

Alpha and Omega

BIBLE

OVERVIEW COURSE

IN 40 LESSONS



Rejep and Layla Aydin

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Preface

In preparing this course we are indebted to Phil Crowter's *Preaching God's Big Story* (Good Book Company, 2016) and his pictures, which we have used with permission. Also to Matt Searles' *God's Story* (Lion Hudson Ltd, 2021). The rest of the course is born out of Leyla's degree in Biblical Studies and more than three decades of Rejep and Leyla teaching God's word to Central Asian believers. The course was written to fill a need for a simple course that would address the issues that are particularly relevant to the church in this part of the world.. It is a tool ordinary believers can use as they gather with other believers, so that together they can grow in their understanding and love of God's word.

Introduction

Here are 40 lessons to help you to get to know the story of the Bible.

Each lesson has lots of questions for you to answer. The number in brackets after each question indicates the number of the answer at the bottom of the lesson. Try to answer the question before looking at the answer!

Each lesson has references to verses from other parts of the Bible. If they are in **bold**, it is important to find them and read them. If they are not in bold, you can look them up if you have time.

I pray that you will enjoy learning and sharing with others this most wonderful of stories!

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Lesson 1:

The books of the Bible



For this lesson you will need to look at the **table of contents** at the beginning of your Bible.

Introduction

- **The Bible is a collection of books.** There are 66 books in the Bible: 39 books in the Old Testament and 27 books in the New Testament. They were written at different times, by different authors. They also have different genres (for example: history, poetry, letters).

How many books are there in the Bible? [1]

- **The Bible is divided into two parts:** the Old Testament (or Old Covenant) and the New Testament (or New Covenant). Covenant means agreement. In the Old Testament, God made various agreements (or covenants) with his people, for example, with Abraham, with Noah, with the Israelites on Mount Sinai, and with David. But in the New Testament he made a new agreement (or covenant) with the blood of Jesus the Messiah. This covenant is superior to all the covenants of the Old Testament because it fulfills all the promises of the Old Testament.

How is the Bible divided? [2]

What is a “covenant”? [3]

- **Both parts of the Bible are God’s words to us.** At the time of Jesus, there was already the Bible—the Old Testament. The Jews called it “Scripture” and read it in synagogues. They believed it was inspired by God. But after the death of the apostles, the believers collected the books written about Jesus (the Gospels) and the letters written by the apostles. Even during the time of the apostles, believers realised that the letters of the apostles were also inspired by God (2 Peter 3:15–16). Paul writes to Timothy: *All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, reproof, correcting, for training in righteousness* (2 Timothy 3:16).

How are all the books of the Bible useful? [4]

The Old Testament

The Old Testament is about how God created the world and people, and chose a people group for himself. There are beautiful promises in the Old Testament that are only fulfilled in the New Testament.

There are different types of books in the Old Testament: books of the law, books of history, books of wisdom, and books of the prophets.

The Pentateuch (Torah)

The first five books are called the Pentateuch or the Torah.

This is the story from the beginning of the world to the death of Moses—until the time when God's people were about to conquer the promised land.

The Pentateuch tells us that:

1. God created the world.
2. People sinned.
3. God sent a flood to destroy all people, but he saved Noah and his family.
4. God chose Abraham to be the father of his people, and so his descendants became God's chosen people.
5. God saved his people from slavery in Egypt through the prophet Moses.
6. On Mount Sinai, God made a covenant with them: He will be their God, and they will keep his laws.
7. Because of their disobedience, God's people had to live in the wilderness for 40 years. And at the end of 40 years, God led them to the border of the promised land.
8. Moses taught the law of God to the new generation.

God made wonderful promises to Abraham, which can be read in Genesis 12:1–7. The story of the Bible is about how God fulfills these promises. In the Old Testament, they are only partially fulfilled.

What did God give Abraham? [5]

The writings that describe the history of the people of Israel: Joshua to Esther

There are 12 history books: they are the history of God's people in the promised land. They are also called The Prophets' Writings Part 1.

God gave his people rulers and kings to rule over them, but most of these rulers and kings chose not to obey God. The greatest kings were David and his son Solomon. During their reigns, it seemed that all the promises to Abraham had come true. But then we see how the people of God did not obey God but worshipped other gods.

Eventually God drove them to another land. After 70 years, some of God's people returned to the promised land.

Who were the greatest kings? [6]

Why did God banish the people to another land? [7]

The books of wisdom (Zabur)

There are five books of wisdom: **Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Songs.**

These books contain wise teachings about life for us. They teach us wisdom and how to live successfully.

The Psalms are a collection of songs of worship and prayers to God. We can use them in our worship and in our prayers!

What do these five books teach? [8]

What are the Psalms useful for? [9]

The books of the prophets

The other 17 books of the Old Testament are the books of the prophets. Prophets were messengers of God.

To understand the books of the prophets, we need to know the books of history. And to understand what the prophets wrote, we need to know when they wrote:

1. Some of the prophets wrote during the reign of the kings of Israel. They warned God's people that if they did not turn to God, God would punish them.
2. Some of the prophets wrote their books while they were in exile. They comforted God's people, saying that God did not reject them forever.
3. Some of the prophets wrote when they returned home after being exiled. They encouraged God's people with the promise that he would remove their shame.

Through the prophets, God warned, comforted, and encouraged his people.

What do you need to know to understand the books of the prophets? [10]

What are three things God does through prophets? [11]

New Testament

In the New Testament we read about how God himself—the Creator of the Universe—entered our world and became the perfect man. Jesus is God's Promised King, the Messiah, who brings salvation. In the New Testament all the promises of the Old Testament are being fulfilled.

In other words, there is only one hero in the Bible: Jesus the Messiah.

Jesus was God's solution to the problem of sin which separates us from God.

Who is the main hero in the Bible? [12]

There are different types of books in the New Testament too.

Gospels and Acts of the Apostles

First there are historical books.

The Gospels: The first four books tell the story of Jesus' life (these are called the Gospels or Injil). Four people wrote accounts of his life: **Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John**.

Then there is **Acts of the Apostles**. This book was written by Luke. It is a story about the new family of God, which means the church. This book tells how the good news about the Messiah spread to many countries.

How many history books are there in the New Testament? [13]

Who wrote the book of Acts of the Apostles? [14]

Letters

After the book of Acts, there are 21 letters from Peter, John, Paul and the other apostles to teach the good news and to encourage and correct the churches.

Who wrote the letters? [15]

Revelation

The last book of the Bible is **Revelation**. In it, John describes his vision that shows us the future where Jesus has conquered sin, death and the devil! God and his people will live together in the new earth forever! This is the complete fulfillment of the promises that God made to Abraham.

Who will live together at the end of the story? [16]

Practical task

If you haven't done this before, read one Bible passage each day (several verses). And ask yourself the following questions:

1. What is written here about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?
2. What is written here about people?
3. Is there a command to obey, a warning to us, or an example to follow?
4. What does God teach me from this passage?
5. Who can I share this with?

Write your answers in a notebook.

Answers

- 1 – 66.
- 2 – Old Testament and New Testament.
- 3 – Covenant means agreement.
- 4 – For teaching, reproof, correction, for instruction in righteousness.
- 5 – Beautiful promises.
- 6 – David and his son Solomon.
- 7 – The people of God did not obey God but worshipped other gods.
- 8 – Wisdom—how to live successfully.
- 9 – We can use them in our worship and in our prayers!
- 10 – We need to know when they wrote.
- 11 – Through the prophets, God warned, comforted, and encouraged.
- 12 – Jesus the Messiah.
- 13 – 5.
- 14 – Luke.
- 15 – Peter, John, Paul and other apostles.
- 16 – God and his people.

Lesson 2:

In the beginning



Read **Genesis 1:1–2:15** (from Genesis chapter one verse one to chapter two verse fifteen).

The Trinity

Genesis 1:1: *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*

What was there before God created the heavens and the earth? [1]

Genesis 1:3: *And God said: “Let there be light”—and there was light.*

How did God create the world? [2]

Read **John 1:1–3.** *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...*

Who was with God in the beginning? [3]

Read **John 1:14–17.** Who is the “Word”? [4]

Genesis 1:2: *The earth was empty and faceless, darkness was over the abyss, and the Spirit of God hovered over the waters.*

Who hovered over the waters? [5]

So in the very first chapter of the Bible we see the Trinity: God, the Son (the Word) and the Holy Spirit.

Read **Genesis 1:26–27.** It is very interesting that God said *our* image and *our* likeness.

This shows us that God is one but from another perspective not one.

Read **Deuteronomy 6:4**. God is one God.

How many gods do we worship? [6]

We do not worship three gods, but we know that our one God is three persons. The one God has three persons who love each other perfectly.

It is not romantic love, but constant selfless love that pleases the others.

God is love (1 John 4:8). In order to love you need to have another person. It is impossible to love if there is no one to love! The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit loved each other beautifully even before the creation of the world.

Read **Deuteronomy 6:5**. What does God tell his people to do? [7]

God tells us to do what he has been doing since before he created the world! God made us to love him and to love people.

We see the Trinity in the Old and New Testaments. For example:

- In Genesis chapters 18–19, God is both in heaven and on earth. Of course, God the Father is still in heaven, and yet we see God speaking to Abraham on earth as man to man. How can it be? When we understand that God is one, but three in one, this becomes understandable.
- In John 14:16–17, Jesus says that he will ask God the Father to send the Holy Spirit to his disciples.

When do we first meet the Trinity in the Bible? [8]

Humans are made to have a relationship with God

Read **Genesis 1:26–27**. How are we different from animals? [9]

What does it look like to be made in God's image? [10]

What kind of people have dignity and worth? Adults? The rich? The ones that are very strong? The ones that are very smart? [11]

We must never reject those whom God created. Our job is to love everyone, regardless of their age, gender, appearance, race, ability, wealth etc.

Read **Revelation 4:11**. Why should we worship God? [12]

We are created to worship God. When we worship God, it brings us joy and brings God joy too!

Adam's task

God placed Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden. But God gave them the whole world!

Read **Genesis 1:28**. What did God tell them to do? [13]



What does this mean? What did God want them to do? [14]

Why did Adam need to reign over the animals? How are animals useful? [15]

God did not give them land so that they would protect it, so that they would not change anything, like in a museum. God gave them land so that they could use it and discover new things for themselves, as well as to make the world even more beautiful.

So Adam and Eve were created in the image of God to **rule the world under the rule of God**.

Read **Genesis 2:9**. Why did God create many trees? [16]

Read **Genesis 2:10–14**. Why did God put them by a river? [17]

There was sand along the seashore and the river. Why did God give us sand? [18]

Read **Genesis 2:12**. What good things did God create for them to find? [19]

Why did God give us precious stones and gold in the earth? [20]

Read **Genesis 2:15**. What did Adam have to do? [21]

Work is good for us! It's terrible when someone has no work and sits at home all day.

God wanted people not only to be able to grow food to feed themselves, God wanted us to enjoy this world. What can we do to enjoy God's world more? [22]

We bring glory to God when we do something to make the world even more beautiful. And we dishonour God when we do something so that the world is less beautiful. For example, throwing rubbish on the ground.

How do you glorify God in your life?

Answers

- 1 – Nothing was there, but God was always there.
- 2 – He said it and it happened. God created by his word.
- 3 – In the beginning the Word was with God.
- 4 – Jesus.
- 5 – Spirit of God.
- 6 – One!
- 7 – Love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your strength.
- 8 – In the first chapter.
- 9 – We are distinguished by the fact that we are made in the likeness of God.
- 10 – We can speak, love, write, make plans for the future and, most of all, communicate with God.
- 11 – Everyone has dignity and value as the image of God, even small children and those with disabilities.
- 12 – Because he created us.
- 13 – Their task was to be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it.
- 14 – He wanted them to:
 - fill the world with children
 - cultivate fruit trees, walnut trees, vegetables, rice, wheat, etc.
 - discover coffee, chocolate, spices, etc.
- 15 – Milk and eggs.
 Wool for clothes and blankets.
 To pull a plough in the fields.
 To pull carts to carry belongings.
 For travel (especially horses).
 For sacrifices (Genesis 4:4).
 And then for food (9:3—God told Noah that he could eat meat).
- 16 – To give delicious fruit.
 To give us wood for the fire.
 So we could build houses.
 For us to make furniture, musical instruments.
 So that it is pleasant to look at them, especially in autumn, when the colors of the leaves change.
- 17 – So that they have fresh water for drinking and washing.
 So that they can travel, because in the beginning there were no roads.
 The garden of Eden was not a prison!
- 18 – So that we can build sandcastles!
 For us to make glass.
 So that we make microchips for phones and computers.
- 19 – Gold, fragrant resin, onyx stone.
- 20 – So that people can decorate themselves.
 So that husbands can show love to their wives!
 So that we have money.
 So that we can make computers and telephones.
 And so that people can decorate the temple, which will be a picture of the heavenly temple (Revelation 21:18–20).
- 21 – To cultivate the garden and take care of it.
- 22 – God really likes it when:
 - we prepare delicious food.
 - we furnish our home beautifully and comfortably so that we can show hospitality to needy people.
 - people invent new things.
 What other ideas do you have?

Lesson 3:

Sin



The garden of Eden

Read **Genesis 3:1–24**.

What did Satan, in the form of a snake, tell Eve? (3:1, 4–5) [1]

He suggests that God is not speaking the truth and that God is not generous.

Did Satan tell the truth? [2]

Adam and Eve were already like God, they were created in his image! And now a creature, not created in the image of God, is speaking to them. He tells them that if they do what he says, they will become like God!

If Adam and Eve had not sinned, what would have happened? (3:24) [3]

Was the knowledge Satan spoke of good for them? Did that make them happy? What will they learn in verse 7? [4]

What work did God give Adam in 2:15? [5]

So, what should they have done when the serpent spoke to them? [6]

Adam and Eve rejected God. God gave them everything they needed to be happy. But that was not enough for them. They wanted to be in the place of God so that they could control their lives.

This is so terrible! But we do the same. We hurt God when we disobey him and obey Satan. We do not want God to rule over us. We want to live as we please. We make God angry.

How are we like Adam and Eve? [7]

Five results of their sin

1. They were ashamed.

Genesis 3:7: When Adam and Eve sinned, they knew immediately that they had done something very wrong. They were ashamed. What did they do? [8]

They used to be happy. Now they are ashamed of themselves and do not love themselves.

2. Sin spoiled their relationship with each other

Genesis 3:12: What does Adam do? [9]

Genesis 3:16: How will Adam and Eve now relate to each other? [10]

Tragically this rule can easily be cruel and selfish. But this is not God's plan for family life.

3. God cursed the earth

Genesis 3:17–18: How does their sin affect the growing of food? [11]

4. Sin brought pain and death

Genesis 3:16–19: How will their lives now change? [12]

But God is merciful—they will not die right away. God has a plan to save people!

5. Sin spoiled their relationship with God

Genesis 3:8: Do they want to talk to God now? [13]

Genesis 3:21: God does not immediately drive them out. What did he do first? [14]

It is God who goes to humans to take away their sin and remove their shame. Reconciliation with God always starts with God's loving actions. Notice that there was the death of the animal. In order to bring people back into fellowship with God, something must die.

Genesis 3:23: What did God do? [15]

They could no longer live with God. Sin separates us from God forever.

What are the five results of sin? [16]

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Sin spoils everything. Sin leads to hell. But this is not the end of the story!

The first and the second Adam

In the middle of this story, God gives us hope.

Genesis 3:15: What will the descendant of Eve do? [17]

What does this mean? [18]

The rest of the Old Testament prepares us for who this person will be and the New Testament reveals who this second Adam is.

1 Corinthians 15:21–22: *And as death came into this world through one person, so through one person came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so all in Christ will be made alive.*

Who is the second Adam? [19]

How did death come to us? [20]

How do we live? [21]

If we sin, we deserve to die. Jesus came to die in our place so that we can live forever (**John 3:16**)!

Daily Challenge

It's so hard to see our own sin. It is important to ask God every day to show us our sins. In that way we can live a life that pleases God.

Psalm 139:23–24: *Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*

Extra: But where did the devil and evil come from?

Genesis 1:31: What did God say about everything he created? [22]

Colossians 1:15–16: These verses speak of Jesus. What did he create? [23]

Who created the spirits? [24]

We need to fear the Creator and not what God created!

Where did Satan (the name of the devil) and evil come from? God always gives the choice to listen to and obey him or not. We would be like robots if he didn't give us free will. Without free choice, we could not love God.

Revelation 12:7–9: Who is Michael? (Jude 1:9) [25]

Who is the dragon? [26]

What happened in the beginning? [27]

After this, the angels who rebelled against God became demons. But the angels who did not rebel against God still serve God and God's people (Hebrews 1:14).

When Jesus died and rose again, he defeated Satan. But Satan is still fighting against God and his people. God has given us all the protection we need to stand firm (Ephesians 6:10–18). We need to put on God's protection and use the weapons God gives us every day!

Revelation 20:10: When Jesus returns, what will he do with Satan? [28]

And then there will be no sin! We will live with Jesus in the new earth forever without any evil at all!

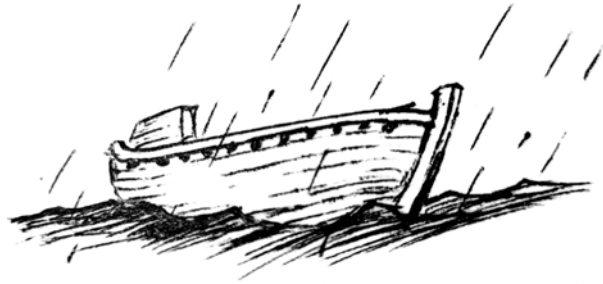
What do you need to repent of today?

Answers

- 1 – **3:1:** *Did God really say, “Do not eat from any tree in the garden”?*
3:4–5: *No, you will not die ... It’s just that God knows that when you eat them, your eyes will open, and you will become the same as him, knowing good and evil.*
- 2 – No!
- 3 – They would continue to eat from the tree of life. And then they would live forever.
- 4 – They will know that they are naked. This knowledge was not good for them. They became less similar to God, and this made them unhappy.
- 5 – God placed him in the garden of Eden to cultivate and take care of the garden.
- 6 – In order to tend the garden, they needed to kill the serpent, or at least drive him from the garden.
- 7 – We hurt God when we disobey God but obey Satan. We do not want God to rule over us. We want to live as we please.
- 8 – They realised that they were naked; then they sewed coverings for themselves from fig leaves.
- 9 – He blames God (*the woman you gave me*) and Eve—“it’s not my fault—it’s her fault!”
- 10 – There will now be a struggle for who will be in charge of the family. She will resent his rule.
- 11 – It will be difficult to work now. Growing fruits and vegetables will be very difficult.
- 12 – They will experience pain. They will die. They will not live forever.
- 13 – No, they hid from God.
- 14 – He covers their shame by killing an animal that did not sin.
- 15 – God drove Adam and Eve out of the garden of Eden.
- 16 – 1) They were ashamed.
 2) Sin spoiled their relationship with each other.
 3) God curses the earth.
 4) Sin brought pain and death.
 5) Sin spoiled their relationship with God.
- 17 – He will crush Satan’s head.
- 18 – God will send someone who will defeat Satan!
- 19 – Jesus Christ.
- 20 – Through Adam.
- 21 – If we are connected with Jesus.
- 22 – Everything that God created was very good.
- 23 – Everything visible and invisible.
- 24 – Jesus.
- 25 – The archangel.
- 26 – The devil.
- 27 – There was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against Satan and his helpers. Then Satan and his helpers were driven out of heaven.
- 28 – He will send Satan to hell.

Lesson 4:

God judges evil



What do we do with rotten fruit bought in the market? [1]

We are like spoiled fruit! From the outside it is not visible that we are rotten on the inside. We look fine on the outside. But God sees that all people are flawed. God knows our hearts!

Read **Genesis 6:5–22**.

Genesis 1:31: What did God think of everything he created? [2]

Genesis 6:6: What did God think of everything now? [3]

All the people had become wicked. What should God do? [4]

How will he do it? [5]

But God is not only holy, he is also a loving God. God must judge the world, but he does not want all people to die.

Genesis 3:15: Whom did God promise to send? [6]

People were part of God's plan to defeat the devil!

Genesis 6:8: Whom did God decide to save? [7]

Genesis 6:14: What did God tell Noah to do? [8]

Genesis 6:18–19: Who will be saved? [9]

This is not a small boat, but more like an ocean liner that can accommodate 3,000 people!

When Noah spoke to people about the flood, they would have laughed at him and would have said that he was crazy!

But what happened to them in the end? [10]

Did this solve the problem of our sin? [11]

Read **Genesis 8:20–22**.

What did Noah do after the flood? [12]

What promise did God give? [13]

Read **Genesis 9:12–16**. What is the sign of this covenant that God made? [14]

God's wonderful promise to Noah shows us the grace of God for ALL mankind. It is not just for a special few. God does not want anyone to perish. God's love is for everyone!

Whenever we see a rainbow in the sky, we can remember the loving faithfulness of God to all his creation.

New Testament

What does God say about people today?

Romans 3:10–18 [15]

Romans 3:23 [16]

All people are sinners, all are corrupt. God will come to judge the world in order to throw away all the bad fruit.

In Matthew, Jesus the Messiah (that is, the Son of Man) said this:

Matthew 25:31–32: *When the Son of Man comes in his glory and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.*

What will he say to those who are not good in **Matthew 25:41**? [17]

When Jesus judges—this is the most terrible thing!

In the Old Testament, how did Noah escape the judgment of God? [18]

The ark is like Jesus. Jesus is our only way to avoid judgment from God. We're completely bad. God is totally good. All we have to do is get into the ark! We need to believe in Jesus, that his death paid for our sins.

Just as people laughed at Noah, so people today laugh at us.

What task has God given us? [19]

What did God tell you in this lesson today?

Is there anyone you can share this lesson with?

Is there a sin you need to repent of?

Homework

Read Genesis chapters 6–9, and 11:1–9 before the next lesson.

Answers

- 1 – We throw them away!
- 2 – Everything was very good—God is happy.
- 3 – God's heart is deeply troubled.
- 4 – Destroy them (throw them away like bad fruit)!
- 5 – With a huge flood.
- 6 – Someone who will defeat the devil.
- 7 – God chose Noah.
- 8 – Build a ship.
- 9 – Noah and his family, and two animals of each kind.
- 10 – They all died.
- 11 – No.
- 12 – Noah brought a sacrifice of thanks to God.
- 13 – God made a promise that he will never again flood the earth.
- 14 – The rainbow!
- 15 – There is not one righteous person.
- 16 – All people have sinned.
- 17 – He tells them they'll go to hell.
- 18 – Noah obeyed God and entered the ark.
- 19 – Our task is to give people the opportunity to repent before God and enter the ark (this means to accept Jesus)—although this may seem strange to them.

Lesson 5:

The promise to Abraham



The descendants of Noah forgot about God. They worshipped other gods.

Hundreds of years passed and God chose Abraham to become the father of God's people.

Three promises

Read **Genesis 12:1–7**.

What three things did God promise Abraham? [1]

1. Blessing

Genesis 3:16–19: What happened to the world that God created? [2]

Genesis 12:3: What does God say he will do now? [3]

What is the greatest blessing we can receive? [4]

2. People

Genesis 21:5: How old was Abraham when his wife Sarah gave birth to Isaac? [5]

His birth was a miracle! God wanted to show that Isaac was a special son.

Genesis 12:2: Why was Isaac special? [6]

Extra

God gave Abraham a terrible test to see if Abraham really trusted God. Read **Genesis 22:1–18**.



God told Abraham to sacrifice his only son. It was through him that God was going to bless the world! This made no sense to Abraham. And yet he obeyed God in faith that God would still keep his promises.

Just when Abraham was about to sacrifice Isaac, the angel of the Lord stopped him. And God provided a ram that he could sacrifice instead.

We see how God provided the sacrifice of an animal instead of the sacrifice of a person. But in the New Testament, we will see how God himself gave his Son as a sacrifice, to die in our place. There was no animal that could be a substitute: no other sacrifice that could atone for all our sins.

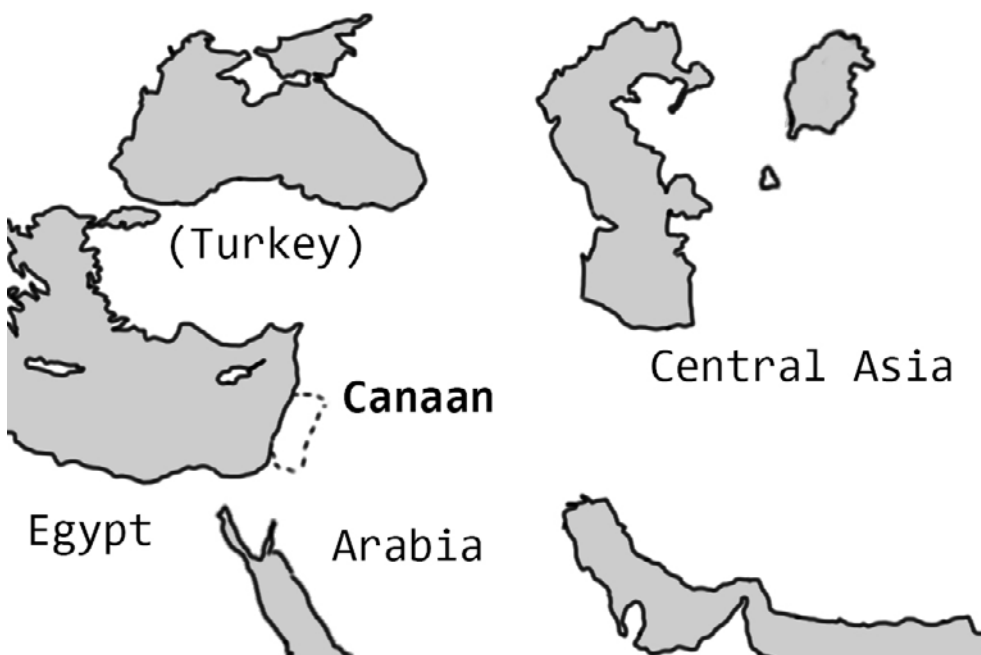
God planned that through Isaac, Abraham would have physical and also spiritual children.

Read **Galatians 3:7**. Who are the children of Abraham in the New Testament? [7]

In the new creation, who will be added to God's people? (**Revelation 7:9**) [8]

3. Land

Genesis 17:8: What land will God give to the descendants of Abraham? [9]



But Abraham never owned the land of Canaan. It wasn't until chapter 23 that he bought a plot of land to bury his wife Sarah. It was 500 years before God gave the land to his people.

Hebrews 11:8–10: In what way is Abraham an excellent example of faith? [10]

But ...

Genesis 46:6: After three generations, where do the descendants of Abraham go to live? [11]

Exodus 2:23: What happened to God's people? [12]

The people need a Saviour through whom they can receive the promises of God.

The rest of the Bible is about how God kept his promises:

In the Old Testament, we read how God began to fulfill his promises to Abraham.

In the New Testament, we read that Jesus is the person who will fulfill these promises.

But they will be fully fulfilled only when Jesus returns and takes us to live with him in the new creation.

The promised land was a picture of the new creation (Revelation 22:1–5).

What three things did God promise Abraham? [13]

When will they be fully fulfilled? [14]

Homework

Read the book of Genesis to see how God starts to fulfill his promises to Abraham.

What have we learned about God in this lesson?

Answers

- 1 – Blessing, people, and land.
- 2 – It was cursed.
- 3 – God will bless all people through Abraham!
- 4 – A relationship with God!
- 5 – Abraham was 100 years old.
- 6 – Because God was going to make his descendants into a great nation, which was to become the people of God.
- 7 – Those who believe in Jesus.
- 8 – People from every clan, every tribe, every nation and every language!
- 9 – All the land of Canaan.
- 10 – He believed that God would fulfill his promises in due time. And he knew that he would have a much better home in heaven than he could have on earth.
- 11 – To Egypt.
- 12 – The people became slaves.
- 13 – Blessing, the people and the land.
- 14 – When Jesus returns and takes us to live with him in the new creation.

Lesson 6:

God's promises are passed on to Abraham's descendants



Isaac

Read **Genesis 25:19–34**.

Who did Isaac marry (v.20)? [1]

In what way were Isaac and Rebekah similar to Abraham and Sarah (v.21)? [2]

What did God tell pregnant Rebekah about the twins she was carrying (v.23)? [3]

Election

This is a big theme in the Bible: God predestined the believers to be his spiritual children, even before the creation of the world!

Read **Ephesians 1:3–8**.

When did God choose us to be his children (v.4)? [4]

Why did God do this (v.6)? [5]

What else has God given us (v.7)? [6]

We will learn more about what this means as we study our Bible overview course.

We may say that it's not fair that some people are chosen and others are not. This is called God's "grace" (v.7). No one deserves to be called and redeemed. We should be amazed and grateful that God chose us!

How much grace does God give us (v.8)? [7]

Jacob

When Jacob grew up he married two sisters, called Leah and Rachel. He was not a good example of a husband or a father! This story would make a good soap opera!

Read **Genesis 29:30–30:24**.

Which wife did Jacob love? [8]

Which wife gave him four sons in 29:32–35? [9]

What did Rachel do when she became jealous of her sister? (30:3) [10]

How many sons did Bilhah have? (30:5–8) [11]

So what did Leah then do? (30:9) [12]

How many sons did Zilpah have? (30:10–13) [13]

How did Leah get to sleep with Jacob again? (30:14–16) [14]

People thought that mandrakes made someone fall in love with you.

What then happened with Leah? (30:17–21) [15]

And, finally, what happened with Rachel? (30:22–24) [16]

Read **Genesis 35:16–19**.

What happened to Rachel? [17]

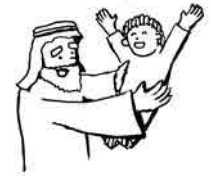
So how many sons did Jacob have in the end? You can either add up or read **Genesis 42:13**. [18]

Read **Genesis 32:28**. What does God change Jacob's name to? [19]

Who did Jacob's sons' descendants become? Read **Genesis 49:28**. [20]

Important to know

God's promises to **Abraham** are repeated to **Isaac** in Genesis 26:3 and to **Jacob** in Genesis 28:13–14. So Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were the forefathers of God's people, the nation of Israel.



Abraham's son by Hagar, **Ishmael**, and Isaac's other son, **Esau**, also became fathers of nations. But the Lord God chose Israel to lay the way of salvation for mankind.

So in the rest of the Old Testament, the people of God are called "**Israel**" and they are made up of 12 tribes, named after the 12 sons of Jacob.

Joseph and the growing people of God

God is growing his people! But then a disaster happens. What is it? Read **Genesis 41:56**. [21]

How did God protect his people from dying of starvation? Read what Joseph said in **Genesis 45:7**. [22]

Genesis chapters 37–47 tells the gripping story of how Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery, and how Joseph became the most important person in Egypt under Pharaoh. It shows us how God protected and cared for his people, even when they were sinful and did terrible things. It also shows God's mercy towards the people of Egypt, so that they also survived the famine.

Read **Genesis 15:13**. How many years did God's people live in Egypt? [23]

Read **Genesis 46:27**. How many of God's people went to Egypt at the time of Joseph? [24]

Read **Numbers 1:45–46**. How many did they become after 400 years? [25]

Now there are enough of them to live in the promised land!

Read **Exodus 1:8–13**. What are the two problems for God's people at the beginning of the book of Exodus? [26]

Genesis 50:24: *Joseph said to the brothers:—I am dying, but God will certainly come to your aid and lead you out of this land to the land that he promised with an oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.*

Joseph knew that God was continuing to carry out his plan for his people.

You too are part of God's plan to bring salvation to many people! Everyone needs to have the opportunity to hear about Jesus and the eternal life which only he can give us.

How are you serving God in your life?

Answers

- 1 – Rebekah.
- 2 – They were both childless for a long time, and the child that they had was then a miraculous gift from God.
- 3 – She was bearing twin boys, who would be ancestors of two different nations. And the older one would serve the younger one.
- 4 – Before the creation of the world!
- 5 – “For the praise of his glory”. So that he would have the glory!
- 6 – Redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses.
- 7 – Loads—he lavished it on us!
- 8 – Rachel.
- 9 – Leah.
- 10 – She gave him her servant Bilhah, so that she could have children for Rachel.
- 11 – Two.
- 12 – She gave Jacob her servant Zilpah, so that she could bear more children for Leah.
- 13 – Two.
- 14 – She “bought” the right to sleep with her husband with mandrakes!
- 15 – She gave birth to Joseph.
- 16 – She bore a second son and then died.
- 17 – She gave birth to two more sons and a daughter.
- 18 – 12.
- 19 – Israel.
- 20 – The 12 tribes of Israel.
- 21 – There is a famine.
- 22 – God sent Joseph ahead of his family (to Egypt) so that they would not die.
- 23 – 400 years.
- 24 – 70.
- 25 – About two million people—603,000 men, plus women and children.
- 26 – They were in Egypt which was not the country God had promised to them, and they were slaves.

Extra: **Genesis quiz**

1. Who was with God in the beginning? [1]
2. What results have we seen because of sin? [2]
3. In the time of Noah, who could escape the judgment of God? [3]
4. What are three things God promised to Abraham, and when will they be completely fulfilled? [4]
5. What was the name of Abraham's son from Sarah? [5]
6. How old was Abraham when Sarah gave birth to Isaac? [6]
7. How many children did Isaac have? [7]
8. What were their names? [8]
9. Through which son did God continue to keep his promise? [9]
10. What new name did God give Jacob? [10]
11. How many sons did Jacob have? [11]
12. Who did they become in the Bible? [12]
13. Who was Jacob's favourite son? [13]
14. What did God do to save them from dying from hunger? [14]
15. How many years did God's people live in Egypt? [15]
16. How many of God's people went to Egypt? [16]
17. How many did they become? (Numbers 1:46) [17]

18. What are the two problems for God's people at the end of the book of Genesis and at the beginning of the book of Exodus? [18]

Answers

- 1 – Word and Holy Spirit.
- 2 – They were ashamed.
Sin spoiled their relationship with each other.
God cursed the land.
Sin brought pain and death.
Sin spoiled their relationship with God.
- 3 – Those who entered the ark.
- 4 – Blessing, people, land. These promises will be fully fulfilled when Jesus returns and takes us to live with him in the new creation.
- 5 – Isaac.
- 6 – 100 years.
- 7 – Two sons.
- 8 – Jacob and Esau.
- 9 – Jacob.
- 10 – Israel.
- 11 – 12 sons.
- 12 – The fathers of the 12 tribes of Israel.
- 13 – Joseph.
- 14 – God sent them to Egypt.
- 15 – 400 years.
- 16 – 70 people.
- 17 – Two million people—603,000 men, plus women and children. Now there are enough of them to live in the promised land.
- 18 – They were in Egypt which was not the country God had promised to them, and they were slaves.

Lesson 7:

God the Saviour



Abraham's descendants at the beginning of the book of Exodus were in a very bad situation.

Read **Exodus 1:8–11** and **15–16** and **22**.

What was it like for the people of Israel? [1]

Yet, in this terrible time of suffering God was planning to rescue his people.

One Israelite couple did not obey Pharaoh's orders to kill their son and hid their baby boy in a basket. Read **Exodus 2:1–10**.

Who found this baby? (v.5) [2]

What was the baby's name? (v.10) [3]

Until that time, God's people knew little about God. Now we see how God revealed his character to his people.

Read **Exodus 2:23–3:17**.

In this passage we learn four things about God:

1. God saves those who know they cannot save themselves

Where are God's people? [4]

What is their problem? [5]

Who did they need? [6]

What did they do? (Exodus 2:23) [7]

They knew that only God could save them.

New Testament:

John 8:34–36: *Jesus replied: “I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. So, if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.”*

Who is a slave of sin? [8]

Do we need to be slaves of sin forever? [9]

Who can set us free? [10]

Who is the Son of God? [11]

How are all people like the Israelites? [12]

What do we need to do? [13]

2. God raises up a person to save his people

Acts 7:20–22: How did God prepare Moses to save his people? [14]

Acts 7:23–29: Was Moses perfect? [15]

God prepared Moses to become the Saviour of his people. As he had grown up in the Pharaoh's palace, he was able to speak to Pharaoh. No other Israelite could do this. But Moses didn't want to go back to Egypt. He knew that Pharaoh would not let the people go.

Exodus 3:12: What did God say to him? [16]

With God's help, he can save God's people!

Why was Moses the right person to save God's people? [17]

But Moses was not a perfect Saviour. He was not the one to overcome Satan (Genesis 3:15).

Find two things which show how Moses was not fit to save God's people? [18]

One day God will send the perfect Saviour to save his people forever.

New Testament:

Matthew 1:20–23: What two names will the son of Mary have, and what do they mean? [19]

Jesus would be the only person who could save us forever!

He is the Son of God—God is with us!

3. God himself came down to deliver his people

Exodus 3:8: What did God do? [20]

New Testament:

John 1:14: What did the Word (Jesus) do? [21]

Just like in the time of Moses, God also came down in the New Testament to deliver us.

Other religions say that we have to work for God to hear us, so that God accepts us into heaven. But we cannot reach God. We can never be good enough.

1 John 4:10: *This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.*

What has God done? [22]

The Son of God came down to die for us, to save us from our sins!

What is the difference between the Christian faith and other religions? [23]

4. God is the only real God.

God's people knew little about God. Pharaoh looked strong and Moses was afraid of Pharaoh. God wanted Moses to know that Pharaoh is nothing in comparison with God!

Who has more power: the ruler of a country or God? [24]

Exodus 3:14: What is the name of God? [25]

In the Bible, God's name tells us who he is.

"I Am" in Hebrew is Yahweh—this is the name of God. But the Jews did not like to use the name Yahweh. Therefore, in the Old Testament, Yahweh is translated as "The Lord".

This name tells us that God is not like other gods who were worshipped by other people. He's alive! He is eternal! He is omnipotent! He has not forgotten his promise to Abraham! God is a faithful God!

What does this name tell us about God? [26]

New Testament:

In the same way, in John, Jesus calls himself "I Am" seven times (we see this more clearly in the original Greek than in some translations).

For example, in John 14:6: *I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.*

What does Jesus mean by this? [27]

Only Jesus can save us from our sins and from the devil!

What have we learned about God in this lesson?

Homework

In Exodus chapters 1–14 we read how God saved the Israelites. Read these chapters this week and write down what you have learned about God.

Answers

- 1 – They were oppressed, they were slaves without freedom, and Pharaoh ordered their newborn sons to be killed.
- 2 – Pharaoh's daughter.
- 3 – Moses.
- 4 – In Egypt.
- 5 – They were slaves.
- 6 – Someone to save them—they couldn't save themselves.
- 7 – They cried out to God for God to help them.
- 8 – Everyone who sins—this means that is all people!
- 9 – No!
- 10 – The son.
- 11 – Jesus!
- 12 – We are slaves too! We are slaves to sin. We cannot save ourselves, like the Israelites.
- 13 – Like the Israelites, we must cry out to God to save us from our sin.
- 14 – He spoke Egyptian and Hebrew. He was well educated. He grew up in a palace and therefore knew how to talk to the Pharaoh.
- 15 – No!
- 16 – God promised to be with him.
- 17 – He was the only Israelite who could speak to Pharaoh.
- 18 – Because he was afraid of Pharaoh and he killed an Egyptian.
- 19 – "Jesus", God saves—because he will save his people from their sins. "Immanuel", God is with us.
- 20 – He came down to deliver the Israelites.
- 21 – The Word became a man and lived among us.
- 22 – He sent his son to atone for our sins.
- 23 – Other religions say that we need to work so that God will hear us, so that God will accept us into heaven. The Bible teaches us that our good deeds will never be enough to enable us to come to God. But the Son of God came down to die for us, to save us from our sins!
- 24 – God!
- 25 – I Am.
- 26 – God is not like other gods. He's alive! He is eternal! He is omnipotent! He has not forgotten his promise to Abraham! God is a faithful God!
- 27 – Jesus wanted people to understand that he is God's Son. And only through him can people know God the Father (Yahweh)!

Lesson 8:

God saves through sacrifice



In this lesson we learn that God is a powerful judge and Saviour. We need to remember and celebrate his amazing salvation!

Punishment (Exodus chapters 5–11)

Pharaoh fights against God. God has warned Pharaoh many times that he and his people will be punished.

What punishments did God send Pharaoh and his people? (chapters 7–11) [1]

What does this teach us about God? (7:17) [2]

He is powerful: more powerful than Pharaoh (and he is more powerful than Satan!)

But Pharaoh still disobeys God.

What was the final judgment that God gave to the Egyptians? [3]

The Israelites also sinned. The death of the first son was not only for the Egyptians, it was a punishment for the Israelites as well—for all who disobeyed God.

As a result of this terrible punishment, Pharaoh released the Israelites. So this punishment became the way of salvation for God's people.

In the Bible, we always see judgment and salvation together. What does this tell us about God? [4]

Salvation

Read **Exodus 12:1–30**.

Blood

God gave the Israelites protection from his judgment. The judgment was that every firstborn son must die.

What did they need to do so that this would not happen in their family? [5]

What will God do when he sees the blood? (v.13) [6]

So the blood of the lamb will protect the firstborn son from death. The lamb died instead of a son in every family.

New Testament

After 1,500 years, what did John say about Jesus? (John 1:29) [7]

What does this mean? [8]

Food

Exodus 12:8: What else should the Israelites do? [9]

God not only protected his people, he fed his people. The lamb gave them food, which gave them strength to walk. The next day they had a long and difficult journey ahead of them!

Not only did God feed his people on this night of rescue, God would continue to feed them for the next 40 years while they lived in a desert.

Read **Exodus 16:31–35**. What did the Israelites eat every day for 40 years? [10]

God supplied all their needs on their journey.

New Testament

What did Jesus say in **John 6:35**? [11]

What does this mean? [12]

What do we do with the bread? (**John 6:51**) [13]

What does this mean? [14]

Jesus died to save us from God's judgment. And he also provides us with everything we need for eternal life and for our journey to our eternal home.

Remember what God did!

Celebration!

Why is the Feast of Passover held annually at this time (Exodus 12:14, 25–27)? [15]



New Testament

How do we celebrate our salvation from slavery and death (1 Corinthians 11:23–26)? [16]

What do the bread and wine represent? [17]

Why should we remember Jesus' death? [18]

What should we do to make sure that we will never forget what Jesus has done for us?

This is the best news ever! Who are you going to tell about this?

Answers

- 1 – Water turns into blood, frogs, mosquitoes, flies, loss of livestock, boils, hail, locusts, darkness, death.
- 2 – God is the Lord.
- 3 – God killed the first son in every Egyptian family.
- 4 – He is both judge and Saviour.
- 5 – They had to slaughter the lamb and they had to anoint both the doorposts and the crossbars of the doors in the house with the blood of the lamb.
- 6 – When God sees the blood, he will pass by—he will not destroy them.
- 7 – *Here is the Lamb of God, Who will take away the sin of the world!*
- 8 – Jesus will die in our place. His blood will protect us from death.
- 9 – God tells them to eat! They were to cook and eat the lamb and bake and eat bread.
- 10 – Manna.
- 11 – *I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes me will not be thirsty.*
- 12 – Only Jesus can satisfy our desire (our hunger) for a relationship with God.
- 13 – We need to eat this!
- 14 – We need to enter into a relationship with Jesus. We need to let Jesus speak to us and change us. We need to read God's word, meditate on the verses, and pray every day.
- 15 – To remember how God saved them from slavery in Egypt and how the blood of the lamb saved them from death.
- 16 – When we are together in the breaking of bread.
- 17 – Jesus' body and blood.
- 18 – Because he died so that God could forgive our sins and give us eternal life with him!

Lesson 9:

Crossing the sea



Read **Exodus 14:1–15:2**.

Pharaoh eventually released the Israelites. They left, then Pharaoh changed his mind and chased after them with his soldiers.

How did the Israelites feel when they saw Pharaoh's army? [1]

Why couldn't the Israelites flee from the Egyptians? [2]

It was a terrible situation!

What did the Israelites have to do to be saved? (14:22) [3]

How many Israelites did God save? [4]

How many Egyptian soldiers died? (14:28) [5]

New Testament

Who is our enemy? (1 Peter 5:8) [6]

Before we became believers, who were we? (John 8:34) [7]

Can people save themselves from sin and the devil? [8]

Just like the Israelites, all people are in a hopeless situation.

Moses went ahead of the Israelites through the sea to lead them to freedom.

When the Israelites walked through the sea, they felt like they were walking to death. It was frightening but it was the only road to freedom.

In the same way, Jesus also went through death to lead us to eternal life! He died on the cross as the once-for-all-time sacrifice for our sins. And he came back to life, showing that he had prepared the way to eternal life for us. He went ahead of us. And he is also going ahead of us now as we travel through the sea! When our earthly life ends, Jesus will lead us into the eternal promised land!

Just like the Israelites, when we decide to follow Jesus, we must also die to ourselves.

We must die to ourselves and let Jesus be the Lord of our lives. This is the only road to true freedom!

What does it look like to die to ourselves? What things do we have to stop doing? What things do we have to start doing?

Hebrews 2:14–15: *And since children have flesh and blood, then he [Jesus] himself received a physical body in order by his death to break the power of the one who holds the power over death—that is, the devil—and to free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.*

What did Jesus accomplish by his death? [9]

John 14:1–3: *Let nothing disturb your hearts. Believe in God and believe in me. There are many rooms in my Father's house, and if it were not so, would I have told you, "I am going to prepare a place for you"? And if now I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me so that you also may be where I am.*

Where will Jesus take us? [10]

1 Thessalonians 4:16–17: *Because the Lord himself will come from heaven (which will be announced by a loud cry, the voice of the archangel and the trumpet of God), and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be raised together with them on the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and from then on we will always be with him.*

When will Jesus take us to his place? [11]

Additional thought: **Baptism**

Romans 6:4: *We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.*

What is baptism a picture of? [12]

This is similar to when the Israelites went through the sea.

What do we need to do once we are saved?

Exodus 14:31–15:1: What three things did the Israelites do when they crossed the sea? [13]

In the same way, what should we do when Jesus saves us? [14]

- What does it look like to fear God? [15]
- What does it look like to trust God and Jesus? [16]
- What does it look like to praise God? [17]

Our praises bring joy to God and to us too! Praising God every day, such as before dinner, is a good habit.

How does the story of Moses leading God's people across the sea provide a picture of what Jesus did for us? [18]

What has God taught you today?

Who can you share this lesson with?

Answers

- 1 – The Israelites were frightened!
- 2 – They could not escape because on one side was the sea and on the other side were Pharaoh and the soldiers. Even if it wasn't like that, they were slow. They had children, old people and lots of luggage which would have slowed them down.
- 3 – They must go through the sea for God to save them.
- 4 – Everyone!
- 5 – All!
- 6 – The devil is our enemy just as Pharaoh was the Israelites' enemy.
- 7 – We were slaves of sin, just as the Israelites were Pharaoh's slaves.
- 8 – No! We cannot save ourselves just as the Israelites could not save themselves.
- 9 – He destroyed the power of the devil and set us free, just as God destroyed the power of Pharaoh and set free his people!
- 10 – To be with him in his Father's house, which will be so much more wonderful than the promised land!
- 11 – At the time when our Lord Jesus returns from heaven and the believers who have died are resurrected.
- 12 – When we go into the water, we die with Jesus. And when we come up out of the water we rise to a new life with Jesus.
- 13 – They feared God.
They put their trust in God and Moses, his servant.
They praised God.
- 14 – We should fear God.
We should trust in God and Jesus his servant.
We should glorify God.
- 15 – When we fear God, we do not sin. God sees everything we do: when we gossip, complain, are unkind, look at bad things on the phone, etc.
- 16 – We do not worry. For example, we must trust him if he asks us to live somewhere in order to be the light of Jesus, even if we do not want to live there. He will take care of us!
- 17 – Praise God with our words and sing songs to God!
- 18 – Moses went through the sea (death) to lead the Israelites to freedom. In the same way, Jesus went through death to lead us to eternal life and to freedom from sin, from death and from the devil!

Lesson 10:

Sacrifices



From the very beginning of the world, people worshipped God through bringing him sacrifices. For example, Cain and Abel (Genesis 4).

People were always looking for God's blessing. They wanted to protect themselves from the wrath of God. Many cultures today have similar practices. People came to understand that a death is needed to stop the wrath of God.

Why have people always offered sacrifices to God? What do people want most of all? [1]

Only during the time of Moses did God explain to his people how to worship him correctly.

When they worshipped God they had to slaughter an animal and burn it on the altar. This is so that they understood two things:

1. **Sin deserves a punishment and that punishment is death.** To restore our relationship with God, something has to die.

The Israelites sinned every day and so every day the priests were to sacrifice an animal.

2. **People need a substitute.** The animal died instead of the people. The animal does not sin, it is people who sin. People needed something to die in their place so that they did not need to die.

What two truths did people need to understand when they made sacrifices? [2]

The book of Leviticus

Leviticus explains five different types of sacrifices to us. Through sacrifices God wanted to teach his people about how they could correctly relate to God.

Leviticus 1—The burnt offering.

Leviticus 2—The grain offering.

Leviticus 3—The fellowship offering.

Leviticus 4—The sin offering.

Leviticus 5—The guilt offering.

We will consider the burnt offering and the fellowship offering.

Leviticus 1—The burnt offering.

Every morning and evening, the priests were to offer a burnt offering. They had to burn it up completely, so nobody could eat it. This sacrifice taught them that God deserves our entire lives.

It teaches us that we should give our whole life to God.

We also read about this in the New Testament:

Romans 12:1: *Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God.*

We need to completely devote ourselves and our whole life to God!

What does the burnt offering remind people of? [3]

What verse in the New Testament reminds us of this? [4]

Leviticus 3—The fellowship offering.

The priests could eat part of each sacrifice, except for the burnt offering.

Other Israelites could only eat from the fellowship offering. The people ate the meat of this sacrifice in God's presence. This showed people that through sacrifice they could have fellowship with God.

In the New Testament, when God's people break bread and drink wine together, it shows them that they can have fellowship with God. This is because the bread represents Jesus' body and the wine represents his blood. So when Jesus died this was the sacrifice that paid for their sins.

What does the fellowship offering remind people of? [5]

How do God's people remind themselves of this in the New Testament? [6]

Are animal sacrifices sufficient?

Read **Hebrews 10:1–10**.

How do we know that the sacrifice of animals is not enough to cleanse us from our sins? (vv.1–2) [7]

In what way were the sacrifices useful? (v.3) [8]

Why was Jesus born into this world? (v.10) [9]

We understand what Jesus did for us when we read the Old Testament. We need sacrifice to restore our relationship with God. The animal sacrifices were not enough. Only Jesus' sacrifice can truly cleanse us of our sins and restore our relationship with God!

How does the Old Testament help us understand what Jesus did in the New Testament? [10]

What do we need to do when we sin? [11]

Sin spoils our relationship with God. Repentance restores our relationship with God. But never forget that God is a holy God and consistent rebellious sin will result in God's wrath.

How can you tell about the sacrifice made once and for all when you speak with your friends about offering sacrifices?

Answers

- 1 – People want God's blessing and to avoid God's wrath.
- 2 – Sin deserves death and people need a substitute to die in their place.
- 3 – God deserves our whole life.
- 4 – **Romans 12:1:** *Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God.*
- 5 – Through sacrifices we can communicate with God.
- 6 – We break bread together.
- 7 – People had to constantly offer more sacrifices.
- 8 – They reminded people of their sins, which had ruined their relationship with God.
- 9 – Jesus was born into this world to be a sacrifice, once and for all, for our sins.
- 10 – The Old Testament explains that we need sacrifice to restore our relationship with God. The animal sacrifices were not enough. Only Jesus' sacrifice can truly cleanse us of our sins and restore our relationship with God!
- 11 – Repent.

Lesson 11:

The Ten Commandments



Read **Exodus 20:1–17**.

Why should we keep these laws?

Some people think that if they obey the commandments, they will go to heaven. They think that God accepts those who are good enough. The Bible doesn't teach that! We can never be as good as God! The amazing message of all the Bible is that God saves us even though we are sinners! We obey because God has already saved us and made us his people. When we accept God's salvation, it is our joy to obey him.

When God rescued the Israelites from slavery, God became their new master and king. After that, God gave them good laws that they should obey. Their obedience showed that they belonged to their new king who had saved them.

Likewise, in the New Testament, when God saved us from Satan's chains Jesus became our new master and king. So we need to serve and obey him! Our obedience shows that we belong to our new king, who has already saved us.

Why should we obey these laws? [1]

The law of the New Testament

One day Jesus was asked what is the most important commandment in the law? How did Jesus answer this good question?

Read **Matthew 22:37–40**.

What are the two most important laws? [2]

Of course, we cannot do this alone. But God gives us his Holy Spirit so that we can really learn to live this way!

God's laws show us God's character. We were created in the likeness of God (Genesis 1:26). He wants our character to become more and more like his character.

Let's think about the ten most important laws that God gave to his people.

The first four commandments

The first four commandments teach us how to relate to God.

1. What is the first commandment? (Exodus 20:3) [3]

How is God like a husband? [4]

This commandment is closely related to the following commandment:

2. What is the second commandment? (v.4) [5]

What is an idol? [6]

Where do we see images of God in the world? (Genesis 1:26) [7]

It is so easy to worship people that we look up to!

What is the problem with the worship of man-made idols? [8]

We should never pray to pictures or statues, even if Jesus is depicted.

Anything that is dearer to us than God can become an idol for us.

What different types of idols do people worship? [9]

3. What is the third commandment? (Exodus 20:7) [10]

Our deeds must match our words. We shouldn't be hypocrites. If we say we love God, we must obey him.

Romans 2:24: *Because of you the name of God is dishonoured among the Gentiles.*

How do we dishonour God's name? [11]

How can we honor God's name? [12]

Luke 6:46: *Why are you calling me: Master, Master, and not doing what I say?*

What is the problem with these people? [13]

How else do people misuse the name of God? [14]

4. What is the fourth commandment? (Exodus 20:8) [15]

We need one day each week to take a break from work and spend time with God and to meet with believers. This day is called the Sabbath or day of rest. Our relationship with God and with people is more important than work!

The Sabbath shows that we trust God, not in our own strength. If we work every day, seven days a week, it shows that we are relying on our own strength to meet all our needs. If we take one day off each week it shows that we are relying on God to meet our needs.

If we remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy, how does it help us to love God? [16]

Commandments five to ten

The following six commandments teach us how to relate to each other.

If we don't love God first (first four commandments), we will not be able to love each other (the last six commandments).

What do we need to do to keep the other six commandments? [17]

What are the next six commandments? (v.12–17) [18]

Is it easy to keep these commandments?

Matthew 5:27–28: *You heard that it was said: "Do not commit adultery." But I tell you that the one who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery in his heart.*

What did Jesus say about our thoughts in these verses? [19]

God not only wants us to be good on the outside, he wants us to be good on the inside! Praise God that he gives us the Holy Spirit so that we can obey, both on the outside and on the inside!

What do we need to remember about our thoughts when we read the Ten Commandments? [20]

How can we obey both internally and externally? [21]

Ask God to give you his Holy Spirit so that your character can become more and more like his character!

Who does your character show that you belong to?

Extra: What laws should I follow?

Are there laws that we, as non-Jews living in the 21st century, do not need to obey? [22]

There are many laws in the Torah (Pentateuch). How do we know if we need to obey a certain law or not?

To know if we should obey them today, we can ask two questions:

1. **What did this law teach the Israelites in those days?**
2. **What does the New Testament teach us about this law and this topic?**

What two questions do we need to ask in order to know whether to obey the laws of the Torah (Pentateuch)? [23]

Two examples:

1. Law on food

Leviticus 11: It was forbidden to eat certain types of meat (e.g. pork—v.7)

What is the first question we should ask? [24]



What does Leviticus 11:45 teach us? [25]

The Israelites were not supposed to live like other nations. They must be holy to God. God's people must be different from other nations.

What is the second question we should ask? [26]

What does 1 Peter 1:15–16 teach us? [27]

God wants us to be holy too. We cannot live like other people, because we belong to God.

What does Mark 7:18–19 teach us? [28]

So when we read Leviticus, we should not worry that the food is not clean! We have to think about our life—are we living holy lives?

But how should we love our neighbour in the light of this law?

1 Corinthians 8:13: *“Therefore, if what I eat causes my brother or sister to sin, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause them to fall.”*

If a believer is upset about you eating religious meat (which has been sacrificed), is it worth eating it? [29]

2. Eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth

Exodus 21:23–25: *If there is serious injury, you are to take life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise.*



What is the first question we should ask? [30]

This law is for judges to give the right punishment. This was the greatest punishment they could give. The punishment must not be greater than this. The judge should not allow people to take terrible revenge (see Genesis 4:24). He was to be just and merciful. It is probable that the person could pay money instead of actually giving his eye or tooth (Exodus 21:26, 27, 30). So these verses taught them that God is just and merciful.

What does Exodus 21:23–25 teach us? [31]

What is the second question we should ask? [32]

What do these verses from Matthew 5:38–39 teach us? [33]

What does Romans 12:19 teach us? [34]

God is still just and merciful!

Soon Jesus will come to judge the world and punish everyone for what they have done. He will bring justice!

God sees everything. When people persecute us, it is difficult for us to forgive. But the Bible tells us that we need to forgive and love (Matthew 6:14–15). This is impossible for us—but possible with the Holy Spirit!

What two questions do we need to ask in order to know whether to obey the Law of the Torah (Pentateuch)? [35]

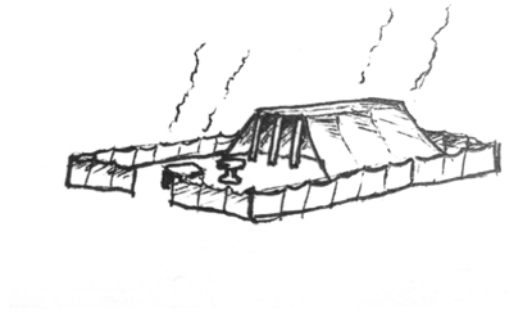
Pray for each other so that you can live holy lives and can show God’s love to everyone around you!

Answers

- 1 – Because God saved us and made us his people. He is our king!
- 2 – *Love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind, and love your neighbour as yourself.*
- 3 – *You shall have no other gods besides God.*
- 4 – God is a jealous God! Just like a husband does not want his wife to adore and love other men, so God does not want us to adore and love other gods.
- 5 – *Don't make for yourself an idol.*
- 6 – This is any image of God that we worship.
- 7 – All people are images of God!
- 8 – An idol cannot portray God—it offends God if we think we can portray him.
- 9 – Pictures or idols to which we pray; political leaders; famous people; money; possessions, etc.
- 10 – *Do not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.*
- 11 – When we sin and disobey him.
- 12 – We honour God when we obey him.
- 13 – They say they love God and then disobey him.
- 14 – They blame God when things go wrong (“Oh God!”). They won't praise God when things are going well.
- 15 – *Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy.*
- 16 – We can spend time with God and meet with believers.
- 17 – Obey the first four commandments!
- 18 – 5. Honor your father and mother.
6. Do not kill.
7. Do not commit adultery.
8. Do not steal.
9. Do not give false testimony.
10. Do not covet.
- 19 – Our thoughts are as important as our actions!
- 20 – God not only wants us to be good on the outside, he wants us to be good on the inside!
- 21 – God gives us the Holy Spirit so that we can obey both outside and inside!
- 22 – Yes!
- 23 – What did the law teach the Israelites during those days? And what does the New Testament teach us about this law and this topic?
- 24 – What did the laws teach the Israelites during those days?
- 25 – *Be holy.*
- 26 – What does the New Testament teach us about this law and this topic?
- 27 – *Be holy in everything.*
- 28 – We can eat everything!
- 29 – No.
- 30 – What did the law teach the Israelites during those days?
- 31 – God is just and merciful.
- 32 – What does the New Testament teach us about this law and this topic?
- 33 – There is no need to take revenge; our task is to forgive.
- 34 – *Do not take revenge, but leave room for God's wrath.*
- 35 – What did the laws teach the Israelites in those days? And what does the New Testament teach us about this law and this topic?

Lesson 12:

The tabernacle



God is with us

Read **Exodus 25:1–22**.

The tabernacle was the place where God promised to meet with his people. In the inner part of this tent there were two rooms.

What were these rooms? (Exodus 26:33) [1]

What was in the Most Holy Place? (25:10–22) [2]

What do we learn about this from Exodus 25:10–22? [3]

What do we know about the cherubim? (Genesis 3:24) [4]

The cherubim represent that God is too pure and holy for people to come near.

Around the tent was a courtyard and a cloth fence.

What was in the courtyard? See **Exodus 40:29–32**. [5]

Both were needed to cleanse people before God.

When God's people travelled in the wilderness, the tabernacle travelled with them.

Five hundred years later, when they were living in the promised land, King Solomon built the temple. The temple looked like the tabernacle, but it was a strong and beautiful building. This was the place where God promised to meet with his people.

How was the temple similar to the tabernacle? [6]

New Testament

In the New Testament era we do not need a physical temple because now the church is God's temple.

1 Corinthians 3:16: *Do you not know that you are together the temple of God and God's Spirit dwells in your midst?*

So if we want to meet with God, we don't have to go to a special beautiful building. Where do we need to go? [7]

God is always with his people!

God is holy

God created us to live in a relationship with him. It was important for God's people that God lived with them. They could not be God's people without God!

But the Israelites were afraid of God. They knew that God was very holy, and that they were sinners. They also saw how God punishes sinful people (for example, Pharaoh!).

God promised to be above the ark of the covenant. The ark was like the throne of God. But nobody saw the ark. It was in the holy of holies, and only the high priest could visit it and he could do so only once a year. So God was with them, but he was separated from them.

What problem did God's people have? [8]

How can sinners meet a holy God?

In the Old Testament, for the Israelites to receive the forgiveness of sins, they needed two things.

1. **Sacrifices** where an animal dies in place of sinful people.
2. **The high priest** who made the main sacrifices.

What two things did the Israelites need to be forgiven? [9]

But their high priests and their sacrifices were never perfect.

They did not completely solve our sin problem. But they prepared us for the Messiah, who would completely solve the problem of our sin!

New Testament

Hebrews 7:26–27: (about Jesus) *Such a high priest truly meets our need—one who is **holy, blameless, pure**, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens. Unlike the other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. He sacrificed for their sins **once and for all** when he offered himself.*

How is Jesus different from other high priests? [10]

How was his sacrifice different from the sacrifices of the Old Testament? [11]

Jesus is our perfect high priest and our perfect sacrifice!

Read **Mark 15:37–38**. What happened in the temple when Jesus died? [12]

This showed us that we are no longer separated from God! This is the best news ever!

Only Jesus can lead sinful people to the holy God!

Read **Hebrews 10:19–22**. What should we do with this incredible opportunity? [13]

John 14:6: *Jesus answered:*

“I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

So on what basis can we draw near to God? [14]

How do other people try to come to God today? [15]

Do you see how the Old Testament helps us to understand the New Testament?

How to read the Bible in a year

Did you know that if you read two chapters of the Old Testament, one chapter of the New Testament and one psalm (or half of a psalm if it is long!) every day, you will read the entire Bible in a year!

How can you read the Bible in a year? [16]



Answers

- 1 – The holy place and the holy of holies.
- 2 – The ark of the covenant.
- 3 – The ark was a golden box. (vv.10–11)
There was a special lid on the ark and two golden cherubim on the lid. (vv.17–18)
The ark contained two stones with the Ten Commandments. (v.21)
God promised to meet there with his people. (v.22)
- 4 – Cherubim guarded the tree of life.
- 5 – There were two things in the courtyard: an altar and a bowl of water.
- 6 – It had two special rooms: a holy place and a holy of holies. It contained an altar and a large bowl for cleaning things.
- 7 – We need to meet other believers (church).
- 8 – God came to live with them, but they were sinners, therefore they could not approach God.
- 9 – High priest and sacrifices.
- 10 – He was holy, blameless, pure.
- 11 – His sacrifice was once and for all!
- 12 – The curtain in the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.
- 13 – Draw near to God!
- 14 – We come to God through Jesus.
- 15 – Give your own examples.
- 16 – Each day read two chapters of the Old Testament, one chapter of the New Testament and one psalm (or half of a psalm if it is long!)

Lesson 13:

Life in the wilderness



God gave his people many laws on Mount Sinai. They made a tabernacle. And after a year, the Israelites left Mount Sinai and travelled towards the promised land.

Terror!

Read **Numbers 13:1–14:9**.

Why did Moses send 12 people to the promised land? [1]

What did they learn about the land? (13:27) [2]

What does “flowing with milk and honey” mean? [3]

What did they find out about the cities? (13:28) [4]

What did they find out about the people? (13:32–33) [5]

Out of the 12, how many trusted God? (14:6–9) [6]

So how many of them did not trust God? [7]

Ten people saw the giants and were terrified.

But what did Caleb and Joshua say? (v.30) [8]

What is the difference between these two men and other men? [9]

But who is stronger: God or people? [10]

They all knew what God had done for them. What had God done for them? [11]

But still, they feared the people and not God.

It's so easy to forget what God has done for us!

How can we remember what God has done for us? [12]

If we do this, we will not be afraid of people, but we will fear God!

What did the Israelites do when they stopped fearing God? (14:1–4) [13]

In the same way, when we don't trust God, we don't want to obey him.

Read **Numbers 14:20–25**. What did God tell them? [14]

Read **Deuteronomy 1:1–3**. What was the result of the Israelites not trusting God? [15]

God made the Israelites live in the wilderness for forty years, until all the adults had died. Only their children, and Caleb and Joshua, would enter the promised land.

Why did God do this? [16]

When we don't trust God, it leads to terrible consequences.

New Testament

The promised land was a fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham (Genesis 12:1–7). It was the place where God would dwell with his people, Israel.

The promised land is also a picture of the new creation where God's people will live with God forever.

Read **Hebrews 11:16**. What did the people of the Old Testament (who trusted God) look forward to? [17]

Read **John 3:16**. If we want to go to the new creation and have eternal life, what should we do? [18]

If we believe in Jesus we will go to the eternal promised land! It will be much better than the promised land in the Old Testament!

Living in the desert

Compared to life in the new creation, our life here is like life in a desert. The desert is a picture of our journey through life.

Read **Deuteronomy 29:5–6**. How did God look after his people in the desert for 40 years? [19]

In the New Testament, the Holy Spirit led Jesus into a desert for 40 days.

How did Satan try to tempt Jesus in **Matthew 4:3**? [20]

How did Jesus answer him in **Matthew 4:4**? [21]

We don't just need bread, but we need to live by God's word.

Jesus trusted that God would take care of him just like God took care of the Israelites.

In **John 6:35** what did Jesus call himself? [22]

What does this mean? [23]

In **John 4:10**, what did Jesus say to the woman at the well? [24]

What does this mean? [25]

How often do you eat and drink? What happens if you do not eat or drink for a long time?

In order for our spirits to be healthy, we need to eat and drink spiritual food each day!

What do we need to do in order to be healthy? [26]

Our journey through life should be a journey of faith: We must trust God and obey him. We need to keep eating and drinking our spiritual food! We must not be afraid of giants, we must fear God!

What kind of giants do we see?

Who do we fear: giants or God?

When we trust God, we do not sin.

We must be people of faith, not fear!

What is God telling you today?

Answers

- 1 – To explore the land, to learn about the cities, about the people and about the land.
- 2 – Milk and honey flow there.
- 3 – This means a lot of livestock and bees. Bees are very important for growing plants. Through this we understand that the land was very fertile.
- 4 – Its cities were fortified and very large.
- 5 – All the people they saw there were of enormous height. They saw giants there.
- 6 – Only two!
- 7 – 10.
- 8 – Let's go and take possession of the land! We can do it!
- 9 – Caleb and Joshua feared God, while the others feared the people.
- 10 – God!
- 11 – God brought them out of Egypt, saved them from Pharaoh, and performed extraordinary miracles.
- 12 – We need to read the Bible every day and praise God. Good songs remind us of what God has done for us. We need to meet regularly with believers to praise God and learn from God's word together.
- 13 – They disobeyed God and did not go to the promised land.
- 14 – That they wouldn't see the promised land.
- 15 – The journey (walking) from Mount Sinai to the promised land only takes 11 days. It lasted 40 years!
- 16 – Because they didn't trust God.
- 17 – They were looking forward to a better, heavenly country—the new creation!
- 18 – We must believe (and put our trust) in Jesus!
- 19 – He gave them water and bread and everything they needed.
- 20 – He told him to turn the stones into bread.
- 21 – *It is written: "Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God."*
- 22 – The Bread of Life.
- 23 – He satisfies our hunger for a relationship with God. He can give us everything we need for eternal life and to live every day that we live on earth.
- 24 – He gives living water.
- 25 – He quenches our thirst for a relationship with God. He can give us everything we need for eternal life and to live every day that we live on earth.
- 26 – We need to read the Bible and pray and spend time with Jesus every day.

Lesson 14:

The Bible story in eight pictures

To review what we have learned so far, we will use these pictures to explain the message of the Bible.



We will read about the first picture, then one person in the group should repeat this information without reading it. Then we read about the second picture, and someone else will repeat it. When we get to the end, we will repeat all eight pictures in turn without looking at the words.



1. Creation

Everything God created was good. God spent time with the first people, Adam and Eve, in a beautiful garden which was called the garden of Eden.



2. The beginning of sin

Adam and Eve disobeyed God, and obeyed the devil. Thus, they lost God's blessings, including eternal life.

The arrow in the picture shows that God drove them out of the garden and out of his presence. Ever since this time, people have longed to be able to relate to God again.



3. Promises

God promised Abraham that he would be the father of a **people** who would be special to God. God promised Abraham a **land** for the people, where God would dwell with them.

And, through Abraham, God promised to **bless** all people.

The crown indicates that God will be their good king.

The rainbow indicates that God keeps his promise (Genesis 9:13–16). You can always trust him!



4. Exodus

God's people found themselves in a foreign country, Egypt, where they were slaves. (The pyramids represent Egypt.)

The arrow indicates that God saved his people from terrible slavery in Egypt.



5. Land

God led his people to the promised land. God promised to live with them and bless them if they would obey him.

The trees and water show that this was good land.

But the Israelites did not want to obey God and so they spoiled their special relationship with him.



6. Jesus the Messiah

God kept his promise to send the Saviour! Jesus the Messiah came to die on the cross so he could be the once-for-all-time sacrifice for our sins. Then he rose from the dead. This shows he had conquered death! So now we can be friends with God again!



7. The return of Jesus

Jesus is now in heaven.

The arrow shows that Jesus will return to bring an end to the world and to judge all people.



8. The new creation

We will live with God in the new, eternal, promised land, in the new creation!

Pray for each other that God will give you someone to share these pictures with this week.

Lesson 15:

Joshua



After forty years of wandering in the desert, Moses led the people to the border of the promised land. Moses himself did not enter the land.

Moses died and Joshua became the new leader. Joshua's task was to bring God's people to the promised land. Joshua would lead them in their battles.

Who became the leader of God's people after Moses? [1]

What was his task? [2]

Promise

Read **Joshua 1:1–9**.

What did God promise his people? (Exodus 3:8) [3]

But the people of Canaan were very strong. The Israelites by themselves were not able to defeat them. They needed God's help.

Let's see what God promised Joshua.

Verses 5b–9 are like a poem. The Old Testament was written in the Hebrew language. In Hebrew poetry, the most important idea is often in the middle of a poem. Look how the first and last parts say the same thing, and how the second and second-to-last parts say the same thing, etc.

- A. I will never leave you and I will never forsake you.
- B. Be strong and courageous...
- C. Be strong and very courageous.
- D. Carefully obey the entire Law ... so that you have success wherever you go.
- E. **Let the words of Torah, the Book of the Law, always be on your lips, meditate on them day and night.**
- D. So that you may be careful to do everything written in it, then you will be prosperous and successful.
- C. ...Be strong and courageous.
- B. Do not be afraid and do not be discouraged.
- A. ...The Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.

What is the main idea in this poem? [4]

If Joshua does this, what will be the result? (v.7) [5]

Why doesn't he need to be afraid or discouraged? (v.9) [6]

Fulfillment

Read **Joshua 21:43–45**.

How much land that God promised to Abraham was conquered by the Israelites under Joshua? (v.43) [7]

What else did God give them? (v.44) [8]

How many of God's promises had been fulfilled, according to this passage of Scripture? (v.45) [9]

This was a miracle! But it was not easy for the Israelites. They had to fight for every city. But in the end, God gave the Israelites a land that was to become a place of peace and joy. This was to be their home with God!

Why did they have to get rid of these people?

In order for the nation to be the light of the world, they needed to get rid of their enemies from the promised land.

These enemies worshipped other gods and did terrible things, including sacrificing their children. God hated what these people did and did not want the Israelites to copy these evil deeds.

Why do they have to get rid of these people? [10]

New Testament

In the time of Jesus, nearly everyone in this part of the world spoke Greek. So the New Testament was written in Greek.

What language was the New Testament written in? [11]

What language was the Old Testament written in? [12]

The Hebrew name “Joshua” is “Jesus” in Greek. What does “Jesus” mean? (Matthew 1:21) [13]

Joshua is a picture of Jesus. Jesus is the faithful leader who will save us and lead us safely to the eternal promised land, to the new creation! This will be much better than the promised land of the Old Testament! This world is not our home. We are on our way to our real home!

Jesus was without sin. He completely obeyed God’s law. He did “not turn from it to the right or to the left” (Joshua 1:7). When tempted by the devil in the wilderness Jesus “fought” him with God’s word (Matthew 4:1–11).

How is Jesus similar to Joshua? [14]

How is Jesus different from Joshua? [15]

What battles does God want us to fight today?

There is no promised land today. God does not call us to fight for a physical piece of land and get rid of all who disobey him. Rather, our job is to show people that there is a holy God through our words and love. He loves them so much that he sent his son to die for their sins so that they might have eternal life. They need to repent of their rebellion against the God of the whole world!

What is our task today? [16]

We are in a spiritual war. The devil is always encouraging us not to obey God. There are many battles ahead of us before we reach the eternal promised land.

Joshua 1:16–17: What did the Israelites promise Joshua? [17]

The Israelites had to obey Joshua, their leader, in everything in order to be victorious. In the same way, we must obey our leader, Jesus, in everything in order to be victorious.

God was with Joshua so he could lead his people to the promised land. But Jesus was God himself who became man. So he is both the God who is with us and the leader who leads us into the eternal promised land.

What did Jesus promise to his “soldiers” (followers) in Matthew 28:20? [18]

So we can read Joshua 1:5b–9 as Jesus’ words to us.

What do we need to do so that we know that Jesus is always with us, and he can make us strong and courageous? [19]

When we read God’s word, God gives us courage and takes away our fear!

Just as the Israelites had to fight for every city, so we have to fight against every sinful thought and action.

- Who do we dislike?
- Who have we not forgiven?
- When do we love ourselves more than our husband or wife?
- Do we get angry and shout at those close to us?
- Do we look at bad things on our phones?

Remember the lesson about Noah? We can easily look good on the outside when we are like rotten fruit on the inside. Ask God to show you how he wants to change you. Then you can help many others to follow Jesus to the everlasting promised land!

Daily challenge

Put on spiritual armour every day (Ephesians 6:10–18) so you can stand firm against every kind of arrow that Satan throws at us. Remember that God fights for us and will deliver us. Our task is not to give up or run away!

Answers

- 1 – Joshua.
- 2 – To lead God's people into the promised land.
- 3 – God promised to lead them out to a good, spacious land, where milk and honey flow (a fertile land with a lot of cattle).
- 4 – Let the words of Torah, the Book of the Law, always be on your lips, meditate on them day and night.
- 5 – He will have success wherever he goes.
- 6 – For the Lord his God will be with him wherever he goes.
- 7 – The whole land.
- 8 – He gave them rest from all their enemies.
- 9 – They had all been fulfilled.
- 10 – God hated what these people did and did not want the Israelites to copy these evil deeds.
- 11 – Greek.
- 12 – Hebrew.
- 13 – God saves.
- 14 – Both of their names mean "God saves" and both save and lead God's people to the promised land.
- 15 – Joshua was a man, so he wasn't perfect. Jesus completely obeyed God's law. Joshua brought the people of God to the promised land which didn't last forever. Jesus will bring us to the eternal promised land.
- 16 – Through our words and love, we need to show people that there is a holy God who loves them. They need to repent!
- 17 – They promised to obey him.
- 18 – I will be with you always, until the end of the age.
- 19 – We need to read, meditate on, and obey God's Word.

Lesson 16:

The judges



In the book of Judges there are many very terrible stories. This shows us how much we need a Saviour. A Saviour who will be the Light in this dark world!

When we read terrible stories in the Bible, what does it remind us of? [1]

Who is the Light of the World? (John 8:12) [2]

The judges were the leaders and saviours of God's people. This was the time between Joshua and the first king, Saul. It lasted more than 300 years and was the period around 1300–1000 BC.

Who were the judges? [3]

The circle

Read **Judges 2:6–19**.

God gave his people the promised land so that they could be the light of the world, and so that other nations could see how they should live and that they should worship the true God.

But in the book of Judges, we see how the Israelites disobeyed God.

There is a circle with five parts that repeats itself:

1. The Israelites worship other gods.
2. God punishes them and gives them to his enemies.
3. They cry out to God.
4. God gives them a judge who saves them.
5. The judge dies.

And after that the circle is repeated.

What are the five parts of the circle in the Book of Judges? [4]

Four problems with the judges

1. The judges were not good examples for us to follow.

The judges in this book were not good examples for us! For example:

1. **Gideon** was afraid (6:27). We should not test God with wet and dry fleeces! (6:36–40)
2. **Jephthah** killed his daughter after he had made a foolish oath. (11:29–40)
3. The most famous judge is **Samson**. He was very strong. He married a Philistine woman who worshipped other gods (14:1–2). He went to prostitutes. He broke his vow not to cut his hair (chapter 16)—so he lost his great strength. And he always took revenge.

They are not good examples for us!

In the New Testament

We have a Saviour who is a good example for us. We can copy him. He was not afraid, he did not kill innocent people, he did not take revenge, and he lived a pure life.

Who is this person? See 1 Peter 2:21–23. [5]

2. The judges were only able to save temporarily.

What happened when the judge died (2:19)? [6]

In the New Testament

We have a Saviour who can save us forever!

Hebrews 7:25: *Therefore, he [Jesus] is able to completely save those who come to God, because he always lives to intercede for them.*

Why can Jesus save us forever? [7]

3. The judges failed to solve the problem of sin.

Throughout the book of Judges, we see the Israelites get worse and worse.

It's amazing that God constantly shows his love for his people!

When they called out to God, what did he do? (e.g. 3:9) [8]

But what happened when the judge died? (2:19) [9]

In the New Testament

We have a Saviour who solved the problem of our sin!

What has God done? (1 John 4:9–10) [10]

What gift did God give us? (Acts 2:38) [11]

The Holy Spirit makes us more and more like Jesus. As he works in our lives, we learn to sin less and less. And one day we will live without sin with Jesus in the new creation!

4. The judges failed to persuade the people to obey God, their king.

How does Psalm 44:4 describe God? [12]

In Deuteronomy 33:5, Moses declares that God “was king over Jeshurun” (a different name for Israel).

But what does **Judges 21:25** say? [13]

The Israelites were living as though they had no king. No one was ruling them. They had stopped living under the rule of Yahweh. They lived as they wanted to and became worse and worse. It was terrible!

What did the Israelites need in order to do the right thing? [14]

God knew that the Israelites would want a king like the other nations. So what did God tell them about what their king should do and not do? (Deuteronomy 17:14–20) [15]

A good king must lead all his people in obedience to the laws of God.

When we read the Old Testament, we know that none of the kings of Israel did everything right. But God told his people that one day he would send a perfect king to lead his people in obedience to the laws of God.

In the New Testament

What title is given to Jesus in these verses?

Matthew 2:2 [16]

Matthew 27:37 [17]

Revelation 19:16 [18]

Jesus is the king who we need! He lived a perfect life and fulfilled the law (Matthew 5:17).

What four problems did the judges have? [19]

Who is a good example for us? [20]

Who can save us forever? [21]

Who can solve the problem of sin? [22]

Who is the perfect king? [23]

How do you worship your king?

What do we learn from the book of Judges?

1. It is very easy to imitate what non-believers do.

What do they worship? [24]

Read **Deuteronomy 6:5**. What does God want from us? [25]

2. Sin is too strong for us to throw it off by ourselves. We need help.

John 8:36: *So if the Son sets you free, you will truly be free.*

How can we stop sinning? [26]

Only Jesus can save us from our sin and only Jesus can change our hearts!

3. God disciplines us because he loves us.

Hebrews 12:5–6: *My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines the one he loves and he chastens everyone whom he accepts as a son.*

Who does the Lord discipline? [27]

When something bad happens to you, ask God what he wants to teach you through it.

This does not mean that all bad things are punishment from God. It is not good to tell people that the bad thing that happened to them is a punishment from God. Others need to be treated with compassion!

Romans 8:28–29: *We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his son...*

How does God use difficulties in our lives? [28]

4. God is faithful, compassionate and merciful.

However many times we go away from him, he will always hear us and save us when we cry out to him. Some people stop following Jesus or coming to meetings because they feel they have made too many bad decisions. But God always forgives, always restores and always loves.

Psalms 145:8: *The Lord is merciful and compassionate; slow to anger and rich in love.*

What do we need to remember when we have done something bad again? [29]

What do we learn from the book of Judges? [30]

Is everything bad a punishment from God? [31]

How should we treat others? [32]

What do we know about difficulties? [33]

What has God taught you today through this book?

Answers

- 1 – We need a saviour.
- 2 – Jesus!
- 3 – They were the leaders and saviours of God's people during the time between Joshua and the first king, Saul.
- 4 –
 1. The Israelites worship other gods.
 2. God punishes them and gives them to his enemies.
 3. They cry to God.
 4. God gives them a judge who saves them.
 5. The judge dies.
- 5 – Jesus!
- 6 – The Israelites worshipped other gods again, and it got worse and worse.
- 7 – Because he lives forever!
- 8 – He sent them a saviour.
- 9 – The Israelites worshipped other gods again, and it got worse and worse.
- 10 – He sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins.
- 11 – He gave us the Holy Spirit.
- 12 – My king.
- 13 – *In those days Israel did not have a king and everyone did what he thought was right.*
- 14 – They needed to submit to the King, Yahweh, who had rescued them from slavery.
- 15 – He must be an Israelite (that is, a worshipper of Yahweh). He must not take lots of wives, horses, silver or gold. He must know and obey God's laws.
- 16 – King of the Jews.
- 17 – King of the Jews.
- 18 – King of Kings and Lord of Lords.
- 19 – The judges were not good examples for us to follow.
The judges were only able to save temporarily.
The judges failed to solve the problem of sin.
The judges failed to persuade the people to obey God, their king.
- 20 – Jesus!
- 21 – Jesus!
- 22 – Jesus!
- 23 – Jesus!
- 24 – They worship religious things, people who are dead, their telephone, their car, their big house.
- 25 – *Love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your strength.*
- 26 – We need Jesus to set us free.
- 27 – Those he loves.
- 28 – God uses all difficulties to make us more like Jesus.
- 29 – That God will always hear us and save us when we cry out to him.
- 30 – It is very easy to imitate unbelievers, to do what they do.
Sin is too strong for us to throw it off by ourselves.
God disciplines us because he loves us.
God is faithful, compassionate and merciful.
- 31 – No.
- 32 – With compassion!
- 33 – God uses all difficulties to make us more like Jesus.

Lesson 17:

The kings



1 and 2 Samuel

In **1 Samuel**, we learn about Samuel, Saul and David.

Samuel was a prophet and the last judge. He taught the Israelites about God and showed them their sins.

But the Israelites wanted to be like other nations: They did not want God to be their king, but they wanted a physical king. So then God gave them Saul.

Saul was the first king. When he disobeyed God, God said that he could no longer be king.

Then God gave the people another king—whom? [1]

What kind of man was he? (**Acts 13:22**) [2]

David was the greatest king of Israel. We read about the reign of David in **2 Samuel**. We'll talk about him in the next lesson.

Who was Samuel? [3]

Who was Saul? [4]

Who was David? [5]

1 and 2 Kings

After David, who was the next king? [6]

What did he build? (**1 Kings 6:1–2**) [7]

What kind of man was he? (**1 Kings 10:23**) [8]

What was life like for the Israelites during the reign of Solomon? (**1 Kings 4:25**) [9]

It was a picture of the new creation!

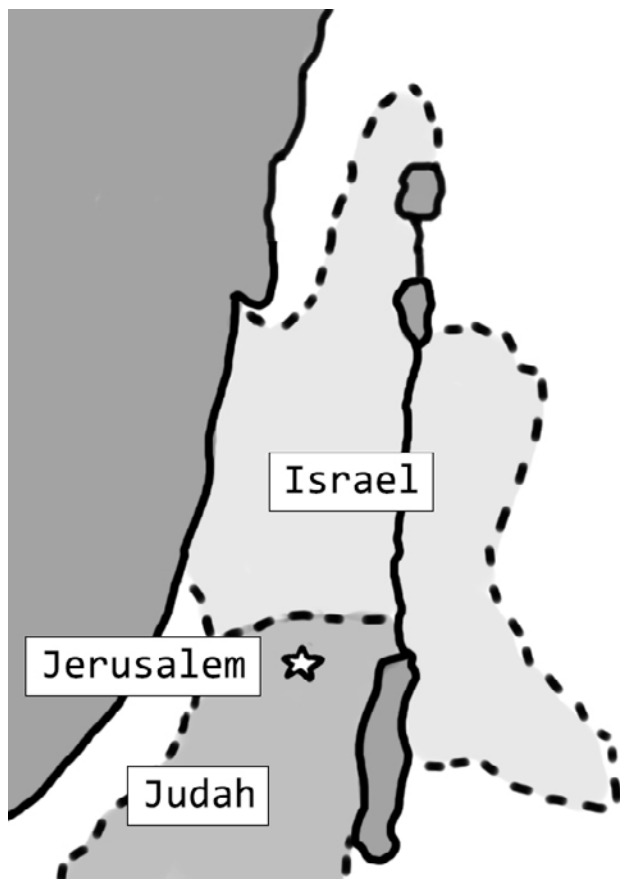
But later Solomon sinned. What did he do? (**1 Kings 11:1–13**) [10]

So we see how Solomon ruined the kingdom.

God was angry with him. So, during the reign of his son, God divided the kingdom into two parts:

The northern part was called **Israel**, and included ten tribes.

And the southern part was called **Judah**, and included two tribes: Benjamin and Judah.



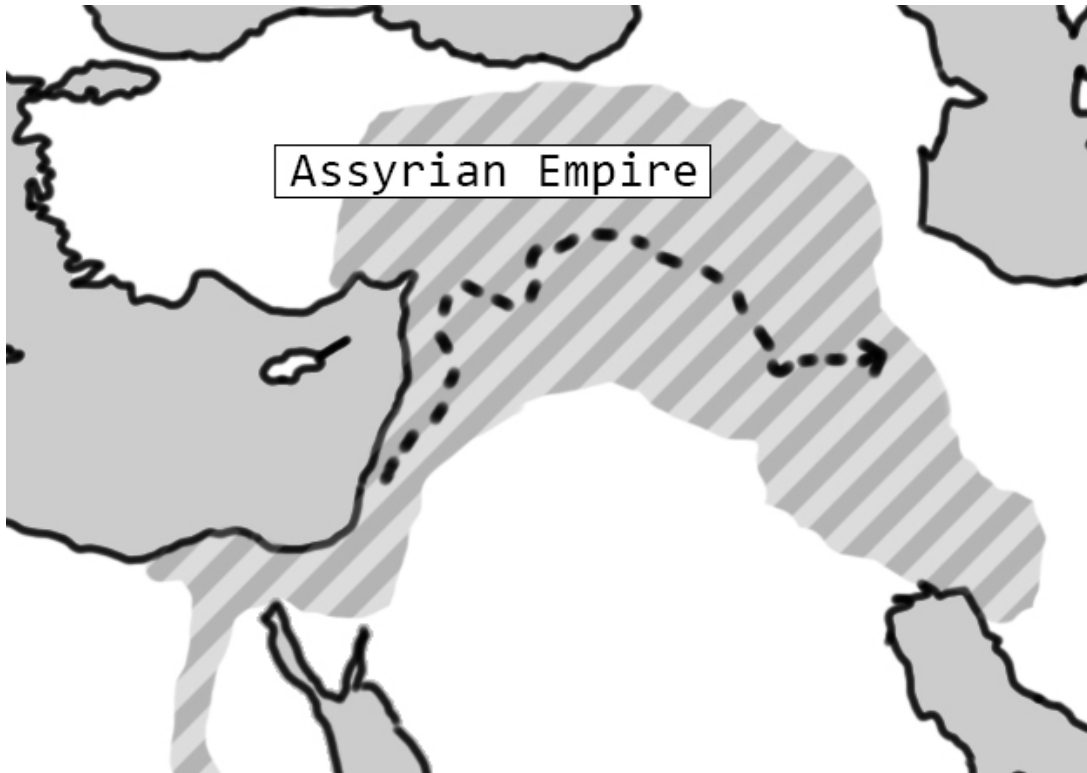
What was the name of the northern part? [11]

What was the name of the southern part? [12]

Israel

During a period of 200 years, 20 bad kings ruled over Israel. They encouraged the worship of other gods. The kings of Israel got worse and worse. And God's people were getting more and more distant from God.

In the end, God sent the Assyrian Empire to conquer Israel. They killed many people and took many people to Assyria. This happened in 722 BC (722 years before Jesus was born) (4 Kings 17:5–23). Look at the map—the dotted line shows where the people were taken.



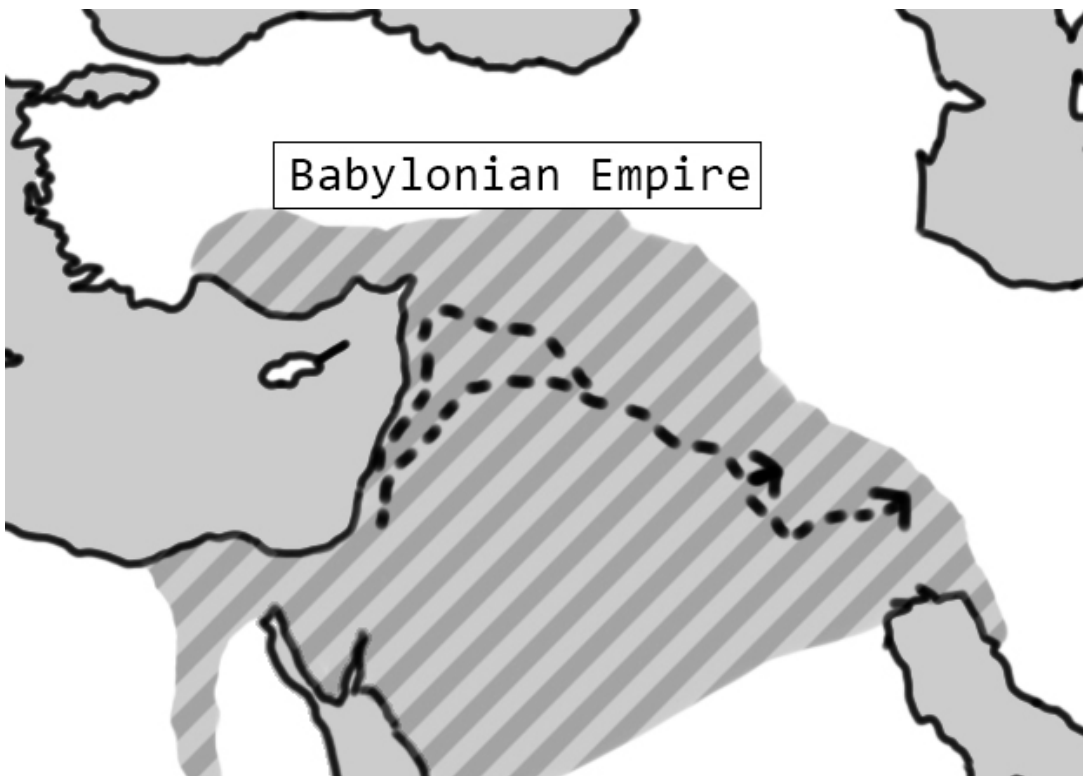
How many kings of Israel were good? [13]

Who defeated Israel in 722 BC? [14]

Judah

Over a period of 350 years, 20 kings ruled over Judah. Some kings were good kings, some were bad kings. And so the people of Judah also drifted further and further from God, just like the people of Israel.

In the end, God sent the Babylonian empire to conquer Judah. They killed many people and took many people to Babylon. This happened in 586 BC (586 years before the birth of Jesus) (2 Kings 25). Look at the map to see where they were taken.



How many kings of Judah were good? [15]

Who conquered Judah in 586 BC? [16]

God's judgment is final:

Under **Moses**, the people were set free, but now they are slaves again.

Under **Joshua**, the land was given to the people. Now they have lost their land.

Under **Samuel**, a king was given to the people. Now the king has been overthrown.

Under **David**, people enjoyed freedom from their enemies. Now they are defeated.

Under **Solomon**, the temple was built as a sign of the presence of God. Now the temple is destroyed.

God keeps his promises to bless those who obey him and to punish those who consistently disobey him (Deuteronomy 28:1–2, 15).

How have we seen God keeping his promises in the Old Testament? [17]

God should punish sin. But the surprise is that he is not only a just God but he is also a merciful God.

What happened 70 years after the start of the exile of Judah? (2 Chronicles 36:20–23) [18]

God also protected the descendants of David. God had promised David that one of his descendants would be the Messiah, the perfect king who would reign forever. When the people returned to Judah from captivity, a descendant of David named Zerubbabel was with them.

However, God's people were never again free from foreign control (except for a short period a hundred years before Jesus). They longed for a time when they would have freedom, their own land, a good king, peace from their enemies and a place where they could truly worship God.

New Testament

What did Jesus come to bring? (**Mark 1:14–15**) [19]

Who is the King? (**Matthew 2:2**) [20]

How is Jesus described in **Matthew 12:42**? [21]

The Jews living at the time of Jesus were waiting for the Messiah. He would bring a kingdom as glorious as the kingdom of Solomon. But the kingdom of Jesus will be much more beautiful than the kingdom of Solomon. There will be far more peace, more riches and more joy in Jesus' kingdom!

How do we get to the wonderful kingdom of Jesus? [22]

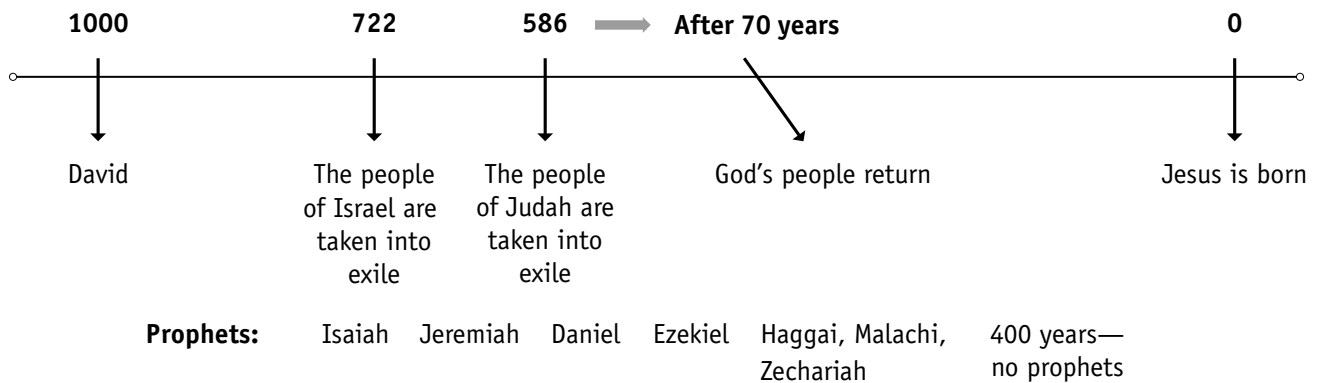
In what areas of your life are you disobeying King Jesus?

Answers

- 1 – David.
- 2 – He loved God.
- 3 – He was a prophet and judge.
- 4 – He was the first king.
- 5 – He was the second king and the greatest king of Israel.
- 6 – His son Solomon.
- 7 – He built the temple.
- 8 – God made him the wisest and richest man in the whole world.
- 9 – God made his kingdom very rich and peaceful.
- 10 – He married many foreign wives and then he worshipped their gods.
- 11 – Israel.
- 12 – Judea.
- 13 – All 20 were bad!
- 14 – The Assyrians.
- 15 – Some of the 20 kings were good kings and some were bad kings.
- 16 – The Babylonians.
- 17 – He blesses those who obey him. He gave them freedom, land, a king, peace from their enemies and a temple where they could worship God. And he punishes those who consistently disobey him, by taking away these blessings.
- 18 – The new king, a Persian king named Cyrus, told the Israelites that they could return home and rebuild the temple.
- 19 – The kingdom of God.
- 20 – Jesus.
- 21 – One who is greater than Solomon.
- 22 – We need to submit to the Kingship of Jesus!

Lesson 18:

David—the greatest king



When did David live? [1]

After the reign of King David, God raised up many prophets to speak to his people.

The prophets who wrote books in the Bible lived between 800 and 400 BC.

After 400 BC, God no longer sent prophets.

When did God send prophets who wrote the books in our Bible? [2]

God used David to prepare his people for the Messiah, the king whom he would one day send. David's life was a picture of the Messiah, and God gave David extraordinary promises about the Messiah.

David was a picture of the Messiah

1. He was born in Bethlehem

Where was David born (1 Samuel 17:12)? [3]

Seven hundred years before Jesus was born, where did the prophet Micah say that one day God's Messiah would come from (**Micah 5:2**)? [4]

In the New Testament, where Jesus was born (**Luke 2:4–7**)? [5]

2. He saved God's people

When David killed the giant Goliath in 1 Samuel 17:48–53, what did he do for the Israelites? [6]

In the New Testament, when Jesus died on the cross, what did he do for those who believe in him (**John 3:16–17; Colossians 1:22; Hebrews 2:14**)? [7]

So David is a picture of the Messiah, who would destroy the devil as God promised in Genesis 3:15.

3. He was the anointed one who suffered a lot

Who was anointed in the Old Testament (**Leviticus 21:10; 1 Samuel 10:1**)? [8]

For many years King Saul persecuted David (you can read about this in 1 Samuel chapters 18–31). During this time, David wrote many psalms (songs in the *Zabur*), which turned out to be prophecies about the Messiah.

The word Messiah means “the anointed one”. In the New Testament, Jesus the Messiah is God's promised king or anointed one. He is the Messiah who suffered for us when he died on the cross.

How did David suffer? [9]

During his suffering, what did David write? [10]

How did Jesus suffer? [11]

4. He became a great king

In the end, David became Israel's greatest king. At the end of his reign, Israel stretched from river Euphrates in the east to Egypt in the west.

In the New Testament, Jesus is the King of kings who will rule over the whole earth! (**Philippians 2:9–11**)

What sort of kings were David and Jesus? [12]

In what four ways was David a picture of the Messiah? [13]

1.

2.

3.

4.

Promises pointing to the Messiah

Read **2 Samuel 7:1–16**.

Until that time, there was no temple and the Israelites worshipped God in the tabernacle.

But in this chapter, what does David want to do? [14]

Why? [15]

God was pleased with David. But God had better plans. God wanted the son of David, Solomon, to build the temple.

However God gave David three amazing promises.

What did God promise in verse 10? [16]

God wants to give them a home that will last forever and no one will spoil it.

But we know that the Israelites continued to rebel against God.

How can God give his people an eternal safe home when they don't want him to be their God? So the prophets began to understand that the promise of an eternal safe home pointed the people to a wonderful future when the Messiah comes (for example, Isaiah 60:11).

What did God promise in verse 15? [17]

The son of David will build a temple. The temple is the place where God will live with his people. But God could not live with the people who are always rebelling against him.

So the prophets began to understand that this promise also pointed the people to the eternal presence of the Messiah (for example, Ezekiel 48:35).

What did God promise in verses 12, 13 and 16? [18]

But how could this be, when the kings got worse and worse?

So the prophets began to understand that all these promises pointed the people to the eternal future with the perfect king who would be the descendant of David (for example, Isaiah 9:6–7).

What three promises did God make to David? [19]

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Jesus was a descendant of David. He is the eternal King whom God has promised. He will take us to his eternal safe home where we will live with him forever!

John 14:1–3: *Let nothing trouble your hearts. Believe in God and believe in me. There are many rooms in my Father's house, and if it were not so, would I have told you, "I am going to prepare a place for you"? And if now I go and prepare a place for you, then later I will return and take you to me, so that you may be where I am.*

What does Jesus promise in these verses? [20]

We also read about this home in Revelation:

Revelation 21:3–4: *God's dwelling-place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.*

Who will live with us in our eternal safe home? [21]

So, let's not be like the Israelites who rebelled against God and whom God had to punish.

Let's do our best to please God and be ready for Jesus when he returns to take us to our eternal safe home.

In what ways are you rebelling against God? In what ways do you displease God in your thoughts, your words and your actions?

What do we need to do? Repent!

Extra: The temple was like the garden of Eden

The tabernacle, and later the temple, reminded the people of God of the garden of Eden.

- The garden of Eden had **beautiful trees and flowers**. The temple was decorated to look like a garden. Pomegranates and flowers were painted and carved inside the temple (1 Kings 7:16–20).
- Just as there was **gold and precious stones** in the garden of Eden, the temple was adorned with gold and precious stones (1 Kings 7:48–50; 2 Chronicles 3:6).
- Just as **God walked** in the garden of Eden, so God “walked” among his people when the tabernacle/temple was in the centre of the people (Leviticus 26:11–12).
- Just as the **exit was on the east side** of the garden of Eden, so the exit from the temple was on the east side (Ezekiel 47:1).
- Just as the **cherubim guarded the exit** to the garden of Eden (Genesis 3:24), so cherubim were sewn onto the curtain of the temple (2 Chronicles 3:14). The cherubim symbolised that God was guarding the entrance so that people would not enter the Holy of Holies. And two golden cherubim stood on the ark. They symbolised that God is too holy for people to come close.
- A **river** flowed in the garden of Eden which then divided into four rivers, which gave life to the world. And in Ezekiel chapter 47, God gave a vision about the future where a river flowed from the new temple, which gave life to everyone.

How did the temple remind God’s people of the garden of Eden? [22]

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

Answers

- 1 – About 1000 BC/1,000 years before the birth of Jesus.
- 2 – 800–400 BC.
- 3 – In a small town called Bethlehem.
- 4 – Bethlehem.
- 5 – Bethlehem.
- 6 – He saved them from the Philistines.
- 7 – He had saved them from death, from sin and from Satan!
- 8 – High priests and kings.
- 9 – King Saul persecuted him for many years.
- 10 – He wrote many psalms, which turned out to be prophecies about the Messiah.
- 11 – He died on the cross for us.
- 12 – David became Israel's greatest king and Jesus is the King of Kings who will rule over the whole earth!
- 13 –
 - 1) He was born in Bethlehem,
 - 2) he saved God's people,
 - 3) he was an anointed king who suffered a lot, and
 - 4) he became a great king.
- 14 – He wanted to build a big, beautiful temple for God.
- 15 – He wanted to honour God.
- 16 – God promised an eternal safe home.
- 17 – His love would never be taken away from them. God will be with them forever!
- 18 – God promised that his people would always have a king who would be a descendant of David.
- 19 –
 - 1) God has promised an eternal safe home,
 - 2) God will be with them forever, and
 - 3) God promised that his people would always have a king who would be a descendant of David.
- 20 – He will come to take us to his father's house (our eternal safe home).
- 21 – God himself!
- 22 –
 - 1) There were beautiful trees and flowers,
 - 2) gold and precious stones,
 - 3) God walked there,
 - 4) the exit was on the east side,
 - 5) the cherubim guarded the exit, and
 - 6) the river (in a vision of the future) gave life to the world.

Lesson 19:

The books of wisdom: Job



There are five books of wisdom: Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs.

These five books help us to live wisely so that we can please God and be a blessing to others.

There is a lot of poetry and songs in these books. Poems and songs touch our hearts deeply. They often help us to express our deepest feelings and emotions. God gives us emotions but they are often hidden. The Psalms help us to see the feelings we have deep in our hearts and help us to pour these feelings out to God. When we do that God is able to comfort, heal and restore us.

These five wisdom books speak about many things humans experience like suffering, love and how to find wisdom. These five books always point us back to God and his loving faithfulness.

God loves to speak to us through these books! What are the five books of wisdom? [1]

Job

Job is a story about a man who suffered. To understand this book, you need to read it all the way through.

Read **chapters 1–2**.

Job loses a lot. What does he lose? [2]

An example for us

1. What does he say in **1:21**? [3]

How can you say this in your own words?

This is such a wonderful example for us: we must learn to praise God, even when we endure all sorts of difficulties.

2. What does he say in **2:10**? [4]

How can you say this in your own words?

We need to humbly accept both the good and bad that God gives us.

3. But Job was not perfect. He got angry with God.

What does he ask God in **3:11**? [5]

This is also a good example for us. We must tell God how we feel. God understands and he wants us to talk honestly with him. He doesn't want us to turn our backs on him because of our pain. In his pain and suffering, Job learned to trust God.

In what three ways is Job an example for us? [6]

1.

2.

3.

Questions to God

Job wants to know why he is suffering. God doesn't answer his questions. But later in chapters 38–41, God meets with him and it is enough for him.

When God speaks, we understand that God does not have to answer our questions. God is in control of everything. God rules over everyone. We do not need to understand everything, but we do need to trust God in everything. God is pleased when we are faithful to him in good times and bad times.

What should we expect from God? [7]

What does God expect from us? [8]

Happy Ending

Read **42:7–17**.

In the Old Testament, it is not very clear what happens after death. These verses show how God blessed Job after all his suffering. In the New Testament, we see that God does not necessarily promise us such happy endings in our lives on earth. For us, this chapter is a picture of the new creation when life will be more beautiful than we can imagine! (Revelation 21:1–4 and 22:1–5)

What is the end of Job a picture of? [9]

Extra

Only at one point Job mentioned his hope to meet God, probably after his resurrection. Read **Job 19:25–27**.

Sin and Suffering

Job's friends say that when a person suffers it is a sign that he has sinned. Job knows that he was not suffering because of his sin, because he knew he was a good person. Job argues with his friends about it for most of the book!

This book teaches us that our suffering is not always because we have sinned. Jesus never sinned, and he suffered rejection, injustice and the most cruel death. He suffered to bring an end to all our suffering! When will that be? [10]

Meanwhile, we know that God uses all our suffering for our good, for example:

James 1:2–4: How does God use our suffering for good in our lives? [11]

When we suffer, we have a choice: we can be bitter and resentful, or we can see this as an opportunity to become more like Jesus.

What did God promise us in **Hebrews 13:5**? [12]

If someone is suffering, does that mean that he did something wrong? [13]

Give an example of a person who suffered even though he never did anything wrong. [14]

When will there be no more suffering? [15]

How does God use all our suffering for our good? [16]

When we suffer, what choice do we have? [17]

What did God promise us in Hebrews 13:5? [18]

May God give us grace for all the difficulties in our life!

What has God taught you through the book of Job?

Answers

- 1 – Job,
Psalms,
Proverbs,
Ecclesiastes,
Song of Songs.
- 2 – Property, children and later on his health.
- 3 – Naked I came from my mother's womb, naked I will depart. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away—May the name of the Lord be praised.
- 4 – Should we accept only the good from God and not trouble?
- 5 – Why was I born?
- 6 – 1) We must learn to praise God, even when we endure all possible difficulties.
2) We need to humbly accept the good and the bad that God wants to give us.
3) We must tell God about our feelings.
- 7 – He may not answer all of our questions, but he will meet with us when we look for him.
- 8 – We have to trust him in good times and bad.
- 9 – The new creation.
- 10 – When he returns to take us home to the new creation.
- 11 – The testing of our faith produces perseverance, and perseverance must grow in us so that we become mature and complete, without any flaws.
- 12 – I will never leave you and I will never forsake you.
- 13 – No.
- 14 – Jesus.
- 15 – When Jesus returns to take us home to the new creation.
- 16 – The testing of our faith produces perseverance, and perseverance must grow in us so that we become mature and complete, without any flaws.
- 17 – We can be bitter and resentful, or we can see this as an opportunity to become more like Jesus.
- 18 – I will never leave you and I will never forsake you.

Lesson 20:

The books of wisdom: Psalms



Do you know ...?

- Psalms is the third longest book in the Bible, after Jeremiah and Genesis (by word count in the original languages).
- There are 150 songs in this book.
- The songs in this book were written over a period of 700 years.
- King David wrote many of these songs. Moses, Solomon and many other men also wrote some of these songs.
- The New Testament writers quote the Psalms more than any other book of the Old Testament. Psalms are quoted in all but four of the New Testament books!
- The book of Psalms has more prophecies about the Messiah than any other Old Testament book.
- In the New Testament, Psalms was the song book of the Jews including Jesus. If Jesus sang these songs, we should sing them too!
- When we read these songs, we have to read them several times to understand the main theme.

How many songs are there in the book of Psalms? [1]

Who wrote many of these songs? [2]

Who had this songbook in the New Testament? [3]

How do you find out the main theme of a song? [4]

The three main types of psalm:

1. There are many songs we can use to **praise God**. Read **Psalm 100**.
2. There are many songs we can use to **thank God** for what he has done. Read **Psalm 116**—this song thanks God for saving the writer when he almost died.

3. There are many songs that we can use to **cry out to God**, when we feel that life is terrible. For example, how did the writer feel when he wrote this:

Psalm 88:18: *You have taken from me friend and neighbour—darkness is my closest friend.* [5]

When we read a song, we need to think about how the writer felt when he wrote this song. Do we feel the same sometimes?

We can use these words to praise God, to thank him, and to cry out to God!

God gives us words for every situation and every emotion!

For what three main purposes can we use Psalms? [6]

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

The Psalms help us to know Jesus

1. We need to remember that King David points us to the Messiah. The situations that David experienced often point us to Jesus.

For example:

- David describes his sufferings in a way that was more than he ever endured. Read **Psalm 22:12–18**—this is an amazing description of crucifixion that was written hundreds of years before they invented crucifixion!
- He was a great king but sometimes the descriptions are far too great to be about David. Read **Psalm 2:6–9**—this prophecy is about the Messiah who would be king of the whole world!

2. What we read about God in the Psalms, shows us who Jesus is.

Example 1: Read **Psalm 103:2–3**. What does God do in verse 3? [7]

Compare **Mark 2:1–12**. What does Jesus do? [8]

Example 2: Read **Psalm 23:1**. How does this describe God? [9]

Compare **John 10:11**. What is written about Jesus? [10]

Give two examples of how David's life points us to the Messiah: [11]

1.

2.

Give two examples of Psalms where what is said about God the Father is also true of God the Son: [12]

1.

2.

May the Psalms lead us to Jesus!

What's your favourite psalm? Why do you like it? [13]

Extra

There are some verses in the Psalms where the writer wants God to judge his enemies, so that terrible things will happen to them. For example: **Psalm 109**.

In the New Testament, what do we learn about revenge? See **Romans 12:17–19**. [14]



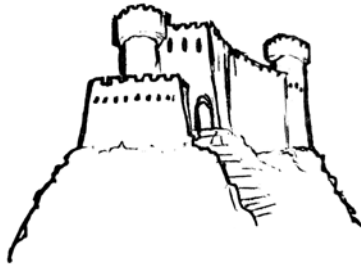
When people persecute God's people, it is not our task to take revenge. But we should pray and we can tell God exactly how we feel about the situation. God feels even more angry than us when people persecute his children. Soon Jesus will return and bring all the evil people to justice!

Answers

- 1 – 150.
- 2 – King David.
- 3 – Jesus.
- 4 – You need to read it several times.
- 5 – He thinks that life cannot be worse than this. Now he has no friends, only darkness.
- 6 – 1) To praise God,
2) to thank him and
3) to cry out to God!
- 7 – God forgives our sins and heals our diseases.
- 8 – He forgave his sins and healed him.
- 9 – He is my shepherd.
- 10 – Jesus is the good shepherd.
- 11 – 1) He suffered and
2) was a great king.
- 12 – 1) Our Saviour and
2) a good shepherd.
- 13 – For example: Psalm 23. God will faithfully lead us, take care of us and give us the strength we need. Our task is to follow him.
- 14 – We must not repay anyone evil for evil. We must not take revenge, but leave room for God's wrath.

Lesson 21:

Psalm 91



Read **Psalm 91**.

This psalm contains promises for the King, which were ultimately for the Messiah, and also for us!

God is our fortress

What do people worry about? [1]

Psalm 91:2: What does the writer say about God? [2]

The fortress is a safe place during the war. We can hide in him and then we will be safe.

In verse 4, what is God compared to? What are the people of God compared to? [3]

God protects us from danger, as a bird protects its chicks from danger with its wings.

Read verses 5–6. When we meditate on God's character and remind ourselves about what he is like, what happens? [4]

Read verses 7–8. They describe a scene of God's judgment of wicked people and God's protection of his people. This is a taste of Judgment Day when Jesus will return to judge the world. On this day those who have not submitted to God's rule will be punished once and for all time.

What will happen to those who have submitted to God's rule and to God's King, the Messiah (v.8)? [5]

So when we meditate on God's character and remind ourselves about what he is like, what happens? [6]

The fight between the devil and the Messiah

The devil tries to defeat the Messiah

The devil had been afraid of the coming of the Messiah ever since the days of the garden of Eden (Genesis 3:15). Once Jesus had been born on earth, Satan tried hard to kill him (Matthew 2:13–16). When Satan didn't succeed, he tried hard to make Jesus fail.

How did the devil use verses from this psalm in **Matthew 4:5–7**? [7]

Why didn't Jesus want to prove to the devil that God would protect him if he jumped off the top of the temple (Matthew 4:7)? [8]

Also, it is always wrong to do what the devil tells us to do!

Read **Matthew 4:11**. We see that the angels that God promised in Psalm 91:11 did come and help Jesus.

The Messiah defeats the devil

Psalm 91:13: The snake or dragon represents the devil. Lions represent those who want to cause harm (Psalm 22:13).

What did God say to Satan (who appeared as a snake) in **Genesis 3:15**? [9]

Satan will be defeated by a descendant of Eve, but this descendant of Eve will suffer in the process.

What will the Messiah do in Psalm 91:13? [10]

He will defeat the devil and all those who serve him!

So what was the Messiah's task? [11]

When troubles come

What does God promise the Messiah in verses 15–16? [12]

God promises:

- to be with him
- to save him
- to honour him
- to give him long life and
- to give him salvation.

Read **Philippians 2:8–11**. Did God keep his promises which he made to the Messiah? [13]

God saved Jesus **through his suffering and death**. Jesus' death does not show that God did not look after Jesus. Rather, God was with him **in** his trouble. God delivered him (raised him from the dead). God honoured him. Jesus now lives forever. And God brought salvation to many people through Jesus' obedience to God.

What does verse 13 tell us about what the Messiah will do? [14]

When we trust Jesus, we do not need to be afraid of the devil and his demons.

What does verse 15 tell us about God? [15]

God protects us with his angels every minute of the day! But the Bible also tells us that sometimes God allows bad things to happen.

Do not listen to those who say that now you are following Jesus, you will not have problems.

What did Jesus tell his disciples in **John 16:33**? [16]

We will have trouble, but Jesus gives us his peace.

What is the wonderful promise God gives us in **Romans 8:38**? [17]

When we follow Jesus, nothing can separate us from God's love!

So will followers of Jesus have troubles? [18]

What does God promise us in Romans 8:38? [19]

God's plans

Jesus knew this psalm well. When he was on the Mount of Olives the night before his death, what did he pray in **Luke 22:42**? [20]

Jesus understood that God can keep us from evil, but sometimes he has higher plans.

Read **Luke 22:43**. Again God sent an angel to strengthen Jesus.

In the same way, we know that God can keep us from evil, but sometimes he has higher plans. If he asks us to endure problems, we need to know that he will always send his angels to help us!

In **Romans 8:28–29** what do we learn about how God uses our difficulties? [21]

So why does God allow difficulties in our lives? [22]

Eternal life

What does God promise in Psalm 91:16? [23]

The Old Testament says little about life after death. Long life was a sign of God's blessing in the Old Testament.

In the New Testament, God does not promise us a long physical life, but he does promise us much better: eternal life with him, which is more wonderful than we can imagine!

Jesus has saved us from sin, death and Satan! He has given us eternal life as a free gift! We don't have to be afraid of anything!

We cannot always see God's plans, but our task is to **trust God** just as Jesus trusted God.

God promises to look after us, to be with us all the days of our life on earth and to give us eternal life. So we should not be afraid!

What does God promise us? [24]

So what is our task? [25]

Which verse from this psalm do you need to remember most?

Answers

- 1 – People worry about health, about the future, about exams, about children, but most of all people worry about money.
- 2 – God is our refuge and fortress.
- 3 – God is like a strong mother bird, we are like weak chicks.
- 4 – We are not afraid of anything!
- 5 – God will keep them safe.
- 6 – We are not afraid of anything!
- 7 – The devil used verses 11 and 12 to tempt Jesus to throw himself off the top of the temple and so prove to everyone that he was God's Son.
- 8 – It is wrong to test God.
- 9 – *I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your offspring and hers:
He will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.*
- 10 – The task of the Messiah was to step on the lion and the snake, trample the young lion and the serpent.
- 11 – To defeat the devil.
- 12 – *When he calls to Me, I will answer: in trouble I will be with him, I will deliver him and honour him. With long life I will satisfy him and show him My salvation.*
- 13 – Yes!
- 14 – God's Messiah is the devil defeater! So God's people can be safe from all evil!
- 15 – God hears our prayers and promises to be with us in times of trouble.
- 16 – *I told you these things so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.*
- 17 – *Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*
- 18 – Yes!
- 19 – Absolutely nothing will be able to separate us from the love of God!
- 20 – Father, if you want to, carry this cup of suffering past Me, but let everything be not according to My will, but according to yours.
- 21 – God uses our difficulties to make us more like Jesus.
- 22 – God uses our difficulties to make us more like Jesus.
- 23 – *With long life I will satisfy him and show him my salvation.*
- 24 – God promises to look after us, to be with us all the days of our life on earth and to give us eternal life.
- 25 – To trust God and not be afraid!

Lesson 22:

The books of wisdom: Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Songs.



Proverbs

Read **1:2**. What is the purpose of this book (in your own words)? [1]

Who needs wisdom? [2]

Overview of chapters 1–9

The first nine chapters challenge us to listen to the voice of wisdom.

Read **1:7**. What is the beginning of wisdom? [3]

Who despises wisdom and instruction? [4]

Many verses speak of two types of people: the wise and the foolish. Which are we going to be: wise or foolish?

Read **1:8–9**. What does a son need to do? [5]

Read **4:14**. What should a son not do? [6]

We need to listen to the voice of wisdom, and not to other voices that lead us away from God.

Read **3:5–6**. What should we do if we don't know what to do? [7]

As we submit to God and ask for his wisdom, he leads us along good and right paths. This is the same idea as Psalm 23 where God, our Good Shepherd, guides us along the right paths.

What are the two types of people in this book? [8]

Overview of chapters 10–31

After nine chapters, there are many separate verses. And usually these verses talk about topics that we all should know. For example money, work, conversations, home, friendship, family, government, life.

Let's look at one example:

Read **14:1**. What does a wise woman do? [9]

What does this mean? [10]

What does a foolish woman do? [11]

What does this mean? [12]

This is true for men too!

What topics are discussed in chapters 10–31? [13]

These are very important topics for us all!

These are not promises

The verses in this book are not promises, but this is what the writer saw in his life.

They describe things that usually, but not always, happen.

However, read this verse:

Proverbs 13:25: *The righteous will eat their fill, but the wicked will go hungry.*

Do the righteous always have enough food? [14]

Do evil people always run out of food? [15]

We know that the righteous sometimes go hungry. This is almost always due to the sins of people, such as war, or government greed, or someone has spent all of the family's money on alcohol. We live in a world that has rebelled against God!

Usually these verses are correct: In the Old Testament, in a normal situation, righteousness leads to blessing. And lawlessness leads to misery. In the New Testament, we learn that these blessings and punishments are a picture of the eternal blessings and punishments that will be ours when Jesus returns. Our hope is not based on the material blessings of this world.

When life is not like what is described here, it reminds us that **we are looking forward to the day when these verses will become true**—when all the righteous will have plenty of food!

When will this be? [16]

Don't let the verses, which at the moment don't seem to fit with our life, stop us from learning from the great wisdom of this book!

What do we need to remember when we see situations in life that do not agree with a verse in this book? [17]

What is your favourite verse in this book?

Ecclesiastes

Read **Ecclesiastes 1:1–14**.

This book discusses the meaning of life.

You have to read the entire book to understand what the book is about.

The main theme is: **Without God, we have no meaning in life:** What is the point of working? What's the point in being good? What is the point of being kind to people?

The writer likes to say that everything is empty, chasing the wind (for example, 1:14). What do you think this means? [18]

Near the end, the writer concludes:

Ecclesiastes 8:15: *So, I commend the enjoyment of life, because there is nothing better for a person under the sun than to eat, drink and be glad. Then joy will accompany them in their toil all the days of the life which God has given them under the sun.*

God wants us to enjoy the life he has given us!

But sometimes we see the emptiness of life: we go to work every day, every day we do the same thing.

But the emptiness of life should encourage us to desire the return of Jesus. Life in the new earth will be full and wonderful and amazing! This world is not our real home!

What should the emptiness of life encourage us to desire? [19]



Song of Songs

Song of Songs speaks of the love between a woman and a man.

A good relationship between a man and his wife is a precious gift from God.

And it reminds us of God's love for us!

Read **Ephesians 5:22–33**.

What does human marriage point us to? [20]

Read **Revelation 19:6–8**.

Who is the bridegroom and who is the bride? [21]

Song of Songs 2:16: *My beloved belongs to me and I to him.*

This is true of us and Jesus!

We need to know that even when we feel that no-one loves us, Jesus loves us like no one else ever could! When we spend time with Jesus, he fills us with his love so that we are then able to show his love to those around us.

Song of Songs 4:1: *How beautiful you are, my darling, Oh how beautiful!*

We need to know that when we don't think we are physically attractive, we are always beautiful to Jesus! When we understand how beautiful we are, we are able to show others how truly beautiful they are too in the way we love them, care for them and respect them.

What does Jesus tell you? [22]

What should a husband's love for a woman remind us of? [23]

What does marriage point us to? [24]

Who loves us more than the best spouse ever could? [25]

What have we learned about God in this lesson?



Answers

- 1 – To help us grow in wisdom and understanding.
- 2 – We all need wisdom!
- 3 – The fear of the Lord.
- 4 – Fools.
- 5 – Listen to the instruction of his father and do not reject the teaching of his mother.
- 6 – He must not spend time with wicked people, nor do what they do.
- 7 – Trust in the Lord with all our heart and lean not on our own understanding; in all our ways submit to him and he will make our paths straight.
- 8 – Wise and foolish.
- 9 – Builds her house.
- 10 – All her thoughts, words, and actions bring her family joy and unity.
- 11 – With her own hands, she tears down her house.
- 12 – Her thoughts, words, and actions make the family unhappy and divided.
- 13 – Money, work, conversations, home, friendship, family, government, life, etc.
- 14 – No.
- 15 – No.
- 16 – When Jesus returns to take us home.
- 17 – We need to remember that we are waiting for the day when these verses become true—when God will bless all his people more than we can imagine!
- 18 – Without God we have no meaning in life, life is empty and pointless.
- 19 – The return of Jesus.
- 20 – Marriage points us to the close relationship between Jesus and the church.
- 21 – Jesus and the church.
- 22 – You are beautiful!
- 23 – The love God has for us!
- 24 – The marriage of Jesus and the church.
- 25 – Jesus!

Lesson 23:

The prophets of Israel and Judah



After the five books of wisdom and songs, we have the books of the prophets.

Who is a prophet in the Old Testament?

A prophet is someone chosen by God to speak God's message. In the Old Testament most of the prophets spoke to God's people but some prophets (for example, Jonah) also took God's message to other nations.

A false prophet does not speak God's message but their own message. A true prophet speaks God's message and it will be fulfilled.

Who is a prophet in the Old Testament? [1]

Why did God send prophets?

He sent the prophets to:

1. **Warn** people because they did not obey the laws of God.
2. To say that God will **judge** and **punish** not only the people of God but also other nations.
3. To say that God will **bless** God's people and other nations as well.

For what three reasons did God send prophets to his people? [2]

Also, God gave wonderful promises to his people through the prophets:

- God would lead God's people back **to Jerusalem** after the Exile.

- God would send a Saviour to **save the people from their sin**.
- God will lead his people home **to heaven**.

These promises are often made as if they were one event rather than three separate events.

What wonderful promises did God make to his people? [3]

To whom did the prophets speak?

Hosea, Amos and **Jonah** spoke to the people of Israel.

Elijah and **Elisha** were also prophets of Israel, but they did not write books.

Most of the other prophets spoke to the people of Judah.

Give an example of a prophet speaking to the people of Israel. [4]

Which two important prophets did not write books? [5]

Which people did most of God's prophets address? [6]

When did they speak?

To understand their message, we need to know when they spoke.

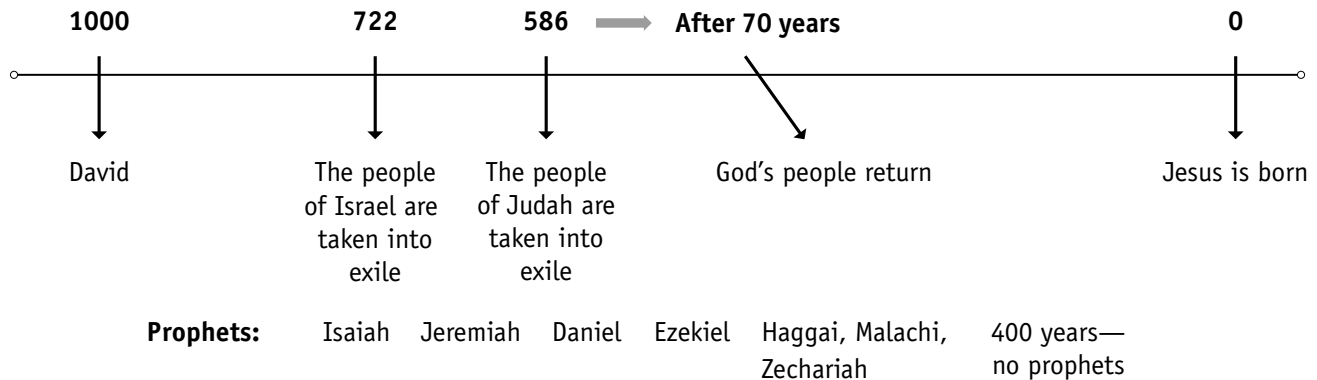
1. Some spoke **before God sent his people into exile**. For example, Isaiah and Jeremiah.
2. Some spoke during the exile, **when they lived in Babylon**. For example, Daniel and Ezekiel.
3. Some spoke **after God's people returned to Jerusalem**. For example, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi, which are the last three books of the Old Testament.

What they said actually happened!

Give an example of a prophet who spoke before the exile. [7]

Give an example of a prophet who spoke during exile. [8]

Give an example of a prophet who spoke after the exile. [9]



Four dates

Look at the timeline.

1. In **722 BC**, the Assyrians took the people of Israel to Assyria. After that, we do not hear anything about the people of Israel.
2. **150 years later (in 586 BC)**, Babylon defeated the people of Judah, destroyed the temple of God and took the people of God to Babylon.
3. **After 70 years (about 500 BC)** the Persian Empire defeated the Babylonian Empire. The Persian king, Cyrus, told the people of God that if they wanted to, they could return to Jerusalem.

But God's people were not faithful for very long. And for 400 years there were no prophets.

All who were faithful to God read the scriptures. From this they learned: One day God will send the **Messiah**, who will save them.

4. **About the year zero (0)**: Jesus was born.

He is the one who fulfills all of God's promises in the Old Testament!

He is the one who will lead us to our eternal home!

When did the Assyrians take the people of Israel to Assyria? [10]

When did Babylon defeat the people of Judah and destroy the temple of God and take the people of God to Babylon? [11]

When were God's people allowed to return home? [12]

When was Jesus born? [13]

Who will fulfill all the promises of God in the Old Testament? [14]

The Exile

This is a repetition of what happened in the garden of Eden.

What happened in the garden of Eden? [15]

In the same way, when God's people sinned, God drove them out of their land and from his presence.

They needed to return from exile not only to the physical land, but also to the presence of God.

The Bible story is about how we can return to life in the presence of God—how we can return to the garden of Eden.

We read about this in the book of Revelation.

Revelation 21:3: *And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people and God himself will be with them and be their God.”*

When will we finally return to life in God's presence? [16]

What is the story of the Bible about? [17]

How can we return to a relationship with God, both now and for eternity (John 6:40)? [18]

The New Testament

After his resurrection, Jesus was talking to some disciples who didn't recognise him.

So he said to them, ‘You foolish people—how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Wasn’t it necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and enter into his glory?’ Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things written about himself in all the scriptures. (Luke 24:25–27)

What did Jesus say about the prophets? [19]

His death and resurrection were part of God's plan for saving the world which had rebelled against him.

Read **Isaiah 55:12**. What does the prophet Isaiah say to those who turn to God? [20]

There is no greater joy than submitting your life to your Creator and his Messiah!

God still speaks to us through the books of the prophets today! So find time to read the books of the prophets!

Homework

Read Isaiah chapters 40–55.

See how Isaiah talks about the Messiah.

What have we learned about God in this lesson?

Answers

- 1 – A prophet is someone chosen by God to speak God's message.
- 2 – To:
 - Warn their people.
 - Say that God will judge and punish not only the people of God but also other nations.
 - Say that God will bless God's people and other nations as well.
- 3 – God will bring God's people back to Jerusalem after the Exile.
God will send a Saviour to save the people from their sin.
God will lead his people home to heaven.
- 4 – Hosea, Amos, Jonah.
- 5 – Elijah and Elisha.
- 6 – The people of Judah.
- 7 – Isaiah and Jeremiah.
- 8 – Daniel and Ezekiel.
- 9 – Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi.
- 10 – In 722 BC.
- 11 – In 586 BC.
- 12 – About 500 BC.
- 13 – About the year 0.
- 14 – Jesus!
- 15 – When Adam and Eve sinned, God drove them out of the garden and from his presence.
- 16 – When Jesus returns, he will take us to live with him forever in the new creation.
- 17 – How can we come back to life in God's presence—How can we get back to the garden of Eden?
- 18 – We must believe in Jesus and in what he did for us.
- 19 – They had much to say about the Messiah including his death and resurrection.
- 20 – *You will go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and the hills will burst into song before you, and all the trees of the field will clap their hands.*

Lesson 24:

The prophet Isaiah



Isaiah lived 300 years after David (700 years before the birth of Jesus) when the people of God were divided into two countries.

What were the two countries called? [1]

Isaiah spoke to the people of Judah.

The Assyrian Empire would soon defeat Israel and try to defeat Judah. It had already conquered some cities in Judah. It was a terrible time!

God rebukes his people

Read **Isaiah 1:1–2:5**.

Why is God angry with his people (**1:1–4**)? [2]

In **1:5–9** Isaiah says, “Why can’t you see God’s punishment? Our country is suffering because we have rebelled against God.” How are they suffering? (v.7) [3]

What does God say about their religion (**1:10–15**)? [4]

Why couldn’t God listen to the prayers of his people (**1:15**)? [5]

God describes his people as his wife (Isaiah 54:5). How does God describe Jerusalem in **Isaiah 1:21**? [6]

How does God describe his people in verse 24? [7]

God will fight against his people!

Why is God saying all this? [8]

Throughout the Bible, we see that God is holy and must punish sins. But he loves his people and always wants to forgive them.

What does God say they should do **(1:16–20)**? [9]

God is a merciful God!

God wants to forgive them. God wants to cleanse them. God wants to bless them.

But we know that God's people will not repent. So in the end what did he do? [10]

But God did not completely reject his people.

In the book of Isaiah, God promises to bring his people home to Jerusalem after the Exile. (Did you read chapter 40 and 43:1–7?)

But we can see that the promise to bring his people home to Jerusalem describes something much better than when they returned to Jerusalem. It describes the new Jerusalem when God will restore the relationship with his people which he had in the garden of Eden!

What will Jerusalem look like **(2:1–4)**? [11]

This is similar to what we read in **Revelation 21:22–27**.



The Messiah in Isaiah

Isaiah speaks more about the Messiah than any other prophet.

Read **52:13–53:12**, which is about the Suffering Servant of God.

This poem has five parts. The middle part of the poem is the most important.

A. 52:13–15: The servant would suffer in order to bring forgiveness, and then he would be exalted.

B. 53:1–3: The servant suffers rejection, humiliation and is finally put to death.

C. 53:4–6: The cause of his death was to bring us peace with God.

B. 53:7–9: The servant suffers rejection, humiliation and is finally put to death.

A. 53:10–12: The servant would suffer in order to bring forgiveness, and then he would be exalted.

What is the most important part of this poem? [12]

God clearly told his people that he would send the Messiah who would die for their sins, and then he would be highly exalted. His glory will be after his suffering.

... and by his stripes we are healed (Isaiah 53:5)

Many people misuse this verse. To properly understand a verse from the Old Testament, we need to do two things:

1. We must always read verses in their context (in their chapter). We need to read the verses before and after a verse in order to understand a verse correctly.

From what we are healed? [13]

2. We need to find out whether the New Testament speaks about this verse and whether Jesus speaks on this subject.

1 Peter 2:24–25: *[The Messiah] Himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live for righteousness. **By his stripes you have been healed.** For you were like sheep, going astray, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.*

What did Peter mean by “*By his stripes you were healed*”? [14]

Jesus also spoke of sins being like a disease.

Luke 5:31–32: *Jesus answered them:—It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have come to call not the righteous to repentance, but sinners.*

What does Jesus mean by “*sick*”? [15]

So by looking at this we come to the conclusion that this verse is not a promise that Jesus will heal us from our physical illnesses. This verse speaks of something much more important: it promises us that our sins will be forgiven and that this Servant (Jesus) will restore our relationship with God forever!

God loves to answer our prayers. We know that he can do anything. When he heals us, it is a great encouragement for us.

He promises us salvation (forgiveness and a new relationship with him) now and promises us completely healthy bodies in the new Jerusalem (**1 Corinthians 15:42–44**).

He doesn't always heal us now (**2 Corinthians 12:7–10**—God didn't heal Paul!).

We cannot use this verse to say that God must heal us.

What does “*By his stripes we are healed*” mean? [16]

What verse from Isaiah do you want to remember? Who can you share it with today?

Answers

- 1 – Judah and Israel.
- 2 – They rebelled against God.
- 3 – Their cities have been destroyed and their crops have been stolen.
- 4 – He hates their religion. God does not accept their sacrifice because they do not obey his laws.
- 5 – *Your hands are full of blood.* They are killing each other! God cannot listen to the prayers of such wicked people.
- 6 – As a prostitute!
- 7 – As his enemies!
- 8 – Because his people did not repent.
- 9 – They need to repent and return to God.
- 10 – He sent them into exile.
- 11 – It will be the highest (most important) mountain where all people come to learn to live for God, and everyone will live in peace.
- 12 – The reason for his death was to bring us peace with God.
- 13 – We are healed of our sins.
- 14 – We are forgiven, because Jesus died for us.
- 15 – Sinners.
- 16 – Our sins will be forgiven and this Servant will restore our relationship with God forever!

Lesson 25:

Nehemiah

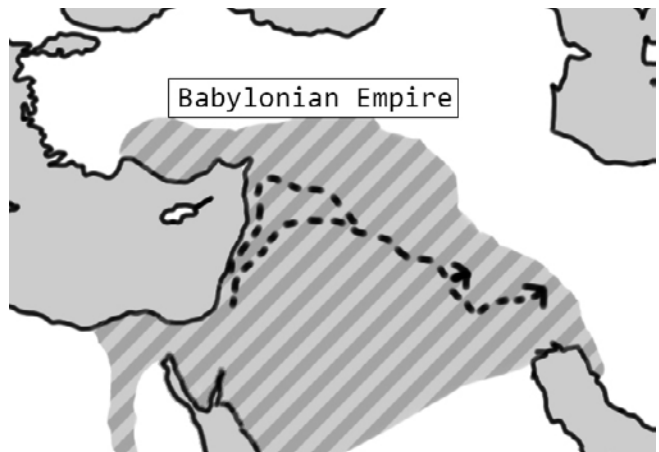


The Situation

In **586 BC**, Babylon defeated the people of Judah, destroyed the temple and took the people of God to Babylon.

After 70 years, the Persian Empire defeated the Babylonian Empire. This was around **500 BC**.

The Persian king, Cyrus, told the people of God that if they wanted to, they could return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple.



Exile!

Read **2 Chronicles 36:15–23**.

How did God's people respond to God's prophets? [1]

What happened to the people of Judah? [2]

What happened to the things that were in the temple? [3]

What happened to the temple? [4]

What happened to the walls of Jerusalem? [5]

Restoring the city of God

In the **book of Ezra**, we read that, after the exile, many of God's people returned to Jerusalem and built the second temple.

In the **book of Nehemiah** we read what happened after that. This was the year **445 BC**.

Read **Nehemiah 1**.

What did Nehemiah hear (**v.3**)? [6]

Why do you think he was upset (**v.4**)? [7]

It looked like the God of the Jews was weak and could not protect his people.

What did Nehemiah know about God (**v.5**)? [8]

What is surprising about the way Nehemiah prayed (**vv.6–7**)? [9]

He was like what the Messiah would be like. He was innocent, but he was ashamed of the sins of the people. And he treated these sins as if they were his own sins. Just like the Suffering Servant in Isaiah 53:5–6.

What did Nehemiah understand from the Torah (**vv.8–9**)? [10]

He saw that God had done all this, but it was not enough. God was still not honoured.

Nehemiah had a good, prestigious job. He was comfortable and did not have to worry about what was happening in Jerusalem. But he knew that God wanted to use him to help rebuild the city of Jerusalem, especially their wall. Jerusalem was God's special city where he had promised to be with his people in the temple (1:9).

In the same way, it is easy to think that life is good and you want to live where you are permanently. But if you have gone to work in another country, remember that God wants to use you to build the church in your own country!

Nehemiah not only built the broken city, but he helped build God's broken people.

How were they broken? [11]

They had lost heart.

So Nehemiah went to Jerusalem in order to lead the people of God to rebuild the walls and their faith in God.

A good leader

Read **Nehemiah 4**.

What do we learn about how Nehemiah led the people? Find seven facts about how he led his people. [12]

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.

Being a good leader was not easy. When they were rebuilding the wall, Nehemiah faced many different kinds of challenges, especially threats and abuse. Yet God helped him to lead the people so that the work continued and was completed!

What do we read about the wall **(6:15)**? [13]

But Nehemiah was not only concerned about the physical city. He was also concerned about the peoples' relationship with God.

What did **Ezra** do **(8:1–3)**? [14]

What did the people do **(10:28–29)**? [15]

This was a new start for God's people! They were listening to God's word and promising to obey it.

Nehemiah is a great example for church leaders today!

The end of the Old Testament

This is almost the end of the Old Testament.

What did God promise Abraham in Genesis 12:1–7? [16]

At the end of the Old Testament, how much of God's promises to Abraham had he fulfilled? [17]

So what's the problem? [18]

Before, God's people were strong, they had become many, and they had their own land. And now they are weak, there are much fewer of them and they are under a foreign king.

Where could God's people find any hope? [19]

Those who read the scriptures knew there was hope. They understood that one day God would send the Messiah who would:

- Change their hearts (Ezekiel 36:26).
- Save them from their sins (Isaiah 53:5–6).
- Rule over the nations forever (Daniel 7:13–14).

How does the Messiah bring hope? [20]

This Messiah fulfils all the promises that God made to Abraham!

Can you explain how the Old Testament prepares us for the New Testament?

Answers

- 1 – They did not listen to them.
- 2 – They were killed or sent into exile.
- 3 – They were taken to Babylon.
- 4 – It burned down.
- 5 – They were broken down.
- 6 – Those who went through captivity and returned to the province of Judea were in great trouble and dishonour. The wall of Jerusalem had been destroyed and its gates burned.
- 7 – The city of God was destroyed and then people did not honour God.
- 8 – God is the God of heaven. God is great and awesome. He keeps his covenant of love with those who love him and obey his commands.
- 9 – He said “we”, not “they”, although he himself did not sin against God.
- 10 – He understood that God had warned his people that he would punish them if they were not faithful to him. And he understood that God had promised that he would bring his people back home.
- 11 – They had been exiled for their sins and they had returned, but they had not rebuilt God’s city and God’s honour.
- 12 –
 - 1) He did not listen to those who opposed him.
 - 2) He prayed to God.
 - 3) He made wise practical decisions (half of the men worked, and half of the men guarded those who worked).
 - 4) He planned what to do if people needed help (the trumpet would sound when someone needed help).
 - 5) He encouraged people by reminding them who God is.
 - 6) He wanted God to be glorified and did not seek his own glory (see also 1:11).
 - 7) He set a good example by working diligently himself.
- 13 – It was completed in 52 days!
- 14 – He read aloud the Torah to the people.
- 15 – They pledged to obey God.
- 16 – The people, the land, and—through Abraham—all people will be blessed.
- 17 – God turned the descendants of Abraham into a great nation, he had given them their own land and had given them perfect laws, by which they could be a light for other nations.
- 18 – The people of God ruined everything because they worshipped other gods and did not obey God’s law.
- 19 – In the word of God!
- 20 – He will change their hearts (Ezekiel 36:26).
He will save them from their sins (Isaiah 53:5–6).
He will rule over the nations forever. (Daniel 7:13–14).

Lesson 26:

The Bible story in eight pictures

To review the history of the Bible, we will use these pictures. We can explain the entire Bible with these pictures.



We will read about the first picture, then one person in the group should repeat this information without reading it. Then we read about the second picture, and someone else will repeat it. When we get to the end, we will repeat all eight pictures in turn without looking at the words.



1. Creation

Everything God created was good. God spent time with the first people, Adam and Eve, in a beautiful garden which was called the garden of Eden.



2. The beginning of sin

Adam and Eve disobeyed God, and obeyed the devil. Thus, they lost God's blessings, including eternal life.

The arrow in the picture shows that God drove them out of the garden and his presence. Ever since this time, people have longed to be able to relate to God again.



3. Promise

God promised Abraham that he would be the father of a **people** who would be special to God. God promised Abraham a **land** for the people, where God would dwell with them.

And, through Abraham, God promised to **bless** all people.

The crown indicates that God will be their good king.

The rainbow indicates that God keeps his promise (Genesis 9:13–16). You can always trust him!



4. Exodus

God's people found themselves in a foreign country in Egypt, where they were slaves. (The pyramids represent Egypt.)

The arrow indicates that God saved his people from terrible slavery in Egypt.



5. The land

God led his people to the promised land. They defeated the Canaanites who lived in this land and who were very wicked people.

God blessed his people, but they worshipped other gods. God warned them many times, but in the end God sent them into exile. Then God brought them back to the promised land, but they still did not obey the laws of God, and continued to sin.

They needed a Saviour who would save them from their sins. They needed a King who would rule them properly. God promised that one day he would send such a person: the Messiah.

They did not all forget about God. When Jesus was born, Judea was part of the Roman Empire. But the people faithful to God (for example, Simeon and Anna—Luke 2:25–38) were still waiting for the Saviour and the King whom God had promised to send.



6. Jesus the Messiah

God kept his promise to send the Saviour! Jesus the Messiah came to die on the cross so he could be the once-for-all-time sacrifice for our sins. He then rose from the dead. This shows he had conquered death! So now we can be friends with God again!



7. The return of Jesus

Jesus is now in heaven.

The arrow shows that Jesus will return to bring an end to the world and to judge all people.



8. The new creation

We will live with God in the new, eternal, promised land, in the new creation!

The Old Testament shows us why we need a Saviour. It teaches us that we are all sinful. We have evil hearts.

It is very important that we read both the Old and New Testaments—the entire Bible—so that we get to know God better and better.

Pray for each other that God will give you someone to share these pictures with this week.

Lesson 27:

God came into the world as a man



At the beginning of their Gospels, Matthew and Luke write about Jesus' birth.

His parents

Read **Matthew 1:18–25**.

What is surprising about what is written in verse 18? [1]

This is the only time in all of history that this has ever happened!

His mother was a human. But he didn't have a human father. It was a miraculous work of God. Jesus was fully human and fully God. Jesus is God himself who came to earth!

How do we see evidence that Jesus really was human in the Gospels?

See **Matthew 21:18, John 19:28, John 4:6, Mark 4:38, John 11:35, John 19:34, John 19:33**. [2]

How do we see evidence that Jesus really was God in the Gospels?

See **Mark 1:33–34, Mark 5:41–42, Mark 6:48, Mark 4:39**. [3]

What does the fact that Jesus was born of a virgin tell us about him? [4]

What had Isaiah prophesied in **Isaiah 7:14**? [5]

Hundreds of years before Jesus was born, God had promised that the Messiah would be born of a virgin!

His place of birth

Read **Luke 2:1–20**.

Where were Joseph and Mary living? [6]

Where was Jesus born (vv.4–6)? [7]

Why was Jesus born in Bethlehem if his parents lived in Nazareth? [8]

Who else in the Bible was born in Bethlehem (**1 Samuel 17:12**)? [9]

What had God promised David in **2 Samuel 7:12–13, 16**? [10]

Matthew 1:1–16 gives us the genealogy of Jesus. Which ancestors are named in verse 6? [11]

But there had been no king from David's line for many years.

What did the angels tell the shepherds in **Luke 2:10–11**? [12]

What had Micah prophesied in **Micah 5:2**? [13]

What is significant about where Jesus was born? [14]

Even Jesus' birthplace is proof that Jesus is the Messiah!

Jesus is our example!

Read **Hebrews 4:15**.

How does the fact that Jesus really was a man encourage us? [15]

In what way was Jesus different from every other person who has ever lived? [16]

He continues to understand how hard it is to be human. Yet his life is the perfect example for us to follow.

A good summary of Jesus' character can be found in the list of the fruits of the Holy Spirit in **Galatians 5:22–23**. What was Jesus' character like? [17]

When we follow Jesus we become more and more like him. Can people see evidence of Jesus in your life? In which areas do you need to ask Jesus to help you change?

Answers

- 1 – Even though Mary was still a virgin, she became pregnant with a child through the Holy Spirit.
- 2 – He got hungry, he got thirsty, he got tired, he slept, he cried, he bled, and in the end he died.
- 3 – He cast out demons, healed the sick, raised the dead, walked on water, and calmed the storm.
- 4 – He was fully human and fully God!
- 5 – That there would be a virgin birth and the one born would be “Immanuel” which means “God with us”.
- 6 – From Nazareth.
- 7 – In Bethlehem.
- 8 – Because his parents had to go to register for a census.
- 9 – King David.
- 10 – The Lord would establish the throne of his son's kingdom forever. A descendant of David would always be on the throne.
- 11 – Jesse, King David and King Solomon.
- 12 – *Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah!*
- 13 – The great ruler would be born in Bethlehem.
- 14 – It was the place that God had said the Messiah would be born.
- 15 – He understands our weaknesses and temptations.
- 16 – He never sinned once!
- 17 – He was full of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Lesson 28:

The Messiah



The Messiah starts his ministry!

Mark's Gospel was the first of the four stories of Jesus' life to be written. See what happens in chapter one.

Mark 1:1: Who does Mark say Jesus is? [1]

Mark 1:11: When Jesus was baptised, what did God call him? [2]

Mark 1:16–20: What do these men do as soon as Jesus tells them to follow him? [3]

Mark 1:22: What do the people think of Jesus' teaching? [4]

Mark 1:24: What does the evil spirit call Jesus? [5]

Mark 1:25–26: What happens when Jesus told the evil spirit to leave the man? [6]

Mark 1:32–34: What did Jesus do? [7]

In just the first chapter, we see that what Jesus does proves that he is the Messiah, the Son of God!

In the fourth chapter of Luke's Gospel, we read what happened when Jesus went back to his hometown.

The person written about in the Old Testament

Read **Luke 4:14–21**.

During the Old Testament, who were God's people waiting for? [8]

What will he do (**Genesis 3:15**)? [9]

What else will he do (**Genesis 12:3**)? [10]

In this passage, the people there are thrilled that Jesus has come back home. Why? [11]

Then they gathered on Saturday in the prayer house of the Jews. They asked Jesus to teach them.

What prophet did he read from? [12]

This passage speaks of a person who has the Holy Spirit and is anointed by God to do amazing things.

In the Old Testament, when were people anointed? [13]

To be God's anointed one meant that God had chosen them for a special task. Isaiah prophesied that one day someone would come who would be God's anointed one. He would do a special task that no one else could do.

In **Luke 4:18–19** what are the four ways used to describe people? [14]

1.

2.

3.

4.

Let's think about what Jesus meant by these words.

The poor

Jesus talks about the poor in two other places in the Gospels.

Luke 6:20–21:

Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you will be satisfied.

Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh.

Matthew 5:3: *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

So, in the Gospels, who are the poor? [15]

But often it is the poor who understand their need for God more than the rich do!

The captives

In the Old Testament, we saw that God's people could not stop sinning and rebelling against God. They were not free, they were always prisoners of sin.

So who has put them "in prison"? [16]



But this person, who Isaiah talked about, will really make them free! He will save them from the power of the devil and sin!

The blind

In John chapter 9, Jesus healed a blind man. In verse 39, what did Jesus say? [17]

So who are the blind? [18]

They think that they're good. Jesus will show them that they are sinful and are in rebellion against God.

The oppressed

What does it mean if you are oppressed? [19]

Who is suffering under a cruel king? [20]

Everyone suffers under Satan's rule until someone sets them free. Satan is a cruel king!

Who do the poor need? [21]

Who do the prisoners of sin need? [22]

Who do the blind need? [23]

Who do the oppressed need? [24]

And what did Jesus say to them in verse 21? [25]

The long-awaited Saviour and Messiah has come!

God has kept his promise to Abraham!

Jesus is the one who God promised!

Jesus healed many people and he performed many miracles to show us who he was.

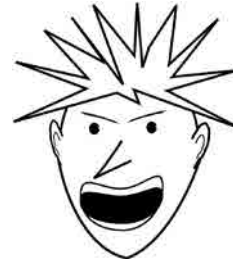
But he came to give us something much better than miracles. He came to set us free from sin, death and Satan!

This was the most exciting news! Why did Jesus come? [26]

Will the people accept him?

Read **Luke 4:28–30**.

How did the people respond to Jesus' sermon? [27]



The world is divided into those who love the Son of God and those who hate him. We shouldn't be surprised when people hate us because we love Jesus.

If he is the Saviour that God has promised, he is worth everything, even if that means people don't love us!

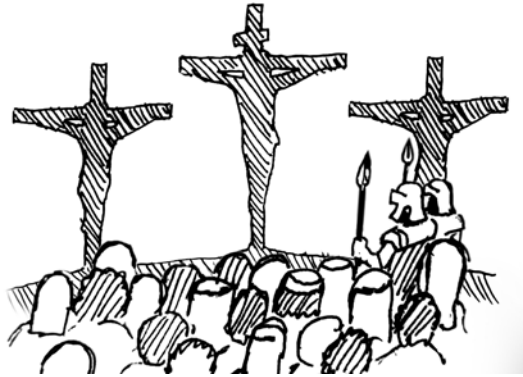
Who is Jesus? What have we learned about him today?

Answers

- 1 – The Messiah, the Son of God.
- 2 – God's Son, who he loves and who pleases him well.
- 3 – They leave everything and follow Jesus.
- 4 – They were amazed at it.
- 5 – The Holy One of God.
- 6 – It came out of him.
- 7 – He healed many people and drove out many demons.
- 8 – They were waiting for the Messiah, the Saviour.
- 9 – He will defeat the devil.
- 10 – He will bless all people.
- 11 – Because they had heard a lot about him and about his miracles.
- 12 – He read to them from Isaiah (chapter 61).
- 13 – When they were appointed king or high priests.
- 14 – 1) The poor,
2) the captives,
3) the blind and
4) the oppressed.
- 15 – Not necessarily those with no money—it means those who know that they need God. They are humble.
- 16 – The devil.
- 17 – *I came to this world for judgment, so that the blind can see, and those who see become blind.*
- 18 – It means those people who do not know that they need God's forgiveness.
- 19 – This means that you are suffering under a cruel ruler.
- 20 – Everyone!
- 21 – Someone to give them true wealth.
- 22 – Someone to set them free from the devil's net.
- 23 – Someone to give them sight so that they understand that they are sinners.
- 24 – They need a good king.
- 25 – *Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.*
- 26 – He came to set us free from sin, death, and Satan!
- 27 – The people did not believe him. They couldn't accept what he said. They tried to kill him!

Lesson 29:

A terrible tragedy or God's plan fulfilled?



Was Jesus' death a terrible tragedy? His life was cut short when he was doing so much good!

Some people say that he didn't really die on the cross. They say that he just appeared to die. It was actually someone else in his place and God made it look like it was Jesus. But this doesn't fit with what we know of God's character. He does not deceive people! And would Jesus have watched someone else die in his place?

Some people say that Jesus was not really dead when he was taken down from the cross and that he revived in the cool tomb. But we know that the Romans were experts in killing people. They knew when someone was dead. When someone was executed on the cross, it was clear that he was dead because he would stop trying to push himself up to take another breath. Crucifixion was the cruellest death ever invented!

Read **John 19:34**. What did the soldier do to make sure Jesus really was dead? [1]

What can we say to people who say that someone else died in Jesus' place and God made it look like it was Jesus? [2]

What can we say to people who say that Jesus didn't actually die on the cross and that he revived in the tomb? [3]

Jesus told his disciples about his death

We read that Jesus knew exactly how he would die.

Read **Luke 9:18–20**.

After he had done many miracles and taught with authority like no-one else, Jesus asked his disciples a question. What did he ask them (v.20)? [4]

What did Peter answer? [5]

Judea at that time was part of the Roman Empire. Jesus' disciples wanted Jesus to become the king who would free them from the Romans.

Read **Luke 9:21–22**.

What did Jesus say to his disciples? [6]

How could this happen? How could Jesus be a conquering king if he was going to be killed? It was so difficult for the disciples to accept this, that Jesus had to tell them this three times (Luke 9:44–45 and 18:31–34).

The disciples understood that Jesus was the King who God had promised to send to his people. But they did not understand what kind of king he would be. They did not realise that the promised King had to suffer.

There is little written in the Old Testament about the fact that the Messiah would die. Most of the prophecies speak of his power and salvation, which he will bring to the people of God.

For example, read **Psalms 2:6–8**.

What will God give to his King? [7]

But in Luke 9:21–22, what did Jesus say about why he came? [8]

Why was it so difficult for the disciples to understand that Jesus was going to be killed? [9]

This was shocking!

The sacrifices in the Old Testament prepare us for the death of the Messiah

Do you remember the lesson about sacrifice? Why did God's people need to offer sacrifices? [10]

Read **Hebrews 10:1–4**.

What is the problem with the sacrifices people made in the Old Testament? [11]

How were sacrifices useful (v.3)? [12]

We need a sacrifice to completely and permanently cleanse us from our sins.

Prophecy in the Old Testament prepares us for the death of the Messiah

What prophecy in the Old Testament prepares us for the death of the Messiah? [13]

Read **Isaiah 53:5–6**.

Hundreds of years before Jesus came, what did God say through Isaiah? [14]

Read **Psalms 22:14–18**.

What does this remind you of? [15]

Psalms 22 describes a crucifixion, hundreds of years before anyone was ever crucified. We now know that this was a prophecy about the Messiah.

The Messiah's death was God's plan from the very beginning!

God's righteous plan

Read **Romans 3:21–26**.

What testifies to the righteousness of God given to those who believe in Jesus (**vv.21–22**)? [16]

How are we redeemed (**vv.23–25**)? [17]

Jesus' sacrificial death was the only perfect sacrifice that could be the payment of the price for our sins and for our being forgiven. There is no other way to eternal life!

Read **Romans 6:23**.

What do we get by sinning? [18]

But what does God give us? [19]

This is the most wonderful news in the world!

So what have we learned today?

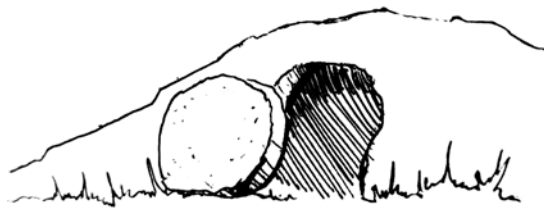
Why did Jesus come?

Answers

- 1 – He pierced Jesus' side with a spear.
- 2 – This doesn't fit with what we know of God's character. He does not deceive people! And would Jesus have watched someone else die in his place?
- 3 – We know that the Romans were experts in killing people. They knew when someone was dead. When someone was executed on the cross, it was clear that he was dead because he would stop trying to get up to take another breath.
- 4 – *Who do you say that I am?*
- 5 – You are the Messiah! You are the one God promised in the Old Testament to send!
- 6 – He will be killed, but on the third day he will be raised to life.
- 7 – The whole earth!
- 8 – Jesus said he came to die and to rise back to life.
- 9 – How could Jesus be a conquering king if he was going to be killed?
- 10 – God is holy and he must punish all who rebel against him. When we do wrong, when we sin, we are rebelling against God. We deserve to die for our sins, just as a traitor to his king deserves to die. But in the Old Testament, God, by his grace, gave his people the opportunity to make sacrifices so that their sins would be forgiven. Only blood can cover our sins.
- 11 – The sacrifice of animals is not enough to make us righteous before God.
- 12 – They would be a reminder for our sins. They showed people that their sins deserve death.
- 13 – Isaiah 53:5–6.
- 14 – God said that the Messiah would die as a sacrifice for our sins. He will take away all our sins!
- 15 – The crucifixion of Jesus.
- 16 – The Law (Pentateuch) and the prophets.
- 17 – Through the sacrifice of Jesus.
- 18 – Death.
- 19 – Eternal life!

Lesson 30:

The resurrection and ascension of Jesus



The resurrection of Jesus

Read **Luke 24:1–12**.

The disciples and the women had no hope that Jesus would rise again. They didn't expect his resurrection!

Why did the women go to the grave? [1]

What surprised them? [2]

What did the angels say to the women (vv.5–7)? [3]

When Christ was leading his disciples on the journey to Jerusalem, he foretold them that he would be killed on a cross, but that he would rise again on the third day (Luke 9:22). This should not have been a surprise for them!

How can we be sure that Jesus rose from the dead?

- If the body had been stolen, they would have taken the linen that was wrapped around the body and not left it behind (Luke 24:12).
- For the Roman leaders and the Jewish leaders to prove that Jesus was not resurrected, they only had to show his body. But they could not find it.
- Over a period of 40 days, Jesus showed himself to many people. There were so many witnesses! (1 Corinthians 15:3–8).

In what three ways can we be sure that Jesus rose from the dead? [4]

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Read **Luke 24:36–43** and **John 20:24–28**.

What did Jesus do to show that he still had a physical body? [5]

What shows that Jesus was different now? [6]

How did Jesus' body remain the same after his resurrection, and how did it differ? [7]

What does Jesus' resurrection show us?

1. Jesus has conquered death! He died and came back to life again!

[Jesus] destroyed death (2 Timothy 1:10).

2. Jesus has defeated the devil! He can free people from the slavery of the devil!

Having disarmed the powers and authorities (Colossians 2:15).

3. Jesus has paid for our sins and God has accepted it!

In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins... (Ephesians 1:7).

4. He gives eternal life to those who believe in him!

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16).

This is the most wonderful news!

What four things does Jesus' resurrection show us? [8]

- 1.
- 2.

3.

4.

The ascension of Jesus

Read **Acts 1:1–11**.

What did Jesus do for 40 days after his resurrection (v.3)? [9]

What did Jesus promise his disciples (v.5)? [10]

What will be their task then (v.8)? [11]

What happened to Jesus after this (v.9)? [12]

What did the angel say to the disciples in verse 11? [13]

Jesus is coming back!

What does Jesus' ascension show us?

Jesus' ascension shows us four things:

1. God has raised Jesus to the highest place.

Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven, on earth and under the earth (Philippians 2:8–10).

2. Jesus will soon return to judge the world.

We should fear Jesus more than anyone else!

In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead... (2 Timothy 4:1).

3. Meanwhile, Jesus is interceding for us.

Who is the one who will condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died (and more than that, he was raised), who is at the right hand of God, and who also is interceding for us (Romans 8:34).

He is saying to God the Father, “[Your name] is your precious child. Forgive them for this sin. My blood has covered it. We will refill them with the Holy Spirit so that they can stop doing this sin and so that they can bring you glory in their life.”

4. We will still have bodies after we die.

Read **1 Corinthians 15:35–46**.

We will have bodies after death, but how will they be different from our bodies now? [14]

We will live forever in a perfect spiritual body!

What does Jesus’ ascension show us? [15]

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Jesus made it possible for us to also enter into the presence of God—now by faith, but in the future for real!

The resurrection and ascension of Jesus is the most wonderful news in the world! Who can you share this with?

What did you learn today?

Answers

- 1 – The women went to anoint the body of Jesus with fragrant oils.
- 2 – The grave was empty!
- 3 – *Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, he is risen! Remember how he told you while he was still with you in Galilee: "The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinners, be crucified, and on the third day rise again."*
- 4 –
 - 1) If the body had been stolen, they would have taken the linen that was wrapped around the body and not left it behind.
 - 2) For the Roman leaders and the Jewish leaders to prove that Jesus was not resurrected, they only had to show his body. But they could not find it.
 - 3) For 40 days, Jesus showed himself to many people. There were so many witnesses!
- 5 – He showed the scars in his hands and his side and he ate some fish.
- 6 – He appeared and disappeared without opening the doors!
- 7 – He could eat food, which is necessary for physical bodies, but he could come and go instantly.
- 8 –
 - 1) Jesus has conquered death! He died and came back to life again.
 - 2) Jesus has defeated the devil!
 - 3) Jesus has paid for our sins and God has accepted it!
 - 4) Jesus gives eternal life to those who believe in him!
- 9 – He presented himself to his followers and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive.
- 10 – They will be baptised in the Holy Spirit.
- 11 – They will be his witnesses throughout the world.
- 12 – He ascended into heaven.
- 13 – *This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.*
- 14 – They will be eternal, they will not have any problems, they will be beautiful and amazing, and we will have an unspoiled relationship with God!
- 15 –
 - 1) God has raised Jesus to the highest place.
 - 2) Jesus will soon return to judge the world.
 - 3) Meanwhile Jesus is interceding for us.
 - 4) And we will have perfect bodies after we die!

Lesson 31:

The Holy Spirit



What do we learn about the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament?

1. When do we first read about the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament? [1]

The Holy Spirit was at work from the beginning!

2. In the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit came to special people for special reasons.

To whom did he come in **1 Samuel 16:13**? [2]

3. Also God gave the Holy Spirit to prophets, so that they could speak the word of God to the people of God.

Read **2 Peter 1:20–21**. How did the prophets pass on God's word? [3]

4. But God promised a time when all of God's people would receive the Holy Spirit.

According to the prophet Joel in **Joel 2:28**, what would that look like? [4]

What do we learn about the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament? [5]

1.

2.

3.

4.

What do we learn about the Holy Spirit in the New Testament?

Acts 1:8: What will the Holy Spirit give the disciples power to do? [6]

They need to tell everyone about Jesus!

Acts 2:1–24: When they received the Holy Spirit, what happened? [7]

Acts 2:41: On that day, how many people became believers? [8]

It was the Harvest Festival, also known as Pentecost, which means “the fiftieth day”. This was the fiftieth day after Passover or Easter. Some churches call themselves Pentecostal because of what God did on that day.

Acts 2:38: Who receives the gift of the Holy Spirit? [9]

The Holy Spirit lives in all believers. You cannot be a believer without the Holy Spirit! (Ephesians 1:13)

What does the Holy Spirit do?

What does the Holy Spirit do in **Romans 8:16**? [10]

What does the Holy Spirit do in **Romans 8:26**? [11]

What does the Holy Spirit do in **Galatians 5:22–23**? [12]

What does the Holy Spirit do in **Acts 1:8**? [13]

What does the Holy Spirit do in **1 Corinthians 12:7–11**? [14]

What does the Holy Spirit do in **1 Corinthians 12:13**? [15]

The Holy Spirit unites us and does not divide us! God is sad that many Christians in recent years have been divided in their understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit.

When we do not love other believers, it shows that we are not allowing the Holy Spirit to work in our lives.

Extra thought

1 Corinthians 14:1–3: What gift does Paul tell us to desire eagerly most of all? [16]

What does this gift look like (v.3)? [17]

The most important task we all have is to strengthen, encourage and comfort each other!

So what have we learned that the Holy Spirit does? [18]

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

What does the life of a person who is full of the Holy Spirit look like?

Read **Galatians 5:22–23**.

What does the life of a person who is full of the Holy Spirit look like? [19]

Is this what our life looks like? If not, what should we do about it? (Read **Luke 11:13**.) [20]

Ephesians 4:30: How do we grieve the Holy Spirit? Give examples. [21]

Gossip

Gossip is a big problem for us. Gossip can destroy someone's reputation and the church. Maybe you know people who have stopped going to church because others gossip about them. How can we help each other not to gossip? What can we say if someone starts gossiping? [22]



We need to please the Holy Spirit—we must not grieve him!

Every day we should ask God to fill us with the Holy Spirit so that we can be the light of Jesus and so that we can be a blessing to all around us!



What have you learned today?

Answers

- 1 – Genesis 1:2.
- 2 – David.
- 3 – The prophets were carried along by the Holy Spirit and so spoke God's words.
- 4 – *Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your elders will have prophetic dreams, and your youths will see visions.*
- 5 –
 - 1) The Holy Spirit was at work from the beginning!
 - 2) In the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit came to special people for special reasons.
 - 3) God also gave the Holy Spirit to the prophets so that they could speak the words of God to God's people.
 - 4) But God promised a time when all of God's people would receive the Holy Spirit.
- 6 – To be witnesses of Jesus not only in Jerusalem, but to the ends of the earth.
- 7 – God changed them from fearful disciples to bold witnesses. And on that day, they were able to explain the gospel to all the visitors in Jerusalem in the visitors' own languages.
- 8 – Three thousand people!
- 9 – All believers—all who repent and are baptised.
- 10 – The Holy Spirit assures us that we belong to God and that we are his children.
- 11 – The Holy Spirit helps us to pray.
- 12 – The Holy Spirit changes our heart and character so that we become like Jesus.
- 13 – The Holy Spirit empowers us to tell everyone about Jesus.
- 14 – The Holy Spirit gives gifts to everyone so that we can serve each other in the church.
- 15 – The Holy Spirit unites us.
- 16 – The gift of prophecy.
- 17 – We speak to people for their strengthening, encouragement and comfort.
- 18 –
 - 1) The Holy Spirit assures us that we belong to God so that we can be his children.
 - 2) The Holy Spirit helps us to pray.
 - 3) The Holy Spirit changes our hearts and characters to become like Jesus.
 - 4) The Holy Spirit gives us the strength to tell everyone about Jesus.
 - 5) The Holy Spirit gives gifts to everyone so that we can serve each other in the church.
 - 6) The Holy Spirit unites us.
- 19 – This person is full of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.
- 20 – We need to ask God to give us his Holy Spirit!
- 21 – Examples include: When we do and say bad things, when we lie, when we say unkind things, when we gossip, when we look at bad things on the internet.
- 22 – Don't be offended, but I don't want to hear gossip. Don't tell me anything you wouldn't say if this person was here. If I don't hear it, I can't pass it on to others!

Lesson 32:

The church



How did the church begin?

Read **Acts 2:36–41**. (This is the end of Peter’s sermon after they had received the Holy Spirit.)

What had they done with the Messiah who God had promised in the Old Testament (**v.36**)? [1]

What was their reaction when they heard this (**v.37**)? [2]

What two things did Peter tell them they needed to do (**v.38**)? [3]

1.

2.

What does it mean to “repent”? [4]

What does baptism symbolize? [5]

It also shows everyone that we are following Jesus and we are joining a family of believers, a church.

It takes a lot of courage to be baptised, especially if our family and friends disagree.

Who receives the Holy Spirit (**vv.38–39**)? [6]

Church growth

Acts 1:15: How many believers were there before this day? [7]

Acts 2:40–41: At the beginning of the day they were a small group of frightened disciples. At the end of the day, how many more people became believers? [8]

This was the beginning of the church!

What does the church do?

Read **Acts 2:42–47**.

The church is not a building—it's a family!

The beginning of the church was a special time. Even if we can't get together every day, we are still one family. Jesus does not want his followers to follow him secretly and covertly. We need each other. We must gather together.

What four things did believers do in **verse 42**? [9]

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

What does “devoting ourselves to the apostles’ teaching” look like for us? [10]

Do you read God's word every day? Do you want to learn as much as you can about God? What does “devoting themselves to fellowship” look like for us? [11]

How do you do this?

Why did they “devote themselves to the breaking of bread”? [12]

Sharing the Lord's supper together is very important for believers.

Can people say that we are always in prayer?

How often do we pray that God will bring others into his kingdom?

Challenge

How many minutes or hours do you spend on the phone each day (talking or reading)? How many minutes or hours do you spend daily in prayer and Bible reading? What's more important?



What does it mean to pray in the Name of Jesus?



This means that we acknowledge that our sins separate us from God. By ourselves, we have no right to stand before God the Father. But we can stand before God because Jesus has forgiven us by his blood shed on the cross. So now God hears our prayers, as those who are righteous before him! This is the most wonderful privilege!

And praying in the name of Jesus also means that we submit to his will.

What did the believers do in **verses 44–45**? [13]

(We'll talk about this in a minute.)

What else did the believers do, in **verses 46–47**? [14]

When we praise God, it makes God happy and makes us happy too!

How often did more people become believers? [15]

May God do this in our church!

Those were wonderful days!

How can we be devoted to each other in our church?

What ideas do you have about how we can show love to each other in the church? Find at least seven answers! [16]

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

Feel free to share your concerns with church leaders so they can pray for you. This is an encouragement for them: it shows that you trust them, and they can rejoice when they see how God answers their prayers. And they can better teach the church through sermons.

May God increase the number of believers in our church every day!

Challenge

When we read the New Testament, we see that problems soon began to appear in the churches. There is no perfect church! There will be no perfect church until we get to the new Jerusalem!

But let's do everything we can, so that more and more people can see God in our lives and learn about who Jesus is through our words!

Extra: Money

Money can cause many problems among the members of a church! Let's see what Paul said about money.



- What did Paul say about money in **1 Timothy 6:10**? [17]

What happens when we love money more than God? [18]

- What did Paul say about money in **1 Corinthians 16:2**? [19]

What habit did Paul encourage Christians to make? [20]

- What did Paul say about money in **2 Thessalonians 3:10**? [21]

What does it mean? [22]

- What did Paul say about money in **Romans 13:8**? [23]

What does this mean for us? [24]

Debt that is not returned on time spoils friendships and the church.

What do we learn from Paul about money? [25]

1.

2.

3.

4.

Borrow only when you can repay the debt within the agreed time. If you really need help with your financial situation, talk to your pastor about it. Money problems are nothing to be ashamed of. Shame is when we ruin friendships and ruin the church.

We need to do good to others. To deceive others is sin.

Is there anything you need to change about how you think about your money?

Answers

- 1 – They had killed him on a cross.
- 2 – They were very upset.
- 3 – 1) Repent.
2) Be baptised.
- 4 – They need to tell God that they are sorry for not obeying him. They need to start following the Messiah that God has sent.
- 5 – A picture of Jesus washing away all our sins. That we have died to ourselves and now we live for Jesus.
- 6 – To all whom God will call. All believers who repent and are baptised.
- 7 – 120.
- 8 – About 3,000 people!
- 9 – 1) They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching.
2) They devoted themselves to fellowship.
3) They devoted themselves to the breaking of bread.
4) They devoted themselves to prayer.
- 10 – We read, meditate, discuss, and pray about what we learn in the Word of God. We should do this on our own and together with other believers.
- 11 – We love and care for each other. We meet together.
- 12 – They were remembering that Jesus had died so they could be forgiven!
- 13 – They were very generous and sacrificial.
- 14 – They praised God.
- 15 – Every day!
- 16 – Examples include:
 - 1) Call other church members.
 - 2) Send a text message.
 - 3) Meet when we can.
 - 4) Come to church every week—It encourages others to just see you at church!
 - 5) Be ready to help each other, for example, if someone is sick or has a baby.
 - 6) Pray for others.
 - 7) Share with others what you have learned in Bible lessons. The more we learn from God's Word, the more God will be able to use us to be a blessing to others!
- 17 – The love of money is the root of all evil.
- 18 – We spend our money to make ourselves happy, not to make God happy.
- 19 – *On the first day of the week let every one of you set aside a sum of money in keeping with your income.*
- 20 – Regularly put money aside so that you can be ready to give money away.
- 21 – *Who does not want to work, let him not eat!*
- 22 – Don't give money to someone who is lazy and doesn't want to work.
- 23 – *Be indebted to no one for anything except the debt of loving one another, for he who loves his neighbour has fulfilled the Law.*
- 24 – We need to pay off our debts as soon as possible!
- 25 – 1) We need God's wisdom on how best to use the money he has given us.
2) Be prepared to be generous.
3) We don't want to encourage others to be idle and not work.
4) Pay off debts quickly so as not to ruin friendships and the church.

Lesson 33:

Telling others the good news



All nations

What did God promise Abraham in **Genesis 12:1–7**? [1]

And now, two thousand years later, we see how God has continued to keep his promises!

We have seen how God sent the Messiah that he promised in the Old Testament. And now it's time for all the nations to hear about the Messiah so that they too can be saved.

What did Jesus say to the disciples in **Matthew 28:18–20**? [2]

Read **Acts 1:8**. How could the disciples make disciples of all nations? [3]

This work has not ended—there are still people who have not heard about Jesus. There are people who do not have the Bible in their own language and where there are no believers who speak that language. For example, in Dagestan (on the Caspian Sea), there are many of these groups of people.

It is our task that all people hear about Jesus!

In the Book of Acts we see how this process began.

Out of Jerusalem

Where did Jesus tell his disciples to be his witnesses (**Acts 1:8**)? [4]

Let's think about these different places.

1. In Jerusalem

In the book of Acts, the 12 disciples of Jesus were called “apostles”.

As Judas had betrayed Jesus and killed himself, who did the other apostles choose to replace Judas (**Acts 1:26**)? [5]

There were just 12 apostles who were the first leaders of the early church.

Who also became an apostle later on (**1 Corinthians 1:1**)? [6]

Acts 6:7: Where did they originally preach? [7]

But the rulers of Judah and the Jewish king were against the apostles.

What did they do in **5:17–20**? [8]

What did they do in **7:59–60**? [9]

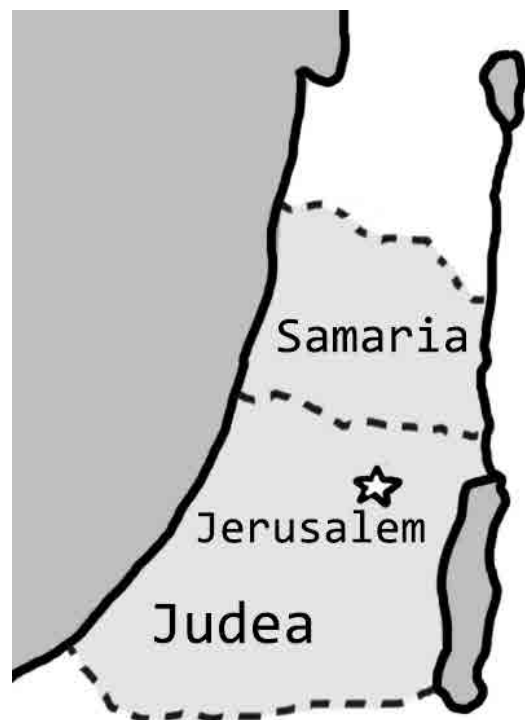
What did the apostles do in **5:41–42**? [10]

Many people believed in Jesus!

2. Throughout Judea and Samaria

Acts 8:2–5: What happened when there was great persecution? [11]

Look at the map above. Samaria is an area north of Jerusalem.



3. The whole world

Read **Acts 10**.

What did God teach Peter? [12]

It was a very important time for the early believers when they realised that the gospel was meant for non-Jews too!

Acts 11:19–21: Where did the believers go? [13]

Look at the map.

Phoenicia—is Lebanon today.

Cyprus is a large island south of Turkey



today.

Antioch is in south east Turkey, and is called Antakya today.

Many Jews and Gentiles believed in Jesus!

Travelling further

In **Acts 13–20**, we read that Paul and other believers travelled throughout what is now Turkey and Greece and started many churches. And later Paul visited these churches.

In the book of Acts we see how the process began for all nations to hear about Jesus. In 8:26–40, we read about how the first African became a Christian.

How can we continue this process?

How do we share good news with people who have never heard?

What ideas do you have about how you can continue the task that began in the book of Acts? [14]



Pray for each other to be able to continue this task!

Answers

- 1 – He promised to make him into a great nation, to give him the land, and that through him all the nations on earth will be blessed.
- 2 – Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
- 3 – The Holy Spirit will give them the power to do it.
- 4 – In Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.
- 5 – Matthias.
- 6 – Paul.
- 7 – In Jerusalem.
- 8 – They put some in jail.
- 9 – They killed James (the brother of John).
- 10 – They continued to preach about Jesus!
- 11 – Many believers fled Jerusalem. They went north of Jerusalem throughout Judea and Samaria.
- 12 – At first they spoke about Jesus only with the Jews, but now they needed to explain to people from other nations (whom the Jews called Gentiles)—these people were not Jews, did not know the Old Testament and did not worship God.
- 13 – To Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch.
- 14 – Ideas include:
 - Pray for people who have never heard about Jesus (in your country and in other countries).
 - Pray with friends so you can support each other as you share about Jesus with family, friends and neighbours.
 - Practice explaining the story of the Bible with each other so that you can be confident explaining it to others.
 - Think about how you can show the love of Jesus in practical ways to your community.
 - Is God asking you to move to a place where people have no opportunity to hear about Jesus?

Lesson 34:

The letters in the New Testament



The believers did not have a New Testament. They had many difficulties. And they needed wisdom on how to live properly for Jesus.

There are 21 letters in the New Testament. The churches were scattered over a wide area, so the apostles wrote letters from afar to encourage these churches.

The churches who received these letters copied them by hand and sent them out to other churches. So that many other churches could benefit from their wisdom.

Has the content of the New Testament been changed?

Some people say that the message of the New Testament was changed. But this was impossible, because the letters and the Gospels were written by eyewitnesses or by those who knew eyewitnesses. They were accepted as true by the very first believers and then were distributed over a very wide area. It would not have been possible to collect them all in and send out new versions. And the early believers would not have allowed anyone to change what they knew to be true!



Over 24,000 manuscript portions of the New Testament have been found. Of these manuscript portions, 230 date from before the birth of Muhammad. These manuscript portions are important because they show that the New Testament has not been changed!

Why is it impossible for the message of the New Testament to have been changed? [1]

The letters:

- **Taught the believers about Jesus and the salvation that Jesus gives**, in order to encourage them to stay true to the faith.
- **Corrected mistakes** of believers when they believed something wrong, so that they knew the truth.
- **Taught believers how to live in the right way** in order to please God.

What three goals did letter writers have when they wrote these letters? [2]

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Who are the authors of these letters?

James (the brother of Jesus), **Peter**, **John**, and **Jude** wrote letters of encouragement to the believers.

Paul wrote nine letters to churches and four to individual people: He wrote two letters to **Timothy** and a letter to **Titus** to help them lead the churches properly. And he wrote a personal letter to **Philemon**.

We do not know who wrote the letter to the **Hebrews**, but many believe that Paul or one of his co-workers (for example, Luke, Barnabas or Apollos) wrote it.

Who wrote most of the letters in the New Testament? [3]

How can we understand these letters?

To help us understand a passage in a letter we can ask four questions:

1. What **problems** were there in the church when this letter was written?
2. What **phrases or words are repeated**? Many people like to underline the phrases that are repeated.
3. What is the **main theme** and what does the author want to teach them? Can you say it in a simple statement?
4. How is this church similar to **our church**? How are our difficulties similar to theirs? What big idea in this passage applies to our church today?

What four questions help us understand the letters of the New Testament? [4]

- 1.

2.

3.

4.

Let us study some verses from the letter to the Colossians together.

Read **Colossians 1:9–20**.

1. Can you guess: **What problems did they have?** [5]

False teachers told them that there were other teachings that the believers did not know about and that a relationship with Jesus was not enough.

2. **What phrases or words are repeated?** [6]

What phrases use the word “**all/every**”? [7]

Paul wanted to tell them that in Jesus we have **everything** for a relationship with God and eternal life!

3. **What was the main theme and what does the author want to teach them?** [8]

4. **How is this church similar to our church? How are our difficulties similar to theirs? What big idea in this passage applies to our church today?** [9]

What can we say to people who say that Jesus is not enough and that we need another prophet who was after him? [10]

Extra

Another way to study the letters (or any passage of the Bible) is to ask yourself these five questions about the chapter you have read. Let's do this together.

1. **What does this passage tell us about God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit)?** [11]

2. **What does this passage tell us about people?** [12]

3. **Is there a command to obey, a warning to us, or an example to follow?** [13]

4. What does God teach us from this passage? [14]

5. Who can I share this with? [15]

In Jesus, we have **everything** for a relationship with God and for eternal life!

Homework

Read 1 Thessalonians, so that we can study it together next lesson.

Answers

- 1 – Because the letters and the Gospels were written by eyewitnesses or in the lifetime of eyewitnesses. They were accepted as true by the very first believers and then were distributed over a very wide area. It would not have been possible to collect them all in and send out new versions. The early believers would not have allowed anyone to change what they knew to be true!
- 2 – 1) To teach the believers about Jesus and the salvation that Jesus gives to encourage them to stay true to the faith.
2) To correct the mistakes of believers when they believed something wrong so that they knew the truth.
3) To teach believers how to live in the right way in order to please God.
- 3 – Paul.
- 4 – 1) What problems did they have?
2) What is the main theme and what does the author want to teach them?
3) What phrases or words are repeated?
4) How is this church similar to our church? How are our difficulties similar to theirs? What big idea in this passage applies to our church today?
- 5 – They thought that perhaps Jesus was not enough.
- 6 – Paul repeats the words “all” and “every”.
- 7 – *Please him in **every** way, bearing fruit in **every** good work.*
*Being strengthened with **all** power.*
*The firstborn over **all** creation.*
*For in him **all** things were created.*
***All** things have been created through him and for him.*
*He is before **all** things.*
*In him **all** things hold together.*
*So that in **everything** he might have the supremacy.*
*God was pleased to have **all** his fullness dwell in him.*
*To reconcile to himself **all** things.*

- 8 – Jesus is no less than God himself (v.15), he has authority over all things, seen and unseen (v.16), and his death is how God the Father has been reconciled with his creation (v.20). So Jesus is all we need!
- 9 – Sometimes people try to tell us that the Bible or Jesus is not enough and that we need something else.
- 10 – Find phrases from this passage that you can use!
- 11 – The Holy Spirit gives us wisdom and understanding.
The Father has qualified us to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light.
The Father rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves.
Jesus is the image of the invisible God.
Jesus is the firstborn over all creation.
Through Jesus and for Jesus everything was created in heaven and on earth.
Jesus is before all things and in him all things hold together.
Jesus is the head of the body, that is, the church.
Jesus is the beginning of everything, the firstborn from among the dead.
In everything Jesus has supremacy.
It was God's will that all the fullness of God dwelt in Jesus.
Jesus died for us so that we would have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.
Through Jesus God reconciles everything to himself, making peace with everything through Jesus' blood shed on the cross.
- 12 – We are created by God and saved by his Son.
- 13 – Paul constantly prayed for the church in Colossae—this is a good example for us.
Our task is to:
- Live worthy of the Lord and please him in everything.
 - Constantly do good deeds.
 - Get to know God more and more.
 - Become stronger through his strength and might, becoming enduring, patient, and joyful.
 - Give thanks to the heavenly Father, who made us worthy to receive a share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light.
- 14 – Share what God has shown you through these verses.
- 15 – What is the name of someone you can share this with?

Lesson 35:

1 Thessalonians



General information about this letter

This letter was written to the believers in Thessalonica in Greece. Thessalonica was one of the largest and most important cities in Paul's day. Look at the map and find it.

This may have been the first letter that Paul wrote.

Read **Acts 17:1–10**. It tells us how the church in Thessalonica started.

How long was Paul there for? [1]

After his first visit to Thessalonica, Paul wanted to visit them again, but he could not. That is why he wrote this letter. This is a good example for us of how God uses our problems for good. For 2,000 years God has blessed millions of people through this letter!



In this letter, Paul wrote about four things

1. Paul had to prove that he was a good person, as some unbelievers were saying bad things about him (**2:1–3:10**). If the believers decided that he was not a good person, they would not continue to believe what he taught them.
2. Paul wanted to encourage believers who were being persecuted for their faith (**1:2–9; 2:14; 3:1–5**).
3. Paul reminded them to live holy lives (**4:1–12; 5:12–22**).
4. Paul wanted the believers to understand what happens when they die and what will happen when Jesus comes back (**4:13–5:11**).

What four things did Paul write about to the believers in Thessalonica? [2]

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Chapter 1

Let's answer the five questions that we can use to study any Bible passage.

What are these five questions? [3]

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

1. What does this passage tell us about God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit)? [4]

2. What does this passage tell us about people? [5]

3. Is there an order to obey, a warning to us, or an example to follow? [6]

4. What does God teach us from this passage? [7]

Faith, love and hope

Faith, hope and love are important words in Paul's letters.

Faith, love and hope are the foundation for our life. If one of them is missing, our faith will not last long.

Faith: Does the knowledge that Jesus will soon return as judge of the world affect what I do every minute of every day?

Love: Is there anyone I don't like or I find difficult to love? If so, I need to ask God to give me the opportunity to show them love. By showing love, we begin to love them!

Hope: When people treat us badly because of our belief in Jesus, we know that Jesus will soon take us to live with him forever. Jesus will give us the courage to stand firm!

We know that when Jesus comes, our problems will be nothing compared to the new earth!

When we suffer with joy, people see the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Interestingly, the church often grows fastest when it is persecuted.

Which of these do you need to ask God to help you grow in: faith, love or hope?

5. Who can I share this with? [8]

Homework

Read the entire letter again this week, and after each chapter, ask yourself the five study questions.

Answers

- 1 – Only two weeks (three Saturdays).
- 2 – 1) Paul had to prove that he was a good person, as some unbelievers were saying bad things about him. If the believers decided that he was not a good person, they would not continue to believe what he told them.
2) Paul wanted to encourage believers who were being persecuted for their faith.
3) Paul reminded them to live holy lives.
4) Paul wanted the believers to understand what happens when they die and what will happen when Jesus comes back.
- 3 – 1) What does this passage tell us about God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit)?
2) What does this passage tell us about people?
3) Is there an order to obey, a warning to us, or an example to follow?
4) What does God teach us from this passage?
5) Who can I share this with?
- 4 – God loves them (v.4).
God has chosen them (v.4).
It is the Holy Spirit that gives people the ability to come to God (v. 5).
The Holy Spirit gives us joy in the midst of suffering (v.6).
He is the true and living God (v. 9).
He raised Jesus from the dead (v.10).
Jesus will return (v.10).
Jesus saves us from God's wrath (v.10).
- 5 – We learn about the deeds of their faith, about the work that they did out of love and about their endurance inspired by the hope of the Lord Jesus (v.3).
Just as the Thessalonians had imitated Paul, Silas and Timothy, so other believers were now imitating them (v.1, 6–7).
Everyone heard about their faith because the Thessalonians accepted the gospel with joy, although they had to suffer a lot (v.8).
Once they worshipped idols, now they worship the living and true God (v.9).
- 6 – Paul always thanks God for those believers (v.2).
He constantly prays for those believers (v.2).
The believers were great examples: Their work was produced by faith, their labour was prompted by love, and their endurance was inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ (v.3).
They suffered with joy. These were good examples for other believers to imitate (v.6).
For them, the most important thing was that Jesus would soon return to judge the world (v.10).
- 7 – Let everyone give their own answer.
- 8 – Give a name of someone you would to share this with and pray for each other to be able to do this well.

Lesson 36:

Jesus' return and the day of judgment



Jesus' return

The return of the Lord Jesus is written about in many places of the New Testament.

He is going to take us home! Finally, God will fulfill all his promises that he made to Abraham!

What promises did God make to Abraham in Genesis 12:1–7? [1]

God's **people** will live in a wonderful new **world** where we will be **blessed** more than we can imagine!

Let's read **Matthew 24:1–44** to learn about the time before Jesus returns.

What did Jesus say in verses 6–8? [2]

What did Jesus say in verse 14? [3]

Extra

Matthew 24:15–21: *So, when you see in the holy place “the abomination which leads to desolation”, which the prophet Daniel spoke of...*

This refers to Daniel's prophecy about a terrible time when the temple will be used for terrible sacrifices and then there will be judgment (Daniel 9:27; 11:31; 12:11).

In 167 BC, the Greek ruler Antioch Epiphanes offered unclean sacrifices to a false god in the temple in Jerusalem. Then the Jews rose up in rebellion.

Jesus, however, uses this phrase to predict two events:

1. The temple will be destroyed. This happened in 70 AD. It was the most terrible disaster for the Jews. But we know that the temple and its sacrifices were no longer needed for God to forgive his people. Why was this? [4]
2. Jesus was also talking about his return. Before he comes back, there will be a terrible opposition to the people of God.

What two events is Jesus talking about in verses 15–20? [5]

What will the situation be like before Jesus will return (**v.21**)? [6]

Jesus quotes a verse from Isaiah. What did he say (**vv.29–30**)? [7]

Who will know when Jesus has returned (**v.30**)? [8]

When something goes wrong in the world, such as earthquakes, many people find out about it by watching the news on TV or on their phone. But some people don't know about it. When Jesus returns, all people around the world will immediately know about it. Those who sleep will wake up. There will be no one who doesn't know about it.

What will Jesus send his angels to do (**v.31**)? [9]

What will be destroyed and what lasts forever (**v.35**)? [10]

Who knows when Jesus will return (**v.36**)? [11]

When Jesus was a man on earth, he did not know everything and he did not know when he would return. If people say that they know the date when Jesus will return, we do not need to believe them. Over the centuries some people have tried to predict the date of Jesus' return. No one has been correct! God, our perfect heavenly Father, knows when it is and we need to trust him!

In the time of Noah, what did the people do when Noah told them about the flood (**vv.37–39**)? [12]

Then what happened to them? [13]

How are today's people similar to the people of Noah's time? [14]

What do these verses tell us about the coming of Jesus (**vv.42–43**)? [15]

What do we need to do (v.44)? [16]

The day of judgment

Jesus gave us this parable so that we can understand the day of judgment.

Read **Matthew 25:31–46**.

Jesus will divide all people into two groups. With what animals does he compare these two groups? [17]

Which group will Jesus invite into his kingdom? [18]

Who are the sheep? [19]

How will Jesus judge us? [20]

But... in John 3:16 who will have eternal life? [21]

Do they contradict each other? [22]

- We have all sinned. But by God's grace Christ paid for our sins and we were forgiven. In this way we were justified before God! (Romans 3:23–24)
- Using Jesus' analogy, we are all "goats" but God forgave us and he changed us into "sheep"! What an amazing God we have!
- When Jesus saves us, he changes our hearts so that we love to serve his people.
- What we do shows whether we really believe in Jesus or not, whether we are a sheep or a goat.

What do our actions say about us? Are we a goat or a sheep?

Matthew and John both understood that our actions are evidence of our faith. Both wrote that if we believe in Jesus, we must be people who do good works. John not only wrote 3:16, he also wrote **John 5:28–29**. In these verses, what does it say will happen to those who do good? [23]

What does it say will happen to those who have done evil? [24]

Heaven and hell

We see that in Matthew 25:31–46 there are two different places: heaven and hell.

What will Jesus say to those who lived for him (v.34)? [25]

These are the most beautiful words we could ever hear!

God has prepared his kingdom so we can enjoy him forever! (Revelation 21:3–4)

God blesses us so much if we believe in Jesus and obey him!

What will Jesus say to those who have lived for themselves and have rebelled against God (v.41)? [26]

These are the most terrible words we could ever hear. God will punish those who did not want to obey him.

They will live permanently separated from God, along with the devil and evil spirits. It will be a place of eternal death.

Confidence

Read **1 John 4:15–18**.

Who helps us to confidently wait for the day of judgment? [27]

What is the greatest proof that God lives in us (**vv.16–17**)? [28]

What evidence is there in our life that God lives in us?

How much do we love and want to obey Jesus?

Questions to test ourselves

At home:

Do we do everything we can to love and encourage each other in our family?

Do we thank those who serve us (cook, clean, wash our clothes, etc.)?

Are we quick to help when we see that someone needs help?

At work:

How do we work? Do we do our work with a bad attitude? Do we do as little as possible or waste time? Or do we work cheerfully, doing our best so we can please Jesus as well as our boss.

In meetings:

Do we encourage, pray for and respect the leaders?

Do we help to serve others and clean up at the end of a meeting?

Are we reluctant or unwilling to help when someone needs help? Or do we say, “These are not my problems, let them solve their own problems”?

Friendships:

How do we talk about other people? Do we say good or bad things about them? The rule is: if you wouldn't say it in front of the person you're talking about, don't say it at all.

Do we pray for those who have upset us and said things we don't like?
If we are in a quarrel with someone, do we do everything we can to make peace with them?

In which areas do you need to ask Jesus to help you to change?

Challenge

What does it look like to be ready for Jesus' return? How can we be prepared for Jesus' return? [29]

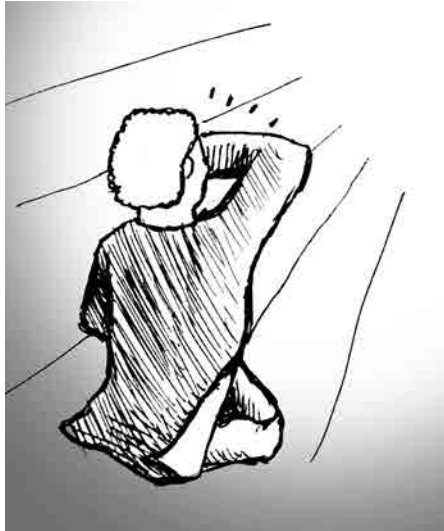
What did God challenge you about in this lesson?

Answers

- 1 – People, land, and blessing.
- 2 – That there will always be problems and this does not mean that the end of the world will be soon.
- 3 – That the good news will be proclaimed throughout the world and then he will return.
- 4 – Jesus' death was the once for all time sacrifice for our sins!
- 5 – The temple will be destroyed and, before Jesus comes back, there will be a terrible opposition to the people of God.
- 6 – There will be very hard times.
- 7 – When something terrible goes wrong in the sky, it will be a sign that Jesus is returning.
- 8 – Everyone!
- 9 – Gather all his people to take them home.
- 10 – Things are not eternal! But the words of Jesus are eternal! The words of Jesus are true forever, and will never be forgotten.
- 11 – Only God.
- 12 – They continued to live as before. They enjoyed living as they wanted. They did not obey God. They believed that life would go on forever.
- 13 – God condemned them and they died in the flood.
- 14 – People continue to live as before. They enjoy living as they want. They don't listen to God. They believe that life will go on forever.
- 15 – It will be sudden and unexpected.
- 16 – We must be ready for the return of Jesus.
- 17 – Sheep and goats.
- 18 – The sheep.
- 19 – Those who do good.
- 20 – Jesus will judge us by the deeds we have done.
- 21 – All who believe in Jesus.
- 22 – NO!
- 23 – They will have eternal life.
- 24 – They will be condemned.
- 25 – *Come to me, blessed by my Father, receive your inheritance—the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.*
- 26 – *Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.*
- 27 – If we recognise Jesus as the son of God, if we believe in him, God lives in us and gives us confidence to wait for the day of judgment.
- 28 – Our love for God and for each other.
- 29 – We need to live every day as if it were the last day before the return of Jesus.
Ask God to show us our sins so that we repent.
Ask God to show us if there is someone we need to forgive.
Let our friends and relatives hear about Jesus.

Lesson 37:

The book of Revelation (part 1)



We will study Revelation in two parts. In the first part, we will look at some of the ideas in the book, and in the second part, we will study a passage from this book.

Encouragement

When John wrote Revelation, many believers were dying for their faith in Jesus. The Roman emperor wanted the people to worship him (the emperor) and the believers would not do that.

Revelation was written to encourage believers, to remind believers that:

- Jesus is the real King who rules the world!
- Maybe the devil is strong and evil, but he lost the war when Jesus rose from the dead.
- Soon Jesus will come to judge the world and send the devil and all Jesus' enemies to hell!
- Then all who believe in Jesus will live forever in the beautiful new earth!

Why did the people John wrote to need encouragement? [1]

What did God want to remind the believers about in this book? [2]

1.

2.

3.

4.

When do we need encouragement? [3]

What did God want to remind us about in this book? [4]

Vision

This book is very different from other books in the Bible. This is about the vision that God gave to John. In the vision, he sees and hears strange things: they are symbols that have meaning. This is not history. This is not like the Acts of the Apostles. When we read something strange, we should ask ourselves, “What does it mean?”

In the Old Testament we find places where the prophets had visions. Their visions also had meaning. For example, some passages from Daniel, Ezekiel, and Zechariah.

All the images that we find in Revelation, we find in the Old Testament. The Old Testament helps us to understand not only Revelation, but all the books of the New Testament!

How is this book different from other books in the Bible? [5]

Which prophets in the Old Testament also had visions in which they saw events and things that had special meanings? [6]

Let's look at some of these symbols in Revelation:

Dragons and horns

What animal did John see in **Revelation 12:3**? [7]

What kind of animal is a dragon? [8]

What does the dragon represent? [9]

How many horns does he have? [10]



Let's look at where we find a terrible animal with ten horns in the Old Testament. What did Daniel see in **Daniel 7:7**? [11]

Daniel 7:24 explains what this beast represents.

What do the ten horns represent? [12]

The devil is behind all evil political power. What examples can you think of? [13]



Numbers

In Revelation we will see many numbers that have their own meaning. These are also symbols, they are not literal numbers.

Let us look at some of these numbers that we see in Revelation.

Seven

Read **Genesis 2:2**. What do you think the number seven means? [14]



Read **Revelation 1:11**. What does Jesus tell John to do? [15]

So this means that Revelation was a letter written to all the churches then and now!

Sometimes we need to do some mathematics!

Read **Revelation 12:6**. The woman represents the church.

How long does God take care of her? [16]

How many months is this? [17]

How many years is this? [18]

If seven years means eternity, then three and a half years—that's half of seven—means our time in the wilderness won't last forever!

Six

What does six mean? Is it the same thing as seven? [19]



Six means "not seven". It is the number of imperfection, and therefore of evil.

Satan loves to imitate God. Sometimes it seems that something is almost “seven”, and we can decide that it is “seven”—when it’s not seven, but six. Satan loves to deceive us into obeying him and not God.

How do we know that something is from God? [20]

If the Jews wanted to emphasise something, they said it three times. How did the seraphim describe God in **Isaiah 6:3**? [21]

They were saying that God is completely holy.

If seven represents perfection and if we were to give God a number, we would give him the number 777 because he is absolutely perfect.

However Satan loves to deceive us. He is never good. He is completely evil. He cannot become like God. So what number does he get in **Revelation 13:18**? [22]

What does this mean? [23]

Ten

When John writes about periods of time, ten days represents a short time, and a thousand years represents a long time.

For example:

Read **Revelation 2:10**. How long will their persecution last? [24]

This represents a short period of time.

Read **Revelation 20:1–6**. How long is Satan bound? [25]

How long will the believers reign with Jesus? [26]

A thousand years represents a long time. It is the period between the first and second coming of Jesus (between his resurrection and his return to judge the world). That time is now! Jesus is ruling and building his church. Satan is bound and cannot do as much harm as he wants to. But there will come a short time when he will be released for terrible deeds, and then Jesus will return.

What does ten days represent? [27]

What does a thousand years represent? [28]



One big thing that Christians today disagree on is how to understand Revelation 20:1–6.

Let us remember that:

There are many symbols in Revelation and “1,000 years” is one of them.

If something is important then God tells us about it many times in the Bible.

We need to concentrate on what is clear in the Bible: Jesus died for our sins, he rose from the dead, he is coming back as judge of the world and then all those who have lived for him will live with him forever in a wonderful new creation.

We need to be careful not to add to what the Bible clearly and repeatedly says about the end of the world.

And we also need to love those who disagree with us!

What do we need to remember when other Christians disagree with us? [29]

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Twelve

Read **Exodus 24:4**. How many tribes were there in Israel? [30]

Read **Luke 6:13**. How many apostles did Jesus choose? [31]

So what do you think twelve means? [32]

Read **Revelation 21:12–14**. This is a description of the new Jerusalem.

How many gates are there in the new Jerusalem? [33]

12

How many angels are there? [34]

How many foundations are there? [35]

This is the perfect safe city!

Time for some more mathematics!

What does 12×12 equal? [36]

What does $144 \times 1,000$ equal? [37]

Read **Revelation 7:4**. How many people will be in heaven with Jesus? [38]

This is the full number of believers ("12") times the full number of believers ("12") times a very large number, too many to count (1,000). $12 \times 12 \times 1,000 = 144,000$.

So what does 144,000 mean? [39]

There is a room for all believers! Don't believe those who say that there is only room for a select few believers.

All numbers in Revelation are just symbols, we should not take them literally. We must think about what God wants to tell us through these numbers.

So why did John write Revelation? [40]

Memory verse

Here is a beautiful promise that Jesus made to the church. It is Jesus' word to his people. He stands near us! He is inviting us to have close fellowship with him!

Revelation 3:20: *"Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me."*



Extra: Numbers test

What does the number 7 represent? [41]

What does the number 6 represent? [42]

What do 10 days represent? [43]

What does the number 12 represent? [44]



How can you encourage someone who is being persecuted?

What ideas from Revelation can you share with them?

Answers

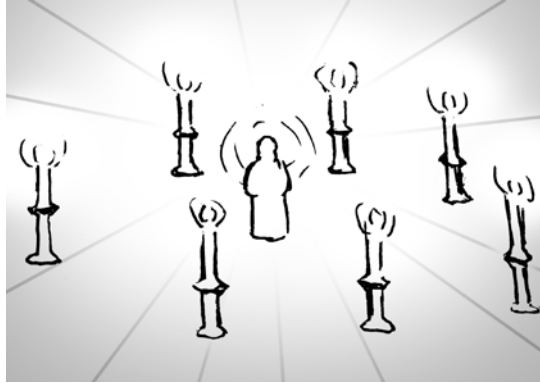
- 1 – Because many believers were dying for their faith in Jesus.
- 2 – 1) Jesus is the real King who rules the world!
2) Maybe the devil is strong and evil, but he lost the war when Jesus rose from the dead.
3) Soon Jesus will come to judge the world and send the devil and all Jesus' enemies to hell!
4) Then all who believe in Jesus will live forever in the beautiful new earth!
- 3 – Every day!
- 4 – Jesus is the real King who rules the world!
Maybe the devil is strong and evil, but he lost the war when Jesus rose from the dead.
Soon Jesus will come to judge the world and send the devil and all Jesus' enemies to hell!
Then all who believe in Jesus will live forever in the beautiful new earth!
- 5 – This is the vision that God gave to John. This is not history.
- 6 – Daniel, Ezekiel, and Zechariah.
- 7 – John saw a red dragon.
- 8 – It is evil and dangerous.
- 9 – The devil.
- 10 – Ten horns.
- 11 – He saw a terrible beast with ten horns.
- 12 – Ten kings.
- 13 – Hitler, Stalin, ISIS, Taliban.
- 14 – God created the world in six days and rested on the seventh day. Seven means "perfect" or "complete".
Seven is the perfect number in the Bible.

- 15 – Write a letter to the seven churches.
- 16 – 1,260 days.
- 17 – 42 months. (1,260 divided by 30 = 42)
- 18 – Three and a half years. (42 divided by 12=3.5)
- 19 – No!
- 20 – The more we read God's Word, the better we can discern truth from falsehood.
- 21 – Holy, holy, holy.
- 22 – 666.
- 23 – He is completely and utterly evil.
- 24 – 10 days.
- 25 – 1,000 years.
- 26 – 1,000 years.
- 27 – A short time.
- 28 – A very long time.
- 29 – 1) There are many symbols in Revelation and "1,000 years" is one of them.
2) That if something is important then God tells us about it many times in the Bible.
3) We need to concentrate on what is clear in the Bible: Jesus died for our sins, he rose from the dead, he is coming back as judge of the world and then all those who have lived for him will live with him forever in a wonderful new creation.
4) We need to be careful not to add to what the Bible clearly and repeatedly says about the end of the world.
5) And we also need to love those who disagree with us!
- 30 – 12.
- 31 – 12.
- 32 – The full amount or completeness—not one is missing.
- 33 – 12.
- 34 – 12.
- 35 – 12.
- 36 – 144.
- 37 – 144,000.
- 38 – 144,000.
- 39 – This number symbolises the total number of believers. It means all the believers who ever were and all the believers there are now and those who will be after us.
- 40 – He wrote it to encourage the church, which was suffering much persecution.
- 41 – Perfect or complete.
- 42 – Evil.
- 43 – A short time.
- 44 – The full amount or completeness.

Lesson 38:

The book of Revelation

(part 2)



Let's study a passage from the first chapter of Revelation.

Read **Revelation 1:12–18**.

In **verse 12** what do the seven lampstands represent? (v.20) [1]

What did Jesus call himself in **John 8:12**? [2]

What does light do? [3]

How did the Israelites know where to go in the desert (Exodus 13:21)? [4]

How does **Psalms 27:1** describe God? [5]

How does **Psalms 119:105** describe God's word? [6]

So what did Jesus mean by saying that he is the "light of the world"? [7]

If churches are lampstands, what is their task? [8]

Where is Jesus in **Revelation 1:13**? [9]

What does this mean? [10]

What was Jesus wearing? [11]

Who wore a long robe with a sash in **Exodus 28:4**? [12]

What is written about his hair (**Revelation 1:14**)? [13]

What does white hair represent? [14]

When Daniel saw God in a vision in Daniel 7:9, his hair was also white.

What did that mean about God? [15]

What is written about Jesus eyes (**Revelation 1:14**)? [16]

What do you guess that this means? [17]

What is written about his feet (**Revelation 1:15**)? [18]

Bronze is a hard, shiny metal. They used to polish bronze to use it as a mirror. What does bronze represent? [19]

Daniel also saw an awesome man in a vision who had blazing eyes and his arms and legs were like bronze (Daniel 10:6).

What is written about Jesus' voice (**Revelation 1:15**)? [20]

What do you guess that this means? [21]

This is also the sound that Ezekiel heard in his vision (Ezekiel 43:2).

What was in Jesus' right hand (**Revelation 1:16**)? [22]

What does this mean (**Revelation 1:20**)? [23]

Jesus has full power over all the angels!

What do angels do? Read **Hebrews 1:14**. [24]

What comes out of Jesus' mouth (**Revelation 1:16**)? [25]

What does this mean? Read **Isaiah 11:4** (a prophecy about the Messiah). [26]

What is written about his face (**Revelation 1:16**)? [27]

When did Jesus' face shine in the gospels? Read **Matthew 17:1–2**. [28]

What does this show? [29]

What does Jesus say to John (**Revelation 1:17**)? [30]

How many times is it written in the Bible "Don't be afraid!"? [31]

Once for every day of the year! Every day God wants to remind us that we don't need to be afraid! We should only fear God!

What else did Jesus say (**Revelation 1:17–18**)? [32]

What does this mean? [33]

How would you describe Jesus to your friends?

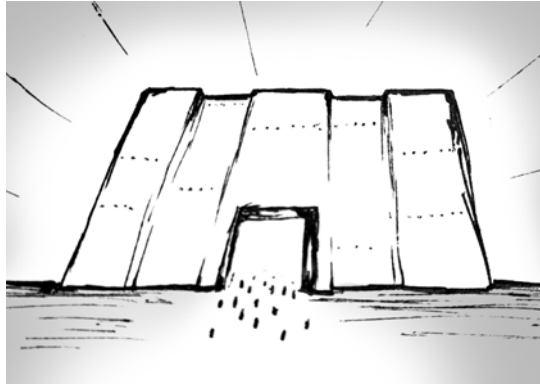
Use words from this passage to praise Jesus.

Answers

- 1 – The seven churches.
- 2 – The light of the world.
- 3 – Light enables us to see!
- 4 – God led them in a pillar of cloud during the day and in a pillar of fire by night to give them light.
- 5 – *He is my light and my salvation.*
- 6 – *Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.*
- 7 – He was claiming to be God. Only God can truly show us our hearts and how we should live.
- 8 – To let Jesus' light shine out through the church into our communities! Let people see Jesus' love and goodness through us!
- 9 – He is among the lampstands.
- 10 – Jesus is with us—he has not left us!
- 11 – He was wearing a long robe with a golden sash around his chest.
- 12 – These were the clothes of the high priest, Aaron.
- 13 – The hair of his head was as white as wool or as snow.
- 14 – It means you have wisdom—that's why in Central Asia old men are called "white beards"!
- 15 – God has perfect wisdom.
- 16 – His eyes were like a blazing fire.
- 17 – God knows everything. We cannot hide anything from God!
- 18 – His feet are like bronze that is glowing in a furnace.
- 19 – Glory, strength, and security.
- 20 – It was like the sound of mighty waters.
- 21 – Jesus speaks with power and authority.
- 22 – Seven stars.
- 23 – These are the messengers or the angels of the seven churches.
- 24 – Angels help us all the time, even if we don't see them!
- 25 – A double-edged sword.
- 26 – Jesus will judge the whole world!
- 27 – His face was like the brightly shining sun.
- 28 – When Jesus took Peter, James, and John up a mountain and he was transfigured before them.
- 29 – This shows Jesus' glory.
- 30 – Don't be afraid!
- 31 – 365 times.
- 32 – *I am the first and I am the last. I am alive! I was dead, but behold, I am alive forever! I have the keys to death and hell!*
- 33 – Christ Jesus is eternal. He gave his life as a sacrifice and is risen again. Thus, Christ has conquered death! And so he decides about what happens to us in this world and he decides our eternal future.

Lesson 39:

The new creation



God keeps his promises!

What promises did God make to Abraham in **Genesis 12:1–7**? [1]

When will God fully fulfill his promises to Abraham? [2]

What will the people, the land, and the blessing look like?

Who will be among the people in the new creation? Who will live with God forever? Read **Revelation 7:9**. [3]

What will the land be like? Read **Revelation 22:1–5**. [4]

How will God bless us? Read **Revelation 21:3**. [5]

Let's read **Revelation 21:1–8** to help us understand more about these three things.

New land

What happened to the earth when Adam and Eve sinned in Genesis 3:17–18? [6]

Revelation 21:1: What will happen to the first heaven and earth? [7]

Revelation 21:5: What will God make new? [8]



God has promised a new home for his people. It will be much better than the promised land or the garden of Eden! No one will spoil our new home. Satan and all God's enemies will not be there.

Read **1 Corinthians 15:42–44**. What will our bodies be like? [9]

God will make us perfect, with perfect bodies without sickness and without sin!

The people

Read **Revelation 21:2**. What are the three different phrases or words that describe the church? [10]



What do these phrases teach us?

- **Holy City**—Can you imagine a community in which there is no unkind person, and there is no resentment towards each other?
- **New Jerusalem**—this represents the most wonderful city! Everything is new and never gets old!

No dirt, garbage, rundown houses, holes in the sidewalks, beggars, advertising that lies to you!

Everything is beautiful, new, clean, quiet and works well!

Every time something irritates us in this world, it is an opportunity for God to remind us that this is not our real home—he is preparing a much better home for us!

- **A bride beautifully dressed for her husband** means that believers have become the most beautiful and loving people!

How does Jesus make us beautiful? Read **Ephesians 5:25–27**. [11]

And of course the Holy Spirit is working in our lives to make us more like Jesus.

These descriptions help us understand that the church is precious in God's eyes! Therefore, we should treat each other like precious brothers and sisters. Every member of the church is valuable!

God is working within each one of us to make us more like Jesus, but until we get to the new Jerusalem we need to be patient and forgiving of one another! We need to do everything we can to help each other get to the new creation!

The blessing

Read **Revelation 21:3**. Where is God? [12]



Not only will we be new people in a new home, we will have a new friendship with God!

If we believe in Jesus, we are already in friendship with God! But in the new creation, it will be much more! It will be amazing!

Read **Revelation 21:4**. What will God do to us? [13]

What will not be in the new Jerusalem? [14]

Read **Isaiah 35:10**. How will people feel in the new Jerusalem? [15]

Read **Revelation 21:6**. How does Jesus describe himself? [16]

What does it mean? [17]

What does Jesus give us? [18]

To whom will Jesus give the water of life? [19]

What does it mean to be thirsty? [20]

What does it mean to drink from the water of life? Read **John 7:37–39**. [21]

Do you drink from the water of life every day?

Between now and the end of the world

Read **Revelation 21:7**. What does “those who are victorious” mean? [22]

When is it hard to keep following Jesus? [23]

What will be our reward? [24]

When we enter our new home it will be better than we can ever imagine!

Read **Revelation 21:8**. What will happen with all these bad people? [25]

Challenge

It is so easy to think that this verse is talking about other, bad people. But...

- Are we ever afraid to follow Jesus?
- Are we ever unfaithful to him?
- Are we ever vile (even in our thoughts—Matthew 5:27–29)?
- Are we ever murderers (even in our thoughts—Matthew 5:21–22)?
- Are we ever idol-worshippers? Whatever we love the most is our idol.



Read **Deuteronomy 6:5**. How much should we love God? [26]

God wants us to love him more than anything in the world!

But until we get to the new creation, we will all fail God.

So what do we do when God shows us our sin? [27]

God is always ready to forgive us!

Are you allowing God to make you more like Jesus?

So what did we learn about the new creation today? [28]

Let's work hard to be the beautiful bride God created us to be!

Answers

- 1 – People, land, and blessing.
- 2 – We see how God begins to fulfill these promises throughout the Bible. But God will only fully fulfill these promises in the new creation, also called the new Jerusalem.
- 3 – God's people will be from every tribe, every nation, every language!
- 4 – It will be the most wonderful land: no hunger, no sin, no sickness, no death, no darkness, no trouble, nothing to be afraid of.
- 5 – God will bless us more than we can imagine! The Creator of the universe himself, who is merciful, compassionate and loving, will live with us!
- 6 – God cursed the earth. Our world is corrupted and broken.
- 7 – They will soon be gone.
- 8 – Everything!
- 9 – Imperishable, glorious, powerful and spiritual!
- 10 – Holy City, new Jerusalem, and a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.
- 11 – He speaks to us through his word so that we understand our sin and ask him to help us change.
- 12 – He is with his people!
- 13 – He will wipe every tear from their eyes. He understands all our pain. He comforts us.
- 14 – There will be no more death, no more mourning, no more crying, no more pain.
- 15 – They will be happier than we can imagine!
- 16 – The Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and End.
- 17 – Alpha and Omega were the first and last letters in the Greek alphabet. (The New Testament was originally written in Greek.) Jesus was there at the creation of the world, and Jesus will come at the end of the world.
- 18 – The water of life.
- 19 – To those who suffer from thirst.
- 20 – It means to know how much we need God. We realise that without God we die.
- 21 – It means to ask Jesus to fill us with his Holy Spirit!
- 22 – This is the person who still follows Jesus no matter what happens. They are faithful to the end.
- 23 – When:
 - People treat us badly because of our faith.
 - People persecute us.
 - We feel like nothing in this life works out for us—everything keeps going wrong.
- 24 – We will inherit everything and be children of God! We will belong to God forever!
- 25 – They will be sent to the lake of burning sulfur.
- 26 – With all our heart and with all our soul and with all our strength.
- 27 – Repent and ask Jesus to change your heart.
- 28 – God will finally fulfill his promises to Abraham when Jesus returns.
 We will be new people with perfect bodies, in a new home, with a new friendship with God!
 Jesus gives us everything we need to go there.
 We must be faithful to him to the end.

Lesson 40:

The Bible story in eight pictures

To review what we have learned in this course, we will use these pictures one last time to explain the main points of the Bible's big story.



We will read about the first picture, then one person in the group should repeat this information without reading it. Then we will read about the second picture, and someone else will repeat it. When we reach the end, we will repeat all eight pictures in turn without looking at the words. You can add any further details from the lessons you like when you talk through all the eight pictures together.



1. Creation

Everything God created was good. God spent time with the first people, Adam and Eve, in a beautiful garden that was called the garden of Eden.



2. The beginning of sin

Adam and Eve disobeyed God, and obeyed the devil. Thus, they lost God's blessings, including eternal life.

The arrow in the picture shows that God drove them out of the garden and his presence.

Ever since this time, people have longed to be able to relate to God and to be in his presence again.



3. Promise

God promised Abraham that he would be the father of a **people** who would be special to God. God promised Abraham a **land** for the people, where God would dwell with them.

And God promised **blessings** to all nations through him.

The crown represents that God will be their good king.

The rainbow represents that God keeps his promise (Genesis 9:13–16). You can always trust him!



4. Exodus

God's people found themselves in a foreign country in Egypt, where they were slaves. (The pyramids represent Egypt.)

The arrow indicates that God saved his people from terrible slavery in Egypt.



5. Land

God led his people to the promised land. They defeated the Canaanites who lived in this land, who were very wicked people.

God blessed his people, but they worshipped other gods. God warned them many times, but in the end God sent them into exile. Then God brought them back to the promised land, but they still did not obey the laws of God, but continued to sin.

They needed a Saviour who would save them from their sins. They needed a King who would rule them properly. God promised that one day he would send such a person: his Messiah.



6. Jesus the Messiah

God kept his promise! God came to this world to be its Saviour. The name Jesus means "God saves". Jesus was God's Messiah. He lived as the perfect Israelite, in perfect relationship with God, and died on the cross. His death was the perfect sacrifice for our

sins so that God could forgive us.

His resurrection showed that he had overcome sin, death, and the devil! Now people can be friends with God again!



7. The return of Jesus

Jesus is now in heaven.

The arrow shows that Jesus will return to bring an end to the world and to judge all people. God, through Jesus, will judge all people.



8. The new creation

King Jesus will bring his people home. We will live with God in the new, eternal, promised land!

There will be no more sin, sorrow or death!

Jesus will send Satan to hell.

And God's people will enjoy eternal life with God in the new creation!

Who can you explain these pictures to this week?

How does knowing God's big story encourage you today?

This 40-lesson course takes you through the story of the Bible, seeing how each part points us to Jesus. Each lesson has lots of questions, and the answers are all at the end. In this way it can be used by Christians of all levels of Bible knowledge. The aim is to help all Christians to learn to love reading God's word.

