

1. Introducing the Bible

Aim: To present the Bible as God's authoritative, inerrant, and effective Word.

Introduction: We live in a society which once was founded on biblical truth. Though many have heard of the Bible, and may even own one, sadly, they do not know what it says because they have never taken the time to read it for themselves. They presume it's out-of-date or irrelevant. But the Bible is very relevant; it is timeless. Indeed, it is the Book of all books that tells us who the true God is and what life's about.

In this series, "From Creation to Christ" we will study the Bible from Creation to the Cross and to the Coming of Jesus. Our study will be chronological and panoramic (dealing only with the "big" stories).

We trust that we will grow in understanding the message of the Bible, grow in confidence in its authority, and gain respect for its uniqueness as God's written and powerful Word.

A. The focus of the Bible

What is the main focus of the Bible? (Gen 1:1; John 1:1; John 5:39; John 17:3; John 20:31)

God is the main focus of the Bible - the Bible is indeed the revelation of God. The other main focus of the Bible is that God can be known by us humans. In His grace, and for His glory, God has enabled us sinners to be brought back into relationship with Him so that we can know Him, through His eternal Son.

B. The Content of the Bible

The Bible is a big book, made up of 66 books and written by about 40 human authors. But how should we see it? (2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 1:20-21)

The Bible is one book – God's Book – written by one author, the Holy Spirit. It is one "big" story, with every part connected to the overall story – God's story. We declare the Bible to be "God's Word".

The Bible has a lot of history in it. How should we view its historical content?

It is human history as seen from God's perspective; it is His Story (His-Story). In this story we behold God's dealings with people, His glory and character, and His plans and purposes for us in Christ.

The Bible has many different types of writings in it – history, law, poetry, wisdom, teaching, prophecy, etc? What should our response be to what we read? (2 Kings 22:10-11, 18-19; Rev 2:7)

We are to humbly listen to what we read, and respond to it - allowing it to impact what we believe and do.

Consider the statement that Martin Luther made to his non-Christian friend Erasmus (who knew the Bible very well) "The difference between you and me Erasmus, is that I sit under Scripture letting it judge me, but you sit above Scripture judging it". [Discuss]

C. The Foundation of the Bible

Consider who God is. What is the basis of the Bible? (Isa 40:8; Matt 24:35; John 17:17)

The Bible is based on the fact that the eternal and true God has chosen to communicate with us so that we might know Him. God's Word, like God Himself, is eternal and true.

The Bible is founded on "the beginning story" (Gen 1:1; John 1:1). Why?

The Bible starts at the beginning of the human race; at the beginning of the Creation of the heavens and the earth. This is so that we can understand why we were made and what happened to humans in their relationship with God, and what God has done to restore things in Christ. Our "beginning story" is very important in laying the background and purpose for the Gospel of Christ.

Jesus quoted from the foundations (Matt 19:4-6). So did Paul (Rom 5:12-14). What does this imply?

The foundations of the Bible are to be received and believed. They are not some fable or fairy story. They are critical to understanding life and what God has done for us in Christ.

D. The Benefit of the Bible

What are the benefits in setting aside time read and study the Bible (personally & at Home Group)?

The Bible enables us to spiritually prosper (Psa 1:1-3), to be spiritually enlightened (Psa 19:7-11), to be a light to our path (Psa 119:105); to set us free from sin (John 8:31-32), to lead us to salvation in Christ (2 Tim 3:15), and to change and transform us (John 17:17; Heb 4:12). It is the most important book of all.

What is the connection between the Bible and Life? (Deut 32:47; John 5:24; Phil 2:15-16)

The Bible is the Word of Life. Through it we come to know God and to know life and to live life to the full.

Conclusion: The Bible is the most quoted, the most published, the most translated, and the most influential book in the history of mankind. But above all, it is God's message to us. He had it written for us. Therefore, more than any other thing, we should want to read it and know it. Amen!

Summary: The Bible is most important because it is God's message of truth to every individual.

2. God Alone (part 1)

Aim: To present the fact of God's existence before all things, and His sovereignty over all things.

Introduction: In our culture, self is exalted and assigned to that place of control and supremacy that belongs to God alone. For example, our secular education system and many of our sciences have been taken over by humanistic philosophies that put man in the place of God. *[discuss]*

In this study, we will consider God's rightful place; He alone is God – above and beyond us all.

A. Revision

What were the main points of last week's lesson?

God is the main focus of the Bible. The Bible is "HIS STORY." As we study the Bible, we see what God has said about Himself, and what He's revealed about His nature and character through what He has done. Above all, the Bible reveals what God has done so that we can know Him (John 17:3) through His Son.

Let us now consider God from His Word. Who is God? What is He like?

B. God alone had no beginning; God will have no end; God is ETERNAL.

What are the opening words of the Bible? What do these words signify? (Gen 1:1)

God declared these words so that we would know that there was a beginning to all things; except Himself. Just think: Before the beginning, there was no universe, earth, angels, people. There was nothing but God.

What do we learn in Psalm 90:2 and 1 Tim 1:17?

God, and God alone, is eternal. He was not created. There never was a time when God did not exist. There never will be a time when God does not exist. He has always been and will always be. God can never die. This truth is what is declared when God says "I am the Alpha and Omega" (Rev 1:8).

In contrast, how does man (in our human flesh) compare to God? (Psa 90:10; Psa 139:16)

Man is not eternal. Unlike God, he has a beginning, and in regard to his flesh, he has an end.

KEY POINT: GOD had no beginning, and will have no end.

MAN is born and dies.

C. God is a Trinity.

In Genesis 1:1, the Hebrew word for God is Elohim. It's plural. What does this signify?

The plural use for God (*El*) can be used to emphasise God's majesty (ie, He's the God of gods). But we also know from the Bible's revelation of God, and especially in the New Testament, that though God is One (Deut 6:4), there is more than one "person" in the Godhead. So, the use of *Elohim* is "spot-on".

In Genesis 1:26, how does God refer to Himself?

The pronouns "us" and "our" are used when God creates man in His image, again affirming that more than one "person" is in the Godhead; indeed, we know that Jesus created with God the Father (John 1:3).

The names of these "persons" who make up the Godhead are clearly revealed when we come into the New Testament. What names do we give them? (Matt 28:19; Rev 1:4-5)

They are God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. This revelation becomes clearer in the unfolding of God's story. But, in the opening pages of the Bible, the seed plot is revealed that there are "persons" within the Godhead. We use the word "Trinity" to describe these three persons who are God.

Note: As we continue to study the Bible, we will see that the three "persons" of the Trinity work in perfect harmony together, for they are one God (cf. John 10:30; eternal and equally God (cf. John 1:1).

KEY POINT: GOD is a Triune being of three "persons". MAN is a triune person – body, soul & spirit.

D. Because God existed before all things, He is completely independent of everything and everyone.

Does God need anything or anyone in order to exist or operate? (Isa 40:28; Acts 17:24-25)

No! As implied by the fact that He existed before all things, He has need of nothing to sustain Him. He does not need the earth nor anything on it. He doesn't need air, food, water, light, sleep. He never gets tired, thirsty, or hungry. God needs nothing. And He doesn't need us.

How does man compare? (Psa 145:14-16; Matt 6:31-32)

We are totally dependent on things around us. We would never have been born into the world without parents. We would never have survived as infants without care. We need food, water, oxygen, sleep, light, protection, etc. We are totally dependent on God, and the things He has provided.

KEY POINT: GOD needs nothing. He is independent. MAN needs many things. He is dependent.

Summary: **God is unique. Unlike any other, He had no beginning, He is eternal, and He needs nothing. Whereas man has a beginning, and has need of God and what He provides.**

3. God Alone (part 2)

Aim: To present the fact of God's existence before all things, and His sovereignty over all things.

Introduction: Humans today want to believe there is no God, or to believe in a god that suits us (ie, not the God of the Bible). Can you think of examples of that? How has this thinking affected our society?

A. Revision

Last week we considered God in relation to man. What were the main key points?

GOD had no beginning, will have no end.

MAN is born and dies.

GOD is a Triune being of three "persons".

MAN is a triune person – body, soul & spirit

GOD needs nothing. He is independent.

MAN needs many things. He is dependent.

B. God is Spirit

Before there was a physical world, there was God. What do we know about God from John 4:24?

God is Spirit. He does not have a material body. He does not have flesh and bones like humans.

Because God is Spirit, some think of Him as a "force". What do you think? (cf. Exod 34:1-8)

God is not a force or influence. Even though He is Spirit, He is a real being, who can speak and think and feel and act. He has a mind, a nature, a personality, and a will; just like us, but infinitely greater. Indeed, we who are human persons, have been made in the image of the greatest person – God.

Because God is Spirit, what does this imply? (John 1:18; 1 Tim 6:13-16)

We cannot see God with our natural eyes. Also, He does not have bodily needs. How different that is to us. Because we have a body, we have many needs, and are very limited compared to God.

KEY POINT: GOD is Spirit and has no material body. MAN has a material body.

C. God alone is all-knowing (omniscient)

In order for God to create the universe, what attribute did He need? (Pro 3:19; Psa 104:24)

He needed wisdom and knowledge. Creation's vastness and minuteness, its complexities and intricacies, reveal how God is infinitely wise and knowledgeable (cf. Psa 147:4-5; Isa 40:25-28).

What else do we learn about God from Isa 40:12-14 and Rom 11:33-36?

God possesses all knowledge. He doesn't need anyone to teach Him; for there's nothing He doesn't know.

How does man compare in relation to God's knowledge and wisdom? (Job 38:1-7)

In contrast to God, we know little. We need to be taught, and are depended on God for wisdom (Jam 1:5).

KEY POINT: GOD knows everything. MAN needs to be taught.

D. God alone is everywhere (omnipresent)

Where is God? Where was He before everything else existed? (Psa 139:7-10; Jer 23:24)

God is everywhere. Solomon understood this when he built his temple. It could not contain Him; nor can the highest heavens (2 Chron 6:18).

Though God is everywhere, what false teaching must we safeguard ourselves against?

The error of pantheism. God is not "in everything"; and everything is not God. He is the Creator, distinct from His creation. His glorious presence is in heaven, where He sits upon His throne (Isa 6:1; Rev 4:2-3).

How do we compare to God?

God and God alone is able to be everywhere all the time. Man is limited to being in one place at a time.

KEY POINT: God is everywhere all the time MAN is only in one place at a time.

E. God alone is greater than all (omnipotent)

What do we learn from Psa 145:1-3, Isa 40:12-18 and Jer 10:6-7?

There is no one like God. He is infinitely greater than all. His greatness is beyond compare.

What else do we learn about God from 1 Chron 29:10-13, Psa 103:19 and Isa 40:21-25?

God rules over all things. He alone has all power to rule and reign. He is the Sovereign Lord.

KEY POINT: GOD is greater than all and is the only Sovereign MAN is under God's authority.

F. God alone can tell us about the beginning

Who should we listen to in regard to our beginnings? (Discuss)

Consider: Only God was there in the beginning! Man wasn't! He who has no beginning, knows all that came to be and how it came to be. In Genesis, in our Bible God has given His record of our beginning.

Summary: **There is no-one like God. He is Spirit, He is all-knowing, He is everywhere, He is greater than all, He is the only Sovereign, and only He was there at the beginning.**

4. God Created the Heavens and the Earth – Part 1

Aim: To show that God created the heavens and the earth from nothing through His great power.

Introduction: We live in a society where theories of evolution are constantly taught in every place as if they were fact; yet the biblical account, given by the one who designed and made everything, is usually disregarded. Unless a person studies the Bible and draws convictions from it, he will almost certainly be affected by man's incorrect ideas about our existence and origins. *[Discuss]*

A. Genesis (the beginning)

What theories are used for how the earth formed and how life began? How should we respond?

Many theories exist about what happened in the beginning. But only God was there, and only He knows.

Can we rely upon the Genesis record? Who endorses the Genesis account? (Matt 19:4-6)

God gave direct revelation (to Moses) so that we would know how the earth was formed and how life began. Jesus affirmed the Genesis account when He quoted from Gen 1:27 and Gen 2:24 in Matt 19:4-6.

B. "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth"

What is significant about the phrase, "In the beginning" (Gen 1:1)?

It signifies that all things had a beginning. Nothing or no one existed before the beginning, except God.

Note: The word "genesis" means "beginnings" or "origins."

What did God use to make the heavens and the earth? (Heb 11:3)

God literally made the heavens and the earth out of nothing! He did not fashion or shape something that already existed. Unlike anyone else in all Creation, He has the power to create from nothing (Jer 32:17).

What was the state of the earth after God had brought it forth from nothing? (Gen 1:2)

The earth was formless and empty, and covered by darkness and water. There was no life anywhere.

What imagery is captured in the phrase "and the Spirit of God was moving (hovering)"?

God's Spirit (the third person in the Trinity) was poised to act and do all that was commanded by God the Father through the Son (Rev 4:11, Heb 1:1-2). The Trinity was involved in Creation.

C. The first day: Light created

How did God create light? (Gen 1:3)

He just spoke "Let there be light", and it appeared. God, and God alone, can speak things into existence.

Note: Light is a most amazing "substance". Scientists can model and understand it to some degree, but light itself is a mystery, as revealed in quantum physics. Only God alone understands light.

Note: The light on the first day was not when God created the sun – that wasn't done until the fourth day.

How did God describe the light? (Gen 1:4)

It was good. We will notice that nearly each time God created, He said it was good (or perfect).

How long was the first "day"? (Gen 1:5; Exod 20:8-11)

According to Jewish scholars, and the Exodus reading, we should understand the "days" of creation to be 24 hour days. God literally spoke the words in Exodus 20 to His people; they would have understood the Hebrew word "day" to be a literal 24 hour day. Note: The Jews counted a day as being from sunset to sunset. This was based on the phrase "there was evening and there was morning" from Genesis 1.

D. The second day: Atmosphere created

On the second day what did God create? (Gen 1:6-8)

God created the atmosphere, in order to separate the waters below from the waters above. The waters below would be seas, and the waters above would be clouds. Note: Some have suggested that there was originally a large water "blanket" in the upper atmosphere to protect the earth (which may have been the reason why the earth was flooded so completely during Noah's flood).

What do we know about the earth's atmosphere from scientific research?

Our atmosphere is perfect. We have an ozone layer to protect us from the sun's radiation, and a perfect ratio of 21% oxygen and 78% nitrogen to support life. God is all wise.

Conclusion:

Unlike man's theories, God's written account of creation has not changed. He was there before the beginning. He is the Sovereign Creator, and He alone knows how all things came to be. God has told us in His Word that He created everything. He is the source of all energy and the Creator of all matter.

Summary: God alone is the Creator; He made everything from nothing.

5. God Created the Heavens and the Earth – Part 2

Aim: To show that God created the heavens and the earth from nothing through His great power.

Introduction: Our society allows evolutionary theories to be widely published and taught as fact. What is not widely published is how much of the data which evolutionists once based their theories on is being proven false; eg, many so-called links in man's evolution have been shown to be hoaxes. *[Discuss]*

Questions about life are answered by evolutionists in terms of millions of years and chance. God's revealed, through His Word, that He has made all things by His power; not by time and chance. *[Discuss]*

In our last study, we looked at the first two days of creation. Let us now look at the next three days.

A. The third day: dry land, ocean, and all flora created

On the third day, what did God do? What do we learn about God?(Psa 95:5; Job 38:8-11)

With incredible power God displayed when He gathered the seas to their place, and caused the dry ground to appear. God alone, made the oceans, and He alone controls them (cf. Jesus power in Mark 4:35-41).

After the dry ground appeared, what amazing event happened next? (Gen 1:11-13)

God alone created all plant life (the first living things); from microscopic algae to giant Karri trees.

God tells us that He made the plants to yield seed "after their kind". What does this imply?

Plants only reproduce themselves after their kind, and do not evolve into other kinds. Thus, evolution has no foundation. There is variation within a kind, but you never get one plant kind evolving into another. Therefore, the plants we have today came from what God created in the beginning.

What does the order, complexity, and design of plant life shows us?

It shows us that there is a Master Designer, who has made things in a perfect and beautiful way. Consider: God made the plants to bless us and be useful for us. He also made them with a variety of colours and fragrances to delight us. Plant-life ought to be a daily reminder of His greatness and glory and care of us. Note: God could have made everything black and white. But instead, He created colours that could be seen by the eyes of man. Everything could have been tasteless. But God created flavour and taste buds to taste it. He did the same thing with fragrances. He made the earth not just livable, but truly beautiful.

At the end of Gen 1:12, it says that "God saw that it was good". What does this imply?

Everything God created on this day was good. Thorns and weeds did not exist. No fruit was poisonous.

B. The fourth day: Sun, moon, and stars created

What did God do on the fourth day of creation? (Gen 1:14-19; Isa 40:26)

God spoke, and the sun, moon, and stars came into being. He created them and has a name for them all.

Science has shown that the earth is part of a solar system, which is part of the "milky way" galaxy, which is part of other systems. What does all this indicate?

The stars and planets are not dispersed randomly throughout the universe, but everything is in its place, moving about in an orderly manner. This shows how there is a Master Designer; God Almighty.

Note: We see the same order through a microscope as we do through a telescope. Atoms reflect the same order as in the solar system. The stamp of God's design is deeply imprinted in every part of creation.

What does the vastness of the universe speak to us about? (Isaiah 40:12; Psa 19:1; Rom 1:20)

How great God is! We can only see a tiny part of the universe. Yet God created even the most remote galaxies and stars, and measures it with His hand span. We cannot imagine the immensity of the universe; much less can we comprehend the greatness of God! It all truly declares His glory!

C. The fifth day: All sea life and birds created

After creating vegetation, what did God create next, and what did He do? (Gen 1:20-23)

God created all sea life and all birds, all in one day, and then He **filled** the seas and the sky with them.

What does the start of verse 21 specifically mention?

God created the "great sea monsters". This would have included crocodiles, whales, great sharks, giant squids, and also, water-based dinosaurs. Note: God was the Creator of all the dinosaurs (cf. Job 40:15-18).

What truths are again emphasised at the end of verse 21?

God created everything good, and everything was created in its **kind**; again, negating evolutionary thought.

What should Gen 1:20-23 cause us to realise? What should it cause us to do? (Psa 104:1,24-25)

God made all sea life and bird life in one day with such vastness in colour, design, and shape, and with great complexity (just like the plants). Consider: The simplest bacterial cells are exceedingly complex. Each contains molecular machinery, far more complex than any machine man could make. Praise God!

Summary: God made everything, from an intricate little flower to the most distant galaxy.

6. God Created the Heavens and the Earth – Part 3

Aim: To show that God created the heavens and the earth from nothing and that He made man.

Introduction: *At Creation, God established laws to regulate Creation. What do we know about these laws?* They are absolutely reliable and predictable. Eg, because the movement and position of the moon and earth and sun are completely predictable, calendars and tidal charts can be made years in advance.

What do these laws affirm and what do these laws tell us about God's nature?

These laws affirm that there is a Creator God – things are not left to randomness and chance, as evolution proposes. Also, our magnificent Creator is the God of order. Note: God constantly sustains these laws (Heb 1:3a). If He didn't, the laws would collapse and the universe would disintegrate. *[Discuss]*

There is quite a mystery with some laws. Eg, we can model and predict the force of gravity, but why is there such a thing as gravity. What do mysteries in Creation remind us of? (God is awesome)

A. Sixth day: Part 1 - The creation of the animal world

On the first part of the sixth day of creation, what should we be amazed at? (Gen 1:24-25)

God's creativity in making a great number and variety of animals; from cattle to wild beasts, from reptiles to dinosaurs. What an amazing array of animals we have to marvel at; from the great to the small.

What is significant about the phrase "after their kind" for the creation of animals/reptiles?

God created each kind of animal with unique characteristics, and each kind of animal is capable of reproducing only other animals like itself. Animals cannot and do not evolve. They can adapt, and there is God-given variation within a species, but they cannot go from one species to another. Evolution is a lie.

Initially, what do we know about the creatures God made from Gen 1:30?

There were no carnivorous creatures; all ate plants for food. Thus, there was no death or killing, contrary to what evolution teaches. Death came into God's perfect creation when Adam & Eve sinned (Rom 5:12).

B. Sixth day: Part 2 - The creation of mankind

Why was mankind the last to be created by God? (Isa 45:18)

God created a perfect world before He created mankind, in order for us to have a beautiful world to live in. Cf: God made the heavens for us to marvel at and for navigation; He made plants/animals/birds for us to enjoy and use. The world was made perfect for man to inhabit (cf. how we prepare for our first baby).

One of the most important verses in Genesis 1 is vv.26-27. Why is it so important?

Mankind was made in the image of God; in the likeness of the Creator Himself, unlike any other creature.

Who was God speaking to when He said, "Let us make man in our image"? What does it imply?

It was God the Father, God the Son, & the Holy Spirit who were sharing together about us being made in their image. What's implied is that this was the most important stage of Creation; the pinnacle of creation.

What does it imply that humans were made in the image of God (unlike any other creature)?

Humans are the crown of God's creation, His cherished possession, His co-regents on earth, and the object of His love - that's why God was prepared to redeem us at great cost to Himself through Jesus.

What does it mean that man was made in the image of God?

God made man like Himself, with a mind, emotions, and a will, to be in a unique relationship with Him.

1) Man's mind (his intellect): God has a mind, and He purposed to make man with a mind which had the ability to know God, think like God, and reason like God; unlike animals that have a limited mind.

2) Man's emotions (his feelings): God has emotions, and He purposed to make man with emotions too. We can feel and love, experience joy and sadness, like God. Animals, at best, have barely any emotions.

3) Man's will (his ability to choose): God has a will, and He purposed to make man with a will too. We can make decisions. Unlike animals that operate on instinct, humans can choose what they want to do.

Consider how our mind, emotions and our will have been made in the image of God. Why?

The primary reason is so that man can know God and be in relationship with Him.

- a mind to hear and understand God, to learn the true character of God, and to communicate with God.
- emotions to respond to God out of love and devotion, and with a thankful heart of worship.
- a will to choose to obey God, to carry out His plans, to please God and glorify Him.

Gen 5:1, 9:6 & Jam 3:9 and other verses affirm that man has been made in God's image Why?

It is so important that we understand who we are. It determines our relationship with God and each other.

Summary: **God made man unlike any other; He was made in God's image. He is the crown of God's creation, and his purpose is to glorify God.**

7. The Creation of Man and the Responsibility of Man

Aim: To show us how God created man and woman, and the responsibility He gave to them.

Introduction: *In our last studies we learnt how God created the heavens and the earth in preparation for the creation of man, and that man was made different to all other beings. In what way? (Gen 1:26-27)*

Man was made in the image of God. As a result, we have a mind, emotions and a will, like God has.

In this study, we shall continue to consider the creation of man, and our responsibility to God.

A. The creation of man and woman

God created the human race, but how did He do it, according to the second half of Gen 1:27?

Unlike angels, God made mankind with two distinct but complementary kinds; male and female.

In Gen 2:7 and 2:18-22, what else do we learn?

God created the man first, and then after some time, He made woman from the rib (or side) of the man.

The first man was called Adam, and the first woman was called Eve (Gen 3:20), which means "life".

What important truths do we learn about the creation of Adam from Gen 2:7?

a) Firstly, man was made from the dust of the ground. This means our body was made from common earthly elements that are readily found in nature, such as carbon and water. Yet, what an awesome job God did, in using common things to make our amazing human body. Note that the name Adam is related to the Hebrew word *adamah*, which means ground or dust, signifying what we have come from.

b) Secondly, in order for Adam to become a living being, God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. Man now had a spirit. Consider Jam 2:26; our body is dead without the spirit. Clearly, we learn that man is more than flesh and bones. We have a spirit from God, without which we could not live.

From Gen 2:7, what do we learn about God and life?

God alone has the power to give life (Rom 4:17; 1 Tim 6:13). No other can; not Satan, nor man. Man can manipulate and modify life, but we cannot create it. Being God, Jesus also has the power to give life (John 5:21; John 11:25-26). All things receive their life from God and are unable to give life to anything.

B. God gave humans responsibility

What charge did God give Adam and Eve according to the first part of Gen 1:28?

They were to have children and populate the earth (this is the only command from God we've obeyed).

From Gen 1:28, Acts 17:26 and 1 Cor 15:45,47 what can we be sure of?

There were no human beings, or human-like beings (humanoids) before Adam. He was the first, and the father of all people, regardless of race, culture, or country. He is the father of the entire human race.

Besides populating the earth, what else was mankind to do? (Gen 1:28)

God put man in charge of the earth and everything in it. This included managing and caring for it. God didn't give this responsibility to His angels, or to Satan and his demons, but to man.

How was man to rule the earth?

He was to rule it in the image of God; ie, with a reference to God and with God's heart for the world. Man was to rule as God's representative; in co-operation with Him.

How should we respond to God giving man the right to rule the earth? (Psa 8:1-9)

Man should feel deeply honoured and privileged that God has chosen to give him the rule of the earth. It ought to cause us to be humbled, and to praise our Creator.

C. Everything God made was good

What do we learn from Gen 1:29-30?

Man was initially a vegetarian; so were all the other animals. All animals and birds ate plants and fruit. There was no death at this point in the Creation. Opposite to the thinking of evolution, there was no death and suffering needed for the survival of the fittest. Also, there would not have been any fossils.

The final verse of Gen 1 declares what? (Gen 1:31)

"God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good." When we consider the heavens and the earth, we must praise God for making everything so well. It is all **very** good. Because God is perfect and good, everything He created was absolutely right and beautiful. This includes us, the human race. Sadly, we now see the effects of sin that have marred the former glory. But God's glory still can be seen.

Summary: God made everything very good, with man as the crown of His creation. As Creator and owner of man, God gave man the privileged responsibility of being the manager of the earth.

8. God Placed Adam in the Garden of Eden

Aim: To consider mankind in relation to God's creation, and God's relationship with him.

Introduction: Our society teaches us to be independent and to do "our own thing"; God's Word teaches us to be in submission to our holy, righteous Creator. Our society teaches us to stand up for our rights; the Bible teaches us the privilege of receiving what is given to us by our sovereign, loving, all-knowing God. Our society teaches us to go as far as we dare and to get away with whatever we can; God's Word teaches us that God is just and must punish sin. Our society tells us to find out who we are so that we can have self-esteem; God's Word says we should know Him and then understand who we are in Him! *[Discuss]*

In this study we will consider God's provision for man and his relationship to God.

A. God finished making all He had planned.

Have you ever started something and not finished it? Why not?

Some reasons: you changed your mind, you lost interest, it turned out to be too hard for you to do, it was a bigger job than you had thought, you were interrupted, you ran out of time, you ran out of money, etc.

Unlike us, what do we read concerning God, in Genesis 2:1?

God finished the work He had planned to do. This included creating man, even though He knew how man would turn from Him. God always carries out what He plans, and nothing or no one can hinder God from doing all He plans to do (Psa 33:11; Dan 4:34-35; Isa 46:9-10); not us, not a king, nor even Satan.

B. God made all things in six days and then rested from His work of creation on the seventh day.

How many days did it take for God to make everything?

Only six days! As indicated by the phrase "and there was evening and there was morning" (Gen 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31), we are to understand that God created everything in six literal days. When we think of all that God made, isn't it truly amazing that He did it in six days. Such is the power and might of God.

On the seventh day God rested. Why? (Gen 2:2-3)

It wasn't because He became tired after all His work. God doesn't get weary like we do (Psa 121:1-4; Isa 40:28). Instead, He rested because the work of creation was perfect and complete. Nothing more could be added to it. We also glean that when God rested, He also took pleasure in His marvellous creation.

God rested and sanctified (set apart) the seventh day. Why? (Gen 2:3; Exod 20:8-11)

God rested and gave us an example to follow. God knows our frame and knows how our human bodies need one day in seven to rest. Do you obey God's command? God gave it for us (Mark 2:27).

C. Man in the Garden of Eden.

What do we learn in Gen 2:4-5 (particularly verse 5)?

We learn that the vegetation that God brought forth was conditional on it being watered and on man being available to cultivate it. Note: Gen 2:4 is the first time we see the word "LORD" used for God's name. It is the Hebrew word YHWH, which means "I AM" (Exod 3:14); a special name that God gave to Moses.

What did God do to water the earth in order for vegetation to grow? (Gen 2:6)

God caused a mist (vapour) to rise and water the earth. We note that, at this stage, the earth was not initially watered by rain (rain probably started falling after Noah's flood).

After making man, what else did God do? (Gen 2:7-8)

Because God loved Adam very much, God planted a garden for Adam to live in. God met every need of Adam. God can be trusted to meet all our needs, just as He did for Adam (cf. Phil 4:13)

What state was the Garden of Eden in? (Gen 2:9)

It was absolutely perfect. It would have been filled with perfect fruit, fragrant aromas, and wonderful colours and hues. It would not have had weeds, bugs, or diseases. Adam would have truly been delighted with this garden. It was a delight to the eyes, and it provided Adam with all his needs.

Besides the garden of Eden being a joy to Adam, what was he to do in the garden? (Gen 2:15)

God gave him the privilege to not only enjoy it, but to cultivate it and look after it. He was to work in it; this affirms that it is a God-given, good thing to work.

The garden was beautiful, but Adam enjoyed something greater. What was it? (Gen 3:8a)

He enjoyed walking and talking with God. He was able to enjoy full fellowship with God, because man had not sinned against God yet. This was, and is, meant to be man's chief delight; not God's creation.

Summary: God gave man a wonderful creation to enjoy, but God wanted man to enjoy Him first.

9. Man and his Moral Responsibility to God

Aim: To consider man in relation to God, as well as the consequences of disobedience to God.

Introduction: Children are born with life and the potential to do great things. But it's not as simple as that. There are choices that can be made that can lead to disastrous results. *[Discuss]*.

A. The tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Besides the Garden of Eden being filled with beautiful plants, pleasing to the sight and good for food, what else did God plant in this garden? (Gen 2:9)

Two special trees were in the middle of Eden: the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good & evil.

What do we know about the tree of life? (Gen 3:22; Rev 22:2, 14)

It was a very special tree, whose fruit would give eternal life to those who eat it. This was no ordinary tree; those who ate of its fruit benefited both physically and spiritually. This tree of life is now in God's paradise, and will be made accessible by the Lord Jesus to those who have been washed in His blood.

What do we know about the tree of the knowledge of good and evil? (Gen 3:22)

This was a very special tree, whose fruit would make you become like God, knowing good and evil. This meant Adam was in a state of innocence; like a little child. However he still had the ability to choose for himself, and that includes choosing to follow God or to follow his own will.

In this state of innocence what did God do? (Gen 2:16-17)

God gave clear instructions to Adam in regard to what he could do and what he couldn't do. In his state of innocence God wanted Adam to have what was good, to be dependent upon Him for all His needs, and to follow His guidance in every choice and decision.

Considering God's words to Adam in Gen 2:16-17, what also is true for us?

God has not left us to decide for ourselves what is right and what is wrong. He has given us the Bible with clear instructions, both for doing what is right and good, and avoiding what is wrong and evil.

What were the specific instructions that God gave Adam? (Gen 2:16-17)

God instructed Adam that he was free to eat from any tree in the garden, including the tree of life.

However, there was only one tree that God clearly told Adam not to eat from; this was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God knew what was best for Adam.

In being told not to eat from the tree of knowledge, what was Adam left with?

He was left with a choice. Adam could choose to obey God and be dependent on Him, eating only what God had said was good, or he could choose to disobey God, and become independent of Him.

B. Death is the punishment for disobedience to God.

What were the consequences of Adam's choice? (Genesis 2:17)

If Adam obeyed God then he would live forever, but if he disobeyed Him, he would die; as God made very clear to Adam. Note: God warns us, through His Word, and He does that out of love and concern.

What did God mean when He told Adam that he would die if he disobeyed?

1. Death of Adam's physical body: Adam's physical body would begin to age and die the moment he sinned. Eventually, he would die and his body would return to the dust from which he came (Gen 3:19).
2. Death of Adam's relationship with God (his spirit would die on the day he sinned): Adam would be separated from God. He would no longer be God's friend, but an enemy (Rom 5:10).
3. Death of Adam's soul: Without God's intervention, after physical death, Adam would face an eternity of torment and punishment in the Lake of Fire (Matt 13:40-42; Matt 25:41; Rev 20:14-15). Instead of enjoying God's paradise, Adam would experience eternal misery in a place where the worm never dies, and the fire is never quenched. On our own, we cannot escape this consequence, for God is just.

C. God's position of authority over Adam.

Why did God have the right to tell Adam what to do?

God had the right because He made Adam and gave him his life; Adam belonged to God. Also, God had the right to tell Adam what to do because God knows everything, and knows what is best for us; He was wiser than Adam, and He knew that if Adam ate the forbidden fruit, he would be separated from God.

Today, most people do whatever they want, without listening to God. What should we do?

We should listen to God, for He still knows what is best for us. He has given us the Bible so that we can know the truth. We should listen carefully to God's Word, for He is our all-wise Creator (Psa 119:73).

Summary: God our Creator warns us of the consequences of sin; because He loves & cared for us.

10. God Made Eve and Established Marriage

Aim: To show that God provided what Adam needed (a wife), and that marriage was ordained by God.

Introduction: *How does our society view women? [Discuss]*

How do Aussies now view the Bible's definition of marriage? [Discuss]

In the beginning God created Eve uniquely and for a reason, and then He instituted marriage. It's God's revelation of womanhood and marriage that helps us know what womanhood is about, as well as the sacredness of marriage. When God's revelation is silenced in any society, we will find women being dishonoured and her role being confused, as well as marriage being redefined and ruined. *[Discuss]*

A. God decided that Adam needed a wife to help him

Everything was good in God's creation (Gen 1:31), but what could be better? (Gen 2:18)

Even though Adam had perfect fellowship with God, and he lived in a perfect garden, God knew that Adam was in need of a companion to relate to. We were made in God's image to have relationship.

Why didn't God make Adam and Eve at the same time?

God separated the creation of Eve from Adam, and has given us Gen 2:18-24, so that we might know why Eve was made, and that we might comprehend the uniqueness of womanhood. Note: How important these biblical truths are, in an unprecedented time when the western world is trying to remove gender. *[Discuss]*

According to Gen 2:18 why did God make Eve for Adam?

Eve was made to be a "suitable helper" for Adam; or "helpmeet" (KJV). God ordained this before the "Fall", and it has important ramifications when it comes to men/women roles (cf. 1 Tim 2:12-13). Also, she was not made a "clone" of Adam, but made different to "correspond" to Adam; to complement him.

What task did God give to Adam? (Gen 2:19-20)

Although God made all the animals and birds, He gave Adam the task of naming them. This act shows how God highly regarded Adam, and willingly made him master over all creatures.

After naming all the animals, what does the Bible emphasise again? (Gen 2:20)

There was no suitable helper for Adam amongst all the animals. This was because Adam was made very different to all of them. He was made in God's image, so he could know, love, and obey God. The animals were not capable of this. Adam needed someone more like himself, who he could relate to fully.

B. God created Eve from Adam's rib

Who could provide Adam with a suitable helper? (Gen 2:21)

Man was incapable of this; nor the angels. But God would provide, because He can and He cares.

How did God create Eve? (Gen 2:21-23)

Eve was not made in the same way as Adam; from the dust (Gen 2:7). Instead, God took one of Adam's ribs and made a woman from this. She came from Adam (Gen 2:23)

What is the significance of the way God made Eve? (Gen 2:21-22)

It affirmed that Eve was not Adam's "clone"; she was made different. Also, the woman came from man's rib; not from his feet to be walked on, not from his head to be rule him, but from his side to indicate that she would be one with him; under the arm to be protected by him, and next to his heart to be loved by him.

What was Adam's response when he saw Eve? (Gen 2:23) What's the implication (Eph 5:28-29)?

Adam acknowledged that God had made Eve from his own body. In Eph 5, Paul affirms the implication - just as Adam was to love and care for his own body, he was to love and care for Eve; she was part of him.

C. Marriage was ordained by God

Marriage was ordained by God, but what was it based on ("For this reason ...")? (Gen 2:24)

Marriage was based on God making woman to perfectly correspond to and complement man in every way. Marriage is only to be between a man and a woman (God made Adam & Eve, not Adam & Steve).

What do learn about marriage from Gen 2:24?

Marriage requires three key actions: **Leaving** - where a couple separate from family ties to form a new tie. **Cleaving** (joining) - where a couple come together and embrace each other exclusively. **Uniting** - where a couple seek (it's an ongoing work) to become "one flesh"; one in body, mind and spirit.

What else happens in marriage according to Jesus in Matt 19:5-6? What does this imply?

God joins a couple in marriage. The marriage bond is sacred, and is not to be broken lightly.

What is the significance of Gen 2:25?

Adam and Eve were intimate and vulnerable with each other. God has ordained this only in marriage.

Summary: Marriage was ordained by God. It was God's perfect gift and plan for the human race.

11. Satan and Sin in the Garden

Aim: To show Satan's character, and how sin came into the world.

Introduction: *How do most people view Genesis 3 – the serpent, Adam & Eve, the "forbidden fruit"?* Most believe it's only a myth. In fact, some Christians have come to believe this lie, and even teach it.

The account in Genesis 3 is critical in understanding our human condition and the glorious Gospel.

A. Life in the Garden

How was life for Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden? (Gen 2:7-9)

Life was perfect. They lived in harmony with God, each other and all creation. There was no sicknesses, pests, weeds or thorns. There was no sin, no arguments, no hurtful words, but perfect relationships.

How much freedom did God give Adam and Eve? (Gen 2:15-17)

They were free to eat from any tree in the garden, except one; the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

What did God say would happen if man disobeyed Him? (Gen 2:17)

He would surely die. He would be separated from God immediately and his body would begin to die (age).

B. Satan's Entrance into the Garden

In that perfect garden, who came to Adam and Eve? (Gen 3:1; John 8:44; Rev 12:9-10)

The serpent came into the garden. He is God's arch enemy; he is a liar, a murderer, a deceiver, and an accuser. He delights in turning humans away from God and to be like him – to be in rebellion to God.

What do we learn about Satan from Gen 3:1? (see also 2 Cor 11:3, 11:14)

Satan disguised himself as a serpent (one of God's creatures). He didn't permit Eve to know who he truly was. Here we see Satan's true character - a deceiver. He also was more crafty than any other animal God had made. This is another characteristic of Satan - crafty and cunning.

Satan is active today. What should we be aware of? (2 Cor 2:11; Eph 6:11; Rev 12:2,17)

Satan is scheming to lead us away from God. He's even at war with all those who follow Jesus.

How else does the Bible describe Satan, and what we are to do? (1 Pet 5:8)

Satan is like a roaring lion, seeking to devour us. We are told to be alert; eg; be prayerful (Matt 26:41).

C. Sin's Entrance into the Garden

Why did Satan say what he did in Gen 3:1?

He wanted to cast doubt on God's Word, when he said "Has God said?" Satan also wanted to cast doubt on God's goodness, by suggesting that God had said that they couldn't eat from any tree of the garden; ie, intimating that God doesn't care for you. Satan's key tactic is to cast doubt on God's truth and character.

What was Eve's response? (Gen 3:2-3)

Eve responded correctly by telling Satan the truth in regard to what God had said to them. This is what we must do too, just as Jesus did when He was tempted (Matt 4:3-4).

How did Satan respond to Eve's answer? (Gen 3:4)

He called God a liar by saying that they would not die by eating the forbidden fruit. He said the very opposite to what God had told Adam. As Jesus said in John 8:44, Satan is a liar and the father of all lies.

In Gen 3:5, what does Satan do next?

After his lie, which minimised the consequences of sin, Satan covered his lie with a truth (cf. Gen 3:22). But Satan did it in such a way to tempt Eve to be like God, knowing good and evil. Also, by phrasing it the way he did, he was implying that God was holding them back from being all that they could be.

What caused Eve to yield to temptation and sin? (Gen 3:6)

Through Satan's deception, Eve looked with desire at the forbidden fruit; it looked good and she desired to become wise like God. So, she took and ate, and sinned. Desire was what led her to sin.

Who else was with Eve when she ate the forbidden fruit? (Gen 3:6) What was he not doing?

Adam was right there with her. Instead of obeying God's Word, and reminding Eve of the consequences of eating the fruit, he went along with what Eve desired. He listened to Eve; not to God (cf. Gen 3:17a).

Did Satan make Eve and Adam sin? (cf. Jam 1:14-16)

No! He can only tempt us with wrong desires. It's our choice to indulge in wrong desires that leads to sin.

Compare Gen 3:6 with 1 John 2:5-16. What do you notice?

Things haven't changed – what Eve was tempted with by Satan's deception is what we are tempted with as we live in this fallen world; the lust of the eyes (coveting), the lust of the flesh (desiring), and the boastful pride of life (wanting to be a "somebody"). We either submit to God, or submit to desire and sin.

Summary: God speaks truth; Satan speaks lies; we sin when we don't listen to God, but Satan's lies.

12. Man's & God's Responses to Sin

Aim: To show man's wrong response to sin, and God's gracious response.

Review: *What do we learn from Gen 3:1-5 in regard to the character of the serpent (Satan)?*

Satan was deceitful and cunning in speaking lies, and then covering over the lies with part truths. He is a liar and the father of lies (John 8:44). He also threw doubt on God's character and word. Consider also:

- He tempted Eve when she was on her own. He tempts us when we are at our weakest state.
- He tempted Eve with something that she might yield to. He knows our weaknesses.

What caused Eve to sin? (Gen 3:6; cf. also 1 John 2:15-16)

Desire led her to sin; the desire of the flesh (it looked good to eat), the desire of the eyes (it looked desirable), and the pride of life (she could make herself greater). We are tempted in the same ways.

A. Man's Responses to Sin

What happened immediately after Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit? Why? (Gen 3:7)

They realised they were naked, because they were now like God, knowing good and evil (Gen 3:22).

What did they do in response to this realisation? (Gen 3:7)

They sought to cover their nakedness with fig leaves (they sought to fix the problem their own way).

When God came down in the cool of the day, what did they do? (Gen 3:8-10)

Adam and Eve hid themselves from God, because they feared Him.

When God challenged them about eating the forbidden fruit, how did they respond? (Gen 3:11-13)

Adam and Eve blamed others for their sin; they did not admit their guilt.

Eve blamed the devil. Who did Adam blame? (Gen 3:12-13)

Adam didn't just blame Eve. He blamed God for giving him Eve – how ungrateful was he for all that God had done for him. Humans are often willing to blame God in order to justify themselves (cf. Job 40:6-8).

When we sin against someone, what do we see so often, which we see with Adam and Eve?

Instead of owning up to our sin, we either cover up (eg, by lies and deception), we run and hide to avoid getting into trouble, or we blame others for what we have done. Saying "sorry" is rare.

We even behave like this before God (as Adam and Eve did). What's so wrong? (Heb 4:13)

God knows and sees all things. We can't cover up from His all searching eyes, we can't run from His presence (Psa 139:7-8), and when we blame others, He knows exactly what we have done (Gen 4:8-10).

As a Christian, what should we do when we sin? (cf. 1 John 1:9; 1 John 2:1-2; Matt 5:23-24)

We should confess our sin to God through Christ, and we should put things right with others.

B. The Consequences of Sin

Adam & Eve covered up, hid and blamed others. How is this related to the consequences of sin?

When we sin, we are not right with God. The consequences of this are that we take things into our own hands to deal with sin (ie, cover up), or we run and hide from God and even blame God. Sin shows itself.

What key consequence of sin is highlighted in Gen 3:8 and affirmed in Isa 59:2?

Instead of enjoying daily fellowship with God, they hid; their fellowship with God was severely damaged by sin. They were even scared of God, rather than being drawn to His presence. Sin separates us from God.

But what also happened the moment they sinned by eating the forbidden fruit? (cf. Gen 2:17)

They died. Though they didn't drop dead immediately, they died spiritually by being separated from God, and they would also begin to die physically through ageing (Gen 3:19).

In the New Testament, what do we learn about the results of sin in Rom 5:10 and Rom 6:23?

Sin results in us being an enemy of God; for we have sided with the devil. More than that, not only are we separated from God in this life, but we face eternity in the lake of fire (Matt 25:41, 46; Rev 20:15).

C. God's Responses to Sin

What was God's reaction to Adam and Eve's sin? What was so surprising? (Gen 3:8-11)

God could have struck Adam and Eve down immediately, but instead He sought them. He even gave them an opportunity to confess their sin. God's reaction was gracious and merciful.

Although Adam and Eve would bear the consequences of their sin, what did God do? (Gen 3:7,21)

Although Adam and Eve clothed themselves with fig leaves (which are itchy and break down quickly) God provided them with animal skins; which implies an animal was sacrificed for them. This is the first picture we have of sacrifice for sin (a foreshadowing of the ultimate sacrifice of Christ for our sin).

Consider: Although we have all sinned, God is still graciously calling out to us all "where are you?"

Summary: Sin separates us from God, but God has graciously chosen to seek us.

13. The Punishment and the Promise

Aim: To show that God is just when punishing sin, but gives us hope through His gracious promises.

Review: *In Genesis 3:7-13, what contrasting response do we see from man and God in regard to sin?* Man, after sinning, covers up the consequences of his sin, hides from God and blames others. God, on the other hand, seeks man and gives him an opportunity to confess. God's response is incredibly gracious.

In this study we will consider punishment for sin, but what is sin's most serious consequence?

Adam and Eve became separated from God (Gen 3:8; Isa 59:2). This is called spiritual death (Eph 2:1).

A. God's punishment of Satan

Despite God's mercy to man, there still would be punishment. What happened first? (Gen 3:14)

God cursed Satan because he deceived Eve. Satan was cursed more than any other created being. He was cursed for all eternity, which would include him being hurled into hell one day (Matt 25:41; Rev 20:10).

How is Satan's curse portrayed in the nature of a snake? (Gen 3:14)

A snake crawls on its belly. Satan, who tried to lift up his head above God, would be brought low. Also, a snake "eats" dust as it crawls over it. Satan, who once dwelt in heaven, would be cast to the earth (to dust). Note also how Satan's character is portrayed in a snake; ie, slippery, cunning, dangerous.

B. God's promise

Read Gen 3:15. Though this is part of the curse on Satan, what amazing promise do we have?

God would raise up from the seed of the woman (a descendant) who would have the power to bruise (or crush) the head of Satan; thereby delivering fallen humans from Satan's power. This is the first promise of God sending Jesus, to deliver us from Satan, as well as sin (Acts 26:18; Col 1:13-14; Heb 2:14-15).

What do the phrases "bruise you on the head" and "bruise you on the heel" refer to?

"Bruise you on the head" refers to Jesus striking and defeating the devil at the cross. "Bruise you on the heel" refers to Satan wounding Jesus at the cross, but it would not be fatal (Jesus rose from the dead).

C. God's punishment of mankind

What was Eve's punishment which would come upon future women as well? (Gen 3:16)

Eve would suffer childbirth pain (no other creature suffers the amount of pain women do in childbirth). Also, Eve would be ruled by her husband. Things would change from what God set up in Gen 2:18-24.

How appropriate was Eve's punishment?

She desired the forbidden fruit; now her desire would be for her husband. She ruled over her husband in giving him the fruit; now Adam would rule over her. God is just; the punishment fitted the crime.

Before God punishes Adam, what did He rebuke him about? (Gen 3:17)

God rebuked Adam for why he really had sinned; he listened to Eve and followed her, rather than God.

What was Adam's punishment which would affect all humans as well? (Gen 3:17-19)

Adam would have to toil (suffer pain) in order to eat and live. Before that, he just had to pick and eat from the garden. Also, to increase that pain, God would cause thorns and thistles to grow. Also, Adam would physically die (return to the ground). No longer would he and future humans live forever on the earth. It was at this moment that the ageing process began and man began to die physically.

In Gen 3:16-18, pain is a big part of God's punishment. What is significant about this?

Pleasure was sought by man, so pain was the fitting consequence. Note: Eternal punishment will be about pain too (Rev 20:10, 15), unless we turn from our sinful pleasures and turn to Jesus Christ our Saviour.

Satan said they wouldn't die if they ate. God said they would. What happened? (Gen 2:17, 3:4)

God speaks truth, but Satan lies. Also, God doesn't threaten with His words; He always does what He says. So, Adam and Eve did die; they began to die physically, but more seriously, they died spiritually.

Compare Gen 3:17 ("cursed is the ground") with Rom 8:20-21. What do we glean from this?

When God cursed the ground because of man's sin, the whole creation went into a state of groaning. As a result, we constantly struggle as we live here on earth. That's why this world is so fallen and painful.

Why did God strike the earth as a result of mankind's sin? What impact should this have on us?

God made the earth perfect for man, but the consequence of his sin, was that it would no longer be perfect. God also did this so that man would not look to the earth for help, but look up to Him for help.

What was cursed and what was not cursed in Gen 3:14-19? What is so significant about this?

Satan was cursed and the ground was cursed, but Adam and Eve were not cursed (but punished). As a result, the door was left open for God to redeem mankind through the promise He gave us in Gen 3:15.

Summary: In the midst of the curses and punishments, God gave an amazing promise to rescue us.

14. God's Provision and God's Justice

Aim: To show God's grace in covering sin, and God's justice in sending Adam & Eve out of the garden.

Review: *Why is our world so broken and "messed up"?* (Gen 3:16-19; Isa 59:2)

Genesis 3 tells us why. When man sinned against God, it brought serious consequences; pain difficulty and death. Above all, it damaged our relationship with God. We became separated from Him.

In the midst of God cursing Satan, what hope was given to us? (Gen 3:15)

God promised to send us a Deliverer, who would deliver us from Satan's hold on us, and from our sin. What an amazing act of mercy and grace. Gen 3:15 is the first promise we have of Jesus our Saviour.

A. Adam and Eve are the parents of all people.

What do you think the Scriptures mean when it says Eve is the mother of all the living? (Gen 3:20)

Eve is the first woman and the mother of every human being. Even though people have different colours of skin, we all originally came from the same parents (cf. also Acts 17:26).

What are the implications that we all come from the same parents according to Gen 3:16-19?

Without exception, we all bear the consequences of Adam and Eve's sin; we bear pain, hardship and death. Also, as the New Testament declares, we also have a fallen sinful nature and we all sin (Rom 3:23).

B. God provided clothing for Adam and Eve.

When Adam and Eve sinned and they realised their nakedness, what did they do? (Gen 3:7)

They covered up their nakedness with fig leaves. They sought to deal with the consequences their way.

What do we find God doing for Adam and Eve in Gen 3:21?

God provided a covering for Adam and Eve. The fig leaves were a very poor and inadequate covering, but God provided one that was both enduring and suitable.

What is so amazing about what God did in providing them coverings?

It shows us God's mercy and love. Although their sin had deeply hurt God, He lovingly provided for them.

What was required to make this covering possible?

God had to kill an animal to clothe Adam and Eve. The animal's life had to be sacrificed to provide the covering. Note: God brought about the first death in Creation, for man's sake.

What does Gen 3:21 foreshadow in regard to the Old Covenant? (Lev 4:27-31; Psa 32:1)

God established the Law that people needed to sacrifice an animal to Him for their sins to be covered.

But what does Gen 3:21 foreshadow in regard to the New Covenant? (Heb 10:11-14)

It foreshadows God's gracious provision of His Son; through the shedding of Jesus' blood we are forgiven and we are covered in Christ's righteousness. Gen 3:21 foreshadowed it, the animal sacrifices in the Old Testament foreshadowed it (cf. Heb 10:4), but only Christ's death truly allowed us to be covered.

What do we learn in regard to what is required for the payment of sin? (Heb 9:22)

God demands death as the payment for sin. Blood has to be shed before a covering for sin can be provided. Note: Adam & Eve could not provide this with any works of their own. Only God could (cf. Tit 3:4-6).

C. God puts Adam and Eve out of the garden.

After God graciously clothed Adam and Eve, what did He do next? (Genesis 3:22-23)

God sent Adam and Eve out of the beautiful garden that He had especially made for them (Gen 2:8-9).

God explains in these verses the reason behind His actions. What was it?

The reason God put them out of the garden was so that they would not eat of the tree of life and live forever in their sinful state. Note: This was actually an act of God's mercy (can you imagine what the world would be like if evil people like Herod, Nero, and Hitler, were able to live forever).

For what other reason did God send Adam and Eve out of the garden? (Cf. Gen 3:17-19)

God is just. By putting man out of the garden, He allowed the consequence and punishment of sin to take effect. Adam would now have to work hard in order to survive, and without the tree of life, he would die.

What is significant about what God did to stop Adam & Eve eating from the tree of life? (Gen 3:24)

God used Cherubim, mighty angels, to stop sinful man from living forever. Indeed, God has blocked every way for us to have eternal life, except through His provision for us in Christ (John 3:16; Rev 22:14).

Adam and Eve had enjoyed a beautiful garden. How would life be for them now?

1. They were now no longer in a state of innocence. They knew evil and had a sinful nature (Rom 7:18-19)
2. They were now no longer able to eat the fruit in the garden. They would suffer pain and toil (Rom 8:20)
3. They no longer enjoyed fellowship with God. They would suffer spiritual and physical death (Eph 2:1).

Summary: God mercifully provided a covering for sin, but justly sent Adam & Eve out of the garden.

15. Lessons from Cain and Abel

Aim: To show that fallen man has an active sinful nature, but God is gracious in helping us with sin.

Introduction *Why do we find it hard to do what is right, and easy to do what is wrong? (Rom 7:14-20)*

We have inherited a sinful nature from Adam and Eve. This goes right back to the Fall in Genesis 3.

A. Cain and Abel's state

We read of Cain and Abel's birth and life in Gen 4:1-2. What state were they born into?

1. They were born outside of the garden of Eden, away from paradise and God's intimate presence.
2. They were born away from the tree of life. They would therefore not live forever, but one day die.
3. They were born sinners because their father Adam was a sinner (Rom 5:19; 1 Pet 1:17-18).
4. They were born separated from God and under Satan's dominion (Acts 26:18).

What state have we been born into?

We have been born into exactly the same state as Cain and Abel. We are outside the garden, cut-off from the tree of life, born with a sinful nature, and under Satan's power. From this state we need to be rescued.

Consider the consequence of Adam and Eve's sin. If they had not sinned, what would our state be?

If they had not sinned, we would have lived in God's presence in the garden of Eden forever. Sin has plunged the whole human race into a state of separation from God, where sin and death reign on the earth.

B. Cain and Abel's offerings

Why was God pleased with Abel's offering, but not Cain's offering? (Gen 4:3-5; 1 John 3:11-12)

Firstly, it's not to do with the offerings they gave. Later on, in the Law of Moses, both grain and animal offerings were stated as acceptable thanksgiving offerings to God. But what's important is the heart we have when we bring our offerings to God. Cain had evil motives; Abel had good motives.

Read Isa 29:13, 1 Sam 16:7. Matt 5:23-24 and Luke 21:1-4. What do we learn from these verses?

The heart is most important to God. He does not just look at what we do (on the outside) or how much we give, but our heart motive. Our heart needs to be right if we want God to accept what we bring to Him.

What happened to Cain when God rejected his offering? (Gen 4:5)

Cain became angry toward God. Also, as we shall see, he became jealous of God's favour toward Abel.

How does God view man's anger? (Jam 1:19-20)

Man's anger does not please God. That's because it is self-centred, uncontrolled and dangerous. This is the anger Cain had. Note: There is also a different type of anger, which we call righteous anger. This was seen in Jesus (Matt 21:12-13). It is not selfish and sinful, but concerned for God's glory & righteousness.

How did God respond to Cain's anger? What is so surprising? (Gen 4:6-7)

God responded graciously to Cain and reasoned with him (knowing full well what Cain intended to do).

By questioning Cain about his anger (Gen 4:6-7), what was God giving Cain a chance to do?

He was giving him an opportunity to turn away from evil. What a loving act!

How does God describe the nature of sin to Cain? (Gen 4:7)

God describes sin as "crouching at the door". The imagery here is one of a lion, ready to pounce on his prey (cf. 1 Peter 5:8). God also describes sin as having a "desire" for Cain; ie, to control and possess. This is exactly what sin seeks to do; to take control of our lives, so that we obey its desires (cf. Rom 6:12-14).

God provided a way of escape. What was it? (Gen 4:7)

God lovingly told Cain the way of escape - Cain must master sin, and not let it master him.

What about when we face evil desires and temptations; what are we to do? (1 Cor 10:12-13)

We are to do what God said to Cain. We must master sin and turn from it (cf. 1 Pet 2:11) with the help of the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:12-13). God is faithful in providing us a way of escape. We need to take it!

C. Cain's response to God and Abel

What did Cain do with God's gracious warning and instruction? (Gen 4:8)

He refused to listen. Instead, he allowed his evil thoughts to be unchecked, and then he killed Abel.

What can we learn from Cain? Consider also what Jesus taught us in Matt 26:41.

We must not let sinful desires rule us. We need the Spirit's self-control (cf. Gal 5:22-23) to do that. We also need to listen to God and take His way of escape. Jesus also taught us to watch and pray (Matt 26:41).

Are you surprised by the wickedness of Cain's actions?

We may be surprised, but may we not underestimate our own sinful nature (Jer 17:9). We are all capable of committing great sin (cf. king David, a godly man, who lusted, committed adultery, and even murder).

Summary: Sin desires to rule over us and destroy us; God graciously provides a way of escape.

16. God's Justice for Unrepentant Sinners

Aim: To show that if we don't repent, God will cause us to bear the full consequences of our sins.

Review: *In Gen 4 we read of a shocking sin: Cain killing Abel. What are we to deduce from this?*
We live in a fallen world where sin occurs. We all have a sinful nature that is capable of great sin.

What's so amazing about God in this story, and what do we learn about sin's nature? (Gen 4:6-7)

God saw Cain's evil heart and graciously sought to reason with him so that he might not kill Abel. We also learn about sin's nature – it seeks to overpower us (like a lion), in order to master and control us.

A. God's question to Cain

Why did God ask Cain where Abel was, when He knew what had happened? (Gen 4:9)

Although God knew that Cain had killed Abel, for He knows and sees all things (Heb 4:13), God asked Cain in order to give him an opportunity to repent. God did the same thing for Adam and Eve (Gen 3:9).

God had every right to strike Cain down immediately for his sin, but what do we see instead?

God showed Cain grace. Giving him an opportunity to confess is gracious of God.

Like Cain, we deserve to be dealt with more strictly for sin, but what is God like? (Psa 103:8-10)

God is merciful with us and kind, not treating us as we deserve. In response, we should repent (Rom 2:4).

What was Cain's response to God's mercy and God's question? (Gen 4:9)

He didn't own up to his sin. Instead, he committed two further sins. He lied straight to God's face, a blatant insult to God's mercy, and he refused to accept any responsibility towards his brother's welfare.

When we are confronted about our sins, are we like Cain? [Discuss]

What we see in Cain is an example of how the sinful nature operates in all of us. How hard it seems for us to humble ourselves and confess our sin. We would rather lie and wash our hands of any responsibility.

What do we make of Cain's question to God: "Am I my brother's keeper? Should we be?"

Cain's response to God is deplorable. Of course we should be our brother's keeper. We were made to care for each other. As followers of Christ, we are especially to be our brother's keeper (cf. Gal 5:25-6:2).

B. God's judgement on Cain

After failing to acknowledge his sin, how did God deal with Cain? (Gen 4:10)

God faced unrepentant Cain up to the truth. He told Cain how He knew what he had done. More than that, God would now take action against Cain, for the shedding of Abel's blood demanded that He take action.

What was the punishment that Cain incurred? (Gen 4:11-12)

God caused Cain to be cursed from the ground. This meant that the ground would be barren from all his endeavours, and that he would be a wanderer. Note also that God's punishment fitted Cain's crime. The ground received Abel's blood. Now God would cause the ground to arise and make Cain suffer.

After God pronounced judgement on Cain, how did Cain respond? (Genesis 4:13)

He complained his punishment was too much; that he had been wronged by God. He was more concerned about his punishment than his sin.

How do many people respond to God's judgement (consider Cain's response)?

Like Cain, many view God's justice as being harsh, unfair, and unloving. They are wrong! (Rev 15:3-4)

Cain rightly points out what would happen to him because of his sin. What was this? (Gen 4:14)

The Lord's face would be hidden from him, and he would be a restless wanderer. Here we have a picture of what happens when we sin and remain unrepentant. We are separated from God and are restless.

Cain says "whoever finds me will kill me". What do we see in God's answer to Cain? (Gen 4:15)

God would take vengeance on anyone who took Cain's life. Although he was an unrepentant sinner, he was still a human, whose life God valued. Therefore, no one could take Cain's life and get away with it.

God ensured Cain would suffer sin's consequences for a lifetime. Is there a parallel here for us?

God will cause unrepentant sinners to suffer the consequences of their sin for all eternity (Matt 25:41,46).

C. Descendants of Cain and Seth

Read Gen 4:16-17. Cain married and had children. Where did Cain get his wife from?

Cain married one of his sisters, for his parents had many children (Gen 5:3-5). Note: Back then, having children with a close relation did not create problems, as human genes were quite pure still.

What do we note about Cain's descendants and Seth's descendants? (Gen 4:18-22, 25-26)

There is no reference to Cain's descendants seeking God. Seth's line, however, began to call upon the Lord. Behold two lines; one righteous, one not. So it is today; we either seek to follow Jesus or not.

Summary: God is merciful and just. We must choose to either seek Him or bear the consequences.

17. Noah and the Flood – God’s Justice and Grace

Aim: To show what happens to man when he fails to seek God, and God’s dealings with sinful man.

Introduction: *Virtually every ancient culture that exists today has a flood story. Why is this?*

This is because there was a world-wide flood. It’s a real story – not a fictitious, man-made story.

The non-biblical accounts of the flood can vary significantly from the biblical account. Why?

Every non-biblical account was passed down to the next generation by word of mouth, thereby being altered through “Chinese whispers”. Also, being separated from God, people twisted the original story to suit their own understanding. But the biblical account is God’s retelling of what truly happened.

The New Testament presents the flood as an historical fact (Luke 17:27; 2 Pet 2:5). In these next few studies we shall consider this very important biblical story, as recorded in Genesis 6-9.

A. The state of the world in Noah’s day

Before the flood occurred 1656 years after creation, what were humans like? (Gen 6:4-5, 11-12)

Humans had increased greatly in wickedness, so that every thought was only evil continually (v.5). Also, violence and corruption filled the earth (vv. 11-12). Nearly everyone was far away from God & His will.

Why had the world become like this?

Being descendants of Adam, they were born outside of the Garden of Eden, separated from God, and with a sinful nature. Man’s sinful nature and his choice to turn from God led to wickedness abounding greatly.

In Gen 6:1-3, what impact did man’s wickedness have on God’s Spirit? What was the result?

God’s Spirit would no longer strive or contend with man’s wickedness forever (He who is ever seeking to turn us from our sins to God). As a result, God reduced the time men would live on earth from say 900 plus years before Noah, to just 120 years. Even God’s patience was being tried by human sinfulness.

Who were the Nephilim? (Gen 6:4; Num 13:33)

Some believe the Nephilim were the offspring of angels and humans, because of the use of the term “sons of God”. But it’s most likely that “sons of God” refers to males (who are in the likeness of Adam, the son of God), and “daughters of men” refers to females (who are in the likeness of Eve, who came from man). Also, in Num 13:33, the Nephilim are referred to as humans who are tall in stature (“sons of Anak”).

Not everyone was wicked. Read Gen 5:21-24 & 6:8-9. Why were they different?

Enoch and Noah did not corrupt themselves or act wickedly. They walked with God (they had a personal relationship with God through faith). Though no one is perfect, they sought to live a life pleasing to God.

What do we know about Noah? (Gen 6:8-9; Heb 11:7; 2 Pet 2:5)

Noah was a righteous and blameless man, finding favour with God. Also, in the New Testament, we read that he was a man of faith who feared & obeyed God, as well as a preacher of righteousness; he proclaimed God’s way to the ungodly. Despite not seeing anyone repent, he was faithful in proclaiming God’s Word.

B. God’s heart toward the world’s state

How was God affected by man’s wickedness in the days of Noah? (Gen 6:6)

God’s heart was filled with sorrow and pain, and He was deeply grieved that He had made man; He wished He hadn’t made man. Though mankind was the crown of His creation, we see how man’s sin and rebellion deeply grieved the heart of God. Our sin and rebellion does impact the heart of God!

Read Gen 6:7. Was God over-reacting?

God never over-reacts! God had been very patient with humans. He allowed mankind to have over 1600 years to turn back to Him. But things had become so bad that God’s justice demanded that He act in judgment and destroy the human race. Even the animals and birds (who are under man’s rule – Gen 1:28) would suffer the consequences of man’s sin; they would suffer because of us.

The judgment of God in sending the flood in Noah’s Day is in 2 Pet 3:3-10. Why is it mentioned?

Just as God judged the whole world in Noah’s Day because of human sin, God will one day judge the whole world again; this time, not with water, but with fire. Like in Noah’s Day, He is presently being very patient with humans, longing for us to repent and be right with Him through Jesus His Son.

In the midst of judgement, we find something amazing. What is it? (Gen 6:8-14)

God graciously chose to spare the human race by saving Noah and his family; although no one is good, including Noah (Rom 3:10-12). God would save them by placing them in a boat (ark). What grace!

What has God done for us in His grace to save us from judgment?

Just as Noah was saved by being in a boat, we are spared God’s judgment by being in Christ (Rom 8:1).

Summary: God is affected and grieved over man’s sin. He will act justly, but He is also gracious.

18. God's Covenant and Noah's Obedience

Aim: To see God's instructions and covenant to Noah, and Noah's faith and obedience to God.

Review: *In Noah's day, humans were evil continually. How did God feel about this? (Gen 6:5-7)* God was very grieved in His heart. He even regretted making mankind. But also, God could not just let things continue. He needed to act and bring judgment upon mankind.

In the midst of destroying the world by the flood, what did God plan to do? (Gen 6:8, 13-14) He planned to rescue the only righteous man on the face of the earth, and his family, from the flood. God would show grace and provide a way of escape for Noah.

A. God gives instructions to Noah

In order to save Noah and his family, God didn't just warn Noah. What did He do? (Gen 6:13-16) God graciously gave Noah instructions about building an ark that would keep him and his family safe.

What do you notice about the instructions given to Noah for the ark? (Gen 6:15-16)

- 1) God gave specific instructions to Noah, who wouldn't have known how to build a boat like the ark.
- 2) He was to use gopher wood; a pine-like timber that was light and good to plane into planks for a boat.
- 3) He was to cover the boat with pitch; a tar-based substance - perfect for waterproofing the boat.
- 4) The 6 to 1 ration between length to width was perfect for ocean-going stability; this ratio is used today.
- 5) The large size and three decks, with a window for ventilation, were perfect for all the creatures on board.

What do we learn about God when we consider the instructions He gave Noah?

God's knowledge is perfect. He knows all things; including the instructions for an ark to survive the flood.

God specifically told Noah to make a door in the side of the ark. What for? (Gen 6:16)

Only through this door could people and animals enter in for safety. There was one door only.

What should the one door in the ark remind us of? (cf. John 10:7-9)

This reminds us of the Lord Jesus. There is but one way for us to enter God's kingdom and be saved from sin. It's through Jesus. There is no other way for us to be saved (Acts 4:12; John 14:6).

How God would destroy the world is not mentioned until Gen 6:17. What was that way?

God would destroy the world by a flood. Never had this happened before.

How large would the flood be? Local? Continental? Global? (Gen 6:17)

God would flood the whole world (cf. also Gen 7:17-20). Though many dismiss this, the evidence for this is overwhelming; eg, scientists know that Australia was once covered by water, as seen with the existence of fossils and shells in the centre of Australia. This is just one example. Only the flood can explain it.

B. God's covenant and Noah's faith and obedience

After instructing Noah to build the ark, what did God establish with Noah? (Gen 6:18)

God established a covenant with Noah. This is the first occurrence of the word "covenant" in the Bible. Noah, his family, and the creatures with him, would be spared from being destroyed by the flood.

What do you understand by the word "covenant"?

In respect to God and man, it is always a God-initiated gracious agreement for the good of the one whom God is making the covenant with. Some important covenants in the Bible are the Abrahamic covenant (Gen 15:17-18), the Mosaic covenant (Exod 24:7-8), and the New Covenant (Heb 8:6-10) in Jesus.

Besides building the ark, what else did God command Noah to do? (Gen 6:19-21)

Noah had to bring two of every kind of land creature onto the ark (a male and a female of every kind), as well as food to keep everything alive during the time of the flood and until the flood subsided. What a job!

Many doubt that two of every land creature could have fitted in the ark. Should we doubt?

Of course not! God's Word is always true, for God has spoken it. If we have doubts, let us realise a few things. 1) The ark was huge, with three decks. 2) Only two of every species was required. For example, just two dogs were needed; not all the different dog breeds. In the case of dogs, this would have probably been two wolves. 3) The creatures could have been juveniles (not fully grown adults).

What did Noah do after God instructed him and made a covenant with him? (Gen 6:22; Heb 11:7)

He firstly believed God. Never had it rained before (we believe a mist watered the earth; Gen 2:6). Then, he completely obeyed God. Without this, Noah, his family, and all living things would have perished.

Our situation is similar to Noah. We must believe in Jesus to be saved, but what else must there be? Like Noah, we can only be saved when we act upon our faith in what God has declared in His Word. We must repent (Act 2:38) and follow Jesus (Matt 16:24). As Jam 2:14-17 says, faith without works is dead.

Summary: God made a covenant with Noah and gave him instructions; Noah believed and obeyed.

19. God Destroys and Saves

Aim: To see God's judgment in destroying unbelievers, and to see God's grace in saving believers.

Review: *God gave special instructions to Noah about the building of the ark, and He made a covenant with Noah. What does this reveal to us about God's character?*

God cared for Noah. He didn't just warn him about the flood, but told him how to be saved. He also promised by covenant to look after Noah, and all those on the ark. What a gracious and good God.

What did Noah do after receiving the special instructions and the covenant? (Gen 6:22)

Noah believed and trusted in God and he completely obeyed God – he trusted and obeyed. Do we?

A. God tells Noah to enter the ark

Noah had to bring onto the ark two of every kind of creature. But what did God do? (Gen 6:20)

God brought the creatures to Noah ("they will come to you"). As a result, Noah was spared a whole lot of work. More importantly, God selected the best pair of every species. God didn't leave it all up to Noah.

In Gen 7:2-3, some creatures had more than just a pair on the ark. Which were these? Why?

Noah had to bring seven pairs of clean animals and birds onto the ark; ie, clean for sacrificing to God. This was important, as after the flood, some were offered as a thank offering to God (Gen 8:20).

After Noah had completed the ark, what happened next? (Genesis 7:1-5)

Noah entered the ark with all the animals and birds, when God told Him to do so. Noah didn't enter the ark when the first raindrops fell. By faith, he entered when God said (seven days before the flood).

Who closed the ark's door? What did this signify (Gen 7:16)? What picture do we have here for us?

God Himself shut the door. When this happened, it was too late for anyone else to be saved; even if they pleaded. This is how it will be when Christ returns. It will be too late to be saved then (Matt 25:10-13).

B. God brings the Flood

Read Gen 7:11-12. How did God flood the earth?

God caused rain to fall for 40 days and nights; note that we have local floods just from 1 day of solid rain. Also, the great reservoirs of water underneath the earth unleashed their contents too, to flood the world.

How extensive was the flood? (Gen 7:17-20)

The flood was worldwide. Every mountain was covered. The mention of 15 cubits is to help us know that no one could survive the flood; not even a giraffe; the tallest land animal (a giraffe is 6 metres or 13 cubits high). Note: The flood was not local, as some teach. The New Testament affirms this (2 Pet 3:5-7). Also, that's why we have fossils and sedimentary layers throughout the whole earth.

C. God destroys all those outside the ark

What did the flood do? What does the Bible emphasise? (Genesis 7:21-24)

All land creatures and birds, and all human beings, perished in the flood. Nothing survived, except what was in the ark. Again, the fossil evidence overwhelmingly proves this catastrophic world-wide event.

How sad to think of the loss of human life. But how should we view it from God's perspective?

God had been very patient for 100 years while Noah built the ark and preached to the people (2 Pet 2:5). They could have entered the ark to be saved, but chose not to. As a result, they received God's judgment.

What should we learn from this story for ourselves? (2 Pet 3:8-9)

Today, God is patient with us, longing for us to repent and believe in Jesus to be saved. But only a few heed the Gospel message. One day, judgment shall fall, and all shall perish who haven't trusted in Jesus.

C. God remembers Noah and all those inside the ark

After the 40 days and nights of rain, what does the Bible say God did? (Gen 8:1-5)

The God of the universe remembered Noah and those on the ark; that means He cared for them, as they would perish if they remained on the ark for too long. God stopped the rain, closed up the water reservoirs beneath, and caused a strong wind to blow across the earth, so that the floodwaters would recede.

When did Noah, his family and the animals, leave the ark? (Gen 8:6-19)

Noah used a raven and a dove to see if the floodwaters had receded enough, but he didn't leave the ark until God told him to (vv. 15-16). Noah obeyed God. If he had left earlier, it would have been disastrous.

What did God instruct Noah to do, and what did Noah do? (Gen 8:17, 20)

Just as Adam & Eve were instructed, Noah was instructed to replenish the earth. It was God's gracious will for man to again inhabit the earth. Noah, in thankfulness, made an offering to God. He was so thankful for God sparing him, his family and all the creatures with him. Are we thankful to God for Jesus!

Summary: God kept His promise in destroying unbelievers, but preserving Noah & those on the ark.

20. God's Gracious Promise and His Reaction to Human Pride

Aim: To show God's grace to fallen humans, and the way He acts against human pride for our sake.

Introduction *The Bible explains man's history in depths not found in any other resource. [Discuss]*

In the Bible, the all-knowing God has given us revelation in regard to why there is death and sin. Even the flood story explains so much of our geology. In this study, we will even discover why we have a rainbow, and why there are various languages throughout the world.

A. God's gracious promise to Noah and his descendants

After Noah obediently left the ark, what did he do? Why? (Gen 8:20)

In thanks to God for sparing them and not forgetting them (Gen 8:1), he built an altar and offered a burnt offering to the Lord. Noah was very appreciative of God's grace. This is the first mention of an altar.

What was God's response to Noah's action? (Gen 8:21-22)

God was pleased with Noah's offering, and made a most gracious and merciful promise. Even though God knew how man would continue in wickedness, He promised to never again destroy the world by a flood. He also promised to maintain the seasons, and allow the earth to bear its fruit for our good.

What commands did God give Noah and his sons when they came out of the ark? (Gen 9:1-7)

1. They were to be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth (the same command given to Adam & Eve).
2. Every living thing was to be under the control and care of man (again, this is what God told Adam).
3. Every living thing would now be food for them (not just green plants). Before this, all humans and animals only ate green plants (Gen 1:29-30).
4. Humans were not to eat any blood from a living creature, signifying the importance of blood; something that was emphasised in the Law of Moses, and in the death of Jesus (1 Pet 1:18-19).
5. If a person's life is taken, either by man or animal, then that man or animal shall forfeit its life.

Why did God require a person or animal's life to be taken if they killed a person? (Gen 9:6)

God gave this command because human beings have been made in God's image. Human life is sacred.

What covenant did God make with Noah and all creatures? (Gen 9:8-11)

The covenant was that He would never again destroy the world by a flood. There are local floods, but never would there be a global flood. God made this promise, even though He knew that man would sin.

What was the sign of this new covenant? (Gen 9:12-17)

God would set a rainbow in the clouds as the sign. Every time we see a rainbow, we ought to remind ourselves of God's grace in promising to never flood the world again; and He has kept His promise.

B. After the Flood and God's reaction to human pride

One of Noah's sons was cursed. Who was it and why? (Gen 9:22-25)

Ham (the father of Canaan) was cursed because of his sin. He would become a servant. Indeed, this line became very sinful (Deut 9:4-5), and were overthrown by Joshua and the Israelites, at God's command.

One of Noah's sons and his descendants was exalted above the rest. Which one? (Gen 9:26-27)

Shem is exalted. Canaan would serve him and Japheth would find shelter in him. Let us note that through Shem's line came the Lord Jesus. Through Him, all the nations of the earth would be blessed.

Do you have any of your ancestors mentioned in Genesis 10?

Sure do! Every person's ancestry can be traced back to here. We have all come from Adam and Noah.

What do we learn about the ability of humans from Gen 11:1-4? Why?

There was one language, and because of this, man was able to work together and do great things, like build a huge tower. Today, with an almost universal language again, man can almost do anything.

What sin do we notice in Gen 11:4?

Instead of seeking to honour God, humans wanted to make their name great. This is pride and humanism; sinful and rebellious to God. Today, we again see much human ability, as well as pride and humanism.

What did God think of pride and humanism? (Gen 11:5-6)

He was deeply concerned. He could see that man would be able to do anything, and in our sinful state, that would be dangerous in leading us further from God, and making ourselves out to be gods.

What did God do? (Gen 11:7-9)

He caused them to speak different languages and He scattered them throughout the earth. Thus, our differing language groups have developed as a result of God's intervention at the tower of Babel.

Note: God did this, in grace, to counteract our pride, and to cause us to seek Him.

Summary: Our history is shaped by God's actions; and He acts in grace so that we might seek Him.

21. God Chose, Called, and Promised Abram

Aim: To show that God is faithful to carry out His plans and to fulfil His promises.

Introduction *Over the next few studies, we will be considering the life of Abraham. He lived about 4000 years ago. What are the big things you recall about Abraham's life? (Jam 2:23)*

Abraham was the friend of God; he walked with God and believed God. Through faith, he was declared to be righteous. He was a man who grew in faith, until he trusted God completely; even being willing to sacrifice his son at God's command. From Abraham came the nation of Israel, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

A. Abram's background

Abram (or Abraham, as he was later called) was descended from which line of Noah?(Gen 11:10,26)
Abram descended from Shem. This was the line of God's promise (Gen 9:26). He was the 10th generation.

Where was Abram born and where did he grow up? What was it like? (Gen 11:27-28)

Abram was born in Ur of the Chaldeans. He lived close to where the people had begun to build the great tower of Babel. Ur was a pagan city, worshipping false gods. Abram's family and descendants would have been pagans, worshipping false gods (cf. Josh 24:14).

Who did Abram marry and what do we learn about her? (Gen 11:29-30)

Abram married Sarai, and she was unable to have children. This was considered to be a disgrace back then.

Abram moved from Ur of the Chaldeans to where? Why? (Gen 11:31; Acts 7:2-4)

Abram went from Ur to Haran (a 1000km away from Ur). Ur was a pagan city in Upper Mesopotamia (Padan-Aram). He moved there, because God called him there. Later on, God called him to Canaan.

B. Abram's calling

While living in Haran, after the death of his father Terah, what did God do? (Gen 12:1)

God called Abram to leave Haran and his relatives and go into the land of Canaan; into a completely foreign land. He had to leave all behind, including the idols of his relatives (cf. Josh 24:2).

Why did God choose and call Abram to go to Canaan? What was God's purpose?

We don't know why God chose Abram. This is according to His sovereign will. But God did this to separate him from the rest of the nations and to create a holy people, through whom Jesus would come.

In calling Abram, what promises did God give to Abram? (Gen 12:2-3)

God promised to make Abram a great nation, to bless him, to make his name great, and to bless others through him. In time, God fulfilled all these promises. God blessed Abram by miraculously allowing Sarai to bear a child; He also preserved and helped Abram in a foreign land; from the promised child came the great nation of Israel; God made Abram's name great (everyone's heard of Abram); and through Abram we have all been blessed through Israel and ultimately, through Abram's descendant Jesus Christ.

What do we learn about God through the calling of Abram? (cf. Isa 46:8-10)

Whatever God purposes, He does. Whatever he begins, He brings to a conclusion. Nothing can keep God from carrying out His plans and accomplishing His purposes. Calling Abram was God's next step in His plan to deliver mankind from our bondage to sin, and in sending the promised Deliverer through his line.

In Gen 12:3, it speaks of blessings and curses. How are to understand this?

As we consider Abram's life, and the life of his descendants (Israel), we observe that both individuals and people groups who have cursed them, have been cursed by God, but those who bless them are blessed by God. This still is in operation today; there is no place for anti-Semitism in Christ's church [Discuss]

C. Abram's obedience

What did Abram do with God's choice and calling? (Gen 12:4-5; Heb 11:8-9)

Abram obeyed God. Exercising faith in God, and taking all he had, he left Haran for good, and left his relatives and friends behind, to go to an unknown land. True faith always expresses itself in obedience.

Read Gen 12:6-9. What did God promise Him and what did Abram do in response?

God promised Abram to give his descendants Canaan. In response, Abram built an altar to worship God. The Lord was his God, whose name he called on. He no longer followed the idols of his fathers.

God has called us in Christ to be His people. How should we respond? (cf. Abram's example)

We are to leave the world and any idols behind, and follow Christ alone (Matt 16:24-25).

Abram received great promises from God. So have we in Christ (2 Pet 1:2-4). What are some?

God will save us and give us eternal life (John 3:16); God will always be with us (Heb 13:5-6); God will protect us from temptations too great and provide a way of escape (1 Cor 10:13), etc, etc.

Summary: Like for Abram, God has given us magnificent promises and He calls us to follow Him.

22. A Test of Faith and A test in Choices

Aim: To show us the importance of trusting God and also looking to Him when making choices.

Intro *Who is Abraham to us; a Jewish patriarch, a distant historical figure? (Rom 4:16-17; Gal 3:6-7)*
He is our "father" in faith! We should be greatly encouraged and comforted by the testimony of this man.

Abraham is held up to us as an example of faith, yet he was also human; riddled with failures in faith. But Abraham also repented of his sin and sought to grow in faith and to make right choices for God.

A. Abram's test of faith – trusting God

After coming to Canaan, the Lord sent a trial to test Abram's faith. What was it? (Gen 12:10)

God sent a famine in the land. God can send us trials too, to test and refine our faith (cf. 1 Pet 1:6-7).

How did Abram do in this test? (Gen 12:11-16)

Not very well; even the "father of faith" failed to trust God that He would care for him. Abram went down to Egypt without asking God, and he lied about Sarai being his wife in order to save his own skin.

What did God do in this situation? (Gen 12:17-20)

He intervened and rescued Sarai by striking Pharaoh's household, and rebuking Abram through Pharaoh. God was very gracious to Abram (and Sarai); but there were important lessons to learn.

After showing great faith and obedience in going to Canaan, Abram stumbled and fell. Why?

The reason he fell (and we fall) is because we get our eyes off the Lord and onto the circumstances about us (Matt 14:28-31), and then we try and deal with our circumstances in our own strength (cf. Pro 3:5-6).

God never gives up on His children, even when we fail Him badly. Why?

It is because He loves us unconditionally (Psa 103:10-11); He even disciplines us in love (Heb 12:7-11).

B. Abram returns to Bethel & God

What was the first thing that Abram did when he returned from Egypt? (Gen 13:1-4)

He returned to the land of Canaan, and settled back at Bethel, where he called on the name of the Lord.

What is significant about Bethel? (Gen 12:8; 13:4)

Bethel, which means "house of God", is where Abram built an altar to the Lord and called on His name, when in Canaan. In Egypt he had done his own thing and strayed from God. Now he returns back to God.

What is the Christian's "Bethel"?

Like Abram, we stray from God. We have times in "our Egypt", where we are separated from God through sin. We are also need to return to our "Bethel", the throne of grace, and seek forgiveness (1 John 1:6-10).

C. Lot's Choice and Abram's Choice

Abram's nephew Lot came with him to Canaan. What was the problem that occurred? (Gen 13:5-7)

Because Abram and Lot both had many sheep and cattle, trouble developed between the shepherds taking care of their herds and flocks, for there was not enough pasture to sustain all their animals.

What did Abram do to resolve the tension between the two camps? (Gen 13:8-9)

Abram was a peacemaker. He let Lot choose the land he wanted and he would humbly take what was left.

What lessons do we learn from Abram? (Eph 4:1-3; Phil 2:3-4; Matt 5:9)

We are called to be like Abram; to put others ahead of ourselves, and to be peacemakers.

What choice did Lot make? (Gen 13:10-11)

Lot chose the best pasture in the Jordan valley, which was well-watered, for he thought this would be best.

What else was in the Jordan valley? What do we learn about Lot? (Gen 13:12-13)

The wicked city of Sodom was in the valley. Even though Lot believed in God, he made his choice on what was best financially; not what was best spiritually. Bad things happened to Lot because of this choice.

How are we in our choices? Like Lot? (cf. Pro 14:12; Matt 6:33; 1 Joh 2:15-16)

Often we choose things according to what looks appealing to our eyes, rather than what's best spiritually.

What land did Abram end up living in? (Gen 13:12)

Abram settled in the land of Canaan. In effect, his animals were pastured on the rocky, less fertile hills and mountains, of Canaan. In the eyes of men, it would seem that Abram was the "loser". But Abram was blessed where he was, protected from the ungodly influences of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Though he lived in the less fertile land of Canaan, what did God do? (Gen 13:14-18)

God blessed Abram and again promised all the land of Canaan to Abram's descendants.

What else do we know about Abram? (Heb 11:9-10)

Abram's heart was set on the Lord and His city, not the things of earth. We are to be the same (Col 3:1-3).

Summary: God calls us to trust Him and obey, and to look to Him when we are making choices.

23. God's Mercy and Wrath – the story of Lot and Sodom

Aim: To show God's justice in dealing with sin, and God's grace to those who trust in Him.

Intro: *In our society, sexual immorality is prevalent and accepted; including homosexuality and other sexual perversions. How does a loving God view such a society (cf. Phil 2:14-15)? [Discuss]*

A. Lot and Sodom

Lot, Abraham's nephew, settled in Sodom. What was Sodom like? (Gen 13:13, 18:20, 19:4-5; Jud 7)

Sodom was a very wicked city, full of self-indulgence and sexual immorality; including homosexuality.

What was life like for Lot as he lived amongst the people of Sodom? (2 Pet 2:6-8)

Lot was a righteous man. The wickedness he saw caused his righteous soul to be tormented daily.

As we live in the midst of an increasingly wicked society, what must we be careful of?

We need to be careful not to become complacent or accepting of the wickedness around us. We need to make sure that we continue to see sin as God does; and like Lot, be tormented by the evil we see.

B. Abraham, God and Sodom

Read Gen 18:16-21. How would you describe God's view of Abraham? Why? (cf. also Jam 2:23)

God had a very high regard for Abraham; so much so, that He was willing to share with Abraham what He was thinking of doing to Sodom and Gomorrah. Abraham was God's friend. God loved Abraham – a man of faith and righteousness, and who would be a good father in faithfully teaching others about God.

Why did God intend to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah? What do we learn here? (Gen 18:20-21)

God cannot allow sin to continue. Once it becomes too great, He must act; just as He did in Noah's day (cf. Gen 6:5-7). God is patient and loving, but He's also just, and in His rule, He will act when it's warranted.

Sodom's main sin was homosexuality. What is God's view on this sin? (Lev 18:22; Rom 1:26-27)

God greatly detests this sin, because it is a perversion to the natural order. Today homosexuality is widely accepted, and some think God has no problem with it, but His wrath burns against it (Rev 21:8).

What did Abraham do when he learnt that God would destroy Sodom? (Gen 18:23-33)

Abraham interceded for Sodom for the sake of Lot and any other righteous soul in that city. We are called to intercede for others that they may be spared from God's wrath (Jude 21-23). Are we like Abraham?

What was so extraordinary about the conversation between God and Abraham?

Abraham was able to share openly his thoughts to the almighty God, including challenging Him about not treating the righteous and the wicked alike. He even pleaded for God to spare Sodom if there were ten righteous people – and God agreed. Truly, we see an amazing thing – a friendship between a man and God.

What do we learn about God in His conversation with Abraham?

God is gracious and for the sake of a few righteous, He was willing to spare Sodom of what they deserved.

C. Lot's Rescue

Read Gen 19:1-9. What do we learn from this account?

Sodom was truly very wicked – seeking to rape the visitors that had come to the city. It's also shocking to see Lot be willing to sacrifice his daughters for the sake of the visitors (sadly, this was a cultural norm).

What did God do for Lot and his family? (Gen 19:10-11)

God's angels rescued Lot by bringing him back into the house and protecting the family by blinding the men.

Read Gen 19:12-14. What do you make of the angels' appeal?

It is very gracious. They warned Lot and his family to flee, and that he should warn anyone else he cared for.

Lot warned his sons-in-law about the imminent destruction. What was their response? (Gen 19:14)

They thought he was joking. Similarly, many dismiss the imminent coming of God's wrath (2 Pet 3:3-4).

After being warned to flee by the angels, what did Lot do and what did God do? (Gen 19:15-16)

Lot hesitated, but in His compassion, God ordered His angels to take hold of their hands and rescue them.

Read Gen 19:17-25. What did God do for Lot and what did God do to Sodom and the other cities?

God was gracious again to Lot by giving him his request to spare Zoar, where he fled to. But God punished the wicked severely with fire once Lot reached Zoar. Behold God's justice and grace (cf. Rom 11:22).

What was the angels' instruction? What happened? What can we learn? (Gen 19:17, 26)

The angels said "Do not look behind you". But Lot's wife disobeyed, and became a pillar of salt. Her action showed where her heart was. We are not to look back (Luke 9:62), but look to Jesus (Heb 12:2).

Read Gen 19:27-29. What did God do for Abraham?

God rescued Lot and his family. The God of all the earth did better than Abraham had asked for.

Summary: God distinguishes between the righteous and wicked; may we be those who are righteous.

24. Abraham's Righteousness and God's Trustworthiness

Aim: To show that God credited Abraham's faith as righteousness, and that God can be trusted.

Intro: *Abraham was not always a man of faith. He had great faith in obeying God's call to go from Haran to Canaan. But what did Abraham not do when there was a famine in Canaan? (Gen 12:10-13)* He didn't trust God. He went down to Egypt without asking God. Then, and once in Egypt, he didn't trust God to look after him and Sarah. He took things into his own hands; and it nearly ended in disaster.

In this study, we will see Abraham's faith when God gave him an amazing promise, and most importantly, we will see the important blessing that comes to us when we have faith in God.

A. Abram's righteousness

What did the Lord confirm to Abram in Gen 15:1?

The Lord confirmed He would continue to protect Abram; he had nothing to fear (cf. how God protected Abram in Egypt in Gen 12:14-20; despite his lack of faith). Also, the Lord confirmed Abram's reward – this wasn't just having the land of Canaan and having descendants; it included heaven (Heb 11:9-10).

For Christians, God has confirmed His promises to us. How do they compare to Abram's?

They are similar. The Lord confirms to us that we do not need to fear either, for He is with us (Heb 13:5) and will protect us (1 John 5:18), and that we have a great reward (Matt 5:12; 1 Pet 1:3-4).

Abram questioned God about who would receive his great reward, since he was without an heir; he had no descendants. But what did God promise him? (Gen 15:2-5)

God promised Abram a child, and that from this child, a countless number of descendants would come.

Though Abram and Sarai were old, well past childbearing, what did Abram do? (Gen 15:6)

He believed God; ie., he believed what God had told him – despite him and Sarai being past childbearing.

In Gen 15:6 we have an extremely important truth. What is it? (cf. also Hab 2:4)

God declared Abram to be righteous (right in God's eyes) through his faith alone in God and His word.

Note: He was not declared to be righteous based on works, but on faith alone.

This declaration to Abram is foundational to the Gospel. In what way? (Rom 1:16-17; Gal 3:6-11)

As we hear the Gospel and put our faith in Jesus, we are declared righteous, despite the fact that we have sinned (Rom 3:23). Being righteous before the holy God is based on faith; not works.

What is behind God declaring Abram to be righteous, and us to be righteous? (Rom 3:21-24)

It's completely based on God's grace and what He's done for us. We can never be declared righteous by our own efforts because we all sin. Righteousness is a gift from God by faith; not something we can earn.

Read Gen 15:7, 12-21. Before Abram even had a child, what did God tell him?

God promised Abram and his descendants the land of Canaan. Also, Abram's descendants would be slaves in a foreign land 400 years, before God would deliver them and bring them to Canaan. This is exactly what happened. What an amazing God who knows the end from the beginning (Isa 46:9-10).

B. Man's plan and God's plan

After the promise of a child, Abram & Sarai came up with a plan. Why? What was it? (Gen 16:1-3)

Since Sarai couldn't bear children, Sarai's maid Hagar would be Abram's wife, and bear a child for Sarai.

Abram & Sarai's plan was not God's plan. What resulted between Sarai & Hagar? (Gen 16:4-6)

They became enemies. Ultimately, Ishmael's descendants became Israel's enemy. May we learn from this!

C. God's trustworthiness

After Abram & Sarai had carried out their own plans, what did God do? (Gen 17:1-8; 15-16)

God continued to fulfill His plan for them. He reaffirmed His covenant with Abram, and that through Sarai the promised child would come; to commemorate this, their names were changed to Abraham and Sarah.

What was Abraham's response to God's words? (Gen 17:17-18)

He laughed, and questioned how a 100 year old man and a 90 year old woman could have a child. He also pleaded that God might establish His covenant through Ishmael. Abraham didn't fully embrace God's plan.

What was God's response to Abraham's appeal? (Gen 17:19-22)

God confirmed that through Sarah's child the covenant would be established, but that He would also bless Ishmael. Sarah's child, Isaac would be called Isaac ("he laughs"); a reminder of how Abraham laughed before God when He said Sarah would have a child. Sarah also laughed at God's words (Gen 18:9-12).

According to God's promise, Sarah bore Isaac (Gen 21:1-3). What do we learn from this?

God is true to His word, and He is able to do all things; even if they seem impossible (Gen 18:13-14).

Summary: God is trustworthy. Let us always believe in Him, and we shall be declared righteous.

25. Abraham's Obedience and Faith

Aim: To show Abraham's obedience; which came from the outworking of his faith in God.

Intro: *Obedience to God is not always an easy thing for us. Why is that? [Discuss]*

We find it particularly challenging to obey God when, what we are called to do, is difficult to carry out, or if it doesn't make sense to us. This is precisely what Abraham faced, as we shall see in this study.

A. The covenant of circumcision

What was the covenant that God made with Abraham and his descendants? (Gen 17:7-8)

He would be their God, and the land of Canaan would be their everlasting possession.

What were Abraham and His descendants to do for their part of the covenant? (Gen 17:9-11)

All males were to be circumcised; it was to be a sign of the covenant. It was a strange sign, but commanded.

Christians also have a sign for the covenant we have with God. What is it? (Acts 2:38)

God has made a covenant with us to give us eternal life if we have faith in His Son. The sign of this covenant is believer's baptism. It may be a strange sign, but this is the sign God has given to us.

What did Abraham do after receiving instructions on circumcision? (Gen 17:23-27)

He immediately obeyed God. He also circumcised Isaac (Gen 21:4). Have you believed in the Lord Jesus Christ to save you? Then, like Abraham, have you obeyed God? Have you been baptised (Matt 28:19-20)?

B. Abraham's test of faith

One day, when Isaac was a young man, what did God command Abraham to do? (Gen 22:1-2)

God commanded Abraham to sacrifice Isaac. What a request! God's promises to Abraham would be fulfilled only through Isaac. Not only that, Abraham and Sarah dearly loved their only son Isaac.

How could God command such a terrible and difficult thing? (Gen 22:1; Heb 11:17)

God was testing Abraham to see if he loved Isaac more than he loved Him. It was a test in trusting God.

Previously, how had Abraham gone when it came to trusting God? (Genesis 17:17)

He laughed when God said he and Sarah would have a child. On two occasions, he said to the people around him that his wife Sarah was his sister, because he was afraid that harm might come to him.

What did Abraham do here when put to the test? (Gen 22:3)

He obeyed God immediately. He didn't doubt or question God. He didn't hesitate. Instead, he trusted and obeyed God completely. This shows us that Abraham's faith had grown. Is your faith growing? Do you let the trials of life refine and grow your faith in God (1 Pet 1:6-7; 2 Pet 3:18)?

In Gen 22:5, we see Abraham's great faith. In what way?

He tells his servants to wait where they were, and that he and Isaac would worship God, and then both return. Why did Abraham say this? Would he disobey God and not sacrifice Isaac? No! Heb 11:17-19 tell us that Abraham trusted and obeyed God, even contemplating that God would raise Isaac from the dead.

As they went, what did Isaac ask Abraham, and what was Abraham's response? (Gen 22:6-8).

Isaac asked where the animal for the sacrifice was. Abraham responded: "The Lord will provide".

When they came to the top of Mt Moriah, what did Abraham do? (Gen 22:9-10)

In complete obedience, Abraham took hold of Isaac, laid him on the altar, and lifted up the knife to kill him. How difficult this was to do. Yet Abraham obeyed God no matter what, for he trusted Him.

What did God do as Abraham was about to kill Isaac? (Gen 22:10-12)

God called out to stop Abraham. God now knew that Abraham loved Him more than anything else.

God spared Isaac, but what else did God do? (Gen 22:13-14)

God provided a ram to be sacrificed in the place of Isaac. It was a substitute for Isaac, provided by God.

Through his obedience and faith, what was confirmed to Abraham? (Gen 22:15-19)

God confirmed His promise to bless Abraham, and that through Isaac the Messiah would come who would bring great blessing to us all; salvation. Note: Noah's obedience brought about salvation from a flood. Abraham's obedience brought about the promised salvation from sin. How important is obedience!

Mt Moriah is mentioned in this account (Gen 22:2). What's special about Mt Moriah? (2 Chr 3:1)

This ended up being the site where Solomon's temple was built, and near where Jesus died for our sins.

Abraham being willing to sacrifice Isaac is a foreshadowing of another story. What is it?

It's a foreshadowing of God sacrificing His one and only Son, for us; but unlike Abraham, there was no one to stop God. It had to be done, if He was to provide salvation for us. Also, there is another picture here. A ram was provided as a substitute for Isaac, and God has substituted His Son, the Lamb of God, for us.

Summary: God desires us to trust and obey Him completely. What blessings come when we do that!

26. Isaac's Family and God's Grace

Aim: To show God's sovereignty and grace in choosing Jacob to inherit the Abrahamic covenant.

Intro: *In the Old Testament, the Lord God is often called the "God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob". We know that Abraham was a man of faith. But what were Isaac and Jacob like? (cf. Heb 11:17-21)*

Isaac and Jacob were men of faith too, but as we shall see in our next studies, there were times when Isaac didn't trust God, and in regards to Jacob, he was a despicable schemer before he became a man of faith.

A. Isaac's broken family

How did Isaac get a wife, and who was she? (Gen 24:1-4; 12-16, 22-27, 50-51)

Abraham arranged for his servant to get a wife for Isaac from his relatives. The Lord guided the servant in an amazing way, so that he met Rebekah; brother of Laban and daughter of Bethuel (Abraham's nephew).

Why wasn't Isaac to marry a Canaanite? What does the NT teach on marriage? (2 Cor 6:14)

Isaac was not to marry a Canaanite (like his step-brother Esau had done – Gen 26:34-35), for they worshipped pagan gods. We are instructed in the New Testament to only marry a fellow Christian.

What difficulties did Isaac and Rebekah face and what did Isaac do? (Gen 25:19-21)

Rebekah was not able to have children. So Isaac prayed, and the Lord answered him by causing Rebekah to fall pregnant. Do we pray when we face difficulties? (cf. 1 John 5:14-15).

What did the Lord tell Rebekah before she gave birth? (Gen 25:22-23)

The Lord told Rebekah that she would have twins. The Lord sees and knows everything. Also, against the customs of the day, the Lord said that the older one would serve the younger.

What do we learn about the twins and about the family? (Gen 25:24-34)

Esau was a skilful hunter, but he did not value his birth-right. He sold it to Jacob for a pot of stew. Jacob was a "home-body", but also a schemer, holding his brother to ransom in order to obtain Esau's birth-right.

Isaac and Rebekah had a serious problem in their family. What was it? (Gen 25:28)

Isaac favoured Esau, and Rebekah favoured Jacob. Favouritism is a damaging and dangerous thing in a family. It is also a bad thing in the Lord's church. Cf. Jam 2:1-9. We are to love all equally.

Isaac faced a test of faith. Read Gen 26:1, 6-11. How did he go?

Like for his father Abraham, Isaac failed to trust God in regard to his challenging situation. Yet, like Abraham, he learnt to trust God and he grew in faith – just as we are to as well (cf. 2 Pet 3:18).

What did the Lord affirm to Isaac, and what was Isaac's response? (Gen 26:2-5, 23-25)

The Lord affirmed His covenant to Isaac. In response, Isaac built an altar and called on the Lord's name.

Although Isaac grew in his faith, what did he have wrong? (Gen 27:1-4)

Isaac wanted Esau to be the blessed son, although God had already said it would be Jacob (Gen 25:23).

So often, we also can fail to accept God's plan and seek to have our will done instead (cf. Luke 22:42).

Jacob would be the one who would inherit the covenant, but what was he like? (Gen 27:18-29)

Jacob was a deceiver. With his mother's encouragement, he deceived his father to steal the blessing away from his brother Esau. Jacob's name suited his character, for it means "one who deceives" (Gen 27:36).

What do we learn about Esau from Gen 27:41 and the other accounts we have seen?

Esau ended up hating Jacob, and even wanted to kill him. From the other accounts we have in Gen 25-27, Esau was not a man of faith. He lived for himself, without reference to God; even marrying pagan women.

Because of how Esau wanted to kill Jacob, what happened next? (Gen 27:42-28:5)

Rebekah convinced Isaac to send Jacob away to Laban in Haran in order for him to get a wife there. But her real reason was to spare Jacob from Esau's anger. Look what favouritism had caused.

B. God's mercy on deceitful Jacob

As Jacob fled to Haran, he experienced something amazing. What was it? (Genesis 28:10-15)

He experienced God's grace and mercy. God affirmed to him that he would be blessed by God, and that the Abrahamic covenant would pass to him. God's grace is amazing, and so is His sovereignty in choosing Jacob. We never would have "chosen" a deceitful man like Jacob, but God did (Rom 9:10-16).

When Jacob awoke from his dream, what did this deceitful sinner do? (Gen 28:16-22)

He acknowledged the Lord's presence, he feared God, and he made a vow to make the Lord his God.

What repentance! Jacob turned from his sinful ways and believed in God. Now he was a man of faith.

Discuss: None of us are born a Christian. We're all like Jacob – sinner. But have you experienced God's grace, and like Jacob, have you committed yourself to follow the Lord God through Jesus?

Summary: God chooses to save and use us sinners according to His amazing grace. What grace!

27. **Jacob: the Man of God**

Aim: To show how Jacob became a changed man after encountering the Lord, and how God blessed him.

Recap: *What type of person was Jacob before he fled to Haran? (Gen 25:29-33; 27:34-36)*

Jacob was selfish and godless, a schemer and a deceiver, who gained at his own brother's loss.

What was so remarkable about his encounter with God in Gen 28:10-15?

God came to Jacob, when he didn't care for God. He was incredibly gracious in choosing to give Jacob the Abrahamic blessing. Do you marvel at God's grace and choice of you? Let's continue Jacob's story.

A. Jacob's transformation

After coming to know the Lord, where did Jacob go? (Gen 28:5; 29:13-14)

He journeyed to Haran (where Abraham came from), and he met Laban, his mother's brother.

What was Laban like? (Gen 29:21-30)

Laban was like old Jacob; a deceiver and schemer. Note: God often brings into our life people who are like our sinful self so that we might see ourselves as we really are, and desire God to change us.

Although Laban dealt deceitfully with Jacob, what do we notice in Jacob's behaviour?

He had become a changed man after making the Lord his God. Never again do we see Jacob dealing deceitfully with others. When we turn to the Lord Jesus, we are changed too (2 Cor 5:17).

What was life like for Jacob as he lived with Laban? (Gen 31:4-7; 38-41)

Jacob had to work hard for twenty years for Laban; who cheated and changed his wages ten times.

Why did Jacob leave Laban? (Gen 31:1-3)

Although life was very tough for Jacob, he didn't leave Laban until the Lord told him to. No longer did Jacob do his own thing. He truly had made the Lord his God, and followed Him. Are we like that?

Despite his hardships with Laban, what does Jacob say about God? (Gen 31:5,7,9,42)

Jacob testified how God had been with him, protected him, and made him prosper. He gave glory to God.

In a dream from the Lord, what did God remind Jacob of? (Genesis 31:10-13)

God reminded Jacob of how He had cared for him and protected him, and He reminded him of their encounter twenty years ago, where He graciously chose to bless Jacob and be with him.

As a Christian, when are we reminded of God's gracious dealings with us?

We are reminded many times, but especially when we break bread together. As we take the cup, we are reminded of the new covenant, God's richest blessings to us, all because of what Jesus has done for us.

After Jacob left with his family, what did Laban do? Why? (Gen 31:22-23, 43)

He pursued Jacob to him harm and take back Jacob's family; he believed Jacob's family belonged to him.

What did God do? (Gen 31:24, 29)

The Lord intervened and prevented Laban from harming Jacob. Note: It could have turned out badly for Jacob, for unknown to him, Rachel had stolen Laban's idol (Gen 31:19, 32). But God protected him.

B. Jacob's trust and thankfulness to God

In returning to Canaan, what was Jacob's great fear? (Gen 32:6-8)

He was afraid of his brother Esau, for twenty years earlier Esau had planned to kill him (Gen 27:41).

In his fear, what did Jacob do? (Gen 32:9-12)

He called upon the Lord to deliver him from Esau. What a great prayer this is. Here we see the heart of this changed man. Jacob humbly confesses how he is unworthy of the Lord's lovingkindness and faithfulness. He also, by faith, reminds the Lord of His command to return to Canaan, and His promise to keep him.

While preparing to meet Esau, what amazing encounter did Jacob have? (Gen 32:24-29)

He wrestled with a man who blessed him, and changed his name to Israel ("one who strives with God").

Who was this man? (Gen 32:30)

According to Jacob's response, it was God (it probably was a pre-incarnation of the Lord Jesus).

What great picture do we have here for Christians?

We have a wonderful picture of prayer. We are to reverently "wrestle" with the Lord for His blessing.

How did Jacob's encounter with Esau go? (Gen 33:1-4)

It went very well. God caused the two brothers to meet on friendly terms. The Lord had prepared the way.

Read Gen 33:18-20. What is Jacob's response to all that God had done for him?

He built an altar and worshipped the Lord; behold Jacob, the man of God. Are we the people of God too, seen in the way we have been transformed, and in the way we trust in the Lord and worship Him?

Summary: When we commit ourselves to the Lord and follow Him, He will guide and bless us.

28. Joseph and God's Sovereignty

Aim: To show how God's sovereignty overrules circumstances and that He can be fully trusted.

Intro: *Jacob fathered 11 sons in Haran; Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Joseph, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher. Benjamin was born in Canaan to give Jacob 12 sons; they became the tribes of Israel. Two of these sons were destined by God to become great leaders. Which ones and in what way?* Joseph would become a great leader in Egypt to save the then known world from a severe famine. We shall consider his story next. But Judah would also become a great leader. He would lead his brothers to Egypt, but his descendants would end up being the kingly line, from whom Jesus came (Rev 5:5).

A. Joseph - the favourite son

What do we learn of Joseph in Gen 37:1-4? What resulted?

Joseph was the favoured son. This caused Joseph's brothers to hate him. Favouritism is very dangerous.

Joseph had some dreams. What was God showing him? How did his brothers respond? (Gen 37:5-11)

God was showing Joseph how he would become a great leader. This caused his brothers to be jealous of him.

What did jealousy in the heart of Joseph's brothers lead to? (Gen 37:18-28)

Jealousy almost led to Joseph's death, but by God's rule, he preserved Joseph through Judah convincing his brothers to sell him as a slave. Let's be careful of jealousy. It leads to great sin (Jam 3:14-16).

B. Joseph - slave in Egypt

In Egypt, who bought Joseph as a slave? (Gen 39:1)

Potiphar, Pharaoh's captain of the bodyguard, purchased Joseph. Of all the people of Egypt who could have purchased him, God arranged for someone close to Pharaoh to have him. Behold God's sovereignty!

Though a slave, how did Joseph serve his new master? (Gen 39:2-6)

Joseph served Potiphar as a slave with all his heart. He didn't complain after all that had happened to him. He trusted the Lord and served Him without complaint. We are called to do the same (Col 3:22-24).

Although Potiphar made him head over his house, what happened? (Gen 39:7-20)

Potiphar's wife enticed Joseph to have sex, but he chose to conduct himself in a holy manner; he sought to please God (Gen 39:9, 12). Yet, despite being holy, he ended up being falsely accused and put in prison.

What two things can we learn from Joseph in order to resist temptation?

When facing temptation we are to consider how wrong it is to sin against God, and we are to run away from evil – rather than linger and be drawn into sin. We are not to give sin an opportunity.

Though things went from bad to worse for Joseph, what could Joseph still do?

He could trust God that things would work out (Rom 8:28); including fulfilling the dreams he had earlier.

In prison, what happened? (Gen 39:21-23; 40:1-8, 20-23)

God blessed Joseph, and the chief jailer put everything in his care. During this time, with God's help, he gave the right interpretation to dreams that Pharaoh's cupbearer and baker had received.

How did interpreting the cupbearer's dream lead to Joseph coming before Pharaoh? (Gen 41:9-13)

Two years later when Pharaoh had a dream, and no one could interpret it, the cupbearer remembered Joseph and told Pharaoh about how this Hebrew man can interpret dreams. Here again we see God's sovereignty.

After being summoned, what attitude did Joseph have before Pharaoh? (Gen 41:14-16)

He was humble and acknowledged that God is the only One who can interpret dreams. Are we humble?

What was Pharaoh's dream about? (Gen 41:25-32)

Though Pharaoh didn't know God, in His sovereignty He gave this dream to Pharaoh to warn him of how there would be seven years of plenty, followed by seven years of a very severe famine.

C. Joseph – prince of Egypt

Why did God arrange for Joseph to interpret the dream he had given to Pharaoh? (Gen 41:38-41)

God did this, so that in His sovereignty, He might exalt Joseph to be second in command of Egypt. Who would ever have believed this? Joseph, who was a slave and in prison, became a great leader in Egypt.

What do we learn about God in all this?

God is in control. His purposes will be accomplished (cf. Dan 4:34-35). He even uses circumstances to accomplish His will. Joseph had dreams that he would become a great leader. Now it had been fulfilled.

What do we learn about Joseph?

He always trusted God, in spite of dire circumstances. Even just before the seven years of famine, by faith, he fathered two children (Gen 41:50-52). He believed God would see them through the famine.

Summary: God is in control. When we face difficult circumstances, we are to trust in Him.

29. Joseph and the God Who Can Bring Good out of Evil

Aim: To show that God can bring great good out of evil; and that we can trust Him to work things out.

Intro: *When people deeply hurt you, what do you struggle with the most? [Discuss]*

Read Rom 8:18 & 28. How can these two verses help us when facing hurt and hardship?

When we remember our future hope and how God will cause all things to work together for good for those who love Him, it brings a peace and a joy into our life, and our behaviour remains holy.

In this study we shall see how Joseph handled some deep hurts, and how God worked things out.

A. Joseph's dealings with his brothers

The Lord caused a famine to be in all the earth. What did this result in? (Gen 41:56-42:5)

It resulted in Jacob sending ten of his sons to Egypt to buy grain. This was all part of God's plan.

What happened when Joseph's brothers came before Joseph? What did this fulfill? (Gen 42:6)

Joseph's brothers bowed down to him, in fulfilment of the dream God had given him earlier (Gen 37:6-8).

What was Joseph's reaction to his brothers? Why might he have behaved like this? (Gen 42:7-17)

Joseph dealt harshly with them, accusing them of being spies, and even imprisoning them. Joseph may have been teaching them a lesson, and still reacting from being deeply hurt by their ill-treatment earlier.

In Gen 42:18-25 what do we learn about the brothers and Joseph?

Joseph's brothers felt remorse for what they had done, and when Joseph heard this, he wept.

When Jacob's family needed more grain, which brother outshone the others? (Gen 43:1-10)

Judah, the one who initially suggested selling Joseph as a slave (Gen 37:26-27), stood up and said they must take Benjamin back if they were to buy grain, and that he would be surety for him. Judah was willing to sacrifice himself. From Judah came Jesus, the lion of Judah (Rev 5:5), who sacrificed Himself for us.

When Joseph saw his brothers and Benjamin what happened? (Gen 43:26-31)

Joseph was deeply moved at the sight of Benjamin. He also asked about the well-being of Jacob.

What did Joseph do next? Why? (Gen 44:1-13)

He secretly had his silver cup put in Benjamin's saddle, and then he had him arrested and brought back. We can't be sure why Joseph did this, but possibly, he was still teaching his brothers a lesson.

B. God's dealings with Joseph

Which brother stood up and interceded for Benjamin? (Gen 44:14-18, 25-34)

At risk to his own life, Judah interceded before Joseph for the release of Benjamin. Again, this is a striking picture of the Lord Jesus, who has and continues to intercede for us (Heb 7:25; 1 John 2:1:2).

Why did Joseph respond as he did in Gen 45:1-4?

Joseph wept and disclosed his true identity to his brothers because he was so moved by Judah. No longer did he treat them harshly after this. Judah's willingness to sacrifice himself caused Joseph to forgive his brothers fully and to be gracious to them (cf. God's kindness to us causes us to repent – Rom 2:4).

How did Joseph view what had happened to him? (Gen 45:5-8)

Joseph knew that God had used his brothers' evil actions to bring about good and a mighty deliverance.

When the brothers returned to Jacob with good news, how did he receive it? (Gen 45:24-28)

Jacob could not believe that Joseph was alive, but then when he finally believed, his spirit was revived.

Through all this, what happened to Jacob's family? (Gen 46:1-7)

At God's command and Joseph's request, Jacob and his family left Canaan and came to Egypt. God had said to Abraham that his descendants would live in a foreign land (Gen 15:13). God now fulfilled it.

After Jacob died, what were his brothers' concerns? What was his response? (Gen 50:15-21)

Joseph's brothers were concerned that Joseph had the power to pay them back for the evil they had done to him. But Joseph reassured them that he would not harm them but love and provide for them. Joseph knew that though they did evil, God had allowed it to happen to bring about great good.

Joseph requested that his bones be carried by the Israelites to Canaan. Why? (Gen 50:24-25)

He believed that God would take care of them in Egypt and bring them to Canaan at the appointed time.

Does Joseph remind you of anyone?

Joseph reminds us of the Lord Jesus. Like Joseph, Jesus trusted God His Father completely, throughout all His suffering and anguish. He knew that it was God's will, and that God would bring great good out of evil (Acts 2:22-24). Also, just as people had to come to Joseph to buy bread to not perish, Jesus is the bread of life (John 6:35), and we must come to Him and receive Him, if we are to not perish eternally.

Summary: Under His sovereign will, God can bring good out of evil; we are called to trust Him.

30. Israel's Enslavement and God's Compassion

Aim: To show that God is compassionate and caring, and sought to rescue His people from slavery.

Intro: *In this study we begin to look at the 2nd book of the Bible. What's the big story of Exodus?*

Exodus means "going out." It's about Israel's "going out" from slavery in Egypt to being free people in the Promised Land by God's power and compassion; as well as about God establishing His covenant with them.

What should be the most important thing that we see as we study the book of Exodus?

It should be God's glorious character. God's awesome character is revealed in His actions toward Israel. He is all-knowing, all-powerful, holy, faithful and compassionate; and He's the same today (Heb 13:8).

A. Israel's Enslavement

After Joseph died, how did Israel fare in the land of Egypt? (Exod 1:6-11)

The Israelites were initially well-received by the Egyptians and multiplied greatly. But after Joseph died, and after a new king arose in Egypt, things changed. Israel was afflicted with hard labour.

Read Exod 1:12-14. What was life like for the Israelites as they continued in Egypt?

Life became tougher and more bitter. The Israelites were enslaved – oppressed and afflicted cruelly.

When we consider Israel's state in Egypt, what picture comes to mind when we think of our state in this world when we are outside of Christ? (Rom 6:16-17; Eph 2:1-3)

It reminds us of how life is tough and bitter when we're not followers of Christ, for we are slaves of sin and are under the rule of Satan himself.

Read Exod 1:15-22. What happened next? What does this remind us of in regard to Jesus?

The king commanded all male Israelite babies to be killed. It reminds us of, after Jesus was born, how Herod (under Satan) sought to kill the Deliverer by killing male babies born in Bethlehem (Matt 2:13-16).

B. God's Deliverer

Although Pharaoh was seeking to destroy Israel, what did God do? (Exod 2:1-2)

God caused a male Israelite child to be born, Moses, who God would use to deliver Israel from Egypt. God also caused Moses' parents not to follow Pharaoh's decree, but by faith, they hid him (Heb 11:23).

When the child could no longer be hidden, what did God do to preserve him? (Exod 2:3-6)

Although the child was put in a basket on the Nile River, a river where crocodiles live, God protected the child from harm and caused Pharaoh's daughter to discover him, to have mercy on him, and preserve him.

How was God good to Moses' mother? (Exod 2:7-10)

Moses' mother was given the task of nursing Moses for Pharaoh's daughter until he was weaned.

Why do you think God chose to have Moses grow up in Pharaoh's courts?

God knew that Moses would be safer in Pharaoh's house, and that he would learn many things, including how to read and write (Acts 7:22). This was needed for God to accomplish His plans through Moses.

When Moses had grown up, what did he try and do, and what did this lead to? (Exod 2:11-15)

He tried to rescue his people in his own strength, by killing an Egyptian overseer. But this led to Moses fleeing Egypt. What a mess! But God would still use Moses, but in His time and in His way.

What can we learn for ourselves from Moses' story?

May we learn not to run ahead of God and try to do His will our way. May we live out Pro 3:5-6.

In Midian, where Moses fled to, what happened? (Exod 2:16-22; 3:1)

He lived with Reuel (Jethro), married his daughter Zipporah, and shepherded his father-in-law's sheep.

While here (about 40 years) what was God doing?

God was preparing Moses to be a shepherd and leader of His people Israel, by teaching him lessons from shepherding sheep. God knew what He was doing. He hadn't given up on Moses, but was preparing him.

God works on us and prepares us too, so that we may be used by God in His kingdom. [Discuss]

What is God's master plan for us, according to Rom 8:28-29? Why is that?

God wants to change us into the image of Christ, so that we might glorify Him and be most useful to Him.

C. God's Compassion and Faithfulness

What do we learn about God in Exod 2:23-25?

God heard the cry of His people and had compassion on them. He was also faithful, remembering His covenant with the patriarchs, to bring them into the Promised Land; that's why He was preparing Moses.

Note: God has had compassion on us, we who were slaves of sin and Satan. In faithfulness to His promises, He sent the Deliverer, His Son, to rescue us, when the time was right (Gal 4:4).

Summary: God is compassionate and caring, and will faithfully care for us, if we would trust in Him.

31. God's Call and Moses' Excuses

Aim: To show how God calls people to serve Him, even when they think they would be of no use.

Recap: *Why was Moses shepherding sheep in the wilderness? (Exod 3:1)*

Moses hadn't chosen to shepherd sheep in the wilderness. He had fled there for Pharaoh wanted to kill him, after he had killed an Egyptian (Exod 2:15). Moses' way of helping his people failed badly.

Forty years went by with Moses being in the wilderness. But what was God doing?

God was preparing him to shepherd His people Israel and to use him to deliver them from Egypt and to bring them through the desert. His training as a shepherd in the wilderness was vital – it was God's plan.

A. God's call of Moses

How did God get Moses' attention? What caused this strange phenomenon? (Exod 3:2-3)

The Lord caused a bush to be on fire; but the extraordinary thing was that the bush did not burn up. This is because it was no ordinary fire; the fire was from the glorious presence of the angel of the Lord.

What happened when Moses approached the burning bush? (Exod 3:4-6)

God called to Moses from the midst of the fire and revealed Himself as the God of his forefathers.

Why did God tell Moses to remove his sandals from his feet?

God said this because Moses was in His holy presence, and sandals are made from the skins of dead animals. Also, to be barefoot was a sign of humility and submission; eg, slaves went barefoot.

What message did the Lord have for Moses? (Exod 3:7-10)

The Lord revealed His concern for the Israelites. God also revealed His choice of Moses to lead His people out. It must have been a shock to Moses; since he had killed an Egyptian and had fled Egypt.

What was Moses' reaction to this privileged task, and God's response to that? (Exod 3:11-12)

Moses gave a humble response; so it seems. But as we'll see, he really didn't want the job. But God encouraged him, telling Moses that He would be with him (cf. Heb 13:5-6 and the same promise we have).

Moses wanted to know God's name. What did God say to Him? (Exod 3:13-15)

God gave His name to Moses as "I AM" (Yahweh). God has many names to describe His being, but this name captures that God is ever present, and the only self-existent being in the universe. Note: God's great name for us in Christ is Father. It captures the relationship we have with God through Jesus (John 20:17).

What did God tell Moses in Exod 3:16-22?

God told Moses to go and gather the Israelite elders together, and to tell them that He would deliver them from Egypt and bring them to the Promised Land. Moses is even told that the people will listen to him, but Pharaoh won't, and that Pharaoh will only let Israel go after God performed powerful miracles.

B. Moses' Excuses and Eventual Obedience

What was Moses' response to the Lord's command and the information he was given? (Exod 4:1)

Moses wasn't convinced that the Israelites would listen to him, even though God said they would. He was probably conscious of his past efforts in helping the Israelites, when he killed an Egyptian and fled. How could the Israelites accept him? We too may have misgivings about ourselves from our past failings.

How did God deal with Moses after he questioned Him? (Exod 4:2-9)

God dealt lovingly and patiently with Moses. He gave him the power to perform three signs by which to persuade the Israelites to listen to him, and for Pharaoh to heed God's command to let His people go.

After all this, what do we see Moses trying to do? (Exod 4:10-13)

Moses tried to get out of the job, blaming a speech impediment, and asking for someone else to do it.

Exod 4:11 is a challenging verse. What should we deduce from this? (cf. also John 9:1-3)

God sovereignly chooses our strengths and weaknesses, our perfections and deformities, when He knits us together in our mother's womb (Psa 139:13-14). Jesus declared that it's all for God's glory.

What was God's response to Moses' excuses? (Exod 4:14-17)

God became angry with Moses' continued excuses. But God didn't give up on His plan to send Moses. Moses' older brother, Aaron, would assist him. God ended up compelling Moses to go.

We can be like Moses when God calls us to do something. What excuses may we give? [Discuss]

Finally, what did Moses do? (Exod 4:18-20)

After much grace & patience by God, and assuring him that he had nothing to fear, Moses left for Egypt.

What did the Israelites do after hearing the Lord's Word through Moses & Aaron? (Exod 4:27-31)

The Israelites believed and they worshipped the great "I AM", who cared for them and would deliver them.

Summary: When the great "I AM" calls us to a task, may we obey Him and not give excuses (Isa 6:8).

32. God's Amazing Plan and His Awesome Power

Aim: To show God's sovereign and awesome power in delivering His people; there's no one like the Lord.

Intro: *How do most people view the plagues that struck Egypt during the time of Moses?*

Many believe that it either didn't happen (it's just legend), or that it was just a series of natural disasters (the Egyptians were just unlucky). But the Bible affirms that it was due to God's awesome power.

A. God's Amazing Plan

When Moses and Aaron came to Pharaoh with God's Word, what was his response? (Exod 5:1-2)
Pharaoh refused to obey the Lord. He did not recognise or know the Lord. Indeed, the Egyptians didn't know or worship the true God, but the things of creation; like many today (cf. Rom 1:20-23).

What was Pharaoh's response to Moses and Aaron's request? (Exod 5:3-9)
He increased the workload of the Israelites, such that their suffering grew worse.

The Israelites became discouraged and judgmental of Moses. How did he respond? (Exod 5:20-23)
Moses went to the Lord and laid His concerns and frustrations before Him; as we should (cf. 1 Pet 5:6-7).

How did God respond to Moses' concerns and frustrations? (Exod 6:1-8)
God promised to deliver the Israelites from their bondage with a mighty arm and with great judgments. They would witness the Lord's greatness and power, which they previously had only heard about.

What was the people's response, and what was Moses' response to God's command? (Exod 6:9-13)
The people would not listen or believe that God would deliver them, and Moses didn't want to obey God's command to go to Pharaoh. He believed Pharaoh wouldn't listen to him; just like the people didn't.

The Deliverance by God of His people seemed to have stalled, but what do we read in Exod 7:1-6?
God explained to Moses and Aaron about how Pharaoh indeed wouldn't listen to them, but that He would use this to multiply His signs and wonders, so that Israel and Egypt would know the power of the Lord – this was then enough for Moses and Aaron to go to Pharaoh. They believed God's plan and power.

Exod 7:3 says that God would harden Pharaoh's heart. What are we to make of this?
We may be shocked at God hardening Pharaoh's heart, but let us remember that Pharaoh refused to acknowledge God and he hardened his own heart first (Exod 5:2; Exod 8:32; 1 Sam 6:6).

How old was Moses at this time (Exod 7:7)? What can we learn from this?
Moses was eighty years old. That means God had spent 80 years training Moses for this task of leading His people out of Egypt and through the wilderness– 40 years in Egypt and 40 years in the wilderness.

B. God's Awesome Power

What were the nine plagues that God sent by His almighty power?

1. Exod 7:19-21 The Lord turned the water into blood.
2. Exod 8:5-6 The Lord sent a plague of frogs.
3. Exod 8:16-17 The Lord sent a plague of gnats (lice).

Note: The Egyptian magicians couldn't perform this, nor the remaining plagues (Exod 8:18).

4. Exod 8:20-24 The Lord sent a swarm of insects.

Note: For the remaining plagues, God made a distinction between the Egyptians and the Israelites.

5. Exod 9:1-3, 6-7 The Lord sent a pestilence on the Egyptians livestock.
6. Exod 9:8-10 The Lord sent boils on the Egyptians, including the magicians.
7. Exod 9:22-26 The Lord sent a huge hail storm, as never seen before.
8. Exod 10:12-15 The Lord sent a plague of locusts to destroy the land.
9. Exod 10:21-23 The Lord sent a thick darkness over the Egyptians for three days.

What do we learn about God from these plagues?

God is all powerful; He is to be feared. All other gods are but idols (Psalm 96:4-5). God is in absolute control and no one can hold Him back from accomplishing His plans and purposes (Dan 4:34-35).

What do we learn through the Israelites?

Because of God's choice of Israel and His faithfulness, and their faith in Him, He protected them. God also protects us when we trust in His Son. God makes a distinction between believers and unbelievers.

What do we learn from Pharaoh's response to God?

We learn that Pharaoh was very foolish in trying to resist God. Today, many people are foolish in resisting God's command to repent of their sins and trust in His Son for salvation. One day, they will experience God's judgment. Far worse than any plague, they will experience eternal punishment in hell.

Summary: The Lord God is awesome in power, but for those who trust in Him, He protects them.

33. The Passover Lamb

Aim: To show that God provides a way of escape for those who trust Him.

Intro: *What are the attitudes of unbelievers when it comes to the Day of Judgment? (2 Pet 3:3-7)*

Many either mock this day, or don't believe in such a thing, or have the attitude "I'll take my chances".

What do most unbelievers fail to realise or understand? (Heb 9:27; Rev 21:11-15)

No matter what we believe, we will be judged; and we will be condemned for our sins. But incredibly, God has provided a way of escape; we won't be judged if we turn to Jesus and trust in Him.

In this study, we shall consider God's final judgment on Egypt. But in the midst of His judgment, God provided a way of escape for any person who would listen to Him and obey Him. Would Israel?

A. The Lord's last judgment on the Egyptians

After God had sent the nine plagues, what was Pharaoh's final response? (Exod 10:21-29)

Pharaoh refused to obey the Lord and let the Israelites go. His heart was hard, and he even despised Moses.

God knew one more plague would cause Pharaoh to release Israel. What was it? (Exod 11:1, 4-8)

God would strike down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt. This final plague would even strike at Pharaoh personally; taking the life of His firstborn son – the heir to the throne.

Would the Israelites be spared this plague on the firstborn? (Exod 12:21-23)

They would also be struck by this final plague, unless they obeyed the Lord. For in His grace and mercy, God provided a way of escape. If they didn't obey, then they would suffer the same fate as the Egyptians.

What were the 5 things the Israelites had to do if they wanted to be spared from this last plague?

1. Exod 12:1-5 Each home had to choose an unblemished (perfect) lamb on the 10th day of the first month.
2. Exod 12:6 The lamb had to be killed on the 14th day of the first month – it was to be sacrificed.
3. Exod 12:7 The lamb's blood had to be applied to the doorposts and lintel of the door of their homes.
4. Exod 12:8-11 They had to roast the lamb and eat it in their homes; staying in their homes until morning.
5. Exod 12:46 They were not to break any of the lamb's bones.

God's instructions were very specific. What can we learn from this?

God did not leave it up to people to save themselves their own way. He gave specific instructions – just as He did with Noah so that he and his family and the creatures with him might be saved from the flood.

What did God promise the Israelites, if they obeyed Him? (Exod 12:12-13)

God promised when He saw the blood on the door of their homes, He would pass over and spare them.

What did the Israelites do? (Exod 12:28)

They could have said, "I'll take my chances", or "God is a God of love and surely He wouldn't kill my son". But instead of relying on human reasoning, they trusted God and did what the Lord had said.

What happened to the Egyptians? (Exodus 12:29-30)

Every firstborn Egyptian child died and the firstborn of all the Egyptians' livestock died. God was true to His word of judgment. He always does what He says. He doesn't merely threaten.

What was Pharaoh's response this time? (Exodus 12:31-36)

Pharaoh called Moses that very night and told him to take the Israelites out of Egypt; just as God said would happen (Exod 11:1). Not only did they leave in haste, but they plundered the Egyptians.

This deliverance by God was not to be forgotten. What did God stipulate? (Exod 12:24-27)

Once a year the Israelites were to eat the Passover meal, re-enacting the night they were delivered by God from judgment by sacrificing a perfect lamb and putting its blood on the door of their homes. They were also to teach their children how the Lord spared them, and brought them out of the land of Egypt.

B. The Passover Lamb and the Lamb of God

What did Jesus celebrate before His death (Matt 26:17-18)? What's He called in 1 Cor 5:7? Why?

Jesus celebrated the Passover with His disciples – which means Jesus died at Passover (in Jewish time a day is from evening to evening). He is also called the Passover. This is because the original Passover lamb is a powerful picture of Jesus. Like the unblemished Passover lamb, Jesus is our unblemished (sinless) Passover lamb, whose blood was shed, so that we might be saved from God's judgment. The similarities are striking; cf., not one of Jesus' bones was broken (John 19:36), just like for the Passover lamb.

Like the Israelites, what are we to do? (John 1:29; Col 1:19-23)

Like Israel had to apply the lamb's blood and remain in their homes, we're to apply Jesus' blood to our life (trust in Him being the Lamb of God), and remain in Christ, so that God will pass over and not judge us.

Summary: God will only save those who are covered by Jesus' blood; ie, those who trust in Jesus.

34. God Delivered Israel at the Red Sea

Aim: To show that God provides a way of escape for those who trust in Him.

Intro: *What is the common reaction in our society to the miracles recorded in the Bible?*

Many dismiss the miracles recorded in the Bible, and even so called Bible scholars try to play them down, by suggesting that they are nothing but natural phenomena that have been overly exaggerated.

What's required to believe in the miracles recorded in the Bible?

What's required is faith in an awesome God who has the power to create the world from nothing (Heb 11:3), and faith in an incredible God who intervenes at times in our history for our sake.

In this study we shall consider the parting of the Red Sea. What should this story remind us of?

It should remind us of God's awesome power and mercy to deliver us from sin through the cross of Christ.

A. God led the Israelites

After escaping from Egypt, who led the people of Israel on their journey? (Exod 13:17-18)

God was the one who led His people (not Moses). He led them the very best way. It wasn't the shortest way to Canaan, but where His people would be kept safe and also learn to trust in God. God knows best!

Read Gen 50:24-25 and Exod 13:19. What did taking Joseph's bones signify?

It signified that God hadn't forgotten them, but had cared for them all along; and now was rescuing them.

How did the Lord manifest His presence amongst His people? (Exod 13:21-22)

A cloud, representing God's presence, accompanied the people throughout their journey through the desert. It was no ordinary cloud. It was a "pillar of cloud" by day, to protect Israel from the fierce sun, and a "pillar of fire" by night, to provide warmth and light in the cold and dark desert.

God caused the Israelites to wander around near the Red Sea. Why? (Exod 14:1-9)

God's plan was to make Pharaoh think that the Israelites didn't know what they were doing, so that he would pursue them. This, indeed, is what happened. The huge Egyptian army pursued them.

How did the Israelites react when they saw the Egyptian army pursuing them? (Exod 14:10-12)

They became very frightened and cried out to the Lord. They even blamed Moses for bringing them out into the wilderness to die by the sword of the Egyptians. Are we like this when things don't go to plan?

How did Moses respond in this crisis? (Exod 14:13-14)

He seemed to be the only one who had faith in God. He sought to calm the people's fear and to help them trust in God's deliverance. Note: Though the Israelites didn't trust in the Lord, God would still mercifully deliver them. It was God's plan to preserve Israel so that through them, the Lord Jesus, might come.

How bad was Israel's situation? (Exod 14:1)

They had the Red Sea in front of them, mountains on either side of them, and the Egyptian army poised to destroy them. They were trapped. They weren't able to deliver themselves and had no way of escaping.

Israel's predicament is a picture of our state before God. In what way? (Rom 5:6; Eph 2:1-3)

We all face God's judgment for sin. There's no escaping it, and we have no way of delivering ourselves.

B. God delivered the Israelites

What were God's instructions to Moses in Exod 14:15-18?

By faith, they were to head toward the Red Sea, and then God would open up a way for them to walk through the sea – and incredibly, on dry ground. Moses had to trust God and take a giant step of faith.

What did God do to protect His people from the ever-nearing Egyptian army? (Exod 14:19-20)

God protected them by His mighty power. No matter what Egypt did, they weren't able to come upon them and harm them. The cloud caused the Egyptians to be in darkness, whereas the Israelites had light.

What did God do to deliver His people from the Egyptians? (Exod 14:21-22)

In an awesome demonstration of His power, God caused the Red Sea to open and He formed a dry path for Israel to cross. With a wall of water on each side, the Israelites crossed the Red Sea (Exod 14:29).

As Israel crossed over, what did the Egyptians do? (Exod 14:23-28)

The Egyptians pursued Israel into the sea, but the Lord caused the army to be in confusion, and then, once every Israelite was safe on the other side, God caused the sea to return, and Egypt's army was destroyed.

What does this story teach us?

God is all-powerful. Those who trust Him will be rescued, but those who oppose Him will be destroyed.

What incredible picture do we have here for all those who trust in Jesus? (Tit 3:4-7)

Though we were helplessly lost, God has provided an escape from judgment through faith in His Son.

Summary: We can fully trust God to save us and to help us even when our circumstances are hard.

35. God's Gracious Provision For His Grumbling People

Aim: To show that God is gracious with us and meets our every need. We are to trust Him; not complain.

Intro: *Imagine being an Israelite and seeing the Red Sea open up before you, and seeing the Egyptian army swallowed up as the Red Sea returned to its original place. If you were there, how would that impact your life? [Discuss] We have also beheld more awesome things than a Red Sea Crossing. We have come to understand that God's Son came to save us? What impact should this have on us? [Discuss]*

In this study, we shall see Israel's surprise response to God after He miraculously rescued them.

A. Israel complains

Three days after crossing the Red Sea, what happened? (Exod 15:22-24)

The people went from a state of praise after the Red Sea crossing to a state of grumbling, because they lacked water. They grumbled against Moses, but they were really grumbling against the Lord (Exod 16:8).

Why did the Israelites have this response?

Even though the Lord had wonderfully rescued Israel through the Red Sea, they had not learned to trust God. When God tested them with a lack of water (Exod 15:25), they failed to trust Him.

One person did trust God during this first test. Who was that and what did he do? (Exod 15:25)

Moses trusted in the Lord. When the people grumbled, he cried out to the Lord for help. Do we?

After God provided water for Israel, what gracious promise did He give them? (Exod 15:26)

God promised to spare them from diseases, if they would trust Him and follow Him. What a promise!

Did Israel learn its lesson on grumbling? What do we read next in Exod 16:1-2?

A month and a half later, they grumbled again. This time it was over a lack of food. Instead of trusting the Lord, they complained to Moses and Aaron. How many of us complain first, rather than pray?

How did the Israelites insult God with their comments? (Exod 16:3)

After God had rescued Israel from Egypt, they still longed for Egypt, where they had plenty to eat. Do we hunger for the things of the world because our souls are not satisfied in the Lord (cf. John 7:37)?

What was God's response to their grumbling and complaining? (Exod 16:4,8-15)

God was aware of their grumbling, but in His grace He promised to provide bread from heaven (manna) in the morning, and meat (quail) in the evening. Think of how many God would have to provide for.

God gave special instructions for the manna. What did the Israelites do? (Exod 16:16-30)

Though they were graciously given manna from heaven, some of the Israelites disobeyed the Lord by going directly against His commands. They tested God's patience, and showed contempt for His grace.

The manna was no natural phenomenon. What was so miraculous about it? (Exod 16:31-35)

There was no manna on the Sabbath, but twice as much the day before; it didn't go off when left overnight for the Sabbath, but it did go off if left overnight for any other day; the manna lasted 40 years, and ceased when the people entered the promised land. This was truly God's miraculous provision.

What spiritual lessons can we learn from the manna?

1. Just as the people gathered manna daily (except for the Sabbath), we are to daily rely on the Lord and nourish our soul upon His Word. We cannot rely upon yesterday's spiritual food.
2. Just as God provided manna for the people, otherwise they would have perished, God has given us Jesus, the Bread of Life, (John 6:32-35) to save our soul from perishing.

B. Israel murmurs again

After God provided them with water and food, what did the Israelites do again? (Exod 17:1-4)

They soon forgot about God's great power and provisions, and they began to complain about no water.

What did Moses do again, as the people threatened to stone him? (Exod 17:4)

He cried out to the Lord to intervene. It seems only Moses trusted in the Lord.

What would God do this time to meet the needs of His people? Why? (Exod 17:5-7; Psalm 105:41)

God instructed Moses to strike the rock with his staff, and provide that way miraculously. God did it this way to make it clear that He was amongst His people (consider what the Israelites said in Exod 17:7).

The water coming out of the rock is a spiritual picture of who? (1 Cor 10:4; John 4:13-14)

It's a picture of the Lord Jesus – He is our Rock, the rock of refuge, and from whom we receive the water of life, by which we have spiritual and abundant and eternal life (John 3:16; 10:10).

Summary: Just as God provided for Israel, so in Jesus God has provided for us in a greater way (John 6:35). But let us not to test the Lord by being unthankful. Let us look to Him and trust Him.

36. The Ten Commandments – Part One

Aim: To show that God is absolutely holy, and that no sin can ever enter His presence.

Intro: *How do you view the Ten Commandments? Should we apply them to our lives today? [Discuss]*

The Ten Commandments were given by God to the Israelites when they were at Mt Sinai. Christians know that they are very important, but vary in their opinion in regard to what applies to us in Christ; eg, Seventh Day Adventists observe the Sabbath (4th Command) as a requirement for salvation.

In the next studies we are going to consider the Ten Commandments, and also how they relate to us.

A. God brings Israel to Mount Sinai

What was the mountain that God spoke to Moses and the people from? (Exod 3:1; 19:1-2)

It was Mt Sinai (also called Mt Horeb); the place where Moses saw the burning bush (Exod 3:1).

In Exod 3:12 what did God promise Moses as a sign? What can we learn from this?

In Exod 3:12, well before Moses had gone to Egypt to bring Israel out, God promised Moses that Israel would come out of Egypt to Mt Sinai, where they would worship Him. It all came to pass, just as God said. What a powerful sign this was to Moses that God is absolutely real and faithful and trustworthy.

Read Exod 19:3-4. In speaking to Moses, what did God firstly remind Moses about?

God reminded Moses of how He was the One who used His awesome power to deliver Israel from Egypt. He also was the One who bore Israel on "eagles' wings"; that is, God lifted them up and carried them.

God planned to make an agreement (covenant) with Israel. What was it? (Exod 19:5-6)

God would make Israel His people (of all the people groups of the world), as well as make them a kingdom of priests and a holy nation, if they would keep the covenant He was about to make with them.

If you were an Israelite, how should you have felt about this agreement (covenant)?

It should have been received with great joy and thankfulness. How special it would be for the living God to be the God of Israel, who would bless and protect them, and for them to be God's representatives on earth (ie, priests for God). Note: For us in Christ, we are called to be the same (1 Peter 2:9).

What was Israel's response to God (Exod 19:7-8)? But what happened over time (Jer 32:33-35)?

Israel gave a good response in promising to keep the covenant. But it didn't take long before they dishonoured the covenant and turned their back to the Lord, because of their fallen and sinful natures. Cf. How often have we promised God to fully obey Him, but then fail Him? (cf. Jer 17:9; Rom 7:14-19).

Why did God make an agreement with Israel when He knew they weren't capable of keeping it?

The Lord did it firstly because He loved them, but He also did it to help them see that they were unable to obey in their own strength; we need forgiveness and we need God's help to obey Him (all realised in the covenant God would later make with us through Christ). Cf. Rom 7:7; Gal 3:24

B. God's presence at Mt Sinai

What would God do when giving the covenant (the Law) to Israel? (Exod 19:9-12, 16-20)

God would come down on the mountain and speak to Israel in His great power, glory and holiness.

What effect was this to have on Israel? (Deut 5:22-29)

This was to cause Israel to fear the Lord and obey Him. God calls us to do the same (Heb 12:28-29).

Besides Moses & Aaron, why did God forbid people approaching the mountain? (Exod 19:21-25)

God's presence would come upon the mountain, and because God is holy and humans are not, God had to warn the people, and even get Moses to put barriers up – otherwise people would be consumed by His holiness, if they approached. Cf. Now in Christ, we can approach God (Heb 10:19-22). *Why?*

How did God communicate the Ten Commandments to His people? (Exod 20:1; Deut 4:10-13)

In a very rare and most amazing way, God spoke the Ten Commandments from Mt Sinai to all Israel. He also wrote the commandments on stone, with His finger, and gave the stone tablets to Moses.

What can we learn from this?

The Ten Commandments are extremely important, as seen in the fact that God Himself delivered them; not some angel. The Ten Commandments reflect God's character and His standard for righteousness.

Just before God gave the Ten Commandments, what did He remind Israel of (Exod 20:2)? Why?

God reminded Israel of His goodness in redeeming them from Egypt. God had faithfully fulfilled His part of the covenant. This truth was highlighted so that Israel might respond to their part of the covenant (keeping the Commandments) out of love for God. It's the same for us in Christ (1 John 4:9-10; 5:1-3).

Summary: **God is holy; He is to be feared. God desires to communicate with us, but do we listen?**

37. The Ten Commandments – Part Two

Aim: To show that God's righteous requirements for us as we serve Him as His people.

Intro: *What's so remarkable in the way God gave Israel the Ten Commandments? Why did He do this?*

God spoke the Ten Commandments to the people from the top of Mt Sinai, and also caused the mountain to smoke and shake by His awesome power and presence. He did this so that the people would revere Him (Exod 20:20) and keep the Commandments (which was their part of the covenant).

A. The First Two Commandments

What was the first and foremost commandment? (Exod 20:3)

God and God only is to be our God. We are not to allow anyone or anything else to have first-place.

How did Jesus explain this first commandment? (Matt 22:37)

To have Him as first-place in our life, means to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul and mind.

In the second commandment, what two things were God's people never to do? (Exod 20:4-6)

They were never to make any object to represent God, nor worship any image or object in place of God.

Why was this second commandment particularly relevant to Israel?

Israel had lived 400 years in Egypt, in a country where the people worshipped the creation rather than the Creator; a land of many idols and images. Israel, sadly, participated in this, and even brought with them the idols of Egypt when they crossed the Red Sea (Amos 5:25-26; Acts 7:41-43).

Why are we not to make images to represent the true God?

No one knows what God looks like. Thus, we are never to make anything to resemble Him. We are only to think of God through the visual images presented in the Bible, and made complete in Christ (John 1:18; 14:7-9). Note: We don't even know what Jesus looked like, so that we might not make an image of Him.

In this second commandment, what do we learn about God? (Exod 20:5; Deut 4:24)

God is a jealous God. He requires exclusive devotion. We commit spiritual adultery and stir up God's jealousy when we place anyone or anything else in the place of Him in our hearts and lives.

What characteristics of God are presented in the second commandment? (Exod 20:5-6)

God is just and righteous, punishing sin, but loving and gracious to those who obey Him. Even here, God presents that right image of Himself. This is what should fill our mind when we worship and serve Him.

How has man gone in obeying these first two commandments? (Rom 1:20-25)

Sadly, we have put other gods in the place of the true God. In our western society, our two main gods have been materialism and humanism (the exaltation of man to the place which belongs only to God). We have invoked God's jealousy and aroused His anger. Do we sense our guilt before a holy God?

B. The third and fourth commandments

What is the third commandment? (Exod 20:7)

We are never to use God's name in vain. This means never speaking or using His name in a careless way. This is also called blasphemy. It includes using Christ Jesus' name in vain, since He is God's Son.

What will God do to those who use His name in vain? (Lev 24:16)

God will punish those who use His name in vain (and don't repent). This is because God's name is holy.

When people use God's name in vain, besides profaning His name, what else are they doing?

They are showing disrespect to God. Disrespectful words have become socially acceptable in our society, even against our leaders. To disrespect a human being is bad (for we have been made in God's image). How much more evil it is when we show disrespect to the true and living God by using His name in vain.

What is the fourth commandment? (Exod 20:8-10)

God told the Israelites to keep the seventh day as a special holy day; a day of rest from their labours.

What is this commandment based on? (Exod 20:11)

This commandment is based on how God created the world in six days and rested on the seventh. If you like, God is telling us to do likewise. This commandment was given by God out of love and concern for us. Our Creator knew that we all need to have one day in seven to rest and recuperate (cf. Mark 2:27).

The Sabbath is a Saturday? Why do Christians rest and worship on the Sunday?

The worship and rest day for Christians became the Sunday because this was the practice of the New Testament church (Acts 20:7), and this practice was based on Christ's resurrection day (John 20:1). In Colossians 2:16-17 we are instructed about the Sabbath being a "shadow" of the rest we now have in Christ, and that we are not to judge one another in regard to the practice of the Sabbath.

Summary: The Commandments reveal God's righteous standards; but also our sin (Rom 7:7).

38. The Ten Commandments – Part Three

Aim: To show that God is concerned with the way we treat others - as revealed in the Ten Commandments.

Intro: *The Ten Commandments were given by God to His people the Israelites. Are they just for them?*

They were initially given to the Israelites (Jews), but they were then meant to let the world know about God and His standards – as encapsulated in the Ten Commandments. Note: The Ten Commandments declare God's righteous standards for us, as well as what is required to enter heaven (cf. Mark 10:17-19).

Let's now consider the remaining commandments (that focus on our behaviour with others).

A. The fifth commandment

What is the fifth commandment? (Exodus 20:12)

We are to honour (respect) our parents. As children we are to obey them and be under their authority (Eph 6:1). As adults, we are to continue to honour them by listening to their advice, and speaking well of them.

This commandment has something different to all the rest. What is it? (Eph 6:2-3)

It is the only one with a promise. God promises to prolong our days on earth.

What was the punishment for those who broke this commandment? (Lev 20:9) Why?

A son/daughter was to be put to death. This is because God takes seriously those who oppose authorities.

In the last days, what are we warned would happen? (2 Tim 3:1-2)

There would be disobedience by children toward their parents. This is what we see more and more.

B. The sixth commandment

The sixth commandment says we are not to murder. What does this mean? (Exod 20:13)

Murder is a pre-meditated act to take another person's life. No person is permitted to do this. However, this commandment does not include accidental killing (Num 35:9-12), or putting to death a person by capital punishment (Lev 24:17; Rom 13:3-4), or killing of people to defend yourself in war (Num 10:9).

How did Jesus increase our understanding of this commandment in Matt 5:21-22?

Jesus brought out how we can break this commandment in our heart, even without the physical deed being done. We commit murder in God's eyes when we are angry with someone, or when we put another down, or when we wish someone was dead. God will judge us, not just by what we do, but what we think.

C. The seventh commandment

What is forbidden in the seventh commandment? (Exod 20:14)

God condemns any sexual relations committed outside one's marriage. God does not call it an "affair", as the world does, implying that it's not that bad. He calls it adultery, and it is detestable in His sight.

How did Jesus increase our understanding of this commandment? (Matt 5:27-28)

Jesus brought out that if we look with lust at someone (other than our spouse), then we have broken this commandment. Again, Jesus brings out how we can break this commandment with our wrong thoughts.

D. The eighth commandment

What is condemned in the eighth commandment? (Exod 20:15)

In the eighth commandment, God said we are not to steal. This is taking someone else's property without their consent. It doesn't matter how small an item is (eg, a pen from work); in God's eyes it is stealing.

Can you think of other ways that this commandment can be broken?

We can steal by robbing our employer of time, or by not paying bills or taxes to governing authorities.

E. The ninth commandment

What does the ninth commandment state? (Exod 20:16)

God said that we are not to bear false witness against another person. This includes lying, distorting or exaggerating the truth, telling half-truths, telling "white" lies, making false accusations, etc.

When we lie, who are we following (John 8:44)? Who are we not following (John 14:6)?

We are following Satan, the father of lies, rather than Jesus, who is the truth, and always spoke the truth.

F. The tenth commandment

What does the final commandment say? What does it mean? (Exod 20:17)

We are not to covet anyone or anything that belongs to another.

Where does coveting come from and what does it lead to? (Jam 4:1-5)

It comes from our sinful desires for the things of this world, and it leads to envy and jealousy.

What attitude should we have, instead of coveting? (Heb 13:5; Phil 4:11-13)

We are to be content with what God has given us. Are you?

Summary: Jesus summarised these commands when He said, "Love your neighbour as yourself".

39. The Ten Commandments – Why were they given?

Aim: To consider God's purpose in giving us the Ten Commandments.

Intro: *How do most people respond when asked whether they are good or bad before God? [Discuss]*
Most believe that they are good; as a result, if there's a heaven, they believe God will let them in.

What are some of the main (false) reasons given by many for declaring themselves to be good?

- That if you do more good things than bad things, then God will view you as good.
- That if you keep the Ten Commandments, then you will be considered good by God.
- That if you practice religion and do various religious rituals, God will view you as good.

In this study, we'll consider why the Ten Commandments were given.

A. Purpose of God's Ten Commandments

According to Deut 5:28-29, 33, why did God give the Ten Commandments?

God gave them to Israel (and to us) for our well-being and prosperity; God's laws are for our good.

What else do God's Commandments give us? (Deut 6:24-25; Ezek 20:10-11)

They give us God's standard for righteousness (being right with Him), and what is required for us to have life - including eternal life. If you like, the Ten Commandments (which is a summary of God's whole law) tell us how to find acceptance with God and how to gain entry into heaven.

Read Matt 19:16-19. What do we see Jesus' doing when He met the rich young ruler?

He used the Ten Commandments to affirm whether he was truly good and right in God's sight; that's the law's purpose. Sadly, this man believed he was good, when he wasn't - he coveted (cf. Matt 19:20-22).

What important purpose, then, does God's law have in our life (even still today)? (Rom 7:7)

It reveals that we actually are not good and righteous in God's sight; indeed, it reveals our sin.

What then do the Ten Commandments reveal to us? (Romans 3:10-12, 19-20; 23)

They not only reveal our sin, but that we have failed to keep God's standard of righteousness. Therefore, no one is right or good in His sight. We have all fallen short of God's standard for righteousness.

In James 1:22-25, what else do we learn about the purpose of God's commandments (His Law)?

The commands of God are like a mirror. Just as we cannot see our dirty faces until we look into a mirror, so we cannot see our sinful hearts until we see ourselves in the light of God's law.

In Jam 2:10-11 what else do we learn about keeping God's law?

Even if we keep the majority of God's law, but break just one commandment, it's like we have broken all of it (just like one break in a work of art makes it no longer good, one sin makes us no longer good).

Why is it difficult for people to accept that breaking just one law makes us not good in God's eyes?

Often, it's because we have been used to passing exams that require 50% or more to pass. But when it comes to God's test, the pass mark is 100%. To be worthy of eternal life, we must obey God's Law 100%. If we break just one law, only once in our life, we are no longer righteous, and we will not enter heaven. Cf. It only takes one hole to sink a ship, and it only takes one sin to sink us before the Holy God.

B. Christ and God's Ten Commandments

Why are we not able to keep the Ten Commandments? (Rom 7:14-23)

We all have a sinful nature; all because of what happened in the garden of Eden. When Adam and Eve chose to sin and eat the forbidden fruit, not only did they rebel against God, but they caused the whole human race to inherit a sinful nature. We are all born sinners, and as a result, we sin and break God's law.

What did Jesus press home in His Sermon on the Mount in Matt 5:21-22; 27-28?

Jesus spoke of how we break God's commandments, not just through outward acts, but when we think wrongly; eg, being angry is equal with murder, lusting is equal with adultery. To be righteous, we are to obey inwardly; not just outwardly. How many of us can still say we have kept the Ten Commandments?

What is the punishment for breaking God's Law? (Rom 6:23)

The punishment for sin is death; everlasting separation from God in the Lake of Fire, which God prepared for Satan and the angels (Matt 25:41). This is the punishment even if we should break just one command.

What does a right understanding of God's law bring about according to Gal 3:24?

It convicts us of our sins, and helps us to realise our need for Jesus to save us from sin's consequences.

After we have come to Christ, what then is the purpose of God's commandments? (1 John 5:1-3)

It is to help us know how to love God by living a righteous life pleasing to Him (but not for salvation).

Summary: Many consider the Ten Commandments as a set of rules for good living. They were given to reveal our sin (Rom 7:7), our need for Christ to save us (Gal 3:24), and to know how to be righteous.

40. The Tabernacle – Part One

Aim: To explain the purpose and structure of the Tabernacle, and how it is a picture of Christ.

Intro: *After the Ten Commandments, God commanded Moses to build a special tent called the Tabernacle. What does the Hebrew word for Tabernacle mean?*

It means tent, dwelling place, or home. It indicates God's desire to dwell (to be at home) with us.

Ultimately, who does the Tabernacle point to?

It points to Christ – through His sacrifice and through Him being our great High priest, we can be cleansed of our sins and be in right relationship with God and approach Him (cf. Heb 10:19-22).

In these next few studies we shall study the Tabernacle and see how it points to Christ.

A. Significant Events before the Tabernacle

Before God gave instructions to Moses about the Tabernacle, what happened? (Exod 24:3-8)

God's laws were written down to form the Book of the Covenant (the Ten Commandments were written in stone – Exod 24:12), and the people promised to keep God's covenant. The covenant was then sealed by having blood sprinkled on the people – cf. Christ's blood brings us into covenant (cf. Luke 22:20).

What outstanding event occurred in Exod 24:1-2, 9-11?

Moses and those with him (including the seventy elders of Israel), saw the living God from a distance. They beheld His glory and the pavement of sapphire, and they were not struck down. God permitted it!

What was the purpose of this experience? How does it tie into the Tabernacle?

This special experience shows us God's great desire for us to approach Him and behold Him – even though He is holy and we are sinners. The Tabernacle would be the means for this to happen.

B. God's Command to Build the Tabernacle

Read Exod 25:8. What was the chief purpose of the Tabernacle? (cf. also Exod 29:44-46)

The Tabernacle was built so that God could dwell with His people; His glory would dwell in the Tabernacle's Holy of Holies. The Tabernacle also served to help people understand God's holiness, and their sinfulness, and how they could approach God through sacrifice and the service of priests.

Who would provide for the Tabernacle? (Exod 25:1-7)? What picture do we have here?

God's people would have to provide the materials for the building of the Tabernacle. It would cost them to have God dwell with them. Note: It also costs for us to have God dwell with us; but the cost was borne by Jesus and not us. It cost Him everything so that God may dwell with us by His Spirit.

What instructions did God give Moses in regard to the Tabernacle? (Exod 25:9; Heb 8:4-5)

The Tabernacle had to be built exactly as God told Moses; indeed, it was a copy of Heaven's one. Only then, would God dwell in it, and would the people be able to approach Him. Note: We are not to tell God how we will come to Him (as many religions do). It must be He who tells us how we can come to Him.

C. The Ark and the Mercy Seat of the Tabernacle

What was the very first thing that Moses was told to construct? (Exod 25:10-15)

He was to construct a special box, covered in gold – known as the **Ark of the Covenant**.

What did God instruct Moses to place in this box? (Exod 25:16)

He had to place in the box the testimony (the two stone tablets that had the Ten Commandments). Also, in time, the ark contained a golden jar holding the manna, and Aaron's rod which budded (Heb 9:4).

What was the special thing that was to be constructed and placed on the ark? (Exod 25:17-21)

A golden lid was to be made, that was called the **Mercy Seat**.

The lid was the most important part of the whole Tabernacle. Why? (Exodus 25:22)

This was the place where God would dwell with the Israelites. His presence would be evidenced by a very bright light between the cherubim, known as the Shekinah glory - the radiance, glory, or presence of God.

Why was this lid called the mercy seat?

This lid was the place where God would "sit" with His people, and from it, He would extend **mercy** to His people. Mercy is God's provision for us sinners to escape the punishment we deserve for our sins.

Note: God's law was in the ark; a law that no human being can perfectly keep. But above the ark (above the law) was God's mercy that He shows to all who would approach Him His way.

The mercy seat is a picture of Christ. In what way? (John 1:14; Tit 3:4-6)

The mercy seat reminds us of how God came to dwell amongst us in His Son; and how, through Christ, God can extend His mercy to us sinners; but only if we come to God through Jesus.

Summary: **The Tabernacle declares God's desire to dwell with us sinners; and it points to Christ.**

41. The Tabernacle – Part Two

Aim: To explain the purpose and structure of the Tabernacle, and how it is a picture of Christ.

Intro: *The tabernacle was the place where God chose to meet with His people, and the means by which sinful humans could approach the holy God. Who does the Tabernacle ultimately point to?*

It points to Jesus, through who we are reconciled to God (Col 1:19-20).

In our last study, we considered the most important part of the Tabernacle. What is it?

We considered the Ark of the Covenant and the Mercy Seat, where God's glory resided.

In this next study, we will consider the other special furnishings in the Tabernacle.

A. The Table

A table overlaid with gold was to be made. What was to be placed on it? (Exod 25:30; Lev 24:5-8)

Twelve cakes of bread were to be placed on this table, made of fine flour (without yeast), and they were to be renewed every Sabbath day. Also, frankincense, a sweet smelling gum, was to be placed on the table.

What was the special name given to this bread? (Exod 25:30)

The bread was known as "showbread", or the "bread of the Presence". It stood for God's presence amongst His people, and how God would meet their needs.

Who does this bread remind us of? (John 6:35)

It reminds us of Jesus, who is Emmanuel ("God with us"), and who said "I am the bread of life". When we trust in Jesus, He is ever present with us, and day by day, He satisfies our hungry souls.

How does frankincense relate to Christ? (Eph 5:2)

The sweet smelling frankincense reminds us of how Christ's life and death were like a sweet smelling aroma to God. He pleased His Father in every way and His sacrificial death for us was a sweet smelling offering to God. His presence within us, is also a sweet smelling aroma to us and to others (2 Cor 2:15).

B. The Lampstand

God gave Moses instructions to build a Lampstand. What was its purpose? (Exod 25:37)

It was to give light in the Tabernacle. The priests could then see as they ministered and approached God.

How was the Lampstand made? (Exod 25:31, 36- 39)

It was made from one talent of pure gold; it was all one piece. It had seven lamps from seven branches.

Who does the Lampstand speak of? (John 1:4-9; 8:12)

The lampstand speaks of Jesus, who is "the light of the world". He, alone, is pure and full of truth, and shines forth so that we who are in darkness and ignorance might see how to approach God and be saved.

Who do the seven lamps symbolise?

They symbolise the light of the Holy Spirit. Hand in hand with Jesus, the Holy Spirit shines God's light in the darkness. In Rev 4:5 and 5:6, the Holy Spirit is referred to as the seven Spirits of God.

C. The Golden Altar (Altar of Incense)

A special altar overlaid with gold was to be made. What was to be burnt on it? (Exod 30:1,7-8)

Fragrant incense was to be burnt on this altar every morning and evening.

What is the spiritual significance of the altar and the burning of incense? (Rev 8:3-4; Psa 141:2)

It represents the prayers of God's people that go up before His presence, as explained in Rev 8:3-4; how amazing, that in heaven, there is a golden altar before God's throne with the prayers of the saints on the altar, rising up before God. Truly, the Tabernacle was a copy of the things in heaven (Heb 8:4-5).

What can we learn from the practice of the priests who burnt the incense?

The incense was burnt morning and evening, reminding us that we should be praying day and night.

How does the golden altar relate to the Lord Jesus when it comes to prayer? (Heb 10:19-22)

Just as God received the incense offered up on the golden altar, so God receives our prayers when offered up "on" Jesus; ie, on the basis of what He has accomplished for us through the cross (John 16:23-24).

What is significant about the placement of the golden altar in relation to Christ? (Eph 5:2)

The golden altar where incense was offered up to God was as in front of the veil (Exod 30:6). Jesus offered up His life before God as a fragrant aroma, opening the way for us to approach God; indeed, when Jesus died, the veil was torn, symbolising how the way was opened for us to come to God (Matt 27:50-51).

The Israelites were commanded not to burn "strange incense" (Exod 30:9). Why?

There was only one way to approach God. We can only approach God one way too – Jesus (John 14:6).

Summary: **The table, the lampstand and the golden altar all speak of Christ; He is the "Bread of Life", the "light of the world", and the only way we can approach God.**

42. The Tabernacle – Part Three

Aim: To explain the purpose and structure of the Tabernacle, and how it is a picture of Christ.

Intro: *We have been considering the holy items that went into the Tabernacle. What were they?*

- the ark of the covenant and the mercy seat, the table of showbread, the lampstand, and the golden altar.

How do these items relate to Christ?

Mercy Seat – Jesus is the means by which God is able to dwell with us and show mercy to us sinners.

Table of Showbread – Jesus is the bread of Life through whom we can experience God's presence.

Lampstand – Jesus is the Light of the World through whom we see God's truth and the way to God.

Golden Altar – Jesus's sacrifice was a fragrant aroma to God, opening the way for us to approach God.

In this next study, we shall consider the inside of the Tabernacle in which these items went.

A. The Rooms of the Tabernacle

The Tabernacle consisted of two rooms. What were they called? (Exod 26:33)

One was called the holy place, and the other was called the holy of holies (or most holy place). The holy place was the first room entered when coming into the Tabernacle; the holy of holies was the inner room.

What holy items were put in the holy place? (Exod 26:35)

In the holy place were the lampstand, the table of showbread, and the golden altar. From the entrance to the holy place, the lampstand was on the left, the table on the right, and the golden altar was at the back.

Who could enter the holy place? (Exod 28:40-43)

Only the priests could enter this room, wearing their priestly garments. No other Israelite or foreigner could enter it. If anyone did, or if a priest entered without his garments, they would incur guilt and die.

What do we learn from the restrictions placed upon those who could enter the holy place?

We learn how sinners cannot approach God just as they are, for God is holy, and His holiness consumes sin. Even those who are permitted to approach God, must be chosen and come as God has stipulated.

What holy item was put in the holy of holies? (Exod 26:34)

The very sacred and holy ark of the covenant was placed in the holy of holies, with its mercy seat over it. This was where the Lord's glory and presence dwelt. This is why this room was called the holy of holies.

Who could enter the holy of holies? (Lev 16:2-3; Heb 9:6-7)

Only the high priest could enter the holy of holies, once a year on the Day of Atonement. He could only enter with the blood of animal sacrifices, in order to atone for the sins of the people and his own sins.

Who entered the true holy of holies? What has He accomplished for us? (Heb 9:11-14; 10:9-14)

Jesus, our great high priest, after offering Himself up for us, entered the true holy of holies (Heaven). By His atoning death and resurrection, we can approach God here on earth, and one day we will enter into the true holy of holies (ie, the very presence of God) and dwell with Him forever – all because of Jesus.

B. The Veil and Screen

What divided the two rooms in the Tabernacle? (Exod 26:31-33)

A special curtain (or veil) separated the holy place from the holy of holies. No one could see God's glory, except the high priest when he passed through the veil once a year. The veil was very thick and skilfully woven with cherubim embroidered into it. The veil guarded God's holy presence from man.

What happened to this veil at the time of Jesus' death on the cross? (Matt 27:51)

At precisely the moment Jesus bowed His head and died, the great veil in God's temple was torn in two from top to bottom by God. This act symbolised how Christ's atoning death opened the way for us to God.

Did the entrance into the holy place have anything preventing people seeing in? (Exod 26:36-37)

The holy place also had a screen to cover its doorway. This screen was made of the same material as the veil, except it did not have the embroidered cherubim. It was thick, preventing anyone from seeing inside.

Both the veil and the screen were made of blue, purple and scarlet material and fine twisted linen.

What do you think is the symbolism behind these materials that made up the curtains?

The veil speak of Christ's flesh (Heb 10:19-20); the fine twisted linen was white, reminding us of Christ's pure earthly life; the blue stands for heaven and reminds us of how Jesus is the man from heaven (1 Cor 15:47); the purple stands for royalty and reminds us of how Jesus is the King (Rev 19:16); the scarlet stands for blood and reminds us of Jesus' blood that allows us to enter into God's presence (Heb 10:19).

What did Jesus say about Himself that points to the symbolism of the curtains? (John 10:9; 14:6)

Jesus is the door to heaven, and the only way to God. We must come through Him to be saved.

Summary: There is no other way into God's presence except through the Lord Jesus Christ.

43. The Tabernacle – Part Four

Aim: To consider the Tabernacle and the Priests who served God, and how they point to Christ.

Intro: *What was the main purpose of the Tabernacle?*

The Tabernacle enabled the living and holy God to dwell with His people; though they were sinners. It also taught them how to approach Him and find forgiveness. Ultimately, the Tabernacle pointed to Christ.

In this study we shall consider the remaining parts of the Tabernacle and the priests who served.

A. Bronze Basin (Laver) and Bronze Altar

What was the purpose of the bronze basin (laver) just outside the Tabernacle? (Exod 30:17-21)

It was for the priests to wash their hands and feet before they either ministered in the Tabernacle or went near the altar to burn offerings. If they failed to wash and be clean, they would die.

What is the laver a picture of (particularly for us)? (cf. 1 John 1:6-9)

It is a picture of how, as Christians, we now have been made God's priests (Rev 5:10) and need to daily wash ourselves through Christ's blood before we can minister to God and present our spiritual offerings.

What was the purpose of the bronze altar, which was the first holy vessel one came to when entering the Tabernacle court? (Exod 27:1-2; Lev 4:27-31)

The bronze altar was the place where the priests offered animal sacrifices on behalf of the people to atone for sin. Its location reminded all that a sacrifice had to be made before they could find approach God.

How does the altar speak of Christ? (1 Pet 2:24; Heb 10:11-14)

The altar reminds us of the cross, where the Lord Jesus sacrificed Himself, once for all, to make atonement for our sins. Jesus' sacrifice stands between us and God, and enables us to approach Him.

B. The Courtyard

What was the purpose of the fence around the Tabernacle and the holy vessels? (Exod 27:9-16)

It provided a barrier between the Israelite camp and God's holy presence; between the holy and unholy.

What does the fence and the one gate on the eastern side remind us of? (Isa 59:2; John 10:9)

The fence reminds us of how our separate us from God (there's a barrier), and the gate reminds us Jesus being the door through which we can enter and know God, as well as be saved from our sins (John 10:9).

C. The Priests

Who did the Lord appoint to be the ministers (priests) within the Tabernacle? (Exod 28:1)

The Lord appointed Aaron and his sons, who were from the tribe of Levi, to be His priests. No one else was permitted to be a priest. Aaron was the high priest, and his sons and their descendants were priests.

What were the special requirements for the priests? (Exod 28:4; 30:18-19; Lev 10:9; 21:21)

They had to wear special holy garments when ministering before the Lord; they had to wash themselves in water; they were not to have strong drink. They could not have any physical defect or blemish either.

As we can see, the priests were to be holy to the Lord and were to be set apart from the rest of the people.

What were some of the main duties of the priests? (Exod 27:20-21; 29:38-42; 30:8; Lev 24:5-8)

They were to daily keep the lamp burning in the Tabernacle and burn incense on the golden altar. Every week they were to prepare new bread to put on the table of showbread. Every morning and evening they were to offer a lamb as a burnt offering on the altar. But their main role was to offer up offerings to atone for the sins of the people. They were also to offer grain offerings, peace offerings, and thank offerings.

What was the special duty that the high priest had? (Leviticus 16:2-3; 16:29-34)

The high priest (and only him) was allowed to go into the inner room of the Tabernacle, the holy of holies, where God's glory resided above the mercy seat, once each year, on the Day of Atonement. He could only pass through the veil and enter with the blood of animals to made atonement for himself, for the other priests, for the Tabernacle, and for all the people. This only occurred once a year.

D. Our Great High Priest

In the New Testament, who is our great High Priest? (Heb 4:14; 5:1-10)

Even though He was not of the line of Aaron, Jesus was appointed our high priest by God the Father.

What has Jesus done for us that no former high priest could do? (Heb 9:11-14; 10:10-14)

Once and for all, Jesus offered Himself to pay the penalty for our sins. His precious and perfect shed blood He presented in the true heavenly Tabernacle to fully atone for our sins. Its Christ's shed blood, and not the blood of animals offered by priests, that enables us, by faith, to be forgiven and saved (Heb 10:4).

Summary: **The Tabernacle's objects point to our Lord Jesus Christ, and the priestly system points to Jesus being our great high priest, who alone atones for our sins & brings us to God.**

44. Israel's Rebellion and God's Great Mercy

Aim: To show God's mercy and grace even when Israel greatly rebelled against Him.

Intro: *What had the Israelites experienced from their journey in leaving Egypt and coming to Sinai?*

They had seen the power of God who had delivered them from Egypt and brought them through the Red Sea spectacularly, as well as the kindness of God who provided them water and manna in the harsh wilderness, and they had beheld the majesty of God and heard the voice of the living God at Mt Sinai.

What should such experiences of God do for us?

They should cause us to revere the Lord, to believe in Him with all our heart, as well as to trust Him and obey Him. In this study, we shall see how the Israelites did the opposite.

A. The Golden Calf

While Moses was up Mt Sinai speaking to God, what happened in the Israelite camp? (Exod 32:1)

Since the Israelites didn't know what had happened to their leader Moses, they sought another leader; but not a human leader. They sought a god to lead them; but not the God of Moses.

What did Aaron do when the people asked for another god? (Exod 32:2-4)

Instead of standing firm against the people's rebellion, and appealing for the Lord to be their God, and for them to be patient until Moses' returned, Aaron actively participated in the rebellion by directing them to give him their gold, which he fashioned into a golden calf (breaking the 1st and 2nd Commandments).

What caused Aaron to do such a thing? (Exod 32:21-23)

Aaron sided with the crowd rather than God, and gave into their demand. We need to be careful that we don't fall into the same trap. We are to follow God and fear Him; not man (Matt 10:28).

When the people saw the golden calf that Aaron had made, what did they do? (Exod 32:4)

They declared that this was Israel's god that had brought them out of Egypt.

Read Exod 32:5-6. What did Israel do? What did Aaron try and do?

When Aaron saw them praising the golden calf, he tried to get them to worship the Lord. The people ended up worshipping God and the calf together – this is syncretism, which God loathes (Exod 20:5).

B. Moses the Intercessor

When God told Moses He was going to destroy Israel, what did Moses do? (Exod 32:7-13)

Moses interceded for the people and reminded God of the promises He had made to their forefathers.

Who is Moses a picture of as he interceded before God for the people? (Heb 7:25)

He is a picture of our Lord Jesus who intercedes for us so that God might not deal with us for our sins.

What was God's response to Moses' prayer? (Exod 32:14; Deut 9:19-20)

What incredible grace God showed in not destroying Israel, and how amazing that He should listen to the intercession of Moses as he pleaded for Israel and for Aaron. Intercessory prayer is effective!

How did Moses feel as he came into the camp? What did he do? (Exod 32:19-20)

Moses was angry. He smashed the stone tablets, and ground the golden calf into dust and sprinkled it on the water and made the people drink it. Note: Righteous anger is acceptable to God. It's an anger that arises when God's name is mocked or when injustices are committed (consider Jesus in John 2:13-16).

What was Aaron's excuse when Moses questioned him? (Exod 32:21-24)

Aaron came up with a very lame excuse. Are we not prone to make excuses too, instead of being honest.

Sin must be dealt with. How was the sin of Israel's rebellion dealt with? (Exod 32:25-29)

Moses gave a call for those who were for the Lord to rally to him. Only the Levites stepped forward, and they executed God's judgement by slaying 3000 people. *Why didn't the other tribes stand up for Moses?*

After dealing with the rebellion, what did Moses do? (Exod 32:30-32)

Moses returned to the Lord and pleaded that God would forgive the Israelites for their great sin, and if not, then that he would perish instead of the people. Here we see Moses' love for the people and his desire that they might be saved. We see this with Paul in Rom 9:1-3, but nowhere is it seen more powerfully than in Jesus, whose great love for us, caused Him to die in our place so that we might not perish.

What was God's response to Moses' intercession? (Exod 32:33-35)

God would spare the people, but He would not directly go up with them to the promised land.

But through Moses' constant intercession, what did God finally agree to do? (Exod 33:12-17)

God agreed to go up with Israel Himself, and not just send an angel. As a result, the two stone tablets were replaced, God dwelt amongst His people in the Tabernacle, and He went before them to Canaan.

Summary: God is very merciful and responds to intercessory prayer. Jesus is our great intercessor.

45. Israel's Unbelief and God's Justice and Grace

Aim: To show God's justice and grace in dealing with Israel's unbelief.

Intro: *What were the highs and lows for Israel at Mt Sinai?*

The greatest high would have been seeing the glory of God on top of Mt Sinai and hearing Him speak the 10 Commandments. The greatest low would have been their turning from God to worship the golden calf.

In this study we shall see that Israel was not learning their lessons very well. As a result, they experienced God's justice; but they were also experiencing God's grace.

A. Complaining and Murmuring of the Israelites

In the 2nd month of their 2nd year what did Israel do? (Num 10:11-13) Why? (Num 9:17-18)

Israel left Sinai. For the rest of their travels they would set out every time the cloud over the Tabernacle lifted up, and they would camp every time the cloud settled down.

After leaving Sinai, what happened next? (Num 11:1-3)

Israel complained against the Lord, and He consumed some with fire. Moses' interceded to stop the fire.

Read Num 11:4-6. Israel complained again. Why?

They complained that they had no meat to eat. They had greedy desires for the things back in Egypt, and they were not content with the manna the Lord was giving them each day.

What did God do in response to the people's demands? (Num 11:31-33)

God gave them quail for meat, but because of their complaining, whilst they were still eating the quail, the Lord struck the people with a severe plague, resulting in some of them dying.

What can we learn from all this? (1 Cor 10:10-11; 1 Thess 5:18)

God's people are not to complain, but to give thanks to God in everything.

What were even Aaron and Miriam guilty of? (Num 12:1-10)

Aaron & Miriam were guilty of complaining against Moses; the leader God had appointed. God struck Miriam with leprosy; but through Moses' prayer, she was healed after a week (Num 12:13-15).

What do we learn about Moses and what lessons can we learn from this story? (Heb 13:17)

Moses was one of the all-time greatest leaders, yet so humble (Num 12:3). God loves humility! Also, as God's people, we are not to complain about one another, and especially the leaders God has placed over us. We are to pray for them; not murmur against them.

B. Spying out the promised land

When the Israelites arrived at the border of the land which God had promised to Abraham and his descendants, what did the Lord instruct Moses to do? (Num 13:1-2; 17-20)

The Lord instructed Moses to select twelve men, one from each tribe, to go and spy out Canaan.

When these twelve men returned, what report did they give? (Num 13:25-33)

They told the people that the land was good, but it was occupied by strong people, and some of them were giants. Ten of the spies then discouraged the people from going up and taking the promised land.

What was the response of the people to this bad report? (Num 14:1-4)

They grumbled against Moses and Aaron for they believed that the Canaanites would kill them all. They even made plans to appoint a leader to lead them back to Egypt. We see that they had no faith in God.

What did two of the spies, Caleb and Joshua, do? (Num 13:30; 14:5-9)

By faith, they urged the people to go up and take possession of the land, and not to rebel against the Lord by fearing the Canaanites. They believed God would give them the victory, just as He did against Egypt.

How did the people react to Joshua and Caleb's report? (Num 14:10)

They were not willing to believe. Instead, they wanted to stone them and Moses and Aaron to death.

What was God prepared to do because of their unbelief and rebellion? (Numbers 14:11-12)

God was prepared to strike them down and make Moses into a great nation.

What did Moses do to avert this situation? (Num 14:13-19)

As before, Moses interceded for the people. He pleaded for God to pardon them for the sake of His name.

What was God's response to Moses' intercession? (Num 14:20-24, 28-35)

God pardoned them. Nevertheless, there were consequences for their rebellion. They would wander in the desert for 40 years, and all those 20 years old and up would die in the desert, except Joshua and Caleb.

What lessons do we learn from all this? (cf. John 3:16; 3:36)

God is gracious and forgiving to those who believe, but just and punishing to those who will not believe.

Summary: God is just and gracious - just to those who do not trust Him, gracious to those who do.

46. God's Judgment and Mercy

Aim: To consider Israel's ongoing stubbornness to God, and God's consistent justice and mercy.

Intro: *So far we have seen many instances of Israel complaining and rebelling. Give some examples.* After the spectacular Red Sea crossing they complained about not having any water or food. At Sinai they rebelled and made a golden calf. After Sinai they complained about not having meat, etc.

Israel did not learn, despite God's judgments and mercies. Do we learn from our sins and waywardness? In this study, we shall see Israel's ongoing sin and God's justice and mercy.

A. Korah's Rebellion

Why did Korah and his followers assemble against Moses and Aaron? (Num 16:1-3, 8-10)

They believed that Moses and Aaron were exalting themselves above the rest of the people, and doing what they pleased, and keeping the priesthood to themselves. They wanted the priesthood!

Had Moses and Aaron let their positions go to their head? (Num 12:3; 16:4)

No! Moses was the most humblest person on earth and even fell on his face before Korah.

What did God do when the Israelites sided with Korah against Moses & Aaron? (Num 16:19-21)

God was prepared to exercise His justice by striking the people down for them opposing Moses & Aaron.

But what did Moses and Aaron do? (Num 16:22)

They fell before the Lord and interceded for them that God would have mercy on them and spare them.

What a picture this is of our Lord Jesus who intercedes for us before the throne (Rom 8:34; Heb 7:25).

God had mercy on Israel, but how did God deal with Korah and his companions? (Num 16:23-33)

God dealt justly with these rebels. He caused the ground to open up and swallow them whole.

What can we learn from this event?

God is to be revered and we need to be careful not to rebel against God or those whom God has placed over us. This principle is still applicable for us who follow Christ. (Consider Heb 12:28-29; 13:17).

B. Israel's Complaint & Moses' Sin

After Miriam's death, what did the Israelites do again? (Num 20:2-5)

They complained they had no water and contended against Moses and Aaron. They should have asked the Lord for water, who had provided it miraculously before (Exod 17:5-6). But they did not trust the Lord.

After Moses again interceded for the people, what did God tell Moses to do? (Num 20:6-8)

God told Moses to speak to the rock that was before them, and that God would bring forth water from it.

Did Moses obey the Lord this time? What did he do? (Num 20:9-11)

No! Previously in Exod 17:5-6 Moses had struck the rock at God's command to bring forth water, but this time he was to speak to the rock – but instead, he struck the rock twice.

Why didn't Moses obey the Lord? (Deut 32:49-51)

Moses "broke faith" with God. Driven by anger, he took things into his own hands, and sinned by striking the rock and showing contempt for God's holy name. Anger often leads to sin (Jam 1:19-20; Eph 4:26).

What happened to Moses because of this incident? (Num 20:12) What do you think of this?

Moses was not allowed to enter Canaan because of his sin. We may think this is not just, but the truth is, God expects more from those who are leaders; and dishonouring His holy name is serious (cf. Act 5:1-5).

C. Israel's Murmurings and God's Mercy

After God gave Israel victory over Arad (Num 21:1-3), what did Israel do next? Why? (Num 21:4-5)

They became impatient and complained about the manna being "miserable food", and having no water.

What did God do in response to this complaining? (Num 21:6)

God sent fiery serpents amongst them, causing many to die from the snake bites. Behold God's justice!

This time what did the people do? (Num 21:7)

Instead of adding to their sin, they confessed their wrongs, and pleaded for Moses to intercede for them.

Note: This is the first occurrence of Israel confessing their sin and crying out for mercy.

What was God's immediate response to their repentance and confession? (Num 21:8-9)

He had mercy on them by providing a way of escape. God instructed Moses to make a bronze serpent, and have it lifted up, so that whoever looked at it would miraculously live, despite being bitten by snakes.

The bronze serpent is a picture of who? (John 3:14-16)

It is a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ, who was lifted up (on a cross), so that if we, as sinners, would look by faith to Him, then we will be forgiven of our sins and be saved from eternal death. Amen!

Summary: God is just and punishes sin, but has mercy on us if we would repent & look to Jesus.

47. Israel Enters the Promised Land

Aim: To show that God gives His people the victory when they wholly follow and obey Him.

Intro: *Why did Israel take so long before they entered the land of Canaan? (Exod 13:17; Num 14:30-35)*

Firstly, God did not permit them to go the quickest way into Canaan (which would have taken no more than a month) as they were not ready to oppose the Canaanites. But when they were ready (a few years later), they chose not to obey God and enter Canaan, for they did not trust God. Their punishment was that they would wander in the desert 40 years until those over twenty in age had died in the wilderness.

Forty years later, on the east side of the Jordan, who was left of Israel to cross into Canaan?

Only Joshua and Caleb (the faithful spies), and those under twenty years at the time Israel refused to enter.

A. Joshua appointed the new leader

Who did God appoint to lead His people after Moses? (Num 27:15-18, 22-23)

Joshua, the son of Nun, from the tribe of Ephraim, was appointed to be the new leader after Moses' death.

Why did God choose Joshua? (Exod 24:13; 33:11; Num 14:6-8)

Joshua was a humble and faithful servant to Moses (Exod 24:13), he knew the Lord and walked with Him (Exod 33:11); he was a man of faith as was evident when he gave a good report (Num 14:6-8).

God commissioned Joshua to take Israel across the Jordan and to take possession of Canaan.

What a huge task! But God gave Joshua three great promises. What were they? (Josh 1:1-6)

1. God would give every place that the sole of his foot touched.
2. God would ensure that no person would be able to stand against him, throughout the rest of his life.
3. God would always be with him, never ever failing him or forsaking him.

What responsibility did God give Joshua after giving him these three great promises? (Josh 1:6-9)

God commanded Joshua to be strong and courageous (3 times in 1:6-9), and not to be fearful or faithless. He was to be obedient to God's law, meditating upon it day and night, and obeying everything in it.

What responsibility have we been given as Christians? (2 Pet 1:4)

We have been given great and marvellous promises (2 Pet 1:4), but like Joshua, we have also been given responsibilities: eg, put off the old nature, take in God's Word, and live holy lives (1 Pet 2:1-2; 2:11-12).

B. Joshua's conquest of the land

What was the first thing Joshua faced, and what did God do for Israel? (Josh 3:14-16)

The Jordan River was in flood. But God supernaturally caused the river to dry up where they crossed.

Who did Joshua meet before he engaged in any battle? (Josh 5:13-15) Why did this happen?

Joshua met the real commander of Israel, who would be leading God's heavenly army into battle for Israel. This would have helped Joshua know that he was not alone, and give him confidence in victory.

Who do you think this was? What do you make of His answer to Joshua's question?

We believe this was the Lord Jesus; commander of God's army (Rev 19:11-16). Joshua asked if He was for or against them. The answer was "neither". The real question is whether we are for Him. Joshua was!

The first battle Joshua faced was against Jericho. What was God's plan for victory? (Josh 6:1-5)

God's plan was so strange. Instead of building a siege ramp, as all other armies would do, God told them to walk around the city blowing horns, and then on the last day, to give a great shout. This is exactly what the people did, and miraculously, God caused the walls to come down, because by faith they obeyed Him.

All the walls of the city of Jericho fell down, except one part. Why? (Josh 2:1-4, 8-18; 6:22-23)

The part of the wall where Rahab's house was didn't collapse. She and her house were spared, due to her faith and obedience. She then became one of God's people, and part of the line of Christ (Matt 1:5).

After this great victory over Jericho, what followed? (Josh 7:1-5)

Israel experienced a humbling defeat at the hands of the small city of Ai, because they didn't seek the Lord and because there was sin in the camp. Only after Joshua had dealt with the sin (Josh 7:10-12) could they then have victory over Ai. *What lessons can we learn from this?*

What extraordinary event occurred in Josh 10:12-14?

God halted the going down of the sun so that Israel could defeat their enemies at Joshua's request.

After many battles what finally happened? Why? (Josh 21:43-45)

The people took possession of the land, all because God had been faithful in keeping His promises.

What did Joshua charge the people to do after they took possession of the land? (Josh 24:14-15)

He charged the people to choose to fear and serve and follow the Lord only, as he had chosen. Do we?

Summary: God is faithful to all His promises, but we only experience victory when we obey Him.

48. Israel Under Judges and the First King

Aim: To show that in spite of Israel's failures and unfaithfulness, God was still working out His purposes.

Intro: *Through Joshua, God caused the Israelites to possess the promised land. After their victory, the people entered into a covenant with the Lord to serve and obey Him only (Joshua 24:24). Did they? Yes they did - all the days of Joshua and the elders who survived Joshua (Joshua 24:31).*

In this study, we shall see what happened to Israel after Joshua died.

A. Israel turns to idols after Joshua's death

After the death of Joshua and the elders, what did the Israelites do? (Judges 2:6-11)

After Joshua and the generation who had seen the Lord's miracles in the wilderness had died, the Israelites forgot the Lord. They followed the ways of the Canaanites around them and worshiped their false gods. Behind these gods was Satan, who seeks to draw us away from the true God to worship him.

What was God's reaction to Israel's unfaithfulness? (Judges 2:12-15)

Israel's unfaithfulness provoked the Lord to anger. He caused Israel's enemies to rise up against them. No longer did God give them victory over their enemies. The Lord had warned them that this would happen if they did not obey and worship Him; and so, what God promised came to pass.

When the Lord heard the people groaning in their suffering, what did He do? (Judges 2:16-18)

God raised up judges to deliver the people from their enemies. During this time the Israelites would repent of their sins and return to the Lord.

How long would Israel continue to follow the Lord after they had been delivered? (Judges 2:19)

Only as long as the judge was alive. Then after his death, they would turn away from the Lord and act even more corruptly.

Again and again God rescued Israel, but He never removed all of Israel's enemies from the land of Canaan. Why? (Judges 2:20-23)

God allowed some of the enemy to remain in the land in order to test Israel to see if they would remain faithful to Him. In a similar way, God allows things to test us to see if we will remain faithful to the Lord.

How does the book of Judges summarise Israel's behaviour? (Judges 21:25)

Israel, took her eyes off their true king, the Lord God, and "everyone did what was right in his own eyes." We must guard ourselves from doing the same thing. We are to do the Lord's will, not ours (Matt 26:39).

God should have destroyed Israel for its wickedness and unfaithfulness. Why didn't He?

The Lord protected and preserved Israel, for it was through them that God planned to fulfil all His promises of the Deliverer (John 4:22). In the fullness of time our Deliverer came, the Lord Jesus Christ, born a Jew of the line of David, of the tribe of Judah, a descendant of Abraham.

B. Israel rejects God as king

During the time of the last judge, Samuel, what further sin did Israel commit? (1 Sam 8:4-9)

Israel demanded Samuel to give them a king like the nations around them, but in making this request, they were really rejecting the Lord God as their king. No nation in the world was so privileged like Israel to have God as their king, but they wanted to have what the nations about them had.

The first king was Saul. Why did he end up being rejected by God? (1 Sam 15:17-19; 24-26)

Saul, once he had been king for a while, became proud and chose to disobey God and do his own thing. As a result, the Lord rejected him from being king. God would choose another king, through whom He would send our great Saviour and Deliverer.

Who did God choose to replace Saul? (1 Sam 16:1, 6-13) Why? (Acts 13:22)

God chose David to be the next king. Although he was the youngest in his family, and was initially overlooked by Samuel, God anointed him to be the next king for he was a man "after my heart".

Although David was chosen to be the next king, this did not happen immediately. Why?

David had to go through many trials and tests of character. He had the challenge of overcoming Goliath, of escaping from Saul's attacks, and many other situations. Through it all, David learnt to trust only in the Lord, and to make the Lord his refuge and strength (Psalm 59:16-17).

When we go through trials and tests, do we grow in character and lean on God, or do we give up and complain? Discuss James 1:2-4 and 1 Peter 1:6-7.

Summary: No matter what may come across our paths, God is working out His purposes.

49. David the King

Aim: To show that David was a godly king, who was a picture of His greater son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Intro: *After the judges, the first king of Israel was Saul. What kind of king was he?*

He ruled well to start with, but when he became proud he disobeyed God and turned away from the Lord. He even ended up pursuing the next king God had anointed, David, and sought to kill him.

This study looks at the life of David, and the prophecy given to him about one of his descendants.

A. David's life and rule

What was David's occupation as a young man? How did this help later? (1 Sam 16:11; 17:15)

David was a shepherd who tended his father's sheep around the countryside of Bethlehem. God was preparing David for the time when he would become the shepherd of Israel (1 Chron 17:7).

When David visited his brothers in the army and saw Goliath challenging the Israelites, what was his response? (1 Sam 17:24-26, 32-37)

Although the Israelites fled from Goliath in fear, David stood up in the name of the Lord and offered to fight against this one who was defying the armies of the living God. David believed that God would deliver Goliath into his hands; though he be a giant and a man of war, whereas David was just a shepherd.

What do we learn about David as he approached Goliath in battle? (1 Sam 17:45-47)

David was a man who was zealous in having God's name honoured, and was prepared to take the giant on, because he had mocked God. He was also full of faith in the Lord knowing that the Lord was greater than all others, and that He would give him the power to deliver Goliath into his hands.

In what way is this story a picture of the Lord Jesus?

David's great son, the Lord Jesus fought against a two-fold great enemy; Satan and death. He defeated them both at the cross so that we could be set free from their power (Heb 2:14-15).

After David's victory, Saul became jealous. What did Saul seek to do? (1 Sam 18:8-11)

Saul sought to kill him. This was a difficult time when David had to run and hide from Saul and his army.

God delivered David from Saul. What did David do when God tested him? (1 Sam 24:4-7).

David did not lay a hand on Saul, because he viewed him as the Lord's anointed. David was righteous.

After the death of Saul, what happened to David? (2 Sam 2:1-4; 5:1-5)

David was made king of Judah at age 30, and then became king of all Israel seven and a half years later.

What type of king was David? (1 Kings 11:34, 11:38; Acts 13:22)

David was a man of God. He ruled righteously and justly. He sought to lead Israel in God's ways. He regularly read the Scriptures and prayed to the Lord, and sought to obey the Lord in everything. He wasn't perfect, but when he sinned, he sought God's mercy and forgiveness. He had a heart after God's own heart.

What did David desire to do for the Lord? (2 Sam 7:1-7)

David desired to build a temple for the Lord, where God could dwell. God commended David for having such a heart, but it would be David's son Solomon who would build the temple (1 Kings 8:17-19).

Nevertheless, David did much preparation to help his son build the temple (1 Chron 22:5).

B. David's greater Son

What was the covenant that God made with David? (1 Chron 17:11-15)

God promised to raise up one of David's descendants, who would establish an everlasting kingdom. This descendant would be an eternal king, who would be a Son to God, and God would be a Father to Him, and He would always have God's lovingkindness upon Him.

Who was this descendant that God spoke of? (Matt 1:1; Rev 22:16)

It was the Lord Jesus, who was born of the line of David, and even born in David's city, the city of Bethlehem (Luke 2:4). Jesus is the great Son of David, who came and established God's eternal kingdom, and reigns upon the throne of David as King of Kings and Lord of Lords (Isaiah 9:6-7).

In what way was David the king a type of Christ?

David ruled in righteousness and justice over the Israelites. Jesus rules as king over God's people in perfect righteousness and justice. David fought and defeated Goliath and the many other enemies of Israel. Jesus fought against and defeated Satan and death for His people, so that we might be saved and have eternal life. David planned to build a temple for God to dwell in, but through Jesus, God comes to dwell in His people, who are God's temple (1 Cor 6:19).

Summary: David's life and kingship was a forerunner to his greater Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

50. Solomon and the Temple of God

Aim: To show that Solomon's temple was a shadow of the eternal temple God established through Jesus.
Intro: *Before David died, who was appointed the next king? (1 Chron 23:1) What's remarkable about this?* Under God's direction he appointed Solomon his son to be the king; the son of Bathsheba, whom he committed adultery with. Truly, God had forgiven David, clearly seen in this appointment from God.

In this study we will consider Solomon's reign, and the important task he was given to do.

A. Solomon as king

What was David's charge to Solomon before he died? (1 Kings 2:1-4)

David charged Solomon to keep God's commandments, so that he might be successful, and that God might fulfil all His promises to David (which included David having his descendants rule over Israel).

God said to Solomon "Ask Me for whatever you want." What did he ask for? (1 Kings 3:5-9)

Solomon asked for a wise and understanding heart in order to govern God's people justly.

What was God's response to Solomon's request? (1 Kings 3:10-14)

God was pleased with Solomon's request for wisdom, rather than for a long life, or riches. As a result, God not only made Solomon the wisest person who ever lived, but He also gave him great riches and honour which he had not asked for. [Note: We too are to ask God for wisdom (Jam 1:5), and to seek first God's kingdom (Matt 6:33); then He will add all the other things that we are needful of]

What was the special task God had for Solomon to carry out during his reign? (1 Chron 22:6-11)

Solomon was to build a temple for God. Although David desired to build this temple, and even made preparations for it (1 Chron 22:5), it was Solomon who was charged to build it.

B. The temple

What was Solomon's attitude toward building God's temple? (2 Chron 2:4-9)

Solomon felt humble and unfit to build God's temple. He knew how great God is, and that no temple on earth would ever be adequate to represent His glory. Nevertheless, he did the best he could. He sought after the best labourers and the best materials in order to build a great and wonderful house for the Lord.

What was significant about the place where Solomon built the temple? (2 Chron 3:1)

The temple was built in Jerusalem on Mt Moriah (which means "chosen of the Lord"). We understand this was the place where God called Abraham to offer up his son Isaac (Gen 22:2), and it was also the place where David built an altar to the Lord in order to appease God's wrath (2 Sam 24:25).

What was the design of the temple? (2 Chron 3:3, 8, 10, 14; 4:6-7)

The temple's design was based on the tabernacle, except it was much larger. It had a holy of holies room, separated from the rest of the temple by a veil. It also had the holy room with 10 lampstands & 10 tables.

After 7 ½ years the temple was completed. What happened after that? (2 Chron 5:1-7)

Solomon brought the dedicated treasures of his father David into the temple. He also assembled the leaders of Israel in order to have the ark of the covenant brought into the holy of holies.

What did God do after the ark was placed in the temple? (2 Chron 5:11-14)

The Lord filled the house with His glory (known as the Shekinah glory, which is the radiant glory of God's presence when He dwells with His people). Just as the tabernacle had God's glory shining forth in the holy of holies, so God now manifested Himself with His glory. God was pleased with the temple.

What was Solomon's response to this? (2 Chron 6:1-3, 12-14, 18-21)

Solomon prayed and blessed God's people, and then on bended knees dedicated the temple to the Lord, as a place where God might be sought after for His mercy and forgiveness.

As a sign of God's acceptance of the temple and as a place where He would have mercy on His people, what did God do to confirm this? (2 Chron 7:1-3)

Fire fell from heaven and consumed the burnt offerings, and the glory of the Lord filled the house once again, and the priests were not able to enter the house because of God's glory.

This temple would one day be destroyed, but what did God promise David? (1 Chron 17:11-14)

God promised David that one of his descendants (the Lord Jesus) would build a house and a kingdom that would last forever. 1 Peter 2:4-5 tells us that as living stones, we are Christ's spiritual house with Christ's presence filling us. We are now the temple of God, collectively and individually (1 Cor 6:19).

Summary: We are God's temple filled with the Holy Spirit to show forth God's eternal glory.

51. The Kings of Israel and Judah

Aim: To show that those who love and obey the Lord will be blessed by Him and be a blessing to others.

Intro: *Solomon was blessed with wisdom. What Old Testament books did he write? (Pro 1:1; Eccl 1:1)* He wrote Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, two beloved Bible books, as well as Song of Solomon. But though he was blessed with wisdom, and great riches and wealth (1 Kings 10:23-25), Solomon became unwise.

A. The fall of Solomon

In the latter part of his reign, what happened to Solomon? (1 Kings 11:1-8)

He broke God's command by marrying many heathen wives, who turned his heart away from the true and living God to worship false gods. He even built places of worship for these false gods.

Solomon was the wisest person who ever lived (1 Kings 3:12), yet he fell. Why? (1 Kings 11:2) Solomon loved his wives more than God. Seeking to please them, rather than God, led him to worship false gods. [Note: In Luke 14:25-27, Jesus sternly warns us that to be a follower of Him, we must love Him and put Him first above all others; including parents, our spouse, our children, and our own life.]

What was God's response to Solomon's unfaithfulness? (1 Kings 11:9-13)

God was angry with Solomon; especially since he was privileged to have the Lord appear to him twice. Because of his turning, God would split the nation of Israel into two kingdoms; the northern kingdom of Israel, and the southern kingdom of Judah. Solomon's sons would only rule Judah, and Solomon's enemies would rule Israel. There are always consequences to sin.

B. The Kings of Israel

Israel had twenty kings; from 930BC to 722BC. The first king was Jeroboam and the last was Hoshea. Did any of these kings serve the Lord?

Not one! All the kings of Israel were ungodly kings (cf. 1 Kings 15:25-26). They led the northern kingdom of Israel into greater sin, and further away from the God of Israel. After each of these kings this epitaph is given in the Bible "he did evil in the sight of the Lord".

What ended up happening to the kingdom of Israel? (2 Kings 17:6-14)

God caused the Assyrians to capture them and to take them into exile. This occurred in 722BC. The Lord brought this about because of how Israel turned from Him to walk in the ways of the nations about them, and to serve idols, even though God repeatedly and lovingly warned them to repent through the prophets.

C. The Kings of Judah

From 930BC to 586BC the kingdom of Judah had 20 kings as well. What were these kings like?

The majority of the kings of Judah did not walk in the ways of their forefather David (1 Kings 15:1-3), but did evil in His sight. Of the twenty kings of Judah, only Asa (2 Chron 14:2-4), Jehoshaphat (2 Chron 17:3-4), Joash (2 Chron 24:1-2), Amaziah (2 Chron 25:1-2), Uzziah (2 Chron 26:3-5), Jotham (2 Chron 27:1-2), Hezekiah (2 Chron 29:1-2), and Josiah (2 Chron 34:1-2) served the Lord.

The godly kings of Judah led their people in a godly way. For example, consider Jehoshaphat. When he faced the threat of a huge army coming against Judah what did he do? (2 Chron 20:2-12) Jehoshaphat sought the Lord and assembled all of Judah. He humbly prayed acknowledging God's power and promises, and their powerlessness and absolute dependence on Him. God gave them an incredible victory (2 Chron 20:22-25). When we face a crisis, do we turn to the Lord first and seek His help?

When Israel was exiled by the Assyrians, and were about to do the same to Judah, what did Hezekiah do? (2 Chron 32:20-22)

Hezekiah prayed to the Lord (2 Kings 18:5-6). He prayed for the Lord to not only deliver them but for God's name to be honoured (2 Kings 19:14-19); and He did (2 Kings 19:35).

What was Josiah like? What heart did he have to God's Word? (2 Chron 34:3, 8, 14-21, 27)

Josiah purged Judah of its idols, he restored the temple, and when the Book of the Law was found and read in his presence, he humbled himself to seek the Lord and to obey all that is in God's book. He had a tender and humble heart towards the Word of the Lord. Do we?

Application: Those who did what was evil in the sight of God were punished and their life led many away from God. Those who did what was right in the sight of God were blessed within their own lives, and were a blessing for the whole of the nation. What would God record about our life thus far?

Summary: Let us seek, with God's help, to do what is right in His sight, and to glorify His name.

52. God Sent His Messengers - The Prophets

Aim: To show that Israel refused to respond to the warnings of God's prophets when they went astray.

Intro: *Have you ever tried to tell someone something they didn't want to hear? What happened?*

It's not easy, is it! Harder still, have you ever warned someone you love of something they were doing that was going to cause them ruin? The prophets of God had such a task, as we shall see in this study.

A. The message of the prophets

What was the state of Israel during the time of the kings? (2 Kings 17:6-12)

Israel rebelled against the Lord by turning from Him to serve other gods; they became immoral and committed many terrible sins, continually breaking God's commandments and provoking Him.

In breaking God's commandments, what were they also doing? (Deut 4:12-13)

They were breaking the covenant between them and God; a covenant that they were so privileged to be in.

What were the consequences if Israel broke God's covenant? (Deut 4:23-28)

Israel would be exiled, scattered amongst the nations, and be left few in number.

What was the role of the prophets during Israel's rebellion? (2 Kings 17:13)

God sent His prophets to warn Israel of the consequences of their rebellion and breaking the covenant. They urged the people to repent of their sins to avoid God's judgment.

What was God's heart towards His rebellious people? (Ezek 33:11)

God's heart was not to crush and destroy His people, but He desired for them to turn from their sinful ways so that He might have mercy on them. God doesn't delight in the death of the wicked.

God sent His prophets again and again. What was the people's response? (2 Kings 17:14-18)

The people hardened their hearts and turned further away from the Lord. They became more idolatrous and did more atrocious and abominable acts that provoked the Lord God to anger.

B. The message in the last days

Isaiah the prophet lived in Israel's last days. What was God's word through Isaiah? (Isa 8:5-8)

The Lord told them that they would be defeated and captured by the king of Assyria. God used Assyria to judge and punish His people. This occurred in 722 BC.

Jeremiah the prophet lived in the time of Judah's last days. What was the Lord's word through Jeremiah for the people of Judah and Jerusalem? (Jer 20:4-5)

The Lord told the people of Judah that they would be carried away into exile to Babylon. This is because the people failed to heed the warning of the prophets. Their exile to Babylon occurred in 586BC.

What was God's intention for sending His people into captivity? (Deut 4:27-30)

God did this so that in their distress, they might repent of their sins and return to the Lord and listen to His voice. God would then forgive them of their sins and restore them to the promised land.

What do we learn about God from this? (Deut 4:31)

God is a compassionate and loving God, who desires to have mercy on His people.

Through the prophet Jeremiah, what did God tell the exiles in Babylon? (Jer 29:10-14)

God told them that they would be in exile for seventy years, and then return to the land, for God had good plans for His people. He even told them what they needed to do to know His good plans - they had to seek Him and search for Him, so that He would be found by them, for God is a compassionate God.

Why would God bring them back to the land and not utterly destroy His people?

God is very compassionate. But He is also faithful to all His promises. He had promised that through the seed of Abraham all the nations of the earth would be blessed (Gen 22:18). If Israel had been destroyed, this could not have happened, for through Israel would come the Saviour of the World; the Lord Jesus.

C. The message for us

In many ways the Lord's church over the centuries has been like Israel of old. In what way?

We have followed the ways of the world and the traditions of men and have not followed God's will and God's ways and God's Word.

What is God desiring for us to do? (Rev 2:1-7)

Like the message of the prophets of old, God is calling us to repent of our ways and to return to Him, lest He bring judgment upon us. We desperately need to return to Him and listen to Him again.

Summary: God is merciful; He calls all people to repent and return to Him through His Son.

53. The Promised Messiah as Foretold by the Prophets

Aim: To show how God had given great promises through the Prophets concerning the coming Messiah.

Intro: *During the Old Testament period, Israel rebelled against the Lord. They did not heed the prophets, and they even were exiled. But through all this, what had God not forgotten? (Gen 3:15)*

Even though thousands of years had passed since God gave the first promise of the Messiah in the garden of Eden, the Lord had not forgotten His promise to send the Deliverer/Saviour. Plan A was still on track.

In this study, we shall consider the words God gave to His prophets concerning the Saviour.

A. The Prophecies of the Saviour's Birth and Ministry

In the Old Testament, God promised to send the Messiah. What does this word mean?

Messiah is a Hebrew word. It is equivalent to the Greek word *Christ*. It means "the anointed one". In particular, it means the one God had anointed and chosen to be our Saviour and to be our king.

In Isaiah 9:1-7 what do we learn about the promised Messiah?

- He would come to us as a child (baby), but given to us by God (v. 6)
- He would bear divine names, showing His divine character, and that He actually is God (v. 6)
- He would come and establish God's eternal kingdom, and be the ruler of it (vv. 6 & 7)
- In His rule, He will establish peace, justice and righteousness (vv. 4, 5, 7)
- He would be a great light, bringing spiritual understanding to darkened souls (v. 2)
- He would minister in Galilee; a place held with contempt by orthodox Jews

In Isaiah 7:14 what was special about the Messiah coming?

- He would be born of a virgin, through the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:35)
- He would be called Immanuel ("God with us"), for He would be God come in the flesh

Isaiah 42:1-7 speaks of the ministry of the Messiah. What things do we learn?

- He would be filled with God's Spirit (v. 1) – cf. also John 3:34
- He would not cry out or raise His voice, or crush people, but come in peace and gentleness (vv. 2 & 3)
- He would be a covenant between God and us, bringing peace between a holy God and sinful men (v. 6)
- He would bring spiritual light, not only to the Jews, but to the nations – Gentiles (v. 6)
- He would open blind eyes and set prisoners free – especially in the context of sinners (v. 7)

In Isaiah 61:1-3 what other things would the Messiah do amongst us?

- He would bring good news (the Gospel) to us who are afflicted in sin (v. 1)
- He would bring freedom, deliverance, healing, comfort, and joy through His Gospel (vv. 1-3)
- He would plant us in God's kingdom as righteous ones for His glory (v. 3)

B. The Prophecies of the Saviour's Death and Resurrection

The passage from Isaiah 52:13 to 53:12 wonderfully and clearly depicts how the Messiah would set us free from sin and Satan and grant us salvation. How would this be accomplished?

He would bear our sin, dying on our behalf, in order to make atonement for our sins.

What special things do we learn from this passage concerning our Saviour's death?

- He would be terribly treated and marred more than any man (Isaiah 52:14)
- There was nothing extraordinary about Jesus' appearance (Isaiah 53:2)
- He was despised and rejected by the majority (v. 3)
- He carried our griefs and sorrows and was struck down by God for us (v. 4)
- He would be pierced through, crushed, chastened, and scourged for our sins (v. 5)
- God would lay our sins upon Him – He would pay the penalty for them, which is death (v. 6)
- He would be silent before His accusers, die with the wicked, be buried with the rich (v. 7-9)
- The last part of Isaiah 53 speaks of His resurrection and what He would accomplish for many – justification and salvation and hope (vv. 11-12)

Besides the prophecies from Isaiah, what do we learn from Psa 22:1-18 and Micah 5:2?

The Messiah would cry out "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me", be sneered at as He hung on the cross and be thirsty, be pierced through His hands and feet, and His clothing would be divided by lot. The Saviour would also be born in Bethlehem, though His true origins are eternal.

What happened to all these prophecies, given hundreds of years before the Messiah came?

They were all fulfilled in Jesus, showing to us that He truly is God's Son, the Messiah, and our Saviour.

Summary: **God confirmed again and again the coming of the Messiah. Jesus is He!**

54. God's People in Exile and after Exile

Aim: To show that God preserved His people during and after exile for the coming of the Messiah.

Intro: *What is one of God's glorious characteristics? (Josh 21:45; Deut 7:9; Lam 3:21-23)*

God is faithful. Not one word or promise of the Lord has ever failed (cf. Josh 23:14; 1 Kings 8:56)

In this final study in the Old Testament, we shall consider God's faithfulness in ensuring the coming of His Son into the world to save us from our sins and rescue us from Satan.

A. Israel (Judah) in exile

During the time of exile in Babylon, had God forgotten His people? (Jer 29:4-14) Why not?

God had not forgotten His people, nor His promises that He had given to them. While they were in exile, God cared for them, prospered them, and protected them, for through them would come the Messiah.

God's protected His people – what happened in exile in the days of Esther? (Esther 4:13-17)

Haman wanted to annihilate God's people, but He preserved them through Esther and Mordecai.

What did Daniel do after reading about the prophecy in Jer 29:10? (Dan 9:1-6, 15-19)

Daniel earnestly sought the Lord in prayer that He would forgive His people for their sin and rebellion, and would restore Jerusalem according to His great compassion – and He did. Great is His faithfulness.

B. The return of the exiles from Babylon

Long before Judah went into exile, not only did God say that the exile would last for 70 years, but He also told His people who He would use to deliver them. Who was this? (Isa 45:1,13)

God would use a pagan king, Cyrus, to allow His exiled people to return and rebuild Jerusalem.

What did Cyrus do to help God's people fulfil the prophecy of their return? (Ezra 1:1-4)

He gave them the necessary money, permits and protection to return and rebuild the temple in Jerusalem.

When the people returned, what was the first thing they did? (Ezra 3:1-6)

They restored the altar and resumed their worship of God through sacrificial offerings, according to God's Word through Moses. They also celebrated the feast of booths (tabernacles).

It took twenty years to rebuild the temple. Why? (Ezra 4:4-5, 24)

The surrounding people frightened God's people from working, and managed to halt the work through political means. The work actually stopped for fifteen years.

After the temple was rebuilt, what did God do through His servant Nehemiah? (Neh 2:1-6)

God used Nehemiah to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem in order to give protection to His people as they returned. Against much opposition God enabled His people to complete the task in a short time.

Note: God's people who returned to the promised land were given another name. They were called Jews, the name still used for the descendants of these people today. It is derived from the word "Judah".

After returning, were the Jews faithful to God and His Word? (Mal 1:6-8, 2:8-12, 3:8-10)

Although they removed idol worship, sadly, in their worship they compromised by choosing to do things "their way". Yet, despite all this, God would still preserve them and faithfully bring forth the Messiah.

What was the final word in the Old Testament, written 400 years before Jesus came? (Mal 4:1-6)

It was a prophecy about the coming of John the Baptist (also called "Elijah") to prepare the way for Jesus, and Jesus' coming into our world as the "sun of righteousness with healing in His wings" – what a description of what He would do when He came. Truly He would come to save and restore us.

C. God prepares Israel and the world for the coming of the Messiah – a short history

- Under Alexander the Great, the Greeks took control of the then known world, including Israel, and taught all to speak one language - the Greek language. God, in His sovereignty, would use this one language to spread His Word at Jesus' coming (Note: The New Testament was written in Greek).
- After the Greeks, the Romans took over the then known world. They built many excellent roads linking their vast empire. God was preparing a way for His Word to be carried to distant lands.
- The Romans allowed freedom of religion. This meant the Jews could continue to worship God at the temple, and it enabled the Messiah and the apostles to have the freedom to declare God's Word.
- Because of persecution, the Jews built meeting houses, called synagogues, throughout the Roman Empire. Each Sabbath day at these synagogues, the Old Testament Scriptures would be read and explained, including the prophecies of the Messiah. God was preparing His people and God-fearing Gentiles for the coming of the Messiah, our Saviour.

Summary: **God preserved Israel in exile and brought them back to their land, and perfectly prepared everything for the Messiah's coming; who came when the time was right (Gal 4:4)**