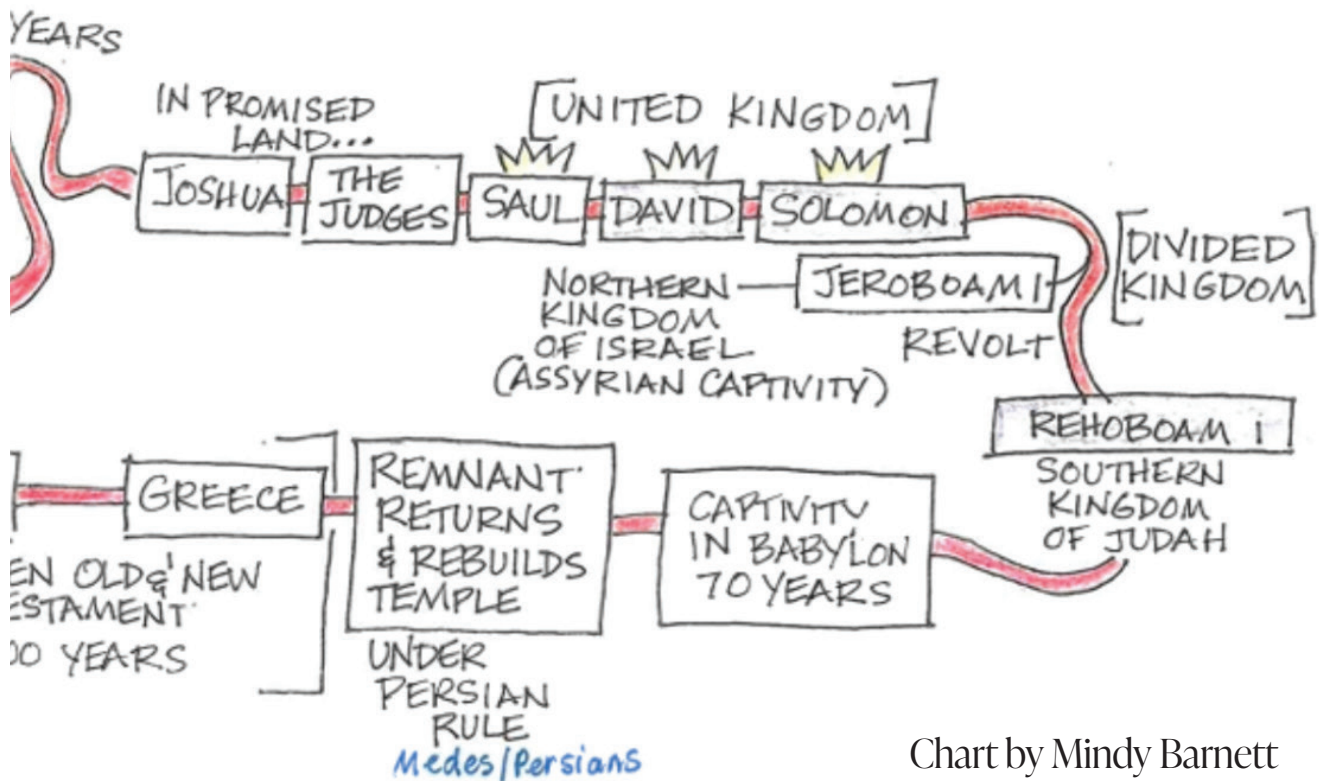
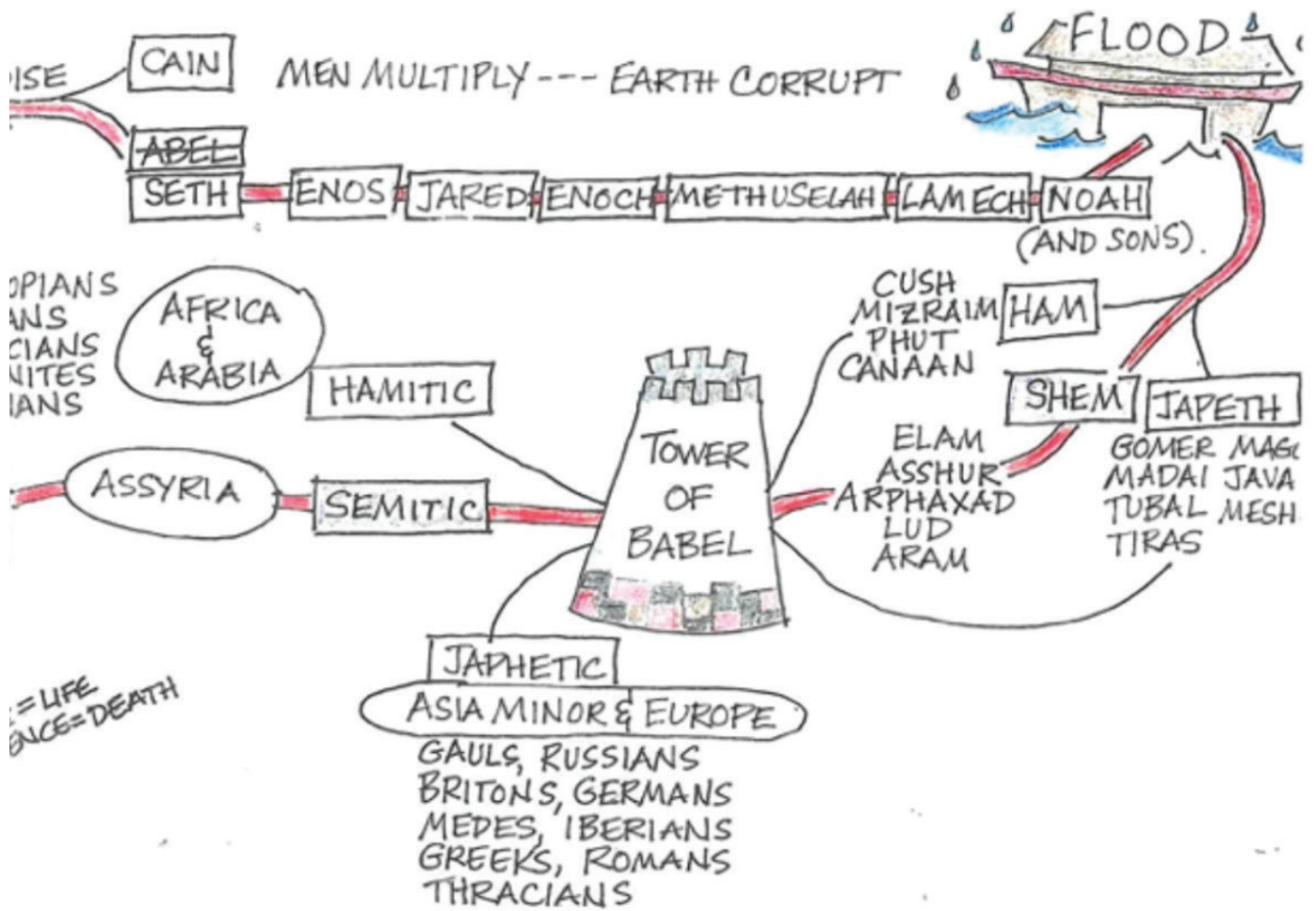


Chart by Mindy Barnett

