

Bible Overview

Book 1 of 3

Creation to Solomon

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“In the beginning...”

With these words, the story of the unfolding of God’s plan to save mankind begins. In this upcoming study, we hope to examine different aspects of God’s plan to save mankind, giving particular focus to the people and events that played critical roles in the revealing of God’s eternal plan.

Due to the volume of material that will be covered in this class, I cannot urge you strongly enough to have reviewed each lesson and answered the pertinent questions before arriving to the class. This will not only save us precious time for the discussion of deeper things, but it will make sure that we do not get bogged down, lengthening an already lengthy study.

Our goal in this study will be to get a grasp of the high points of the God’s redemptive plan, beginning with creation and ending with the second coming of Christ. While there will be opportunities to discuss matters of depth, my primary focus in this study will be to get us more familiar with the unfolding narrative of the Bible.

For each individual lesson, our plan of attack will look something like this:

- 1) An overview of the person/event under consideration
- 2) An examination of the corresponding Biblical passages
- 3) Thought questions regarding practical lessons
- 4) Connecting these people and events to our faith today

To prevent us from getting bogged down and off-track, as you do your weekly reading, please note any questions from/about the text that you might have. Email those questions to question@uococ.org with the subject “Adult Class Questions”. I will do my best to incorporate any questions into the week’s lesson. *This does not mean that questions will be disregarded when we come together—this is simply a tool to help me deal more efficiently with questions that may arise.*

Thank you for being a part of this class! I pray this material will be of some benefit to you.

-TS-

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Lesson 1 – God

The main characters of the Biblical narrative are introduced quite quickly in the opening pages of our Bible. Moses, the author of the Pentateuch (first five books of the OT – Joshua 23.6; Matthew 19.7; Mark 7.10; 12.26) is content to give no grand introduction to deity, merely stating, “In the beginning, God... .”

Our minds are left to ponder the seemingly imponderable—who is God? While there is much that we do not know about God and how He works, there is also much that we can, and should, know.

The term Moses uses in Genesis 1.1 for “God” is the Hebrew word אֱלֹהִים (*el-o-HEEM*). The significance of this word is simple—it is plural. Thus, we are immediately confronted by the reality that there is not one singular person creating the universe, a fact further confirmed in Genesis 1.26. Who are these persons called “God”?

Understand that by using the term “person,” I do not mean human being—humanity is made in the image of God, but is notably not God. By using the term “person”, I simply mean rational, intelligent, self-conscious beings. God has the ability to think (Isaiah 55.8), to choose (Deuteronomy 31.11), and to feel emotion (Genesis 6.6; Psalm 7.11; Hebrews 13.16).

Who, then, are the persons who are rightly called “God”? The One we call the Father is referred to as God (John 20.17; Romans 1.7), as is Jesus (John 1.1; 5.18; Hebrews 1.8). The person described in Scripture as the Holy Spirit is also referred to as God (Matthew 12.28; Acts 5.3-4). These are the only three persons in Scripture who are rightly referred to as Divine. As a husband and wife are one, yet are different persons, the same may be said with reference to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—they are different persons, with different roles, yet between the three of them is complete unity (Deuteronomy 6.4; John 10.30).

While humanity shares many similarities with God, the differences are striking. God is omnipotent—nothing is too difficult for Him (Isaiah 40.28; Jeremiah 32.27). God is omniscient—He possesses all knowledge (1 John 3.20; Psalm 147.4-5). God is omnipresent—He sees everything (Psalm 139.7; Proverbs 15.3).

Together, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit created the universe and everything therein (Genesis 1). The universe created by God was in complete harmony with their nature – “indeed it was very good” (Genesis 1.31). The God we serve is a good God, loving and compassionate (Mark 10.18; 1 John 4.7-8).

Lesson 1 Questions – God

- 1) List at least two other characteristics of God that we can read about in the Bible; also, list one thing God cannot/does not do:
- 2) Why are Moses' words reliable (If you need help, consult 2 Peter 1)?
- 3) When did God formulate His plan to save humanity (Ephesians 1.4)?
- 4) Identify a place in the New Testament where we see the three persons of the Godhead involved in distinct, yet complimentary roles:

Thought Questions

- 1) If God does not get tired (Isaiah 40.28), yet Jesus got tired (Mark 4.38), are we to conclude that Jesus is not God? How can Jesus grow tired and yet still be divine?
- 2) Some who attempt to argue against the Biblical concept of God employ such illustrations as, “Can God create a rock so heavy that even He cannot lift it?” Respond to this argument.
- 3) We read that God is love and that we are created in His image. What does it mean that we are created in His image?

Lesson 2- Adam, Eve, and Creation (Genesis 1-3)

The Biblical narrative begins immediately with the creation of the universe. Each day God adds something new to the universe and each day's creation is declared good (Genesis 1.4,10,12,etc.).

As we saw in the previous lesson, three persons are involved in the creation of the universe—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. As we examine the Bible text, we find they each occupied distinct, yet complementary roles: the Father willed the creation (Hebrews 1.1-2; 11.3), the Son was the active agent in creation (Hebrews 1.2; Colossians 1.15-16), and the Holy Spirit protected and prepared the new creation (Genesis 1.2 “hovering/moved” = brooded cf. Deuteronomy 32.11).

The pinnacle of God's creation was humanity. Man, it is said, is created in the image of God—that is, man has a spiritual component, and in that spiritual component bears some resemblance to God. God also took the man He created and gave him authority over the visible creation (Genesis 1.26).

In the entirety of God's creation, no suitable companion was found for man, so God caused Adam to sleep and from one of his ribs formed a woman, Eve (Genesis 2.2off). As suitable companions, Adam and Eve were joined together by God in bond of marriage (Genesis 2.24; Matthew 19.4ff). In the beginning of their marriage, they enjoyed the unspoiled and perfect Garden of Eden, where man's only task was to tend and keep the garden (Genesis 2.15).

Eventually, Adam and Eve were expelled from the garden when they both succumbed to the temptation of the serpent (Satan—Revelation 12.9). God's instructions were clear—the fruit of every tree was available for food except for the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil (Genesis 2.16-17). When Adam and Eve ate of this tree, they brought sin into a previously untarnished environment and brought death upon themselves (Genesis 2.17).

While Adam and Eve's sin did bring physical death into the world, as man was now separated from the Tree of Life (Genesis 3.22), man and woman died spiritually the moment they ate from the tree; that is, in their sinful act they separated themselves from God (James 2.26; Isaiah 59.2).

The bright light shining at the end of this story is the revelation that God has a plan—a plan to combat sin and save mankind. Though we only see it dimly in Genesis 3, the promise is there—the coming seed of woman would crush the head of the serpent.

Lesson 2 Questions – Adam, Eve, and Creation

- 1) What is the timeframe given in Scripture for the creation of the world (also confer Exodus 20.11)?
- 2) Out of what was man created?
- 3) On what days were insects, birds, and land animals created?
- 4) Plant life was created on what day?
- 5) What four specific instructions were given to man in the garden?

Thought Questions

- 1) Why is an understanding of Genesis 1 crucial to Christian faith today?
- 2) What significance is given to God's creative order in 1 Timothy 2.12ff?
 - a. _____

- 3) Why did God create the non-human world as He did (Ps. 19; Romans 1)?
 - a. _____

- 4) If one attempts to make Genesis 1-3 a non-literal allegory, what important truths are lost?
 - a. _____

- 5) What does this section of Scripture reveal about God's plan to save man?
 - a. _____

Lesson 3- Noah and the Flood (Genesis 6-9)

Moving only eight generation (but some 1600yrs) after Adam's creation, we find a completely different world than the one God created. Mankind, animals, plants, and planets are still present, but sin's influence has permeated throughout the earth. What God had created as "good," mankind had now perverted.

As God looked down from Heaven, He saw evil in man's heart continually and determined to destroy humanity (Genesis 6.5-7). Consistent with His merciful nature, the destruction would not come immediately; neither would the destruction be haphazard. As God surveyed humanity, He saw Noah, a righteous man in the midst of a wicked world (Genesis 6.8-9). Finding grace in God's eyes, Noah was commissioned to build an ark, into which would enter all kinds of animals and righteous people (Genesis 6.14ff).

Following God's plan, Noah constructed the ark God desired and entered into the ark with the animals and his family. Following a period of seven days (Genesis 7.10), the flood began. The fountains of the deep were broken up and rain was constant for 40 day and nights (Genesis 7.11-12). The water rose higher than the highest mountain (Genesis 7.20) and killed off all human and animal life on dry land (Genesis 7.21-23). The earth was covered in this water for 150 days (Genesis 7.24) until the waters began to recede. Noah and his family would finally exit the ark after being inside for more than a year (Genesis 8.14).

Immediately upon exiting the ark, Noah expressed his thankfulness to God by offering pleasing sacrifices to the Lord (Genesis 8.20ff). God accepted these offerings and pledged to never again destroy the earth by water, giving a rainbow as a sign of His pledge (Genesis 9.16).

Noah's story ends in ignominy, though, as his decision to become intoxicated leads to the assault of his wife (Genesis 9.23; cf. Leviticus 18.6-8). A rather demoralizing end to an otherwise thrilling, encouraging story, though it does seem as though Noah found a place for repentance, as he is listed among those exhibiting great faith and due to receive the promise in Hebrews 11.7.

Lesson 3 Questions – Noah and the Flood

1) What does it mean that “Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord”?

a. _____

2) Why is it impossible for the “sons of God” in Genesis 6.2,4 to be angels (cf. Matthew 22.30)?

a. _____

3) Who, then, might the “sons of God” be in Genesis 6.2,4?

a. _____

4) Did Noah put two of every animal on the ark?

a. _____

Thought Questions

1) Since Noah comes before the Law of Moses, why are we reading of clean and unclean animals in Genesis 7-9?

a. _____

2) Give an example of how the story of Noah is referenced in the NT:

a. _____

3) Does God have the power to destroy the earth with water?

a. _____

b. Will He? _____

4) What does this story teach me about marriage?

a. _____

5) How do I see Jesus in this story?

a. _____

Lesson 4- Abraham (Genesis 12-25)

One of the most important figures in Biblical history is introduced in Genesis 12—Abraham. Little is known of Abraham's early life, beyond that he was the son of a man named Terah who lived in Ur of the Chaldeans (Genesis 11.31).

When he was 75 years old, God spoke to Abraham (Abram at the time) and told him to leave his land and his relatives. God promised to direct Abraham to a new land, where Abraham would flourish in a number of ways.

Abraham's journey to this new land that God would give him had its fair share of trouble, some self-imposed. Twice Abraham would convince his wife to lie concerning their relationship (Genesis 12.10ff; 20.1ff). Adding to the family's trouble was an episode where Abraham and Sarah foolishly tried to circumvent God's plan by producing a child through the Egyptian handmaiden Hagar (Genesis 16).

God's promise to Abraham involved three key elements: land would be given, a nation would arise from Abraham's lineage, and through Abraham's seed blessings would come to all the families of the earth (Genesis 12.1-3). Ultimately, the land of Canaan would be given to Abraham's descendants (Gen. 12.6-7; Exodus 6.8; Joshua 21.43-45). The great nation that arose from Abraham was the nation of Israel (Exodus 32.13; Deuteronomy 1.10). The Seed through which all the earth would be blessed is Jesus (Gen. 22.17-18; Acts 3.25-26).

25 years after implicitly being promised a child, Abraham and Sarah received their son Isaac (Genesis 21). Years later, however, God would require Abraham to offer Isaac as a burnt offering (Genesis 22). Abraham obeyed God to the point that he had the knife in hand, ready to kill Isaac, when he was stopped by the voice of the Angel of the Lord (Gen. 22.10-12). Abraham's great demonstration of faith in this instance is recorded in the New Testament for us (Hebrews 11.17ff).

Finally, at the age of 175, Abraham died and was buried in the cave of Machpelah, where Sarah had earlier been buried (Genesis 23.19; 25.9).

Lesson 4 Questions- Abraham

- 1) What information can you find regarding Abraham's life before Gen. 12?
 - a. _____

- 2) Would Abraham himself receive the promise of the land (Gen. 15.12ff)?
 - a. _____
 - b. Why or why not? _____

- 3) What covenant does God make/renew with Abraham in Genesis 17?
 - a. _____

- 4) What was the sign of that covenant?
 - a. _____
- 5) What are the identities of the three visitors to Abraham in Genesis 18?
 - a. Genesis 19.1 identifies _____
 - b. Genesis 18.33 identifies _____

Thought Questions

- 1) Why were Sodom and Gomorrah destroyed (Genesis 19)?
 - a. _____

- 2) What do we learn about God from Genesis 22?
 - a. _____

- 3) How do we see Jesus and God's plan to redeem man pictured in the Old Testament story of Abraham?
 - a. _____

Lesson 5- Abraham (cont.)

One of the most frequently referenced Old Testament characters in the New Testament is Abraham. His name and life are mentioned often by the New Testament writers, particularly Paul (18x, all but one instance in Romans or Galatians). In addition, Jesus makes repeated reference to Abraham.

Jesus often references Abraham to note the difference between the faith of Abraham and the disbelief of those who wore the name of Abraham in Jesus' day. For example, Jesus pointed out that Abraham, alongside faithful Gentiles, would sit down in God's kingdom while the disbelieving Jew would find himself cast out into punishment (Luke 13.23ff). On another occasion, Jesus would rebuke disbelieving Jews for claiming to be Abraham's descendants, yet refusing to do the works of Abraham (John 8.31ff).

In the book of Romans, Paul often pictures Abraham as the head of the Jewish nation. As he seeks to demonstrate the reality of justification by faith through grace, Paul points to Abraham to prove to the Jews that justification before God does not depend upon the law of Moses, but upon faith. In Romans 4, Paul points out that Abraham did not boast of his works before God because he was justified by faith (4.3). Using the example of Abraham, Paul demonstrates that justification by faith was available to the uncircumcised (4.9-12).

In the epistle to the Galatians, Paul points out the spiritual nature of the Abrahamic seed promise, noting that through Jesus Christ we become the seed of Abraham (Galatians 3.29). This is consistent with Paul's earlier argument, that only those who are of faith are the children of Abraham (Gal. 3.7).

In Hebrews, Abraham is mentioned in connection with Melchizedek (Hebrews 7.1ff) and with reference to his faithful life (Hebrews 11.8ff).

Finally, Abraham is mentioned prominently in James 2 as James seeks to establish the necessity of faith and works cooperating together. Abraham's offering of Isaac is called upon by James to express the idea that God requires faith and obedience in order for us to receive justification from Him.

Lesson 5 Questions- Abraham

- 1) Abraham is often pictured in the New Testament as holding a sort of “fatherly” position over two groups of people—one people in a spiritual sense and one people in a physical sense. Identify these two groups.
 - a. Spiritual: _____
 - b. Physical: _____
- 2) In what kingdom will Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob sit alongside many from the east and west (Matthew 8.10ff; Luke 13.23ff)?
 - a. _____
- 3) Was it before, during, or after circumcision that Abraham came into a relationship with God? Please provide a Scripture reference.
 - a. _____

Thought Questions

- 1) The books of Romans, Galatians, and Hebrews frequently mention Abraham. What common problem forms a background for these books?
 - a. _____

- 2) Why could Abraham not boast before God (Romans 4.2)?
 - a. _____

- 3) To whom was the commandment for circumcision given?
 - a. _____

- 4) What is the significance of Paul’s point in Galatians 3.17 that the law came in over 400 years after God’s promise to Abraham?
 - a. _____

- 5) To whom does Jesus give aid, according to Hebrews 2.16?
 - a. _____

Lesson 6- Joseph (Genesis 37-50)

Following Abraham, the next key figures focused on by Moses (Luke 24.44; John 1.45) were Jacob and Esau. It is notable that Jacob's name was changed to Israel (Genesis 35) and had twelve sons (Genesis 35.22ff), one of whom was Joseph. Joseph is the central figure in the last section of Genesis, and his story concludes with the Israelites in Egyptian captivity.

We are formally introduced to Joseph in Genesis 37 where Moses tells us of two of Joseph's dreams. In the first dream, the sheaves of his brothers bowed down to his sheaf. In the second dream, Joseph sees the sun, moon, and eleven stars bowing down before him. These dreams led his brothers to feel contempt for him. This contempt was multiplied by the obvious favoritism which Jacob showed Joseph, one of two sons given him by Rachel. Eventually, the brothers would sell Joseph to Ishmaelite travelers, who would then sell him to Potiphar.

Joseph's conduct, even while in captivity, was such that the Lord was with him (Genesis 39.3). Eventually, Joseph rose in prominence in the house of Potiphar, to the point that he was overseer over all that Potiphar owned (Gen. 39.5). Trouble would soon strike, though, as Potiphar's wife set her eyes upon Joseph. As she sought to seduce Joseph, Joseph ran from her, leaving his garment in her clutches. Whether for shame or vengeance, Potiphar's wife accused Joseph of attempting to rape her. For this, Joseph was cast into prison.

As it happened in Potiphar's house, so it happened in prison—Joseph enjoyed the Lord's favor and grew in respect with the chief jailer. Meeting two men in prison, Joseph interpreted their dreams, indicating one would die and one would be restored to his position in the kingdom. Of this man, Joseph simply asked that he would remember him when he was restored.

Two years after interpreting the dreams, Joseph was brought out of prison to interpret the dreams of Pharaoh. After interpreting the dreams, Pharaoh took Joseph and set him over all his affairs—Joseph was now second in command.

In the following years (Genesis 42ff), when famine was raging throughout the earth, Joseph's family would come to Egypt seeking grain. Joseph would eventually reveal himself to his family and welcome them into Egypt.

Lesson 6 Questions- Joseph

1) Joseph was preferred by Jacob. What reasons might there be for this?

a. _____

2) What did Joseph's brothers do before selling him to the Midianites?

a. _____

3) Who are the Ishmaelites?

a. _____

4) What two men are mentioned alongside Joseph in the king's prison?

a. _____

5) What was the interpretation of Pharaoh's dreams?

a. _____

Thought Questions

1) What does it take to have the Lord with us (Genesis 39.3)?

a. _____

2) Genesis 39.3 "The Lord caused all that [Joseph] did to prosper in his hand"—is this a guarantee for servants of God of all time? Us today?

a. _____

3) What qualities worthy of repetition do we see in Joseph?

a. _____

4) Joseph is often cited as an example of Divine providence—God working in non-miraculous ways. Why might the story of Joseph not be immediately applicable to the idea of Divine providence today?

a. _____

5) What role does Joseph play in the unfolding of God's plan to save?

a. _____

Lesson 7- Moses: The Early Years (Exodus 1-4)

After Joseph's death, his descendants remained settled in Egypt. In the course of time, Moses notes for us that a new Pharaoh came to power "who did not know Joseph" (Exodus 1.8). Having no respect for Joseph or the increasingly vast number of his descendants, the new Pharaoh (possibly Amenhotep I or Thutmose I of the 18th dynasty) enslaved the Israelite people. Beyond this, the murder of all Hebrew baby boys was commanded (Exodus 1.15ff).

Two midwives were noted for their refusal to consent—rather, they feared God (Exodus 1.17). Because of their decisions, a baby named Moses was born to Amram and Jochebed, both of the house of Levi. Moses was in the care of his mother for three months before being adopted by Pharaoh's daughter. Pharaoh's daughter commissioned Jochebed to nurse and care for the child. During this time, Moses apparently learned of his identity (Heb. 11.23ff).

When he was 40, Moses encountered an Egyptian beating a Hebrew. Moses intervened and killed the Egyptian (Acts 7.20ff). A day later, Moses saw two Hebrews fighting. He intervened, but grew fearful when the men spoke to him of the dead Egyptian. Moses then fled Egypt, fearing the wrath of Pharaoh (possibly Thutmose III).

For 40 years, Moses would be in the land of Midian. While here he married a Midianite woman named Zipporah (Exodus 2.21) and had a son named Gershom. While here Moses acted as a shepherd, caring for the flocks of his father-in-law Jethro.

When Moses was 80, the Angel of the Lord spoke to Him from the burning bush, informing him of his great responsibility—Moses was to lead the people out of Egyptian bondage. Exodus 3-4 records Moses contending with God, arguing that he is not capable enough to function as a leader. Nevertheless, God convinces Moses to go, allowing Moses' brother Aaron to serve as his spokesman (Ex. 4.14ff).

Lesson 7 Questions- Moses: The Early Years

- 1) What does the name Moses mean?
 - a. _____
- 2) What were the names of the two Hebrew midwives?
 - a. _____
- 3) How many years did Moses spend in preparation for his leadership role?
 - a. _____
- 4) What was Moses' occupation? What other biblical leader held this job?
 - a. _____
- 5) Was Moses a poor speaker?
 - a. _____

Thought Questions

- 1) Moses was 80 when he encountered the Lord in Midian. Jesus was around 30 (Luke 3.23) when He began His ministry. What lessons might we draw from these facts?
 - a. _____

- 2) Why was God now interested in bringing Israel out of Egypt (Gen. 15)?
 - a. _____

- 3) Amram and Jochebed risked much to preserve their child alive. List two specific lessons we can learn from their godly example.
 - a. _____

- 4) An interesting event occurs on Moses' journey to meet Pharaoh for the first time (Exodus 4.24ff). What is going on here? What lesson is here, if any, for us?
 - a. _____

Lesson 8- Moses and the Exodus (Exodus 5-15)

Appearing before the preeminent world leader of his day, Moses appeared before the pharaoh (possibly Thutmose III or Amenhotep II) and issued a simply demand—let the people of God go into the wilderness and hold a feast to Him (Exodus 5.1). The pharaoh obstinately refused, setting the stage for one of the most incredible displays of God’s power.

Things would get worse for the Israelites before they got better, as the Egyptians increased the burden on their slaves (Exodus 5.6ff). Moses was dismayed by the setback, yet God reassured Moses of His power in Exodus 6.

Appearing before the pharaoh again, God accomplished signs before the pharaoh through Moses and Aaron, but he would not listen (Exodus 7.11ff). With this refusal, the 10 plagues would begin. From lice and flies to dead cattle and darkness, nothing would convince the pharaoh to allow the Israelites to leave.

The final plague God would bring on the Egyptians would strike the pharaoh to his heart and cause him to turn free the Israelites. God promised to kill the firstborn of both man and beast in every house which did not make the proper preparation. The making of these preparation would become a yearly observance in Israel called “Passover,” reminding the people of their salvation from Egypt at the hand of Almighty God (Exodus 12).

At midnight, among those who were unprepared, the firstborn of both man and animal were killed. The toll was astounding in Egypt (Exodus 12.30). The pharaoh, surrounded by all this death, demanded the Israelites leave. Carrying gifts from the bereaved Egyptians, the Israelites hurried toward the Red sea.

Shortly after releasing the Israelites, the pharaoh changed his mind and pursued the Israelites, who were now panicking at the shores of the Red Sea. Moses, though, encouraged the people to remain calm and pled with them to have faith in God (Exodus 14.13ff). Through God’s grace, the Red Sea was parted, allowing the Israelites to escape the pursuing Egyptians. The pursuing Egyptians were drowned by the crashing waters of the Red Sea while the Israelites began their path toward the land promised to Abraham (Exodus 15).

Lesson 8 Questions- Moses and the Exodus

- 1) How old was Moses when much of this was occurring?
 - a. _____
- 2) Egyptians were residents of the land of Egypt. Israelites were residents of _____. (Exodus 8.22)
- 3) The Israelites are noted as being treated differently by God than the Egyptians beginning with what plague?
 - a. _____
- 4) Find two references to this event in the New Testament:
 - a. _____
 - b. _____

Thought Questions

- 1) Who is listed as being responsible for the hardening of Pharaoh's heart?
 - a. _____

- 2) What critical distinction does the author of Hebrews make between the Israelites at the Red Sea and the pursuing Egyptians (Hebrews 11)?
 - a. _____

- 3) How can I see God's plan for man's salvation unfold in this story?
 - a. _____

- 4) In 1 Corinthians 5, Paul connects with Passover lamb with what NT character?
 - a. _____
- 5) What is one new fact about any of the plagues that you learned?
 - a. _____

Lesson 9- Moses and the Law (Exodus 16-34; Deuteronomy 31-34)

Following the astounding events at the Red Sea, the Israelites journeyed towards Mt. Sinai. This migration was marked by moments of doubt, as twice the Israelites complained to the Lord: once for bread (Exodus 16) and once for water (Ex. 17). Finally, three months after leaving Egypt (Ex. 19.1), the Israelites arrived at Mt. Sinai.

For a period of more than 40 days (Ex. 24.1), Moses is ascending the mountain to hear from God, then descending the mountain to share God's message with the people. The very first message God shared with the people through Moses was a reminder of His mighty deeds and a call for the people to keep His covenant (Ex. 19.3ff). The response of the people was a resolved commitment to the Lord (Ex. 19.8).

Three days after the people vowed to serve the Lord, God spoke to the nation the 10 commandments (Exodus 20) – 10 laws that would serve as a foundation for this newly formed nation. These 10 commandments were not given to all nations; these words were given to those who had been “brought... out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage” (Ex. 20.2).

After the giving of the 10 commandments, the people were frightened by what they saw (Ex. 20.18ff). Thus, they asked that Moses might stand before God for them. This being agreeable to God, Moses would spend the majority of chapters 21-32 on Mt. Sinai, receiving the Law from God. Note that the 10 commands, while a part of the Law of Moses, were not the entirety of the law.

Moses' return to the people was beyond disappointing, as he arrived to a scene of idolatry and revelry (Ex. 32.4,25ff). Moses broke the two tablets of the Testimony (Deut. 5.22) which God had given him and then proceeded to have the people drink the ashes of the golden calf. 3000 Israelite men died because of their participation in the worship of the calf (Ex. 32.28). The nation was punished with a plague because of their sin (Ex. 32.35). Only after did they leave Sinai.

The book of Exodus closes with Moses seeing to the design and construction of the different objects which God had commanded him on the mountain.

Lesson 9 Questions- Moses and the Law

- 1) What future, influential leader of Israel is mentioned alongside Moses in Exodus 24?
 - a. _____
- 2) In what chapter of Exodus do we read of the 10 commandments?
 - a. _____
- 3) What was written on the two tablets of stone God gave Moses?
 - a. (Provide a reference) _____
- 4) As Moses ascended the mountain to receive the Law from God after the giving of the 10 commandments, what was God's first commandment?
 - a. _____
- 5) What significant role is Aaron given (Exodus 28-30.10; cf. Heb. 9.7)?
 - a. _____

Thought Questions

- 1) What might be the significance of Moses continually ascending and descending the mountain? What might that convey to the people?
 - a. _____

- 2) Are Christians obligated to follow the 10 commandments today? Explain.
 - a. _____

- 3) What do we learn about nakedness from this reading (Ex. 20.26; 28.42)?
 - a. _____

- 4) What is the contrast between Jesus and Moses in John 1.14-18?
 - a. _____

- 5) Did God intend for the Law of Moses to be His final revelation? Why or why not?
 - a. _____

Lesson 10- Joshua

After leading the Israelites for 40 years, Moses died (Deuteronomy 34), leaving open a leadership role in the nation. Following 30 days of mourning, Joshua, the Son of Nun, ascended to lead the people, as God directed (Deut. 34.9; Joshua 1.1ff). The land that Moses did not get to experience would be attained by the Israelites under the leadership of Joshua (Deut. 34.4; Josh. 1.2).

Joshua's younger life is marked by two notable events. First, Joshua was the assistant to Moses (Exodus 24.13). Joshua is often seen in close proximity to Moses in many key events in the books of Moses. Second, Joshua was one of only two people over 60 to enter the Promised Land (Numbers 13-14) due to his resolute faith in God.

Beginning in Joshua 3, under his leadership, Israel crossed the Jordan River and began to conquer the land which God had promised to her forefathers. Joshua was keenly aware of the history of Israel's fickleness toward God and often made it his mission to remind the people of their God and their responsibilities toward Him. During their initial crossing of the Jordan, Joshua built up a monument of twelve stones, placing them in the midst of the Jordan (Josh. 4.9), serving as a reminder of God's power and grace.

Through Jericho, Ai, and Hebron, Joshua led the Israelites in their conquest of the land that Moses was allowed to see. As his life drew to a close, Joshua gathered the leaders and the people to himself. The last two chapters of the book of Joshua record the touching and stirring messages delivered by the aged Joshua.

In his farewell addresses, he reminded the leaders of the nation to maintain their faithfulness toward God and to lead the Israelites in a godly manner (Josh. 23.4-13). He reminded them of God's faithful conduct toward them in the past (23.14) and encouraged them to continue to enjoy God's blessing by serving Him.

Speaking to the nation at-large, Joshua reminded the people of God's fulfilled promises (Josh. 24.3-4,13-14) and their responsibility to Him (24.15-18).

Lesson 10 Questions- Joshua

1) Why was Joshua allowed to entire Canaan even though he was older?

a. _____

2) What does the name *Joshua* mean?

a. _____

3) List two difficult situations Joshua had to deal with as he led Israel?

a. _____

b. _____

4) Who was Joshua's father? Into which tribe was Joshua born?

a. _____

Thought Questions

1) What characteristics made Joshua a good leader? List at least 2.

a. _____

2) Why did Joshua tell the Israelites that they "[could not] serve the Lord" in Joshua 24.19?

a. _____

3) What was God's promise to Abraham concerning land?

a. _____

4) Has God fulfilled the land promise to Abraham and his descendants?

a. _____

5) *Joshua* is the Hebrew form of what Greek name?

a. _____

6) How can we see Jesus in the story of Joshua?

a. _____

Lesson 11- The Period of the Judges

The Israelites would serve God faithfully in the period immediately following the death of Joshua. However, after that generation passed, a new generation of Israelites arose who “did not know the Lord” (Judges 2.10).

Beginning at the point, Israel began a cycle of rebellion, captivity, repentance, and restoration that would last until the time of the kings. While this period of time tried the patience of the Lord with Israel, it provided opportunity after opportunity for God to reveal Himself and demonstrate both His power and grace.

When Israel would turn away from God, He would allow her to be taken captive. After a period of time, Israel would humble herself, repent, and cry out to God. Upon her repentance, God would raise up for the nation a judge (a deliverer- Judges 2.16) who, with God’s strength, would liberate the people. For a period of time, Israel would remain faithful—then, the cycle would begin again.

Those who served Israel in some capacity as a judge are: Othniel (Judges 3.9-10); Ehud (3.15); Shamgar (3.31); Deborah (4.4); Barak (4.7); Gideon (6.14), Tola (10.1), Jair (10.3); Jephthah (12.7); Ibzan (12.8); Elon (12.11); Abdon (12.13); Samson (15.20; 16.31); Eli (1 Samuel 4.18); and Samuel (1 Samuel 7.15-17). During this time period, idolatry was one of the largest problems in Israel, particularly the worship of Baal and Ashtoreth. The Philistines and Midianites were constant thorns in the side of Israel in the time of the judges. When the book of Judges closes, the picture in Israel is bleak (Judges 21.25).

Following the book of Judges, Israel was in a dark place. Yet, all hope was not lost. A godly woman named Hannah continually prayed to God for a son who would eventually be given her—Samuel. Samuel would rise to occupy a notable role in Israel’s history, being a prophet, judge and anointer of kings.

During Samuel’s reign as judge, Israel would demand a king (1 Samuel 8). Though this displeased the Lord (1 Samuel 12), he allowed Israel to proceed with her decision.

Lesson 11 Questions- The Period of the Judges

- 1) What was a judge?
 - a. _____
- 2) Which judge do you find most interesting? Why?
 - a. _____
 - _____
- 3) What choices set the stage of Israel's struggle with idolatry (chapter 1)?
 - a. _____
 - _____
- 4) What did Eli give his sons that Samuel did not give his sons?
 - a. _____

Thought Questions

- 1) Why did Israel want a king (1 Samuel 8.5)?
 - a. _____
- 2) What was the real reason Israel wanted a king?
 - a. _____
 - _____
- 3) How was Israel rejecting God in asking for a king (1 Samuel 8.6ff)?
 - a. _____
 - _____
- 4) Do a little research on Baal and the worship of Baal. What of interest did you find?
 - a. _____
 - _____
- 5) Do a little research on Ashtoreth and Ashtoreth worship. What of interest did you find?
 - a. _____
 - _____
- 6) How can the book of Judges help us live godly in this present age?
 - a. _____
 - _____
 - _____

Lesson 12- Saul (1 Samuel 8-31)

Israel had demanded a king (1 Samuel 8). Though their decision was unwise, God granted their wishes, warning them of the behavior of their monarchs (1 Sam. 8.10ff). The first of the Israelite kings would be a man named Saul, son of Kish, a Benjamite (1 Sam. 9.1f). Though he was an imposing physical specimen, Saul's attitude would ultimately be his undoing.

At the presentation of Saul, Samuel sought to not only remind the people of their responsibility toward God, but he also explained the responsibility the king had to God and the Law (1 Sam. 10.25). Later, at Saul's coronation, Samuel would again emphasize the need for all the people to obey God (1 Sam. 12.14ff). The events which occurred at the coronation made it clear to the people that they had made the wrong choice in asking for a king. Further disobedience would not be the solution, Samuel emphasized—only humility before God.

Two years into his reign as king, Saul's decline began. While he was in Gilgal preparing to fight the Philistines, he offered both burnt and peace offerings, disregarding the instruction that the sacrifices should only be offered when Samuel arrived (1 Sam. 13.1-15). Samuel rebuked Saul's foolish actions and revealed to Saul that his kingdom "shall not continue" (13.14f). The Lord had selected another man to lead Israel, a man after His heart.

Two subsequent events would mark Saul's fall from the monarchy. Saul's decline would continue later in his reign, as he allowed vengeance to override clear thinking in pursuing the Philistines (1 Sam. 14.24ff), which almost cost him the life of his son, Jonathan. Saul's decline would finally reach an end when he blatantly disobeyed the words of God, sparing Agag of the Amalekites, along with the choice flocks of the Amalekites. As Samuel approached Saul to speak about Saul's disobedience, Saul brazenly stated that he had "performed the commandment of the Lord" (15.13ff). Samuel quickly pointed out Saul's lie. Saul was attempting to shift the blame onto others when Samuel silenced him and pointed that pride had destroyed Saul's reign (15.17).

Saul would eventually repent of his sin, but it was too little, too late—the damage to his reign was done. The Lord rejected Saul as a king and the kingdom would be taken from his family (15.26ff).

Lesson 12 Questions- Saul

- 1) What warning did Samuel have about the behavior of kings?
 - a. _____
- 2) What mission was Saul on that brought him into contact with Samuel?
 - a. _____
- 3) What instructions were given to kings in the law of Moses (Deut. 17)?
 - a. _____
- 4) How does Saul eventually die (1 Samuel 31; 2 Samuel 1)?
 - a. _____
- 5) How long did Saul reign (Acts 13)?
 - a. _____

Thought Questions

- 1) List a few characteristics of Saul that led to his downfall. Explain.
 - a. _____
- 2) Do you think that King Saul was active in the commands of Deut. 17.14ff?
 - a. _____

- 3) As you look through 1 Samuel, should Saul have been dead before chapter 31? Why or why not?
 - a. _____

- 4) What is significant about Jonathan's character?
 - a. _____

- 5) Why did the Lord regret making Saul king over Israel (1 Sam. 15.35)?
 - a. _____
- 6) Explain 1 Samuel 15.22.
 - a. _____

- 7) What central New Testament character was also a Benjamite?
 - a. _____

Lesson 13- David (1 Samuel 16-1 Kings 2)

Though Saul was rejected as king by God, he did not immediately leave the throne; however, it was not long until the new king was identified to Samuel: David, the son of Jesse (1 Samuel 16). At first, Samuel was frightened to anoint the new king (1 Sam. 16.1-4), but he submitted to God's desires and eventually anointed the youngest of Jesse's sons as the next king over Israel.

As Saul had been disobedient (and would continue to be disobedient), it is no surprise to read that the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul (1 Sam. 16.14). Truly, inner peace can only be found when we wholly submit ourselves to God (Philippians 4.7-9). Saul was able to find some degree of comfort in the music which David would play for him.

David's first large-scale introduction to the nation of Israel came in the conflict with the Philistines and their champion-giant Goliath (1 Sam. 17). The faith which David displays throughout this event is astounding, putting to shame the fighting men of Israel. David placed his complete confidence in God (1 Sam. 17.37ff) and thus stepped out to fight the giant, armed with only a staff, a sling, five smooth stones, and his shepherd's bag. The Lord delivered Goliath into the hand of David and Israel plundered the Philistines.

Saul was initially overjoyed at the bravery of David. That bravery was short-lived, however, as envy flamed in Saul's heart after hearing the women sing David's praises (1 Sam. 18.7). From this point on, the relationship between David and Saul would never be the same, as Saul became increasingly more suspicious of David (1 Sam. 18.9). Saul was so set on destroying David that he gave his daughter in marriage to David with the express idea of harming him (1 Sam. 18.21). Saul would try time and time again to kill David, yet would fail, sometimes even being thwarted in his attempts by his own son, Jonathan. In Saul's fervor to kill David, David would often have opportunities to take his own vengeance on Saul. Yet, each time the opportunity was presented, David abstained (1 Sam. 24.6).

Following Saul's death, David would ascend to the throne in Judah, and shortly after that, the throne over all Israel (2 Samuel 2.1-4; 5.1-5).

Lesson 13 Questions- David

- 1) What was David doing when Samuel came to anoint him?
 - a. _____
- 2) Why was David in the Valley of Elah at the Philistine battle?
 - a. _____
- 3) What important character dies as Saul seeks to kill David? (1 Sam. 24-25)
 - a. _____
- 4) What does the name *Nabal* mean?
 - a. _____
- 5) What did Saul do to David and Michal in 1 Samuel 25?
 - a. _____

Thought Questions

- 1) There are many good lessons in these chapters concerning choosing a mate and marriage. Find a few verses and principles from these chapters in 1 Samuel that can guide us to choose good mates and enjoy marriage.
 - a. _____

- 2) David stood to fight the giant when no one else would—he acted with amazing faith. But if he had such faith, why did he take 5 stones?
 - a. _____

- 3) What character, other than David or Saul, do you find interesting in this reading? Why?
 - a. _____

- 4) From what tribe did David come? (1 Chronicles 2.1-12) What is significant about that tribe? (Genesis 49.9f; Isaiah 9.6; 11.1f; Revelation 5.5-9)
 - a. _____

Lesson 14- David (cont.)

Following the death of Saul, David ascends to the throne over the entirety of Israel (2 Samuel 5; 1 Chronicles 11). Though his was a reign that held so much promise, David would eventually find himself undone by sin.

Early in his reign as king, David erred in allowing the ark of God to be transported in an improper manner (2 Sam. 6; cf. Exodus 37.2-5; Numbers 4.15; 7.4-9). The end result was the death of Uzzah and anger on the part of David. The ark would remain outside of Jerusalem for 3 months.

While we might be familiar with the poor choices of David later in his life, not all his decisions were short-sighted. When moving the ark back to Jerusalem, David desired to build a permanent house for the ark of God (2 Sam. 7). While his idea was noble, David would not be the one to construct this house for God—instead, his son would construct the temple. Another positive episode from this segment of David's life concerns his treatment of Mephibosheth, the lame son of Jonathan (2 Sam. 9).

However, David would later relapse into poor decision-making, demonstrated clearly in the events involving Uriah and Bathsheba (2 Sam. 11-13). After involving himself in adultery, David attempted to hide his sin first by drunkenness and then by murder. Eventually, David was confronted by Nathan the prophet and repented of his sin. However, the repercussions of his sin would be felt by many—the illegitimate child would die, the sword would not depart from David's house, and adversity would be present in David's family.

In accordance with Nathan's prophecy, adversity came to David's family. David's son Amnon raped Tamar, David's daughter. Avenging his sister, Absalom, David's son, murdered Amnon and then fled the kingdom, only to return as a usurper to the throne (2 Sam. 15). David would flee from his son until Absalom was killed by Joab, allowing David to return to his throne.

Following the sinful census he conducted (2 Sam. 24), we come to the end of David's life. An old man, still dealing with the fallout from his sin (1 Kings 1), David would die after proclaiming Solomon as his heir.

Lesson 14 Questions- David (cont.)

1) Why was the ark not in Jerusalem? (1 Sam. 5-7)

a. _____

2) Why was David not allowed to build the temple? (1 Chronicles 28.1-6)

a. _____

3) Where was Bathsheba when David saw her bathing? (2 Samuel 11)

a. _____

4) Where is Bathsheba referenced in the New Testament?

a. _____

Thought Questions

1) David showed the “kindness of God” to Mephibosheth (2 Sam. 9). How did David display this kindness of God?

a. _____

2) What did David do incorrectly concerning the transportation of the ark? What does this episode reveal to us about God?

a. _____

3) 1 Chronicles 25 shows that David used instruments of music in the worship of God. Why did he do this? Do his actions authorize ours?

a. _____

4) Where is David first mentioned in the New Testament?

a. _____

5) Who or what are the “sure mercies of David” in Acts 13.34?

a. _____

Lesson 15- Solomon (1 Kings 2-11)

As David nears death, Israel again faces uncertainty about her leader. Adonijah, one of David's sons, sought to usurp the throne. However, David decreed that his son from Bathsheba, Solomon, would be the next ruler. Following David's death, Solomon executed Adonijah, then took his rightful place on the throne over Israel.

Early in his reign, the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream and offered to give him anything he requested. What a change from the character of Saul as we see this new king requesting wisdom (1 Kings 3.9-14)! Solomon's gift was immediately displayed, as he successfully mediated between two women arguing over a child (1 Ki. 3.16ff).

During the reign of Solomon, Israel enjoyed unparalleled prosperity. The daily provision for Solomon involved over 30 oxen and 100 sheep (1 Kings 4.20ff). Surveying the nation as a whole, silver and gold were as common in Israel as gravel (2 Chronicles 1.15). In the midst of such prosperity, Solomon built the temple for the Lord, the structure his father had desired to build. The temple would have been a remarkable building to see, adorned with intricate designs and much of it overlaid with pure gold (1 Ki. 6.21ff).

However, in the midst of all his prosperity, and even with his abundance of wisdom, Solomon fell prey to the very things God had adamantly warned against at the beginning of Israel's nationhood (Deuteronomy 17)—Solomon amassed horses (1 Ki. 4.26); wives (1 Ki. 11.3), and gold and silver (1 Ki. 10.21f).

The result of Solomon's folly was the two-fold. First, the nation, though prosperous, was beginning to divide. After Solomon's death, the nation would complete the process, fracturing into two independent units- Judah and Israel. Second, Solomon's folly caused immense difficulty in his personal life. The 700 wives that Solomon kept eventually turned his heart away from God, leading him into idolatry (1 Ki. 11.4ff).

We are left to our own speculation concerning Solomon's end. If 1 Kings 11 is the end, the Solomon died separated from God. If Ecclesiastes forms the end of Solomon's story, then we see a happy picture of repentance and forgiveness.

Lesson 15 Questions- Solomon

1) How long did Solomon reign as king?

a. _____

2) A “kor” (1 Kings 4.22) is a unit of measurement. How much is a kor?

a. _____

3) Who were Solomon’s parents?

a. _____

4) What connection did Rehoboam and Jeroboam have to Solomon?

a. _____

Thought Questions

1) If Solomon was blessed with so much wisdom, how could he make such poor decisions in his personal life?

a. _____

2) Find the three instances where Matthew mentions Solomon. What do we learn in each instance?

a. _____
b. _____
c. _____

3) Who was Adonijah’s father and how did he fail his son?

a. _____

4) What does Solomon conclude is the purpose of life?

a. _____

5) Beyond the fact that God prohibited it, what was so bad about amassing horses, wives, and gold?

a. _____

6) Are failures in leadership a new problem?

a. _____