

Understanding God's Big Story in the Bible

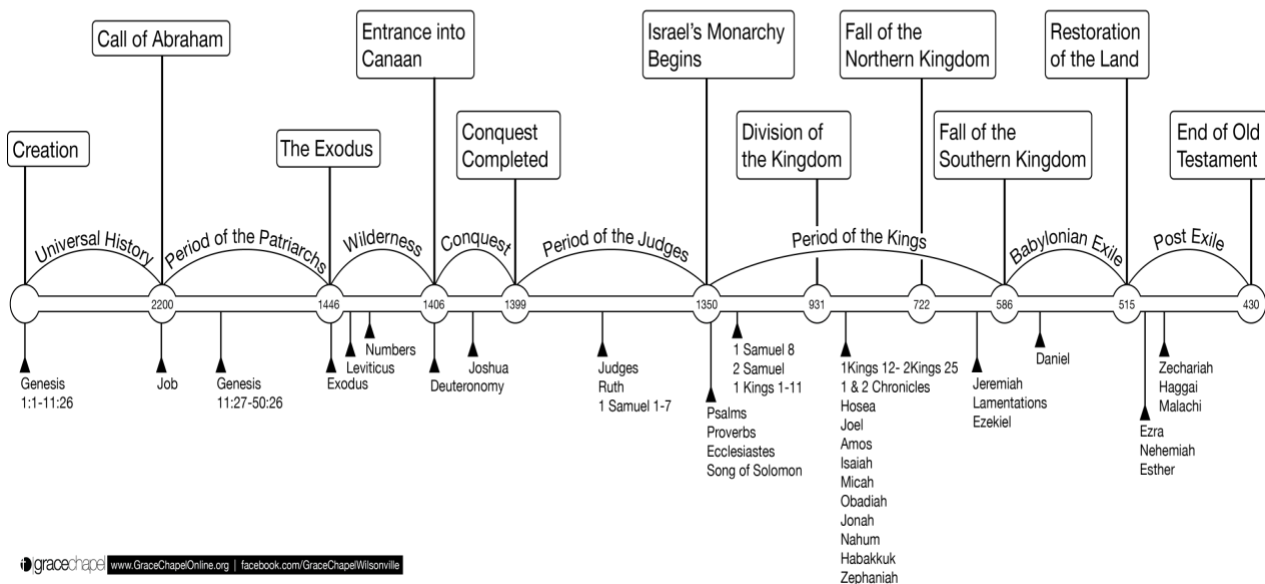
- 1) **OBJECTIVE:** review the importance of the Bible, explain the storyline of the Bible, and learn how to read, study, and share the Bible. Note: Bible quotes are *italicized* and from the Christian Standard Bible.
- 2) **The Bible is Important Because it...**
 - a) **Shows us God's plan for us, which is only found in the Bible.**
 - b) **Guides our daily lives.** *"Your word is a lamp for my feet, and a light on my path."* (Psa. 119:105.)
 - c) **Provides our daily spiritual food.** Jesus said, don't *"live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God."* (Matt 4:4). We need both daily bread and spiritual food to live.
 - d) **Points us to have a right standing with God.** *"All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness,"* (2 Tim. 3:16.)
 - e) **Is the living Word of God as we read it.** *"For the word of God is living and effective and sharper than any double-edged sword...able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart."* (Heb. 4:12.)
 - f) Before we read the Bible, we need to ask the Holy Spirit to guide us with a prayer like this:
"Father, I am here to listen to you speak. Teach me now from your Word. Amen"
- 3) **Who should read the Bible? Everyone!** Most countries' laws are based on it, and it is the best-selling book worldwide. **For Christians,** the Bible is the most important and the only authoritative source you can trust. God's Word is trustworthy and true.
- 4) **The Bible is one book.** The Bible is one

New Testament – 27 books

- **Gospels (4)** – Jesus Life – Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John
- **Church History (1)** – Acts
- **Paul's Letters to Churches (9)** – Romans, 1st and 2nd Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1st and 2nd Thessalonians
- **Paul's Letters to Friends (4)** – 1st and 2nd Timothy, Titus, Philemon
- **General Letters (9)** – Hebrews, James, 1st and 2nd Peter, 1st and 2nd and 3rd John, Jude, and Revelation

39 Books

OLD TESTAMENT TIMELINE



book made up of 66 books written over 1500 years. The Bible is God's history of world. It begins with the creation of all things and ends with all things restored. Yet its message is consistent throughout. If you remove Genesis, for instance, you can't understand the rest of God's Big Story. The New Testament has 1,600 direct quotations from the Old Testament. Without the Old Testament, we don't know who the characters are and what God's plan is.

- 5) **The Bible is by one author** - Inspired by God speaking through men (about 40 authors) over 1,500 years, it is consistent throughout. God wrote it and there are no errors. Each of the 66 books fit together like pieces in a puzzle.

- 6) **The Bible is about one subject telling one Big Story.** Jesus is a key subject of the Bible who unlocks the Bible's meaning. Luke writes that Jesus *"beginning with Moses and all the Prophets...interpreted for them the things concerning himself in all the Scriptures."* Luk 24:27. The Bible is centered on Jesus and is not a series of good moral stories. **Each book points to Jesus and God's plan to rescue mankind. The Old Testament says Jesus is coming. New Testament says He is here and is coming again.** The Bible slowly reveals God's promise that a Savior will come.
- 7) **RECAP:** The Bible is one Book by one author with one subject telling one story.

8) **The Bible Should Be Read, Studied and Shared**

- a) **The Bible is not about human heroes. The Bible explains God's work in history and reveals His Son Jesus. The Bible never hides the wrongdoing of its heroes or of the nation of Israel.**
- b) **Scripture explains God's plan for us.** We can't explain why we are here...only God can in Scripture. We don't define how the world work...God does. The Bible explains the world.
- c) **The Bible reveals our sin and need for a Savior.** As we read the Bible, God calls us to worship and obey Him. The Bible may not be understandable – parts require study, and parts remain a mystery.
- d) **The Bible helps us to mature in Christ and bear fruit. The Bible does not contain false teaching. God's Word is more reliable than your experiences, or your relationships or society.**
- e) Through the Holy Spirit, the Bible can govern our lives, help us make our choices, challenge our beliefs, and shape us to look more like Jesus. **God wants a personal relationship with us - through prayer, His Word, and His Church – the Body of Christ.** We need to meet with God daily. God's Word is Living and eternal. Man's word does not last. God's Word does.

9) **The Big Picture of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation**

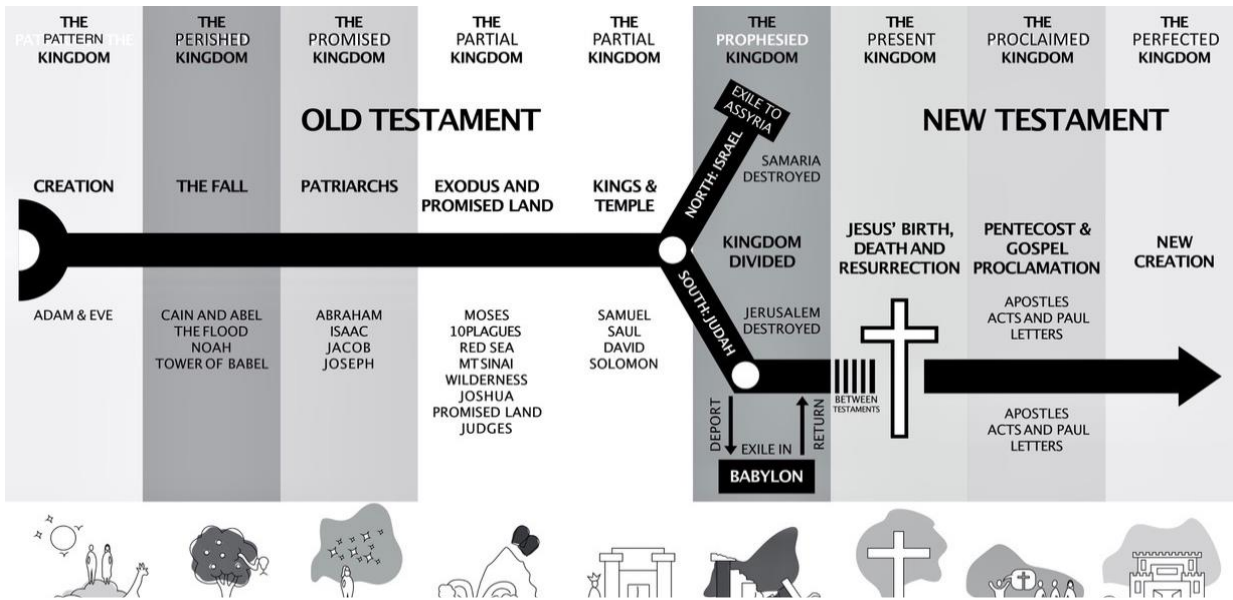
- a) Our Main Theme is the Kingdom of God which is the overarching theme of the Bible.
- b) But there are also many Bible sub-themes that point to Christ.
- i) **Prayer** - Christ said, *"Ask anything in my name, I will do it."* John 14:14
- ii) **Priesthood** – Priest were to intercede for God's people. Christ is now our High Priest
- iii) **Covenants** - God established the way He relates to His people. Christ fulfills God's promises.
- iv) **Sacrifice** – An offering to keep a right relationship with God. Christ is the perfect sacrifice.
- v) **Obedience** - God demands our obedience or be cursed. We obey the "law of Christ" of love.
- vi) **God the Conqueror** - God rescues His people through history. Christ conquers sin and death.
- c) These sub-themes are seen from Genesis to Revelation. Other sub-themes include sin, death, love, faithfulness, etc. These sub-themes all point to the need for Christ's atonement for our sins.

10) **Definition - Kingdom of God.**

God's people, living in God's place, under God's rule and blessing.

- a) God from the beginning wanted His people to be near to Him and to be under His rule and to enjoy His blessing eternally. Because God is Almighty and with no faults, He cannot be with people who disobey Him. And have fallen short of the glory of God.
- 11) **Lesson 1 – Pattern of the Kingdom or Model Kingdom – Genesis 1-2**
- 12) **Before creation, God decided to send His Son to show His grace through Jesus Christ.** (2 Tim 1:8-10). *"He (Jesus) was chosen before the creation of the world...for your sake."* (1 Pet 1:18-21 NIV).
- 13) **At creation, by His Word "God said..."** (Gen 1:3)), God spoke and created the heavens and the earth. **In the beginning, God created all things (Gen. 1:1). God designed the model Kingdom. (Gen 1:31) God's creation matters because He created it for our good and His glory. (John 1:3; Col. 1:16)** God is Lord over ALL things. Everything God made was good...very good. (Gen 1:31). God is the giver of all life.
- 14) **God's people created in God's image** – God said, "Let us make man in our image." (Gen 1:26-28) He created Adam and Eve who bore a likeness in some way to God. Today, we are also image bearers. He created a **specific place for Adam and Eve called the Garden of Eden where God dwelled with them.** They were to (Gen 1:27-28) oversee all that God had created. Eden was to be a place set apart from all the earth where they were to dwell with God and glorify God as image bearers.
- 15) **God's blessing - God was to provide for them forever as they "worked and watched (guarded) over it"** (Gen 2:15-17.) They were to be multiply and fill the earth (expand the garden across the earth.)

- 16) **God’s One Rule or Law** - “*And the LORD God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree of the garden, but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for on the day you eat from it, you will certainly die.”* (Gen 2:16-17).
- 17) **This was the perfect world with perfect relationships:**
- Between God and mankind = perfect!
 - Between man and woman = perfect!
 - Between human beings and all creation = perfect!



THE KINGDOM OF GOD	GOD'S PEOPLE	GOD'S PLACE	GOD'S RULE & BLESSING
THE PATTERN OF THE KINGDOM	Adam and Eve	The garden	God's word; perfect relationship
THE PERISHED KINGDOM	No-one	Banished	Disobedience and curse
THE PROMISED KINGDOM	Abraham's descendants	Canaan	Blessing to Israel and the nations
THE PARTIAL KINGDOM	The Israelites	Canaan (and Jerusalem and temple)	The law and the king
THE PROPHESED KINGDOM	Remnant of Israel; inclusion of nations	New temple; new creation	New covenant; new king; great blessing
THE PRESENT KINGDOM	<i>Jesus Christ: new Adam; new Israel</i>	<i>Jesus Christ: true tabernacle; true temple</i>	<i>Jesus Christ: new covenant; rest</i>
THE PROCLAIMED KINGDOM	The new Israel: Jew and Gentile believers in Christ	The individual believer; the church	New covenant; Holy Spirit
THE PERFECTED KINGDOM	Multi-national family of God	New creation, new Jerusalem, new temple	Throne of God and the Lamb; perfect blessing

- 18) **It was a world without sin or death - a blessing to all creatures and to Adam and Eve.** That is where we want to be.
- 19) **RECAP Lesson 1 – Model Kingdom - God made us so that we could dwell with Him. We exist to glorify and fellowship with God.**
- God’s people** were Adam and Eve (Gen 1:27-28),
 - Living in **God’s place, the Garden of Eden, in His presence**
 - And were to live forever under **God’s one rule and enjoy His blessing.**
- 20) **Lesson 2 – Perished (Dying) Kingdom – Genesis 3-11**
- 21) God said Adam and Eve could enjoy the fruit of all the other trees, but not the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Why did He choose this one rule? By obeying this rule, they would learn that God’s rule

was very good. Like a father, God wants only the best for His children. **The tree of knowledge was to lead man to the knowledge of good and evil by NOT eating the fruit. Obeying God is always our best choice.**

22) **But one day, a talking snake appeared who changed their view of God. They believed the snake and not God and so, they ate from the tree.**

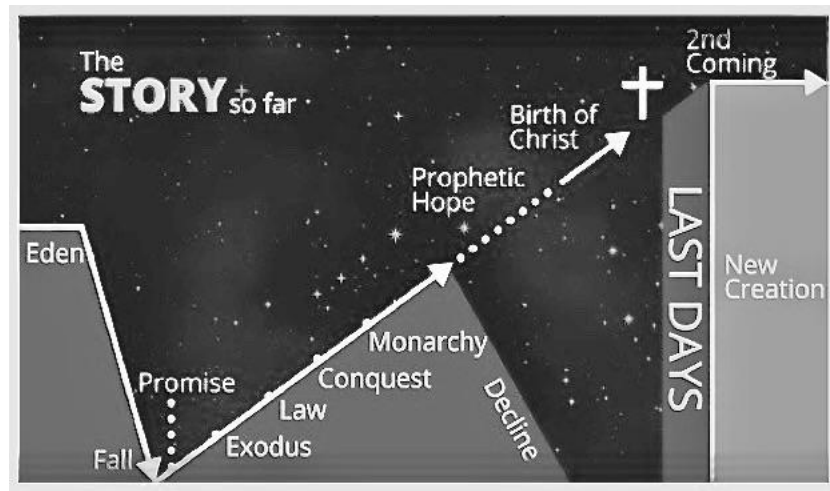
23) **Where did evil come from?**
The talking snake is a fallen angel who is a created creature of God. He is a foe of God and God's image bearers. Satan rebelled against God's authority. Satan is not like God.

a) At the end of time on this earth, *"the ancient serpent (will be) thrown out...(he is) the one*

who deceives the whole world" (Rev 12:9) Satan is not all knowing, eternal, or present everywhere. He is resistible (Jam 4:7) and will be crushed (Gal. 3:15)

24) Satan's tactics with Eve are the same today:

- a) **He distorts His Word – Did God really say, "you can't eat from any tree in the garden?"** (Gen 3:1). God did not say that.. He said don't eat of a specific tree. Satan wants us to doubt God.
 - b) **Satan questions God's Word – "No! You will certainly not die..."** (Gen 3:4). God said if they ate the fruit **they would die**. Satan, the father of lies, wants us to believe his lies. Satan wants us to think that doing "bad" will be "good" for us. *"But each person is tempted when he is drawn away and enticed by his own evil desire. Then after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin, and when sin is fully grown, it gives birth to death."* (Jam 1:14-15). Satan wants us to believe in the Bible.
 - c) **Satan lies about God's motives – "you will be like God, knowing good and evil."** (Gen 3:5) Satan wants us to think WE can decide what is right and wrong. God decides what is good or evil not us.
- 25) **God didn't bring evil into the world. The serpent did. And the serpent is against us.**
- a) Satan does the same things today. **Satan says, "Try it. It isn't wrong to try it. You will like it." What Satan wants always leads to our death and alienation from God.** Satan says, "It's OK for man to marry man." "It's OK to kill a child in the womb." OR "It's ok to hit your spouse, hit her."
 - b) **Adam and Eve chose to follow Satan not God. They turned from God to Satan...rebellng against God. God can't be in the presence of sinful people.** Like Adam and Eve, we try to hide our sins from God. We think He won't see our sin, but God sees everything we do.
 - c) **EVERYTHING suddenly changed. God's model Kingdom ended with Adam and Eve leaving the Garden. God did not fail. Adam and Eve failed to obey God. Adam was to serve and guard (or "work" and "keep") the Garden of Eden, just as priests later were to guard the tabernacle. Adam did not guard the Garden.** He tried to hide from God, but God sees everything.
 - d) God is perfect and cannot be among sinful people. Their sin separated them spiritually from God by rejecting **His rule. God was still present everywhere, but because of their sin, they were separated from the blessing and life of God.** *"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"* (Rom 3:23). His glory was no longer with them. Their intimate relationship with God ended.
 - e) **But God did not give up on Adam and Eve, nor has He given up on us today. He hates sin, yet He showed them mercy.** *"The LORD God made clothing from skins for the man and his wife, and he clothed them"*. Because they sinned, they felt shame and hid. (Gen 3:21). God made the 1st first animal sacrifice to cover them. The last sacrifice was God's naked Son on the cross who covers our sins so we can be with Him.
 - f) **God had a plan that...a serpent crusher will come.** *"I will put hostility between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring. He will strike your head, and you will strike his heel."* (Gen 3:15.) A man (Jesus) will come from Eve's seed and the serpent will strike his (Jesus) heel but the man (Jesus) will strike the serpent's head. The Man from Eve's seed is



Christ and the cost to God's Son will His life but the serpent (Satan) will be defeated forever.

Eve's future son will destroy Satan. God will send Jesus to do what Adam should have done when the serpent tempted Eve.

- g) **God allows them to live but required them to leave Eden.**
 - i) Adam and Eve have **broken the perfect relationship** that God created for them in the Garden **between: 1. Mankind and creation** – labor is now hard; between **2. Man and woman** – they hide from God in shame, blame, and argue; and between **3. God and mankind**. They no longer live with God but now are separated from God's presence. **Now they face death without Him.**
- h) **God wants His people to obey His Ways which are always better than man's ways. Obedience to Him is a theme from Genesis through Revelation.**
 - i) **After Adam and Eve left the Garden, everything goes from bad to worse.**
 - i) Sin spreads to all humans. Cain **murders Abel**. Cain *"was of the evil one."* (1 John 3:12). Seth replaced Abel (Gen:4:25-26; 6:5-8), and **death spreads**.
 - ii) Noah's father, **Lamech**, said, *"This one (Noah) will bring us relief from the agonizing labor of our hands, caused by the ground the LORD has cursed."* (Gen 5:29) Lamech hoped that Noah would defeat the serpent and the curse. **But then came the flood because of wickedness.**
 - iii) **Noah was righteous** but sinned (Gen. 5:29.) God told Noah to be fruitful and fill the earth. The promise to Noah was like the promise to Adam and Eve. God did not give up on mankind.
 - iv) Noah was not the one to give relief from the curse. *"Human wickedness was widespread on the earth and every inclination of the human mind was nothing but evil all the time"* (Gen 6:5.)
 - v) **Tower of Babel** - *"And they said, "Come, let's build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the sky. Let's make a name for ourselves; otherwise, we will be scattered throughout the earth"* Gen. 11:4. God was angry that they wanted to be like gods, so He confused their language and scattered the people throughout earth.
 - vi) **Genesis 5 records the deaths of every generation.** *"Adam's life lasted 930 years; then he died."* (Gen 5:5). God's curse on Adam and Eve is fulfilled – eat of the fruit **"and you will certainly die."**
 - j) **God gave Adam and Eve freedom to choose. Their sin brought death and struggle to earth. As a result of their sin, we will all die. Our souls will be separated from our bodies. Our souls will continue to live in hell or in the restored Kingdom with Christ eternally.**

26) Lesson 2 Recap The Perished Kingdom

- a) **Humans are no longer God's people,**
- b) **No longer live in God's place,**
- c) **Have disobeyed His rule and face His curse not His blessing.**
- d) Why didn't Adam ask God to remove the serpent or why didn't Adam remove the serpent. Instead he listened to the serpent's lies. If Adam didn't crush the serpent who will come? Will it be Abraham?

27) Lesson 3 – Promised Kingdom – Genesis 12-17

- a) God isn't responsible for the fall or man's evil. But He is active and sovereign over all things.
- b) **But before time began, God had an eternal plan.** *"For he chose us in him (Christ) before the foundation of the world, to be...blameless...before him. He made known to us the mystery of his will...that he purposed in Christ as a plan for the right time -to bring everything together in Christ, both things in heaven and things on earth in him"* (Eph 1:4,9-10.)
- c) **All is not lost. God called Abram to go to a land that God would show him.** (See the map of Abram's journey.) God chose Canaan as the home for His people.
- d) **Why did God choose Canaan as the land for His people to dwell?** Canaan was the **crossroads of the trade routes of the empires which rose and fell over the centuries** from Europe, Asia, and Africa. The world's armies marched through this narrow strip of land.
- e) **Abraham and his descendants were to represent God to world. Canaan was to be God's sanctuary for His people. They were to guard Eden and serve Him while He cared for them.**
 - i) Abram's father worshiped pagan gods (Josh 24:2-3.) Abram likely worshiped pagan gods as did his family. Yet Abraham's descendants were to be God's representative people.
 - ii) **Yet, despite Abram's past, God made an unconditional Covenant or Promise to Abraham.** This Covenant will over time restore God's model Kingdom. (See Genesis 12:1-3; Gen. 17:6-8.)
 - iii) **The promise to Abraham was not based on what Abram did but what God did.**

f) **The promise with Abraham guides the rest of Bible. It is the seed of the Gospel –**

- i) *“Now the Scripture saw in advance that God...proclaimed the gospel ahead of time to Abraham, saying, All the nations will be blessed through you” (Gal 3:7-9.)* Through Abraham, God will justify both Jew and Gentile by faith. The promised Kingdom will be fulfilled by Christ (Gen 12:1-3.)

28) What was the Promise for God’s People, God’s Place and God’s Blessing?

29) **The promise for God’s People** – The Promise - *“I will make you into a great nation, I will bless you...and all the peoples on earth will be blessed through you.” “It is a permanent covenant to be your God and the God of your offspring after you” (Gen 17:7,10; Gen 22:17.)* God’s plan to bless the families of the earth will be through Abram’s descendants (Gen 22:17) - Isaac, Jacob, Judah and kings of Judah’s line to Christ. Christ will be the servant crusher from Eve’s seed (Gen 3:15). Today, Christians are God’s people because we are Abraham’s spiritual descendants through the Christ.

30) **The promise for God’s Place** – God was to give them the whole land of Canaan.

a) *“The LORD said to Abram: Go from your land, your relatives, and your father’s house to the land that I will show you.” (Gen 12:1).* Yet, Canaan was occupied by idol worshippers. Many of them over the years would try to destroy God’s people.

b) *“And to you and your future offspring I will give the land where you are residing-all the land of Canaan-as a permanent possession, and I will be their God” (Gen 12:8)*

c) Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob all met God in Canaan and received His promise. Jacob said of Canaan, *“This is none other than the house of God. This is the gate of heaven.” Gen 28:17*

31) **The Promise - God’s Blessing – to all**

32) *“I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. [3] I will bless those who bless you, I will curse anyone who treats you with contempt, and all the peoples on earth will be blessed through you” (Gen 12:2-3. See also Gen. 22:17-18.)* In Gen 12:3, the curse from the fall is replaced with a blessing through God’s promise through Abram’s descendants.



God’s plan of salvation and great blessings for all nations was sealed by circumcision. Gen 17:10-11

33) **LESSON 3 – Recap – The Promised Kingdom** - Unconditional Promise to Abram- Genesis 12:1-3; Gen. 17:6-8 - **Promised People/Nation** through Abraham’s descendants, **the promised Place** (Canaan), and the **promised blessing** to Abraham’s descendants as well as all peoples and nations.

34) Abraham was identified in the New Testament as a hero of the faith. Abraham was justified by his faith in God – *“Abram believed the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness” (Gen 15:6.)* God’s promise to Abraham is fulfilled partly through Moses and David and ultimately fulfilled in Christ, the son of Abraham and son of David.

35) Lesson 4 – The Partial (Imperfect or Not Complete) Kingdom – Gen. 18 through 2 Chronicles

36) **This Partial (Incomplete) Kingdom covers 1,000 years from Abraham to Solomon.** We divide this lesson into four parts – Lesson 4a, 4b, 4c, 4d.

37) God’s promises to Abraham are partially (not completely) fulfilled in Israel’s history. Despite all that God did for His people, the Israelites continually rebelled against God’s plans. The nation of Israel was not the model kingdom. Yet, God’s promises are beginning to be worked out. God is making a people for himself through Abraham/Sarah and their descendants. Over and over, God chooses unworthy people to be His people. It is God who saves so no man can boast.

38) Lesson 4a – God’s People – Genesis 18 – Exodus 18

- a) **Summary of History of Lesson 4a** – See map. **The Patriarchs**, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob receive God’s promise. **Famine** - Joseph brings Jacob and family to Egypt. **Goshen** - Pharaoh gives God’s people land in Egypt. **Exodus** - God leads His people out of Egypt. **Mt. Sinai** - God’s people receive the Law, sacrificial system, tabernacle. **Wilderness wandering** - 40 years. **Moses dies. Joshua leads. Promised Land** - They cross the **Jordan River into the Promised Land** at Jericho.

KINGDOM OF GOD	SCRIPTURE REFERENCE	KEY EVENTS	PARTIAL KINGDOM
4a – God’s People	Genesis 18 – Exodus 18	Patriarchs; Joseph/Egypt Bondage; Exodus	People set free; God creates nation
4b – God’s Rule & Blessing	Exodus 19-Leviticus	Mt. Sinai, God’s dwelling place, 40 years wandering	Law, Sacrifice, God’s presence
4c - God’s Place	Numbers-Joshua	Enter Promised Land; Joshua; conquer Canaan	Land through conquest but uncertainty
4d - God’s King	Judges – 2 Chronicles	Judges; “Everyone does evil”, Samuel	Judges, Samuel, Kings (God rules through His King)

39) **The promise: ‘I will make**

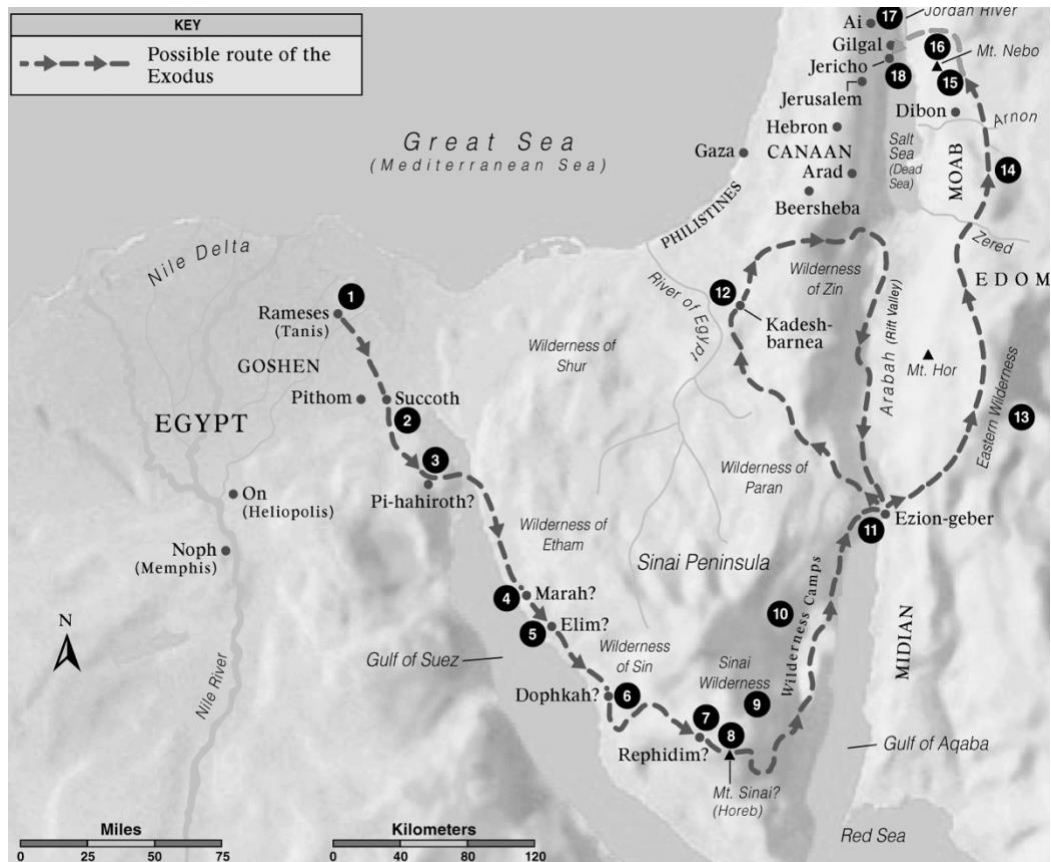
you into a great nation (people)’” (Gen 12:2)

- a) **Miraculous Birth of an Heir** - Through Abram’s seed, God promised a great nation. God’s plan depends upon Abraham and Sara producing an heir. Miraculously, despite Sarai being barren and 99 years old, God grants Abraham a son, Isaac. Without Isaac there would not be a descendant leading to Christ. Only God can fulfill His promises through Abraham.
- b) **Sacrifice of Isaac?** - God tells Abraham to sacrifice his only son (Gen 22.) He places Isaac on the altar. As Abraham is about to kill his son, God provides a ram as a substitute for Isaac. Later, God did not spare His only Son, the perfect sacrifice, who dies for our sins. **God plans do not fail.**
- c) **400 Years then Slavery** - Before Abraham dies, God tells Abraham: “...for 400 years your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own will be enslaved...But God will punish the nation they serve as slaves, afterward they will come out with great possessions” (Gen 15:13-14.)
- d) **Descendants of Abraham** - Isaac (age 60) and Rebekah had sons - Esau and Jacob (Gen 30.) Jacob had twelve sons – (Gen 35:22-29.) Jacob loved Joseph over his other sons (Genesis 37.) God ensures that Joseph becomes second in command of Egypt reporting to Pharaoh. During a 7-year famine throughout the world, Joseph saves Jacob and his family by bringing them to Egypt. Pharaoh gives the Hebrews a choice portion of land, Goshen. Could Joseph be the one to defeat the serpent? “Then Joseph died...” (Ex 1:6,8.). God brings them to Egypt only to lead them out miraculously to Canaan.
- e) **God Rescues His People** – God begins His rescue of His peoples with Moses at the burning bush (Exo 3:14). Throughout the Bible, God rescues and saves His people. **God is the hero of every story.** Moses doesn’t save Israelites. God does. The Bible is a book about God, not about what man has done. Israel is God’s first-born son (Exo 4:22.) Later Jesus is called Israel, God’s first-born son.
- f) **Exodus from Egypt** - The Hebrews multiply and over 400 years become slaves and a threat to Pharaoh. God sends Moses to lead His people (around 2 million people) out of Egypt.
- g) Throughout the Bible, **GOD SAVES HIS PEOPLE by Substitution and Conquest**
- by substitution at Passover (Passover Lamb)**- the evening before God passed over each household AND on the morning before the Hebrews left Egypt (Exo 12), the blood of a lamb is substituted for a first-born son. In Egypt, all die but those saved by blood of a first-born lamb. God passes over those who obeyed Him. Later, Christ is the true substitute for sins. “Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29). God provided the Lamb Himself, like us in every way except sin (Heb.2:17; 4:15).
 - by conquest through the defeat of Pharaoh** - Exo 14. (See also His defeat of Jericho, conquest of Canaan.) And finally, when Christ died on the cross, He defeated evil, and will fully defeat Satan when He returns.
- h) **Exodus or exit from Egypt** - About 2,000,000 of Abraham’s descendants walked out of Egypt one morning at God’s command. After a 3-month journey, God leads them to Mt. Sinai.
- 40) **Recap Lesson 4a: God’s People** - The first promise is partly fulfilled. God has brought His Jacob and his family to Egypt where they multiply. After being in bondage for 425 years, He sets His people free and they become **His people** after 435 years in Egypt. **Just as God promised Abraham.**

41) Lesson 4b – God’s Rule and Blessing

- Exodus 19 –
Leviticus

- a) The journey to the Canaan from Egypt could be finished in 11 days, yet it took 40 years. Their first stop at God’s command was at Mt. Sinai where God spent a year teaching His people what He expected of them. At Mt. Sinai, God descended from heaven



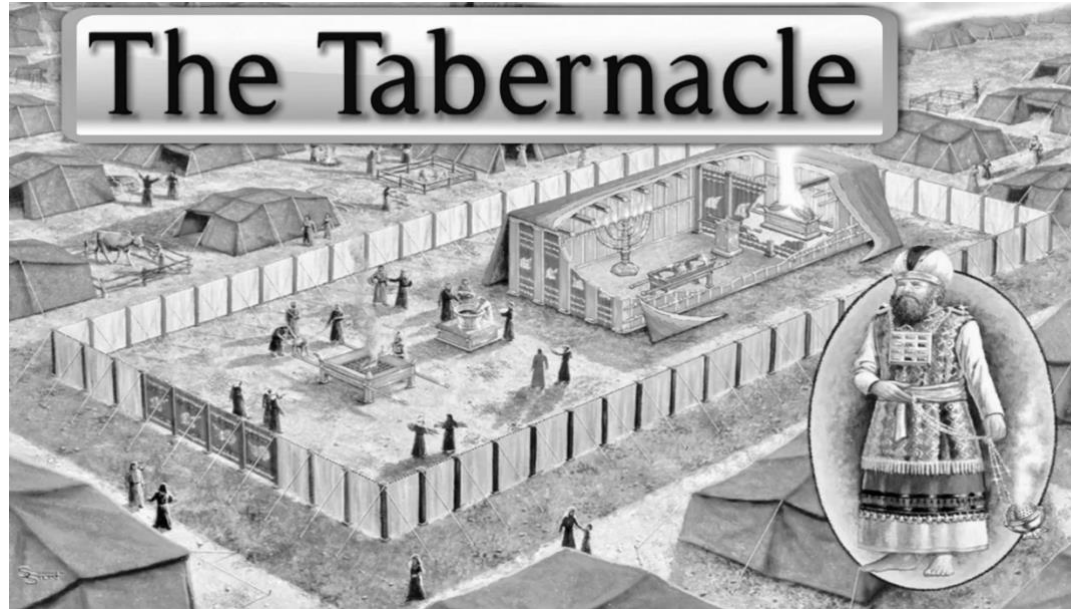
to be with His people, but this was not like Eden. They could not be in His presence under threat of death.

- b) **The promise - God’s Rule or Law** – At Mt. Sinai, God gave them the 10 Commandments and a total of 613 laws that reflect God’s character. This was God’s laws to guide their living under His guidance.
- Why was the law needed?** The law made His people aware of their sin and a way to be saved from God’s wrath for their sin. The law was preparing the people to be God’s representative people to the nations around them. The law doesn’t save. The law points to the need for a Savior. Only, in Christ do we find saving faith. The law reflects God’s character and reveals in us what is wrong and what is right AND what is needed (a substitute or later a Savior).
 - The promise - Blessing – God’s Presence** - At Mt. Sinai, God told them He wanted to dwell in their midst in a limited way (Gen 12:2). **He would bless His people through His presence.** But sinful people cannot live in His presence without being destroyed.
 - Tabernacle – God’s dwelling place** - To be with His people, **God designed the tabernacle which is a tent.** This tent was an earthly copy of a heavenly sanctuary where He would dwell. After they completed the tabernacle, “The cloud covered the tent of meeting, **and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle**” (Ex 40:34). The cloud lifted when they set out and the Lord guided them by cloud and fire throughout their journey to Canaan (Ex 40:36-38). **“I will make my dwelling among you...I will walk among you and will by your God...”** (Ex 26:11-13). **His presence and His glory was among them.**
 - Sacrifice** - To live in God’s presence a sacrifice was required. The priests sacrificed on the altar to bring a temporary atonement for the people’s sins. Once a year on the Day of Atonement, the High Priest sacrificed an animal so the people’s sins for the year would be forgiven. They presented the animal’s blood before God. The blood and life of the animal was a substitute for their sin and brought the person(s) into a right relationship with God. **The animal died so they could live.** The annual and daily sacrifices point to the perfect sacrifice, the Lamb of God, our substitute on the

cross. Today, those trusting Christ can come into the presence of God through Christ. No longer do we need a high priest, once a year, to make atone for our sins. **Christ died so we can live eternally. Today** God can dwell in the hearts of His people.

42) Recap Lesson 4b – God’s Rule/Blessing

- a) The Promise to Abraham is being partially (partly) fulfilled. **God has given the people His rules or His laws. He has blessed them with His daily presence among the people.**



43) **Lesson 4c – God’s Place – Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua.** Summary: In the book of Numbers, Israel rebels and wanders 40 years waiting to enter the Promised Land. In Deuteronomy, Moses speaks for God saying they were to obey and be blessed or disobey and be cursed. In Joshua, the Conquest of Canaan.

44) **The Promise:** ‘To your offspring I will give this land.’ (Gen 12:7.)

- a) **Numbers: Disobedience and delay** – 40 years in wilderness
- i) 12 spies over 40 days saw that Canaan flowed with “milk and honey”. Only Joshua and Caleb believed God would give them the land of Canaan. The rest were afraid of the giants in the land. Because of their fear of giants and no belief in God’s power, the people rebelled against God. God was displeased with this ungrateful, stubborn people and wanted to destroy the entire nation. Moses pleaded on behalf of the people and was concerned for God’s reputation. Instead, **God said “not one of them will ever see the land I promised.”** (Num 14:23.) **The people wandered for 40 years** until the doubters, who were over 20 years of age, died as they wandered. One year for each of the 40 days the spies were in Canaan.
- b) **Deuteronomy: Blessings and Curses**
- i) **This pattern of rebelling continued.** As Moses’ life was ending, he prepared his successor – Joshua – to lead after his death. “Joshua...was filled with the spirit of wisdom” because Moses laid his hands on him. **As they were ready to enter Canaan, Moses gave his farewell sermon – “Obey and be blessed; Disobey and be cursed.”**
- c) **Joshua: Conquest, Nation Established, Unfaithfulness and Uncertainty**
- i) **God told Joshua, “Be strong and courageous” for he would give them the land as promised.** God leads the Israelites to take miraculous possession of the land. (Josh 21:44-45.) The land was divided among the 12 tribes.
 - ii) When **they miraculously crossed the Jordan** from the east into Canaan and toward **Jericho, the tabernacle crossed with them.** “(None) of all the good promises the Lord had made to (them) failed. Everything was fulfilled.” Josh 21:45
 - iii) Joshua called them to renew their covenant with God. Joshua said they would forsake God for foreign gods, but they said, “No...we will worship the Lord.” (Josh 24:21).

- iv) Defeating the Canaanites meant destroying idols and pagan altars. The Israelites were to show the glory of the one true God. **As they occupied Canaan, they were to expand by modelling true worship so that the knowledge of God would spread, and nations would honor Him by repenting and believing. God said, ‘if you turn away and ally yourselves with...these nations that remain with you...(I) will no longer drive (them) before you.’ Josh 23:12-13**
- v) **Joshua final sermon: fear God, obey Him or you will perish from the land.**
- vi) **God’s people are finally in God’s place and under God’s rule and blessing.** Through Israel, God was to make himself known to the world. But the Israelites must keep the covenant and prosper or be expelled. (Josh 5:13-14). Israel exists to serve God’s purposes not the other way around. **Israel has taken possession of the land because God gave it to them as He promised.**

45) Recap Lesson 4c: God’s Place

- a) God has placed **His people in the land promised (His place), Canaan,** and provided the law (**rule**) and His presence as a **blessing to His people.** God’s Kingdom in God’s place has been partly established. **But His Kingdom still needs a king.**



46) Lesson 4d – God’s King – Judges through 2 Chronicles

- a) **The promise of a king to lead God’s people has slowly been revealed.**
 - i) God has slowly been revealing the need for a Savior. From Eve’s seed will come the “serpent crusher” (Gen. 3:15).. And Jacob blessed Judah saying the “*obedience of the nations shall be his.*” (Gen 49:10). **The king, who is to rule under God, must do what God wants him to do and obey His laws** (Deut. 17:18-20). Who will this king be?
- b) **The book of Judges**
 - i) Israel fails to remove all the Canaanites in the land. God isn’t happy and he doesn’t drive out the remaining nations. **God raised up flawed judges to rescue the people over and over.** These leaders were to deliver the people from their enemies. Repeatedly Israel sinned and God had mercy.
 - ii) The problem: *‘In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as they saw fit.’* (Jdgs 17:6)
- c) **1 Samuel – Saul is rejected by God to be king.**
 - i) The people wanted a king like the surrounding nations – not a king under God. **The elders told Samuel, “Appoint a king to judge us the same as all the other nations”** (1 Sam 8:5.) **Saul is anointed but rejected by God because he rejected God’s word.**
 - ii) **David is anointed king.** But suffers and is reject by Saul before the people recognize him as king. **God’s presence is with David. David is a man after God’s own heart.** (1 Sam 18:12,14, 28). Under David, Israel enjoys peace and prosperity never seen in Israel. David isn’t the “serpent-crusher” but he is a partial fulfillment of the promise.
 - iii) **Jerusalem becomes Israel’s capital.** David brings the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem. Israel’s enemies are defeated. **Jerusalem’s temple is the focus of the worship of God.**
- d) **1 Kings 1-11 - Solomon and the Golden Age. Solomon rules for 40 years in peace and prosperity. It is the pinnacle of Israel as nation.**
 - i) **Solomon built the temple, the permanent dwelling place for God and the cloud of God’s glorious presence filled the temple** (1 Kings 8:10-11). Solomon says, at the Temple dedication, (1 Kings 8: 56), **“the LORD...has given rest to his people Israel...Not one of all the good promises he made through his servant Moses has failed.”**

ii) But Solomon turns against God.

47) Recap Lesson 4d – God’s King

- a) The promise of a king has been partially fulfilled. God has provided a king who is to follow God’s law.

48) Recap of Lesson 4 – Partial Kingdom

- a) God’s people are gathered in one place (Israel) as a nation in the land promised, living under God’s king and God’s rule (law) and God’s presence in the Temple is a blessing.

KINGDOM OF GOD	PARTIAL KINGDOM
God’s People	The Israelites
God’s Place	Canaan (and Jerusalem and the temple)
God’s Rule and Blessing	God’s law and king

49) Lesson 5 – Prophesied Kingdom – 6 historical books (1 & 2 Kings; 2 Chronicles through Esther); and 17 prophetic books: Isaiah through Malachi - Summary - Solomon turned from God.

Solomon died. The kingdom is split into Israel in the North and Judah in the south. Both nations turn from God. Neither nation was strong.

50) Israel called the Northern Kingdom –

- a) Made up of 10 tribes - with the capital city in Samaria. The first king was Jeroboam I, who built two temples to worship golden calves (1 Ki 12:28-30.) All His successors continued in idolatry.
 b) Northern Kingdom Destroyed by God - After 200 years Israel was destroyed (722 BC) and people were exiled to Assyria. The kingdom ceased to exist and became a mix of nationalities. *“This disaster happened because the people...Israel sinned against the LORD... the LORD was very angry with Israel, and he removed them from his presence.”* (2 Ki 17:7, 18)

51) Judah – Southern Kingdom

- a) This kingdom included the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin which included God’s Temple in Jerusalem. All future kings of Judah were from the line of King David. Some good kings reigned like Josiah. But most were corrupt and disobedient. They were defeated by Babylonians and exiled in 597 and 586 BC. Jerusalem was destroyed as well as God’s Temple.

52) God’s Spokesmen -The Prophet’s Role in Israel and Judah

- a) They were God’s spokesmen to both Israel and Judah. They were to only speak God’s Word - 2 Pet 1:21 – *“because no prophecy ever came by the will of man; instead, men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.”* They prophesied that one day God’s King would fulfill every promise that God had made. They prophesied God’s judgement on the Israel and Judah AND on the nations around them. They called His people to obey Him and His laws. They spoke of future events that were coming plus events that were predicted hundreds or even thousands of years away.

53) The prophets were to guide the kings so that they ruled under God’s authority. They were to point to God’s blessings for the obedient and curses for the disobedient. But instead of listening to God’s messengers, the rulers and people rebelled against God. *“they kept ridiculing God’s messengers, despising his words, and scoffing at his prophets, until the LORD’s wrath was so stirred up against his people...So he brought up against them the king of the Chaldeans...who burned God’s temple...tore down Jerusalem’s wall”* and destroyed the Temple. (2 Chron 36:15-19)

54) But God did not forget His promises to Israel. In 538 BC, God had Cyrus, King of Persia, return exiles to Jerusalem. The new nation was weak and centered primarily around Jerusalem. As God had spoken through Moses and Joshua, they must obey His commands to be blessed or disobey and be cursed and removed from the land He had given them.

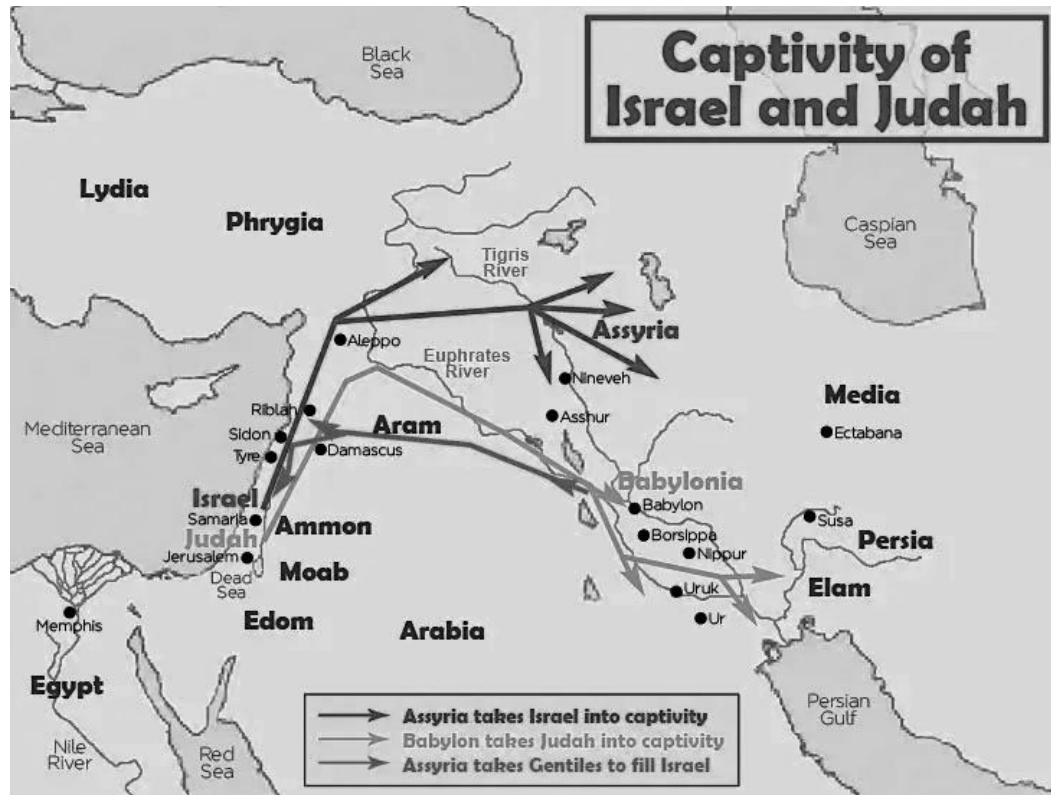
55) God had a message of judgement as well as of hope.

56) Prophet’s Message of Coming Judgement

- a) God told them that Israel and Judah must obey God or be removed from the Promised Land. God’s judgment is the reason behind Israel and Judah’s destruction. *“Because they have rejected the instructions of the Lord..., I will send fire...that will consume...Jerusalem.”* Amos 2:4b-5. Many kings thought they could avoid God by avoiding His prophets or control God by the prophets, but God will not be controlled. God’s Message: Obey or be removed.

57) Prophet’s Message of Hope

- a) God will not forget the promises He made to His people. But God will not rebuild the partial or incomplete kingdom. Instead, God points His people toward a perfect kingdom to come.



- b) The Promise to God's People made through the prophets.

- i) A new exodus

restoring His people as a spiritual people, but not in a national sense.

- ii) A new Passover lamb – Christ will die in the place of others – (Isa 53:6.)

- iii) All people are included – Israelites and all nations included in God's salvation. (Isa 49:6)

- iv) "I will give you a new heart and...I will place my Spirit within you and cause you to follow my statutes and carefully observe my ordinances." (Eze 36:26-27)

- c) The Promise of God's Place

- i) God will establish a place where God will meet them after the temple is destroyed in Jerusalem. He will provide a new Temple and restore His (new) creation (Ex 40-48; Isa 65:17)

- d) The Promise of God's Rule and Blessing

- i) God will fulfill His promise with a new covenant. (Jer. 31:31-33)

- ii) "Look, the days are coming...when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. This one will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors...Instead..."I will put my teaching within them and write it on their hearts." (Jer 31:31-34)

- iii) And a new king (the Messiah). "For a child will be born to us...and the government will be on His shoulders" (Isa 9:6)

- e) The Exiles Return to Israel

- i) God caused King Cyrus (Persia) to defeat the Babylonians and allow the people to return in 538 BC. They rebuilt the temple (Ezra, Nehemiah). But the people are still sinful. The promised time of salvation has not come as God's King hasn't come. Malachi insists that the new King will appear (Mal 3:1). "See, I am going to send my messenger, and he will clear the way before me. Then the Lord you seek will suddenly come to his temple..."

58) Recap Lesson 5 – Prophesied Kingdom

- a) God's people are now a remnant in Jerusalem left waiting for a new temple (place), and for God's presence to dwell among them, and for a new king to rule with great blessing.

- b) Waiting for the King....400 years pass during which we have no written Word from God. Israel wanted to be free of the other nations rule, but their greatest need was to repent and be delivered from their sins through the promised King. The Old Testament cries out, "He is coming!" We have seen the progressive revelation of God's plan from Genesis through Malachi. Over the years, God gave the Israelites glimpses of the meaning of God's promise to Abraham. The Old Testament

promises are not fully revealed except in Christ. As we turn to the New Testament, the King did come!

59) Lesson 6 – Present Kingdom – The Gospels – Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John

60) God's Big Picture is finally becoming clear. **God has slowly revealed His plan to send His Son.**

- a) God DID send a serpent crusher from the seed of Eve (Gen 3:15). God did fulfill His unconditional promise to Abraham (Gen 12, 15, 17, 22). God did promise to David and the prophets that the Messiah would restore creation to a perfect relationship between mankind and Himself. **AND HE DID COME!**
- b) The Old Testament promised Jesus is coming. The New Testament fulfills the promise in Christ. Both Testaments fit together perfectly. The Gospels tell us – He is here! The book of Acts tells us to Proclaim Him! The Epistles/letters Explain Him! Revelation shouts that He is coming back!

61) The Gospels – Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John

- a) **They explain what Jesus said, did and taught - the promised King has finally come.** All of God's promises are fulfilled in Christ. Jesus was born by the seed of Mary and the power of the Holy Spirit. God's promised King is born to save His people through substitution and through conquest.
- 62) **Matthew, Mark & Luke are similar, but each has a unique purpose. John's style is unique with some new material.** John writes, *"In the beginning was the Word (Jesus), and the Word (Jesus) was with God, and the Word (Jesus) was God. [2] He was with God in the beginning. All things were created through him, and apart from him not one thing was created that has been created"* (John 1:1-3). . . *"...his name (Jesus) is called the Word of God"* (Rev 19:13). *"God is with us"* (Mat 1:23). **But the gospels all present the same message: Jesus came to bring salvation to fulfill the promises of God in the Old Testament.**
- 63) **Jesus said of the religious leaders who opposed Him, "You are of your father the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him...because he is a liar and the father of lies"** (John 8:44.) **When we are against Jesus, we are for Satan.** Jesus was the true seed of Eve who would crush the serpent's heel.

64) **Jesus is God's people, God's place and God's rule and blessing.**

- a) **Jesus is God's People – Jesus will stand before God in our place, representing each of us as individuals as well as us as the Church, the body of Christ.** *"I am with you always, to the end of the age."* (Matt 28:20.) Jesus took the punishment we deserved for our sin and died for us. **Because of Christ we can stand before a Holy God.**
 - i) **Jesus is the true Adam** (Luke 3:23-38.) Jesus was fully man, fully God, and a descendant of Adam. He is the only one tempted without sin. By trusting in Christ, we are a new creation and no longer a part of the sin nature of Adam's descendants and no longer headed by Adam but headed by Christ. *"For just as through one man's disobedience (Adam's) the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man's obedience (Christ's) the many will be made righteous."* Rom 5:19
 - ii) **Jesus is the true Israel** (Luke. 3:23-38). Israel was to be God's holy people reflecting His character and obeying His law, but they failed. Jesus did not and will not fail. **We are the spiritual descendants of Abraham and place our trust in Christ.** See Hosea 11:1, *"out of Egypt I called my son."*
 - iii) **Jesus is the true vine.** He is the true vine (**the source of true Life**) through which all must come to God. (Joh 15:5)
 - iv) Jesus is God's people – Jesus claimed to be the true Israel along with all who are joined to Him.
- b) **Jesus is God's place** where God can be met. **The coming of Jesus was the arrival of God.**
 - i) **Jesus is the true tabernacle (dwelling) and the true Temple.** The tabernacle was a glimpse of God's presence among us. **The old Temple** pointed to Christ. "The word (Jesus) became flesh and dwelt (or tabernacled) among us." (Joh 1:14) **The temple: "Destroy this temple and I will raise it in 3 days."** (Joh 2:19). Through Christ, we can know God's presence individually and as the church.
- c) **Jesus is God's Rule** - under God's rule we can be fully satisfied but sin separates us without Christ.
 - i) **Jesus is the new covenant fulfilling the law.** *"Don't think I have come to abolish the Law...I did not come to abolish but to fulfill (them)."* (Matt 5:17; Gal 3:13-14) *"By saying a new covenant, he has declared that the first is obsolete...what is obsolete...is about to pass away."* Heb. 8:13.

- ii) **Jesus is the true King** – He is a descendant of King David who was prophesied would establish God’s rule in a new age. **The Kingdom of God has come because God’s King has come.**
 - iii) **Jesus is the Son of God** – His miracles point to His divine power to heal, raise the dead, and calm a storm. The demons tremble before Him. (Matt 12:22)
 - d) **Jesus is God’s Blessing** – Jesus is the source of God’s blessing. *“Come to me all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”* (Matt 11:28)
 - i) **Christ offers salvation through His conquest over Satan. He defeated Satan, and we are blessed by our new relationship with God through Christ and the Holy Spirit.** Oh, what a Savior! We will enjoy what has been lost since Eden with eternal rest.
- 65) **Bible depends on the cross**
- a) **In the Old Testament, there was no adequate sacrifice for sin to appease (stop) God’s anger. True salvation from God could only come if there was a perfect substitute – Jesus. At the cross, the devil was defeated but he remains an enemy to all mankind and seeks only to destroy until the final judgement** (Rev 20:10; Isa 27:1; Rom 16:20; Heb 2:14).
 - b) **Jesus is the perfect revelation of God; the radiance of His glory; the exact imprint of God’s nature. He is the Creator and Sustainer of all that exists. Everything belongs to Him and exists for Him. He is the author of our salvation, the perfecter of our faith, and the only one in whom we can find life. He is the one who answered the prophets call for a Messiah. Jesus is bigger than we can think. He is enough.**
- 66) **Jesus told his disciples that He would leave earth and then a delay before He would return.**
- 67) **Recap Lesson 6 – The Present Kingdom**
- a) **Christ is God’s People as the new Adam, He replaces the old Adam who sinned, and He is new Israel. He is God’s place now that He dwells in us as the true tabernacle. Jesus is the true ruling King providing the blessing of resurrection Life under the new Covenant.**
- 68) **Lesson 7 – Proclaimed Kingdom – Acts through Jude**
- 69) **These books teach what will happen between Jesus’ first coming and His second coming.**
- 70) **We are living in the last days. The Kingdom of God has come now...but not fully yet. We are living in the PRESENT AGE of the Kingdom of God because Christ has come. But we are waiting for Christ’s return in the “AGE TO COME” when the Kingdom will be fully complete.**
- 71) **What is the reason for the delay in Christ’s return?**
- a) **What seems like a long time to us isn’t to God. *“Where is this ‘coming’ that he promised?...Dear friends, don’t overlook this one fact: With the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day.”*** (2 Pet 3:4,8)
 - b) **God wants more people to hear and repent before it is too late. *“The Lord... is patient with you, not wanting any to perish but all to come to repentance.”*** (2 Pet 3: 9) God has always wanted all people to know Him.
- 72) **Christ Commands Us to Make Disciples While We Wait for His Return**
- a) **Matthew 28:18-20 – *“Jesus came near and said to them, “All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. [19] Go, therefore, and **make disciples** of all nations, **baptizing them** in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, [20] **teaching them** to observe everything I have commanded you. **And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”*****
- 73) **Who do you know that is close to you - a friend, a family member, a neighbor – that has not accepted Jesus as their Savior? Write down the names of two people. Take time to pray for them right now.**
- 74) **WE ARE LIVING IN THE LAST DAYS**
- a) **The Holy Spirit was sent at Pentecost. We are to proclaim the Gospel to all nations and then Jesus will return! We live in the Proclaimed Kingdom which began with the anointing of the Holy Spirit.**
- 75) **Age of the Holy Spirit**
- a) **In the Old Testament, the Spirit of God lived only in special individuals for certain tasks. NOW – the Holy Spirit fills all God’s people.**
 - i) **The gospel spreads in Acts through the work of the Holy Spirit - from Jerusalem (See Acts 2-7) to Judea (Acts 9:2-40) to Samaria (Acts 8:8-25) to UGANDA (Col 1:28-29) and to ENDS OF THE**

EARTH (Acts chapters 13-38). *“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be my witnesses...”* (Acts 1:8)

b) While we wait for His return, the Holy Spirit points us to Him.

76) Work of the Holy Spirit

a) **Brings new birth** - Jesus tells Nicodemus, *“Unless someone is born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.”* (John 3:3)

i) **Convicts of sin and moves us to faith.** The Spirit opens our eyes to understand the Gospel, convicts of our sin, and moves us to repentance and faith (Luke 19:10.) *“No one can come to me (Christ) unless the Father draws them”* (John 6:44.)

ii) For conversion to occur, the Holy Spirit must intervene for anyone to be born again. The Spirit alone changes their heart to turn to God. **All Christians have the Spirit living within them.** *‘If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to him.’* (Rom 8:9)

b) **Equips us to serve Christ.**

i) Gives us courage to witness what Christ has done in our life. We are to witness to non-believers. For conversion to occur, the Spirit must intervene for them to be born again. (Ez 36:26; 2 Cor 4:3-6)

ii) Equips us for ministry to one another. *“A manifestation of the Spirit is given to each person for the common good”* (1 Cor 12: 7.) The Holy Spirit gives gifts to each of us to build Christ’s Church. We are each a part of the body of Christ.

c) **Produces Holiness**

i) **Puts to death our sins so we can live.** *“Because if you live according to the flesh, you are going to die. But if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.”* (Rom 8:13)

ii) Redeems us to receive God’s blessing (Gal 3:14)

iii) We have been saved already in the past from the penalty of sin by death of Christ on cross (Eph 2:8.) We are being saved from the power of sin because the Spirit is living within us and gives us a new heart which hates sin and loves Jesus (Rom 8:13.) And will be saved eternally from the presence of sin in the age to come because evil will be destroyed.

d) **The Holy Spirit helps the reader understand and apply Scripture** (1 Cor 2:6-16).

i) The Bible is logical, and anyone can understand its basic content. But without the Holy Spirit we are blind. Sin cuts off one’s spiritual awareness in Christ. Paul writes of some people that *“the god of this age has blinded the minds of the unbelievers to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God”* (2 Cor 4:4.) The Spirit transforms the mind of the believer as we study helping us to be thoughtful and careful in interpreting the Bible. We must use our mind and allow the Spirit to sharpen it. The Holy Spirit helps us understand” old truth” but does not reveal “new truth.”

77) Recap Lesson 7 – Proclaimed Kingdom

a) **God’s People are the Church** – transformed people of all nations who represent the new Israel. **God’s Place** – collective **Body of Christ**, the Church, which is God’s living temple here on earth - the church scattered and the church gathered for all believers world-wide. **God’s Rule and Blessing** – **The Church lives in perfect relationship with God** because of the death of Christ on the cross who offers a new covenant (rule) and sent the Holy Spirit to provide us blessing after blessing in Christ.

b) **But now we wait for Christ to return:** *“Dear friends, we are God’s children now, and what we will be has not yet been revealed. We know that when he appears, we will be like him because we will see him as he is”* (1 Joh 3:2)

78) Lesson 8 – Perfected Kingdom – Revelation

79) The Book of Revelation is a letter and a prophetic call to us. It is also apocalyptic or symbolic.

a) Written by the apostle John near the end of the first century during a time of great persecution of the church. God shows John a series of visions about what is going on behind the scenes of human history. These visions are to strengthen believers to persevere despite their suffering. The book is also written to give us hope in our life today.

80) The book begins with **seven letters from the Lord Jesus to seven churches**. The letters are representative of the whole church in every age. Christ urges them and us to stay faithful.

a) **There is a throne in heaven!** (Rev 4:2). *“Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth..., saying: “To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power,*

for ever and ever!...and the elders fell down and worshiped.” (Rev 5:13-14; see Isa 53:7; Jn 1:29, Dan 7:13-14). Jesus, the lamb of God, who died for us, suffered, and triumphed demands our worship. (Rev 5:6)

- b) We may feel like we are not in control and that is true. **BUT God is in control** despite the sin and destruction of this world. There is a throne in heaven, and someone IS on the throne.

81) The final judgement

- a) **The last few chapters take us to the end of time. God destroys the forces of evil:** Babylon, the beast, the false prophet and Satan are thrown into the lake of fire.
- i) AND those who were opposed to Christ will also be judged. Rev 20:15 **“Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.”** Rev 20:15 could read this way, “My friend or family member whose name is not found written in the book of life will be thrown into the lake of fire.”

82) What can you do for those who need to make Christ their Savior?

- a) **Pray.**
- b) **Share your faith in Christ.**
- c) **Use your Bible to share the Gospel.**
- i) **Live a life honoring God so others will love the God you serve.**

83) For those receiving a Bible for the first time, these teachers and pastors are here to help you open your Bible, learn to read, study, and share the gospel with your Bible. We are handing you a Bible because there is someone you know who can help you use it...Especially teach you how to share the gospel.

84) A NEW CREATION!

- a) **God’s judgement is final. With Christ’s return, justice is done, and evil is destroyed...forever!** As a result, God’s final work of salvation can now be completed. It is important for us to have a vision of what a restored creation looks like.
- b) Rev 21:1-4 – *“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, I heard a loud voice from the throne: Look, God’s dwelling is with humanity, and he will live with them. They will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them and will be their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; grief, crying, and pain will be no more, because the previous things have passed away.”*
- c) **Once again perfect relationships with God will be restored as well as between relationships between human beings and creation will be in harmony once more.**
- i) **We will not be in opposition to God but under Him so nature will flourish.** A vibrant, fruitful world with a river flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb. (Rev 22:9-10) **Eden is restored.**
- ii) **One day we will stand with “...a vast multitude from every nation, tribe, people and language, which no one could number standing before the throne and before the Lamb.”** (Rev 7:9)
- iii) **Best of all -“Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them”** Rev 21: 3. The bride of Christ is united with Her Husband. There is no temple as there is no need for one (Rev 21:22). **God is everywhere and His people enjoy intimate communion with Him.**

85) RECAP Lesson 8: The Perfected Kingdom of God

- a) At last, all the promises of God are finally, fully fulfilled.
- b) **The Kingdom of God is made perfect. God’s people from all nations, live in God’s place in a new creation under His rule and enjoy His blessing for all eternity.** God will reward those for their progressive sanctification and those who have used the gifts God has given them well. Our loyalty to God’s call on our lives in response to the Gospel will be rewarded. We will be where we long to be...with God...forever!
- c) Have you ever dreamed of what the new heaven and new earth will look like? Will it be boring? What will we do? OR Is it glorious beyond our ability to understand it? This song helps us dream of what the new earth will be like, “I Can Only Imagine” by Bart Millard
- *I can only imagine. What it would be like when I walk by your side...*
 - *What my eyes would see, when your face is before me. I can only imagine, I can only imagine*

- *Surrounded by your glory, what will my heart feel? Will I dance for you Jesus or in awe of You be still?*
 - *Will I stand in your presence, to my knees will I fall? I can only imagine*
 - *Will I sing hallelujah? Will I be able to speak at all? I can only imagine. I can only imagine.*
 - *When that day comes, when I find myself standing in the Son. I can only imagine.*
 - *When all I will do, is forever, forever worship you. I can only imagine. I can only imagine.*
- d) John presents a vision of what being with God, the Father, God, the Son, and God, the Holy Spirit will be like. Glorious!** If we are in awe of Him and look forward to being WITH HIM, shouldn't we want to proclaim HIM to everyone we know? **To represent Him we must proclaim Him for He is a glorious, faithful King.**

WHAT CAN YOU DO WITH WHAT YOU LEARNED TODAY?

- 86) What will you do today when you leave with your own personal Bible? Will you store your Bible on a shelf and not read it??**
- 87) The Bible is a relational Book. God wants to have a relationship with you through the Holy Spirit. Pray before you read your Bible for the Holy Spirit to guide you and give you direction for your day. God wants to work with you. To build your relationship with Him through His Word, through prayer, and through your church.**
- 88) Decide to use your Bible beginning today! Read your Bible every day.**
- a) Don't let your list of what needs to be done today or let other voices distract you. **Pick a time and place to read and study the Bible. Begin by reading a Psalm a day or a chapter of Mark every day,**
 - b) **Have a child or youth read to the family each day.**
 - c) Don't rush reading the Bible. Take time to understand what you are reading. If you don't understand some things. Ask a teacher in your church to help you.
- 89) When You Read the Bible, Ask These Questions? – These are used around the world...they work!**
- a) What does the passage say? What don't I understand? What did passage mean to the original audience? What does it say about God and Christ? What does this passage tells us about man or myself? How does this passage change how I relate to others? What does this passage prompt me to pray? How can I apply this to my life?
- 90) Share the Bible with your family, neighbors, friends, and strangers...**In worship. In small groups. To encourage others. You have written the names of family members and friends who need to accept Christ as Savior. Use your Bible to read God's Word with them....their lives will change.
- 91) The Bible is our essential spiritual food. God's Word produces Life!**– 1 Pet 1:23-25 – For you *“have been born again...of imperishable-through the living and enduring word of God.”* 2 Tim 3:17 – *“so...(you) may be complete, equipped for every good work.”*
- 92) Teach Christ from all the Scriptures. Love Christ through all the Scriptures.**
- 93) God is working right now where you live. Join Him in His work. He is looking for laborers in the vineyard for a great harvest? Don't rule yourself out.**

WISDOM LITERATURE - We have not covered these books, but they fit into God's story. **Job** deals with suffering and God's sovereignty. Though Job's questions about suffering, he submits to God. **Psalms** are a book of praises focused on God, as the great king of the earth and of his people Israel. They are quoted in the N.T. more than any other OT book. Some point to Jesus (see Psalm 45:6-7; 22:1; 2; 89:19-29; 110). **Proverbs** offers practical wisdom, moral virtue, and one's relationship to God and others. **Ecclesiastes** says that there is only one thing that can satisfy man: to fear God and keep His laws (Ecc 12:13). Song of **Solomon** is God's marriage manual. The book presents God's perspective on married love Shulamite bride.

Partial Source: Big Picture course: www.godsbigpicture.co.uk. Link to <https://www.africabibleministries.bible/latest-news>. All Bible quotes are italicized and from the Christian Standard Bible.